

Editors:  
Stefan Gies  
Jon Helge Sætre

## Becoming musicians

*Student involvement and teacher  
collaboration in higher music education*



Norges  
musikkhøgskole  
Norwegian Academy  
of Music

CEMPE

Centre for Excellence in  
Music Performance Education



LATIMPE



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# Preface

*Jon Helge Sætre and Stefan Gies*

In October 2018 the conference *Becoming Musicians, student involvement and teacher collaboration in higher music education* took place in Oslo, Norway. The first ever AEC and CEMPE Learning and Teaching Conference, it attracted students and teachers from 44 institutions worldwide. Keynote speakers, presenters and workshop leaders discussed and shed light on a number of issues related to learning and teaching music in higher education. In this anthology we have gathered a selection of presentations from the conference. Thanks to the time, effort and energy spent by every contributor, the book has turned into what we hope will be a call for re-examination and re-thinking of learning and teaching practices in our field.

Why focus on learning and teaching in higher music education? Is it not what we all do every day, in studios, classrooms and elsewhere? Is it not just too big a topic and therefore impossible to untangle? Quite so, we think, but we see these issues or questions rather as reasons why learning and teaching are crucial issues for any higher education institution. In higher education generally, the present day emphasis on learning and teaching (e.g. the SoTL movement<sup>1</sup>) is probably designed to ensure that universities do not solely focus on research – that learning and teaching issues and practices receive as much attention as subject-specific research from higher education institutions and faculty. The situation is somewhat unique in higher music education, since students and teachers are benefiting from intensive personal support (which is reflected in a very high teacher-student ratio) and thus presumably already emphasising learning and teaching. Attention towards learning and teaching in our field may be crucial for rather different reasons, e.g. as a way of identifying and challenging habits and taken-for-granted educational practices of teaching, or as a way of encouraging sharing, discussion and community in a field that is often quite private and made up by very small educational practices (e.g. the one-to-one model of instrumental tuition), or as a way of creating even better methods for preparing students and institutions to deal with future musical and societal problems and possibilities.

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1 Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, see for example <https://www.stlhe.ca/sotl/what-is-sotl/>

In order to narrow the topics of learning and teaching down a bit, both the conference and this book focus on two main perspectives: student involvement and teacher collaboration. In recent years student involvement has become a central topic in higher music education. Many argue that students should be the central agents in their own learning processes and that teachers and higher education institutions should strive to empower students and engage them more actively. Student-oriented, student-active or student-centred learning methods have become common concepts. Teacher collaboration is at the same time an evolving topic in higher music education practices. In many cases teacher collaboration intertwines with student involvement. What do these concepts mean, though? What does a 'student-centred' educational practice look like, and what do teachers collaborate on? What are the pros and cons of involving students more actively and of increased collaboration in learning and teaching practices? What do student involvement and teacher collaboration mean in learning contexts ranging from one-to-one contexts to cross-disciplinary or cross-institutional practices? We hope that this publication will present at least some possible answers to these questions and, equally important, that the book will present a range of new questions.

The book consists of three parts. The first, entitled *Higher music education institutions and students*, aims to present the educational field of higher music education and the students therein. The first chapter is written by the *AEC working group* that currently focuses on learning and teaching (working group five in the AEC Strengthening Music in Society project). Based on analyses of interesting educational practices, the working group proposes to conceptualise the music performance student as a researching artist. The concept of the researching artist allows us to view the student as an active, explorative, curious and critical student who has artistic agency and who takes responsibility of his or her learning process and artistic development. In the second chapter *Stefan Gies* describes the development of higher music education institutions and practices from the outset up to the present day and pinpoints several issues and dilemmas in the history and development of the field. *Monika Nerland* unfolds in her chapter a number of concepts and traditions related to student-centredness, with a particular focus on the body of research that examines student-centred learning environments. In the last chapter of part one *Nadia Moberg* and *Eva Georgii-Hemming* present a case study on how autonomy and independence are understood by students and teachers in higher music performance education.

Part two consists of four chapters which bring perspectives on instrumental learning and teaching in particular. *Morten Carlsen* discusses the role of the instrument



teacher and asks whether he or she is a 'maestro' or 'mentor'. Carlsen examines possible relationships between students and teachers and the various educational consequences following from these relationships. *Susanne van Els* continues with a personal essay, based on her career as a musician and on developmental work as a curriculum designer. She discusses student motivation and student choice, and suggests replacing control with trust. *Silke Kruse-Weber* and *Timea Sari* present a study on the use of reflective journals as a means to develop students' instrumental and reflective practice. Lastly *Lars Brinck* and *Jacob Anderskov* offer a situated learning analysis of the 'KUA-classes' at Rhythmic Music Conservatory, Copenhagen, where a recent curricular turn has put a strong emphasis on the students as artistic developers and researchers. The students appear to develop a strong sense of 'agency' through 'transparent' contexts based on the students' own artistic work.

Part three comprises chapters on a range of perspectives and projects on student involvement and teacher collaboration. *Karine Hahn* describes a course module in which students act as much as researchers as they act as musicians. *Anna Maria Bordin* presents insights from an Erasmus+ project that combined performance, composition and improvisation as well as different musical cultures and genres. *Brit Ågot Brøske*, *Vegar Storsve*, *Jon Helge Sætre*, *John Vinge* and *Astrid Willumsen* continue to bring culture to the foreground by discussing the learning outcomes of student involvement in intercultural projects. All three chapters present projects or courses that are highly collaborative in the sense of students collaborating with teachers but also students collaborating with students, and teachers with teachers. In his chapter *Luc Nijs* discusses embodiment, expressive movement and technology as a basis for music performance education. *Margarita Lorenzo de Reizábal* and *Manuel Benito Gómez* present a study on the use of hetero-observation, debate, and peer's feedback as part of orchestral conducting classes. *Gjertrud Pederson* and *Unni Løvlid* present and discuss how they set up an interactive music history module as a combination of lectures, group work and performing components. Finally, *Inge Pasmans* and *Ties van de Werff* describe a course that is open and free from formal assessment where students are encouraged to take ownership of their own learning process and to develop different kinds of skills by which they become more reflective about their own role as musicians.

Special thanks go to Ellen Mikalsen Stabell, who has coordinated the work of the editorial team with great care and patience, and to the members of the AEC & CEMPE Learning & Teaching Working Group, Anna Maria Bordin, Lars Brinck, Susanne van Els, Karine Hahn and Siri Storheim. Thank you for backing the process so constructively. We

also owe thanks to all the authors for their committed contributions, to the reviewers for thorough reading, and to the European Commission, NOKUT and the Norwegian Academy of Music. Without the generous financial support from these institutions, we could not have published the anthology.

Let us finally just clarify some abbreviations and connections before leaving you to the main parts of the book. The AEC is the leading voice for music higher education at a European level with almost 300 member institutions that are active in the field<sup>2</sup>. CEMPE is the Centre for Excellence in Music Performance Education at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo<sup>3</sup>. Together, the AEC and CEMPE established the Platform for Learning and Teaching in Music Performance Education (LATIMPE) as a long-term project under the AEC umbrella. In the period 2017 to 2021, however, the platform idea has been merged with the EU-funded AEC Strengthening Music in Society project (SMS), where one vital part is precisely discussing and developing learning and teaching practices and models in music higher education in Europe.

Jon Helge Sætre

Stefan Gies

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Chief Executive, AEC

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2 <https://www.aec-music.eu>

3 <https://nmh.no/en/research/cempe>

# Contributors

## *Editors*

**Stefan Gies** is the Chief Executive of the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC), a position he has had since 2015. He looks back on a wide range of professional experience as a performing musician, music teacher and researcher and on an academic career spanning more than 30 years as a scholar, professor of music education and principal at German Higher Music Education institutions.

**Jon Helge Sætre** is Associate Professor of Music Education (PhD) and Director of the Centre for Excellence in Music Performance Education at the Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo. Author and editor of several scholarly articles and books on music education topics, published nationally and internationally. Sætre's research interests are music education in schools, creative music making, assessment in music education, and higher music education studies. Sætre's teaching experience includes teaching music in compulsory schooling, in general teacher education and in higher music education. Sætre is the chair of the AEC/CEMPE Learning and Teaching Working Group.

## *Authors*

**Jacob Anderskov** is professor WSA at Rhythmic Music Conservatory in Copenhagen, Denmark, where he is responsible for the subject *Kunstnerisk Udviklingsarbejde* (artistic development work), the students' main subject across specialisations and educations. Anderskov has lead artistic research projects focusing on mappings of material organisation tendencies in improvisation (*Habitable Exomusics*), bridging gaps between different music cultures (*Action Reaction*), and mental representation theories as a creative perspective (*Sonic Complexion*). In 2018 he was a nominee for the Nordic Council Music Prize.

**Anna Maria Bordin** is Professor of piano and head of the Department of Research of the Conservatory Paganini of Genoa. She graduated from the "Musik-Akademie" of Basel and has a long career with an intense concert activity. Bordin is author of two books and numerous international articles. She has collaborated with the University of Pavia and planned and conducted a ten years experimentation on the piano training

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**Lars Brinck** is Associate Professor, PhD and Head of Research and Development at Rhythmic Music Conservatory in Copenhagen, Denmark. His research interests include learning as a relational phenomenon, spontaneous musical communication and jamming as an analytical concept for cooperative creativity. As a performing pianist and composer Brinck specialises in the jazz-rock and pop genres with preferences towards funk jamming. Brinck is an experienced community choir leader and arranger.

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**Morten Carlsen** is Professor of viola at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, Norway. Next to a career as performer and pedagogue involving visits at leading European institutions, he has developed an interest in the more philosophic aspects of teaching and performing. He has lectured and written articles on subjects such as instrumental practice, performer history and talent education and published advanced exercises for violin/viola. In 2017, Universitetsforlaget in Oslo published *Å tolke musikk [interpreting music]*, an introduction to musical hermeneutics written together with philosopher Henrik Holm.

**Eva Georgii-Hemming** (PhD) is Professor in musicology and head of the School of Music, Theatre and Art, Örebro University, Sweden. She is principal investigator of the research project Discourses of Academization and the Music Profession in Higher Music Education (DAPHME), funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (2016–2019), the main editor to the anthology *Professional Knowledge in Music Teacher Education* (2013) and has contributed to international research journals, such as *British Journal of Music Education*, *Research Studies in Music Education*, *Music Education Research*, and *Nordic Research in Music Education*.

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**Silke Kruse-Weber** is Professor for instrumental and vocal pedagogy at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, Austria. Since 2013, she has chaired the Curriculum Commission for Instrumental Music Pedagogy in the genres of classical, jazz, and folk music. She is the Head of Department for Music Education. Silke Kruse-Weber's research focuses on collaborative reflective practice in various projects bridging theory and practice, teachers' professional development, Meet4Music which is a community music project, students' instrumental practice through reflective writing and error-management for musicians. Other research topics include the history of piano pedagogy. In all these fields, she has published monographs, chapters, and papers in numerous journals and edited books.

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music performance programmes. Nadia is engaged in issues surrounding education more broadly and has previously been a board member of the Swedish National Union of Students and the Swedish Council for Higher Education.

**Monika Nerland** is Professor in the Department of Education, University of Oslo. Her educational background is from music education, and her doctoral thesis (2003) was a study of one-to-one teaching in the music academy. She has conducted research on teaching, learning and knowledge development in different professions and expert communities, in higher education and in work settings. She was recently responsible for the part of the larger project 'Quality of Norwegian Higher Education' that investigated quality aspects of educational practices, focusing on course environments that employed student-centered approaches.

**Luc Nijs** is postdoctoral researcher at IPEM (Ghent University) and PhD Student in the Arts at the Royal Conservatoire Antwerp. He holds a PhD in Systematic Musicology, MA degrees in Music Performance and Philosophy, and a Teacher Certificate (clarinet, sax, ensemble). His research integrates theory development, empirical studies and practice, focusing on the musician-instrument relationship, on the role of body movement in instrumental music learning and on the role of technology in provoking an embodied approach to instrumental music education.

**Inge Pasmans** is a main subject lecturer in Music Theory at Conservatorium Maastricht, as well as a decorated pianist and a teacher of General Theory Subjects in the Music in Education department and the Classical Music department. She is currently project leader of Music in the Making, an innovative and creative project in the Classical Music department. In 2015-2016 and 2017-2018, Inge participated in research projects, led by the Research Centre for Arts, Autonomy and the Public Sphere, on creative processes.

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**Timea Sari** works as University Assistant in the Department of Music Education at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz. She studied piano pedagogy and performance at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich. In 2009, she accepted an invitation from the Sultan Qaboos University (Sultanate of Oman) to participate in the creation of the Department of Music & Musicology, where she served as head of the piano section. She holds an MA Music Psychology in Education from the University of Sheffield.

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**Vegar Richter Storsve** is an Associate Professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music, and teaches music didactics. He is the Program Director for the Bachelor Programme in Music Education. Storsve has considerable experience from different types of schools in Norway. Furthermore, he has led a number of local, national and international projects in the field of music education and community music. Among other things, he is the initiator of a music project in Lebanon. Storsve's performing activity is with guitars in jazz-pop-rock and folk music genres. He is co-editor of the anthology *Løft blikket – gjør en forskjell* which documents important research results from the

*Lebanon Project*. The anthology was published at the Norwegian Academy of Music in 2013, and an English translation of it will come in 2019/2020.

**Ties van de Werff** (PhD) works as postdoctoral researcher at Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences (Maastricht University), and as a senior researcher at the Research Centre for Arts, Autonomy and the Public Sphere (Zuyd University of Applied Sciences). Ties has a background in practical philosophy, Science & Technology Studies, and social design. Currently, he explores innovative participatory practices in contemporary symphonic music orchestras at the Maastricht Center for Innovation of Classical Music (MCICM).

**Susanne van Els** is one of the leading musicians of her generation. She was known for undertaking adventurous collaborations with the other arts - significant composers like Louis Andriessen wrote new viola works for Susanne. After a truly satisfying international career as a soloist and a chamber musician, she started to work in higher education. Susanne is a member of the Learning & Teaching working group.

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# **Part one**

## **Higher music education institutions and students**



## The music performance student as researching artist? Perspectives on student-centredness in higher music education

*Jon Helge Sætre, Stefan Gies, Anna Maria Bordin, Lars Brinck, Karine Hahn, Siri Storheim, Susanne van Els & Ellen Mikalsen Stabell. Members of Working Group 5 Learning & Teaching in the EU funded AEC project Strengthening Music in Society.*

### **Abstract**

*In this chapter, we present a status after the AEC Learning and Teaching Working Group's first year of activities. Since February 2018, the AEC Working Group has been examining, investigating and discussing issues of learning and teaching in music performance education under the lead of LATIMPE, the Platform for Learning and Teaching in Music Performance Education ([www.latimpe.eu](http://www.latimpe.eu)), which is jointly operated by AEC and CEMPE. This has been done through a dialectical researching process going back and forth between practice and analysis, always striving to keep the balance between a know-how gained through empirical experience and a knowledge based on research findings in order to ensure a structured approach to how to deal with the topic in a scholarly appropriate way. The starting point of investigation were practices that were familiar to members of the group. Key learning perspectives that have arisen from this analysis are student ownership, students' responsibility and freedom, a safe environment, opportunities to experiment, projects that evoke the 'learning muscle' of students and projects that build on students' strengths. In the chapter, we discuss some basic questions, such as: What should students learn? Who and what decides on what they should learn? How to encourage students to take ownership of their learning agenda? To what extent and how can all this be reflected in the curriculum? How can an institution ensure the viability of individual and diverse ways of learning? We end with an argument in favour of seeing the student as a researching artist, as this conceptualise an active, artistic student with professional agency, who is curious, and takes responsibility for his or her learning process. LATIMPE is pursuing this process of collecting practices.*

## Introduction

This chapter presents a status update after the first year of the discussions, initiatives and outcomes of the AEC Learning and Teaching Working Group, since February 2018 coordinating LATIMPE, the AEC & CEMPE *Platform for Learning and Teaching in Music Performance Education* ([www.latimpe.eu](http://www.latimpe.eu)). The Learning and Teaching Working Group (WG) consists of eight members (the authors of this chapter) from six countries, including a student member and a designated advisory coordinator. The aim of this chapter is to present the ways in which the WG has been working so far, to present central questions and perspectives that have emanated from this work, and to invite the field of higher music education to join the discussion on student-centred learning and teaching in music performance education.

The goal of LATIMPE is to strengthen opportunities for higher music education institutions to explore and discuss learning and teaching paradigms, ideas and models that could meet the demands of the 21st century through active collaboration between students, teachers and researchers in all relevant fields of higher music education ([www.aec-music.eu](http://www.aec-music.eu)). Moreover, LATIMPE is committed to following a student-centred approach to learning and teaching. The platform organises events and disseminates material online, and it aims to ([www.aec-music.eu](http://www.aec-music.eu)):

- facilitate institutional networks in the global field of music performance education
- gather information on and investigate learning and teaching practices in music performance education
- share knowledge through workshops, conferences, presentations, publications and online media
- collaborate with existing projects on learning and teaching carried out by AEC member institutions
- stimulate the development of new projects on learning and teaching in music performance education

## Background

Learning and teaching music performance in higher music education is a complex and broad issue and involves a number of context-specific parameters and factors (see Jørgensen 2009 for an overview into research on higher music education). Firstly, higher music performance education takes place in different types of institutions,

from independent music institutions to departments and schools embedded in large universities. Secondly, the knowledge bases for educational practices of learning and teaching range from practice-based to research-intensive forms of knowledge (see for example Godlovitch (1998) about musical performance and Bernstein (1999) about the difference between practical and scholarly knowledge). Thirdly, in a European context and beyond there probably exist a number of 'schools' of music performance learning and teaching, such as the 'Russian school' described by Isabelle Wagner, which build on culturally situated traditions, musical practices and assumptions about learning and teaching and the relationship between teachers and students (Wagner, 2015). There is also reason to believe that practices of music performance learning and teaching differ considerably within the confines of individual institutions (Nerland, 2004). Moreover, the issue of learning and teaching involves a number of participants and viewpoints, e.g. students, teachers, leaders, stakeholders such as orchestras, festivals, educational institutions and organisations as well as researchers both external and internal to higher music education.

Learning and teaching music performance is also related to the broader fields (and theories) of learning, pedagogy and philosophy of education and music education. As in most educational practices, there are a number of educational factors and questions impacting the selection of content, methods of teaching, ways of learning, assessment forms and procedures, student and teacher background, and the learning environment (frameworks, time and resources) of and around the learning and teaching practice (Dartsch, 2014).

## **Working Group approaches and activities**

### Taking the students' perspective

The WG has had to find a way to start exploring this complex network of components in order to become a working group with a certain direction (without losing its openness) and not 'just' a facilitator and organiser of events. The entry point turned out to be the concept of student-centred approaches to learning and teaching (see Nerland in chapter 3 in this publication for a general discussion of this concept). The concepts of student-centred, student-oriented, learner-oriented and student-active approaches to learning are all somehow related to the general shift of focus in educational practice and theory from teaching to learning and the shift from teacher-oriented

to student-oriented education (see Mascolo, 2009; Hoidn, 2014). Furthermore, the concepts seem to share beliefs with socio-cultural (and socio-cognitive) theories of learning (Woolfolk, 2015) and with the tradition of progressive education.

To nourish the discussions on these topics, the WG group decided to spend its first year searching for interesting student-centred learning and teaching practices in higher music education and initiating explorative analyses of these practices from a learning perspective. Following on from this, the WG has discussed different ways of conceptualising the future music performance student from a student-centred perspective. The WG has in other words initiated investigations of several overarching questions: What do we understand by student-centred? What are key characteristics of current student-centred practices in higher music education? What do the students in student-centred practices do?

### Fieldwork: Interesting practices

During its first year the WG has explored issues of learning and teaching in music performance education through a dialectical research process going back and forth between practice and analysis, in effect following an approach resembling anthropological fieldwork with descriptions, interviews and ongoing analyses and discussion. Social anthropologists such as American professor emerita Jean Lave (2011) suggests anthropological fieldwork to be improvisational in character, and we have been inspired by this approach. WG members have searched for, collected information about (from staff and students), analysed and discussed interesting practices with the aim of identifying and understanding key learning characteristics of the practices and searching for conceptualisations of the active, creative, reflective and communicating music performance student.

The WG has collectively tried to analyse the practices, all of which have been practices familiar to the WG members, from a single case and cross-case perspective (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In other words, we have discussed both the central characteristics of each case and what they have in common. The discussions in the WG have led to further questions regarding the examples presented, influencing the written accounts presented on the LATIMPE webpage. This dialectical research process has resulted in a deeper understanding of the practices at hand and, equally important, of additional questions and perspectives related to student-centred learning and teaching.

## The WG's interesting practices

Among the practices that have been analysed, the first is *The Galata Electroacoustic Orchestra* (GEO), a ten-day intensive course included in an Erasmus Lifelong Learning Programme, which included the music academies in Genova (coordinator), Istanbul, Barcelona and Cagliari. The project's general objectives were to found an orchestra devoted to live collective composition, merging the Western Classical tradition of score-based music with improvisation techniques, in particular those of Ottoman Turkish *makam* music and Anatolian folk music. Improvisation was chosen as a paradigm for the GEO as it is the most widely practised among all musical activities, and it is present in every kind of music, in all cultures and countries (see Bordin, in this publication).

A second practice is the *Artistic Research Critique Classes* (the KUA class) at the Rhythmic Conservatoire in Copenhagen (<https://latimpe.eu/the-kua-class/>), in which curricular aims centre around developing the students' ability to initiate, develop, and perform artistic ideas and productions, contextualising their work and critically discussing and reflecting on their artistic work processes and products. The group (often referred to as the 'critique class') holds six to eight students meeting weekly for three hours with their KUA-teacher or tutor, as some students title the professor. The typical KUA class activity is a vibrant mixture of project presentations, collective critique, responses, reflections and contextualisation.

A third practice is the student-led jazz festival *Serendip* at the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH), which is organised by bachelor jazz students in their second year. The festival is part of the mandatory subject *EXMUS*. The subject was created in 2013 to bring together curriculum topics related to music history, music philosophy, interpretation and business and entrepreneurship. For the jazz students, this subject is divided into two modules in their second year: jazz history and festival/concert production.

A fourth practice is the *Lied project* at Conservatorium Maastricht (<https://latimpe.eu/the-lied-project/>), an elective module that lasted six weeks and involved four groups of 14 students in total. The project was interdisciplinary and included a music theory teacher, a choral conductor, an organist and a composer from the conservatoire as well as a performance teacher from the Theatre Academy. During the process the students first studied the lieder of Schumann and Schubert and then moved on to composing their own lieder, using a German text and ten compositions by Kurtág as musical building blocks.

A fifth practice is the Hammerfest project at the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) (<https://latimpe.eu/the-hammerfest-project/>). This is an elective collaborative project embedded in the mandatory subject *Music in Perspective* within the Master in Music Performance at the NMH. For one week in January, fifteen to twenty master students visit Hammerfest, a small city in the northernmost part of Norway. The only information they get before they leave Oslo is to bring along a varied repertoire, as they will play quite a few performances. In Hammerfest they plan and perform a range of concerts in very different venues. The students do school concerts, performances in public places such as the shopping centre and the library, in private homes as well as concerts that are more traditional, and they meet every day to discuss and reflect.

## Student-centred practices: A preliminary analysis

### Key learning perspectives

All cases are different in a number of ways, for example regarding organisation, scope, participants, relation to curriculum, content, aims and so on. However, the practices seem to share a number of perspectives and characteristics when it comes to learning.

Many of the common characteristics concern the role and position of the music performance student. One is the sense of *student ownership* (of content, learning and development) in some of the practices. This is perhaps at its most obvious in the student-led festival Serendip, where students are in control of the entire artistic and managerial process and in which they possess all roles. On the Lied project there is a different kind of ownership, where students through active, compositional work enter the terrain of the Lied with a new kind of ownership which also feeds back to the performance of the masterpieces of for example Schumann and Schubert. Accordingly, the practices seem to give the students a great deal of *responsibility and freedom*. The students involved in the Hammerfest project state that the freedom (combined with responsibility) is simultaneously a great relief, a challenge and a somewhat new experience compared to regular on-campus studies (Brøske & Sætre, 2017). They are also encouraged to take risks but within a *safe environment* created by student comradeship and continuous reflective sessions. A common feature of all of the practices is the *opportunity to experiment*. On the GEO project the students are given the opportunity to experiment musically through cross-genre improvisation in an open artistic practice. On the Lied project the students experiment with a traditional



cornerstone of the classical, romantic repertoire, and in the other practices students experiment with artistic project development (the KUA class), festival programming (Serendip) and with music performance venues and audiences (Hammerfest). As a result, the practices seem to evoke the '*learning muscle*' of the students, and some of the practices seem to *build on the strengths of the students* (e.g. the Serendip project in the sense of designating students to roles that fit the particular interest and competence of the students).

A second set of characteristics concerns the ways in which students work and study. In all of the practices students learn and collaborate in a *community of practice* (see Lave & Wenger, 1991). All cases are highly collaborative, and what unites the participants is in many cases actual work. Students and staff are also collaborating in a number of ways other than the typical one-to-one or lecturer-listener formats. Moreover, some practices are *interdisciplinary*. The KUA class is perhaps the best example, in which students reflect on, analyse and develop projects using tools and perspectives from different forms of art, theory, philosophy and more. Many of the practices also try out a *holistic approach* to learning and an *authentic context* (organising a festival or a concert and developing artistic projects) and work towards *tangible outcomes*. In this sense the practices also may share a common approach to assessment, one that is holistic, focusing on tangible outcomes, and reflective, formative and qualitative rather than strictly criterion-based, graded and summative. Lastly, all the practices seem to depend on teachers who are willing to be *facilitators and supervisors*, rather than teachers having and giving the right answers.

In sum, the cases are similar and different in a number of interesting ways, and they represent a fruitful point of departure for discussion and further exploration of learning and teaching in music performance education. The number of practices is still quite limited, and there are fields of interest that are not yet included, for example technology and digital learning.

## Curricular models

Several basic questions emanate from the analysis above, including:

- What should the students learn?
- How can we conceptualise the role of the active, responsible music performance student?

- Which curricular consequences result from different conceptualisations, or what questions around the curriculum do student-centred approaches raise?
- What are consequently promising ways of learning, and which learning environments, teaching methods and approaches stimulate these ways of learning?

The first question concerns the outcomes of music performance education, and the relationship and even power relation between student learning and curriculum. Should all students learn the same? Is there something students need to learn that they will learn by themselves? Where do students learn? Is there a mutual literacy, or a shared but not exhaustive content, relevant for all students? To paraphrase curriculum theorist Brian Holmes (1981), are curricula designed in order to provide knowledge, skills and experiences that are essential in music (*essentialism*) which cover the whole range of musical subjects (*encyclopaedism*) or which cover what must be studied in order to cope with everyday musicianship (*pragmatism*)?

There is reason to believe that encyclopaedism is a common rationale for curriculum structure in higher music education, although there is little research on this issue, according to Jørgensen (2009, pp. 46-47). The encyclopaedic music curriculum would consist of a number of subjects (disciplines) focusing on teaching students specialised and specific knowledge and skills (e.g. principal and second instrument, chamber music, orchestra, music history, music theory, harmony, ear training, arranging, composing, improvisation, entrepreneurship and so on). There is also reason to believe that the encyclopaedic rationale is both subject and teacher-centred and that the power relation between teachers and students is in favour of the teacher. Possible challenges and problems in such a curricular model is that programmes may become fragmented and overcrowded (which was found to be the case in Norwegian music teacher education, according to Sætre, 2014).

A project-based or problem-based curriculum rationale could serve as a contrast to encyclopaedism (Aditomo, Goodyear, Bliuc & Ellis, 2013; Margetson, 1993). Instead of starting from a pre-described list of mandatory disciplines, a problem-based curriculum would centre on a selection of projects and questions that give the students a *need* for specific knowledge and skills and open up a broader student-led space of inquiry. The project-based rationale is often described as student-centred, as opposed to subject-centred. Potential challenges and problems with such models are that they risk being coincidental, both concerning learning outcomes and study structure and progression. There is also a risk of handing over too much responsibility to the students at the expense of guided instruction (Kirschner, Sweller & Clark, 2006).

## The music performance student as a researching artist?

There are a number of conceptualisations of the music performance student in the field of higher music education, all of which shed light on how to understand the role of the music performance student and the future musician. For example, Susanne van Els (chapter 6) argues the importance of giving students the opportunity to be a *designer of learning* and an *artistic explorer*. Dawn Bennett (2008) uses the notions of the *portfolio musician* and the *protean musician* to describe what musicians face in the modern workplace, while others argue the importance of understanding musicians as *musical entrepreneurs*.

The role of the student is not necessarily entirely clear in the encyclopaedic or in the project-based model of curriculum thinking. During the discussions of the interesting practices, the WG started considering an alternative conceptualisation of the music performance student: the music performance student as a researching artist, which means a student able to ask questions and autonomously use his or her knowledge and skill to seek answers. Understanding music performance students as researching artists is fruitful in a number of ways, not the least since it at the same time captures the *active* student working in and with *the arts* in an *inquiry-based* manner.

The notion of the researching artist relates to the concept of artistic research, which is itself a broad and ambiguous concept. We use the concept of the 'researching artist' to underscore that the student is seen primarily as an artist and not primarily as a researcher. We also use it to emphasise that what we picture is not increased 'academization' in higher music education programmes. We believe the benefits of the concept of the 'researching artist' is that it combines four important elements. 1) The active role of students in their everyday study practice. 2) The idea of a researching attitude in, and curiosity-led forms of, student work. 3) The necessity to develop in harmonious ways creativity and research abilities as two faces of the same artistic identity. 4) The idea of research as something that can be deeply rooted in artistic work and which can have artistic aims.

The fourth point is central in the many debates on what artistic research is 'really about'. In a discussion on these topics Borgdorff argues that artistic research could be defined as art-based and artist-based research and development, as research *in the arts* (Borgdorff, 2006). The work of the artistic researcher thus focuses on artistic processes, products and contexts and aims towards artistic results but includes reflection and contextualisation.

Crispin (2015) discusses the relationships between artistic practice and artistic research and argues that artistic research requires a 'rigorous methodological framework' (p. 58). If so, there is an additional fruitfulness of discussing the differences between a researching artist and an artistic researcher, and to us that is another reason why we prefer the former. The main point, we think, is to discuss the mutual synergies between a researching attitude in the arts and learning to become an artist in musical practices, which is also a main point in Crispin's reflections on artistic research:

The core premise of Artistic Research is that there is a special mode of functioning as an artist that goes beyond the natural and intuitive enquiring of the artistic mind and encompasses something of the more systematic methods and explicitly articulated objectives of research. [...] In Artistic Research, the unique attributes of the artist-researcher, especially as they are articulated within their artistic practice, are not to be excluded from the research process but, on the contrary, form a vital touchstone for testing and evaluating the evidence generated by that process (Crispin, 2015, pp. 56–57)

An important benefit of artistic research, according to Crispin, is that artistic research has 'the potential to resituate the practice of performance within a *continuous, developmental trajectory*, as opposed to its emerging quasi-numinously at the endpoint of the process (Crispin, 2015, p. 57, italics added). The developmental trajectory is a particularly interesting point, since it focuses on the temporal aspects of musical practices, of becoming an artist, just as much as it concerns the process of becoming an artistic researcher.

The conceptualisation of the music performance student as a researching artist captures, in our view, the active, artistic student with artistic and professional agency, which is in the absolute centre of her learning process. The conceptualisation is therefore interesting from the viewpoint of student-centred approaches to learning. It is more in line with a holistic curricular logic than a strictly encyclopaedic logic but does not rely on project-based curricula. The main reason for this is that the conceptualisation changes the relationship of power between student work and curriculum design. It puts the music student's learning process and working methods at the centre instead of the 'never-ending' discussion on what knowledge and skills music students should develop. It underlines the active, crafts-based, explorative, curious, innovative, reflective, methodical, improvisational, questioning, knowledge-seeking, powerful role of the student. Besides, it validates the strong wish and will of students to become musicians, to develop their skills while feeding their own artistic drive. A learning

environment where young professionals make their artistic dreams come true in a connected and informed way can invite students to act as designers of learning and thus serve as a laboratory for art and the profession. Lastly, the concept of the researching artist has additional metaphorical impact in the sense of giving hints as to how to approach music and performance through a number of artistic research procedures, including:

- acquiring musical knowledge and skills
- exploring art through performance
- composing
- improvising
- using digital technology
- contextualising music in wider fields of theory
- doing field work in the profession
- experimenting and testing
- looking for new ways of working and understanding in and with the arts

## Further work

In this chapter the WG has given an account of some of the central challenges, questions, analyses and discussions that have taken place in the WG's first year. The analyses of interesting practices have proven fruitful in the sense of suggesting ways of understanding key characteristics of student-centred practices, in the sense of identifying tensions between different curricular rationales, and in the sense of identifying conceptualisations of the music performance student that reshape the relationship between students, curricula and ways of learning in higher music education. The analyses and discussions have also proven useful in identifying additional questions and perspectives that can form the basis for further work in the WG. A central element of the methodology of the WG is to look for new interesting practices and perspectives that inform and challenge the discussions in the WG. The WG therefore invites the field of higher music education to share their interesting practices, that is, interesting from a learning perspective (through [www.latimpe.eu](http://www.latimpe.eu)) and to think along with the WG.

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# How music performance education became academic: On the history of music higher education in Europe

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## Abstract

*This text aims to answer the question of the academic self-image of music from an historical perspective. In the first section, a certain concept of teaching the art of music is shown as having emerged from the musician's particular historical social situation and a tradition of transferring knowledge which may even today be closer to craftsmanship than to scientific learning. In the second section, light is shed on the history of the institutions where professional musicians are educated. The author reveals how historically grown form of learning and teaching music represent, up until the present day, a basic contradiction to the characteristics and requirements of academic teaching. The third section describes the process of academisation as it took place in Europe from the mid-20th century onwards and questions the reasons that triggered this process but also the motives which made it desirable for those affected to 'go academic'. As part of a final outlook, some topics are listed which, in the author's view, might pose challenges to the music higher education sector in the coming years as well as issues which seem worthy of further research.*

## Introduction

The term academy is derived from the name of a place outside the walls of Athens where Plato established his first school of philosophy, the so-called Platonic Academy (Schmitz, 1867, p. 5). Although the understanding of the term has repeatedly been subject to change since then, from the eighteenth century onwards it has mainly served to designate institutions dedicated to the promotion of scientific and artistic

studies. However, academia or academy was never and is still not a legally protected term in most countries, which might have affected its undeniable semantic volatility. Nonetheless, it can be stated that the term 'academic' as an attributive adjective is underpinned by an identical understanding in almost all European languages. This applies in particular when the term is used in the context of higher education, where it has a formal, legal meaning by distinguishing academic from non-academic studies.

By definition, an academic degree is awarded upon completion of tertiary education. Studies that lead to the acquisition of such a degree are considered academic studies. On the other hand, the attribute 'academic' can also bear an epistemological, i.e. non-formal, meaning when used to characterise a particular theory-practice ratio. An educational institution referred to as academic in this non-formal sense is as a rule aiming at generating knowledge-based and research-based competences and thus sets itself apart from a vocational school, which is considered to teach hands-on, applied skills, such as those used to carry out a craft or to provide services.

This distinction shows quite clearly that it is not always possible to assign a specific case to one category or the other without contradiction. In addition, the distinction between an academic and a non-academic (vocational) education in the epistemological sense describes an approximate theory-practice ratio, albeit not in total absence of the respective other element. No vocational education is completely theory-free. Conversely, the description of education as 'academic' does not imply rejecting references to professional practice.

Even if the ideal of 'pure' academic study still prevails in individual subjects such as philosophy or basic scientific research, the close intertwining of academic teaching and the teaching of practical skills has long been evident in many other disciplines. This is particularly true for medicine, but also for the arts. In this respect, one of the key differences between medicine and the arts is that the demand to be recognised as being academic arose in medicine much earlier than in the arts, in particular in music.

Regardless of whether or not music performance education might be seen as an academic endeavour in the above-mentioned sense, learning and teaching music performance at music Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) seems to have some unique features that differ from those prevailing in other disciplines. From a purely formal point of view, it is particularly noticeable that the faculty-student ratio is significantly higher than in other disciplines and even considerably higher than in other art disciplines. It is not uncommon for a music performance curriculum to provide one and a half to two

hours of individual lessons with a distinguished professor per week which, of course, also impacts how teachers and students communicate and interact with each other.

There is no empirical data available to provide evidence that a number of specific characteristics of one-to-one tuition – listed below as hypotheses and assumptions that are part of a shared understanding within the community – do in fact correspond to the truth. However, these hypotheses will be backed up later in this text with arguments and information that at least support and confirm their plausibility.

- Teacher and student usually share a close relationship with each other which quite often goes beyond the boundaries of the purely professional;
- The long-standing tradition of the master-apprenticeship model is still seen by many in the field as an exemplary learning-and-teaching setting;
- The prevalence of an understanding of teaching as guided participation through which, as Monika Nerland points out, ‘students explore the musical works and practices of their area of expertise and generate visible and hearable ‘products’ in the form of performances’ (Nerland, 2019, p. 58)
- The self-image of many teachers who understand artistic practice and artistic teaching to be intuitive and not necessarily based on reflected action decisions.

The question of whether art, with all its characteristics, can be seen as an academic discipline continues to be the subject of controversy, at least in Europe. The Bologna agreement<sup>1</sup> and the process of integrating artistic studies into higher education institutions, which had advanced substantially by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, seem at first sight to provide evidence of this, not least because the Bologna Process is based on an understanding of the term ‘academic’ that is closely linked to the idea of the purpose-free nature of a research activity. But unlike universities, where ‘academic’ is often understood to be synonymous with ‘quality’, the term’s meaning might be the opposite at art HEIs. In this context, at least in colloquial use, ‘academic’ rather describes the lack or neglect of artistic quality in an artwork or an activity of teaching the arts, and an ‘unacademic’ attitude stands as a guarantor for the preservation of the freedom of art.

Debates on whether or not the arts could be seen as academic disciplines are also related to the question of where art can be located in the area of tension between

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1 This refers to the legal obligations which have been adopted by many countries in the European Higher Education Area since the signing of the Bologna Agreement in 1999; the Bologna Declaration stipulates that artistic performance study programmes in tertiary education have to be fully academised.

science and craft. Should teaching the arts be based on the principle of transferring practical knowledge, or should it focus on reflected knowledge which is possibly based on research findings? Does art actually need to be based on a kind of reflection which goes beyond pure intuition? Does *teaching the arts* need to be reflected? These questions arise in all the art disciplines, but they have a special impact if it is about teaching an instrumentalist, a singer or a conductor because their artistic activity as performers is usually re-creative, not creative, as is the case with a composer or a visual artist, for example.

This text aims to answer the question of the academic self-image of music from an historical perspective. In the first section, it will be shown how a certain concept of teaching music performance has emerged from the musician's particular historical social situation, which has developed from an ethically motivated professional self-understanding and a handed down practice of transferring knowledge in the area of music which may to this day be closer to craftsmanship than to scientific learning.

In the second section, light will be shed on the history of the institutions where professional musicians are educated. A look into history seems to be particularly revealing, as historically developed elements have, up until the present day, been in conflict with some basic characteristics and requirements of 'academising' higher education in music.

The third and concluding section describes the process of academisation as it happened in Europe and then seeks to sum up and consolidate the results from the first two sections to give an outlook on the challenges both music HEIs and research might face in the future.

## **Roots and traditions of handing down musical knowledge**

### Craft apprenticeship

The tradition of transferring musical knowledge, in particular handing down the skills to perform music, through a *Master* who, with his or her personality, acts as a role model for the exemplariness of a musical performance dates back at least to antiquity. The typology of such a master-pupil relationship has been described throughout all cultures and times (Calvert, 2014; Coy, 1989; Gaunt, 2009; Lave, 2011). Part of the

characteristic features of the one-to-one master-apprenticeship relationship is a holistic pedagogical approach as well as embodied or tacit learning through practice. Lave and Wenger also emphasise the fact that the apprentice usually learns a great deal, although few tangible teaching activities appear to emanate from the Master's actions (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 92).

As a principle and method for transmitting knowledge and experience, the master-apprentice relationship still dominates in areas whose body of knowledge is more experience-based than evidence-based. In other words, in those areas in which experience in the development of professional know-how is more important than the findings of scientific research. This applies to the area of religious and spiritual practice as well as to crafts and art.

Although the impact of the master-apprentice relationship has diminished since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to the progress of scientific knowledge, in particular in areas of knowledge which provide verifiable and objective outcomes, the principle of a craft apprenticeship remains of considerable importance not only in the domains of craftsmanship and art (Coy, 1989, p. 2). Michael Coy notes that methods of craft apprenticeship are particularly relied on when a special know-how needs to be taught which 'contains some element that cannot be communicated, but can only be experienced' (Coy, 1989, p. 2). This does not only apply to craftsmanship in the conventional sense, but also to the education of lawyers, doctors or business people, for example. As a side note, Coy mentions that this might also be a matter of preserving the exclusivity of knowledge, of securing power by deliberately limiting the number of knowledgeable and 'initiated' ones.

A critical examination of the implications of the master-apprentice relationship takes place predominantly in the field of music education research. Thus, several authors point out that the principle of the craft apprenticeship is less innovation-friendly with respect to the learning and teaching methods used because the masters tend to behave in the same way towards their apprentices as their masters behaved towards them in the past. The reflection on one's role as a teacher does not belong to the core repertoire of the master's doctrine (Calvert, 2014, p. 61 and 199; Nerland & Hanken, 2004). Randall Allsup explores the question of what student-centred, open and non-hierarchical teaching-learning settings might look like in instrumental lessons which could replace the traditional craft apprenticeship (see Allsup, 2016).

## Craft and art – Richard Sennett's 'The Craftsman'

In his essay entitled 'The Craftsman' dating from 2008 (Sennett, 2008), the American philosopher and sociologist Richard Sennett describes the tension between a conventional understanding of science and the principle of knowledge acquisition through *Erfahrung*<sup>2</sup>. Science, according to Sennett, cannot replace the formation of knowledge through practice-based experience as an epistemological principle, but at best supplement it. This obviously does not apply *only* to art, but it is *especially true* of art.

Based on the maxim 'letting the hand lead the brain, rather than letting the brain rule the hand', he introduces the concept of 'craft thinking' into the debate. Thus, referring to game theories, such as those of Friedrich Schiller, Johann Huizinga and Erik Eriksson (Sennett, 2008, pp. 270-271) as well as to the ideas of the so-called 'neo-pragmatists' (to which he himself subscribes)<sup>3</sup>, he develops the thesis of the (partial) superiority of craft thinking over scientific thinking. According to Sennett, the hand is in many cases more likely to be able to inform the brain than vice versa. Sennett interprets this as a consequence of the 'evolutionary dialogue between the hand and the brain' (Sennett, 2008, p. 151). Nevertheless, the use of exploratory methods and innovative techniques to solve problems has never solely been the domain of science and research but has always been an implicit part of the craftsman's professional ethics.

Sennett's hypothesis is supported by studies on cognitive psychology (Ignatow, 2007; Yanchar, Spackman & Faulconer, 2013). It is enlightening to note that Sennett, in order to clarify these contexts and interrelations, puts the activities of a performing musician (together with those of a glass-blower) at the centre of his reflections. According to Sennett, the learning processes taking place when a string player is practising his or her instrument are essentially controlled by the interplay between the haptic and the hand, while the rationally analysing brain only plays a marginal role in this process at best.

The musician touches the string in different ways, hears a variety of effects, then searches for the means to repeat and reproduce the tone he or she wants. ... Instead of the fingertip acting as a mere servant, this kind of touching moves backward from sensation to procedure (Sennett, 2008, p. 157).

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<sup>2</sup> Sennett refers at this point explicitly to the German term because of its clear and univocal meaning as experience that can only be acquired through practice (Sennett, 2008, p. 287).

<sup>3</sup> (See Sennett, 2008, pp. 286–291). Above all, Richard Rorty (1931–2007) and Hans Joas (\*1948) are considered to be outstanding representatives of neo-pragmatism.

Sennett interprets the process of practising as a continuous repetition in which making mistakes is, so to speak, a necessary prerequisite for specifying the information stored in the brain. It is not the brain that controls the hand, but the other way round: 'Practicing becomes a narrative, rather than mere digital repetition' (Sennett, 2008, p. 160).

By defining the concept of 'craft' in an epistemological sense as a mode of knowledge acquisition, Sennett clearly expands the semantic meaning of the term as a contrast to our everyday understanding.

Craftsmanship names an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake. Craftsmanship cuts a far wider swathe than skilled manual labour: it serves the computer programmer, the doctor and the artist (Sennett, 2008, p. 9).

Thus, Sennett associates craftsmanship not only with the carpenter, bricklayer, glass-blower or potter but also with computer programmers, laboratory technicians, philosophers and surgeons. What distinguishes an artist from a craftsman in the sense described here is not just the specific nature of his activity, his thinking, or his professional self-understanding, but his particular role in society and his social status. For Sennett, the existence of the professional group, 'artists' as a distinction from 'craftsmen', is above all a sociological phenomenon. (Sennett, 2008, p. 73).

### The professional musician's role in society through changing times

The social history of the artistic profession provides many examples which support Sennett's view. In ancient Greece it was considered immoral for a member of the higher classes to play a musical instrument. Playing music was left to the slaves (Wiedemann, 1981, p. 123). In the Middle Ages the theoretical examination of music was considered as reflective or knowledge-based, but that view did not apply to the *performance* of music. The *septem artes liberales* ('The Seven Liberal Arts') include a number of fundamental disciplines to which the artist refers in his work – such as grammar, logic, geometry and the *theory* of music – but not the composing or performing of music (Ehrenforth, 2005, p. 176; Lindgren, 1992; Salmen, 1997, p. 33). Up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, groups of wind players were active in many European countries (called *town pipers* in England, *Stadt Pfeifer* in Germany and *pifari* in Italy), whose task it was to give signals and to provide musical accompaniment to urban festivities. These town

pipers were organised like craftsmen in guilds, following strict rules of professional practice and professional organisation. (Salmen, 1997; Suppan, n.d.)

From the late Middle Ages to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the production of works of art as well as the transfer of artistic knowledge and skills were embedded and organised in structures which correspond to those of a carpenter's or butcher's business. As a rule, there was a form of organised teaching whereby apprentices had to be at the service of the master and were at some point, depending on the progress of their learning, allowed to carry out minor tasks or assistant jobs for which they had to pay apprenticeship fees. However, even at that time it was a unique characteristic of the art apprentice compared to a 'normal' craft apprentice that it was more career-enhancing for a young painter to be able to say: 'I have been working for two years in the workshop of Master Cranach' than to show up with a master craftsman's certificate (Alpers, 1988; Gream, 2000; Hauser, 1953, pp. 331–338).

Conversely, in the Renaissance the idea of an ingenious master who was, as an individual, the bearer of such knowledge that enabled him or her to perform outstanding achievements in his or her profession was common not only in the realm of art but also in terms of craftsmanship (see Hauser, 1953, pp. 349–354). One needs only to think of the famous Cremonese violin makers. However, it is Immanuel Kant, and his particular definition of genius<sup>4</sup>, that lays the foundations for a new image of an artist gradually becoming established during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one of the main characteristics of which is the substantial enhancement of the respective artist's social recognition.

Kant's genius is not a scholar, but he or she has a form of implicit knowledge that is inextricably linked to the notion of an intuitively reflected artist. Thus, Kant offers to the artist not only a new rationale to legitimise his or her professional activity but also a higher social status: the artist is now emancipated from craftsmanship by being accepted as a member of an intellectual elite, but without being subjected to the quality standards and rules of professional ethics which apply to the world of science and the humanities.<sup>5</sup> Artists in this sense are, initially, only the composers and the virtuoso star performers among instrumentalists and singers. The mass of the orchestral and military musicians (the only areas in which it was possible to get

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4 'Genius is the talent (natural endowment) which gives the rule to art. (...) genius is not an aptitude in the way of cleverness for what can be learned according to some rule (...) and that consequently originality must be its primary property' (Kant: *The Critique of Judgment*, § 46).

5 Sennett, however, dismisses notions such as genius, inspiration and creativity to characterise both the artist's and the craftsman's activities as they 'carry too much Romantic baggage' (Sennett 2008, p. 290)



permanent positions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) remained unaffected by such tendencies; unlike composers and virtuosos, they were (often civil servant) service providers and saw themselves as such.

## **The history of music education institutions**

### Beginnings

Before the Enlightenment the transfer of musical knowledge and skills predominantly took place in a private setting. This private setting could be organised in the form of a master craftsman business in which the apprentice purchases an apprenticeship position based on a private law contract and including food and lodging. In many cases the transfer of knowledge takes place within the family, passed down from father to son. However, there were also significant exceptions.

One of these exceptions was the town pipers mentioned in the previous chapter, who were organised in guilds. Another exception was the more or less systematically structured orchestra schools which had been to emerge in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century from the environs of court orchestras. Word had been getting around that it was more profitable to invest in educating the next generation using its own resources rather than hire trained musicians on the free market. Examples of such orchestral schools can be found in Vienna, Mannheim, Paris and Stockholm (see Sowa, 1973, p. 90; Reese Willén, 2014, p. 184).

In terms of numbers, by far the most significant institutionalised music education took place in a church environment, and this happened in a great variety of settings and for different purposes. Some of the musicians educated in church institutions were also active in the area of secular music, thus ensuring a permanent knowledge flow. Conversely, trends and fashions emerging from the realm of secular music always had an impact on the further development of church music (Ehrenforth, 2005; Houston 1988). Despite this continuous exchange, the two worlds of sacred and secular music remained largely separate over the centuries, and the ecclesiastical music education institutions only marginally contributed to the emergence and further development of secular institutions of higher music education. That is why they will not be the subject of further consideration here.

Even if it is true that the very first conservatoires were closely linked to the church, they have never been ecclesiastical institutions but rather institutions sponsored by the church. Moreover, the conservatoires' original objective was not artistic or pedagogical, but social. Originating from Naples in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, orphanages or institutions for orphaned children (*orfanotrofio*) (Rexroth, 2005) were established in many Italian cities. Since the sixteenth century, more and more of these institutions appeared under the name *conservatorio* (lat. *conservare* = preserve), which can be taken as evidence that the task of these institutions was no longer to only look after orphans but also to educate them and prepare them for earning a living. However, the primary focus of vocational training at these conservatoires was first and foremost in the area of craftsmanship (Enciclopedia, 1931, p. 194).

This only changed with an increasing demand for musicians in the labour market at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Since that time evidence shows that well known and successful musicians were committing themselves to teaching at a conservatoire. While Alessandro Scarlatti soon terminated his engagement at the Neapolitan *Conservatorio di Santa Maria di Loreto* in 1689, Antonio Vivaldi spent 15 years in the service of the *Ospedale della Pietà* in Venice, leading its orchestra to achieve outstanding quality of performance. As a symbiosis of social welfare and elite musical training, it may thus be considered as a kind of baroque prototype of *El Sistema*<sup>6</sup>.

## **The emergence of the conservatoire as an institution of bourgeois musical life**

Conservatoires, as we know them today, are an invention of the bourgeoisie. As will be seen in the following, their emergence is closely linked to the replacement of the nobility with a self-confident urban bourgeoisie as the bearer of high culture. This gradual process lasted right through the period between the French Revolution and the First World War.

Whilst Italian conservatoires, having their origin in the pre-revolutionary period and operating with a pre-revolutionary spirit, were almost completely dissolved during the occupation by Napoleonic troops in 1798/99, the first 'new style' bourgeois conservatoire was founded just a few years earlier, in 1794: the Paris Conservatoire, first

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6 <http://fundamusical.org/ve/el-sistema/#.WYimiSsaQzU> (retrieved 08.08.2017)

named the *Conservatoire national des arts et métiers* but renamed the *Conservatoire de Musique* a year later. The task of this state-funded institution was to provide a publicly accessible teaching programme which was mainly focusing on offering instrumental lessons in wind instruments but also, to a limited extent, in string instruments and the harpsichord. Added to this was the task of developing methods for instruction in the individual instrumental subjects as well as musically accompanying the celebrations and festivals of the nation.

The extent to which the conservatoire was considered to be the product of the great revolution became obvious on the occasion of its closure in 1816. Although the conservatoire never ceased operation under the Restoration, the institution was renamed the *École royale de musique et de déclamation*, the founding director Bernard Sarrette was fired, and the institution lost its independence. In the 1820s entrance examinations and final certificates were introduced for the first time (Bongrain & Poirier, 1996). The founding of the *Paris Conservatoire* illustrates the direct link between the dissolution of feudalist structures and the assumption of responsibility for the areas of education and culture by civil society.

The idea of establishing independent music education institutions became very popular in the following years, especially in the German-speaking countries. At the time, the term *conservatoire* was becoming a brand name, intending to create a picture of seriousness and quality. It is only on the basis of an act on the freedom of economic activity coming into force that the bourgeoisie gained sufficient economic power to enable founders to establish and run privately operated conservatoires. From the 1840s, private music conservatoires enjoyed a boom, but the vast majority of these institutions did not see their task as just educating professional musicians, but rather as providing instrumental or vocal guidance of wealthy 'dilettantes and music lovers' (Sowa, 1973, p. 20).

There were, however, a few exceptions, the best known being the *Leipzig Conservatoire*, which was founded in 1843 and went on to gradually replace the Paris Conservatoire as a role model for many conservatoires and music academies which were created right across Europe, and even beyond, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This raises the question of what made this conservatoire so special and why, for decades, it was considered the prototype of a modern, vocationally orientated music education institution. First of all, it is important to note that the *Leipzig Conservatoire* was, from its very beginning, subject to very special circumstances and was pursuing objectives differing from almost any other initiative to establish a conservatoire:

- It was based on a curricular concept, which essentially bore the signature of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy; Mendelssohn's aim was to train qualified professional musicians.
- Mendelssohn did not intend to academise the training programme in the modern sense but to link it to theoretical knowledge, inter alia, through systematic training in the basics of harmony.
- As the city of trade (Leipziger Messe) and of knowledge (Universität Leipzig), Leipzig was particularly open to the new ideas of liberalism, freedom of thought and the free economy.
- As early as in the first half of the nineteenth century, Leipzig had an intensive bourgeois musical scene, characterised by the activities of the Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Thomanerchor, in which courtly traditions played next to no role.
- Even the founding of the Leipzig Conservatoire would not have been possible without a considerable financial contribution from the inheritance of the wealthy and childless councilmen of Leipzig, city judges and the manor owner Heinrich Blümner (Wasserloos, 2004).

### The economic and social aspects of music education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

The numerous initiatives to establish music education institutions were also the result of dramatic social change. The musicians who lost their jobs in the course of the dissolution of many court orchestras were entering the labour market as freelancers (Weber, 2008, pp. 89–92). At the same time so-called dilettante orchestras popped up, composed of committed citizens, which in turn contributed to a growing demand for organised, quality-orientated music lessons (Sowa, 1973, p. 22). This also explains why it was not the main focus of the majority of newly founded conservatoires to educate professional musicians.

Even if some of these privately owned conservatoires that emerged in the years after 1845 were run with a philanthropic purpose, the vast majority were profit-orientated enterprises. It is thus not surprising that in the second-half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century complaints about the poor quality of teaching and the lack of cultural and educational concepts arose. Hugo Riemann writes: '[T]he student pays and in return gets his lessons – anything else is up to the student' (Riemann, 1895, p. 28).

Still, by the outbreak of World War I it was the exception rather than the rule that young people striving for a career as professional musicians decided to attend a

conservatoire or a music school. Neither did having graduated from a conservatoire provide substantial benefits when entering the labour market, nor was it cheaper or more prestigious to attend music lessons at a public institution instead of having private lessons. In addition, the number of professional orchestras running their own vocational orchestra schools or offering internships was continued to increase until World War I.

## **The transition from vocational schools to higher education institutions**

### The state takes over

Hugo Riemann's swipe at the conservatoires cited in the previous chapter is not only critical of their one-sided commercial orientation and lack of educational mission, but also of their insignificance to the labour market.

The artists' agencies who, as is well-known today, are the real Kapellmeister-makers, do not even ask for the certificate of the conservatoire, but judge only from their own experience, i.e. by providing small, subordinate, second or third-level jobs to their aspirants. Then, if these [aspirants] stand the test, quickly advance them (Riemann, 1895, pp. 30-31).

Riemann's observation that conservatoires were not needed from the perspective of the labour market thus reduced the state's ambitions to interfere with the structures of vocational musical training. The fact that a trend to nationalise the former private conservatoires arose was not caused by government interest but by the pressure emanating from a public debate targeting the promotion of civic values, which was supported not least by critical statements of culturally well known and respected persons such as Hugo Riemann (Riemann, 1895; Roske, 1986).

As early as 1874 the *Musikschule München*, as one of the first of its kind, became a 'state institution' under the Ministry of Culture (Edelmann 2005). In 1909 the *Vienna Conservatoire* was nationalised. However, both institutions continued to be almost exclusively privately financed. The only institution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century aside from the *Paris Conservatoire* to be predominantly funded by the state was the *Königliche akademische Hochschule für Musik*. It was founded in Berlin in 1869 and, until the

1920s, remained the only institution of its kind to hold the designation ‘university’ (*Hochschule*) (Schenk, 2004, pp. 12-13).

Nowhere in Europe, however, was there a compelling need to transfer state sovereignty to a higher music education institution. This presumably arose for the first time in the context of the so-called ‘Kestenbergreform’ in the mid-1920s, when classroom music teacher education in Prussia was reorganised and assigned to an institution which was both artistically and scientifically orientated (see Kestenberg & Gruhn, 2009, pp. 168–169; Schenk, 2004, p. 174). Significantly, the new teacher education programme was not assigned to the *Hochschule für Musik* but to the *Institut für Kirchenmusik* (Institute for Church Music), founded by Carl Friedrich Zelter in 1822 and later transformed into an *Akademie für Kirchen- und Schulmusik*, and, as of 1935, named the *Staatliche Hochschule für Musikerziehung und Kirchenmusik*. Immediately after the end of World War II, the *Hochschule für Musik* and the *Staatliche Hochschule für Musikerziehung und Kirchenmusik* merged. The further development of this institution was now to take a course which could be described as a creeping process of academisation – a process which unfolded in a similar way in other countries.

### The process of academisation

Typical of this process is on the one hand the institutional separation of musical lay training from vocational training to professional musician and on the other the question of the value of the degrees awarded by these institutions. Even though most of these institutions now awarded state-qualified professional diplomas, their legal status was still only that of a vocational school, even if they were bearing the name ‘academy’ or ‘university’. In 1956, for example, German jurisprudence was in agreement that no academic degrees can be awarded for artistic achievements (Thieme, 1956, p. 218). However, voices were becoming ever louder, articulating the claim to equate the institutions of higher music education with universities. Initial successes of such campaigns became evident in the course of the 1960s (see Hofer, 1996, pp. 21–25). Legal equality was established either in the course of the adoption of separate laws or through integration or collaboration with universities.

In the 1970s the conservatoires in the Nordic countries were dissolved and converted into music colleges or incorporated as music faculties into the nearby university. This also led to the abolition of the term ‘conservatoire’, not only in Northern Europe but also in the German speaking countries. Although this process did not take place simultaneously in the different European countries, the trend was heading in the

same direction and followed a similar dynamic. The process was reaching its critical stage after the Bologna Declaration was launched in 1999. Triggered by the so-called Bologna Process, almost all of the countries which are part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) were implementing laws stipulating that all disciplines and study programmes must demonstrate that they are reflective or theory-based, in other words, that they are 'academic'.

Some countries decided to keep the title conservatoire while equipping them with academic status, as was the case in the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands and Russia. However, the conservatoires in almost all the Mediterranean and Romance-speaking countries remained non-academic, although even there, after World War II, a distinction was made between 'conservatoires' and so-called 'higher conservatoires', such as in Spain and France. But even where the music HEIs are fully recognised as being equivalent to universities in legal terms, it does not necessarily mean that general acceptance of the impact and significance of the formally acquired academic status has taken place. On the contrary, the discussion about how to interpret the fact of being 'academic' and how to fulfil relative requirements in higher arts education continues to this day.

## Wrap-up and conclusion

If one asks in retrospect whether and, if so, why academisation is seen by those concerned as a desirable goal, the different understandings of the term that have been mentioned above become a key factor of discussion. On top of that, however, the aspiration 'to academise' can be driven by different motives. Overall, this seems to contribute to a confusing picture. But let us first look back on the motives that have indeed been and still are standing behind efforts to academise the institutions of higher music education. In this regard, at least four different aspects can be distinguished from each other, each of which is linked to a different objective.

'Academisation' in this sense can target:

1. The increase in social reputation (social aspect)
2. The award of legally-standard degrees which may regulate access to certain professional activities or offices (formal/legal aspect)
3. The recognition as a discipline whose methods of knowledge acquisition are theory or reflection-based (epistemological aspect)

4. The improvement in access to public and governmental funding, both in the area of promoting tertiary education and promoting research (political aspect)

1) Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century there still seemed to be the stigma attached to the music profession and especially orchestral musicians that they formerly counted among the court servants. In this context the term, 'academy' was promising recognition by alluding to intellectual excellence connotations. Also the award of non-academic honorary titles such as 'Kammervirtuos' or 'Kammersänger' can be seen as compensation for the lack of recognition compared to the social status of the 'real' academic.

2) Even as state-funded but not university-accredited institutions, conservatoires and music academies were generally not allowed to award any legally valid degrees.

3) As a result of the 1999 Bologna Declaration, students are required to demonstrate that they are familiar with reflected and research-based methods of learning and teaching and are able to apply these in an appropriate way. On the one hand, this leads to the development of a new methodological repertoire that is adapted to the needs and requirements of the arts, which differ from those of the natural sciences and the humanities. However, the arts community is still in disagreement as to whether 'artistic research' in this sense needs to be an essential part of a professional and highly developed artistic practice which – it is argued – is fulfilled by performing and requires no cultural superstructure to reflect upon or legitimise one's own actions. The arguments that are used in this case strongly reflect the self-conception and professional ethos of the craftsman as described by Richard Sennett (2008):

- Quality results from developing technical mastery of what you do. (Guiding paradigm: technical mastery).
- Reflection upon one's own actions is permitted, but not obligatory.
- A conservative, tradition-orientated understanding of value goes hand-in-hand with an innovative approach to making use of new technologies.
- One's own identity as a specialist is strengthened by distancing oneself from other specialists. The motto, '*Cobbler, stick to your last!*' is also meant as a compliment for the performance of the other.

The fairly widespread self-assessment that one is, for example, an oboist (and not a musician), which implies that one is unable to judge whether a violin player is



performing well or badly, is a commitment to a professional self-understanding which does not necessarily require reflection of one's own practice. The characterisation of one's own professional practice as 'unacademic' is meant positively in this context and is an integral part of a person's identity as a musician or as an arts professor.

4) The question of the 'academic' character of art is, not least, also a political question as political decision-makers do not only decide on the prerequisites for the recognition of qualifications and academic degrees but also on the allocation of research funding (see Linberg-Sand & Sonesson, 2015, p. 185). In this regard, too, Europe is developing asynchronously. Unlike the sciences, research grants are still only accessible to arts research projects in exceptional cases. Academisation in this respect can also be interpreted as working towards the equality between the arts and the sciences as regards their status as being subject to state subsidy.

## Outlook

The Bologna Declaration and the discussions it has triggered on issues such as academic self-understanding, the reflective and research-based nature of learning and teaching the arts, and the peculiarity and intrinsic dignity of *the artistic* as a mode of knowledge acquisition differing from *the scientific*, stirred the world of music HEIs.

The gradual process of recognising and promoting the former conservatoires from vocational schools to higher education institutions, which has dragged on for decades, has been taken for granted by many teachers without taking into account what academisation actually means or could mean to their daily business.

Looking at the self-assessment and the self-image of professional musicians in Europe today presents an unclear and partly contradictory image. On the one hand, an understanding of their own occupational role as a service provider, which was still prevailing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has almost completely disappeared. On the other hand, a professional self-image is widespread according to which artists and musicians claim to benefit from the social privileges and intellectual status of the academic whilst they at the same time do not necessarily feel a need to respect the rules that are generally associated with this status. These include, among others:

- to consider one's own professional actions to be reflection-based
- to contribute to further developing the professional field through striving for progress and innovation

- systematic structuring of teaching and learning
- reliability and verifiability of quality criteria

It is significant that these aforementioned characteristics, that could also be described as *leading paradigms of academic teaching* are of particularly little value in the field of instrumental and vocal performance education, and again especially in the field of classical music. It could almost be said that triggered by the Bologna Process, the centuries-old dichotomy between *Musica practica* and *Musica poetica*, *Musicus* and *Cantor* has arisen again. In fact, the Bologna Process has also created visible a gap at many music HEIs, dividing those who are open to accepting and adapting the above-mentioned paradigms of academic teaching and those who reject them.

Critics claim that the Bologna Declaration and the subsequent creation of common quality standards could lead to the mainstreaming of study programmes and thus subvert the freedom of art, science and teaching. In fact, the concept of academisation can also be understood as a search for the canonisation of teaching. However, it is unlikely to be a side effect of the Bologna Process, nor would it be desirable for the permission to pursue a career as an artist to ever be regulated by formal admission requirements, such as academic degrees, as had been the case in the countries of the former Eastern bloc during the times of socialism.

Conversely, it needs to be asked how an academic education can prepare for the present and future requirements of the profession as comprehensively as possible. Reflectiveness and the ability to adapt to changing vocational requirements and professional frameworks are, in this sense, elements of academising higher music education by not only strengthening the study programmes' employability orientation, but also by extending the horizon of a professional identity that is inspired by the professional ethos of the craft.

Artistic research may play a key role in the further development of the process of academisation. The discussion on the particular nature of artistic research is still in its initial phase. However, it does look as if research in the arts requires not only special methods and forms of knowledge acquisition but also the recognition of its own dignity, both from the music community and from the research community as a whole. Indeed, this discussion offers hope that a reconciliation between craft and reflectiveness in its truest and best academic sense is possible.

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## **Beyond policy: Conceptualising student-centred learning environments in higher (music) education**

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### **Abstract**

*While student-centred learning environments are placed high on the policy agenda for how educational practices can be developed, it is less clear what this term actually means and what implications it may have for teaching and learning. This article discusses how student-centred learning environments in higher education can be interpreted and conceptualized from an educational sciences perspective, in which the term is used to characterize learning environments that aim at placing students at the centre of the activities and facilitating their active participation and engagement with disciplinary and/or professional knowledge. The article also provides examples from recent research on how such environments are organised and experienced by teachers and students in different Norwegian higher education contexts. The examples are mainly taken from studies of common educational practices in the general field of higher education, such as practices employing problem-based, project-based and case-based learning. Reflections on what these insights might mean for the specific field of music performance education are included on the way, and discussed in relation to teacher collaboration as a means of supporting student engagement and learning in higher music education. The article builds on a keynote presentation given at the AEC-CEMPE conference *Becoming Musicians—Student Involvement and Teacher Collaboration in Higher Music Education in Oslo in October 2018*.*

## Introduction

Student-centred educational practices are often high on the agenda in both educational policy and practice. Student-centred terminology has emerged as a way of promoting alternative teaching methods to the lecture format in higher education, and stimulating more engagement from students. As such, ‘student-centred’ is often understood as opposed to ‘teacher-centred’, and affiliated with approaches to teaching that are ‘learner-focused’ rather than ‘content-focused’ (see e.g. Baeten et al., 2016; Uiboleht, Karm & Postareff, 2018). At the same time, higher education policies and regulations reference a myriad of concepts, many of which highlight similar phenomena, whilst others, despite almost identical phrasing, reference different ideas. The concepts of ‘student-centred teaching’ and ‘active learning’ are at times used interchangeably, even if they point to two different processes, whilst in other instances the term ‘student-centred learning’ refers to quite different phenomena. Moreover, rather than understanding teacher-centeredness and student-centeredness as opposites, it may be more productive to perceive them on a continuum of pedagogical approaches that complement and even depend on each other in everyday practice (Elen et al., 2007). Nevertheless, research shows unconsciously mixing these concepts may be unproductive to student learning, and a clearer understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of different pedagogical approaches is needed in order to communicate the intentions of activities as well as to foster collaboration (Nerland & Prøitz, 2018; Postareff et al., 2008).

In this article, which builds on a keynote presentation given at the AEC-CEMPE conference *Becoming Musicians—Student Involvement and Teacher Collaboration in Higher Music Education* in Oslo in October 2018, I use the phrase *student-centred learning environments* (SCLs) as an umbrella term to characterise learning environments that aim at placing students at the centre of the activities and facilitating their active participation and engagement with disciplinary and/or professional knowledge. I begin by discussing the emergence of what we can call the ‘student-centred complex’ in policies for higher education. Next—as indicated in the title—we will move beyond policy to examine forms and conditions for SCLs. First, to conceptualise what SCLs entail when grounded in theoretical perspectives to learning and teaching, we move from policy to educational science. Second, we shift from policy to practice by examining how teachers and students experience different types of SCLs. Throughout I broadly explore common practices and perspectives in the general field of higher education. Reflections on what these insights might mean for the specific field of music performance education are included on the way, and also discussed in relation to teacher collaboration as a means of supporting student engagement and learning in higher music education.



## The student-centred terminology in higher education policy

The emergence of student-centred terminology in educational policy has different origins, but three interconnected trends interplay in bringing a stronger focus toward what students are doing and learning in higher education. First, developments within working life have generated new requirements to professional expertise, which include the capacity for change and for taking on responsibilities in shifting contexts of collaboration. As fields of knowledge grow more complex, expanding to include a range of knowledge-generating actors and stakeholders, the demand for advanced skills, such as knowledge integration, the ability to work with multifaceted problems and collaboration across domains of expertise, are increasing. This leads to increased interest in engaging students in explorative and knowledge-generating activities, and in 'the relevance of activities to working life. Especially in profession-oriented programmes there has been a concern towards developing 'authentic' tasks and learning environments, that is, tasks and environments that provide experiences with the type of problems or situations that characterize professional life (Herrington, Reeves & Oliver, 2014; Litzinger et al., 2011). Furthermore, such tasks and environments have been associated with student-centred learning environments (Land, Hannafin & Oliver, 2012).

Second, there is an increased emphasis on monitoring the quality of educational practices and institutions at the local, national and international level. This has given rise to a range of new actors and organisations engaged in developing higher education practices, such as student organisations, university alliances, quality assurance agencies and directorates, and networks like AEC. These developments are nourished by international collaboration and policy coordination, including the joint efforts and activities that constitute the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).<sup>1</sup> Student-centred learning is central to the work of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) and the European Student Union, and currently there is interest in taking initiatives further, toward the educational ground floor, by facilitating the sharing of 'innovative learning and practices' across higher education institutions. As stated in the Paris Communiqué from the EHEA Ministerial Conference (2018, p. 3):

The success of the European Learning and Teaching Forum launched by the European University Association last year demonstrates the value and potential of collaboration in learning and teaching, with tangible benefits for higher

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1 [www.ehea.info/](http://www.ehea.info/)

education institutions, staff and students. Therefore, in addition to measures at national level, we will develop joint European initiatives to support and stimulate a wide range of innovative learning and teaching practices, building on existing good practice in our countries and beyond. This will encompass the further development and full implementation of student-centred learning and open education in the context of lifelong learning. Study programmes that provide diverse learning methods and flexible learning can foster social mobility and continuous professional development whilst enabling learners to access and complete higher education at any stage of their lives.

As this quote demonstrates, the policy discourse on student-centred learning is entwined with notions of lifelong learning and flexible educational arrangements, through which higher education may serve the evolving knowledge economy by fostering mobility and employability. This is further served by a well-developed infrastructure of standards and tools addressing input and output factors, such as qualification frameworks and learning outcomes descriptions. Efforts to address educational processes through international policy cooperation are a new trend historically. At the same time, the further development of innovative learning and teaching practices should be handled by the higher education institutions themselves, in ways that secure academic freedom and institutional autonomy (Paris Communiqué, 2018).

Third, both the calls for more ‘authentic’ and explorative learning activities and the efforts to promote innovative learning and teaching practices carry an implicit criticism of the learning environments offered in higher education. A common assumption is that common (i.e.,) practices in university-based education such as lectures and text-based seminars are insufficient to meet new demands. For instance, it is argued such practices rest on a ‘transmission view’ of knowledge and learning that does not account for the learners’ engagement and sense-making, that limited support and feedback is offered during the learning process, and that there is too much focus on what is taught by lecturers rather than what is learned by the students. Whilst the pedagogical approaches used will vary extensively between knowledge domains and institutions, and teachers seem increasingly eager to engage in developing course activities and learning environments, these notions provide the ground for a student-centred terminology that defines itself in contrast to teacher-centred or content-centred approaches.

Despite the many actors embracing a student-centred terminology—and likely an effect of their diversity—concepts are often used in different, imprecise ways. For example, ‘student-centred learning’ might be used when one is actually talking about

approaches to teaching or features of course design. From a pedagogical perspective, it is important to keep different processes and phenomena analytically apart for the sake of understanding how they can support each other. Thus, we should insist on separating learning from teaching, and learning processes from learning activities, even if it is the productive intersection of these processes we aim at supporting. Moreover, rather than learning itself being student-centred or active, student-centredness should be viewed as characteristics of the learning environment and of ways of engaging students in courses and activities. From this perspective, the concept SCLEs makes more sense. The next section explores the concept of SCLEs further by drawing on theories and perspectives within educational science.

## **Conceptualisations of SCLEs in educational science**

Several lines of educational theory and practice are relevant to conceptualising SCLEs. One important contributor is the literature on instructional design, which is concerned with the practices of designing physical and virtual learning environments. Grounded in constructivist perspectives on learning, this literature takes the stance that learning is an active process of knowledge construction and sense-making that evolves with guidance from teachers, other participants and/or the material environment (Land, Hannafin & Oliver, 2012; Mayer, 2004). Whilst differing interpretations remain, there is general agreement that SCLEs offer opportunities for students to work on real-world problems, gain practical experience from practices characteristic to the knowledge domain, and take ownership of their inquiry processes (Land, Hannafin & Oliver, 2012). This suggests the tasks and learning activities included in the pedagogical design should involve students in the types of explorative and investigative practices that are central to generating knowledge and showing expertise in the domain, and that such practices should be related to problems or situations that are relevant to the students' prospective work. The students' engagement with knowledge is highlighted, more than the content of what is taught. The emphasis on 'ownership' denotes that students, at least to some extent, should develop and follow their own paths in the inquiry process and commit to the task at hand. What this implies and what it looks like will vary according to field of expertise. However, a general principle is that activities should be guided, or 'scaffolded', by teachers and/or other actors and resources in the environment (Land, Hannafin & Oliver, 2012). Although greater responsibility for activities and learning processes is allocated to the students, they should be provided with processual support rather than being

left to fend for themselves. Moreover, again based on constructivist perspectives on learning, students should have the opportunity to activate their previous experiences as well as access to a range of knowledge resources in the learning process (Land, Hannafin & Oliver, 2012). This has implications for how the teacher's role is conceptualised. Rather than traditional instruction, teaching becomes a matter of designing activities and environments by carefully assembling a set of tasks, tools, resources and responsibilities that are distributed to participants (Goodyear, 2015). The role of the teacher in the learning process becomes that of a facilitator and a guide in the students' evolving inquiry process rather than a transmitter of knowledge.

It can be argued these features are already in place in higher music education. The institutionalised traditions of teaching and learning always have placed emphasis on students' responsibilities and active participation. At least where music performance education is concerned, there is strong traditions for guided participation in one-to-one settings, through which students explore the musical works and practices of their area of expertise and generate visible and hearable 'products' in the form of performances. Such individualised tuition practices allow for tailored support, therefore avoiding one of the key challenges associated with SCLs in higher education more generally; namely, meeting the different needs and experiences of students who take part in the same environment (Hockings, 2009; Northedge, 2003). As musical works and interpretations are often shared across geographical boundaries, the available resources for learning exceed the local educational practice. In such a context, student ownership of the learning process is both afforded and required. Yet, some questions may be raised as to the flexibility of the educational arrangements and the possibility to 'design' them. For instance, to what extent are personal routes of development encouraged, and to what extent are students in the same specialist area (i.e., instrument tradition) expected to follow the same route? What spaces for and kinds of inquiry processes are supported? What can be changed and experimented with, and what needs to be kept in line with established performance conventions? With respect to the wider learning environment offered by the institution and study programme, how do different activities and learning arenas intersect in students' learning? Finally, to what extent can supportive environments be planned and designed in educational contexts that leave extensive time and responsibilities for self-studying?

Rather than seeking concrete solutions, these questions can be used as tools to reflect on the further development of learning environments in higher music education. The criteria for SCLs as described above are general, and will need to be translated and adapted to the specific practices one aims to develop. In the next sections we will

move to educational practice and look into examples of SCLEs and how these are experienced by teachers and students.

## **Insights from educational practice: Supporting learning through inquiry**

As noted above, one SCLE trait is the involvement of students in explorative and knowledge-generating activities, through which they gain experience by solving problems or addressing phenomena that resemble ‘real-life’ situations. This may be realized in various types of environments and through different pedagogical designs. Approaches often affiliated with SCLEs include project-based learning, problem-based learning, different forms of inquiry-based learning, as well as the use of case analyses and simulation games in digital or face-to-face environments (Land, Hannafin & Oliver, 2012). Whilst project- and problem-based learning adhere to specific methods and ways of sequencing the work, inquiry-based learning is used as collective term for approaches that stimulate learning through inquiry, of which project- and problem-based learning are two alternatives (Aditomo et al., 2011). In educational contexts, elements of the different approaches can be combined. What is clear both from research and practical experience is that the character of the knowledge domain matters to how learning through inquiry is organised and supported. In what follows, I will present insights from two projects in which teachers’ and students’ work with inquiry-based and student-centred approaches in higher education based on participant observation of course activities and supplemented with interviews, course documents and other course materials.<sup>2</sup>

The first project, *Horizontal Governance and Learning Dynamics in Higher Education*, was conducted in the period 2012-2016 and included close-up studies of teaching and learning activities in three professional programmes within the areas of law, engineering and teacher education. The aim was to examine how students, through participation in domain-specific knowledge practices, were ‘enrolled’ or initiated in their prospective professional knowledge cultures. All programmes used forms of inquiry-based learning in their introductory courses. This was organized as group work wherein students were required to explore real-world problems and construct knowledge together. The tasks given to students in law and teacher education focused

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<sup>2</sup> Both projects were supported by the Research Council of Norway under the Education 2020 and the FINNUT programmes, Grant no. 212285 and 237960.

on case analyses, whilst students in software engineering were asked to develop a webpage (see Jensen, Nerland & Enqvist-Jensen, 2015; Damşa & Nerland, 2016; Damşa, Nerland & Jensen, 2017). The law students attended an intensive one-week course involving daily teacher-led sessions and group work whilst the group process was spread across several weeks in engineering and teacher education.

Whilst all programmes introduced students to a set of epistemic practices critical to each professional culture's investigative processes, what these practices entailed and how students were engaged and supported varied. In legal education, emphasis was placed on introducing students to methodological principles for examining legal conflicts. Key practices included sorting information and identifying types of conflicts and parties involved, investigating sources of law and how these could inform the case, and justifying decisions by building a convincing legal argument (Jensen et al., 2015). Teacher support was provided through modelling how to sort conflicts, reading the sources of law and navigating the textual universe of this professional culture. In engineering education, students developed a product (a webpage) by employing programming knowledge and techniques presented in teacher-led sessions. Key practices included writing, testing and validating code using developer tools, generating ideas, and documenting the work process (Damşa & Nerland, 2016). Teacher support took the form of modelling programming activities and pointing to tools available to programmers in the professional field. In teacher education, students were asked to use theoretical concepts from learning theories to analyse a case narrative involving a school situation. This led to a written report; key practices included academic writing, formulating an inquiry question for the analysis and integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience (Damşa & Nerland, 2016). In this case, teacher support was less procedural in character, and more directed towards conceptual understanding and criteria for academic work. In sum, these examples show inquiry activities are domain-specific and that being aware of, and making explicit, the key practices for exploring and generating knowledge in the domain is crucial when designing student-centred learning environments and activities. Moreover, the examples show how educational activities, by way of these practices and profession-specific tools and resources can link students to the wider professional world in which they aspire to work.

How, then, can these insights inform the development of SCLEs in higher music education? One important question to ask is what inquiry-based learning might mean in this educational context. Several options may be envisioned: Project-based activities could be organised with the aim of integrating different knowledge forms when developing a performance or analysis, such as knowledge from aural training and

performance studies. Inquiry activities could combine analyses of musical works based on musicology with musical interpretations and performances, thus resembling the type of artistic research practice that exists in the form of master theses and PhD projects. Or activities could be more fully based on music performance, for example organized in projects with the aim of developing concert productions for specific audience groups. These activities, and many others, are frequently used in higher music education. However, the awareness of what constitutes the aims and means for inquiry in the various activities, what it takes to enact these, and how teacher support could be organised in different phases of the learning process may be less clear. When developing SCLEs based on inquiry activities, the specific investigative practices involved in the type of inquiry activity should be explicated, and how these can be modelled and supported in the learning process must be considered.

## **Insights from educational practice: Challenges in developing SCLEs**

The second project, *Quality of Norwegian Higher Education (QNHE)*, was conducted in the period 2014 – 2018 as a collaborative effort between the research institute NIFU and the University of Oslo Department of Education. One part of the project investigated experiences with student-centred learning environments, as these were organized and enacted in eight higher education courses (for an overview, see Nerland & Prøitz, 2018). The aim was to learn more about the opportunities and challenges teachers and students face in their everyday educational activities, and the studied learning environments included larger lectures combined with seminars, project-based learning in smaller groups, problem-based learning, case-based learning, simulation exercises with and without technology use, field work, portfolio work and online activities.

The findings, summarised in a report edited by Nerland and Prøitz (2018), show both teachers and students generally embraced efforts to create SCLEs, but these also generated a set of challenges. First, when looking at the course environments as a whole, we noticed they tended to comprise a range of activities, tasks and assessment forms and that it was not always clear for the participants what they were expected to do and achieve with the various activities. This indicates a risk of overloading the course designs in the effort of developing SCLEs, without sufficiently grounding the activities in clear ideas about their envisioned role in students' learning processes. Second, as student-centred approaches tend to delegate the responsibility of organising

work to the students, with the teacher as a facilitator, support from teachers is both necessary and more difficult to provide. Analyses conducted in the QNHE project showed students' participation in optional activities was quite variegated, and that they often organised their work in spaces and arenas where teachers were not present. For instance, students tended to prefer widely available social media platforms rather than those offered by the course or programme. This is not surprising, and indeed self-organised activities may be seen as critical to creating ownership of the learning process. However, it raises challenges as to how processes can be planned, monitored and supported by teachers. Third, the findings from the QNHE project reveal gaps and conflicts that arise between courses and activities in which students are engaged. This relates to the placement of a course and its knowledge content in the overall programme structure, such as how a given course builds on previous courses and prepares students for what comes next. Conflicts may also occur between parallel courses in the students' programme; for example, when there is a significant uptick in workload in several courses at the same time. Especially when course activities rely on students taking on responsibilities and participating actively, and when students are dependent on each other's contributions, it is essential to secure time and space for such engagement. This demonstrates the importance of seeing the course activities from a student perspective, and the need to create a progression in ways of working across courses. This, in turn, requires collaboration across courses as well as collaborative investments from teachers in the planning phase.

The two projects drawn upon in this article were both oriented towards teaching and learning practices in higher education courses organised around classes or larger groups of students, within academic and professional programmes that are offered by many universities and which accommodate large numbers of students. As a consequence, the exploration of SCLs have been limited to a set of pedagogical approaches used by teachers in these contexts. One could easily imagine that there are other ways of engaging students actively in learning processes, and even more so in performance-oriented programmes as in higher music education. Nevertheless, the insights described above may prompt questions of relevance for further development also for music performance education. One issue concerns what teacher collaboration and coordination of learning activities might look like. Such efforts must rest on clear ideas regarding collaboration objectives, what kind of learning processes the collaborative or coordinating efforts should support, and the potential barriers to bringing different forms of knowledge and expertise together. Some forms of collaboration may aim at supporting progression in student learning over time; for instance, in the way activities and courses build on each other. In other cases, the aim may rather be to integrate theoretical and experience-based



forms of knowledge in the moment of examining, say, a musical work. Alternatively, the aim of collaboration may be to bridge educational activities with ongoing developments in professional music life. Therefore, relevant questions to ask include: Does teacher collaboration in higher music education essentially mean inter-subject collaboration? In what ways does collaboration involve complementary resources and forms of expertise; conversely, in what ways does it support joint work with similar forms of expertise? And what are the implications of the various forms on the distribution of responsibilities to teachers and students?

In my PhD project on teaching practices in music performance education (Nerland, 2003, 2007) different versions of teacher collaboration were identified: performance teachers and pianists could collaborate to create a more holistic context as a basis for tuition, a performance teacher could collaborate with a composer to support the students' interpretation and performance of contemporary music, and performance teachers representing the same instrument could collaborate to distribute responsibilities for supporting the development of different technical skills. The activities of CEMPE and the presentations at the recent AEC-CEMPE conference show extensive activities currently taking place when it comes to teacher collaboration, and that students themselves are taking on coordinating roles and facilitating the integration of courses and activities in their learning trajectories. This is promising when it comes to creating meaningful learning experiences for students and teachers alike. It is hoped that experiences from these activities will also be examined and documented, so that examples of music-related SCLs and their practices can be shared amongst the wider educational community.

## **Concluding remarks**

This article has discussed several reasons why SCLs currently are high on the agenda in higher education, both in policy and practice, and outlined some ways in which such environments can be interpreted, conceptualised and organised. Based on studies of educational practices in a range of domains other than music education, the article has also pointed to challenges faced by teachers and students in developing SCLs. Drawing some conclusions from this discussion, one implication is that we, in the context of SCLs, need to expand the conception of teaching in ways that go beyond instruction and guidance to students in specific situations. In addition, teaching is about planning and designing learning environments, within and across courses in a study programme, and often in collaboration with students and colleagues. This requires some

understanding of the pedagogical notions and principles underlying different activities such as inquiry-based learning. Moreover, it necessitates an explicit awareness of the types of knowledge practices and investigative processes students need to master in order to participate in, and take responsibility for, activities. Complicating matters further, SCLEs place students and their learning opportunities as main concerns in the activity, which means attention must be paid to the wider educational system that makes up the students' world of learning. This may include resources and practices offered beyond organised educational activities, such as online resources and experiences from professional life. Taking all these issues into account, it can be argued that SCLEs may never be fully actualised for all students in higher education. Rather, they may be seen as an ideal to work toward, and as a set of conceptual and exemplary resources that can be drawn upon in the further development of educational practices.

In these efforts, higher music education may learn from other domains and programme contexts in several ways. For instance, other domains may have developed more explicit collective descriptions of learning processes and progression principles in inquiry-oriented activities, or models for coordinating content and activities across courses. At the same time, music education has a long tradition of placing students in the centre of activities and allocating extensive responsibilities as well as ownership of processes to the students. Moreover, schools of music, academies or conservatoires are certainly more than a composition of educational practices. These are richly textured environments where high-quality resources for students' self-directed learning are offered, and where there are many opportunities for searching feedback from teachers, peers, and other social and material instances. This indicates the further development of learning environments in higher music education should build on these resources rather than breaking with them. It also suggests other programmes may learn from the way music education is organised. One recent development in ways of conceptualising learning is to see learning as *performative actions* through which students actively construct knowledge and through which their actions, based on achieved insights, become consequential for further action (Säljö, 2010). This is related to new technologies as well as to the complexity of knowledge domains, in which students are encouraged to select and integrate information from different sources and to demonstrate their knowledgeability through ways of doing rather than through ways of reasoning. This way of approaching learning is certainly relevant for music education and other educational practices in the performing arts, and these institutions may have important insights to offer in this area.

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# Musicianship – discursive constructions of autonomy and independence within music performance programmes

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## Abstract

*Autonomy and independence are key concepts in higher education. Skills and competences viewed as necessary for a flexible and lifelong career have become increasingly centred on employability and demands for market adjustment. This article addresses the issue of how autonomy and independence are understood within a specific disciplinary context. Drawing on interviews with teachers and students, the paper aims to investigate discursive constructions of autonomy and independence within music performance programmes in higher education. We establish that autonomy is articulated primarily as actions of expression and communication, both musically and linguistically. Independence is primarily articulated as a detachment from teachers as well as independence from prior musical interpretations and sheet music. On the basis of the findings we argue that autonomy and independence mainly involve an alignment with current societal and market conditions, which suggests a rather limited latitude in terms of possible actions and positions.*

## Background

Drawing on interviews with teachers and students, this paper explores the discursive constructions of *autonomy* and *independence* within music performance programmes. The specific objectives are (i) to analyse and explain students' and teachers' notions of autonomous and independent musicianship within music performance programmes and (ii) to elucidate the perceived role of education in fostering autonomy and independence. Autonomy and independence are related; however, we use both concepts as we aim to capture both *freedom to* act independently and *freedom from* dependence.

Problems regarding autonomy and independence are linked to profound changes occurring within European university and higher education structures, governance and organisation during the last two decades (EHEA, 2017; Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Anand Pant & Coates, 2016). The Bologna Process and broader global trends in which education is embedded have led to increased concern about the demand for market adjustments (Gaunt & Papageorgi, 2010; Hansmann, Jödicke, Brändle, Guhl & Frischknecht, 2017; Sursock & Smidt, 2010). Scholars have, for example, criticised the ways in which the value of higher education is framed in response to economic concerns and neoliberal values, instead of advocating education as a free development of the person in the Humboldtian sense (Ball, 2004; Moore, 2016). In relation to employability, student autonomy and independence have become two key concepts which have been emphasised within higher education. Universities are increasingly focusing on skills and competences needed for a flexible and lifelong career within a profession or occupational domain (Georgii-Hemming et al., 2016; Krücken, 2014).

Moreover, a series of political reforms have placed demands on vocational programmes to become an integral part of higher education and create stronger links between teaching and research (Ek, Ideland, Jönsson & Malmberg, 2010). In Sweden this trend towards 'academisation' – among other things – has meant that students undertaking all forms of bachelor and master programmes must write or conduct an 'independent thesis'. The requirement to do so creates tensions between the focus on scientific and professional practice (Georgii-Hemming et al., 2016; Hazelkorn & Moynihan, 2010; Moberg, 2019). In other words, as institutional traditions and new requirements meet, this leads to a struggle over time and space between engaging in activities linked to different forms of knowledge. It is likely that this tension is heightened within higher music education given the demands and specific requirements placed on the music profession.

There are also rapid changes within musical and cultural activities in society more generally. As a result, the future labour market for music performance students is characterised by divergence in musical styles, context and engagement (Georgii-Hemming et al., 2016; Tregear et al., 2016). Musicians' careers include roles as performers, managers, producers and educators (Bennett, 2016; Gaunt, 2016; Myers, 2016). Institutions must prepare students 'for a large diversity of career paths and enable them to broadly contribute to society' (EUA, 2017, p. 2).

In Sweden and other countries, curricula and policy documents state that students must be able to adapt to new contexts, to formulate and solve problems, to make assessments and decisions, and to integrate their knowledge in different contexts. They

must also be able to develop new forms of personal expression and take responsibility for their ongoing learning (European Commission, 2017; Su, Feng, Yang & Chen, 2012; Swedish Code of Statutes 2006:173; Swedish Code of Statutes 2009:1037). To succeed as professional musicians, music performance students thus need to develop *both* domain-specific and generic or transferable skills. Autonomy and independence are thus two main competencies which are expressed as pathways to developing such skills. These competencies have been relatively underexplored in higher music education – both in terms of students’ and teachers’ understanding of them as well as within the academic literature.

## Previous research

In literature on higher education, concepts of autonomy and independence have so far mainly been discussed in relation to the selection of vital key competencies in view of current societal challenges and labour market requirements (Davies, 2017; Rieckmann, 2011). Studies focusing on autonomy and independence as transferrable skills have mainly been concerned with issues around assessment of students’ learning outcomes in higher education programmes (Blömke, Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Kuhn & Fege, 2013; Minors, Burnard, Wiffen, Shihabi & van der Walt, 2017; Tremblay, Lalancette & Roseveare, 2012). With respect to university curricula, there has undoubtedly been a shift towards more instrumental and measurable forms of knowledge, and much has been written about how the logics underpinning higher education institutions are currently driven by New Public Management ideology (Broucker & De Wit, 2015; Georgii-Hemming, 2017). As a response to this development, studies have argued for the need to link critical reflection skills, independent thinking and the potential for student participation in societal debates on topics related to the profession (Harland & Wald, 2018; Kincheloe, 2008).

Within music research, most studies have centred on music students’ autonomous and independent learning within the context of the master-apprentice tradition and one-to-one tuition (Carey, Harrison & Dwyer, 2017; Long, Creech, Gaunt & Hallam, 2014). Previous studies, such as Johansson (2013) and Burwell (2013), emphasise that qualities of independence are vital to students’ learning throughout their careers. Some of the issues emerging from these findings relate explicitly to how reflective practice can increase undergraduate students’ learning autonomy and stimulate their development as independent musicians (Burwell, 2013).

In reference to how to better foster independence, research also addresses students' self-regulating strategies for independent music practice (Jørgensen, 2000; Nielsen, 2001, 2004) and teachers' approaches to the development of individuality within the Western classical music tradition (Hultberg, 2000, 2002; Laukka, 2004). For instance, in their research on teachers' beliefs about effective instrumental teaching, Mills and Smith (2003) report that the development of students' individuality is among the highest ranked qualities in higher education.

Although this research has tended to focus on learning strategies, much less attention has been paid to the characteristics of autonomy and independence *per se*. What is currently lacking in research is studies at a conceptual level concerning the qualities and discursive constructions of autonomy and independence –within or outside disciplinary contexts.

## Methodology

Data presented in this paper is drawn from a larger ongoing study (DAPHME<sup>1</sup>) and an associated doctoral study (Moberg, in progress), both focusing on how processes of academisation affect higher music education across Europe<sup>2</sup>. Adopting a broad critical discourse-study approach, we investigate and seek to demonstrate how autonomy and independence are constructed within higher music education in Sweden. We primarily take our inspiration and analytical categories from work developed by Fairclough (2003, 2010, 2015) and Wodak and Meyer (2016). In their approaches the analysts oscillate between texts and wider social structures. This allows us to approach the question of why autonomy and independence are constructed in specific ways at micro and macro levels. Subsequently we seek to explain how autonomy and independence are understood within music performance programmes, considering why autonomy and independence are constructed in particular ways.

The data consists of semi-structured in-depth interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2017) with teachers (n = 17) and master students (n = 6) from four different music academies in Sweden offering music performance degree programmes at master level. The students all had a classical music orientation, while all but one teacher had a background in

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1 Discourses of Academization and the Music Profession in Higher Music Education

2 Acknowledgments: This work was supported by The Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond).



classical music. By choosing participants from different music academies, we could avoid generalising from statements which may have been limited by a specific institutional discourse.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were chosen since these had the potential to generate data-rich accounts focused on the respondents' opinions and interpretations. The interview guide drew from specific themes linked to DAPHME's conceptual framework, which is based on exploring notions of competence, knowledge, (artistic) research and views on the functions of these within education and the music professions. Interviews with students were conducted by Nadia Moberg, and interviews with teachers and leaders were conducted individually by Eva Georgii-Hemming or her colleague Karin Johansson<sup>3</sup>. Each interview lasted 50–90 minutes and was audio-recorded. All interviews were fully transcribed, and the interview transcripts were subjected to thematic coding, using the data analysis platform NVivo. For this paper, the data from all interviews were read together. However, while the main focus of the study was not to conduct a comparative analysis of the students' and the teachers' accounts, we remained open to differences between them as groups since there could potentially be important insights to be made in highlighting these.

We use the term 'discourse' to capture language use as a social practice (Fairclough, 1992) and consider discourse to be 'a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action' (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016, p. 27). In line with Fairclough (2015), we examine discourse in a multidimensional way and seek to describe, interpret and explain the relationships between texts, interactions and contexts. The approach assumes a dialectic relationship between discursive acts and situations, institutions and structures surrounding these acts. While discourse bears the marks of social structures, it simultaneously aids in stabilising or changing these structures. This view has analytical implications as the in-depth analysis of texts is accompanied by an investigation into how the texts are embedded in institutional practices and conditions in a recursive manner (Fairclough, 2015). In other words, to analyse discourse entails investigating relationships between concrete language use and wider social structures including integrating historical information 'in which the discursive "events" are embedded' (Wodak et al., 2009, pp. 7–8). The analysis therefore involved situating individual statements within Swedish music institutions' practices and traditions as well as changes in higher education.

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<sup>3</sup> Prof. Karin Johansson, Lund University, Malmö, Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts. Data is used with her consent.

As indicated above, the interviews focused on how respondents understood and expressed notions of knowledge and competence. However, different perspectives on autonomy and independence also became salient in our conversations. The analytical strategy sought to identify patterns and contradictions in constructions of autonomy and independence. Following thematic analysis, an in-depth textual analysis of the relevant themes was conducted with analytical categories such as assumption, collocation, intertextuality, modality and representation of social actors and events (Fairclough, 2003) guiding us towards an analysis of how autonomy and independence are constructed. Thus, the in-depth analysis did not cover all data, but rather focused on relevant themes and specific utterances where explicit and implicit ideas surrounding autonomy and independence were salient. Our main focus was on analysing what autonomy and independence means within these institutions and on whether (and how) the education can be seen to support and/or develop autonomous and independent musicians.

## Findings

Exploring discursive constructions of autonomy and independence, we found that the articulations are structured primarily around two areas: where *actions* correspond with acting autonomously and *positions* correspond with taking an independent position. 'Actions' refer to competences, including skills, and are broadly defined as cognitive, motivational and social dispositions that can be increased through learning. They are assumed to be multidimensional and specific to the field of study but are also understood as specific to higher education in general (Shavelson, 2013; Zlatkin et al., 2016). 'Positions' refer to perceptions of where musicians need to locate themselves and be located by others so as to be conceived of as independent musicians. Positions involve strategies deployed to become independent musician subjects which may develop through, or be hindered by, the education. In the following section we explain what characterises autonomous and independent musicians based on how the concepts are constructed in the teacher and student interviews.

### Acting autonomously

Craftsmanship is a competence that is largely taken for granted. Students and teachers equally conclude that instrumental skills are the main prerequisite for functioning as an autonomous musician. Mentions are made in passing pointing out that musicians need

to be 'super' and handle their instrument in as 'unhindered' a way as possible. 'Purely professional skills' are, in short, essential to 'everything you want to accomplish'. This constitutes the foundation on which a musician subsequently can build an autonomous artistry and career. However, there is more to this. To be a good musician in terms of being an expert on an instrument is no longer enough. This view is confirmed by the literature (Bennett, 2007; Johansson 2012).

In the interviews there is emphasis on verbal expression and communication as important components of autonomous musicianship. Amongst the students this is mainly, but not exclusively, implicitly stated, whereas the teachers articulate it explicitly in many different ways. Ranging from arguments concerning musicians' abilities to participate in public discourse, funding opportunities and arguments concerning stage presence, verbal expression represents a cornerstone of several different aspects of the profession. Various reasons were thus given as to why verbal expression and communication are key to autonomy. One explanation is that it enables a person to communicate with backers, to apply for funding to and act as a marketer. The importance of 'entrepreneurship' and public relations is underlined. A teacher explains:

(...) they will be forced to speak about their instrumental and artistic activities. In some ways being able to express it, write funding applications (...)  
(Teacher)

The statement implies that labour market conditions lie behind this assumed fact, and there is no social actor, either individual or collective, behind this compelling force. Students, too, conclude that you have to be able to 'promote yourself' and to 'write enticing sales texts'. Such aspects are described as time-consuming, as a rather demanding means of reaching the purpose itself. Albeit primarily not expressed in terms of communication, these aspects of musicianship are recurrent:

...what we spent the most time on when I played with the quartet was... like sending out emails and... I just want someone to do that for me, because it's really difficult. And talking about taking up time, out of everything that takes the most time. To arrange gigs. (Student)

While expressed as necessary undertakings, these activities are primarily described as additional tasks, performed 'on the side' of a musician's main occupation – or as in this student's case, preferably carried out by someone else. Simultaneously, there are some reservations made concerning musicians' abilities to verbalise and communicate

their reasoning, articulated as something to which they are ‘unaccustomed’ or ‘not used’ to. While communicative actions and verbal expression are described as significant aspects of autonomy, articulations reveal that this area poses a challenge on both an individual and an educational level.

Nevertheless, a regular notion is that musicians need to be able to explain themselves and what they do both verbally and in writing. They need to ‘master tools in order to fight for themselves’, as one teacher proclaims. In relation to this there are also ideas about improved opportunities to argue for one’s *raison d’être* and assert one’s position as a musician in society. Among the teachers in particular, the ability to argue is emphasised:

...they can’t leave education and just ‘play nice’, but they have to be able to explain what they do, give coherent arguments for why they should exist, how they want to work and, yes, why it’s [musicians and music] important in society, nothing can be taken for granted. (Teacher)

Fighting for themselves and arguing for their own existence are examples of statements where music students are positioned as ‘underdogs’. This is not only a question of one’s own survival; it also describes a collective mission where classical musicians in general ought to be able to legitimise classical music and musicians’ role in society. On one occasion a teacher makes a comparison between students in higher education in general and music performance students. By using reported speech to illustrate how music performance students may feel (‘I can only do this’ or ‘everyone else uses such fancy words’), the teacher expresses the wish that higher music education should contribute to a ‘breadth’ so that music students do not feel inferior to students on other degree programmes. Furthermore, some statements can be understood as attempts to redefine what a musician is, ought to or needs to be. Illustrative of this is when a teacher talks about a perceived misconception among musicians that many musicians thought of as successful during the course of history have, in fact, been capable of asserting themselves not only musically but in other ways as well:

In all honesty, we have had a rather strange romantic idea that it’s enough to play as a musician and then... but that... if we look back on the romantic era, there were no puppets, the great composers and musicians could really speak for themselves, be seen, be heard and argue for themselves. I think there is a misconception among our current musicians, actually. (Teacher)

This presupposed idea of craftsmanship as a sufficient part of musicianship is articulated as one held by many musicians, but nonetheless portrayed as false. Not now, nor previously in history, has this been enough, the teacher asserts with a high degree of certainty. Also mooted is the idea that verbal abilities make one a good artist and presenter, since those who can verbally articulate their practice are in a better locus to comment on and explain artistic processes and choices. The statement above, understood in the context of the full findings, suggests that verbal competences have a legitimacy based on the discipline's own tradition. An increased focus on verbal competences is thus not explained primarily by influences from an academic context but rather as a rediscovery of something which musicians used to master in the past.

Verbalisation seems to constitute both a reflective tool in musicians' own knowledge formation and a tool for influencing audience experiences. One student talks about the musician's duty to present music to an audience in ways that make it both available and more interesting. This is one trait that separates a good musician from musicians who 'only play':

...it's really my job to... present this music so that they understand [...] You have a great opportunity to... make it interesting as well. And well, moving. Better. (Student)

Illustrated here is an idea that verbal expression can enhance the experience for listeners, even make the music better. Such abilities are portrayed here as expected of a truly autonomous musician. Furthermore, verbal expression and communication are articulated as a matter of democracy. By having such abilities, musicians are given opportunities to become subjects. It enables them to gain their own voice, to participate in public discourse and to problematise their own art. An illustrative expression concerning the importance of verbal confidence is articulated through a statement about the fear of 'the silenced musician':

I really think it's needed in the future... musicians who can articulate, who can... so we become part of the public discourse. I think it's more common to have articulate directors, actors, writers... visual artists are usually much better at problematising their art and putting it into a broader context. I think there might be a change when musicians, too, can talk about their artistry in a broader context. I think that will mean a lot to the field of music. (Teacher)

A desire for more eloquent musicians was uttered in the interviews and placed in direct contrast to professionals in other artistic fields. The statement above highlights an undesired difference which preferably should be extinguished. Musicians generally need to learn something which other artists have already mastered. Correspondingly, there are examples where students articulate an appreciation in relation to eloquent musicians they have encountered during the education. One student describes a situation where a person who was 'a practising musician who had also reflected a lot' shared their thoughts and concludes that it was very interesting.

Finally, there is an idea that different groups and associations employ different kinds of language that music students need to be able to manage. Since musicians find themselves in different constellations and at various events, they need to be sociable. Therefore, an autonomous musician needs to be able to adapt to different settings and people:

They get some tools, but there are a lot of demands put on musicians, not just in terms of playing: you have to have a pretty firm gaze and talk to people without looking scared when not holding your instrument. And there are some students here who have a long way to go. (Teacher)  
...social skills are extremely important, especially as a freelancer, being able to carry yourself and adapt to different... situations and different social circles. (Student)

While artistic uniqueness and originality are emphasised as desirable qualities for musicians (which we will see examples of under the next heading), there are also vital ideas about adapting and being able to act as a chameleon in some sense. We conclude that the kind of actions which autonomy is constructed around primarily have to do with expressing something and communicating – musically, but also via language. This is articulated explicitly mostly by the teachers, but more often implicitly by students. Musical craftsmanship and communication are thus paired with verbal expression and interaction in constructions of autonomy.

### Holding an independent position

Independence as a state of being, in these interviews, is expressed via different subject positionings. Achieving independence as a musician means reaching a point where reliance on, or control by, others is an exception. Independence is predominantly articulated as a detachment from teachers and as an absence of external constraints

imposed by them. Secondly, it is about independence from prior musical interpretations by others. The positionings of independent subjects are primarily articulated in relation to teachers, other musicians, traditions and sheet music. The desirable position is the independent artist with a personal expression and unique profile.

References to the 'old tradition' are made, referring to a master-apprentice relationship where teachers are seen as musical decision-makers and some kind of knowledge reservoirs (cf. Bennett, 2008). Yet it is worth noting that when 'tradition' collocates with 'old' it can often be interpreted as an attempt to reinforce it as an outdated or 'backward' tradition/relationship. Both teachers and students observe that such ideas are still present to some degree. A student describes that there are teachers who '*hang on to* this master-apprentice tradition', while a teacher states that it '*lands on* our current students'. Taken together, these statements convey tradition as a physical thing, something which can be grasped or in some accidental way falls down upon students. In the first statement teachers actively hold on to it. In the second there is no action performed; the tradition is portrayed as a force in itself.

The 'old tradition' is also depicted as constituting a barrier to students' development. Students talk in critical terms about how they easily come to view the teachers' ideas as 'the truth', how there is often a 'right way' of doing things, how they are 'not encouraged to think freely' and how they have to 'ask for permission'. For such reasons, they are critical of these conditions. Teachers speak about these conditions as well and identify them as an area for educational development. In one statement a teacher claims that 'students often think like their teachers', another uses reported speech to mimic teachers who say things like 'you must play this way' or 'if you do as I tell you, it will be fine', while a third remarks that students need to do 'not only what the teacher says'.

While it is referred to as an old tradition, it is clearly still a concern and a highly extant part of the educational discourse. Both teachers and students are critical of master-apprentice relationships that are seen to foster dependence as opposed to independence. In one teacher's critical statement about concert posters we see a particularly clear example of how a teacher and a group of students are positioned:

You know we even have some concerts... where you can see posters with 'Clarinet professor blah, blah, blah presents his pupils' at a lunchtime concert. Then you're still there, suddenly. (Teacher)

This statement can be understood as an abstraction over a series of social events, a representation of an institutional concert culture. The poster, which serves to inform a potential audience of an upcoming event, is here re-contextualised as an illustrative example of a problematic relationship. In the poster the action is performed by a professor, and the students are aggregated and presented by him. The main actor is the teacher, positioned as an indispensable hub. Furthermore, the teacher is referred to by both a professional title and his proper name. Meanwhile the students are relegated to the background. Referred to as '*his* pupils' the students are thus placed in a relation to the teacher where they become defined as a particular master's progenies.

Though there are numerous manifest critical perspectives voiced on the old tradition by both students and teachers, some statements are contradictory and reveal an embeddedness of ideals related to this particular master-apprentice relationship. For example, one teacher speaks about a 'very good teacher' and refers to him as a 'Papa Percussion'. The statement suggests a very close relationship, involving a dependent position for students emphasised through the use of the paternalistic metaphor. Furthermore, there are examples where students support their claims by using argument from authority, legitimising their claims by referring to the teachers' statements:

It's harder to get a job because we're more people fighting over them and the level is much higher. Our teacher told us that when we had a lesson...  
(Student)

The student thus argues that something is true because the teacher, in this case treated as an authority, said so. The interviewees generally assert that independent musicians make their own decisions and that they should stand in a position where nothing interferes with musical interpretation and expression. From the students' perspectives, a unique and personal profile is primarily developed through their own endeavours. Several students observe that it is not supported by their education at this point in time. Illustrative of this point is the comment that there is 'little room for artistic freedom and personal expression'. Simultaneously, students are in agreement that 'you are expected to stand for something unique, a personal expression'. One student remarks that it is important to know 'what can separate me from others', whilst another claims that 'you become crazy if you are being moulded into a form'. In short, you need to have your own opinions, make your own decisions and not rely on others. For instance, one student critically describes how 'many' students approach a new piece of music:



I notice that there are so many people who, as soon as they get a new piece, check a recording directly to see how someone else does it and so on. And that's the fastest way, but to sit down and to look at the score and think 'how could he have thought about this, and what could I do with this'... (Student)

The statement conveys a negative view of musicians who work in imitative ways, rendering the independently interpreting subject as an ideal. Amongst teachers, developing a unique and personal expression is not explicitly emphasised to the same extent as among students. More commonly, teachers speak about 'awareness' of a musical position. This awareness is primarily built around insights into one's musical influences, a knowledge of where you belong in the musical field. However, one teacher mentions specific courses where the main objective is for students to 'find' their own artistic expression, 'find each individual's artistic uniqueness'. Yet another teacher talks about freelancing and states that 'you need to have your own profile'. The teacher continues:

...we see that those who have made it are those who have dared to specialise their knowledge. (Teacher)

As for the above statement, creating a personal profile is a question of courage. For students it is primarily a question of developing something through acquiring knowledge and skills. More often still, at the heart of the teacher's statements is the 'awareness' referred to here: 'more required now than ever is an awareness of who you are as a musician'. All in all, teachers construct a position where independence means that musicians have insight into their own musicianship; a good self-perception of what musical space they inhabit. Similarly, other teachers note that 'you must have an awareness of your place', while another claims that students need to 'become more aware of their position'. There are also statements about an 'understanding of who you are' and the need to 'understand yourself in relation to other musicians'. One teacher speaks about a course:

... the course ends with that they [the students] describe (...) their own musical context. That they [show they] understand how and what shapes their musical references as well as understand what their references are. ... Why do I think this drummer is good, or that violinist ... like putting themselves in a musical context that is. (Teacher)

The emphasis amongst the students is on developing a personal expression and learning how to make the music 'your own'. In other words, it is a matter of gaining new subject knowledge and skills. The teachers, on the other hand, talk about awareness, about contextualising yourself or understanding something which is already there, in place. This is thus rather about gaining personal insight. To put it differently, the students seem to demand that their education offers them ways and knowledge to construct themselves as unique musicians, while the teachers' articulations convey an essentialism where the role of the education is to offer them tools to discover an already existing musical essence.

## **Discussion**

In constructions of autonomy and independence within higher music education we see that teachers and students have similar ideas about what autonomous and independent musicianship means. However, they talk about this in slightly different ways. While the teachers mostly express ideas around aspects of autonomy in terms of transferable skills needed for successful performance in different professional situations and contexts, the students instead talk about specific skills linked to concrete tasks. Our analysis demonstrates that musical qualities are essential, but it also reveals that verbal competences are increasingly important prerequisites in order to develop as autonomous musicians.

The data supports an assumption that language skills have taken on the role of a new craft. This is partly advanced by the actions needed because of the demands of the labour market. These demands link to changing structures of funding for music as well as labour market saturation. As full-time musical jobs are becoming increasingly scarce, classical musicians and educators are increasingly expected to handle marketing, business, community engagement and self-driven musical projects to meet market demand. Entrepreneurship curricula are now in place at most music conservatoires globally (Moore, 2016). However, in our study there is no explicit evidence of criticism or scepticism against an increased focus on language skills and market adjustments within education.

This research supports the idea that being unique and having a personal expression are seen as vital for developing as professional musicians, as suggested by previous findings (Gaunt 2016; Johansson, 2012). To successfully compete for jobs, it is not enough to

have the musical craftsmanship and knowing the tradition; a personal profile is an important selling point. This can be understood as an aspect of a neoliberal society in which you are your own brand (León, 2014) and where the internal organising logic of neoliberalism views competition as a powerful stimulus for driving quality.

We argue that this implies a challenge in a profession where musicians commonly act as bearers of tradition. A mantra of personal expression and uniqueness potentially creates tensions: to what degree is uniqueness a desirable characteristic of classical musicians?

Looking more carefully at the constructions of autonomy and independence, it is possible to question how far they actually reach in music performance institutions. In some sense, autonomy and independence means adapting to different social and musical contexts, meeting the needs of the labour market and following musical traditions. Our study points to how alignment to current conditions constitutes a large part of what it means to be an autonomous and independent musician. Independence, then, does not mean breaking norms and traditions or questioning educational systems or market principles, for example. Autonomous and independent musicianship therefore suggests a rather limited latitude in terms of possible actions and positionings. Furthermore, this study has found that this trend is not problematised to any great extent. Given these findings, it would be of interest to further investigate the ways in which this restricts the (rhetorical) principle of artistic freedom.

The findings of this study raise questions about the role of (music higher) education in supporting students' development of autonomy and independence. Concrete learning activities geared towards these expressed aims were not the focus of the interviews. It is, however, worth noting that teachers point out that students must reflexively become aware of who they *are*, what musical preferences they *have*, and where they *are* located in the musical field. In other words, developing autonomy and independence is primarily a question of becoming aware of existing talent and identity rather than being inspired by new influences to develop artistic freedom. This suggests that the role of education is mainly to assist students to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses in relation to future challenges. We argue that central to this conception is the idea of the self as authentic and as something to be discovered and expressed rather than developed and contested.

In addition to market demands, we argue that one reason for the intensified focus on language skills is the process of academisation. As an integral part of higher education,

study programmes must adapt to regulations and organisational structures (Ek et al., 2013). Academisation also demands stronger links between research and teaching, which may create a gap between education and profession. Academisation may be considered useful by the profession if it proves the added value of performing arts education. However, an essential issue is whether the outcomes that education offers correspond with what the profession require. More specifically, placing art into a university system and an academic discourse can be seen as challenging fundamental ideas about artistic competence (Nerland & Jensen, 2014). In our study, language skills are not connected to theoretical knowledge and research or seen as a mean of gaining academic status. However, teachers and students express a need to learn 'what others already can, but we not are used to', i.e. to communicate verbally. Being part of the higher education system has not just compelled performing programmes to adapt to the standards of other academic programmes but also to create an ambition to further develop a language for professional practice.

## **Concluding remarks**

The meanings of autonomy and independence are not fixed. Whilst being depicted as key concepts within higher education, various academic disciplines and professions will interpret these in different ways. This article has begun to explore constructions of autonomy and independence within music performance education in Sweden. To conclude, we argue that autonomy and independence largely involve an alignment to current societal and market conditions, which suggests a rather limited latitude in possible actions and positions.

We demonstrate that while the concepts encompass many different aspects, there is a clear focus on preparing students for a professional career. To this end, there is an emphasis on language skills and verbal communication as important components. It is striking that such competences are almost exclusively linked to entrepreneurship and individual artistry. While the concept of autonomy holds the potential to argue for a distinct professional field, inside and outside academia, the ability of students to reflect on social and ethical aspects of art or on musicians' role in society (cf. Swedish Code of Statutes, 2009:1037) is not recognised to any significant extent in the data. There are, however, outlines of ideas concerning the ability of musicians to participate in public discourse and debate through developed verbal skills. It seems to us that there is room for advancements in this area. At a time when nationalistic

forces seek to establish their cultural protectionist agenda so as to strengthen the national 'common' identity, it is our firm belief that higher education has to prepare music performance students for asserting their mandate in society – not only in terms of their individual artistic freedom, but also in terms of claiming the freedom of arts.

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## **Part two**

### **Instrumental learning and teaching**



## Maestro or Mentor? On cultural differences in performance education

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‘Wir müssen mit dem schädlichsten aller alteuropäischen Konzepte brechen: mit der Vorstellung der Übertragung von Wissen.’ (We need to break with the most damaging of traditional European concepts: the idea that knowledge is transferable.) (Sloterdijk, 2015, p. 126)

### Abstract

*The object of this article is to highlight differences within educational cultures at an academy level, regardless of the student’s age. Two basic models for understanding the relationship between teacher and student are introduced, one called Maestro and the other the Mentor model. I wish to explore how they can be recognised practically in terms of feedback modes. The content is informed by pedagogical and, to a certain extent, philosophical ideas. However, my personal experience, first as a student and then as a teacher, is central.*

*The authoritative Maestro knows all the answers and personifies the tradition in terms of repertoire and interpretation. He or she takes full responsibility for the students’ artistic development, as long as they are compliant. If the Maestro gives group lessons, they will be traditional master classes. In contrast, the Mentor helps a student find his own way, which means that the Mentor is also a learner. The responsibility is largely the student’s, who is seen as a resourceful collaborator. Group lessons are frequent, with students commenting on each other’s playing and development.*

*One might expect that cultural differences in teaching are disappearing in today’s world with its exchange programmes. However, they still manifest themselves clearly in performance teaching and seem to correspond to hierarchical structures. As professors rarely undergo any substantial pedagogical training,*

*teaching methods are often not a result of conscious choice, they rather tend to preserve traditions that need challenging. In this respect, the relationship between interpretation and technique is a central factor, the question being if technique must be developed before interpretative skills become relevant or if they may be taught in parallel.*

*The described models both have their strengths and weaknesses. It is important, however, to ask if authoritarian teaching still has a place in modern, democratic societies.*

## **Introduction**

My first serious teaching took place at the music conservatory in Oslo (which later merged with the Norwegian Academy of Music) in 1989. Seven years had passed since I graduated from the Vienna Music Academy (now 'Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst'). My initial approach was naturally very similar to the way I had been taught myself. I soon discovered that this did not work very well with Norwegian and Swedish students, though. The method somehow did not 'catch on'. Above all, the technical drill and the routine of etudes and exercises had to be adapted to my students' attitudes. They were mostly soundly motivated and understood the necessities of the craft, but second-rate repertoire (as etudes mostly are) and the sheer repetition of technical movements without musical meaning often seemed a waste of time to them. Above all, they wanted to satisfy their urge to make music, not me. At my rather young age of 31, and with no previous teaching experience, I also lacked the overwhelming authority of my own professor Beyerle in Vienna.

For a number of years now I have had the pleasure of revisiting my old academy as a guest teacher in the class of a slightly older colleague from the class of professor Beyerle. These visits have revealed to me how much my own teaching has changed. I have had similar experiences at many other institutions on the continent, among them Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt in Weimar, Conservatoire Nationale Supérieur de Musique et de Danse in Paris and the State Conservatory of Tbilisi in Georgia. The differences become apparent through the style of playing and attitudes of the students, discussions with colleagues, in some cases also common teaching in a class lesson. Some passive observation has also been helpful.

Naturally, pedagogical practice and theory are influenced by general attitudes and conditions as well as political expectations in different societies. One would perhaps expect pedagogical differences to disappear as the world gets more closely connected. To make more precise observations of the degree to which such differences still exist, a group of colleagues at the Norwegian Academy of Music, me being one of them, decided to conduct a number of interviews with students from different countries. Some studied abroad before coming to Oslo, some did the opposite, and several have been exchange students. Thus they were able to compare two or more learning environments. The results so far have been presented at conferences and are very interesting indeed (Sætre, Carlsen, Birkeland & Sandbakken, 2018). The main outcome is that differences do exist to a greater degree than we would have expected (further documentation is forthcoming, but not available at present). In what respects do such differences manifest themselves?

### Differences between educational cultures

There is to a certain extent a common tradition within the classical music world. Is it still relevant to speak of separate 'schools' – a common term in this respect – within classical performance education? It is worth mentioning that few teachers at this level have any formal pedagogical training apart from shorter courses that institutions may offer and sometimes demand of newly appointed professors. In addition, there is often some scepticism towards theorising and pedagogical literature, and therefore the initial approach of most teachers will, as with me, be to pass on what they have learned similarly to how they were taught. This, of course, tends to preserve the tradition without further reflection.

Some issues are of particular importance when discussing cultural differences:

- (a) The mode of communication between teacher and student.
- (b) Care for the general development of the student's personality versus focus on purely instrumental challenges.
- (c) The methodical focus on musical interpretation as opposed to technique.

A. The relationship between teacher and student will probably always be hierarchical to some degree: the performance teacher will be more or less dominant. I choose to call a strongly hierarchical relationship with an authoritarian teacher the Maestro model and a more egalitarian relationship with communication both ways the Mentor

model. The feedback from the teacher will be different depending on the models. They are of course extremes, and teachers will normally make use of elements from both. There is a continuum of pedagogical practices between these models.

B. There is a tension between student-focused and instrument-based teaching constituting two poles within general pedagogical history and thinking. Student-focused teaching (as in the Mentor model) leaves much freedom, and responsibility, to the student and demands a lot of flexibility and empathy from the teacher. Instrument or subject-focused teaching (as in the Maestro model) puts the technical and musical demands in the foreground without overmuch regard for the individuality of the student. The teacher 'owns' the subject, in this case the traditional repertoire and technique, and the student must submit to its demands; discipline is an important asset, and interpretational freedom is limited.

An excellent and readable modern introduction to pedagogical theory and different practices is Gary Thomas' *Education – A Very Short Introduction* (2013). His terms for subject-focused teaching is 'formal education', whereas student-focused teaching is seen as 'progressive'. I also recommend Michael F. Mascolo's (2009) very nuanced article *Beyond student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogy: Teaching and learning as guided participation*, which sees these models as simplifications. As mentioned, I share his view to some extent but treat these models as useful tools in order to understand the dynamics between teacher and student.

C. In classical music education it is normal to distinguish between interpretation and technique to some, often a significant, degree. In other words, the artistic aspects of the concert repertoire are treated separately from the necessary technical tools. Regardless of the pedagogy there is no way to avoid a lot of technical study and polish; the instruments and their repertoires are just very challenging to master professionally.

The Maestro model will normally have a strong emphasis on the repertoire and technical requirements, leaving less room for the student's personality. The latter will find more room for expression within the Mentor model. The teacher/student relationship may be viewed as a manifestation of the teacher's identity as being representative either of an important tradition or of her or his involvement with individual students and their general development. What has been treated as points A. and B. so far tend to melt into one; the mode of communication is a result of the underlying pedagogical attitude, whether the teacher is conscious of it or not. This way we end up with some fundamental questions about different kinds of performance teaching and their



methods. I will first describe the Maestro model in further detail, then the Mentor model and its basically cooperative understanding of artistic learning. Variations in feedback within these models will be clarified and the methodical relationship between interpretation and technique discussed. A few words on possible sociological relations influencing these models bridge them in the middle.

We should not forget that different levels of proficiency – and maturity – have a role here. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein called the learning of basic faculties like reading, counting and writing somewhat drastically ‘drill’ (German ‘Abrichtung’) (Wittgenstein, 2006). Learning an instrument is similar in that the question how to sit at a piano or hold a violin or an oboe does not allow for much discussion. However, it is from the very beginning possible to appeal to the understanding of the pupil. The final goal is perhaps not very different within the different models, and the roads may converge on a very high level when teacher and student – hopefully – develop a relationship of genuine artistic respect towards each other. Our topic here is the student who already sees a professional career as an option. This may happen at a very young age; my own experience has taught me that gifted children may be treated very much like adult students at least from the age when they enter puberty.

## **The Maestro model**

My time at the Vienna Music Academy from 1976 to 1982 gave me my first experience of the maestro – the domineering professor. The teaching I received in my home town of Tromsø way above the Arctic Circle was quite relaxed and unmethodical – I was a rather late starter. Now I was told ‘ask – I think I can answer every question!’ The result was that I did not dare to ask anything for two years. My professor was friendly, but the communication was prescriptive: he knew, I should do as I was told. That was probably the way it had to be under the circumstances.

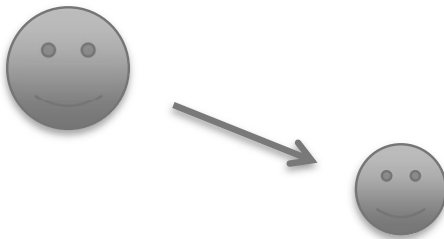
Some decades earlier the famous violin pedagogue Carl Flesch (a Hungarian who mainly taught in Germany) demanded that his students be ‘like clay in my hands:’ According to his son, ‘the maestro was surrounded by an atmosphere of absolute authority, which did not allow questions or discussion.’ (Flesch, 1960, p. 7, translated by the author). If a student arrived with too much self-confidence, she or he was systematically taken to pieces and made ready to be ‘kneaded’ – like clay – into a good violinist with the

stamp of professor Flesch. Further older examples of this kind of teaching are not hard to find, including smacking with a stick (Barnard, 1874)

However, these authoritarian methods are alive and well even today. *Producing Excellence – The Making of Virtuosos* is based on a doctoral thesis by the Polish sociologist Izabela Wagner (2015). She studied the so-called Russian violin school as she found it in her homeland and elsewhere, above all in Paris. The teachers mentioned (anonymously) were all moulded by their Russian, or Soviet, background, some teaching at conservatoires, some privately. She quotes the ‘typical teacher’s’ ideal of discipline: ‘The best students are Asian ones, because they know how to work. They do not open their mouth: no tantrums or perversity. They are not in the revolutionary mood. They work and that’s it.’ (Wagner, 2015, p. 208). Some of the feedback reported in this book, I regret to say, is positively abusive. Due to my own background the examples here are from string teaching. I do not think there are fundamental differences in hierarchy and methods within the same cultural milieu, though.

The Maestro model seems to have prevailed more or less everywhere during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It may be difficult to imagine in detail how the practice of instrumental teaching was before 1900. Perhaps greater freedom with regard to the musical text, improvisation and stronger emphasis on compositional skills allowed for more individual interpretations (or in the worst case self-indulgent exhibitionism). The extreme ideal of perfectionism, created to a large degree by the record industry, did not yet exist. Discipline was probably strict, however, along the same lines as general methods of education.

Let us look at the strongly hierarchical Maestro model as it may look today and its consequences in further detail.



*Figure 1: The Maestro model*

Communication is one-way, from teacher to student. The teacher occupies a different rank in the hierarchy, and his or her methods are a 'guarantee' of success. To a certain extent the maestro 'owns' the student.

The maestro, male or female, represents the art and its tradition, the way to play the instrument, or sing, and to interpret canonical works. These aspects may not be questioned by the student without disturbing the relationship with the teacher and thereby the teaching. The maestro will initiate the student into the secrets of the art and guide her or him towards success in the professional world. Traditionally, the top rank is reserved for the soloist, followed by the chamber musician, the orchestral musician (leaders and principal players enjoying special consideration) and, at the bottom, the non-performing teacher in a municipal school or private teaching practice (see for instance Wagner, 2015, p. 197).

In this model the student is not seen as having any special competence. The teaching is organised as private lessons (passive listeners may be welcome) or as 'master classes' where the students take turns to play while the master is the only one allowed to give feedback. Repertoire and exercises are the maestro's responsibility, and the students must trust his authority and expect maximum results as long as they submit to his regime. Discussions between students may occur, of course, but as one of my former students said after having studied for some months in Berlin: 'I have no idea who else is part of my class.' The contact between teacher and student may still be warm and friendly, in a way they are dependent upon each other. If the student feels well taken care of, an affectionate dedication may start to develop, and the attention of the maestro may give the student the feeling of being rewarded. As long as the methods are sound, a very efficient transfer of a whole artistic framework may be the result.

Very often a student is expected to attend the maestro's courses during holidays or even term time in addition to the regular lessons. Lessons with other teachers are out of the question, and guest teachers may lead to potentially confusing interferences. The changing of teachers within a conservatoire is a humiliation and may create serious tensions between colleagues. Hence, the Maestro model is basically private even if practised at an institution, and copying is a frequently applied learning method. When the maestro decides that the time is ripe, a new professor will be found with her or his mediation.

There is often a strong competitive attitude between the students. Different classes and maestros will likewise eye each other almost with suspicion. The resulting pressure on

all parties involved may be an extra motivating factor and lead to extreme commitment. Success implies a higher place in the hierarchy for both teacher and student – as my former slightly unhappy Berlin student admitted: ‘I do practice more now.’

As a matter of fact, the Maestro model is clearly expressed in the way symphony orchestras work – almost without being questioned. The broader audience also seems to be enthused by the image of the strong and inspired leader of great forces. The parallel to military hierarchy is striking, with a general giving orders which are passed on by officers of different ranks down to the privates, the ‘tutti’, or multitude. It is ironic that the task of a conductor is mainly pedagogic, 15 hours of rehearsal may anticipate 1<sup>1/2</sup> hours of performance, and it is worth asking how fruitful the classical, authoritarian role of the conductor actually is. Orchestras playing without this mute organiser tend to display a higher energy level as orchestral chamber musicians instead of ‘blindly’ following a visual lead. Size evidently has a role to play here and chamber orchestras do this more often than symphony orchestras, sometimes even playing by heart. Anyhow, there are few conductors who charge an orchestra with its maximum energy potential.

### Hierarchical and egalitarian societies

Societies as a whole are organised in a more or less hierarchical or egalitarian way. This circumstance may find one of its expressions in grammatical structures like formal and informal address and the use of titles in spoken language. It is interesting in this respect to notice that the informal ‘thou’ and its inflections have (all but) disappeared in the Anglo-Saxon world, while formal address is an almost unknown phenomenon to young people speaking Scandinavian languages. In German, French, Italian etc. both are present and observed to different degrees.

It is hardly possible to rank cultures and nations accurately in terms of hierarchy. I find Erin Meyer’s perhaps a little sketchy division convincing, as it fits with my own experience (Meyer, 2017). In an article on management she treats countries like Russia, China and Japan as hierarchical extremes, France, Belgium and Germany (I would like to add Austria myself) being somewhat less pronounced. On the egalitarian side, Scandinavia and the Netherlands are the European extremes, closely followed by the United States and Canada. Great Britain is given a position further towards the middle. There are also highly valuable insights to be gained from some economists’ research into teaching within general education. These seem to fit in well with my impressions and analysis (Doepke & Zilibotti, 2019). One paper states that ‘methods

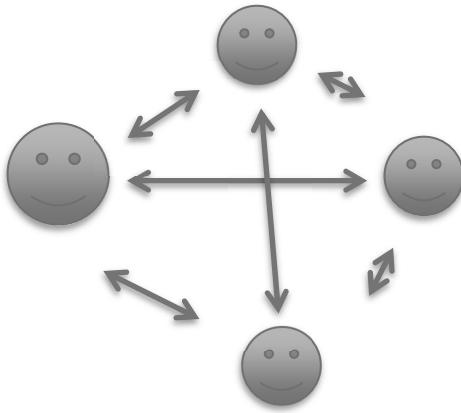
of teaching differ tremendously across countries', emphasising the difference between 'horizontal' and 'vertical teaching practices' (Algan, Cahuc & Shleifer, 2013). These coincide with the Maestro and Mentor models.

I think it is evident that the strongly hierarchical structures underlying the Maestro model are sociological in origin, as are those of the Mentor model which will be described next. Hierarchical thinking colours the relationship between performers, teachers, their classes (I have even been told that students of star teachers may get access to practice rooms more easily) and the students within a class. However, in the traditional world of classical music these structures may perhaps be more accentuated and survive even if they are less marked in society in general, a well-known phenomenon in sociology.

## **The Mentor model**

As mentioned, my studies in Vienna were in typically maestro style, and my own attempts to implement the same in Oslo were unsuccessful. After 30 years my teaching is now rooted in the Mentor model and through discussions with and visits to classes of colleagues I have gained the impression that the faculty in Oslo generally shares this model, regardless of instruments. Our interviewees tell the same story.

A teacher always needs knowledge or skill-based authority to be trusted by students. However, in the Mentor model an understanding of teaching as cooperation between teacher(s) and students is central, and it shapes a different kind of relationship to the Maestro model. The Socratic ideal of the teacher as a 'midwife' releasing talent already present in the student is a fitting if rather worn metaphor. In other words, the teacher is not supposed to transfer his or her own artistic and technical gifts and understanding to the students, but to help them develop their own ideals. At our academy a certain measure of collaboration between professors is preconditioned through master classes or workshops (called 'forums') with different teachers each week, some of them external. In addition, each member of staff is expected to organise class lessons with active participation by the students, thereby motivating the students to share their thoughts. This way students get in touch with each other's playing and development and with diverse approaches to teaching and practising. Finally, students may share two, or even more, main instrument teachers.



*Figure 2 The Mentor model.*

The students are supposed to take an active part during lessons, sharing thoughts and asking questions. They are seen as competent and expected to share their insights with each other. Ideally the mentor may teach by engaging with the students' reflections and challenging their thinking. Questions should be a crucial part of the teaching; the learning process is ultimately the students' own responsibility.

The Mentor model places responsibility on both sides.<sup>1</sup> It implies that students must be competent as regards their own learning process and development, direction and to a certain extent methods. Their personal motivation needs to be strong as the teacher will rarely be authoritarian; the student is responsible for the learning outcome and choice of teacher(s). Less motivated or self-conscious students may find this challenging.

Student competence regarding their own development has an influence on roles and methods. The teacher, with deeper insights technically and musically, does not view her or his interpretation style or musical ideals as necessarily being right for the student. The teacher is curious about the student's own ideals and wishes. Here is a learning potential for both sides as the mentor needs to confront new ideas and musical concepts. The student's competence is a combination of curiosity, a unique personality, artistic drive and a closeness to his or her own – and colleagues'

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<sup>1</sup> This model (often called cooperative teaching) has a long history within pedagogical research, more on this in Mascolo (2009)

– progress and existing skills and understanding. Students may back each other up and give valuable feedback from a different perspective than the teacher and thus also be of help to the mentor.

Workshops and class lessons, with the students giving active feedback, are welcome. However, it is essential that the professor creates an atmosphere where comments and discussions can take place in a fruitful manner, within a secure and trustful framework. This does not come by itself (see e.g. Hanken, 2015). If successful, the class lessons may teach the students how to give constructive feedback to themselves and prepare them to teach in the future. Teamwork between the teachers of an institution sets a good example for the students and allows teachers to feel proud of the students of colleagues, not only his or her own.

Paula Collens and Andrea Creech (2013) compared the roles in performance teaching to those of therapist and client in psychological counselling. Central is the mutual transfer, here described with the background of intersubjectivity theory as developed since the 1980s (more on the theory in the article). This is a very interesting approach with parallels especially to the Mentor model.

## **Modes of feedback**

Teaching is communication. The two models described here are based on different forms of communication and roles. One could also speak of fundamentally different philosophical mindsets, which shape the pedagogy. Let us explore this a little.

The anthropologist, biologist etc. Gregory Bateson viewed learning as a process parallel to biological evolution and outlined levels of learning inherent in evolutionary development (Bateson, 1979). First, species need to adapt to their environment to survive, a kind of dumb and primitive, but necessary, learning akin to Wittgenstein's 'drill' when learning basic skills. Bateson's second level is to learn to learn, which may be described as the personalised and reflective acquirement of knowledge and skills, mostly reserved for humans. This is of course much more challenging and often has a long time perspective. Interestingly, Bateson operates with a third level as well, to learn to learn to learn, but without going into detail (Bateson, 1979, p. 174).

The English philosopher Mary Warnock defines the aim of human learning as the acquirement of ‘understanding, enjoyment and independent control’ (Warnock, 2001, p. 20). These three elements are central to all arenas and levels of teaching. In practice it is useful to ask to which extent these elements are implemented and balanced in any kind of teaching. In instrumental teaching, for instance, excessive focus on control may interfere negatively with enjoyment. Moreover, there may be a feeling of control without real understanding. On the other hand, I doubt that understanding can seriously undermine enjoyment and control.

From this point of departure, I will explore three modes of verbal feedback in performance teaching which can be seen as a simple – and simplified – scale in three steps:



*Figure 3: Kinds of feedback at different levels of complexity*

- A. Prescription is basically a kind of drill, ordering or demonstrating how something should sound or be achieved technically. This kind of feedback must be clear and unambiguous to enable the student to emulate the given instruction and its aim. To a certain extent, prescription cannot be avoided, especially when new skills are introduced. It is a one-way communication mode.
- B. Feedback by suggestion of a possible solution, be it to a technical or musical problem, gives the student a choice, thereby allowing for independent work and thinking at the same time as a preliminary option is given. The student may respond verbally to the suggestion in the lesson. Ideally, both prescriptions and suggestions should be explained to enable understanding of the artistic thinking behind them.
- C. Teaching by asking questions is the most challenging for both teacher and student. The goal is to invoke and enhance the student’s own concepts and reflection through goal-oriented but open questions. Experiments allowing the student to experience a passage or movement in different ways are an important and often humorous related method. Questions and experiments



invite the student to take the initiative regarding the direction of his or her work. It is definitely the most collaborative of these modes of feedback.

Within the Maestro model prescription will normally be the dominant feedback mode, to a certain extent perhaps modified by suggestions. This is a very efficient teaching method mainly aimed at rapid improvement. At the other end of the scale we find the extensive use of questions and experiments, which is an ideal within the Mentor model. The goal is long-term. The student should learn to learn independently, and the process will enable understanding, enjoyment by mastering new elements and individual control of acquired skills and concepts.

Hopefully we are now able to recognise the two models through their application of feedback modes, group teaching and the teacher/student relationship. A teacher may certainly use different modes in his or her teaching; a collaborative mentor may thus use prescriptions extensively just before a concert or an audition where time is limited and something needs immediate correction. Whether a typical maestro can also playfully engage with a student through questions and experiments is an open question which I hesitate to answer.

## **Interpretation versus technique**

‘First you must have the technique, later you may interpret!’ I was told during my student years in Vienna. I have heard this repeated by other professors over the years. A violin colleague in Oslo, on the other hand, vehemently opposed technical exams, reasoning that ‘I do not want to take part in separating music and technique!’

Musical interpretation and instrumental technique can in fact not be completely separated. Technique is nothing but the ability to express oneself, and technical exercises always have a musical component, perhaps apart from purely gymnastic ones. Still, the concept of a separation is common. It makes the task of the teacher less complex, and maybe a fear of complexity lurks behind a predominant focus on technique. There are teachers who choose to deal mainly with the craft of playing until the student has reached a professional level, whereas others allow interpretation to be the main focus and develop technique simultaneously. My own experience is that a technical problem often seems to evaporate as the student’s musical idea clarifies.

It is self-evident that one cannot express something without the necessary technique; without language, no communication. At the same time, it is of limited use to be good at saying something if you have nothing to say. It is worth questioning whether development of musical imagination and understanding can be put on hold and then suddenly brought to life after years of painstaking technical practice. My own experience was to some extent a waste of time. It took me years to develop any real understanding of interpretation after my final exam, though I do not want to blame my professor alone for this.

There is a great number of manuals available on how to play an instrument, some of them very good. They tend to describe the movements necessary to create sounds, avoiding the complexities of musical texts and the many possible choices involved. Interpretation can be taught independently of the instrument, but relatively few have made an effort to write comprehensively about this.<sup>2</sup> My impression is that strong focus on technique before interpretation is more typical within a Maestro model, though it would be interesting to investigate this and other questions outlined here in further detail. Chamber music might be the ideal arena for developing interpretational skills and understanding, but it is normally of inferior importance in traditional performance education.

## Final comments

We have explored some significant factors which characterise different kinds of performance pedagogy: hierarchical prescription versus egalitarian collaboration, feedback modes and focus on technique versus interpretation. We have touched upon the circumstance that behind the methodologies there are ideologies and varying views of human nature. This should invite wider reflection and is worth investigating in future research. The pedagogical models have strengths and weaknesses in terms of efficiency or long-term development, for instance, and it should be possible to discover further consequences of pedagogical models and traditions. Perhaps it would be ideal for a student to gain some experience of both maestros and collaborative mentors?

A career within classical music is often highly competitive. Auditions, exams and competitions are central parts of the lives of many young (and not so young) musicians.

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<sup>2</sup> One attempt is Carlsen and Holm (2017)

Excessively free and personal interpretations will often not be encouraged by traditional juries, and this may contribute to a deplorable lack of imagination and courage in performance. Students should choose what is right for them, but in order to choose you must be aware of differences and possibilities. Likewise, institutions need to ask themselves whether their teaching is in line with their basic values. The different models presented here are often not consciously chosen by teachers or institutions. Whatever ideal one favours, reflection and questioning is unavoidable. Otherwise classical music and its tradition may soon be an endangered species.

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## How (not) to teach

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### Abstract

*In this personal essay Susanne van Els draws on her musical career as a performer and educator to look at when, where and how essential learning takes place. Because, when answering the number one question – what is our main goal in life – the answer should not be ‘to teach’ but ‘for our students to learn’. There is a major discrepancy between the ideal musicianship, as portrayed by great musicians and felt sincerely by youngsters who start their training at conservatoires, and the information materials and course structures offered by our study programmes. Also, the way we organise our education stands remote from professional practice and from the original and valuable master-apprentice model. Is our system of ‘controlled learning’ making our students passive? And would they develop better in an atmosphere of trust and when they enjoy themselves more? Promising projects were conducted based on an idea that goes beyond student-centred learning: student-led education.*

### Classical music

This is about classical music programmes. When discussing issues that are topical in music education there is a general notion that practices in folk, jazz and pop music are essentially different from what a classical musician does – I think this is a matter of (different) balance at most. If there is an absence of creation, improvisation, ‘the here and now uniqueness’ in reproduction (playing Mozart), a classical music concert is meaningless.

The classical music profession involves incredible technical, physical and mental demands: a job which requires steady health and complete madness at times, with responsibilities ranging from understanding music and serving composers to finding

an audience and organising money, networks and professional support. And in the end, it is all about humanity, society, individual and universal joy and pain, human existence and searching for the divine. It's the best job in the world, it's just not easy. And it's not simple: the kind of learning that it requires might best be described as growth.

## **Learning = growing**

As musicians we are blessed to have a profession which obliges us to keep learning, even just to maintain a level, which means we have our daily practice and a path of ongoing development.

When I quit playing to start working in education, I found myself learning poems by heart. One every two weeks, to be memorised with the objective of being able to recite it fluently for the never upcoming occasion of someone's need to hear me recite a poem.

It took a while before I realised what was going on: I missed learning. I missed playing music, I missed the physical activity, I missed my precious old Italian viola, I missed the solitude of practising, I missed the fun in the dressing room, I missed the excitement on stage, I even missed being nervous. But most of all, I missed learning.

One description of growth could be that there is a certain natural determination whilst at the same time there are only some predictable moments. When we grow crops, we know that we have to create the right circumstances for fertility, good soil, warmth and light, some protection. Then we wait, we do not sit next to the tomato yelling 'grow!' And every parent knows they are a sidekick in this process that children go through when growing up. They are an important factor, of course, teaching by example for better or for worse, but the relationship between their actions and the effects on the child is not always clear. And the most important rule of parenting is to really see your child. To extend trust, and to play, work and live together. To truly be with them.

## Teaching – what, how?

My main teacher for 6 years at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague was viola player Ferdinand Erblisch, a student of Hatto Beyerle, from Vienna. A most vivid memory of something he said was when I played and taught at a summer course with his string quartet, the Orlando Festival, and I was over the moon because I got to play with Norbert Brainin of the Amadeus Quartet. So, late one evening at the bar Ferdinand came up to me and asked ‘what did you learn today?’, and when I did not have an immediate answer because I was so happy with myself, our conversation stopped. This was an important lesson on lifelong learning and the importance of it to a musician.

He also taught me about the ancient carpets, the kelims, that he collected and how to cook ossobuco. What he taught me about playing in the Viennese way, ‘wienerisch’, was very helpful later on when I joined the Schönberg Ensemble, although Ferdinand was not particularly fond of 20<sup>th</sup> century music and did not have this purpose in mind for what he taught me.

I learnt everything from him when his quartet invited me to play all of Mozart’s string quintets with them in several concerts and tours: our bowing arms connected through our spines, his viola sound influenced every muscle I used, I saw him disconnect in the dressing room when his first violin and cello colleagues argued fiercely, I felt how nervous he was on stage and how much he wanted to make music. And the funny thing is that Ferdinand got the idea of asking me not because of his thorough knowledge of my capabilities and my many flaws because he had been teaching me for all those years, but because I once spent a long evening going through chamber music repertoire just for fun with friends, one of whom was his wife, and he heard us play Mozart when he came to pick her up. So, not just I, but also my teacher, learned outside the actual lesson.

Nobuko Imai was my other viola teacher in the same period. I remember one lesson in which she was so frustrated at how I played Schubert’s Arpeggione Sonata that she did not know what to say or do. Shortly after, I found a copy of her own Arpeggione score, with her personal choices of register and fingering, from which I have been performing since, still not knowing what it meant but feeling a suggestion anyway.

A huge lesson that came from Nobuko is in this story: we wanted to perform together but not just Brandenburg no. 6, so when I was offered a new viola concerto by the Dutch national composer Willem Jeths, I asked for a viola double concerto. The piece was magnificent, as we discovered in the first rehearsal two days before the first performance: one movement of 15', virtuosic both for the large ensemble and for the two solo violas, incredibly tense and atmospheric. When Willem called me while I was driving back home after the rehearsal, I expressed my huge appreciation and gratitude, and I mentioned that it was just a little bit surprising that the piece did not include a cadenza. In the middle of that night Willem called me again in a feverish tone of voice: how about he add the notes of his solo elegy for viola, a piece he had written for me years before, to the concerto? The magical thing about this idea was that it felt very natural to attach the solo piece to the end of the concerto and that it would be possible, even very exciting and beautiful, to create a two-instrument version of the solo piece. The next day I went to Nobuko to show her the Elegy (which was a virtuosic piece as well with high ranges that are usually not the domain of the viola), and on the day of the first performance the three of us were literally cutting the score of the solo piece so we could add its 8' to the concerto. For the sake of great art, Nobuko took a big risk, playing notes she did not really have time to prepare. She proved flexibility and bravery to be important professional qualities, teaching by example, including other aspects than viola technique.

My teachers are fantastic musicians. I did not realise this fully in their lessons, nor can I say that I learned everything from them in the lessons.

Generosity from the teacher is a primary condition, and it should not just address the wish for the students to become better than them, but also different. There is always a lot of informal learning going on, and formal teaching is not always straightforward or immediately effective. Outside the main subject lessons, in practical settings, playing side by side for instance, there are many learning opportunities in the interaction between teacher and student.



## The ideal

‘When I go hear someone perform—whether it’s dance, theatre, opera or song, chamber music, whatever—I’m moved only when I feel something has been given to me in the most generous, open, vulnerable way. I am moved when I feel I have somehow shared with that performer, or through that performer, even with the rest of the audience sitting around me, something about the human condition that we need either comfort about, or we can celebrate together. And I can’t be moved, really, unless the person or persons performing know themselves well, and know what it is that they can uniquely offer through the piece. If a performer’s goal is to exude confidence more than anything else, and show what they can do, I’m not going to be moved.’ (Dawn Upshaw in Driscoll, 2018)

‘About prodigies: why should they spend their whole childhoods slaving? Music isn’t THAT hard! Furthermore, when one reads about the lives of truly great performers, one learns that most of them were well-educated, cultured beings who had time for activities outside music; few of them practiced more than four or five hours a day. They took time off when they needed it, and formed close personal attachments. General culture and personal warmth come through in one’s musical personality; and that’s partly what makes the playing of – for instance - a Casals, a Kreisler, a Schnabel, so moving.’ (Isserlis, 2018)

The way these two great musicians and educators speak about their ideal musician as a human being, with broad knowledge and wisdom, is convincing. And most probably, no one would disagree. But the question is do our students see this when they think of their studies, when they look at their schedule?

I have seen students who enrol on the classical piano bachelor programme all of a sudden thinking that creating cabaret, which they enjoyed doing in secondary school, is over, that the pop songs they compose are meaningless now, and that writing texts or even reading books has nothing to do with being a pianist.

We certainly have exchanged the ideal of broad, creative musicianship for technically equipped specialism: today you are either a violinist or a singer or a composer; and when you are a violinist you either play in an orchestra or you are a chamber musician,

and, by the way, when you like contemporary music you will not be invited to play Mozart anymore.

I love *Le Boeuf sur le Toit*, the night café in Paris in the roaring twenties, the ‘nothing-doing bar’ where artist and audience blended. The writer Cocteau created the ballet choreography (!) for Milhaud’s piece of the same name, which was based on 28 funny, sexy Brazilian songs. Rubinstein played Bach on the piano, while Stravinsky and Picasso teamed up, and everyone was engaged in all kinds of wildly artistic projects together.

This ideal musicianship, connecting with creation, an artistry that extends to the other arts and to other fields in society, emotionally honest and deeply engaged, combining artistic urgency with a larger societal, political context, which is much broader than what we call a ‘portfolio career’, still exists in many musicians, but they develop themselves in that way outside or after conservatoire studies, or maybe, a very small number, on special programmes.

For sure, students do not see this inspiring chaos when they think of their classical music studies!

## The study programme

In a conversation with the student partners at CEMPE<sup>1</sup> it was expressed that students consider the bachelor phase of their studies to be problematic to their transition from ‘talent’ to ‘artist’.

Many of us look at fragmentation on the study programme as a problem: most subjects our students take teach skills we expect to be useful for their performance skills, but we do not take care of the transfer. And there are initiatives with a practical and holistic approach, reflective and entrepreneurial, happening in many places, but there is more to feel uncomfortable about in the fundamental design of the classical music bachelor:

- Our programmes are full: 60 ECTS credits = 1,680 hours of work, which equals 42 weeks of 40 hours which we concentrate into an academic year lasting an

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<sup>1</sup> CEMPE is the abbreviation for the Norwegian Academy of Music’s Centre for Excellence in Music Performance Education.

average of 36 weeks. Daily practice is included in these hours, and academies are starting to take responsibility for teaching their students how to practise, but we hardly worry about the fact that to practise seriously for a couple of hours, one needs a good balance in the layout of the day and time for reflection and to organise concentration and energy. Also, good ideas and insights usually get noticed while taking a walk or a bath.

- Almost no subjects or projects are complete professional activities, although we know that the job demands so much more than excellent playing.
- Almost no subjects or projects are complete professional activities which demand and train collaborative working, whereas we know that although a musician needs to be able to work in solitude for many hours, the job itself is always about making music together, about communication and connection.

Thinking about this last point: the architects who designed the Oslo opera house, Snøhetta, describe their organisation as purely collaborative, ‘the singular in the plural’, where designing consists of so many different ways of looking and thinking that their staff change roles all the time and carry joint responsibility. This is a very nice description of any music ensemble: musicians functioning at the same level while being all very different in skillsets and character, together forming a group which is capable of ‘everything’.

Orchestras are the places in which musicians have strictly separated functions and responsibilities. Yet there is an awareness that communication, ‘radar’ as the London Symphony Orchestra calls it, and collaborative attitude are the most important characteristics for orchestra musicians, too – in addition to excellent playing of course – in order to be successful and survive in this very demanding profession.

For our students, all this means that our curricula create a constant tension between the main subject and the rest: study hours for instrumental and vocal practice are limited, and the relationship between subsidiary subjects and both the main subject and the profession is not clear.

Also, this fragmented and artificial organisation of education must send the message that we are only preparing them for the job, which leads them, instead of doing trial and error in practical settings, to hide away in their practice rooms in constant confrontation with that of which they are not yet capable.

This separation of skills, goals of subjects and content of lessons, is meant to be able to control the process of learning. General learning outcomes for all students and

assessment in a way the results can be justified lead to subject descriptions in which learning goals and learning outcomes are described as if we can guarantee that things will be done, learning is foreseen, and lessons have a direct effect. In our attempts to be transparent and accountable, we create a world which is narrowing down our perception of learning into a scheme of teaching. But can we ever actually predict that learning will happen?

Acknowledging how deep and profound and complex real learning is, especially in our field, this looks like fake control. Higher music education is not about leading students to a diploma, but about becoming musicians.

## **Assessment**

The other huge reality our students are confronted with, next to the curriculum and daily schedule, is assessment. The effect of assessment on learning is decisive, and involving students has proven to make sense.

Students will always respond to the way we organise assessment – no changed approach or different teaching method can have an effect unless we incorporate and synchronise assessment with our attitude in or organisation of teaching. And giving students a place, a position, a say, ownership, an active role in assessment situations, is extremely helpful in maximising learning.

Here's an example of how assessment *for* learning can also go beyond reflection on learning in the actual exam setting, how thinking from the learning side can be very helpful in designing assessment.

In chamber music on the bachelor course huge differences in level occur, which is normal: imagine a beginners' ensemble of accordion or guitar versus a piano trio of youngsters who come from a Young Talent programme and play a lovely first Beethoven. When at the end of the school year assessment comes and the piano trio play their Beethoven without having improved much during the year, it will still be 'very good' – a panel from outside will judge likewise. But that cannot be the goal of a chamber music programme! Students need to learn.

What we did in The Hague, where I was head of the classical music department (2009–2015), was to make the formal assessment a simple form for the chamber music teachers of all the ensembles with one question: 'Did the ensemble work and improve according to the goals set?' The teacher answered yes or no, which was pass or fail for the chamber music students in that academic year. Beware: the 'goals set' was what the teacher and ensemble decided they had to work on during the year, which obviously would be different for the different ensembles.

The colleagues and I were a sounding board: we had regular meetings to discuss the progress of the groups. The control side of this was that with a 'pass' the ensemble qualified to perform in the chamber music festival, and everyone would hear them play. But the real bonus was that by performing there we opened up all kinds of possibilities for formative feedback: the panel of chamber music teachers and international guests filled in full sheets which were passed on directly to the ensembles (when the content raised questions they could speak with us), and the panel and guests discussed amongst themselves topics that came up around repertoire, performance practice and overall level, which was instructive for the institution. And I started different experiments: audiences filled in their own feedback forms, concerts were recorded, and the videos were judged and discussed by the ensembles themselves and peer ensembles and all their feedback were published.

I really saw that the good Beethoven Trio, in a conventional situation, could restrain themselves from learning because they knew they were good, and the accordion trio would do likewise because they knew they would barely pass.

Of course, the absolute measure of level, our constant obsession, was taken out of formal assessment, but it got a lot of attention in the feedback. And students know who is the best anyway, this does not really contribute to learning.

## Trust and joy

So far, concentrating on learning and on the effect our attitudes and methods in teaching, curriculum design and assessment have on students and learning, I have been sketching a reality from our students' perspective that is not a very positive one. They don't recognise the ideal of music-making which brought them to our academies nor the ideal musicianship which goes beyond practising instrumental skills on their programmes. They are fighting a daily battle for studying and playing their instrument without feeling a connection with all the other bits and pieces we make them do, they feel like they are in preparation for something which only comes in the shape of the verdict of assessment...

A bit black and white, but I must say that I worry about them. Classical music students are so much more shy and passive than their peers in theatre for instance. Of course, our job has a larger technical aspect to be taken care of, but in this, the artistic drive and active learning energy are helpful as well. It is not a completely separate thing, neither is it that hard, as Isserlis says.

Actually, both in conservatoires and on classical music stages, I miss joy.

And at this point Nigella comes in.

'... that cooking should not be considered the domain of the expert, that food is more than just fuel but says something unarguably authentic about the way we live and feel, and that perfectionism is the enemy of any kind of pleasure in the kitchen. (Lawson, 1998, p. 8)

She changed the perspective from *How to Cook* into *How to Eat*. She does not want to be stopped from having fun in the kitchen because of a lack of expertise or perfectionism. She writes about the relish of eating good food, turning around cookbooks from instruction to pleasure. And with all this, she exposes something which is so important, in life and so helpful and vital in learning: joy.

In *The ABCs of How We Learn* (Schwartz, Tsang & Blair, 2016) the J is for just-in-time telling, which is connecting explanation to an experience, but I would plead for a capital Joy. Students often act passive and dependent, and I wonder: our students are so talented, and they choose a life of uncertainty and relative poverty because of their love for music, why do they not have 'fun in the kitchen'?

The opposite of joy not being seriousness but fear, is that it?

I have heard students talk about fear. There is the general and even daily fear of not being capable of whatever it is you have to do. And it is true, to be able to go on stage requires a lot of daring trust, and when you have to do something really difficult you need to be prepared like an athlete or a bank robber; and when you do something, like singing your heart out, that you love so deeply that it makes you be what you do, it is not strange that fear is something you need to face. But theatre students know this as well.

Then there is the fear that students express about their future, the material side of it. This is also known to theatre students. There is something else that I see when looking at our students: they look unmotivated, passive, as if they have lost contact with their 'learning muscles'. As we know that learning, fundamental and lifelong learning, like growth, is so vital for musicians, should we maybe teach them how to learn, how to use their 'learning muscles'? Or will our students follow their instincts when we let go? Like theatre students who are so much in contact with their artistic vibes. Like, when babies learn to walk, all by themselves, inevitably, which every parent finds scary, and I remember especially from my oldest that he also immediately walked away! So, would it make sense to try just to facilitate learning more? To make room for our students' natural drive to learn? Shall we trust them in their urge to grow?

## **The main subject**

The pivot in classical music training is the main subject. In publications of research that has been done on the relationship between teacher and student in one-to-one teaching, there is a general notion of the need for a different role for the teacher which even goes beyond 'follow-me' to 'partners in inquiry', or from 'master-dominant' to 'student-centred', which leads to learning in lessons moving away from copying to independent thinking and individual artistry: a teacher who is more of a coach than an instructor.

Of course, we have to completely get rid of ridiculous and rigid ownership on the part of the teacher, but the wish of the teacher for his student to be successful is a basis for committed teaching. Besides, our main subject teachers are experts in music-making, not in teaching, and as long as they are truly generous, this in itself is not a huge problem. Students need to develop all kinds of learning strategies anyway, and there is learning which is not all that conscious but is more physical or tacit, and some copying

can be very instructive. Personally, I feel that there is a limit in moving from guide to neutral attendant and that there is a danger in not wanting to be authoritarian, which is: leaving out authority. Educational support is a necessity.

With curricula having become overloaded over the last years, constantly adding new topics such as entrepreneurship in separate subjects, the main subject is under pressure. At most conservatoires the weekly main subject lesson lasts one hour, and it usually takes place between 24 and 34 weeks a year. Students will always consider their main subject teacher the master and themselves the apprentice, no matter how young, open and nice their teacher is. They just want the teacher to really see them and to help them. You learn from whom you love. Why fight this? But we must understand that it is impossible for teachers to give what their students need in so few contact hours.

Besides, in the original master-apprentice construction there were workplaces, ateliers of high quality, with collaborative working, all levels present, learning and teaching at the same table, everyone being part of the same manufacturing process. In these master-apprentice settings, theory and practice were taught while working side by side. We still find this in architect and design practices, in theatre groups, in professional restaurant kitchens and in education for craftsmanship: teaching by example, the master opens up his own practice and business to involve students at different levels and with different prospects, at every stage of their development, seeing them grow until the best amongst them would leave his house to start their own practice.

The main subject is the raft on which everything else floats. Teachers have limited time to work with their students in the one-to-one lessons. More varied settings in which teachers can work and play with their students would provide opportunities for intense learning experiences. The teachers' role being extended provides another playing field for them to share their expertise.



Some years ago, there was a Mendelssohn octet project, and when I asked the teacher, a fantastic violinist, to not instruct from behind the score but to play with them, after some hesitation he came up with the idea of not playing first violin but fourth. It was so good to not only see the students at their best, but also to have the teacher enjoy himself thoroughly! And it did turn the emphasis from teaching to learning, which liberated great energy. The teacher showed his students trust by taking the risk of being on stage together, which inspired astonishing, fearless motivation to excel in the performances.

I like to think of a conservatoire, according to the 'look and feel' of the master-apprentice place, as a house for working and learning, for developing and sharing knowledge, where hierarchy is only functional for the process of creating and making, where teachers work alongside students.

Ordinarily making music together, in a collegial, professional way – this is not yet another teaching method, it is plain thinking from a learning perspective. And it changes the fragmented, fixed and full programmes into something which is more playful, joyful and lively instead.

## **Innovation**

In 2016–2017 I worked on an innovation study. It was part of 'ZUYD Innoveert', a special investment programme at the University of Applied Sciences, ZUYD, that Conservatorium Maastricht belongs to. The study was called 'Year plan – from classical problem to working together', and it had as a central problem the competition between weekly scheduled lessons and project-based working in a professional way, including all the educational and pedagogical questions involved. As ZUYD has an educational profile in which practical learning settings play an important role, there was a basis for looking in that direction.

I wanted to tackle the issue of the full programme with weekly lessons and the fact that we find it difficult to validate students' activities outside our academies in a fundamental way, and organisation was a factor in thinking about student motivation.

At an ICON meeting in Finland I remember Bernard Lanskey from Yong Siew Toh (YST) Conservatory in Singapore saying:

'The next group of bachelor year 1 students I will welcome with doing nothing, no classes, no instruction, nothing, because all they seem to want to do is main subject lessons and practice - well they can have that, but just that. I will wait in my room until they come knocking on the door, and then I will ask them what they want!'

- everyone had been laughing then: we recognized the frustration of finding students only focusing on practicing their instruments and being unwilling to visit free concerts or to get involved in anything which seemed to be just a bit outside their box... and at the same time I could still feel the incredible drive I myself had to become a musician, which I find in students, but most of the time hidden behind insecurity and passivity...

Another motivation for the study was that I increasingly felt that our education needed to be able to host natural learning in an atmosphere of attention and personal awareness that we know from parenting; that when we would dare to trust our students and what drives them there would be a better balance in the house. More time for guidance and togetherness, instead of chasing students producing bad results.

The innovation study consisted of an investigation of the successful model and learning environment of the Institute of Performative Arts, our ZUYD sister theatre school, a visit to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) in Glasgow to find out about their curriculum changes, discussions amongst the staff and student participants from Conservatorium Maastricht itself, and a visit to CEMPE to receive feedback on the ideas. This was all documented. The study resulted in a layout for a possible new organisation of the bachelor curriculum for classical music students.

The pivots for the model are all the things that are normal in professional music-making such as creativity, collaboration and inclusiveness. It applies a holistic approach, incorporating music-theory, entrepreneurship, reflection and research, while reaching out to an audience.

Practically the year would be divided into 5 periods (4 x 7 or 8 weeks and an exam period of 6 weeks). In the learning and teaching periods, subjects were grouped and projects would be flanked with lessons and masterclasses. There would be topics that would be basic part of what would be organised and available yearly, or once every two years, and there would be guidelines for what a student in a specific major would have to take part in. There would be room for a student to incorporate projects and professional activities outside school in his schedule.

One of the positive consequences of the model was that it required good planning by the students and good guidance from the teachers, so the balance moved from a student having to follow a pre-fixed program and us checking on the results to the student choosing his programme. Also, this allowed students, staff and teachers to work together to influence the programme design, add special subjects in meaningful arrangement with other activities and invite masterclass teachers relevant to the general topic in that period. Naturally, there would be more collaboration between (students from different) disciplines and between students of mixed ability. And the way to literally organise all this (practising in the mornings, projects and lessons well scheduled in the afternoons and evenings) would make much more space for the main subject. That we would not be able to 'cover everything' would be balanced with a professional level and 'depth'.

Two major shifts came with this approach:

- from learning in separate subjects organised into longer lasting weekly lessons, thus preparing for professional work, to learning in concentrated practical settings of real-life work with all elements of professional practice involved, including ongoing feedback and a smooth passage to assessment.
- from a fixed programme for everyone, only to vary the level/grade a student would reach with just a limited number of ECTS<sup>2</sup> to be chosen in electives, to more student choice and more variety in what they would learn.

We created a model of meaningful projects and activities, which was not that difficult. Music theory teachers were also immediately inspired and started to design a 1-year bachelor with two weekly two-and-a-half hour classes, co-ordinating all separate

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<sup>2</sup> ECTS is an abbreviation for the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. One full academic year amounts to 60 ECTS credits.

music theory subjects within Basic Skills and Creative Skills, after which they would join in the project structure.

The challenge was to keep thinking from the learning side of it and to let go of control. Understanding that students learn in different ways and accepting the consequences of assessment for learning (instead of assessment of learning) was a relief.

## **Pilot projects**

The innovation study had run so smoothly and all stakeholders were so enthusiastic that it seemed possible to start thinking of implementing the model. Of course, it was vital to test whether this approach would indeed activate the ‘learning muscle’ in students, whether it would bring them back in contact with their natural, strong drive to learn, connecting them with their deep motivation to become a musician, so we performed two pilot projects in the academic year of 2017–2018.

Both projects were based on:

- student choice, both within the project and in the project design
- teachers, experts on the specific topic, as co-workers in the project
- and the absence of the usual drivers (uniform learning outcomes for all, assessment, ECTS credits)

Both projects faced initial hesitation and cold feet amongst both students and teachers as well as a bit of initial unease amongst both students and teachers in their new roles and relationships. In both projects there was the radical decision to not describe learning outcomes or define criteria for what would make a performance ‘good’, or, God forbid, ‘sufficient’. Both projects resulted in optimum motivation and maximum learning. (Find a description of the Lied Project and the Student Initiative on <https://latimpe.eu>)

Some of the comments the students gave afterwards:

‘It is actually such a surprise to find all of us have become better singers in the months in which we spent all this time on production work...’

‘The singing is a reward! I did all this effort and now I sing! I really wanted it!!!!’

‘I had such a different attitude towards the audience – we did all this work to get them in, and we were convinced that they had to come.’

‘We did not think of being assessed. You are constantly judged anyway, and it was nice to show our teachers what we are capable of.’

‘Having teachers ‘work for us’, on demand, and they were great! – it was so different, and how to put this, it meant such a lot to me.’

‘I don’t know why students usually look not so motivated, in lessons and in projects.... It is the kind of uncertainty that you have, about how good you are, about whether you will have a future in music. In this project, there was no room for that kind of doubt, and, now that I think of it, we sort of organised our own future!’

‘It was like a huge strong flame burning inside of all of us, we wanted it so much. Now, how do I keep that flame alive?’

It was wonderful to see how the students made positive choices to take part in the projects, based on the wish to develop themselves. There was no hiding and no trying to escape from learning or from confronting weak points. Without us organising it, they took responsibility together and worked in a collaborative manner. They learned different things in different ways, there was no fear of experimenting while working or of presenting what they created to an audience. They strived for the maximum, and both their basic main subject skills and their musicianship developed strongly.

It was very important to find that what we might fear when letting go, procrastination, laziness, low standards, was simply not present. On the contrary. And it was not just very clear that a love for music, a wish to be on stage, wanting to have fun with a group of young people, were excellent drivers for exhausting work to get done, but also that this motivation led to open, vulnerable, deeply engaged learning. The strong

connection between what they made and produced and the feeling they owned the stage resulted in a wonderfully joyful attitude towards the audience.

It is touching to read about how this student reached personal growth in the Student Initiative project, as she wrote in the master research thesis which she dedicated to their Zauberflöte:

*'I have finally given myself permission to be proud of my work and achievements.'*

The teachers were enjoying their part in it too. Once they found out that being a co-worker did not mean they had to let go of their expertise but that it actually was an invitation to use and share whatever they thought might be helpful, they also found that it was nice to rely on other methods than 'teaching', like playing or listening together, bringing in material, just being there or deliberately not help at moments.

The fact that the teachers in these projects were being invited or requested by the students ('hired' from the ambulant hours the students had to make the project possible) created a natural setting of being an expert, without hierarchical structures. They felt trust from me in letting them 'just work', but they also noticed that they had to be much more active than usual: teaching from a score versus playing along, or assessing from behind a table versus being constantly aware of what is happening and giving appropriate and useful feedback at the right moment, quite a different intensity! And the teachers in these projects were so relieved to find that they were not the ones to look after attendance and that the group process functioned well without their interference. The teachers said they did not play a role in creating a standard, or in motivating students to look further or do more, so the absence of assessment, or actually the fact that it was present and available and shared constantly while working, turned it into a driving factor instead of something that was scary and would stop a student from experimenting and learning. In both projects, students stepped forward as incredibly motivated, active learners. Fearlessly and joyfully.

## **Student-led education**

There is some passivity in 'student-centred': we place the student at the centre, we care for them, but it is still us thinking about them and for them. And there is a danger of being too comforting, constantly nurturing, not challenging enough.

The student as an active explorer in constant curiosity finding their way in the world of classical music is a wonderful starting point. Then again, it is so important to get rid of hierarchical notions in designing education, in performing it and in assessing it, and student motivation appears to spur on self-steering. Radically taking the normal position of looking at education from the learning side is helpful in this, and it also allows our students to design a future which we cannot imagine.

Having seen the 'learning muscle' of the students and how they take on the challenge of quality learning once trust has replaced control, I am positive about student-led education. It is a setting in which authority is a natural element in the process in which teachers join students in working, learning and exploring. It provides a daily-life experience with collaboration on different levels and in varying situations. And it creates abundant space for learning.

'But students don't know what's good for them'. Sure, and this way they can find out. Student-led education as I see it is not about us withdrawing, it is about stepping in, being there, actively providing guidance, taking the risk of doing instead of telling, taking responsibility together, on the spot, when and where learning happens, with the students designing their learning pathway and their future in art.

Let's not position ourselves at the end, at the outcome side, but let's take a stand together with our students from the beginning and see where they go. Let's create the circumstances for learning, let's be with them, play with them, work with them. When we do this well, sharing our expertise, reflecting on what we do, questioning and enjoying what happens, our education will have true quality. And it might be more fun.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Learning to reflect: Enhancing instrumental music education students' practice through reflective journals**

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### **Abstract**

*Conservatoire students are required to spend substantial amounts of time engaged in instrumental practice to improve efficiency. However, students often lack self-regulation skills to optimise their practice behaviour and strategies. These skills are essential for musicians, and even more so for prospective instrumental educators, as they will teach their future pupils to practise effectively. There is a need in higher education to teach reflective practice. Reflective journals could provide some insights into students' learning and reflection. This study, with its aim of gaining insights into students' learning and reflective practice, reports on the course Learning and teaching instrumental practice, offered to undergraduate students of Instrumental/Vocal Pedagogy and instrumental studies. In each course unit the students are introduced to different theoretical concepts. Furthermore, the students keep an individual reflective journal about their instrument practice and are encouraged to share their experiences with their peers. The students' written contributions were analysed in order to retrace the development of their reflective skills. Preliminary results of this pilot study show that the students find it difficult to reflect critically on different levels, such as by documenting, contextualising, interpreting, evaluating and planning. Finally, for the majority of the students, reflective writing indeed fosters an understanding of learning processes. This can therefore enhance self-regulation skills, which in turn can lead to optimising instrumental practice.*

## Introduction

Instrumental practice is a constant companion for music students in order to advance proficiency on their instruments. When practising, students usually spend many solitary hours working on different technical problems and on the refinement of musical interpretations as they prepare for lessons, performances and examinations. During these activities, beside effective and sophisticated task-oriented strategy use, (meta)cognitive strategies are essential for improving and maintaining musical performance skills and practice, and one would assume that especially conservatoire students knowledgeably (if not routinely) adopt these strategies in their daily practice. However, in many cases instrumental practice is not always effective – even in higher education. Students tend to prioritise the amount of time they invest in practising their instruments as a guarantee of musical achievement instead of focusing on the quality of their practice. Many students still rely heavily on their teachers' feedback, and if not given any clear practice instructions, they usually tend to 'just repeat'. Similarly, Jørgensen (2000) points out that at his academy the majority of students at the start of their courses 'have received little or no advice from former teachers on practice behaviour' (p. 73), which might indicate that students enter higher music education with only limited and ineffective learning strategies. Furthermore, many of the students feel that their practice is often unproductive and wish to learn more about practising (Jørgensen, 2000). In addition, students often lack explicit theoretical knowledge and appropriate reflection tools to optimise their practice habits and strategies. In accordance with Jørgensen (2000), we suggest that instrumental learning at higher music educational institutions should emphasise the learning processes of students instead of learning outcomes and offer them support in optimising their practice behaviours. Accordingly, the aforementioned obstacles could be diminished if students would systematically learn during their musical (higher) education to reflect more and more deeply on their actions, motivation, behaviour and results during practice sessions.

The current pilot study is part of an ongoing development research project, *Learning to reflect*, and reports on the seminar *Learning and teaching instrumental practice* offered each term to undergraduate students majoring in instrumental and vocal pedagogy and instrumental studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, Austria. The students in the seminar play various instruments in the classical, jazz and folk music genres. The seminar was established with a view to promoting the development of competent, creative and reflective musicians who know how to practise efficiently. The lecturers aim to facilitate the students' reflective practice by fostering their ability to reflect verbally and in writing as well as exploring various

principles of reflection and theoretical concepts during the course. Students are asked to keep a weekly journal about their practice activities, and the receive feedback from the course lecturer in order to improve their reflection skills.

In this contribution we first expand on the theoretical background of the study. We discuss relevant research about structured (deliberate) practice, self-regulation and metacognition as the key variables in musicians' work. Then we provide some information about the objectives and contents of the seminar *Learning and teaching instrumental practice* itself, followed by a description of the current study with its participants, data, method and analysis. Finally, the findings and insights from the analysis of the reflective writings will be presented and discussed in a wider context, contributing to a broader understanding of the relationship between reflective practice and students' learning.

## **Background to the study**

In the following chapter we will present theoretical principles for reflective practice and discuss relevant literature.

In the discourse about reflective practice Donald Schön (1983, 1987) provides a foundational work and theoretical framework for our research. Most literature related to the relevance of reflection in learning processes as well as its importance for the evolvement of reflective practice refers to the work of Schön (1983, 1987). He delineates two basic types of reflection: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action refers to reflection during an activity; it is mostly implicit. In conjunction, reflection-on-action means stepping back and making sense of past actions, experiences and thoughts in order to explore possible alternatives or adjust to future ones. (Schön, 1983, p. 68). Similarly, Cowan (2013) suggests that reflection can also take the form of 'reflection-for-action', through which we intentionally and deliberately plan and prepare ourselves for future activities by identifying potential difficulties and alternatives.

(Self-)reflection, as a stepping out of the action or a learning process, takes on a new dimension especially in the written form by allowing the writer the alienation from his own work process (Bräuer, 2000). In various higher education disciplines and

curricula, reflective journals are the most commonly applied tool to enhance students' reflection skills.

Research on musical practice has a long tradition and provides an extensive body of literature describing, observing, examining and analysing musicians' practice strategies, habits and behaviours (e.g. Chaffin & Imreh, 2001; Gruson, 2000; Hallam, 1995, 1997; Miklaszewski, 1989; Nielsen, 1999). Generally, most research on musicians' practice is based on the underlying framework of deliberate practice, introduced by Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993). In their meta-analysis, Macnamara et al. (2014) conclude that the 'amount of deliberate practice is not as important as Ericsson and his colleagues have argued' (p. 3). However, although the role of the quantity of practice in musical performance is still significant, subsequent research has stressed that the quality of practice is also a pivotal aspect in the development of musical excellence. Therefore, Williamon and Valentine (2000) propose that 'the content and quality of deliberate practice must be examined before fully understanding the factors which affect the quality of specific performances' (p. 373). In line with this proposition, Bonneville-Roussy and Bouffard (2015) present the framework of formal practice positing that 'self-regulation, deliberate practice and practice time, taken separately, are necessary but insufficient for explaining musical achievement . [ . . ] it is necessary to combine all three constructs in order to attain optimal performance' (p. 690).

Self-regulated learning occurs when students become 'metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviourally active participants in their own learning process' (Zimmermann, 1986, p. 308). Metacognitive aspects refer to planning and organising the learning process as well as to self-instruction, self-monitoring and self-evaluation. Motivational aspects encompass feelings of competency, autonomy and self-efficacy. Behaviourally, self-regulated learners actively structure, select and create their learning environments to enhance learning (Zimmermann, 1986). Although the basic tenets of self-regulated learning originate from a general educational context, applying this paradigm to investigations in music education and performance proved to be highly informative and brought valuable insights into the mechanisms of musical learning and practice (Bonneville-Roussy & Bouffard, 2015; Hewitt, 2011; Jørgensen, 2004; Leon-Guerrero, 2008; McPherson & Renwick, 2001; McPherson & Zimmermann, 2011; Miksza, 2007; Nielsen, 2001).

Related to reflection and the use of reflective journals in teacher education programmes, Hatton and Smith (1995) provide an extensive literature review of the various strategies used to promote student reflection and report on their study investigating

the impact of these strategies on students' reflection. Their data sources include students' written reports, self-evaluations, videotapes and interviews. The authors identify three different types of reflection: descriptive, dialogic and critical. While critical reflection is only identified in a few instances, the majority of reflections are coded as descriptive, which in many cases led on to dialogic reflection. Furthermore, the authors find that reflective writing preceded by a dialogue with another colleague ('critical friend' interviews) is characteristically dialogic, indicating that verbal interaction in addition to writing can be a useful tool to facilitate deeper levels of reflection. Similar experiences are reported by Hume (2009), stating that her students' reflections are descriptive rather than evaluative and that 'students' comments tend to reflect a "need to know", or "what needed to happen" approach, but usually the next step is missing – that is, the specifics of how to address the need' (p. 25). In the context of arts education, Rolfe (2006) conducts a study with nine dance students, asking them to keep reflective journals over a period of 21 weeks. The students are provided with handouts and guiding questions to promote more profound reflection. They receive feedback on their writing from the course tutor and have some opportunities for peer-to-peer discussions.

There are also several studies investigating reflective processes and the fostering of reflective skills through reflective journals in a music educational context. Brown (2009) investigates the use of reflective journals as a means to foster Australian voice students' critical, creative and self-regulated thinking. By providing extracts from students' journals, the author demonstrates that reflective writing can indeed help students to better evaluate the effectiveness of their actions, to identify their strengths and weaknesses and make more concrete plans for actions, but also to verbalise problematic issues such as performance anxiety. In the study by Esslin-Peard et al. (2015), first and second year classical and popular music students are asked to write reflective essays at the end of the academic year about their learning, performance and practising. With regard to the first year students, the authors identify three common main themes, 'Technique', 'Insight' and 'Targets', which were apparent in both classical and popular music students' essays. Around these themes, students report on their preoccupation with and development of technical matters and skills as the major focus of their learning and practice in their first year of study, which often lead to revealing insights and deeper understanding of their individual practice routines and needs. However, in terms of future targets and goals there are some differences between the two groups. Classical musicians formulate individual goals such as certain performance opportunities or changes in practice habits. In contrast, popular music students set themselves rather general targets. As for the students in their second year of study,

two different sets of themes emerge from the data set. Classical musicians are focused on 'tuning and intonation' and are still preoccupied with consciously thinking about how to practise and the knowledgeable application of various practice strategies ('metacognitive practice strategies'). The third theme, 'change and "a-Ha" moments', is related to experiences of unanticipated discovery in practising and understanding. As for the popular music students, the two most commonly elaborated themes are 'individual practice' and 'band practice'. Summarising the results of this study, the authors suggest that the maturation of musicians implies iteration of practice 'or mindful repetition utilising metacognitive processes [which in turn] implies a conscious process of planning, doing, reflecting and *changing*' (Esslin-Peard et al., 2015, p. 142, emphasis in original). In a study conducted by Carey et al. (2017), reflective journals are utilised to capture students' various learning activities and experiences during their first year of musical studies. In addition to a workshop designed to promote students' understanding of reflective practice, they are also provided with questions to prompt their journal-writing related to learning goals, personal achievements and progress. The results show that reflective journaling stimulated the students' critical thinking and dialogue, enhanced feelings of autonomy and responsibility for their own learning, and through the writing task, students are thinking more about their learning goals and engage more often in student-teacher discussions, which lead to a more collaborative approach.

## **Facilitating reflective practice: Learning and teaching instrumental practice**

This study reports on the seminar *Learning and teaching instrumental practice* offered to undergraduate students. With this seminar we aim to aid students in furthering their (instrumental) practice skills, and for this we consider the enhancement of self-regulation processes, skills in reflective practice as well as skills in reflection as essential. Therefore, we regard these two basic principles as the cornerstone of our course.

Through keeping reflective journals, we encourage students to analyse judgements and attempt to provide rationales to reach effective learning outcomes. Based on the cycles of self-regulation and the levels of reflection according to Bräuer (2016), we focus in these journals on reflection-on-action as an activity that critically observes the relationship between students' intentions and goals, means, ways and activities,

as productive reflection can lead to changes in goals or activities in order to optimise the efficacy of practising and making music.

In each seminar unit students are introduced to different theoretical concepts and have the opportunity to put this theoretical knowledge into practice via different methods. We discuss various theories concerning motor learning and formal practice, and we inform the students about neuroscientific findings and their implications for musical practice. With regard to didactic theories, we give input about error and risk management, time management and ways in which teachers can promote self-regulation and guide pupils to learn and practise on their own. In order to demonstrate how this knowledge can be put into practice, we suggest different working methods adopted from ICON<sup>1</sup>, such as the 'balance wheel', 'SMART goal setting' as well as the 'present level assessment form', which encourages students to ask questions and set goals strategically in the long, medium, and short term (Williams, 2017).

During the course of the seminar we employ three forms of reflective writing: a narrative biography at the beginning of the semester in which students are asked to recall their musical career and development prior to university in order to get them into writing. Following this first assignment, throughout the semester students are required to keep a weekly reflective practice journal. At the end of the semester students write another reflective essay, a meta-reflection, in which they reflect on their experiences and learning in the seminar throughout the semester based on their individual practice diaries. All these methods are accompanied by continuous feedback from both instructors and discussions with peers.

In order to help students to deepen their reflections we introduce the didactic model from Bräuer (2016), demonstrating levels of reflection from a rather sketchy form of reproduction towards deeper (or in this case higher) levels of self-analysis. In this four-stage model learners first reflect on an experience by mentally replaying and depicting it in a descriptive, non-judgemental way (level 1). The learner is then ready to re-evaluate the experience by progressing through further stages. In the second step students are asked to analyse the underlying reasons for their actions and interpret the circumstances of their experience (level 2). When analysing and interpreting, the quality of one's own actions is questioned and discussed in order to create awareness of the specific meaning of the experience. New insights can be linked to existing

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<sup>1</sup> ICON stands for 'Innovative Conservatoire', which is an international collaboration that stimulates knowledge exchange, innovation and reflective practices by bringing together teachers in music higher education (Duffy, 2016).

knowledge, and further insights are gained. At the next level of reflection (level 3) the students will compare what they have learned with their own goals and external expectations by evaluating the experience. Finally (level 4), students are expected to plan new strategies and activities as a consequence of the experience and argumentation of the previous steps.

With this model in mind, students are encouraged to examine critically, discuss and then revise their writings while challenging their assumptions and exploring different ideas and approaches towards their thinking and feelings about practising.

Finally, we should like to add a comment about the assessment procedure we used for marking the reflective journals at the end of term. The lecturers were conscious not to mark the content of the individual reflective journals as that would inhibit the students' expressions. Instead, we discussed how the various levels of reflection from Bräuer (2016) could help define criteria for the assessment. In addition, we showed them different examples of reflection in order to achieve transparency for grading. Furthermore, we came to an understanding that only the last three writings were graded. Crucial criteria were: reflecting critically, thinking in lines of argumentation, contextualising practice with an understanding of embodied practice.

As students are usually not familiar with writing and keeping a reflective practice journal, we provide them with a few guiding questions:

- What do I want to learn/practise? Is my goal appropriate?
- How do I want to practise? Do I know how I can succeed?
- How can I confirm/check that I have learned it?
- If I did not succeed, what can I change or improve?

As an additional idea for organising their thoughts, we also offer a table template. Generally, students are welcome to write freely according to the guiding questions or to write their entries into the template. In addition, each student receives individual feedback on each submitted journal from the lecturer. In the meta-reflections the students are asked to reflect on their experiences at the seminar in its entirety, including its content, the topics discussed and the writing of the journals. For this writing task, we provide following guiding questions:

- What did I learn?
- How did I learn?



- Which were for me the most important aspects of this seminar?
- Where do I see my strengths?
- What do I want to adopt in the future?
- What was useful for me to learn?
- What was unclear to me? Which aspects do I still need to catch up on?
- Which topics would I still like to elaborate on?

## Study

### Participants and ethical considerations

A total of 13 students registered for the seminar *Learning and teaching instrumental practice*. During the last seminar unit we explained and described the objectives and the rationale of the study to the group. Subsequently, a written information sheet and a consent form were distributed to be signed and returned to us. Students were informed that participation in the study is voluntary and that their written reflections would be anonymised and treated confidentially. Participants who gave their written consent to participate in the study received a random ID number, and any persons referred to by name in reflections were anonymised.

11 students consented to participate in the study. Six of them are female and five male, their ages ranging from 19 to 31.

### Data

This study is based on a data set comprising students' reflective journals and final meta-reflections, submitted during the summer term 2018. The length of these written reflections varies greatly with some students submitting as many as six to eight reflective journals over the semester, others only three; yielding a total of 70 individual reflective practice journals and 11 meta-reflections.

### Data analysis

At the start of the data analysis we first examined the formats of the reflective journals. Next, we were also interested in whether there would be a change in the format of the journals and possible interactions between format and content, tracing the

development of students' reflective writing skills. Subsequently, we analysed the content of the journals and meta-reflections through a thematic analysis, first with an inductive approach whereby initial codes were generated. However, our analysis and the final formulation of our codes and themes were complemented by a deductive process informed by the relevant literature.

We analysed the journals and the meta-reflections separately, as we had slightly different research questions concerning the two sets and types of reflections.

The analysis of the journals was guided by following research questions:

- How did students describe their practice? (Format)
- What did they describe? (Content)
- How did the format of the journals affect the content?
- How did their reflections develop over time?

As for the meta-reflections, the analysis was guided by following questions:

- How did the students experience reflective writing?
- What matters to the journal writer?
- What did the students subjectively learn?
- Did the students consider reflective journals as a useful tool to enhance practising?

## Findings

### Reflective journals – format

By examining the format of the reflective journals we can distinguish three distinct types. The first, 'table type', is characterised by a table format. The entries are written in a strict and reduced 'telegraphic style', neutral, without personal pronouns. The journals in this style contain primarily lists and bullet points, conveying a certain strong impression of distance. The second type of journals, the 'dialogue type' is the antipode to the table type. These journals are written as running texts with fully formulated sentences, providing the reader with detailed descriptions of actions and showing clear engagement by using the personal pronoun 'I' extensively. The third 'mixed type'

of journals can be placed between these two opposites. Here the writer employs the template, and the entries concerning goals and strategies for the practice session are kept in telegraphic style. However, when it comes to observations and reflections, the accounts are written in a similar style to the journals of the dialogue type. During the formal analysis we also look at how the format changed over time. At the beginning of the semester all but one student employed the template we proposed, but after a few weeks this format was abandoned, and the majority of students used the format of the mixed type. Some students change the style of their writings more radically, as they replace the table type immediately with the dialogue type.

### Reflective journals – content

During the thematic analysis of the reflective journals the following main themes are identified: documentation of practice sessions, goal setting, metacognition, resources, and feelings.

### **Documentation of practice sessions**

By looking into the content of the journals, we are not surprised to find documentations of the what and the how of practice sessions as the central category.

I try to unpack all the practice strategies I know. I practise legato sections staccato at a fast pace, but in such a way that I can still control my fingers and my sound. I also practise with dotted rhythms, from back to front, with various rhythmic variations. (Student 8)

I practise the left hand alone, without pedal. I'm phrasing in my head, but I still try to articulate bar-by-bar. (Student 9)

I watched myself in the mirror while I worked on my fingering. This has helped me a lot, because this way I could notice early if my hand got tense. Therefore, I revised some fingerings. (Student 7)

The students provide us with detailed reports of their actions, various practice strategies and methods, how they work on different technical aspects and interpretations, how they prepare and memorise pieces for performances, and which additional methods they use for practice.

## Goal setting

Goal setting is a recurring topic both in the seminar and in the journals. Already at the beginning of the seminar we observed that the majority of students had some difficulty setting and formulating detailed and meaningful goals. Initially, the students state the content of their practice sessions as goals and do not specify further.

Goal: Bach Partita: Corrente, Bars 27-30: technique. Sarabande: by heart and not rushing. (Student 9)

However, after addressing the issue of goal setting in the seminar and coaching the students individually via feedback, towards the end of semester we can see a certain improvement.

My goal for the last [few] days was to work on difficult passages, and because this is a transcription it was important for me to stay as close to the original as possible. (Student 10)

In the third movement I need to improve my interpretation. I think better phrasing will make playing this piece easier. Movements one and two I practise for safety in performance, so I play through. Doing this, I also change my focus: I choose a faster or a slower tempo, I pay attention to rhythmic peculiarities or to the timbre. I ask myself: do I know the harmonies/fingering at this or that place? (Student 2)

## Metacognition

More precise goal setting but also various other inputs in the seminar probably help the students to monitor and evaluate their practising more accurately, and because of the fact that they have to write up their actions and thoughts while practising, they start to observe themselves more consciously. This could mean that after a while, their writing shows more and more signs of metacognition.

Ravel still takes a lot of practice time, and on the first day I switched to Albeniz rather late, I was – despite a long break in between – pretty exhausted. I noticed that my goal (every day two lines) will be not reached. But this time, as already mentioned, I want to counteract this. That's why I always started

with Albeniz right from the second day – and lo and behold, it works for now. So obviously the objective was feasible, the kind of implementation was rather the problem. (Student 2)

## Resources

Another constant category is personal and material resources. In these comments the students write about difficulties and challenges in terms of time management, deadlines, lack of time, tiredness or retention of concentration, for instance. At the beginning of the semester, these remarks are more like complaints, without considering a solution.

A quick look through, no more time for it. It's enough. In class I can be corrected anyway. (Student 1)

Till the end of the semester, it probably will not get much better with the time I have for practising and how much I have to do a day. (Student 3)

At the end of the semester these complaints become more reflective in the way the students write and think about how they could handle these difficulties.

I set the alarm for an hour, and for that time I don't let myself lose focus. I have to practise at the university, where the only thing in the room to be interested in is the piano. If I feel that I'm already tired or cannot concentrate anymore, I go out and breathe some fresh air. Only then I can let go of my thoughts that always wanted to come before. (Student 1)

For the next week, I have to organise my time even better in order to use my practice time in a more efficient way. This also includes switching off the phone while practising. (Student 11)

## Feelings

When changing the format for the reflective journals, the students also adapt their writing style. While the first journals are kept in a rather distant style, during the course of the semester the reflections demonstrate more self-involvement and engagement.

This change goes hand in hand with descriptions of feelings about and during practice. It is remarkable that the students report rather positive feelings throughout the journals. These positive feelings are there even in the table type journals (but also in the other types) in the form of satisfaction and feeling good about progress.

I was very satisfied with my practice and my concentration today. (Student 7)

Later these positive feelings were extended and refined. The students started to write more about having fun and enjoying practising, confidence and pride in their progress, success and skills.

In my opinion, the time for this session was very well invested: I practised not only the high notes, perfected my embouchure and intonation, but I also did something good for my soul. Before playing this piece, I didn't realise how much I missed Mozart. And this emotional connection makes me feel like I have rose-tinted glasses on. My enthusiasm for playing the piece is far greater than any technical issues and hurdles. (Student 6)

As the students write more openly, they start to share their negative feelings as well and admit to fear, anxiety, frustration, feeling guilty, remorse, doubts and insecurity.

I tried to play the concerto from memory but failed miserably after only 2 bars. How embarrassing!! I could have shot myself for this foolishness. (Student 4)

I'm pretty disappointed with myself for not being able to think faster. (Student 6)

By looking at the form and content of the journals in parallel, it is clear that these two elements were related. However, it is not clear whether the form has an impact on content or, conversely, content affected the form. As for the development of the journals over time, we can state that there is a positive development in the students' reflections over the semester, demonstrated by more detailed descriptions and a stronger self-involvement in the writings. We find indications that over the course of the semester the students start to regard and examine their own practice from a different perspective. However, this change is gradual, often blurred and with setbacks, and the students' progress in writing is rather idiosyncratic; some shifts happening abruptly, others are more subtle.

## Meta-reflections

### **Learning process**

During the semester the students initially discuss and reflect on their development in terms of learning and practising as a rather responsive and unconscious action, which then evolved into a more proactive, deliberate organisation of practice. The students describe their struggles while learning: how to organise their practice environment and manage their time; how to set specific, meaningful, achievable, reachable and timely goals and how to plan ahead in order to reach their self-set, broader targets.

Because of this seminar I regard my practice now from a new perspective. Now, I first think about which practice strategy would be the best and then I start to practice. In the past my practice was rather unstructured, and I just ploughed ahead with it. (Student 7)

The students try to balance between quantity and quality of practice, emphasising goal-setting, monitoring and evaluating their practice progress instead of unilaterally focusing on the amount of time spent practising.

That the quality is more important than quantity is very clear to me, and since I also see for myself and hear how much progress I make, I think that will certainly improve over time. (Student 3)

For the majority of the students, reflecting systematically on their practising is a completely new experience. Some of them mention that they expand their horizons and actually change their practice by exploring new strategies like goal-setting, mental training or fragmented practice by splitting fast movements in fragments. The students gain more awareness and knowledge of their repertoire of strategies, so that they enhance their metacognitive skills.

At the beginning of the semester I could not imagine how diverse daily practice can actually be. (Student 7)

This course helped me to solve problems not only with methodology, or by assessing everything through my experience, but also by always looking for new ways to be more flexible. (Student1)

I found it very helpful and refreshing after a long time as a practising musician to take a deep look at the theory of practice again. Many things were new or inspired me to look at things from new perspectives. (Student 10)

The students also reflect on their future objectives, some of them indicating their intention to integrate reflective writing into their practice sessions in the future.

In any case, I would like to continue to write down keywords while practising and, in retrospect, to think again about them. (Student 10)

However, there is a certain conflict between the priority of instrumental practice and reflection with respect to the time demands of writing the journals. The belief that only 'real' practice, i.e. physical instrumental practice, can lead to success – and not reflection on it – is dominant. Students look at their instrumental practice in a pragmatic way, regarding practice as a learning process to achieve a desired product as soon as possible. Indeed, some students in the seminar state quite bluntly that they view writing the reflections as a waste of time. Nevertheless, as the meta-reflections demonstrate, a shift did occur as well. At the end of the semester many students still see writing the journals as strenuous, yet very beneficial.

Writing these reflections was very laborious and time-consuming because I had to get used to document and reflect my actions, movements and workflow. (Student 9)

Basically, I think that I've always thought a lot about practising, but a written reflection is something else. (Student 10)

What I do not want to do is to keep writing everything down. On the one hand, honestly, it really takes a lot of time, which could often be better spent practising. (Student 2)

Some students also reflect on the challenge of combining physical practice with reflective writing:

At first I found it difficult to get an idea of the format in which the practice journals work best for me. At the beginning I tried to use keywords in table form, but I had to realise that I would rather stay on the surface. During practice I started to write down a few thoughts that came to mind and then



reflect on them in hindsight. That means the actual reflection happened after practising. I also tried to go through the whole process while practising but found that this completely breaks the flow, and you never really get in there. With the keywords it was not difficult to recall the practice situation and to think about it. I then wrote down these thoughts. (Student 10)

## **Didactic aspects**

The meta-reflections also reveal meaningful didactic outcomes. Feedback, coming from lecturers or peers, on the learning platform or in personal communication is appreciated as being very helpful and supportive.

The feedback on the journals was very useful surely not just to me, but also to many other students in the seminar. It helped us to improve our writing and reflect on a deeper level. Especially after a personal communication with the course instructor, when I could explain my practice situation at the moment, it was much easier to express myself in my journals. (Student 6)

Another important aspect is the difficulty in finding the motivation to write the journals, to share personal thoughts with lecturers and, last but not least, to put feelings into words.

For me personally, it is difficult to tell my thoughts to a stranger; the problem is not so much to adequately formulate my statements, but it is quite an effort to open up to others. (Student 6)

## **Discussion**

### Students' views on practice and self-regulated learning

An interesting finding from our study relates to the students' basic comprehension of instrumental practice. We find several indications that during the semester the students closely observe and perhaps even reconsider their practice habits in order to move away from 'just' practising towards a more 'optimal practice' (Williams, 2017). Consequently, reflective writing fostered consciousness about learning processes and could therefore enhance self-regulation skills, which in turn could lead to optimising

instrumental practice. With regard to Larrivé (2000), some of our students engage in critical reflection by exploring unexamined beliefs, assumptions and expectations. Furthermore, they also experience certain shifts in thought by changing their personal attitudes and learning. Increasingly, students challenge their assumptions and question existing practices. As our findings show, by asking our students to keep these reflective journals, we are able to trigger some changes in their approaches to practice.

By providing the students with theoretical input as well as practical applications in our seminar and by encouraging them to include their new knowledge into their daily practice, we attempt to motivate them to transform their declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge. However, it is possible that not all of them are able to build procedural knowledge with respect to self-regulation skills. However, the students articulated that they had never thought systematically (particularly in writing) about how to explicitly adapt their practice. This is in line with Jørgensen (2008), observing that 'many students enter higher music education without much practice help from former teachers. Teaching practice is, accordingly, a task that has to be addressed on all levels of instrumental education' (p. 14). He subsequently points out that 'knowledge of practicing is a fundamental prerequisite for progress' and therefore, 'teachers must teach practicing to their students' (Jørgensen, 2008, p. 14). Carey et al. (2017) as well as Hübner et al. (2010) also indicate that journal writing can encourage students to make connections between new ideas and their existing knowledge in order to monitor their learning continuously and to address gaps in their understanding at an earlier stage, which may lead to enhanced learning outcomes.

However, it was quite difficult at the beginning of the semester for the students to set their own goals in a productive way. While Carey et al. (2017) state that in their study the students often reflect on their goals, for us the challenge is rather that the students learn to formulate meaningful goals. In addition, the students are exclusively concerned with the quantity of practice time, insisting on 'more' without addressing the quality of the playing and practice (Jørgensen, 2008). We also observe that certain personality traits can have an effect on reflection and that there is sometimes a certain resistance by the students to engage in reflective journaling, as they consider writing much more time-consuming than talking. Furthermore, our experiences are comparable to an observation reported by Rolfe (2006), who also noticed that some students do not see at the outset of the semester the benefits of journal writing. But later, consistent with findings by Carey et al. (2017), most of the students view reflection as a useful tool to enhance confidence, to establish goals and to complement learning. Many points in our students' writings demonstrate characteristics of mature musicianship in practising, as

suggested by Esslin-Peard et al. (2015). The students focus on similar topics: 'technique', 'insight', 'individual practice', 'tuning and intonation', 'metacognitive practice strategies', 'change and "A-Ha" moments' (Esslin-Peard et al., 2015, pp. 130-135). However, only few of the students address the 'artistic perspective of practice' (Jørgensen, 2008), and they speak only occasionally about practice as an enjoyable activity with feelings of flow. Instead, most understandings are rather in line with the more pragmatic definition of practice by Hallam (1997), defining practice as 'achieve[ing] the desired end-product, in as short a time as possible, without interfering negatively with longer-term goals' (Hallam, 1997, p. 181). Our findings are not in line with Rolfe (2006), whose participants are at first anxious and insecure, but at the end of term they write more positively and confidently. We observe rather the opposite: the students initially primarily express confidence and satisfaction in their practice outcomes and only later in the semester allow themselves to admit negative feelings and insecurity.

According to Zimmerman's (2002) model of self-regulation, students can actively reflect upon their self-generated thoughts, feelings and actions, which they can then adapt to attain their personal goals. Many students appreciate at the end that they are able to 'influence actively their personal agency and personal motivation to enact on the social setting and structures, in viewing self-regulation as an interaction between personal, behavioral, and environmental processes' (Nielsen, 2008, p. 19). Moreover, through the use of cognitive strategies such as rehearsal, elaboration, organisation and critical thinking aided the development of metacognitive self-regulation (Nielsen 2004). Main topics in the reflections refer to strategies of resource management, such as time-management, study environment, effort regulation, peer learning and help seeking, which are in line with findings by Nielsen (2004).

In conclusion, the reflections from the students' perspective demonstrate that with this seminar we are able to trigger changes in their approaches to self-regulation, and deliberate reflection could enhance the students' practice.

### Challenges and limitations of the study

The reflective writings are addressed only in a private dialogue or with us lecturers. The students' instrumental teachers are not involved in these reflections. As Carey et al. (2018, p. 405) point out:

The danger here is that journals remain isolated from the teaching and learning context to which they relate (that is, the students' one-to-one lessons).

A more effective approach would be for teachers to engage with their own students' journals and use them to reflect on their teaching.

Furthermore, Carey and colleagues indicate that it is 'also apparent that teachers need support in learning to foster students' reflective abilities' (Carey et al., 2018, p. 406). We agree with Brown (2009) that by utilising reflective journals in a seminar, there is always a risk of reflections becoming merely confessions. In addition, it is difficult to distinguish whether students write exactly what they feel, think and experience or only what they assume the lecturers want to hear or read (see also Carey et al., 2017).

### Scaffolding reflective writing

Research on reflective writing shows that students need support in learning to reflect (Carey et al., 2018; Coulson & Harvey, 2013). Coulson & Harvey (2013) posit that 'effective reflection for learning through experience requires a high level of introspection and open-minded self-analysis, a capacity for abstract learning, and self-regulation and agency that few students in higher education innately possess' (p. 1). However, support to develop these skills and practice of reflection will assist the students to a deeper level of reflection for learning through experience, as we also observe that there is indeed potential to learn reflection through the lecturers' scaffolding by structured development activities such as Bräuer's reflection model (2016). In addition, our guiding questions progressively increase abilities and agency (see also: Brown, 2009; Coulson & Harvey 2013).

Similar to reports by Hatton and Smith (1995), our students see verbal interaction and constructive dialogue to facilitate reflection as highly effective. All things considered, we recommend facilitators to provide theoretical background and structure, prepare for personal and time barriers, give samples, engage in verbal dialogue, encourage the students to be open and honest and be non-judgemental in facilitation.

We examined possible requirements to be considered for such seminars utilising reflective journals. First of all, building an atmosphere of trust and a safe framework for collaboration in the class is essential in order to provide meaningful possibilities for exchange and feedback but also for developing a shared understanding and context for reflection, where facilitating the development of the students' reflection skills will be possible. Furthermore, we emphasise that lecturers should be aware that facilitating reflection requires flexibility, openness and above all time in order to accommodate the students' individual needs. Finally, it is important to repeatedly

and frequently encourage the students and to give them reassurance that reflective writing can be learned.

## Conclusion

So, did we enhance the practice of our students? As the reflections demonstrate, in some ways, yes. Our experiences and insights from last semester show that reflective writing does indeed foster consciousness about learning processes and can therefore enhance self-regulation skills, which in turn can lead to optimising instrumental practice. The development of our students' reflective writing shows maturation. However, we are not certain whether this maturation through reflection affected the students' actual practice or related only to the journals.

As learning to reflect is a reflexive and very individual process, we realise that it requires learning not only from the students, but also from us lecturers. We therefore decided to continue to explore the challenges and opportunities associated with this type of seminar in the coming semesters.

It has been said that musicians do not readily speak about their practice and personal experiences; they are seldom verbalised outside one-to-one teaching situations (e.g. Gaunt, 2008; Johansson, 2013). The following quote confirms the need we mentioned previously for higher education to focus more on the process of learning and not unilaterally on the outcomes of instrumental practice:

I think we musicians communicate too little about our practice. We talk a lot about music or about what we're practising but rarely about how we practice. (Student 10)

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## **Becoming a researching artist: Situated perspectives on music conservatory learning and teaching**

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### **Abstract**

*One-to-one instrumental tuition has traditionally constituted the core teaching and learning activity for classical music higher education institutions, and most jazz programmes somehow seem to have taken similar structural approaches. In recent years, with pop, rock and electronica entering many music conservatories, it appears as if ambitions to educate creative, personal artists has pinpointed the need for renewed attention to the suitability of conventional curricular approaches. At Rhythmic Music Conservatory Copenhagen, the work place of the two authors, a decisive curricular shift aiming at meeting such needs, was recently put to work. The main ambition was to place the students' development of their own compositional and performative material at the core of the curriculum, materialised through the weekly KUA critique class. The chapter offers a situated learning perspective on this development.*

### **Lead sheet. Overview**

With this chapter we develop and discuss a situated learning analytical perspective on the music conservatory's new curricular structure by examining and discussing, how students and teachers develop skills and competences in and around the KUA classes. Through ethnographic approaches such as participant observation, qualitative interviews and field notes, we unfold through a series of situated learning theoretical analyses, how students' and teachers' changing participation in deeply collective changing practices of artistic diversity and unpredictability constitutes learning.

Our analyses suggest that the KUA class helps provide a transparent learning environment through an explicit focus on a learning curriculum, developing the students' and teachers' agencies as researching artists.

Conclusively, we suggest some broader reflections on such learning analytical potential for other music higher education institutions (music HEI) aiming to educate innovative, creative and artistically independent artists developing new approaches, and new art.

## **Intro. What is the KUA class?**

Seven music academy students meet weekly in their KUA-class, including a heavy rock guitarist, a free jazz vocal performer, a drummer inclined to explore the paths of Milford Graves, an indie songwriter and a bass player with affection for Grieg and grunge.

Every Wednesday morning from nine to twelve they meet with their KUA teacher, sharing the aim of developing their performative and creative practices at or outside the academy. The students exchange artistic ideas and visions, they discuss their intensions for the semester, they present new sketches of songs and compositions, they talk about the methodologies and context of their work, they play for each other or bring recordings from reactions based on the presentations of their fellow students.

Students at Rhythmic Music Conservatory, Copenhagen have for some years now been engaging in critical discussion and reflection on their own and their peers' artistic development projects in so-called 'critique classes', known by its acronym KUA.

Although the students represent very different views on art and aesthetics, the ambition for the KUA class is that they develop individual, artistic skills by sharing impressions and experiences from listening to each other's musical ideas. Similarly, they need to be open to their fellow students' reactions to their own productions and performances. The idea is not to encourage restrictive, normative reactions to the musical ideas presented in class. Rather, the KUA class is an attempt to foster curiosity, new angles, new questions, new arguments – leading to new, interesting works of art – in

a collective setting<sup>1</sup> and to develop the students' ability to reflect on their own and their peers' artistic intensions, processes, experiments, artistic aspirations, mistakes and products. We often describe this scholarly ambition for the students as being able to listen to your own music from a distance. To be able to travel from the productive field to the receptive field through a post-analysis of your personal artistic statements. To be able to listen to 'yourself' through the ears of the outside world (Jacob's educational field notes).

In other words, the idea behind KUA is for the students to learn about artistic reflection by *doing* it and by experiencing others doing it.<sup>2</sup>

In the following section, we offer some historical background on the KUA class and our current curiosity concerning its learning potential.

## **First verse. Artistic research entering music higher education curricula**

Conventional curricula design within music higher education institutions (music HEI) has for decades placed the one-to-one instrumental tuition model at the core of its teaching (and learning) activities. Until now, this educational approach seems to have worked fine for educating classical musicians, supplemented with ensemble activities ranging from piano duos and trios to string quartets, chamber and symphony orchestras.

With jazz entering the curriculum in music HEI in Europe and the US during the 1970s and 80s, similar curricular logics were initially applied (Brinck 2014, 2017; Hebert, 2011). For some reason, teaching and learning jazz seemed at the time to fit rather smoothly into the conventional classical music education 'mould', adopting somewhat linear ideas of learning certain skills before others, separating the acquisition of instrumental skills from ear training, from theory, from music history, and so on.

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1 The paradoxes that we need to address every day include striving for the highest conceivable level of artistic quality within a very diverse field comprising the students' artistic projects. The students' artistic activities – not the academy or the KUA teacher – define the artistic field of attention, and we help the student to strive for the highest artistic standards.

2 The aim is not the theoretical strength of the reflection. Rather, it is the reflection's anchoring to and relevance for the student's specific artistic processes.

When rock, pop, electronica and freer forms of jazz became an increasingly prominent part of the aesthetic palette<sup>3</sup> at some music HEIs (including Rhythmic Music Conservatory in Copenhagen, Denmark) during the 1990s and 2000s, such historical, didactical arguments were continuously challenged by a series of (now) quite obvious circumstances: 1) The idea of a mutual music theory curriculum for all students seemed not to withstand closer scrutiny. How could we keep claiming that the singer-songwriter, for her artistic development, needed the same 'set' of theoretical and practical knowledge and skills regarding chords and scales as the be-bop saxophonist, the electronic noise artist, or the free jazz pianist? 2) The idea that the one-to-one teaching and learning model (somehow) dependent on the student being taught by a master within the student's instrumental and musical preferences) was the ultimate format for developing instrumental skills and advanced musical interpretation needed similar reconsideration. If the death metal guitarist and the semi-acoustic ambient jazz guitarist were to share a guitar professor, the teaching would have to be on a highly generic level, exhausting the very artistic sensitivity and compassion that it takes to propagate musical knowledge and skill. Or the two guitar students would have to have two different guitar teachers from their respective professional domains.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, 3) with pop, rock and electronica gradually gaining prominence within HEIs, the artistic practice of creating one's own material – a core approach to music-making within these genres (Williams & Williams, 2016) – required some serious attention. And the question arose: how can educational institutions such as music HEIs for popular music offer optimal opportunities for music students within what we might coin 'the creative domains within popular music'? What does such a curricular model look like?

During the 2000s, we at Rhythmic Music Conservatory found this educational challenge increasingly pressing, and finally (in 2012) we decided on an emphatic curricular turn, placing the students' development of their own compositional and performative material at the core of the curriculum and at the same time enabling highly individualised one-to-one instrumental teaching.

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3 Please cf. Michelsen (2001) for a thorough discussion of pop, jazz (in Scandinavia coined as 'rhythmic music') taking a societal position 'between high and low' through such institutional dynamics.

4 Such logics seem to beg a new question: how many instrumental teachers would then be needed? One for each student?

## **Interlude. Authors' biographies of participation**

We find it apt at this moment as authors to introduce each of our points of departure for writing this piece. Stating our individual biographies of participation at this point aligns with the ideas behind situated learning theory as presented shortly, claiming inseparability and coherence between the participants' different relational realities and their historical significance.

We have been colleagues at the Rhythmic Music Conservatory (RMC) for more than ten years and have been collaborating on many occasions, excavating and benefitting from our quite different historical, artistic and educational paths through life. This is our first co-written scholarly paper.

Jacob Anderskov

I am a pianist, composer and bandleader trained within the jazz paradigm but nowadays traversing a number of genres from contemporary jazz to composed new music.<sup>5</sup> With my music, I'm always aiming for unforeseeable shapes by changing methodologies and aesthetical settings between my different artistic projects. Similarly, my teaching at the RMC pivots around the un-predictabilities of facilitating the transformational encounters between student, teacher and fellow students.

As an artistic researcher, I have published a number of artistic research projects<sup>6</sup>. In several of those, the mapping of actual as well as potential musical materials has played a central role in developing new directions to my music.

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5 This is documented on around thirty albums that Anderskov has published as bandleader.

6 Publications include "Action –Reaction", "Habitable Exomusics" and "Sonic Complexion", all in peer review for publication on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net>

Lars Brinck

I am a pianist, keyboardist, arranger and scientific researcher. My artistic, educational and scientific interests entwine, pivoting around the spontaneous musical interaction of popular music, jamming and collective improvisation, especially within circular, groove-based genres. I am particularly interested in how and when such skills are developed through relational processes. Additionally, this has led to an interest in discussing conventional assumptions of teaching and learning, illuminating the significance of many different kinds of everyday situations and contexts as places and moments for learning and development.

## Second verse. Methodology

### Situated learning theory

Situated learning theory (SLT) was originally suggested as an analytic methodology intended to challenge conventional 'distinctions between learning and doing, between social identity and knowledge, between education and occupation, between form and content' (Lave, 1996, p. 143). Lave and Wenger (1991) formulated SLT based on analytical observations on the intimate relational aspects of apprenticeship practices, showing how 'opportunities for learning are (...) given structure by work practices instead of by strongly asymmetrical master-apprentice relations' (p. 91).

Founded on a social practice theoretical understanding of everyday practice as a historical, dialectical construction, SLT emphasises the changing relations between persons and the world, asking: 'what if we took the collective social nature of our existence so seriously that we put it first?' (Lave, 1997, p. 146). Such a social ontological position holds self-evident epistemological implications: knowledge is not only a strongly relational matter, knowledge is also indivisible from and embedded in human practice. From this position, learning is conceptualised as persons' changing participation in changing practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lave, 2011). Lave describes the position like this:

The construction of practitioners' identities is a collective enterprise and is only partly a matter of an individual's sense of self, biography, and substance. The construction of identity is also a way of speaking of the community's constitution of itself through the activity of its practitioners. (...) Most of all, without participation with others, there may be no basis for lived identity (Lave, 1991, p. 74).

Situated learning theory offers a set of concepts for us to study the 'structuring resources that shape the learning process and context' (Lave & Wenger 1991, p. 91). And considering learning to be a part of any social practice involves focusing our analytical attention 'on the structure of social practice rather than privileging the structure of pedagogy as the source of learning' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 113)

Lave articulates how we may then discover 'situated opportunities for the improvisational development of new practice' (Lave, 1989 in Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 97) and asks further: 'What can we learn from examining contemporary social practice when it is conceived as a complex structure of interrelated processes of production and transformation of communities and participants?' (Lave, 1991, p. 64). Taking a *decentred* approach to the empirical analyses means that '[a]ctivities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation: they are part of a broader system of relations in which they have meaning' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53). Through such an analytical lens it becomes possible to construct a 'robust notion of a "whole person" which does justice to the multiple relations through which persons define themselves in practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 53–54, quotation within quotation in original).

Taking such a decentred, situated learning theoretical perspective on students' and teachers' changing participation in and around the KUA class has the potential to reveal '*the more inclusive* phenomena of collective participation in which we, our identities, products, and knowledgeabilities have their concrete existence' (Lave & Packer, 2008, p. 41, italics in original). This involves shifting from unambiguous notions of an individual learner, the master as a locus of authority and of teaching as the pivot of learning to the idea of changing participation in changing practice.

From this theoretical platform we inquire: how can situated learning theoretical analyses of music HEI students' and teachers' changing participation in the changing practices in and around the KUA class offer a deepened understanding of how learning takes place? And what kinds of new related questions may then surface?

## Ethnographic fieldwork

The empirical material for this investigation has been produced through long-term ethnographic fieldwork (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997) and semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) with two RMC master students (Zara and Karl<sup>7</sup>) who have participated in KUA classes for a couple of years. Educational field notes and diaries (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994) have been recorded by Jacob during his weekly development of curricular material and class planning. Both authors have been engaged on a curricular management level in developing arguments for the KUA class idea, and discussions from these processes have informed the ethnographic accounts and analytical selections.<sup>8</sup>

As Burke (2008) puts it, we have engaged in a long-term process of ‘writing as a method of inquiry’ in order to embrace the significance of ‘the trying, recognising it as embryonic to the full-fledged attention to the significance of language’ (p. 205). We have taken Burke’s approach even further in the sense that our *collective* endeavour of writing about, discovering and excavating aspects of interest in the subject at hand has resulted in a long-term written dialogue. This dialogic practice has mainly operated through emailing versions of initial documents, sharing of notes, sharing of preliminary analyses of the student interviews, and so on. Through this collective process we have been able to carefully select three analytical concepts from situated learning theory that we find particularly significant to our findings.

Through ethnographic accounts and interview excerpts (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2003; Lave, 2011) unfolding specific, seemingly mundane, everyday situations in and around the KUA class, we hope to provide coherent sensations of the empirical foundation for our analyses. In the following section our analyses and ethnographic accounts ‘formlessly entwine’, as the late poet and musician Leonard Cohen and his co-writer Sharon Robinson so beautifully put it.<sup>9</sup> Not as linear, causal ‘truths’ and testable representations of what is going on and how we and the students think and act, but merely as a *presentation* (Polkinghorne, 2003, p. 17) of what we, the authors, as teachers, musicians and researchers, find interesting and significant

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7 Students’ names anonymised.

8 Anderskov is currently a professor (WSA), and Brinck is currently an ass. professor, PhD and Head of Research and Development.

9 Alexandra Leaving is written by Sharon Robinson and Leonard Cohen. Published 2001 on *Ten New Songs*, Columbia Records.



to the human practices before us, including the perspectives and wordings of some of the students.

## **Chorus. Analysing changing participation, changing practice**

The following section offers a set of ethnographic accounts integrating situated learning theoretical analyses through the lens of the concepts of *transparency*, *agency* and *learning curriculum*.

### Transparency

One of the seminal analytical concepts developed in the scholarly community around a social practice theoretical approach to situated learning theory is the notion of *transparency* as a structuring resource (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 91). The concept enables us to recognise ‘the socio-political order of practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 91) as a pivotal resource for persons’ changing participation – learning – in and around the KUA class.

It is crucial to the idea behind the KUA class that the student’s on-going productive processes in and outside the conservatory<sup>10</sup> and the KUA classes’ reflective practices are deeply entwined. The KUA class only makes sense if the student is constantly engaged in one or more continuing artistic processes. Hence, the student’s artistic work processes are not only the object of critical reflection but the *precondition* for such reflective activity aimed at developing and nourishing the student’s personal, independent artistic profile – that of the researching artist.<sup>11</sup>

Looking at the interviewed students’ participation in and around the KUA class reveals a number of interesting observations concerning *transparency* as a structuring resource for learning. Zara explains how participating in the KUA class ‘opened the horizon towards what is music, and what is [our] approach to music’ and how within the group

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10 The academy offers an extensive number of work places for students to compose, practice, experiment and produce musical artworks, alone or with others.

11 This curricular idea is supported by Daniel Butt in his discussions on artistic research as music HEI activity, quoting Rogoff to suggest that the academy’s critical culture engages in ‘singularisation’ of art works in order for ‘materials, works, associations, narratives, methodologies (...) pursue one another in unconventional modes, invite each other to dance as it were (...)’ (Butt, 2017, p. 74).

‘there are a lot of different characters and people with different musical backgrounds.’ In her class, Zara worked with ‘improvisers, songwriters, producers, and so you get a completely different view on your work (...).’ (Zara, pers. comm. <sup>12</sup>). <sup>13</sup>

On a similar note, Karl explains how the dialogue in the class can generate surprising reflections and explicitly mentions how, ‘when I listen to other students, there are some comments which I can totally share, but also which I cannot share, because we have different artistic goals or ideals’ (Karl, pers. comm.). Karl is himself aware of the fact that conflicts of interest, artistic preference, taste et cetera generate different, often clarifying reflections on one’s own work. Karl states how detecting artistic disagreements ‘is also interesting, because that is just another way to see one’s object [musical work, ed.]. I listen to [a fellow student] and he says “this is great”, but I don’t think “this is great”’, Karl states, before asking himself ‘why don’t I agree with him or her? Why is it important for me *not* to go this way, but the other way?’ (Karl, pers. comm.)

Zara provides a similar example, having often experienced a sensation of ‘ah, that’s also a perspective [I] can see in my project right now!’ and continues this line of thought on how she ‘discover[s] new aspects of [her] own artistic personality’, while she exchanges views and ideas with people from different backgrounds. Zara sums up how she ‘learn[s] that [some specific example, ed.] is not the only right solution. So, you open up, get inspired.’ (Zara, pers. comm.).

The interviewed students also express how they benefit from providing reactions to their classmates’ works, how processes on response appear in multiple directions, and how the class is ‘not only [about] receiving feedback but also giving feedback. Which is also challenging. (...) And every time it’s a new task for me to give new comments about (...) a project which I am not related to, which could be totally different from what I am doing.’<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The reference ‘pers.comm.’ signifies that the quote originates from the interviews with the students. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim and can be accessed by request.

<sup>13</sup> All KUA classes are composed with this aim of artistic and instrumental diversity. Outside the classes, we find that the students are given (and taking) many opportunities to meet with artists closer to their artistic preferences.

<sup>14</sup> The teacher’s task guiding these feedback processes is a matter of many interesting discussions and methodological investigations. Karl experiences how ‘it’s depending on the KUA teacher, how you can (...) how challenged you (...) because in some KUA lessons [my teacher] says: “Today, only questions” or in the next lesson he says “Only non-judgmental comments”’ (Karl, pers. comm.). Søren Kjærgaard, also teaching KUA at RMC, has shared some of his experiences with feedback formats in Kjærgaard (2018) (in Danish).

Critical dialogue based on generous (and for some vulnerable) exchanges of art works and art processes in and around the KUA class seems to provide an array of transparent notions of what the creation of new, personal art (music) entails. The diversity of artistic standpoints, artistic procedural preferences and experiences and artistic products becomes a resource, insofar as the different practices – the KUA class being one of an array of ‘meeting spots’ – of dialogue and sharing of works maintain their transparency, providing each student with an opportunity to participate from a number of different positions and perspectives of their choice. Acting within specific, carefully considered intentions in a transparent context constitutes *agency*, as we will elaborate on shortly.

Of course, transparency as a resource for learning in such diverse artistic environments represents matters of conflict. Art for art’s sake, making money on a number one hit or changing the world through artistic statements? Or a mixture of those (or other) perspectives? Zara conveys how a fellow student bluntly claims how he ‘want[s] to be rich with my music’, and how, to Zara this ‘is a goal [which] I can totally not relate [to]. I’m not sure what I can get from that opinion or that statement. What inspiration can I get there? It is just [a] statement (...) too far away from me.’ (Zara, pers. comm.)<sup>15</sup> According to situated learning theory, a ‘theory of social practice emphasizes the relational interdependency of agent and world, of activity, meaning, cognition, learning, and knowing’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 50). Persons’ thoughts and actions are constantly negotiated through participation in practice(s). From this view, participation ‘is always based on situated negotiation and re-negotiation of meaning.’ (p. 51)

I think it is also good to know or to experience a person who wants a totally different thing. Like, ‘I want to make money’, or ‘I want to be a pure artist’ – to have those extremes in one room. To me, at least, it would be also great to experience what kind of vibe exist in that field, when those two extremes have to comment on each other. (Karl, pers. comm.)

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15 Lave and Wenger (1991) have offered the concept of *telos* to describe the direction of choices. Brinck (2014) suggests the concept of *aboutness* or *what the music is about* as a similar attempt to circumscribe the overall intentions related to human activity on different levels. In Brinck (2014) the analytic concept of *aboutness* is suggested to enable us to recognise and discuss what lies behind, or above, artistic decisions made by different musicians in different contexts. On a similar note, a theory on funk jamming presented in Brinck (2018) entails ‘making the music feel good’ to describe such overall perspective on funk jamming. Along a similar line of thought, Borgo (2014) suggests the term ‘what the music wants’ to address such overall guiding perspectives for actions. What is to one artist a clearly stated value or quality, appears to another to be meaningless or at least difficult to grasp. ‘What the music wants’ is to a great extent an individual matter, although social conventions and historical, cultural conventions are obviously established.

Again, it appears as if a clear statement about wanting to make money from art ignites – or even fortifies – an aspiration *not* to pursue such goals. Transparency regarding the student’s many different artistic practices as (also) shared in the KUA class provides access to multiple ways of participation, nurturing the development of a still more detailed perspective on one’s own artistic identity. The multiplicity of the lives of an artist, a musician, a composer, (and teacher) becomes transparent through different practices.

## Agency

Contradictions, conflicts and paradoxes seem to compel each person to think carefully about their own position and consequently the available action possibilities. Becoming an artist with an ability to make conscious decisions presupposes transparency regarding the many kinds of positions and choices that are available, accessible and affordable.

Developing such a strong ability to make qualified artistic decisions, pursuing ideas and directions to suit your artistic visions or sensibilities seems be crucial to any creative artist. The analytical concept of *agency* in situated learning theory enables us to recognise moments of changing participation in changing practice, where such action possibilities are developed.

Now follows a couple of empirical examples of learning as changing participation as learning from the perspective of *agency*.

Zara expressed how she finds that engaging in the KUA class helps her

[become] my own teacher, because through this I learn what is important for me and what I need to learn and how I can approach things. And you gain trust in your choices, and I think that is very crucial for being a musician in this world now, outside school. Where we have trust and awareness of your choices – you learn to be your own boss. (Zara, pers. comm.)

From a teacher’s perspective, the fact that they are not expected to reproduce either Patti Smith or Charlie Parker provides a space for the students to define their own path. Consequently, the KUA teacher’s task entails illuminating to the students how to make that space reach its full potential, and not just remain promising and comfortable. This might mean asking the students about ‘the criteria of quality applicable to your music for it to succeed in artistic terms’ (Jacob’s educational notes).

Zara elucidates how ‘I can evaluate it and reflect on it and maybe change it or just leave it like that, because I can say: “No, this is my decision, my artistic decision”’. This point also relates to the former section’s analytical concept of *transparency* insofar as the openness of opinions and statements and artworks provides a *mirror* for the student to reflect his/her own views, thus fostering yet more nuanced and robust agency and identity in practice. Zara adds: ‘If you invite others into your own work, I feel that I learn much more and much faster than if I am just working in my own room’ (Zara, pers. comm.).

The fact that the students share sketches, unfinished products, procedural doubts, frustrations and shortcomings similarly appears to develop the students’ agency, their ability to negotiate acting in practice in consciously interdependent manners. Zara discloses how participation in class becomes ‘a place for us to share our struggles and see that: “Ah, I’m not the only one, everybody has these problems, it’s normal, we can talk and find a way through this.” You really build up a relationship.’ (Zara, pers. comm.)

The students seem to develop *agency* on a deeper, long-term level in the sense that ‘you get to know yourself, your artistic identity.’ (Zara, pers. comm.). Detecting and elaborating on differences in taste, argument and perspective seems to gradually clarify the student’s own personal artistic aspirations on an aggregated level, providing *agency* to engage robustly in the artistic work processes and the involved ongoing decisions and choices. The students appear to develop an ability to not only look at their own and others’ artworks through understandings of the potential interpretational and experiential domains of these works, but to develop *agency* to continuously make artistic decisions based on these reflections.

## Learning curriculum

As already mentioned, the KUA students are constantly engaged in their own artistic projects throughout their three, five or seven years of enrolment<sup>16</sup>, resulting in a vast production of artistic projects and performances at and outside the academy. This fertile forest of profoundly different artistic projects becomes – consciously or not – the empirical foundation for the reflective practices in the KUA class. And, of course, it also offers reference points for artistic discussions and debates outside the KUA class. In the following section, we look at the significance of the students’ and

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16 Bachelor programmes in Denmark run for three years, master programmes for five and advanced diploma programmes for seven years.

teachers' artwork constituting such pivotal empirical material, and how we may talk about this as a *learning curriculum*.

Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest a clear distinction between a learning curriculum and a teaching curriculum, insofar as a 'learning curriculum consists of situated opportunities (...) for the improvisational development of new practice' (Lave, 1989 in Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 97), and how '[t]he practice of the community creates the potential "curriculum" in the broadest sense' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 93, quote in original). In the KUA class (and the formlessly entwined dialogues between students and teachers and among students outside the class), the collective discussions and reflections take the students' artistic productions, sketches and aspirations as their starting point. Taking a learning curricular perspective focuses our attention on the 'everyday practice [as] *viewed from the perspective of the learners*' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 97, italics in original). Through such an analytical lens, a 'learning curriculum is essentially situated' and 'characteristic of a community', not necessarily as being present in the same (class)room but merely as co-participants in adjacent paths of lived-in practices. It implies 'participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities' (p. 98).

When the student's works are presented in the KUA class, the music initially 'calls on' its own references through the perspective of the student presenting her sketches, ideas or finalised productions. Initially, it is not her teacher or peers who suggest relevant references. The teacher and the other students sense what might arguably be a relevant point of artistic reference or inspiration through their personal artistic intuition by offering an 'open room' for the presenting student to process this input. Points of reference can be aesthetical, methodological or based on informational or research-based similarities in the work or the process. In a comparative perspective, Zara describes how she has experienced different approaches to referencing and how these different points of relations have affected her development of an artistic, creative identity:

(...) There [are] a lot of teachers, especially when I studied [for] my bachelor at [another music HEI], people or teacher[s] were just telling you that 'You have to play like this, because it is better.' But if you reflect on that, it is just the way the teacher is playing, not what you want to express. Because there is a ton of other musicians in history playing differently. [Our KUA teacher] has a great quality and the skill to lead you in a direction without pushing

[onto] you his musical ideal, I think. And then, that's where creativity starts. (...) [He] doesn't say: 'go this way or go this way'. He says: 'OK, you have those ten ways to go, and you can choose whatever way you want to go.' (Zara, pers. comm.)

For the KUA teacher, referencing seems to take the student's own artistic production as a starting point, very imminently placing the focus on the student's artistic aspirations and visions. This appears to involve 'access to arenas of mature practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 110), but somehow guided by the student's artistic choices and arguments.

Again, conflicts and doubts constitute a pivotal 'energy' in these processes: Karl elucidates how

...I go home, reflect on that and listen to the references. And I can just feel if it is right or not. But sometimes I feel that it is totally right. And then after one week, I feel 'No, it is not the right thing', or sometimes I think: 'No, that is not what I am looking for, this reference is not what I am looking for right now,' but after one week it changes to: 'No, it was the right thing.' (Karl, pers. comm.)

The references arising from the artistic sketches presented in the KUA class might be described as an act of 'opening doors to choose from' for the students. And of course, references are (eventually) also introduced by fellow students, either in class or in the band rooms, in the academy canteen or elsewhere. Referencing as a practice closely related to the perceived ideas or directions emerging from the students' budding artworks becomes a distinct and tangible testimony of the relevance of the perspective of a *learning curriculum* on the students' potential development. You might say that the curriculum develops through the ongoing development of the students' artwork *in a formlessly entwined* dialogue with present as well as past, historical artworks. Questions are posed, reactions are offered and reflections are developed from the scope of the students' ongoing work.

This consistent focus on the students' perspective through the lens of their evolving artwork allows for imperfection, failures, mistakes, doubts and sketches. Zara states how 'I wasn't used to share so much about things I hadn't brought to perfection yet' (Zara, pers. comm.). She adds how confidence, the trustful environment, matters:

[The class] becomes your little family (...). You meet regularly, every week, so through these regular meetings you build trust in the people that you see again and again, and they also open up, so everyone is in the same position. (Zara, pers. comm.)

The professional interest over time appears to be important, insofar as fellow students and the teacher in the words of Karl 'know what you are doing this week and the last week. They follow your development. This is important, because otherwise I think that – especially here [at this academy] – you have so many choices that you can easily get lost.' (Karl, pers. comm.) Zara adds on a similar note how the fact that 'you have this one person, or this group, that you can check base with, is very useful.' (Zara, pers. comm.)

In other words, the students' ongoing artistic work constitutes the main point of departure for the curricular activities in the KUA class. Ideas and products are shared, often in quite (conventionally) vulnerable situations dominated by doubts, confusion, a chaos of options and paths to follow. What seems to make way for this approach is the mere fact that the curriculum clearly is conceived from a learner's perspective. The overall approach seems to be inquiring (paraphrasing Lave & Wenger): What are the situated opportunities here for the improvisational development of new practice? What is needed here for changing participation to be facilitated, for different positions of participation to be possible? And thus, for a steady, yet conflictual and contradictory practice of multiple agencies to evolve?

## Outro

### Concluding comments

Taking a social ontological stand on human existence – and on learning – might seem to contradict or oppose the educational idea of providing the students with singular, deeply personalised opportunities for developing their individual, artistic, creative identity – clearly a curricular (cl)aim pivotal for any art or music HEL.

We see no opposition here. On the contrary. With this chapter, we argue that situated learning theoretical analyses of the students' and teachers' participation in and around the KUA classes enhance the significance of the dialectics between the student's



individual artistic identity formation and the ongoing changing relations with the other students and their creative work.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, we argue that the analytical perspectives of *agency*, of *transparency* and of *learning curriculum* provide us with a coherent argument for such dialectic relations. We show how the intricate, ongoing (and changing) relation between the educational idea of providing each student with a singular, personal perspective on his/her work and the curricular structure of the collective sharing and mirroring of ongoing artworks appears to be productive.<sup>18</sup>

The students' *agency* as artists in society appears to be developed in *transparent* contexts and practices, where what can be learned (and through which practices) surfaces in somewhat recognisable shapes and forms. And *learning curriculum* as an analytical perspective on what is (to be) learned helps us to recognise the significance of a (not only theoretical, philosophical but very tangible, hands-on) student perspective on the everyday activities that education involves.<sup>19</sup>

As we have argued, our analyses have aimed at 'decentering the analysis of [the students as] changing participants' (Lave, draft, p. 23) in and around the KUA classes, acknowledging the impact of other (historically informed) practices than the specific class in question. However, this perspective could have been more thorough. On a larger scale of inquiry, it would be interesting to look more into the students' band practice in the band rooms, their work at their 'bedroom computer stations', their concerts and so on.<sup>20</sup>

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17 Just this week, finishing this chapter, we both attended the summer exams at the academy. The exams take place in the form of concerts accompanied by recordings as well as a subsequent reflection and discussion of the artistic choices leading to the artistic statement, the concert. It becomes evident (however undocumented at this point) how the students present interesting, amazing, groundbreaking artworks and that they to a great extent can lay out and share the discussion they have had with themselves and their peers and teachers about the artistic decisions and doubts leading to the final concert.

18 Please cf. Butt (2017 pp. 133 ff.) and Kjærgaard (2018) for further discussions along those lines.

19 Brinck and Tanggaard (2016) present a similar argument for how developing collective discourse of art and art pedagogy involves 'embracing the unpredictable' in order for deep, personal artistic sensations to surface.

20 Please cf. Brinck (forthcoming) reporting from empirical, situated learning theoretical analyses of co-writing rock bands' collective creative processes as learning, inseparable from the evolving art produced in the band rooms.

## New questions

We find that the empirical analyses offered here cast light on new ways of thinking about future music HEI's challenges and options in regard to educating innovative, creative and artistically independent artists. We are aware of the fact that the analytical examples presented here stem from the field of creative arts, popular music, jazz, electronica and so on. However, we wonder whether the analytical perspective of *agency* could prove useful in reflecting on classical music students' one-to-one teaching as well, asking: how do we as teachers and institutions provide specific, tangible platforms for students to grow into independent artists and learners in a lifelong perspective? And with the analytic concept of *transparency* we may ask ourselves whether what we want the students to become better at, *is* as apparent, as we usually think. Are the (artistic and/or personal) pathways available to the students during their studies laid out in transparent patterns? Are we aware of what the students learn from being students, regardless of our explicit intentions? And from a different perspective, are we as teachers and institutions being open and transparent in the way we define and communicate our expectations and evaluations?

And finally, the analytical handle *learning curriculum* certainly aids us in thinking about which perspective we adopt on a day-to-day basis to design and argue for our curricular activities. To what extent may each of us reconsider not only the material that we suggest for classes but also the structure of classes, the divisions between younger and older students, the relations between schools and extra-curricular activities in society, and so on?

In conclusion, with this chapter we offer a set of analytical tools for recognising and reflecting on how we can fulfil an ambition to educate students to – in a lifelong perspective – continually be able to develop new approaches to their performances, new interpretations, new audiences and new art forms – regardless of genres, styles or cultural conventions.

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# **Part three**

## **Perspectives and projects**



## **Inquiry into an unknown musical practice: an example of learning through project and investigation**

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### **Abstract**

*The music pedagogy department at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Lyon has built a training programme based on project and inquiry, inspired by the theories of John Dewey and Louis Legrand. The students are asked to investigate a musical practice that they are not familiar with before. They meet musicians, perform with them, they conduct interviews, prepare pedagogical workshops, read documentation, and animate a seminar. The idea is that they through this process become able to raise new questions derived from action experiences.*

*The following article unfolds the theoretical foundations of this project, and describes how it is implemented by showing an example of students who have investigated *bèlè*, which is a music and dance form from Martinique.*

*This ‘inquiry’ and project constitutes a challenge for the students that changes their understanding of what music and what learning music are. Conducting an investigation allows students to take a global view of the musical issues – an approach that differ from how most of them usually focus mostly on ‘musical material’. They identify the multiplicity of conditions for the emergence of a musical practice, which is essential since they have to encourage and accompany new practices as pedagogues in the futures.*

## Introduction

Historically, higher music education in France has been built on a strong instrumental specialisation, rooted in the context of Western classical music. This specialisation refers to the performance practice of the orchestra musician and the soloist on the one hand, and to a very strong separation between performance and theory on the other. In particular, the analysis and the discourse on music have been developed in the academic field of musicology, which in France is exclusively assigned to the universities, whilst the performance practice is left to the conservatoires with very few bridges between these two areas. Today, even though a growing number of institutions offer curricula that allow students to combine music performance practice and research, the separation between performance and theory still remains strong, as the idea is that there would be just one right way of learning how to perform music.

In the music pedagogy department of the Conservatoire National de Musique et de Danse de Lyon (CNSMDL) students are instructed to reflect on musical practices by drawing on disciplinary fields. Firstly, if one wants to go beyond the simple logic of imitation and reproduction in a setting that is intended to trigger instructed learning, a teacher needs to describe in depth the different musical practices he or she is teaching. Secondly, it is essential to be able to support the students' artistic ideas and projects (which might differ from those of the teachers) and to remain flexible in a musical world that is undergoing constant change. Finally, if the artist-teacher wants to pro-actively contribute to the well-being of the society and the community in which he or she is embedded, he or she should be able to take a more specific look at his or her own role as an artist but also to understand the social and cultural logic of the area.

Therefore, the educational concept of 'learning through projects and by inquiry' developed in this paper stands at the junction of different academic disciplinary fields usually present in higher music education in the subjects of musicology; educational sciences; sociology and anthropology.

Students and teachers in the department gather theoretical input from each of these fields which is in turn reinforced by the pragmatic anchoring of these approaches.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There are few reference works that propose a conceptual development of this multidisciplinary approach to musical practices; the teaching teams therefore draw on literature in different fields of research. However, mention can be made of the Cahiers de la Recherche 'Enseigner la Musique [Teaching Music]', published by Cefedem Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Lyon, which feature articles written by researchers from a variety of disciplinary fields in which they write their experiences and reflections as actors in the specialised teaching of music (artists-teachers, directors, politicians).



The logic of projects corresponds particularly to this multidisciplinary anchoring because this enables the persons involved to combine various elements and to make them interact with each other, as will be demonstrated later on.

The CNSMDL students in the music pedagogy department were asked to investigate a musical practice which they were not familiar with before. The idea was that they had no clue about the musical structure the musicians were referring to when performing their music. In other words: they did not have any knowledge of the construct of ideas these musicians were re-constructing through the act of performing. Such an unknown musical practice could for example be if a classical musician were to focus on the *bèlè*, which is a musical genre from Martinique – an example we will describe further below. In this case the students met the musicians, tried to perform with them, conducted interviews and read documentation related to the music they were scrutinising. Next, during a three-day workshop they offered other musicians an initiation to this music before finally discussing the results of their investigation at a seminar.

We believe that such investigations allow students to develop essential musical, didactic and pedagogical skills and that they help students think about the role of the music teacher in modern-day conservatoires. And we believe that giving the students space to experiment will help them develop their creativity. Why is this? Firstly, because students are exposed to a situation which is at first glance not easy to solve. Secondly, because they will meet groups that have come up with different answers when facing similar or even the same problems. This helps them to develop ‘divergent thought’, to imagine new possibilities, to become ‘open-ended’ (Guilford, 1950; Hameline, 1996).

We are convinced that in the current context of global warming, migration and the urgency of finding solutions for sustainable development, new generations will have to invent new ways of living together, and thus creativity has become an essential and indispensable skill.

Education and training have an essential role to play in relation to these issues. That is why the isomorphism between the values that new music teachers are asked to develop in their music schools and the ones the music instructors should implement in the training of future teachers is crucial.

This paper will address both the idea of the music teachers’ new tasks and roles as well as the objectives of the workshop. Starting with a brief overview of the context,

I will go on to describe the survey methods and tools and present an example before critically analysing this work.

## Background

The department of music pedagogy at the CNSMDL

The Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Lyon (CNSMDL) is one of the two higher music education institutions in France that are exclusively focusing on higher education and run under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture. Its department of music pedagogy has existed since 1994. The CNSMDL operates under the auspices of both the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. The music pedagogy department offers a two-year programme which awards a master in pedagogy.

The student cohort of this programme is about 20 students per year, most of them having graduated with a master's degree in performance or in theory from one of the two CNSMDs in France. With a master's degree in music pedagogy they are given permission to teach instrumental, vocal or theory lessons in music schools and conservatoires. After a regional civil service competition the newly qualified teacher can join the managerial staff of a conservatoire and become a senior executive.

Music schools and conservatoires<sup>2</sup> in France today

France has a very close network of music schools and conservatoires. Marcel Landowsky, director of music at the Ministry of Culture from 1966 to 1975, and later Maurice Fleuret, director from 1981 to 1986, promoted a very strong development policy reinforcing these structures in order to improve young people's access to music education (Lefebvre, 2014; Veilt & Duchemin, 2000). These music schools and conservatoires offer a specialised initial education of music – from early childhood music education up to a diploma of amateur or pre-professional practice.

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<sup>2</sup> To avoid misunderstandings between different forms of institutional logic in Europe, we will use the term 'conservatoire' to refer to educational structures of music with state approval which deliver teaching from the beginner level to pre professional diploma.

These structures are publicly funded, mainly by municipalities. The courses are generally structured according to the relevant instrumental or vocal disciplines. The conservatoires are classified according to their territorial extent: 'regional conservatoires', 'departmental c.' and 'municipal c.' or 'intercommunal c.'. In total there are around 380 conservatoires in France ([www.culture.gouv.fr](http://www.culture.gouv.fr)). The pedagogy department trains teachers who are licensed to teach within these public structures as experts in music education.

In addition a number of smaller structures can be found, including communal or associative institutions (not included in the above figure), that have kept the name 'music school'. These schools may have emerged from traditional structures such as municipal wind ensembles. Generally, they offer more limited educational services than the conservatoires, but pursue similar goals and missions, at a local scale.

During the last few decades attitudes towards music have changed a great deal in France. On the one hand, music schools and conservatoires have experienced significant growth: even if the conservatoires remain focused on one-to-one teaching and classical music, the range of services and activities has expanded considerably. On the other hand, music-related habits, especially when it comes to listening to music, have changed. Music schools and conservatoires should support this evolution, and teacher education should encourage the artist-teacher to continually develop his or her role as a professional musician and music educator in our changing society.

Even if the curricula and activities are laid down by the state, the structures are the responsibility of the local authorities. Thus, elected officials ask conservatoires to expand their services and to address a wider audience. The audience attending classes in these institutions is now different from the past. The various framework texts of the Ministry of Culture, which describe the missions of the conservatoires<sup>3</sup>, show evolution: music schools and conservatoires are given the task of further developing amateur practices, collective practices, multidisciplinary and creativity. They have a duty to engage in partnerships with associations and artists, to anchor the conservatoire in its home territory and make it shine. The conservatoire is no longer exclusively meant to train orchestral musicians. But this historical legacy is still so strong that changes

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<sup>3</sup> The 1984, 1992 and 1996 'pedagogical guidance schemes' and 'Charter for Specialized Arts Education' (2001) clarified the different missions of the schools concerned. The pedagogical guidance scheme for the initial teaching of music, published in 2008, is now the reference document for all teachers, directors and elected officials.

are often difficult to implement and only slowly put into action. That is why it is so important to support young teachers in developing an extended scope of skills and competencies to help them articulate heritage and new forms of practice.

The changes that have been outlined above are impacting teaching methods: group lessons are booming, student profiles change and diversify, as well as their relationship with music and their expectations. Moreover, information is today considerably more accessible – whether it is access to exotic music that has long been unknown to our Western societies or information about the history of heritage or interpretations.

All this also has a strong impact on the role and the mission of the teacher. Teaching music practices that are new to him, the teacher cannot rely on his encyclopedic knowledge. Therefore his role shifts towards a more accompanying one, helping the students to inquire, research for, analyse and classify information, as well as develop their critical thinking.

The development of new technologies has also brought new opportunities for students who are eager to compose music. Music editing programs or computer-assisted musics for example, make composition more accessible. As a result, the separation between interpretation and composition becomes blurry – an experience that seems to be less alien to musical styles and genres outside scholarly classical music.

These developments are also a challenge for the traditional relationship between theory and practice. The teacher must now be open to diverse approaches to music-making and to helping his students understand, compare and experiment with different ways of making music, different processes, in other words: he must find new and more flexible ways of balancing the relationship between theory and practice.

The teaching profession is changing. The music teacher can no longer only be a specialist on an instrument or a musical genre; he or she must also be a specialist on the ‘access to knowledge’, someone who is able to support their students during their research.

### Learning through project and inquiry

This is why the music education department at the CNSMDL has built a training programme based on project and inquiry. Two student cohorts have enrolled on the

programme to date, but some projects, such as the one described below, have been under development for several years.

Project work and inquiry are to be understood as two poles in a regulatory cycle. The tension between the two is productive in order to raise new questions derived from action experiences. Stimulating and releasing this productive tension between project work and inquiry with each individual student can be seen as a common basic concept which underlies all pedagogical study programmes at the CNSML.

The skills that the students have to develop in their career are, of course, prescribed by regulations stipulated by the Ministry of Culture, and the choice of devices is designed to allow these acquisitions. But in the articulation between the different projects, and within each project, the student's path is conceived at the beginning of a dialogue, or even negotiation, in which not only the teacher is involved but also the student him- or herself at an earlier stage of his or her career as a learner. There is a contractual process between the student and his or her teacher: the pedagogical team have an agreement with the students on the terms of their projects – their challenges, objectives, methods and evaluation – and, at the same time, the teachers are challenged to gradually withdraw from the role of instructor into a role as mentor and facilitator, allowing the student to develop into a professional self-reflecting and self-controlling educator.

This educational concept is based on two major theories: Firstly, 'pedagogy through project' ('pédagogie de projet'), defined by Louis Legrand (1982). Secondly, 'theory of inquiry', developed by John Dewey (1938), which can be seen from today's point of view as one of the first formulations of a theory of action-oriented learning in the modern sense.

The department of music pedagogy at the CNSMDL is not the only one to have implemented these principles into music teacher education in France. In particular, the Cefedem Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, under the leadership of Jean-Charles François, starting in 2000, as well as later the Cefedem of Normandy under the leadership of Yanik Lefort have already developed educational programmes based on these principles since 2000, with many changes over the years and different groups of students<sup>4</sup>. The

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4 Jacques Moreau has already proposed a contribution on this subject to the AEC, starting with a text written in French by Jean-Charles François (François et al., 2007), edited in collaboration between the Cefedem Rhône-Alpes and the CNSMDL: "Contractual Process in Students' Performance Projects". This paper was simultaneously presented in English by Jean-Charles François to a Connect presentation at the Guildhall.

teams from these three institutions have shared their experiences with each other through discussions and workshops.

Legrand and Dewey developed concepts that really put the student at the centre of his or her learning process.

### To learn through project: Louis Legrand

Louis Legrand, in charge of a study mission to improve the functioning of secondary schools, summarises in a report to the Ministry of National Education the main lines of 'learning through project' (Legrand, 1982). For him, a project supposes:

1. A choice of subject made by the learner, implying a conscious and personal commitment;
2. A collective approach – although the initiative can be carried out individually;
3. Planning ahead of time;
4. A presentation to others;
5. Learning by trial and error;
6. A rotation between individual work and collective consultation;
7. Teachers positioned as regulators, informants and support as needed.

One of the interesting elements in this project pedagogy, which resonates with the multidisciplinary aspects of our approach, is the interaction and interrelationships between the various components of the project. For example, it is necessary to consider the group, the profiles of the actors, their cultural and sociological context, as well as their prior experiences and previous understandings that they convey to the notions and phenomena. In addition, there is a very strong interrelationship between the activity in which they will engage and their idea of what they will learn; if one of the elements in the project setting changes, all the other elements are modified. In other words: based on an understanding which is widely shared among the leading learning theorists, the mental representation which the individual associates with a certain notion changes as a consequence of a changed perception of the phenomena.

An example: the notion of 'constraints' is particularly interesting. The 'constraint' comes from both the context (musical, production) and the teacher who will propose a certain educational setting, forcing the student to expose himself or herself to a particular challenge or obstacle instead of evading it in order to be able to achieve the learning objectives. The notion of constraint is found both in the field of educational

sciences (Astolfi, 1993; Meirieu, 1987) and in the field of pragmatic anthropology. Isabelle Stengers (1996), for example, develops the notion of constraints related to the 'ecology of practices'. When students learn from the project, they should gather all these dimensions in the same movement.

We wish to emphasise that 'project-based learning' is not to be confused with 'project society'. 'Project-based learning' aims at the emancipation of the individuals – in the sense of Tilman (2004); but a society that would exclusively be based on project work might put people's jobs and security at risk (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999)<sup>5</sup>.

'Project-based learning' is developed in the school's context, be it a general school or a music school. This must ensure an articulation with the long-term work carried out, the fundamental values defined by the public school, and be discussed with the various actors of the school. Moreover, the school ensures a safe environment where the student can be wrong, wander, waste time, and be equipped with the material needed. Alongside this, the development of project logic in contemporary Western societies also corresponds to a liberal, competitive view of society – a dimension that should not be taught in school, even if the principles constituting a project can be similar.

### John Dewey – The theory of inquiry

The second theoretical grounding is for us the theory of inquiry. In the philosophy of John Dewey, the idea that learning is triggered by research is crucial (Dewey, 1938). In order to improve, students have to be faced with a problem and solve it through investigation.

For the pragmatic philosopher John Dewey, inquiry is the experience that aims at the acquisition of knowledge; it is experience itself, insofar as it reveals the logic of operations. Experience is both the foundation and the ultimate objective of the determined approach of investigation. This vision is particularly interesting for us: transposed into the context of the musical practice, it refers to the procedures we are used to when performing music.

To start an investigation – or even to have the idea of conducting an investigation – people have to be able to create an initial situation which is addressed as a problem,

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<sup>5</sup> See François et al. (2007) for the development of this thesis.

albeit a real or an imaginary problem, to be solved. For Dewey, the transformation from an 'indeterminate' situation to a 'problematic' situation is done in five stages:

1. The antecedent condition of inquiry: the indeterminate situation
2. Institution of a problem
3. The determination of a problem-solution
4. Reasoning
5. The operational character of fact-meanings.

In this theory scientific knowledge is developed through an inquiry process whose nature does not differ from how a problem is usually solved in the context of an everyday situation which apparently needs to be solved. In both spheres there is a continuum between experience and logic, and therefore between inquiry and practice.

This concept of inquiry refers to a cluster of behaviours that can be of a different nature, backed by either psychological, cultural, organic ('natural') or scholarly logics. Their common peculiarity is that they are all finally aiming at overcoming problems.

In the field of musical practices these 'behaviours' correspond to the different solutions that have been found as a result of the internal communication within a certain community or social group in various contexts in order to answer a question; for example, the question of varying a melody or inventing different propositions. Working with a melody (the answer can differ in nature depending on the context: harmonic, modal, rhythmic, etc.), each human group will come up with answers that differ from each other, with a variety of ways in which to make different kinds of music, with different musical parameters each treated in a specific way. The logic of inquiry makes it possible to attempt to identify these ways of doing things, to see how groups are experimenting, how they develop collective responses to an open question, how these choices stabilise at a given moment. There emerge shared musical questions for which each social entity, in various contexts, develops its own answer.

Why is this theory so important to us? Because it obviously allows us to understand that musicians, when working out a musical performance, are contained within a continuous cycle in which a concrete action (the musical performance) generates experience (which is gained by analysing and assessing our own performance somewhere in between success or failure), which in turn becomes the starting point of a new action. Dewey points out that this process of learning through action experience may not necessarily refer to one's own actions only, but also to actions that are carried



out by other members of the professional community. And that is why he considers the learners' actions to be a collective response to experience. This very pragmatic approach allows us to look at musical practices from the point of view of both their fabrication and their theorisation, as an integrated process similar to how actors themselves experience it.

We therefore also make the tools that might help students go successfully through this inquiry process: different interview techniques, observation methods, how to observe a territory, how to identify contexts, how to consider the audience from a sociological approach, etc.

The following text proposes both how to describe the project framework and how to build on a project that was conducted by a student group.

The data was collected through the observation of different sessions involving the students, and interviews:

- first discussions with the group at the start of the project;
- discussion as they go through their surveys, especially from their field diaries;
- parallel discussion with musicians whom the students had interviewed;
- observation and analysis of the workshops offered by these students to other students to help them discover and practise this music;
- participation in the research seminar;
- final interview at the beginning of a written and documented report (audio, video) of the students.

## **An inquiry about unknown musical practices to discover: the 'EPMD' method Description of the framework, challenges and expectations**

Start of the project: the preliminary phase at the beginning of the investigation

Before the beginning of the project, one teacher (who is already a musician-teacher and an anthropological researcher) offers a lesson on the issue of tradition and its

dynamics, alterity, and other fundamental anthropological questions. Some theoretical references are then discussed – especially Geertz (1973), Amselle (2008) and Lenclud (1987).

Then we constitute groups of students (four or five students per group) and present to them the musical context in which they have to do their investigation. This musical context should be a completely unknown musical genre, far away from their main musical identity. It is paramount that at the beginning they do not understand how these musicians create and play this kind of music, it must be a real mystery to them.

Our students are mostly musicians with a background in classical music or in early music (there is sometimes a jazz musician in the student group, but this is still an exception). So, for example, they have to investigate Mandingo music; jazz fusion; improvised counterpoint; Corsican polyphonies etc. The musical practices have to be very specific in order to prevent the students from creating general categories.

To perform music involves specific processes in specific contexts (Becker, 1982) – and this is the central issue of this method, what the students have to confront themselves with.

Before the beginning of the study the students have to write a text concerning their initial questions: what are their ideas about the performance practice? How do they imagine that this kind of music is created? What is to them a complete mystery? How are they planning on inquiring? What questions do they want to ask the musicians playing this music?

This text aims to identify the students' initial representations; representations that will evolve during the project.

## The inquiry

After that the inquiry can begin. The students are asked to conduct an investigation by using the method of participatory observation.<sup>6</sup> The framework is strictly defined. Although this may seem paradoxical at first, these constraints are necessary conditions in order for the students to conduct their investigations as freely as possible.

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6 To work on ways of making music, students rely in particular on the work of Perrenoud (2007) and Schütz (2007).

The students are asked to keep a logbook as they investigate – to write down the names of people they are looking to get in touch with, whom they meet, what they observe – but also their questions, their misunderstandings and their doubts.

They have to find out who is practising this music, look for contacts, meet musicians, make observations and conduct interviews. When they have started searching, the team of teachers may help them find contacts if necessary. They are asked to play with some of these musicians, try to integrate some practising moments to the project. They have to look for existing literature on this topic and conduct research on the internet.

Finally, the students have to define the different criteria: the matrix of the genre and the essential ingredients in the making of this music.

All this should not necessarily be done as a linear, progressive investigation process, but rather in a back and forth process allowing new insights to generate questions on data already collected.

### The pedagogical workshop

Having conducted their inquiry, the students offer a pedagogical workshop for a small group of students from another cohort who has yet to work on this inquiry. The workshop runs over three days, with five three-hour work sessions.

Students acting as ‘teachers’ have to make their ‘students’ understand all the issues of this music; their task is to make their peers discover the music performance practice they have studied and investigated themselves. They have to make choices, as they cannot address all the topics during the workshop, and justify these choices. The students have to develop more than one approach to fulfil their task and are asked to justify their choices of transmission modes.

In the workshop they need to define the task of the musicians, the issues, the resources, the environment and the evaluation criteria.

These workshops are seen as a real challenge by the students. It is very difficult, for example, to explain in a short session modes of transmission that in the real world run over many years and that are embedded in a very specific social setting and maybe supervised by a master or by peers, where the learner step by step acquires new competencies or the right to play certain sounds or rhythms.

The task of the students here is to reinvent a fictional context adapted to the constraints of the situation – a situation they are likely to encounter later when teaching in music schools.

### The seminar

After all this work the students are asked to animate a three-hour seminar on this specific musical genre<sup>7</sup>. The audience is made up of their fellow students in the department – which means that some of them have conducted a similar investigation on another musical practice.

The seminar must follow a particular structure. First the musicians who attended the workshop present and play the result of what they have developed during the sessions. Then the facilitators invite questions from the audience about this music and how it is made. The musicians who participated in the workshop talk about their work and practice; they address the difficulties they encountered, especially the musical and instrumental difficulties which challenged them with regard to their musical habits. They define and explain which role the supervisor had in the process.

Next, the group of investigators present their inquiry from a documented and problem-solving approach; they compare what the music students have said and what they had foreseen; they try to answer the first questions from the audience. Then they facilitate a debate about specific ways of making music.

### Return to their own music-making ways with a fresh approach

The last step is about assessment, evaluation and feedback on the various issues of the project. It is essential to verify whether the students have grasped the issues of the project in which they were involved and to discuss them.

The final interview between the students and the teacher from the pedagogy department is therefore particularly crucial in building skills. The formulation process allows the students to take a step back from the situations they experienced, to objectify them.

In addition, the students themselves propose the criteria for the success of their workshop and their musical essays. This will allow them to identify the constituent elements

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7 Inspired by De Certeau (1978).

of the practices for them and to note possible discrepancies between the words of the musicians they have investigated and their own musical vision. For example, the criterion of a certain type of accuracy, which is constitutive of classical musicians, will not necessarily be valid in all contexts or in any case will not necessarily be paramount. This is why it is necessary to be able to link, in this final interview, the different phases of the investigation. This interview represents a formative evaluation (Hadjji, 1989).

Then, each student, this time individually, has to return to his own way of making music and see what has changed in the way he looks at his own practice. This is the central anthropological dimension. The project has to be based on the students' alterity, because this is a necessary condition for enabling them to find and define their own identity (Laplantine & Nouss, 2008).

Especially in music higher education institutions musicians are highly specialised in a particular musical practice from a young age. In France most classical music students learn one instrument and often only one genre. The 'way of the hand' (Sudnow, 1978) is so integrated, incorporated, that they cannot see the musical processes and are unable to question them.

Only upon graduation when they are away from their routine can students reconsider their 'natural' musical process. This is important for any musician but especially for a teacher, who is in charge of teaching students his own way of doing things. The reflexive posture of the music teacher is fundamental. He or she should do and look at his or her practice, structure his discourse on his practice, compare it with other logics, question the evidence, think out of the box in order to explore new possibilities.

Let us now have a closer look at an example of one specific inquiry.

## **An example: 'Inquiry into bèlè'**

Investigate the way of making 'bèlè'

Last year four students (a harpist, a violist, a pianist and a gambist) investigated the 'Bèlè', one of the best known musical genres in Martinique. Members of the pedagogical staff knew this practice because some very famous artists had come to Lyon to train and graduate in specialised education; so we knew there were resources available.

The bèlè is particularly interesting because it is really a Martinican community practice with a very dynamic ‘tradition’ and therefore formats that evolve with society (Jean-Baptiste, 2008). It is interesting to see that this practice is still expanding on the island. Moreover, the various elements that constitute it (text, song, drums and rhythm, dance, assembly, structures) are completely indivisible.

By the time the island of Martinique was occupied by the French colonists, the slaves gradually structured artistic forms mixing cultural elements of the populations enslaving them (for example, the quadrilles in dance); elements that came from – or were reinvented from memories of – the slaves’ countries of origin (for example, forms of African rhythm); artistic structures which reflect the community – even the ideal of a social organisation which cannot be told (for example, the different movements of dancers describing the social division of tasks, the question of the ownership of the land, and especially the issue of the ‘helping hands’). As in the tales, texts (fixed or improvised, often according to the events) include many layers of understanding, and their real meaning cannot be read by those who do not have access to certain codes.

We will take a closer look here at how the students gradually grasped these issues and how they worked and communicated among themselves. The quotes in the text below in the text are the words of the students, formulated by the time of their assessment.

### Initial statements and key moments

At first the students had no points of reference to this practice: ‘We knew nothing before because the name “bèlè” had never come to our ears’.

They did some initial research on the internet. Then they wrote: ‘The whole thing being extremely interesting but nevertheless very theoretical, we quickly decided to directly contact the current stakeholders of this practice.’ So they contacted bèlè musicians living in Lyon, and others were approached by phone because they lived in Martinique<sup>8</sup>. These interviews and observations were the first key moment of their investigation:

We were at first a little worried because of the versatility of this practice, because the workshop required so much exploration and space for new

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<sup>8</sup> Manuela Bapte (Lyon), Philippe Montout, called Philo ; Simone Vaity (Vaity, the first woman to take the ‘tanbouw’) and Nathalie Ardanu (Artana).

things. Then we realised how multidisciplinary was at the core of this practice, and rich. At that time, we were not able to consider that the three components (drums, voice lead, dance) couldn't exist separated from the other, because the bèlè has this particularity to lead the voice, the dance, the percussions, by some sort of 'calls' which make it essential to consider them together as a whole. For the pedagogical workshop, we were thinking first to establish three simultaneous workshops, separated – music, dance, text; but this idea has been invalidated by our observations.<sup>9</sup>

It is interesting to note that what seemed obvious to our students, namely to separate the different artistic roles, to look at them and to work on them separately, was immediately invalidated by the first observations. The constraint of adopting the same way of doing things as the musicians they observed is in that sense very effective; if this instruction had been bypassed, the musicians would not have been able to face this challenge of an holistic approach to learning music.

The second key moment was a 'swarè bèlè' in which the students participated. It was when they had to play and dance that their first impressions were contradicted and that the constitutive elements of the bèlè made sense to them: *'We had very quickly cultural reflexes inherent to our practice as classical musicians: common breathing to start together, representation of rhythm in the form of written rhythms we knew (quavers, semiquavers etc.); we had to get rid of all this.'*

For example, during the 'drum climb', a dancer steps out of the circle and heads to an improvisation spell towards the drum. At first, just through observation, the students had the impression that the drum led the dancer and was the one who proposed a movement. Then they experienced the role of the drum, and the role of the dancer. They understood that it was the dancer who led: he is the one playing to contradict the musical proposals, made of ambivalent moments. He questions the limits of his equilibrium. Students can also relate to one of Vaity's sentences in an interview: *'the good musician is the one who is a good dancer'*.

Another point: they realised how much the audience of the evening was a central, constitutive element. They could see the intergenerational dynamics, the mixing of levels of competence, the political and social dimensions of the genre.

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9 All these quotes come from the final report of the students; it includes their own analyses and the interviews that they conducted with the musicians during their investigation.

Everyone holds different roles during the evening: 'le chanté' (singing), 'le bwaté' (the rhythmic), 'le tanbouyé' (the drummer), 'le répondé' (responsorial singing), 'le dansé' (dance), 'lawonn' (the round, the assembly); it is also important to help with preparing the food, and to take active part in the evening by talking, singing and dancing. *'While we were beating the drums, dancers were preparing the table on which various victuals were laid. Dance levels, although very disparate, were not a hindrance to our learning or to the smooth running of the dance.'*

It is interesting to note that the students were aware of these key moments and of the evolution of their statements.

Our way of understanding the learning of this practice has evolved between the beginning of the investigation and the seminar, our tests happening at different moments and in different learning contexts. Our way of working has therefore been influenced as we proceeded with the project.

### The pedagogical workshop and the seminar shape the inquiry

The timing of the pedagogical workshop developed by the students was particularly interesting: it was necessary to balance moments of *doing* the practice with moments of *information* of the practice in order to give the students resources to participate as investigators and develop artefacts.

Students have looked for solutions to how to transpose the experience into the context of the classroom, with precise schedules, a moment of swaré bèlè. To do so, they first had to identify the constitutive components of these evenings. And it was important for them to find a specific identity for the participants.

Expression and learning is done by 'doing' (instrument, dance, singing): those who do not dance in the quadrille observe the best dancers, but they are still an integral part of the performance by responding to the song and continuing to follow the dance steps from wherever they are.

The pedagogical workshop forced them to define what were, in practice, the unavoidable components (for example, the 'tibois', rhythmic rotation on the body of the drum), and what was an unavoidable principle, where it was necessary to change the elements to adapt them to the context – for example, to make a *bèlè Lyonnais*, with



peculiar elements referring to the way of living in Lyon, and not to repeat the same thing as in the *bèlè* of a specific region. In that sense, we can say that the pedagogical workshop is an integral part of the investigation and of the research process.

The objective of the workshop is not only to transmit knowledge of a musical practice. When preparing the workshop the musicians conducting the survey must know what they want the participants to learn, they must choose and define which elements to convey, in which way they want to do things, which elements of the contexts must absolutely be discussed. At this point the act of transmission is entirely linked to the question of inquiry and artistic practice.

The time of the seminar reproduces, in terms of formulation, the same constraints as defined in the workshop: coming back to the conservatoire, the participants of this project must decide what to report to the student-teacher audience. They also have to think how to get people on board in the debate and discussion around the posed questions.

The seminar forced the students to get out of the first personal impressions and prejudices in order to formalise the impact and knowledge they had received from the experience.

More specifically, a political aspect was also embedded in this project. This Resistance through Art was identified and modelled while preparing the seminar:

Practising *bèlè* in Martinique is a form of resistance.’; ‘The need affirmed by the artists that the practice evolves with the society, keeping the fundamental idea: to anchor in the structure of the *bèlè* the foundations of a social organisation based on mutual aid.’; ‘that’s the *swaré bèlè*, it’s really the community.

Finally, the students were able to highlight how this research helped them to take a fresh look at their own music and re-examine the relationship between fixed and improvised elements, the holistic interdisciplinary approach, the separation of levels, the collective practice, the relevance of everything that appears outside the game, the place of the audience and the artist as part of the community.

Above all, the questions of music, society and transmission, could be questioned in the same movement – and this is the issue of this inquiry and an essential skill of the artist-teacher.

## Critical analysis

### The choice of the musical practice

The question of choosing the musical context to investigate remains delicate. On the one hand, there are contexts that are more or less suitable and relevant to investigate through this kind of project work. In particular, we have noticed that when the chosen musical context is too close to the context in which the student has evolved musically, the inquiry does not work so well. Students tend to rely on things they think they recognise and find it harder to spot differences.

On the other hand, when the practice is very far away from the students' own realm of experiences, they may tend to see only the 'exotic' side of the music they are asked to investigate. They think things can work the way they do because it is a very distant form of music, but they then have difficulty questioning their own practices.

In addition, the contexts are chosen on the basis of the stylistic characteristics, but we could also imagine dealing with musical practices that are very different with regard to the process of how this music is developed, produced and performed even if the style and the aesthetics are not. The criteria may even be 'music that we do not understand' rather than a remote geographical or historical area. For example, investigation of the pianos installed in railway stations or at airports or singing mothers in private spaces. This would lead to very different musical questions, but it may be worth a try.

### The workshop and its pedagogical questions

A second question concerns educational workshops. There is a tension between two logics. On one hand, the students were asked to use methods and modes of transmission they identified during the project, while on the other hand, they were also expected to apply a student-centered pedagogy, which might have a very different approach. This sometimes gave students the impression of having to follow contradictory injunctions.

### The question of the report-

Finally, there is the question of the different reports. It is very important for students to take a reflective look at what they are doing, but they sometimes feel like they are asked to write endless, very formalised reports.

However, it is essential that this inquiry and this work remain something joyful, centred on the practice and the pleasure of playing.

### ‘Le maître ignorant’ (Rancière, 1973)

One of the main objectives of this work is to show the students that they can do research and develop an educational concept of music they do not know. This is based on the notion of the ‘ignorant master’, developed in France by Jacques Rancière. But this can, of course, have limitations if it is misunderstood or misused.

It is especially important for students to develop different types of ‘relationship to knowledge’. The teachers must be able to assist their students in the process of identifying their own projects. Students will not have the same musical preferences and project ideas as their teachers come up with. The teachers should be able to facilitate these desires – even if this should not be the only pedagogical modality.

It is also essential that the artists in a community (for example, here, the students) are able to locate, analyse and perform with the different musicians resident in an area (here, the Bèlè’s artists in Martinique) – and that their students can play with these various musicians too.

## **Conclusion – Return to the theories**

In conclusion we can emphasise the fact that looking at the musical performance practices in light of the initial question the performer has to face (rather than in light of the burden of repertoire and tradition) has both pedagogical and artistic consequences. The way in which the performer learns and performs the music will change. However, when we take the role of the artist in society seriously, both as a researcher and as a resource in a community, such a project will in addition to educational and artistic consequences also have social implications.

Developing an anthropological view on musical practices allows students to consider musical practices that they would not even spot, to quote Becker (1999). This skill is essential today for an art teacher, who is asked to connect different audiences and different music on the territory of the conservatoire.

Moreover, participatory observation is very central. It is by playing with other musicians that students realise that they cannot do it automatically and that they can understand there are different approaches and ways of making music.

The separation between 'practising' and 'transmitting', 'artist' and 'teacher', 'musician' and 'researcher' no longer arises in the same terms. Nor between 'the one who knows' and 'the one who doesn't know'. Students tend to think of the elements of the musical language they have been taught from a young age as 'natural'. Decentring allows them to imagine new possibilities.

Conducting an investigation allows the students to take a global view of the musical issues, while they are used to focusing only on 'musical material'. They identify the multiplicity of conditions for the emergence of a musical practice – which is essential since they have to encourage and accompany new practices.

If we go back to Dewey's theory of inquiry, we can emphasise here that such an approach allows us to look at the time of the pedagogical workshop, as well as the musical game, as constituent elements of the investigation. This is a strong challenge in the sense that it will bring together theoretical and practical issues. The interviews with the musicians, the sociological analyses, the musical exchanges between the artists and the transmission courses will all be part of the investigation and will help to define the artist researcher involved in the society.

Students in teacher training have other opportunities to work on this articulation between societal, pedagogical and artistic questions. In particular, in the context of another project, they have to investigate a field, to reflect the existing and underlying musical practices in order to be able to offer a practice accompaniment that connects audiences who, otherwise, would not necessarily have the opportunity to build things together. This involvement of the artist is therefore at once social, educational and musical – and he or she participates in the same movement in a community of researchers.

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## The Galata Electroacoustic Orchestra Project

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### Abstract

*The Galata Electroacoustic Orchestra (GEO) project was realised in 2013 as a Lifelong Learning Programme at the Conservatory Paganini in Genoa, Italy. Its general objective was to found an orchestra devoted to live collective compositions created by music students, to merge the Western Classical tradition of score-based music with improvisation techniques, in particular those of Ottoman Turkish Makam music and Anatolian folk music. GEO proposed a multidisciplinary didactical approach to the specific subject and to its current potential thanks to the contribution of electroacoustic technology. The main aim of the project was to create a connection between electronic and traditional instruments through performing practice. Improvisation was chosen as a paradigm for the GEO, as it is the most widely practised of all musical activities; it is probably the least recognised and understood, though present in every kind of music.*

*This study is divided into two parts: in the first the GEO Project is described from an institutional and structural point of view, and three interviews with two students and one teacher are carried out and analysed, providing the key points of the survey scheme for the subsequent interviews. In the second part of the study, a number of GEO participants collaborated by taking part in interviews on Skype. The collected and analysed data concerned personal information, pre-enrolment requirements, insights on instruments, peers, teachers, improvisation and performance.*

*The high-level human relationship was the basis for the effectiveness of the GEO project, improving the performative quality of all the musicians.*

## The Galata Electroacoustic Project

The Galata Electroacoustic Orchestra (GEO) was a ten-day intensive course included in the Erasmus Lifelong Learning Programme (IP n°2012-1-IT2-ERA10-38878) which brought together students and teaching staff from different countries. GEO was conceived and developed by Roberto Doati, who has described his work in detail in the interview cited in this paper and in the Proceedings from the Fifth International Symposium of Music Pedagogues in Pula (Doati, 2017). The principal aim of the project was to foster the teaching of particular subjects and to allow the people involved to benefit from learning and teaching in very favourable conditions (Parncutt & McPherson, 2002), creating a connection between digital and acoustic instruments through performance practice (Jordà et al., 2007). The conceptual and technological tools of electroacoustic music – a truly new musical language based on the idea of *composing* not only using sounds, but creating new sounds (Darling, Erickson & Clarke 2007; Stuart 2003) – fit such a creation and led the whole group towards new musical experiences. Coordinator of the GEO IP project was the ‘Niccolò Paganini’ Conservatory in Genoa, while its partners were Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul Teknik University, Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, and the ‘G. Pierluigi da Palestrina’ Conservatory in Cagliari. The project started with a selection of students studying for a bachelor’s degree, master’s degree or PhD with proven experience of acoustic and/or electronic instruments in one of the following areas: composition, improvisation or interpretation in jazz, classical or folk music.

The name GEO derives from the Genoese Galata district in Istanbul, dating back to the 12th century. In general, since the beginning of the 20th century extra-European music and traditional folk music have become a true source of inspiration for Western composers (Kárpáti, 1980). Therefore, GEO proposed a multidisciplinary didactical approach to the subject and to its current potential with the contribution of electroacoustic technology. Its general objectives were to found an orchestra devoted to live collective composition, merging the Western Classical tradition of score-based music and improvisation techniques, in particular those associated with Ottoman Turkish *makam* music and Anatolian folk music (Senturk, 2011). Improvisation was chosen as a paradigm for GEO, as it is the most widely practised among all musical activities, and it is present in every kind of music (Pressing, 1988) – in all cultures and countries.

The activities were divided into lectures, workshops, laboratories, concert rehearsals and a final public concert, which took place after exams and classes had ended. The



students of GEO have explored many disciplines useful in a cultural and musical context in which the electronic component is key: acoustical analysis (microphones as sensors), interaction, musical notation, gestures, interfaces control, embodied knowledge, laptop performance, computational analysis and history.

Improvisation is a challenging musical practice, even more so if it is performed in a multifaceted context like GEO, because it requires an understanding the historical background of the musical cultures involved and knowledge of a wide repertoire from folk to jazz, from the classic and avant-garde Western tradition to the Middle-Eastern one, in both an acoustic and an electronic setting. This is why all the practical activities of GEO were preceded by historical and theoretical lectures.

The chosen guidelines to approach improvisation were:

- Effective improvisation implies listening rather than playing.
- Instead of limiting one's interaction with the other performers to pitch, dynamics and tempo, the performers must concentrate on timbre in relation to listening and sound production.
- The acoustic performers work in what we call an *horstemp*s (out of time) composition dimension before realising an *in-time* performance. They are invited to investigate their sound microstructure in depth.
- The sound environment can be a common ground for both acoustic and electro-acoustic performers, a kind of soundscape.
- Very short improvisation on only one sound – pitch, dynamics, duration, timbre or articulation as a starting point.

The real protagonists of GEO were 33 students with different musical backgrounds, selected from:

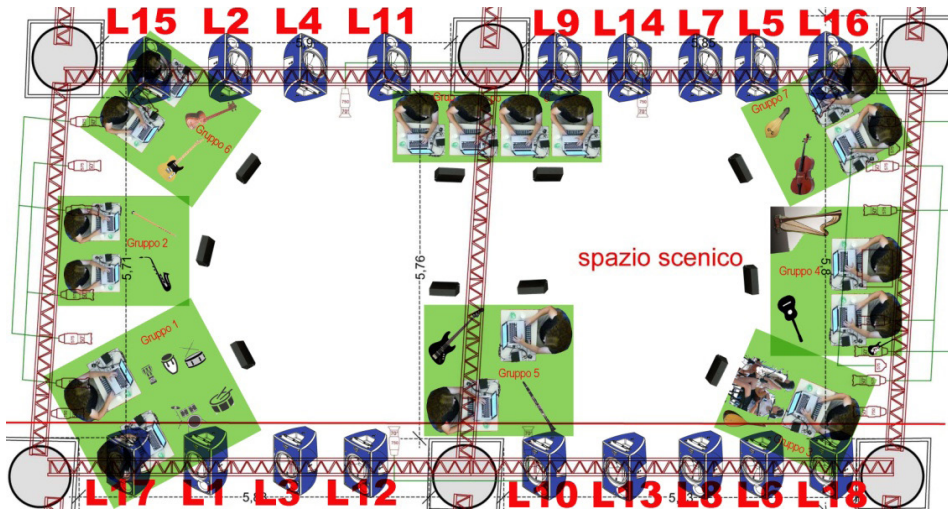
- Classical music (harp and cello)
- Jazz (voice, electric guitar, tenor saxophone)
- Electronic music
- Anatolian folk music (traditional instruments)
- Information technology
- Sardinian traditional folk music (voice and percussion)

The students involved had varying levels of competence in improvisation and, as the project was promoting free improvisation, both the students that had never

improvised and those accustomed to improvising on very rigorous schemes encountered relevant difficulties. To introduce the improvisation experience, the departments of composition and electronic music of the Conservatory of Genoa, organised 'Improvvisa-mente', a joint workshop on different forms of improvisation with lectures and practical sessions. This extracurricular activity helped the students to overcome the difficulty of getting into improvisation and abandon stiffness and prejudice induced by traditional training.

The most considered traditional music throughout the project was of Turkish origin, and it added new timbres as well as new compositional models, not only in terms of pitch and scales, but also in time organisation. This kind of improvisation system highlighted the problems related to the possibilities of playing microtones with Western instruments. For the harpist, for example, the execution of microtones led to technical considerations on the use of the harp itself and to the acquisition of entirely new instrumental skills.

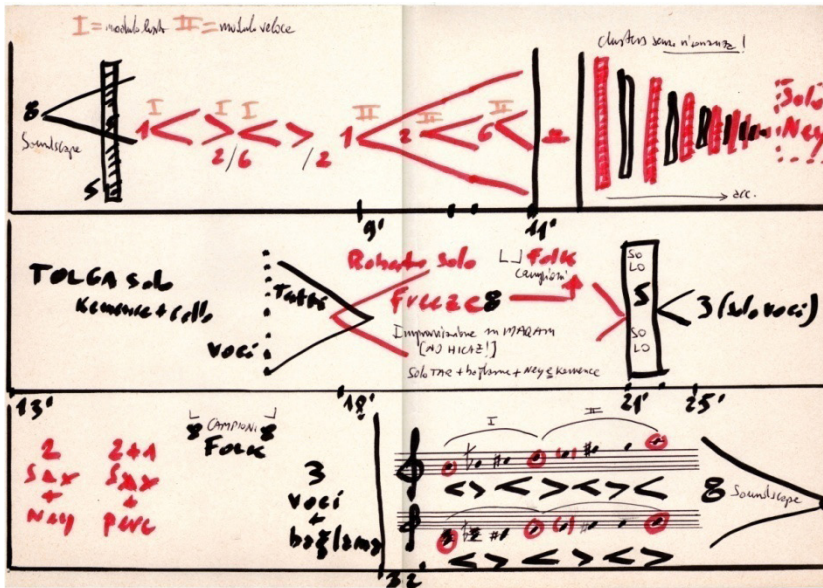
The first stage of the GEO agglomeration, after lectures and workshops, took place by setting up 8 small musical groups with diverse tasks, each following the rule of maximum heterogeneity in terms of musical instruments and cultural identity, on the basis of personal musical choices. GEO students were able to develop affinities and sympathies towards their companions from other countries, with different cultures and musical sensibilities. This was the social and cultural humus in which the eight instrumental groups were formed. The groups had to practise their improvisation in separate rooms under the teacher's supervision, and their task was to realise two different modules, a slow one and a fast one, based on one of the following structural principles: textures, pointillistic structures with short and long single sounds, melodic counterpoint using Turkish makam, interweaving rhythms using folk models, continuity and discontinuity in the compositive materials of the improvisations. This first level of agglomeration allowed the students to feel that they were part of a larger organism whose deep connections were revealed through improvisation and which found its expression in the sound. This experience was reported as the most striking and exciting. Finally a larger ensemble was formed.



*GEO disposition*

The main idea that animated the final concert was to combine the different musical cultures involved, thanks to digital tools, with a growing use of sonic events coming from the cities itself, integrating the live Harbour sounds in the GEO orchestra performance. They played under the guidance of two conductors, Tolga Tuzun and Roberto Doati, positioned in a way that did not allow them to see each other. Only two groups were free from any direction, having developed complex timbre interchange and formal control.

The real challenge of the project was to guide the students through the practice of collective improvisation. In this kind of activity, the students needed to overcome the concept of instrumental competence to incorporate an empathic attitude and a revolutionary change concerning the time dimension, which ceases to be conventionally agreed on, to become an empathically shared experience in which the performers define their actions joining in a physical and cultural environment.



‘When something nice happened during the improvisation’s rehearsals, we fixed it: I in my score, and Tolgan in his memory’, said Roberto Doati of the genesis of the GEO score, the only written testimony of the two performances of GEO. The score is a highly symbolic graphic space that reveals, not without some difficulty, the compositional procedure of GEO, referring to the actions of the two conductors with two different colours, red and black.

The most evident and symbolic image in this score, recurring often during the piece, is the wave which can be interpreted as an almost ‘genetic’ element of GEO, connecting and vivifying the eight parts to which the score refers. These are the eight small instrumental groups of GEO, with an elementary and physical sound and a super-identity evoked by the action of the laptop that had to capture the sounds diffused by the eight speakers, one for each group, in order to arrange, amplify, mix and return them back to that same environment. This is the alchemical nature of the eight hyperinstruments that GEO originated.

During the period of rehearsals each group had generated a little musical structure, very simple but timbrally connoted, in part suggested by the solicitations of Roberto and Tolgan, in part determined by the nature of the musical instruments involved in the group and, the most creative and interesting, partly arising from the free elaboration of the group. Sounds and rhythmic patterns created by each group built

the compositional elements that Roberto and Tolgan considered, constituting the first important foundation of the entire compositional process we can rightfully call collective composition.

The sound profile of the groups was structured as follows:

- Group 1: 2 percussions and 2 laptops
- Group 2: ney, tenor saxophone and 2 laptops
- Group 3: baglama/female voice, female voice and 1 laptop
- Group 4: baglama, harp, 1 laptop and electric guitar, and 1 laptop
- Group 5: clarinet, electric bass and 2 laptops
- Group 6: tar, electric guitar and 2 laptops
- Group 7: kemençe, cello and 2 laptops
- Group 8: 4 laptops

Group 8, comprising only laptops, was in charge of capturing and processing the Genoa and Istanbul Harbour sounds, receiving just start and stop signals: for this reason preliminary rehearsals were very important in order to determine what kind of interference to create during the concert, when and how.

Each group had to prepare two small improvisations, one slow, with time suspended and piano, and one fast, with a very pulsating rhythm. When the conductor gave an attack to one group, the musicians had to start the improvisation module indicated with one finger (index, slow module) or two fingers (index and medium, fast module). If, after having stopped the module, it was called back, the musicians had to follow their improvisation, i.e. not starting the module again from the beginning.

All groups had to answer the conductor's call carefully, following conventional gestures. Only Group 5 could improvise freely, only starting and finishing according to the conductor's gestures. Here are some examples of gestures, also fixed through a video, which the conductors prepared to facilitate the comprehension of a system of unconventional signs and gestures, and which had to be shared and assimilated during the 10 days of the project:

- Curved arms up: just the acoustic instruments will play, freezing (i.e. not changing) the pitch they are playing in that moment.
- Curved arms down: microtonal pitch changing (free tempo), up and down the main note they were freezing.

- Straight arms up, cupped hands: just the Anatolian acoustic instruments will play, Anatolian music (they can agree what to play all together before the concert or each is free to choose a different melody to improvise) + percussion following the rhythm of the melodic Anatolian instruments (they have enclosed a list of *wazn*, Arabian rhythmic patterns, in a separate file).
- Straight arms up, thumb and index fingers forming an L: just the laptops, they will make a freeze until a straight arms down, thumb and index fingers forming an L: microtonal deviations from the freeze sounds.

The last day of the IC was devoted to rehearsing the guided collective improvisation, *Compasso da Navigare*, to be performed on stage in Genoa's Old Harbour.

In 2014 GEO was invited to the 58<sup>th</sup> Festival of Contemporary Music at *La Biennale di Venezia* (whose title was *Limes*) by its Artistic Director Ivan Fedele. The GEO Orchestra performed at the *Corderie dell'Arsenale*, the ancient Venetian dockyard. In 2015 *Compasso da Navigare* received a 'Franco Abbiati' Award by the Italian Music Critics Association.

## **The method and the first phase of the study**

This study evolved in two different phases: in the first the GEO project was analysed from an institutional and a structural point of view, and three interviews with two female students and one teacher were carried out. The two students, both Italian, represent two of the musical worlds that GEO connected, classical music and jazz. The third interviewee, Roberto Doati, is the creator of the project, one of the teachers involved in it, and one of the conductors of the two GEO performances. The analysis of these first three interviews allowed us to create a survey consisting of a series of recurring topics that the interviews confirmed to be important and meaningful to the analysis and the comprehension of the project itself.

In the second part of the study the other GEO participants were asked whether they were willing to collaborate by taking part in interviews on Skype. The language proposed to non-Italian interviewees was English, which was the official language of the GEO project, but the initial reactions of the interviewees suggested offering an opportunity to answer in writing to those who did not feel comfortable being interviewed in English. There were 13 respondents to the second phase of the study from

Turkey, Italy and Spain respectively, representing not only the different geographical areas of the Mediterranean involved in the project, but above all the different musical worlds which were brought together by it: jazz, classical music, traditional Turkish music, electronic music and sound engineering, and Sardinian folk music. They were very different because of their educational backgrounds and musical choices as well as their respective nationalities and cultural regions. Yet they were united by only one great challenge: improvisation.

The interviews with the two first students were carried out between December 2017 and January 2018 and highlighted the aspects of their experience that were important both to the role they played at the time and to their continuing musical careers. In particular, they established a first grid of topics to analyse, not only based on theoretical or intuitive perspectives any scholar could express in relation to the GEO project, but based on these two students' opinions and memories. This was the first issue to consider: recovering memories, feelings and thoughts related to an experience which had occurred about six years previously. However, it was the strength of those impressions seeping through the time gap that determined the lucidity of their opinions. More specifically, they both spoke about the strong influence on the need to use their instrument, the harp and the voice, in different ways from those acquired during their training in order to produce different sounds and learn new techniques. The two students reported that the GEO experience changed their way of envisioning their instrument, their performance and their professional profile.

The primary objective of the project was focused on improvisation, intended as a cross-cultural tool: the two students, coming from two very different educational experiences as far as first-hand knowledge of improvisation is concerned, attested their difficulty in overcoming their knowledge. In the classical music world improvisation is not cultivated, while in the world of contemporary music and jazz improvisation plays an important role. Yet it is completely different compared to the GEO project proposal. For the harpist, improvisation had never been considered, because she had received classical and traditional academic training, whereas the singer's background included vocal jazz improvisation.

The third point of specific interest to our study is represented by the performance experience. The two interviews highlighted, on the one hand, the lack of traditional references related to orchestral performance – instrumental group training, strong reference to shared rhythmic models, conventional gesture support from the conductor,



high level of execution predictability – and, on the other, the powerful sense of non-verbal communication based on visual contact and on the ‘in the flow’ condition.

Both students reported a feeling of deep communion with the other musicians, the public and the context, experiencing the two concerts as the most significant and iconic moments of the whole project. Such a pervasive experience of a different way of making music intrinsically changed the meaning of music itself, leading in more than one case to an important life change, choosing to move abroad and completing musical education in a new context.

The key points that consequently generated the survey for all the subsequent interviews were:

- Personal data and background: preliminary information necessary to establish first contact and to understand their cultural, social and specific field of training.
- Pre-enrolment requirements: information aimed at assessing the interviewee’s awareness of his or her training profile and the project he or she was approaching.
- Instrumental insight: specific information on sound production techniques intrinsically linked to the relation with one’s instrument, and the type of instrumental training received.
- Peers and teachers: information related to the intercultural, multilingual and interdisciplinary context proposed by the GEO project.
- Improvisation: specific information concerning the improvisation experience before, during and after the GEO project.
- Performance: information aimed at defining the performing experience before, during and after the GEO project.
- Music: considerations on the concept of music, and how they may be modified by and during the GEO experience.

## **The intercultural and multilingual context**

Although the sharing of such an intense musical experience does not necessarily require a good level of verbal skills, the ability to verbalise, explain, define, express opinions and desires was fundamental especially in the preliminary phase of the GEO



project. The official language of the project was English, and every participant had the essential language skills needed to relate to others and understand the most important content. Obviously, for some of them it was easy, and the project offered an excellent opportunity to verify and practise their English. For others it was an opportunity to improve their language skills, especially for students coming from countries where language training is still not focused enough on the need of the younger generations to master English.

All the interviewees reported very positive feedback as far as interpersonal relationships were concerned, defining them as gratifying and productive from every point of view, especially within their group – one of the eight in which the preparatory activity for the orchestral rehearsals was divided. In addition, everyone noticed that they were changing their way of dealing with and of solving problems as well. Two of the students expressed very similar feedback: in their group they learnt to use the processing programme much faster and better than they could have done in a more traditional teaching context because each member of the group shared their experience and knowledge with everyone else. For example, one student, while chatting with Turkish peer, discovered that flamenco, on which an important part of the research for his PhD was based, had very similar features with popular Turkish musical practice, thus adding an interesting opportunity for further study. Someone recalled how, during the project period, the Turkish musicians were facing a time of great concern about the political unrest in their country, and that they were given the opportunity to explain and share it with the other young people in their group. The result was described by a Turkish student as ‘a kind of improvised round table session during which musical topics were temporarily put aside in order to discuss social policies, the future of the younger generation and professional opportunities in art and music’. The student here described a feeling of commonality with the other students and with the professors, capable of producing proximity and harmony, generating sympathetic tension and producing exceptional results during the performance. Someone added an interesting remark from a communicative point of view by recalling that the teachers succeeded in developing a common language, which allowed everyone, regardless of their cultural origin, to feel part of the project and to be happy to spend not only their working hours and their lessons together, but their evenings, free time and time off, too. Even people with shy and reserved personalities who did not represent the best quality for such an intensive socialising and interactive learning experience recounted how working in mixed and small groups helped them a great deal: it was inevitable that they would learn from each other, whether you wanted to or not. Such a context, with musicians from different linguistic, musical and cultural backgrounds working

collaboratively on new collective performances, profoundly changed the perception of what is known, and redefining in substance and definition the outlines of knowledge: in this experience of inner change originates the need for a new common language.

I would like to conclude this profile of the GEO social and cultural context with an interesting perspective expressed by one of the students, who described the experience of diversity not only as being tolerated but also recognised as a value; as a small but effective example of democracy.

## **The relationship with the musical instruments**

The encounter with the Turkish musical tradition brought forth a change of scenery for the students coming from the tradition of Western art music or jazz, especially as far as the timbre quality of the sound is concerned, and consequently, the technical and gestural changes it required. As one of the students appropriately pointed out, by the end of the project the Western musicians had not learnt to play like the Turkish musicians, and conversely, the musicians from the East had definitely not learnt to play like Western musicians in 10 days. Still, the musicians' sound 'glossary' was so enriched that the concept of sound itself had been subverted, also due to the involvement of electronic musical instruments. The awareness that there were so many vocal and instrumental techniques was the true learning outcome of GEO; this involved in some cases a relevant change from a technical point of view, and changed the musicians as such. Electronic music could invent and modify sounds, but everything had to be decided and planned in advance. If from an improvisational point of view everyone's previous experience was obviously different, at times even deeply so, from an instrumental point of view they all approached the GEO experience with their instrumental expertise which, they all agreed, was adequate to face the executive challenges that GEO would propose. Everyone's role has given everyone the chance, as musicians and/or electronic musicians, to discover new possibilities and to widen their musical knowledge thanks to the interaction with peers and professors.

The challenge also involved a traditional and ancient instrument such as the kemençe, a 3-string Turkish bow instrument, with a different use of the bow as well as without the bow. In addition, interaction with percussionists and with electronic musicians led the kemençe player to focus on the timbre qualities of sounds and on rhythmic variations. For this type of musician, a traditional Turkish instrumentalist, the most

intense experience was playing her traditional instrument using a musical language that is quite different from makam, inspired by nature and the environment, and performing in real time with nature itself. It is the concept of sound itself which is modified and transformed into a dynamic, diachronic, live and converting entity that naturally and necessarily attracts all the instruments and techniques involved.

For the electronic musicians, the instrumental challenge was centred on learning how to use the extremely complex software, *Cosmosf*, which could capture and process both the ambient and the orchestral sounds. Thus, the preparatory meetings organised during the year, before the summer project, were very useful. Some of the collaborations established at the time are still being carried on. For electronic musicians direct contact with traditional musicians and an orchestra is a rare and very precious experience. One of the sound engineers pointed out how in only ten days such different people in terms of culture, origin and background could get together on stage and perform in a concert where everyone knew exactly what to do.

## **At the heart of sound**

Improvisation represented the true GEO challenge for everyone. For those who had never improvised, like the classical musicians, for those who were sure to be capable of it, like the jazz musicians, and for those who thought it was an intrinsic part of their musical training, like the Turkish musicians, GEO embodied such a new experience that it deeply affected the mere concept of creativity, of music and of contemporary music, as well as of improvisation. One of the students made an interesting observation about the interaction between creativity and improvisation. He had always thought that extemporaneousness in musical creation was a utopian idea because in reality there was always strong guidance provided by previous musical experience and by listening to other musicians. The GEO experience partly changed his ideas about this utopia, blurring its contours and allowing him to delve consciously into a kind of illusion favouring a musical creation free from any kind of conditioning. Thus, a sort of musical 'tabula rasa' was realised where the flattened wax represents the previous experience and improvisation establishes new content engravings: flatten to reconstruct, aiming at originality. Hence, improvisation has continued to be an important part of the professional activity of this student, teaching included.

The theme of the relationship between structure and freedom in improvisation was developed into a kaleidoscopic reality of personal experiences. For each of the GEO protagonists, the structure-freedom binomial triggered conflicting thoughts and feelings at times. Someone was convinced that improvisation was whatever is played without a score, even a single sound. During the GEO project this student came to understand the role of structures in improvisation and modified his way of conceiving it, always coming to a decision before starting. As an example, one student declared that he still uses certain strategies and solutions learnt during GEO performances, such as careful management of musical tensions and dynamics.

Conversely, the musicians who were used to improvising in the *taksim* style of makam described a great sense of freedom, especially in the management of musical thought, which stimulated a different approach to performance. Likewise, the jazz improvisers found that they were able to play with their instruments, obtaining a very pleasant and high-quality result from a performative point of view. A sound engineer's comments highlighted the value of structure in improvisation and performance as a guarantee of quality and effectiveness, not only for those who are playing, but also for the audience from a communicative and expressive point of view.

A first hypothesis of synthesis to the binomial structure-freedom in improvisation is represented by the conscious and shared area of freedom of the eight instrumentals groups in the structured performance. Finally, the true conceptual synthesis of this conflict came from a statement which explained the GEO experience imprinted in everyone's mind that 'you are free only in a cage... you can't go ahead if you have unlimited possibilities, you are paralysed'.

The second subject which vigorously emerged from the students' stories was the discovery, the revaluation and the enchantment of the sound. For everyone, although in different ways, the sound was an important basis on which to build the improvisational experience. Considering music as sound had contributed to their growth and change: for example, one student reported that the timbric aspects of the performance required relevant attention and that he could still feel the amazement pervading him when he discovered that no cacophony was generated either during the rehearsals or during the concerts. Each performer was very focused and enfolded by the ambient sounds and at the same time isolated from everything else and concentrated on their own performance. It was a shocking but very pleasant feeling which changed their relationship with the performance radically, introducing time, space and dynamic parameters to the whole performative experience in an overpowering and pervasive

way. According to this idea, the orchestra is conceived as a sound entity in which electronic processing is a kind of shade that deforms and modifies the sound contents, plunging them into their time and place. The sound was the source of great discovery: listening to others more than to yourself, conceiving this listening as perception and comprehension of all the different cultures represented in those sounds, and experiencing through sound the true universality of music.

## Teachers' opinions about GEO

The interviews with four teachers and one sound engineer followed the same survey structure. The multicultural GEO context was perceived by the teachers we interviewed as a workshop where cultures and methods met and compared and where the most extraordinarily creative aspect was represented by the differences between the participants: there were musicians playing a Turkish cornet, or a guitar in quarter tones, and Spanish, Italian or Turkish instruments united by the input of technology. Thanks to the innovative and creative software *Cosmosf*, the students had to learn to use achieving results that can be defined heuristic. In the GEO context, the students were able to experience a whole universality of musical languages by means of contemporary improvisational practice. Student autonomy was an important goal and to some extent a prerequisite for innermost comprehension, as was the ability to use the information the students received and absorbed creatively.

The way of viewing one's musical instrument underwent a great deal of reconsideration during the project. Being in constant contact with makam and the microtonal theory of Turkish music led the students to adopt uncommon uses of their instruments, persuading them to search for new sounds. However, the most interesting challenge was to consider the laptop a musical instrument. The role of engineer's group was to set up the microphones at the Galata Harbour in Istanbul, on the top of the Cotton Factory in Genoa and on the roof of his house in Spain in order to capture and transmit them live to the performance venue, processing this material with *Cosmosf*. Not only was it necessary to learn how to use the programme, but also to apply it in real time and in a performative musical context.

The presence of so many new sounds made the improvisation experience much more powerful compared to when it takes place in the comfort zone of the world of sound as we know it, essentially based on consolidated automatic impulses. Everything was

creative due to diversity, which led everybody to confront unexpected sounds. In this unpredictable sound environment, instruments changed roles and lost their references to consolidated performance practices, acquiring a new freedom never taken into consideration before. This type of improvisation made the students extremely flexible and able to process new ideas and sounds, while at the same time broadening their musical syntactic structure (MacDonald, Wilson & Miell, 2012). The performance arising from that experience, merging ideas and styles, can be called collective composition.

Improvisation in GEO made it possible for very different traditions and cultures to coexist in the same place, at the same time and in the same improvised act, creating a structure capable of bringing diversity together. It is not surprising that such an innovative and atypical context established very strong human and sonic connections and that

...the GEO project created a situation where students could go through some doors which they hadn't opened before, and so they were able to investigate the realm of sonic exploration, integrating their instruments into that electro-acoustic context, as witnessed by Sinan Bokesoy, the creator of the GEO project software.

Within the GEO path, the students went through a kind of 'subtraction from the best-known syntactic structures', which meant giving up their certainties. In such a setting, where they lived together all day, every day, without having a single moment to return to their old habits, at all times, they were urged towards and contaminated by change. GEO has left everyone with a new kind of consideration for diversity and has proven that a surprising, challenging and even inhibiting context, compared to acquired certainties, is more effective and more productive in terms of the creative resources that can be developed and achieved.

GEO has taught everyone that diversity can become a method, and in spite of the fact that this experience would be difficult to replicate, it has left 'the scent of what has been a unique experience on the daily efforts of each of us', with the words of one of the teachers.

## The institutional aspects

The interview with the GEO project manager Patrizia Conti allowed us to understand its institutional dimension and to place it in the Italian regulatory context. The educational system in Italy is facing an increasing number of difficulties due to insufficient resources. In fact, our institutions, even the proudly virtuous and prosperous ones like the Genoa Conservatory, are seeking a balance between long-lasting tradition, strong demands for renewal, extremely limited economic resources, and what all of this involves. The GEO experience, with its peaks and troughs, has driven us to reconsider the AFAM (Higher Musical and Artistic Education) system, ask specific questions and demand urgent answers. What became clear through working with the GEO project, was that it is not sufficient to get a project funded; a great project like this also needs an institution that is willing to engage in the project and spend internal resources on it.

GEO was conceived and presented to the Erasmus Agency for the first time in the 2006/2007 academic year as part of the European project *Culture 2007*. It failed, but with a very high evaluation. In this first outline, it already bore the name GEO and contained the didactic contents that characterised it from the beginning. The second attempt was instead part of the Intensive Programme, so the presentation had to be more didactic/educational rather than artistic/cultural. In 2011 the preparation of this second project, which had a positive outcome, began, and the Erasmus Agency allocated around €45,000 to GEO.

Under these circumstances, welcoming about 40 people for 10 days and guaranteeing ideal conditions to express the potential of the GEO project was a real challenge. As is often the way, individuals, not institutions, are the ones who meet these challenges. Perhaps the relevance of the GEO project was not fully understood, and administrators and colleagues considered it very expensive compared to the results; no doubt, the administration considered the amount of additional work unmanageable without the extra funds intended to support it. It is difficult now to comprehend the institutional evaluation and choices that preceded the implementation of this project.

However, the Genoa Conservatory finally decided it could not afford to contribute to the project as suggested and that it did not have the human resources to manage it from an administrative point of view. After Patrizia Conti's resignation from the Board of Directors and an assessment of the potential damage that abandoning the project would cause to the conservatory, the governing body decided to proceed provided it

did not affect the budget of the conservatory. In fact, to give GEO the chance to operate, those who set it up and organised it had to do without the allocated funds. The clumsy attempts to rescue such a seriously compromised situation are the reason for the official withdrawal from the second phase of GEO, which had already been accepted by the Erasmus Agency. While GEO was welcomed at the Venice Biennial Festival, thus setting the premises for the prestigious Abbiati Award, the conservatory handed back the funds, and GEO, in one of the student's words, '...fizzled out'.

Several years have gone by, but it is still very sad to recall all of this, despite the Abbiati Award, and all the acknowledgements the project received. With the objectivity that only the passing of time can bring, today we can say that perhaps the GEO project was too big and ambitious for the Conservatory of Genoa, or perhaps it had not been sufficiently shared. Certainly, both these considerations have contributed to the outcome of the project. In any case it is important to reflect on the concomitance of two important prerequisites of good success, a healthy and virtuous institution and an extraordinary project, in relation to an incredible outcome.

This testimony of Patrizia Conti, bears the weight and credit of those who accepted the challenge while being fully aware of the fragility of the institution, who led their conservatory with passion and committal in the first years of the Higher Education challenge and in compliance with the European standards, realistically assessing the risk and personal efforts GEO organisers had to deal with. For this reason, her words do not only represent an outlook on the Italian HME reality, but a heartfelt call.

## **An innovative experience**

The aspects of the GEO project highlighting relevant teaching- learning situations were:

- Disruption of the preferential relationship with a teacher: the teaching relationship was realised in a collaborative setting, the effect of which was that participants did not feel like 'someone's students'. Everyone considered themselves as protagonists and bearers of the necessary knowledge for the growth of the project itself;
- hyperinstrumental conception – instrumentalists experienced a relationship that exceeded the self-centred identity of the traditional soloist or orchestra



member by creating much stronger collective identification where everyone's role is indispensable and strengthened by this new collective entity;

- intercultural and interpersonal dialogue based primarily on an informative and creative exchange, establishing the necessary conditions for a common experience which was able to generate original models;
- empathetic contact through sound: dialogue and exchange enhanced everyone's empathic capacity, which is always involved in group performative processes aimed at collective creation, strong involvement with the public and the overall context;
- space-time conception of a deeply modified experience: the resulting musical involvement is merely conventional and accepted but emphatically taken from a collective experience – over time and in space – that through sound is deformed expanding exponentially;
- creative use of electronic devices in a new concept of sound in which the purity of the vibration and of the physical resonance is not denied or overcome but accepted and synthesised.

The experience of diversity was felt by all participants to be a very powerful way towards change and revitalisation. If the encounter with Turkish music was a constant element of great interest, the time, place and context it occurred in provided a far more pervasive quality to this change, where different cultures, instruments, and even musical languages were searching for a meeting point.

The high-level human relationship was the basis for the effectiveness of the GEO project, improving the performative quality of all the musicians. This relational setting can be described as a kind of musical democracy where everyone becomes more virtuous the moment they embrace it, and what develops from it is higher quality musical outcomes and human experiences. This accepted diversity is the frame of a new kaleidoscopic aesthetic concept in which one's perspective includes, understands and welcomes everyone else's. The fundamental requirement for this diversity to be productive and become a focusing factor was listening. It represented one of the most important learning outcomes for all, especially during the performances, when they felt that listening to what they were playing was much less important than listening to their peers.

The revolutionary power of this type of listening relies on the fact that:

...you do not listen to what is expected to happen, but not being able to foresee what is going to happen, you listen and pay maximum attention, without any preclusion or selection, focusing on the world of sound that you are creating and modifying moment by moment.

So Okan Yaşarlar, one of the students, defined the kind of listening that generates contact and affinity, nourishing the flow state. In this context GEO developed as a cellular organism where every cell had a defined function and at the same time helped to create an organism that was much more than the sum of all its parts, a system within the same shared set of properties.

Finally, the fusion between ancient practices and elements of the musical cultures of so many diverse geographical areas, merged thanks to technology and human agency, has been fundamental to conceiving GEO as a contemporary musical experience. In this definition of the GEO performance as a real-time composition, two creative moments coexist: the creation of musical modules by the hyperinstrumental groups and the moment of the collective improvisation during the concert. Within this fusion the respect for everyone's roots in the present and the future was realised in the name of the effective interaction among different cultures. GEO taught its participants to recognise and respect what in other people comes from their roots and has made them free and independent in music as in life. The revolutionary impact of the GEO project on the lives of many of these young people is highlighted by the fact that many of them have chosen to leave their country to find new inspiration, effective responses to their needs, and to meet major challenges.

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## **Musicians for the intercultural society: student involvement in international projects**

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### **Abstract**

*This chapter presents three international collaborative projects (in Lebanon, India and Georgia) in which the Norwegian Academy of Music is a partner and reports from an ongoing research study that examines these projects from a learning perspective. Students are involved in the projects in several ways, and the chapter aims to discuss what characterises student learning in the projects. The authors argue that theoretical perspectives on collaborative learning, cultural encounters and the role of reflection in and on action are central to understanding learning in intercultural projects. The research study makes use of a range of ethnographic methods, and empirical data is presented in the form of a narrative. The chapter suggests that the characteristic of the learning potential of the projects is that the projects enable reflective cultural encounters, which may encourage a process of understanding cultural differences and stimulating development of intercultural competence. Furthermore, students and teachers collaborate in a participatory musical and educational practice. In this intercultural participatory practice, comparisons and contradictions occur which may cause and demand reflection and make change of practice, purpose and values possible on both an individual and a cultural level.*

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a series of international projects at the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) and reports from an ongoing research study examining the projects from a learning perspective. An important aim of the international projects, based in South Lebanon, India and Georgia, is to enable musicians and music teachers to meet, understand and engage musically in a culturally diverse hybrid society by taking an active part in international projects based on student involvement and

teacher collaboration. The research study aims to examine learning issues related to the projects. Data is collected through a range of ethnographic methods. In this chapter we focus on exploring the learning potential of such projects. We anticipate, and we will show theoretically, that there is reason to believe that learning takes place in international collaborative projects, and we therefore ask: why and how does learning take place in intercultural collaborative projects in higher music education?

First we will present the projects in South Lebanon, India and Georgia and the three organisational models of student involvement linked to the projects. Next we approach the research question from theoretical viewpoints, mainly by drawing on cultural and intercultural studies and educational theory. Then we present the story of Astrid, a master student who has completed all three models visiting Georgia and India and who is part of the research team. Her story gives empirical insights from the Norwegian students' perspective in the form of a narrative, an approach that is backed by narrative methodology. The Norwegian student perspective is just one aspect of the overall research study, which in time will provide empirical material from participants in all four countries.

The chapter argues, from both theoretical and empirical strands, that intercultural music and music teaching practice are important arenas for learning and development on a personal, musical, cultural and intercultural level. A key characteristic of the learning potential, we suggest, is that the projects enable reflective cultural encounters that may facilitate the development of cultural understanding and intercultural competence. Furthermore, participants collaborate in a guided, participatory musical and educational practice. In this intercultural participatory practice, comparisons and contradictions occur which stimulate learning by causing and demanding reflection.

## **The projects and the models of student involvement**

### **The Lebanon Project**

The Norwegian Academy of Music has been involved in a music project in South Lebanon since 2002, and it is part of a larger collaboration within culture, health and education

for marginalised groups<sup>1</sup>. A central strand in the project is to help provide music activities for Palestinian refugee children in the Rashidieh refugee camp. Rashidieh has existed as a Palestinian refugee camp since 1948 after the establishment of the state of Israel and following the Arab-Israeli war. Most people here are born in refugee families, and the population is approximately 30,000 within two square kilometres. The camp is characterised by a lack of human rights and educational opportunities, high unemployment, a weak economy, a lack of clean water and insufficient healthcare as well as limited opportunities for participation in society outside the camp, including cultural activities (Storsve, 2013). The music activities in Rashidieh take place in a cultural centre run by a non-governmental organisation, Beit Atfal Assumoud<sup>2</sup>. The core activity is active music making in a mixed ensemble, where 40–60 young people aged 7–20 play together twice a week as an after-school activity. The orchestra is run by four local music teachers and comprises guitars, xylophones, keyboards, violins, saxophones, drums and other percussion instruments. The orchestra is very diverse in terms of age and mix of instruments and not the least when it comes to the children's instrumental experience and skills. This creates a challenging teaching practice.

This music project is located mainly within a Muslim cultural context in which music is neither common as a leisure activity nor as a school subject. Some Muslims consider music *haram* (forbidden) and find that music incites inappropriate behaviours. Other Muslims see music as a valuable and desirable activity (Harris, 2006; Izsak, 2013). The project in Rashidieh aims to promote equal rights and to contribute to cultural democracy. Such ideologies can occasionally be seen as being in opposition to the social and religious hierarchical structures in the camp, and the project is in some ways in itself replete with internal ideological contradictions (Brøske, 2017).

## Education IN Music, India

*Education IN Music*, Bengaluru, India, is a collaborative project between the Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts<sup>3</sup> (SaPa), Jain University<sup>4</sup> and the NMH. SaPa is a music school, and its primary task is providing instrumental tuition for children. In 2014 SaPa expanded its focus and started the SaPa in Schools programme, aiming to establish music as a subject in several primary and lower secondary schools. SaPa

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1 See more about the project in Storsve & Brøske-Danielsen (Eds., 2013), <https://nmh.no/forskning/prosjekter/libanonprosjektet/>, [https://nmh.no/ansatte/nyheter/studentpraksis\\_i\\_libanon](https://nmh.no/ansatte/nyheter/studentpraksis_i_libanon)

2 <http://www.socialcare.org/portal/home/1/>

3 <http://sapaindia.com/>

4 <https://www.jainuniversity.ac.in/>

also offers training for Indian music teachers to teach in these schools in collaboration with the NMH. All three partners are now involved in establishing a bachelor's degree in music education at Jain University. Another central strand in the project is to bring Indian SaPa teachers to Norway and to send students from the NMH to India to participate in teaching music in schools, in teacher training, and to learn Indian music.

This project is embedded in a culture where music is learned mainly outside schools, and music education has not been available to all. Music teacher training as such does not exist in India. Learning music is traditionally carried out by sitting with a guru within the *guru-shishya* system, and teachers should be highly respected and not contradicted.

### Bridging the Gap, Georgia

*Bridging the Gap* is a collaboration between the Tbilisi State Conservatoire (TSC) and the NMH. The overall goal is to support and facilitate the process of development and reforms at the TSC. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and Georgia's inclusion in the Bologna Process in 2005, educational reforms carried out at Georgian higher education institutions revealed the need to introduce labour market oriented educational programmes. Despite the fact that educational reforms were directed towards upgrading the systems to European standards, higher education institutions in Georgia still face the rather common problem of a finding the right balance between educational outcomes and the demands of the labour market.

The Georgia project includes several strands, where creating an educational programme in music education at the TSC and teacher and student mobility are the two strands relevant to our research project. The NMH is deeply involved in developing the course in music education, both in terms of curriculum development and teaching the course where both Norwegian teachers and Norwegian students participate. Bringing Norwegian students to the TSC is another important strand on this project. The Norwegian students teach music in schools, participate in workshops for Georgian students attending the new course, and attend workshops learning Georgian music.

### Three models of student involvement

All the three collaborative projects have been established in response to our local partners' goals and needs for renewal and development in music education. The direction and choices made in the projects are continuously discussed and decided in collaboration between the local partners and the NMH. Another common characteristic



is that all projects centre around training music teachers in formal and informal ways. Furthermore, student and teacher mobility and exchange is an important strand in all these projects. Teachers and students from Lebanon, India and Georgia are visiting Norway as an important part of the projects. Since 2005 we have also brought students from NMH into the international projects, within three different models.

*In the first model*, the international project is defined as a mandatory placement component in the integrated performance and teacher training bachelor programme. In the third year of this four-year programme we bring the students into one of the projects. In the period from 2005 to 2014 we brought students to South Lebanon and from 2015 to India building on the same kind of structure and ideas. For ten days student music teachers collaborate on leading music activities for children either in schools or within other structures, contribute in different workshops for music teachers, and give concerts. In this model the community of practice is mostly between the Norwegian students, and the Norwegian teachers supervise and give feedback to the student teachers. The workshops for local music teachers are driven and led by teachers from the NMH with the NMH students contributing by leading a few musical activities.

*The second model* is set up as an elective course available to all students at the NMH. It includes performance and teaching practice components and is now being implemented in Tbilisi. It is not part of the teacher training course in Norway, and hence supervision is not that strongly emphasised throughout the teaching practice. Several of the NMH students choosing this course also participated in the first model of student involvement. Over a period of eight days NMH students perform for children, give workshops and teach music in schools and for music teachers. In this model the NMH students are more independent from the Norwegian teachers. Nevertheless, collaboration between students and teachers in planning, carrying out and evaluating the music activities are central in this model.

*The third model* is to include a small group of students from the NMH with a particular interest in intercultural questions as partners in the international projects. This can be both bachelor, master and PhD students. Forming groups of 4–8 students with 2–3 teachers from the NMH, this constitutes an arena for reflective conversations on issues such as teaching practices, musical material, values and ideologies. The main activity in this model is workshops either for children (in the Lebanon project), teacher training workshops (in India and Georgia) or teaching on the new educational courses (in India and Georgia), all carried out in collaboration between the Norwegian teachers and students and local partners. This model has been rolled out in all three countries.

We believe that these three models related to the three international projects are suited to giving valuable insights into intercultural issues and building competence in different ways for the Norwegian students involved. The first model represents a first meeting with something entirely new. The students are not given the full responsibility, teachers are at hand to supervise, and the tasks are concrete and narrow. In the second model the students are in a more mixed group (students from different study programmes NMH), and they encounter both a new culture and a new situation while at the same time collaborating with fellow students they do not know too well. Furthermore, teachers from the NMH are not that 'hands on' but still provide guidance and are part of conversations and reflections. In the third model teachers and students plan and give workshops and teaching session together, as equals.

## **Intercultural encounters: theoretical perspectives**

We propose that several theoretical perspectives are needed in order to understand the research question: why and how learning takes place in these intercultural projects. In particular, we believe that the issues of *collaborative learning*, *cultural encounters* and *the role of reflection in and on action* are central to understanding learning in intercultural projects.

The projects are centred on highly *collaborative* encounters. Students and teachers collaborate and take an active part in the planning, implementation and performance of musical concerts, workshops and classroom music teaching. This specific setting, which is collaborative, in-practice and reflective, may be seen as a key arena for learning, or even as an example of what characterises learning (e.g. Engeström, 2001; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). We propose that the learning potential of this kind of practice can be understood through Rogoff's (1995) three concepts of apprenticeship, guided participation and participatory appropriation. Apprenticeship involves 'active individuals participating with others in culturally organized activity that has as part of its purpose the development of mature participation in the activity by the less experienced people' (Rogoff, 1995, p. 141). Guided participation refers to 'the processes and systems of involvement between people as they communicate and coordinate efforts while participating in culturally valued activity' (Rogoff, 1995, p. 141). Guidance, according to Rogoff, 'involves the direction offered by cultural and social values, as well as social partners;' while participation 'refers to observation, as well as hands-on involvement in an activity' (Rogoff 1995, p. 141). Lastly, Rogoff claims that a key understanding of learning is found

in participation itself (and not in the internalisation of external knowledge), and participatory appropriation refers to 'how individuals change through their involvement in one or another activity, [and] in the process becoming prepared for subsequent involvement in related activities.' (Rogoff, 1995, p. 141).

The projects facilitate encounters between persons and between *cultures*. Culture is a broad and highly debated concept (Young, 2015) but one which normally concerns social behaviours and norms in human societies. A central question in culture studies is whether culture and cultural identity are more or less fixed or fluid phenomena (Hall, 1989). Even though people in a specific culture probably share a number of characteristics, culture and cultural identity are just as much a matter of difference (Hall, 1989) or of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994). 'Cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in the relation of Self to Other' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 52). This challenges the idea of identity as related to certain essential characteristics based on origin or location as well as the idea of 'one shared culture, a sort of collective "one true self"' (Hall, 1989, p. 225) or the 'fixity of cultures' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 52). According to Hall, culture and cultural identity is, in addition to similarities, characterised by fluidity and 'deep and significant *difference* which constitute "what we really are"; or rather – since history has intervened – "what we have become"' (p. 225, italics in original). In addition, Hall argues that culture is produced and transformed. Cultural identity is a matter of becoming as well as being, and it belongs to the future as much as to the past (p. 225).

Intercultural studies suggest that collaboration across cultures may stimulate development of a particular competence, intercultural competence. According to Dearnorff (2006), the term generally refers to the 'ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes' (pp. 247–248). Barrett and colleagues (2013) provide many examples of such knowledge, skills and attitudes: intercultural attitudes entail an appreciation of diversity, respect for differences, a willingness to learn from others – questioning what is seen as normal and tolerating insecurity. Examples of intercultural knowledge include understanding the diversity of cultures, understanding and paying attention to preconceptions (your own and those of others), stereotypes, discrimination and issues of language. Intercultural skills include the ability to take on a multi-perspective, to be able to interpret cultures, to be emphatic, cognitive flexibility, and so on. Studies in this field also reveal that developing intercultural competence means learning about the values, identities and traditions of your own cultural settings and everyday life (Westerlund, Partti & Karlsen, 2015).

In collaborative learning and in cultural encounters, *reflection* seems to play a crucial role. Research suggests quite clearly that educational practice is not just actions, but actions *and their attendant discourses* (Alexander, 2001, Schön, 1987). Alexander (2008) for example, defines pedagogy as the act of teaching ‘*together with the purposes, values, ideas, assumptions, theories and beliefs that inform, shape and seek to justify it*’ (p. 75, italics in original). One element in attendant discourses might then be reflection on different levels, which also can be seen as an important line in intercultural encounters (Broeske-Danielsen, 2013, Westerlund, Partti & Karlsen, 2015). Schön (1987) introduced the terms reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action to describe professional competence. According to Schön (1987), reflection at different levels is key to meeting the challenges of the ‘swampy zones of practice’ (p. 3). By connecting the term artistry to reflection at different levels, Schön underlines that the practitioner makes new sense of uncertain, unique or conflictual situations, and rethinks them in ways that go beyond available rules, facts, theories and operations. Indeterminate situations force the practitioner to respond and to find solutions on the spot. In this way ‘thinking serves to reshape what we do while we are doing it’, which Schön expresses through the term ‘reflection-in-action’ (1987, p. 26). Such reflection occurs in the midst of action without interrupting it. What distinguishes reflection-in-action from other kinds of reflection is its immediate significance for action. Although reflection-on-action is different from reflection-in-action, it may indirectly shape our future action, as it is a reflection on our past reflection-in-action. Different levels of reflection play important roles in the acquisition of artistry, according to Schön (1987). Dale (1998) and Lauvås and Handal (1997, 2000) also focus on reflection on different levels, particularly related to educational practices. One of their levels of reflection is directed towards ethical justification based on values (Lauvås & Handal, 2000). A meeting between different educational practices (as well as musical, we suggest) thus means a meeting between different sets of values and theories of practice. Professional knowledge consists not only of the ability to convey a particular content to a group of students (and audiences), but also of an awareness – a reflective attitude towards the ideas, norms, values, beliefs and assumptions which underlie all the decisions involved in planning and undertaking music teaching and musical performance. In other words, our professional knowledge is subject to an ethical and value-related dimension linked to what is relevant, correct and important (Alexander, 2001; Clarke & Yinger, 1977; Lauvås & Handal, 2000).

This line of ideas can be found in previous studies on student music teachers’ learning in intercultural encounters, which show that meeting an unfamiliar and challenging teaching context forces the practitioner to draw on all their previously gained competence and drives the need for reflection on different levels (Broeske-Danielsen, 2013;

Westerlund, Partti and Karlsen, 2015). Reflection both in action and on action can then be seen as conditions for the learning that takes place (Broske-Danielsen, 2013). As the unknown becomes familiar, the practitioner can consider what she knows and then reflect on this knowledge in new ways and through new lenses that could contribute further to challenging her own ethical justification and values in relation to music teaching.

In sum, the points above suggest that a key issue concerning the learning potential of these international projects can be framed as *reflective encounters of intercultural difference in collaborative participatory practice*. If we understand cultures and identities as hybrid, produced and transformed (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1989) and contradictions and multi-voicedness as potential drivers for learning and change (Engeström, 2001), intercultural encounters may cause (in a positive way), and even demand, reflection on different levels that make *change* of practice, purpose and values possible on a personal, professional and cultural level.

## Research methodology

The overall research project is organised as three separate case studies, i.e. Lebanon, Georgia and India, with different subprojects within each case. All subprojects provide data to the overarching research question, why and how does learning take place in participating in intercultural projects. The choice of research design is made in line with Yin's argumentation (2009). The case study design is appropriate in order to investigate a phenomenon (in this case learning) within its real-life context, 'especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Our hypothesis is that important learning takes place in the intercultural projects. However, why it happens and in what ways, is far from apparent. Ethnographic methods (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), including participant observation, student- and teacher field and reflection logs, semi-structured interviews are used to collect data. The data is discussed and understood through the use of various strategies appropriated to the specific subproject, including qualitative content analysis (Kvale, 2007) and narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993). The use of various data collection and data analysis strategies is based on an understanding that the phenomenon of learning, its process and design, may be different in the different intercultural contexts. Data collected through these strategies, interpreted through various analytical procedures, becomes '(...) multiple sources of evidence' (Yin, 2009, p. 18) to the overarching research question.

In this chapter, we use a narrative representation of the data on student learning. The narrative, presented as 'Astrid's story', is constructed in cooperation by the narrator, i.e. the master student Astrid, and the 'listeners', i.e. the research group. Astrid was asked to write a text about her experiences and reflections of her participations in the three models of student involvement presented above. To ensure reliable input to the story, she again discussed her thoughts and understandings with previous peers attending the professional placements with her. Through reading her descriptions, discussing the experiences with Astrid, editing and reshaping what was told, a 'meta story' (Riessman, 1993, p. 13) about what happened was created. The narrative presented as Astrid's story is 'the representation of an event or a series of events' (Abbot, 2008, p. 13), with a number of quotes from Astrid's original text. There are three events presented in Astrid's story. The first is the mandatory placement in Bengaluru, India (student involvement model one). The second is the elective subject in Tbilisi, Georgia (model two). The third is when she enrolled in the master's program attending new projects in the countries previous visited (model three). Astrid's story unveils the process of building teacher confidence, higher reflection and intercultural competence when engaging in different intercultural learning contexts over time.

## **Narrative on student learning: Astrid's story**

### Model one

Astrid's first encounter in the intercultural program was when she in her third year in the integrated music performance and teacher education bachelor programme had a mandatory placement in India. Astrid and 16 fellow students spent a week in Bengaluru teaching music in Indian primary schools to large groups of fourth to seventh graders, giving concerts and learning Carnatic music. In the schools, they worked with Norwegian folk music, improvisation, singing games and dancing. Especially the Norwegian folk song with unfamiliar melody and words evoked curiosity and friendly giggling among the pupils, Astrid remembers. Bringing the guitar and clarinet into the classroom was also met with enthusiasm. Astrid remembers the hours of teaching as intense, but it was never difficult to engage the pupils in singing, playing and dancing.

The students prepared teaching material in Norway and were excited to try it out in a new context. Planning for teaching was a bit difficult, because they were not quite certain how many children attended the classes, the age of the pupils, what equipment

was available, but most of all – how the learning content would be received. In planning, teaching and reflecting on teaching Astrid experienced how it was like to be a part of a big team of student teachers, and the collaboration between students and teachers became a good arena to learn from each other. She had to adapt to a different context, overcoming language barriers and function in what was perceived as a more ‘strict’ context where discipline, assessment and competition was recognizable aspects of the educational culture. For Astrid, the main concern regarding the placements in school was how to find learning activities that would function well, capture the children’s motivation and how to make small adjustments in practice and between hours of teaching. They discussed, helped each other and together made the adjustments needed to adapt the activities to the new intercultural context, Astrid asserts.

‘The musical material we planned to carry out, constituted a frame for our teaching, where the new context and culture influenced action in practice making us take a step back from our own perspectives. This practical experience; being sensitive for the need to make intuitive choices regarding teaching strategies and musical material, contributed to valuable learning.’

The way of being surprised or meeting something very different contributed in new ways of thinking about selecting musical material. It was difficult, and maybe not the best idea, to plan for every detail, Astrid learned.

‘It seemed more important to be aware of the overarching goals and to be able to continuously adjust to the teaching situation.’

The group of students also performed a concert at the end of the visit in the school. Here, the Norwegian students and Indian pupils performed the Norwegian folk song together, with the Norwegian lyric, to the audience’s great enthusiasm.

Astrid and her fellow students also attended different workshops in Indian classical music during the stay. Experiencing Indian discipline and culture through their own playing, singing and improvising opened for knowledge on cultural beliefs, values and perspectives, thus contributing to increased cultural awareness, Astrid asserts.

## Model two

In her fourth year of study, Astrid and eight fellow students elected a course that culminated in a visit to Tbilisi, Georgia.. This time, Astrid felt that being part of a smaller group

of students made it easier for all to participate in concerts and in planning, teaching and all the on-going discussions. Having the prior experience from the India project, Astrid felt that she had resources for making this professional placement extra valuable.

'We found ourselves more confident in the teaching situation and when decisions had to be made.'

The group of students went to a school where they met approximately 40 fifth graders. The pupils were a little shy at first, Astrid remembers. The Norwegian students started the class by performing a quiet version of *Viva la Vida* by Coldplay. Several of the children knew this song, and they were excited to hear it performed by the Norwegians. The students knew that they had to demonstrate and not count on explaining with words. An example was the blues song *Keep on knockin'*. They had prepared an arrangement with guitar, piano, rhythm instruments and voice. The result was that the whole group of pupils were involved in playing, where both the shy and the eager could find their places. Through a rotation principle in circles, the Georgian pupils switched instruments so that all of them could try the djembe, percussion instruments and piano.

Towards the end of the week, the students held a concert in the school. It became a charming, chaotic and fun affair: In small crowded classrooms, they played material consisting of elements from Georgian and Norwegian folk music, to Debussy's *Petite Suite* and Coldplay's *Viva la Vida*.

Although the practical and cultural challenges the students met in Tbilisi differed from the ones they met in India, Astrid experienced and discovered similarities between the two projects. She found similarities through the actual encounter with a foreign culture. Through this meeting, she experienced how her cultural pre-understandings was revised through the intercultural experience, and how a *new* understanding of the culture was created (an on-going process).

'You start paying more attention to your own values. You understand that actual problems can be caused by taken-for-granted cultural viewpoints.'

In this sense, Astrid developed knowledge and skills to understand and adjust to the diversity of cultures.

Astrid experienced that the learning content could meet a certain resistance in India and Georgia. Therefore, she became aware of the need to make quick intuitive choices



in the learning situation to adapt the learning material to different settings, so that it would become relevant for pupils and teachers. Using this prior knowledge from the visit to India, Astrid felt she was able to make decisions based on a 'richer' basis.

'The planning process became a meeting between pedagogical theory and intercultural competence. It made it easier to identify challenges and consider different solutions together.'

Astrid experienced how the intercultural projects combined loose ends in her own music education study programme, and she learned a lot in a very short time.

Model one and two had an impact on Astrid as a musician. The two visits encouraged more reflection about her performance practice, her musical habits, and gave her new musical ideas. In addition, meeting Indian and Georgian music pushed her out of her musical comfort zone, and resulted in experimentation with new genres. A particularly important impact is that she now reflects more about what she wants with her concerts and her repertoire. Do I have a distinct concept, or is it 'just for fun'. She mentions two incidents that sparked such reflection. In Georgia, Astrid experienced teachers discussing whether songs in minor keys are appropriate for small children (are they too sad?). In India, she attended a four-hour long concert with Carnatic music, in which she experienced a connection between musicians and audience that to her was completely new. The audience was an active part of the music making and the musical experience, by following the *talas* with hand and finger movements. Both incidents made her think about what she wants with her music, and what music may mean and express to different people.

### Model three

Astrid's experiences from India and Georgia nurtured a research interest in intercultural issues. In her fifth year, she therefore enrolled in the master's programme, giving her an opportunity to return to India and Georgia for empirical studies. As a master student, she thought of herself more as a colleague than a student when collaborating in the team. She, and two fellow students, were included in planning for workshops for Georgian student teachers at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire. The workshops focussed on active music making and listening, in addition to reflection on educational issues. Astrid attended as well meetings and had late night dinner discussions with her teachers and peers.

'You get inspired by each other, both through practical work and by meeting different ways of thinking. This stimulates reflection on the many issues of teaching, and you get to know your identity as a musician and teacher.'

Together with her previous experiences and her readings of literature on the master's level, this made her more interested and more aware of the ethical rationales for education. The ability to reflect on how values affect practice became important for Astrid, as it was a key element for greater understanding. Although justifications and reasons were still both practice-based and theory-based, her prior experience was of great importance.

'Without experience from the previous projects, it would have been impossible to reflect on a higher level, and you constantly return to the strictly practical matters of teaching. This underlines the reciprocal relationship between different levels of practice.'

The projects make you able to see yourself from outside, Astrid suggests.

'To switch between the role of an observer and the active role of the music teacher and musician stimulates reflection on the many issues of teaching, and you get to know your identity as a musician and teacher. You understand that actual problems can be caused by taken-for-granted cultural viewpoints (the view on play, theory, assessment, authorities and so on). In this sense, you develop knowledge and skills to understand and adjust to the diversity of cultures.'

## **Comments and reflections**

Astrid's story, in our opinion, suggests quite clearly that the three visits to foreign countries have made an important impact on her professional development, which also previous students at the academy have stated after participating in model one (Broeske-Danielsen, 2013). The story also suggests that collaboration, reflection in and on action, and meeting a new cultural setting are promising perspectives that help understand the learning experiences in such projects.

The role of collaboration between students and between students and staff is a re-occurring issue in the story. In the first model, the story suggests, collaboration and learning between students is central. They are working in a big team, finding teaching and learning activities, musical material and gaining practical experience in action together. Collaboration in a big group constituted an important arena for learning, according to Astrid's story, and according to previous research (Broeske-Danielsen 2013; Westerlund et al., 2015). In the second model, collaboration continues in a smaller group of students. During the third model, Astrid participated with more experience, in a small team of students and staff. Astrid was no longer 'just' a student, but an aspiring experienced participant, a colleague in the collaborative team. The three models are also designed differently, where the students are given more and more responsibility with less supervision from teachers throughout the three models. Astrid's experiences with the three different models show traces of a certain participatory progression in the three models, in which Astrid's role transforms from a less experienced participant to mature participation (see also Westerlund et al., 2015). In Rogoff's words (1995, see also Lave & Wenger, 1991), Astrid seems to be an apprentice that participates in the practices (through observation and hands-on involvement) on an increasingly experienced level. What helps her develop is collaborative participation combined with the guidance involved in the practice (from peers and teachers, and from the direction offered from cultural and social values in the practice). This suggests that experiencing being a part of a community of fellow students contributes to the feeling of safety and opens possibilities for learning. Previous studies (Broeske-Danielsen, 2013; Westerlund et al., 2015) show that collaboration between peers reduces the complexity in a new and unfamiliar context, as there are many peers helping each other. This again decreases the feeling of risk in a contradictory and multifaceted situation where students have to move out of their comfort zones (Broeske-Danielsen, 2013).

Collaboration seems to be experienced very positively, yet participating in intercultural settings is far from straightforward, according to the story. There are many traces of Astrid having to cope with uncertainty, insecurity and unfamiliar situations and challenges. In the story, Astrid's says that 'being sensitive for the need to make intuitive choices regarding teaching strategies and musical material, contributed to valuable learning'. Such reflection-in-action is precisely central for being able to handle the 'swampy zones of practice' (Schön 1987, p. 3). Astrid's journey throughout the three models shows that she became more confident in her teaching and in making decisions on the spot. She describes that her reflection also moved to an increasingly higher level throughout her three intercultural encounters. The story of Astrid suggests a high degree of reflection among the students within the projects, both related to planning

and evaluating the teaching practice and related to more overarching issues related to values and justifications. Overall, it seems as the contradictory and demanding teaching context led to increased reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Schön, 1987) where fellow students played a significant role in all levels.

Astrid's previous experience and the enriched intercultural competence contributed to increased interest in and awareness of values and justifications in music education, to exploring her own identity and to increased ability to reflect on a higher level. There is reason to believe that reflection is particularly important in intercultural encounters and at the same time enhanced in such projects, since the students are facing a quite new and unfamiliar situation and context (Broeske-Danielsen, 2013). Astrid's story suggests that throughout the three experiences she felt more and more confident in meeting the unfamiliar and unpredictable. It is therefore reason to think that this is not just a result of meeting different contexts in the three models, but also comes from Astrid's ability to face and meet such challenges. She has gained increased competence as a music teacher and increased her intercultural competence, which relates among other things to being open for new ways of seeing and understanding, and being able to adjust to new settings. The study by Westerlund et al. (2015) underlines the importance of learning to face the unknown and being able to make on-the-spot decisions.

Cultural participation, and coping with cultural and identity issues, seem to be important aspects of Astrid's account of her three visits. In her first visit to India, Astrid met a new cultural context and encountered cultural differences of many kinds, not the least in the music classroom. The learning context was characterized by cultural difference (but also similarities), multi-voicedness and contradictions in several ways (Engeström, 2001). Astrid's story suggests that the students started developing intercultural competence, for example tolerating insecurity and handling contradictions (Barrett et al., 2013), which is in line with the findings of Westerlund et al. (2015). Astrid reports eventually coping (better) with cultural difference, because she already had experience with facing new, unpredictable and multi-voiced settings. Because of having previous experience, Astrid developed what she calls a 'new understanding' of culture, adjusted to the 'diversity of cultures', and paid attention to her own preconceptions, all of which are traces of intercultural competence (Barrett et al., 2013). Astrid directs her gaze both outwards and inward, to cultural difference and to her own preconceptions and identity. Many words in her story suggest that this process probably is rather complex and even troublesome: *Different, new context, new culture, adapt, take a step back, surprised, taken-for-granted, diversity, identity, resistance,*

*complexity, musical habits, values, see yourself from outside.* What is going on, it seems, is a process of accepting and understanding the *hybridity* of both the culture she meets, her own cultural background with all its traditions and values, and also her personal values and preconceptions (identity). The process of learning to handle and face the unknown requires willingness to risk yourself, your understanding and to be ready to let your identity be challenged. This can lead to really starting to understand cultures (your own and others) not as fixed, unitary nor simply dualistic (Bhabha, 1994, p. 52; Hall, 1989, p. 225), and not understanding identities (your own and others) related to origin or location (Bhabha, 1994, p. 52), but rather as hybrid in every possible way. This would be a start of, and always a part of, a journey of not finding out 'what we really are' (Hall, 1989, p. 225), but rather continuously being open for what 'we can become', a journey that belongs to the future.

The empirical material of this chapter is limited, but Astrid's story is still supporting the further exploration of the theoretically developed roles of collaborative learning, cultural encounters and reflection when it comes to understanding learning in international projects. Collaboration between students and between students and teachers seem to be crucial in all the three models, both regarding being able to cope with the many challenges in practice and being able to tolerate insecurity, as well as for making sense of contradictory values and hybrid identities and cultures. Reflection seems to be a central strand throughout all three models, and it seems reasonable to suggest that meeting the multi-voiced and unfamiliar contexts cause and demand reflection, which subsequently may lead to a change of practice, purpose and values (Engeström, 2001). Further examination is however needed in order to discuss these matters in more depth, and on a broader empirical basis, not the least by including the voices from all involved countries in the study.

## Conclusions

The models of student involvement connected to the three international projects, as outlined in the beginning of this chapter, aim to enable musicians and music teachers to face, understand and engage in the intercultural society. As the story of Astrid is suggesting, this aim seems to be met. To answer the questions of why and how learning takes place in the projects needs further exploration, but the present chapter has given some promising suggestions. We suggest, based on the outline of the project organisation, the theoretical strands and the empirical data presented in the narrative, that the

characteristics of the learning potential of the projects is that the projects make possible reflective cultural encounters, which may encourage a process of understanding cultural difference and stimulate development of intercultural competence. Further, participants collaborate in a *participatory* musical and educational *practice*, which is situated in a *cultural context*. In this intercultural, participatory practice, *comparisons and contradictions* occur (cultural, professional and personal), which may cause and demand *reflection* (personal and professional) and make *change* of practice, purpose and values possible, on both the individual and cultural level.

The close collaboration between the students and between the students and the teachers, the shift between the act as performer and observer, the peer assessment and the on-going and highly focused discussions, is the very foundation for why learning occurs, regardless of the intercultural context. We suggest that the intercultural context accelerates this learning. The act of comparison naturally evolves, both with students and with teachers, as the distance between *the known* and *the unknown* may be experienced as wide-ranging. Comparisons are again expedient and fruitful – if reflections contribute to new knowledge and understanding on the professional as well as on the personal domain. Students report a higher level of reflection, not only addressing the execution of learning activities and musicianship and how to improve their teaching and musicianship, but in engaging in reflections about the structural, political, religious and value-based foundation for their activities. As Astrid's story points out, students start to pay more attention to their own values and the taken-for-granted cultural viewpoints that again can both be the cause of problems as well as a 'source for understanding the world'. This kind of reflection, facilitated through the encounter in distanced and often different educational and musical culture, is thus in line with the theory of didactics, and in line with the objectives of teacher education and performance studies. One could say that the students *discover* the theory of didactics. The aspect of distance and comparisons is one interesting explanation for the *why* in the research question. Other interesting themes for continuous reflection is the significance of teaching and presenting music in a second language, forcing to make explicit tacit knowledge and thus facilitating a different higher level of thinking, assessing and executing theoretical, methodological and musical concepts.

Last, to fully understand *why* and *how* learning takes place in intercultural projects, and how we can both *facilitate for* and *learn from* educational development, requires a closer examination of the cultural, political, religious structures regulating the educational and musical contexts. We hope that we will be able to include some

exploration of these broad issues as part of the continuing work on researching the learning potential of intercultural projects in higher music education.

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## Moving together while playing music: promoting involvement through student- centred collaborative practices

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### Abstract

*Europe has a very strong tradition of teaching how to play a musical instrument, leading to high standards of music performance, brilliant musicians, beautiful repertoire, and outstanding instructional materials. Yet, the so-called Conservatoire tradition and especially its underlying master-apprentice model of teaching is prone to critiques in the light of recent pedagogical insights about how students learn. Studies have shown that this model is often characterized by a teacher-centred approach with a focus on technique in function of reproductive imitation, corrected mainly by verbal feedback and aural modelling, thereby neglecting important aspects of learning such as learner autonomy, self-efficacy, self-regulation, individual artistic voice. Furthermore, the one-to-one approach of this model might be questioned following current insights on effective learning and teaching pointing to the importance of collaborative learning.*

*In this chapter, it is argued that a viable way to address the critiques and challenges that instrumental music education faces, is bringing the body to the heart of the instrumental music learning process by promoting a bodily engagement at the intersection of personal style, instrumental gestures and bodily responses to the music through the deliberate use of expressive movement. By engaging learners in an interactive loop between music, body, instrument and co-learners, movement-based learning activities enable creating a learning environment that empowers learners and thereby fosters intrinsic motivation.*

## Introduction

Millions of people worldwide learn how to play a musical instrument, and many of them follow formal music training. In Europe alone, more than 4,000,000 children a week attend one of the more than 6,000 local music schools to develop the musical and instrumental skills to allow them to engage in meaningful musical experiences and to express themselves through music (European Music School Union, 2010).

Europe has a very strong tradition of teaching how to play a musical instrument which has been passed down for generations from teacher to student (Burnard, 2014). Today this so-called conservatoire tradition and its practices still prevail worldwide in many instrumental music classrooms (Jorgensen, 2011). However, despite its achievements such as high standards of musical performance, brilliant musicians, beautiful repertoire and outstanding instructional materials, this tradition and especially its underlying master-apprentice model of teaching is prone to critique in the light of recent pedagogical insights. Studies have shown that this model is often characterised by a teacher-centred approach with a focus on technique to support reproductive imitation corrected mainly by verbal feedback and aural modelling, thereby neglecting important aspects of learning such as learner autonomy, self-efficacy, self-regulation and individual artistic voice (see McPherson & Welch, 2012). Another characteristic of Western formal instrumental learning is the one-to-one approach (Creech & Gaunt, 2012). Yet, current insights on effective learning and teaching point to the importance of collaborative learning (Ferguson-Patrick & Jolliffe, 2018).

Arguably, the above-mentioned critiques call for a reconsideration and innovation of instrumental music teaching to create a space in the curriculum for activities that promote artistic creation (e.g. improvisation, composition), informal ways of learning and collaborative practices (e.g. through group assignments), student initiative (e.g. choice of repertoire) etc. Here, it is argued that one viable way of addressing the critiques and challenges that instrumental music education faces is bringing the body to the heart of the instrumental music learning process by promoting a bodily engagement at the intersection of personal style, instrumental gestures and bodily responses to the music through the deliberate use of expressive movement. This way it becomes possible to create a learning environment that empowers learners and fosters intrinsic motivation. Arguably, this may be achieved based on learning activities that engage learners in an interactive loop between body, instrument, music and co-learners by combining locomotor or non-locomotor expressive movements in relation to elements of the music and to expression.

Interestingly, according to Leman (2016), the cognitive-motivational architecture that underlies musical interaction has its roots in the biology of social interaction and the rewarding effects of such interaction. This means that the process of musical meaning formation is decisive for motivational processes.

This chapter discursively elaborates on the theoretical arguments for an approach to instrumental music education that is based on the deliberate use of expressive movement while playing your instrument, and it provides some practice-based examples of movement-based musical activities that demonstrate the theoretical elaborations. In the first section the theory of embodied music cognition and the basic mechanisms of musical interaction are explained. The next section elaborates on the importance of an optimal relationship between musician and instrument that allows these basic mechanisms to steer the spontaneous expressive interaction during performance. Then, a movement-based approach to instrumental learning is proposed as a viable way of promoting student involvement through student-centred collaborative practices. This section provides practice-based examples.

## **Embodied music cognition and the basic mechanisms of musical interaction**

The theory of embodied music cognition offers an evidence-based view on how bodily involvement shapes the way we perceive, feel, experience and comprehend music (Lesaffre, Maes & Leman, 2017). The idea is that embodiment determines, to a large extent, why and how a stream of sounds is experienced as music and why engaging with music can be a rewarding experience.

### **Enactment: transforming sound into music through movement**

According to the embodied music cognition view, musical meaning is not inherent to the music but rather the outcome of an embodied interaction with music, when the musician participates in a direct and engaged way in the musical environment he or she creates while playing (Dourish, 2004; Leman, 2016). The idea is that, while interacting with music a sound-movement-intention connection is established that transforms the stream of sounds into a meaningful musical experience. This transformation process, also called enactment, occurs through the association of patterns in the sounds (e.g. chord sequence or melody) with movement patterns (e.g. shape, direction, energy)

and thereby with the intentional states (e.g. emotions) that underlie these patterns. This connection is made possible because music and movement share certain features (Sievers, Polansky, Casey & Wheatley, 2013). Both modalities are time-based, and thus music can be experienced as a flow of movement, imbued with a certain quality and with an intentional direction that can evoke an emotion (Stern, 2010). From this viewpoint, understanding music can be seen as a multimodal process.

### Basic mechanisms of enactment in music

The general process described above of attributing intentions to music by associating musical and movement patterns is rooted in several basic mechanisms that constitute an embodied interaction: alignment, entrainment and prediction (Leman, 2016).

#### **Alignment with music**

When moving expressively to music, physical actions are intuitively matched to the music (Eerola, Luck, & Toiviainen, 2006). Such a match is based on the ability to feel the music from within and to align one's movements accordingly in response to specific aspects of the music. Some might move to the beat, whereas others might show an emotional response or imitate the character of the music.

The ability to expressively align one's movements to certain elements or aspects of the music can be conceived from two viewpoints. The first viewpoint concerns the alignment between patterns in the music and in movement. The latter can align to the beat (e.g. nodding to the beat) or to what happens in between the beats (e.g. showing the expressive phrasing with a lateral movement of the body). Depending on which aspect of the music gets the most attention, one of the two types of alignment might be more prominent. Nevertheless, as the flow of associated bodily and musical rhythms occur within an overall discrete timing framework defined by beats, metre and tempo, it is likely that both types of alignment have mutual dependencies (Leman, 2016).

The second viewpoint concerns the conditions or 'states' that lead to patterns, and particularly the state changes that drive and support the expressive alignment of musical patterns with movement patterns. Leman (2016) distinguishes between three transition processes that contribute to state changes and, as such, to the experience of music as a pleasurable and empowering phenomenon. Firstly, the perceived ability to match music and movement leads to a sense of agency, causing feelings of satisfaction, reward and immersion (Clark, 2015). As this process also applies to the

interaction and alignment with peers, it possibly induces pro-social emotions. In this case, the individual sense of agency ('I did it!') becomes valued within the collective agency of the group ('We did it!') (Pacherie, 2014). Secondly, the physical effort it takes to align to the music can lead to an increased sense of agency and to an increase in one's arousal level. Physical activities performed to music may induce physiological and psychological states of being awake, alert and excited, thus improving executive functions (Byun et al., 2014) and facilitating higher cognitive functions (Audiffren & André, 2014). Thirdly, musical patterns can affect the energetic state of a person based on their qualitative features such as degree of variation, bass drum decibel level, length and structure of motives or timbre. For example, music can be relaxing or activating and in this way generate a transfer from sound energy to motor energy, thus affecting the way movement is aligned to the music. This leads to the attribution of affect value to music such as pleasant vs. unpleasant, happy vs. sad (Roda, Canazza & De Poli, 2014) and to a pro-social attitude.

### **Entrainment in music**

The alignment of bodily responses to music evidently occurs within a global timing framework. Such a framework is established through the synchronisation of movements to salient time markers in the music, such as the beat. Importantly, synchronisation is a very natural human response. The process of being pulled towards synchronisation has been called entrainment (Clayton, Sager & Will, 2004). In general, the concept of entrainment refers to 'the coordination of temporally structured events through interaction' (Clayton et al., 2004, p. 3). Note that events can be interpreted broadly: from heartbeats that synchronise to moving and dancing together. Entrainment not only allows for precision and flexibility in timing between people but also for a sense of participation and emotional bonding between them (Phillips-Silver, Aktipis & Bryant, 2010).

Entrainment also happens between people and music (e.g. Ilari, 2015; Large, 2000; Phillips-Silver et al., 2010). By attracting or pulling people towards the beat, entrainment enables three sensorimotor mechanisms: finding, keeping and even being the beat, thus enabling the emergence of a person's overall timing framework (phase alignment). Finding the beat is the process of recognising the regularity in time of salient markers that allows keeping the beat and eventually being the beat. Note that between finding and being, a transition occurs in effort. Finding the beat requires effort, but once the beat has been found and prediction runs smooth, it no longer requires effort, and energy is freed up to spend on other aspects of the musical interaction.

Entrainment does not necessarily occur automatically or smoothly. One must be able to detect the salient moments in the music (e.g. the beat), to perform rhythmic patterns (e.g. the music itself), and to adapt the performance of rhythmic patterns to fit the overall timing framework (Phillips-Silver et al., 2010). Furthermore, the process of entrainment is influenced by human factors such as motor variability (Demos, Chaffin & Kant, 2014) and preferred tempo resulting from biomechanics and neuronal clocks (Styns, Van Noorden, Moelants & Leman, 2007). For example, several studies have looked at the spontaneous synchronisation of children with music which conclude that not only is synchronisation easier or better when the tempo of the music is close to the preferred tempo of the child, but the preferred tempo can also change over time (e.g. Van Noorden, De Bruyn, Van Noorden, & Leman, 2017).

### **Predicting music**

The basic mechanisms of alignment and entrainment are closely connected to a third basic mechanism, namely prediction. Establishing a global timing framework through the mechanisms of entrainment and alignment with the music within that framework stems from the ability to sense what comes next in the music and to predict the outcome of a movement, such as hitting a drum or reaching a point in space to the beat. According to the embodied cognition approach, the combination of our biomechanical constraints (such as the length and shape of our legs and arms; e.g. Dahl, Huron, Brod & Altenmüller, 2014) and our state of arousal (feeling fatigued or being energetic) characterises the way we interact and predict music. From this perspective, prediction or anticipation of music is viewed as the expected outcome of bodily-mediated perceptions and physical actions with music rather than the expected outcome of a direct line between music and the brain.

Predictive control plays an important role in interacting with music. It induces different interaction situations. Leman (2016) distinguishes between four different interaction situations. The first, attenuation, occurs when the prediction of the unfolding music is successful. In this case, the self-generated sensory information that stems from playing or moving to the music no longer requires conscious monitoring, and attention is freed up for other elements in the musical interaction such as concentrating on the melody or the actions of others. The second, facilitation, aids the prediction of a certain channel in the music, such as timing, over other channels, such as melody or harmony, thereby facilitating the interaction with the music. For example, a stepping pattern (see Figure 1) may help to keep track of time by outsourcing the 'counting' to the repeated stepping pattern that demands a limited amount of effort due to the

entrainment mechanism. This way, cognitive resources are freed up to deal with – and predict – other aspects of the music such as the expressive phrasing.



*Figure 1 - Possible examples of a stepping pattern that can be used to facilitate timing*

The third, disambiguation, helps to deal with the perceptual or affective-expressive ambiguities in the music that may hinder prediction. For example, music can be interpreted in different metres (e.g. duple metre vs. triple) or in different emotions (e.g. happy vs. sad). Such ambiguity introduces uncertainty and interferes with pattern detection and with the emergence of higher level patterns that enable the enactment process. As such it becomes more difficult to couple states (e.g. sadness vs. happiness) with patterns (e.g. minor mode vs. short notes) and consequently to associate intentions with the music. Movement can reduce that uncertainty by aligning to the music in such a way that a certain content is favoured. For example, movement can be used to disambiguate metrical ambiguity such as binary versus ternary groupings of the beat (e.g. Naveda & Leman, 2010). Similarly, dancing a sad or happy choreography to ambiguous music influences the perceived expression in the music (Maes & Leman, 2013).

Finally, prediction can be linked to re-training, whereby established sensorimotor schemes are re-adjusted based on expected perceptual outcomes. Such adaptation is important. Sensorimotor schemes shape and improve cognitive processing and consequently contribute to the feeling of being in control. This makes the interaction more wanted and more liked (Leman, 2016).

### **The body in the enactment process**

The basic mechanisms of enactment are determined by bodily processes, thereby reinforcing the body in its role as the natural mediator of the interaction with music. Prediction is embedded in sensorimotor schemes which realise tight couplings between

motor commands and expectations (Pezzulo, 2011). These sensorimotor schemes stem from a repertoire of acquired actions (e.g. through deliberate practising) and innate reflexes (e.g. postural or stretch reflexes). As such they involve kinaesthetic, tactile and haptic sensing particularities of the body related to the biomechanics of the body (e.g. the length and shape of our legs and arms; e.g. Dahl et al., 2014) and to the bodily states (e.g. feeling fatigued or being energetic) that drive the alignment. It is assumed that these particularities have an impact on the predictive processes and therefore influence anticipation of expected outcomes (Clark, 2015). The attraction dynamics of entrainment are determined by natural motor variability (shaped by prediction and adaption processes), motor resonance and preferred tempo (determined by biomechanics of the body and neuronal clocks) and body movement (e.g. by guiding attention) (Leman, 2016). Alignment is related to the music-movement correlation and, alongside the observable movement patterns, also involves bodily states related to effort and arousal and known through proprioceptive observation (Leman, 2016).

Therefore, the body cannot be conceived of as a mere vehicle for being part of and experiencing the world. Rather, it may be considered the primary sphere in which all significance is initially engendered (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). It opens a space of gestural possibilities to engage with the created musical world by shaping both the openness and responsiveness to the music. In this sense, our physiologically and culturally dependent bodily existence with its embodied skills, experience and knowledge serves as the background to the interaction with the music. It becomes possible to bodily attune to the music and to rely on this experiential basis to give meaning to the music and to develop musical understanding. Importantly, such bodily attunement can be, and usually is, pre-reflective. That is, relevant information (e.g. about the acoustics, responses from the audience) is most often perceived, selected and appropriately responded to without the musician being representationally aware of doing so (Dohn, 2002; Leman, 2016).

An essential element of the pre-reflective attunement and crucial to the possibility of freely resonating with the music is the body's ability to move spontaneously and responsively (Behnke, 1989). Such motility can be viewed from two perspectives. A first – mechanistic – perspective is related to the body as an object. Here, motility concerns the physical body and its biomechanical degrees of freedom, which can be effortlessly recruited and annihilated in a flexible and spontaneous manner according to task demands (Kelso, 1997). A second – phenomenological – perspective is related to the body as a subject. Here motility concerns the lived body and the way the body is experienced as an 'I can'. This feeling of agency is not, however, about causal control



whereby the body is merely a physical instrument that serves an interior subjectivity (e.g. predefined musical goals). Rather, it is about experiencing a horizon of possibilities to engage with the world (e.g. music) (Behnke, 1989). The pre-reflective moving body is intentional; it reaches out towards the world, and based on its motility it responds to the world (e.g. music) that questions or invites us to act (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). In other words, bodily being in the world involves a directedness that is essentially motility (Reuter, 1999). Therefore, understanding this directedness involves an analysis of movement (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). In music performance, this directedness is determined by a push and pull process through which musical intentionality is shaped on the fly, based on the enactment process (Nijs, 2017).

### **Musical interaction, reward and expression**

Neurobiological findings indicate that music affects the human reward system, a brain structure that is key to our motivation, behaviour and psychological makeup (Zatorre & Salimpoor, 2013). According to Leman (2016), this rewarding nature stems from the expressive alignment with music, based on the use of musical patterns to enact musical expression. As such, feelings of reward through music are intrinsically related to the ability to anticipate and predict how the music unfolds (Huron, 2006; Salimpoor, Zald, Zatorre, Dagher & McIntosh, 2015). Leman's argument is that the interaction with music involves the combination of the three interaction-reward states that were described in the section on alignment: agency, arousal and valence. The three-state transition processes run parallel and, together with pattern processing, establish a cognitive-motivational loop that generates the rewarding and empowering nature of musical experiences: the mutual reinforcement of the three transition processes positively affects reward. Based on prediction, effort and expression as the major ingredients of the enactment process, the pattern processing that underlies alignment and entrainment involves the co-occurrence of arousal, positive valence and the feeling of being in control.

An interesting viewpoint is the idea that the rewarding nature of musical interaction is modulated by our innate expressive system through which the pro-social value of musical interaction is activated. Interacting with music appeals to the human urge to evoke expressive responses from others in order to establish an interaction that is mutually rewarding (Leman, 2016). This expressive system involves the sensitivity (perception) to expressive elements in the music and the ability to generate expressive responses (action) to these elements. Such responses have a biological origin, namely the reflexes as manifested in the urge to express oneself, and a cultural origin that

involves the control of these reflexes as shaped by implicit and explicit learning processes. This means that musical activities that integrate movement not only support the development of controlling reflexes; they also broaden the development of a learned repertoire of musical responses.

## **Embodied interaction with music and the musician-instrument relationship**

Expressiveness in performing music involves listening-while-performing (Clarke, 2005). But because of the specific timeframe of musical performance, it is impossible to take every action or its result into account as if it was a perceptually distinct unit. Therefore, the musician must be able to pick up information without the need for cognitive processes and act directly in attunement with the environment. Accordingly, the flexible and spontaneous expression of musical meaning requires the musician to participate in a direct and engaged way with the music. Such interaction with music is called an embodied interaction (Dourish, 2004). Importantly, the body as a natural mediator in the enactment process is extended with an artificial mediator such as a musical instrument. The nature of this extension is vital because it may allow or hinder an embodied interaction with the music as described above. It should not interfere with a direct engagement with the music, allowing the musician to keep an open focus on the musical environment and respond in a creative and expressive way. This is only possible when the musical instrument (or any other musical tool) becomes incorporated into the natural mediator (Nijs, Lesaffre & Leman, 2013).

The incorporation of the musical instrument involves the transformation of the musical instrument from a mere artefact into a 'natural' extension of the body. The instrument's use and functioning have become so natural that it seems an organic component of the musician's body (Nijs et al., 2013). Consequently, instrumental gestures (sound-producing and sound-facilitating; Jensenius, Wanderley, Godoy and Leman, 2010) can become constituents of the dynamic structure of the body (body schema) and, as such, part of the somatic know-how of the musician (Behnke, 1989). As a part of the body as the stable background of every human experience, it is no longer an obstacle to an embodied interaction with the music. The resulting attunement of the extended body to the musical environment (e.g. music, other musicians, audience) enables the musician to engage in the enactment process and to freely and expressively communicate his artistic intentions based on the bodily articulation

of the attributed musical meaning. Engaging in the enactment process is vital for a free bodily expressive response to the musical environment in which the body is no longer a recalcitrant object that needs to be mastered in order to adequately play the instrument (Behnke, 1989). Rather, it becomes a subject, a primary source of individual musical signification processes through the articulation of the lived experience of the music through instrument-mediated body postures and body movement. Such subjectification involves a change process in which an individual expression (playing music) acquires meanings that convey a person's attitude or viewpoint. It concerns the construction of the individual subject and enables acknowledgment of 'the uniqueness of each individual human being' (Biesta, 2009).

The free bodily articulation of this lived experience is an integral part of the social interaction between musicians and between musician and audience. Such socialisation involves the use of the body as a major source of musical communication (see for example: Broughton & Davidson, 2014; Davidson, 2012). Addressing the body and body movement as mediators in the process of musical meaning formation facilitates and stimulates intersubjective interaction and participatory sense-making (Schiavio & De Jaegher, 2017). The corporeal dimension of human communication is intentionally addressed, and basic mechanisms of musicality are activated (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009). Here, the body becomes the medium for conveying musical meaning to an audience or co-performers (Leman, 2007).

Accordingly, in this view – optimising the musician-instrument relationship and thus facilitating an embodied interaction with the music – requires the integration of three different types of bodily behaviour or movements in performance and their associated repertoire of movements. Such integration can shape the bodily engagement with the musical instrument (Nijs et al., 2013; Nijs, 2017; Ruggieri & Katnelson, 1996). The initial type of movements concerns the personal movement style. These are movement patterns and postures that are formed by genetic background, developmental patterns and habits acquired throughout life and personality (e.g. Shusterman, 2011). They are related to the idiosyncratic, distinctive nature of an individual's motor behaviour and are an essential part of expressive communication (Gallagher, 1986; Ruggieri & Katnelson, 1996). For example, looking at fingertip kinematics of skilled pianists, Dalla Bella and Palmer (2011) were able to train a neuralnetwork classifier to successfully recognise a particular pianist just by finger velocity and acceleration patterns, a result recently confirmed with skilled flute players (Albrecht, Janssen, Quarz, Newell & Schöllhorn, 2014). A second type of movements concerns the instrumental gestures. These are the gestures that are directly (sound-producing

action) or indirectly (sound-facilitating action) involved in the sound production process in musical performance (Jensenius et al., 2010). A third type of movements concerns the expressive gestures. These are the gestures used to communicate musical meaning (communicative movements) or movements that are expressive responses to the music played (sound-accompanying movements/actions). Moreover, each of these movements is influenced by biological and cultural elements and by previously learned skills (Dreyfus, 1996).

### **Moving together while playing music: promoting involvement through student- centred collaborative practices**

The above-mentioned processes of subjectification and socialisation, reinforced by the processes of incorporation and integration, are not only directly related to the enactment process but also to the pedagogical tenets of student-centredness and collaborative learning. While subjectification fosters autonomous musical meaning formation, socialisation embeds the individual sense-making of subjectification into participatory sense-making (De Jaegher & Di Paolo, 2007). These processes are evidently linked to the enactment process, which underlies subjectification and socialisation and is facilitated through the incorporation of the instrument and the integration of the different types of movement.

In this chapter, the use of locomotor (stepping in different ways, patterns) and non-locomotor (e.g. axial and small; Gallahue & Ozmun, 1998) expressive movements in relation to elements of the music and to expression is proposed as a viable way of promoting the processes of subjectification, socialisation, incorporation and integration. Through a variety of movement-based musical activities, learners can engage in an interactive loop between body, instrument, music and co-learners. This loop entails the exploration and exploitation of musical, bodily and instrumental possibilities and constraints and stimulates the negotiation between musical intentions, bodily responses to the music and instrumental gestures. When tailored to the basic mechanisms of enactment, such learning activities have the potential to address the empowering nature of expression. Indeed, they can intensify the transition processes, reinforcing the rewarding nature of playing music and, as such, promoting intrinsic motivation. Through the combination of (guided) exploration or discovery learning and direct

instruction, e.g. by imposing certain movement patterns, different aspects of the basic mechanisms can be supported.

According to Beegle (2010), musical collaboration supports children in expanding upon their individual musical potential through verbal and nonverbal social interaction, and children are capable of structuring creative music products in meaningful ways with minimal intervention from adults. Movement-based group activities intensify the non-verbal dimension of joint musical interaction and create a learning environment where, due to the often explorative and experimental nature of the activities, outcomes are not necessarily pre-given and unforeseen challenges emerge and can be approached in different ways. Such activities may reinforce these basic mechanisms. For example, moving together (e.g. stepping) while playing may facilitate finding, keeping or becoming the beat through the process of social entrainment, or seeing others perform certain patterns may support predictive processes.

The following paragraphs describe some practice-based examples of movement activities for group lessons in the instrumental music classroom that demonstrate the theoretical elaborations above. Note that all activities are always followed by a brief reflection with the learners.

### Saying hello

An excellent activity to start a lesson with is a 'say hello' activity, based on the idea of 'shape' in Laban Movement Analysis (Bradley, 2009). Addressing the changing human form in both shape and attitude, this activity is about the how the body changes shape in relation to others (Bradley, 2009). The goal of this activity is to promote communication between learners and to connect musical motifs to a specific expressive bodily experience.

In the first part of the learning activity, learners walk around (without their instruments) in the classroom, and when passing somebody they shake hands. The way of shaking hands is changed on cue, switching between different shape qualifications, namely shape-flow (self-directed; handshake without being interested in the other), directional shape (spoke-like and arc-like movement that bridges from self to the environment, like a professional handshake), or shaping (rich mutual and sophisticated interaction supported by full-bodied interactions, very expressive and somewhat exaggerated handshake as if meeting somebody you like a lot and didn't see for long time). This might also be accompanied by music. Different variations are possible

when performing this activity to music. For example, the teacher might accompany the activity on the piano and invite learners to change the shape of the handshake according to the changes in the music. Or the teacher might vary tempo or tonality to provoke awareness of the possible influence of the music on the lived experience of shaking hands in a certain way.

In the second part of the activity, students walk around and, when passing somebody, they improvise a musical motif on their instrument in accordance with the different shape levels (uninterested, professional, expressive). This can be done using a pentatonic or any other scale or without any tonal requirement. This way, the activity can be used at different levels of instrumental skill. Again, different variations are possible. For example, learners might freely choose what to play, improvising something different for each handshake, or they might be asked to come up with a specific musical motif for each type of handshake. Another possibility is to ask the learners to invent a motif that is kept the same for each handshake but varied in the way it is interpreted according to the different types of handshake.

### Warm-up and loosening the body

In this activity learners explore the joints' degrees of freedom in the interaction with the instrument and, as such, 'negotiate' with their instrument. This way, the activity helps to prepare the creative use of the body in expressively responding to music.

In a first version of this exercise, the degrees of freedom of each joint are explored by coupling each joint to a note of a scale. While playing a note, the joint is moved to explore its degrees of freedom. Again, different variations are possible, allowing for different levels of difficulty. For example, the movement in a joint might be combined while performing different musical tasks.

On the one hand, playing one note per joint raises awareness of the interface between musician and instrument and of the changes in the sound (e.g. timbre, intonation) that stem from the movement. On the other hand, performing more complicated musical tasks may address other aspects of performance such as regularity or phrasing.

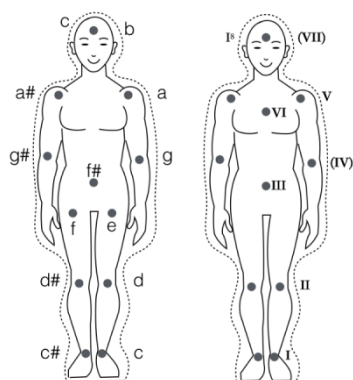


Figure 3. Connecting different joints to a scale.

In a second version of this exercise, learners pair up and in a leading-following exercise invite each other to explore bodily freedom while playing music. This is done by using two different objects: a rope and a stick. Both objects invite the learners to perform different kinds of movements, and they raise awareness of the different ways of moving while playing music. Moreover, working with objects facilitates this movement approach for students who are less inclined to move themselves. One student leads by making a movement with the object, and the other student follows by trying to imitate that movement. Roles are switched during the activity. As in the first version, this might be done while playing one note or while performing a more complicated musical task.

### Stepping to the music

This activity draws on a very natural inclination to walk/step to music. In this case, the music is produced by the students themselves, possibly with some musical accompaniment (e.g. teacher at the piano, a backing track or an accompaniment generated in some dedicated software such as iReal Pro or Garage Band). The goal of this activity is to generate awareness of bodily involvement and to support the development of timing and expressive skills. The activity can be done in an external space (locomotor: walking in the classroom) or in the personal space (non-locomotor: step on the spot), thereby looking for invariants that connect the space through specific elements in the movement.

In one version learners are invited to walk around in the classroom and to switch between a mechanical and an expressive mode of walking. The mode can potentially be connected to a specific way of moving in space. For example, the mechanical mode of moving might be done while walking in a circle, while the expressive mode is done while moving freely through space, or vice versa. The musical tasks can be very varied, ranging from a scale over a simple melody to a complex rhythm. While walking the students are given a sign (musical or verbal) to switch between the two modes. Furthermore, during the expressive mode they are from time to time invited to stop walking, freezing in their position (but continuing to play the note they were playing) at the time of the stop sign, closing their eyes and turning their attention inward to feel their body and the connection with the instrument, and to listen to their own sound in relation to the body position.

In another version, the walking is done with a specific stepping pattern that is connected to a specific musical pattern (see Figure 3). First, the learners get acquainted with the different patterns, next they switch between patterns. Again, a switch between modes of moving can be introduced whereby the expressive mode of moving is connected to the expressive phrasing of the musical pattern.

right-left-right-left right-left-right  
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

right-left-right-left right - left  
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

right-left-right-left turn  
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

*Figure 4. Stepping patterns that express different rhythms and expressive phrasing. The first measure always contains four steps forward. In the first motif, the second*



*measure involves three steps back. In the second motif, the second measure involves two sliding sideward steps. In the third motif, the second measure involves a turn on the spot with the whole body.*

## Choreo-musical motifs

In this activity learners combine improvising music with improvising movement, using movement notation based on Laban motif notation (Hutchinson Guest, 2000). The goal is to reflect in and on action about the music-movement connection.

Learners are first presented with the notation system (see Figure 4), allowing them to get acquainted with writing a score that captures their improvisation and thus allows others to repeat it.

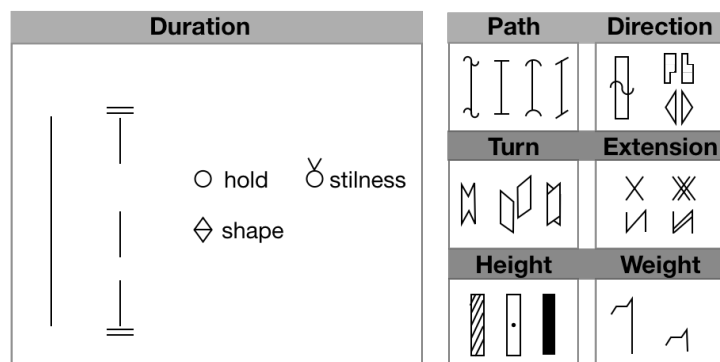


Figure 5. Example of LMA notation that can be used to design a chore-musical motif.

Next, two pathways can be followed. A first pathway goes from movement to music. In this case, learners explore combinations of movement actions, write down a sequence of actions and then try to improvise music that, according to them, fits the movement actions. A second pathway goes from music to movement. In this case, learners start from an existing melody or musical excerpt and invent a sequence of movements that, according to them, fits the music. Then they write this movement sequence down with the motif notation symbols.

After the individual explorations and creation of a personal choreo-musical motif, learners pair up. Different tasks are then possible. For example, they can perform each other's movement sequence and improvise on it, or they can start from one movement

sequence and compose a second voice to it. Another way is that one performs the movement, the other the music.

Again, this activity allows differentiation according to skill level. Both the movement and the musical tasks can be shaped according to different levels of complexity or difficulty by determining the number of possible actions, by defining the repertoire that is used, or through the introduction of degrees of freedom in the musical improvisation.

## Conclusion

Movement-based approaches to instrumental music education are scarce. Yet, both theory and practice provide arguments that it might be a viable approach to shape instrumental music education. In this chapter a theoretical framework was outlined as the basis for the design of innovative learning activities with a firm pedagogical and musicological basis. Using this theoretical framework, we suggest taking the bodily experience as a starting point in the music learning process. Based on some concrete practice-based examples, the approach invites practitioners to explore this kind of movement-based practices in instrumental music teaching to promote student-centred and collaborative learning. It also invites researchers to investigate the potential benefits of learning to play a musical instrument through movement-based activities. Such investigations may shed light on the practice of instrumental teaching and learning but also on the fundamental processes that underlie musical learning. Moreover, a movement-based approach may have additional societal benefits. It may create a learning environment that lowers socio-cultural barriers (e.g. due to repertoire). Indeed, the specific context created by music and movement activities may facilitate cross-cultural communication by framing existing differences. This could support diversity, inclusion and broad access.

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## **Hetero-observation in the orchestral conducting classroom from the students' perspective: analysis of pre- and post-observational self-reports**

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### **Abstract**

*This research explores the influence of hetero-observation on gestural learning by 28 first-year orchestral conducting students at a higher music education institution in Spain. For this hetero-observational study an exercise in two phases was designed in which each student conducted a different piece after one week of individual preparation. In the first phase each student conducted the work commissioned, and immediately after the execution they completed a self-report with open questions. After this a discussion/debate was held in which the external observers of the exercise (the peers and the teacher) analysed the performance on the podium and expressed opinions about it by exchanging suggestions and advice in order to improve it. In the second phase each student performed the same piece and, once more, received the hetero-observational feedback through an open debate, collecting new self-reports. Analyses of self-reports have shown that hetero-observation prevents unilateral transmission of knowledge and returns students to prominence in their training, favouring their active involvement in the process of individual and collective learning. From the results we can deduce that the students have felt a change of role in the classroom: they have started to act as teachers to their peers during the debates. This new role demands knowledge, contemplation of the observed, and a search for solutions to collaborate in the development of competencies of the others while looking back at themselves to visualise their own mistakes and successes in light of what was done by others on the podium. The results show that the hetero-observation is a tool for enhancing*

*individual and collective gestural competencies, and the peer interaction during the debates has served to set in motion mechanisms of motivation and regulation of learning within the group of participants.*

## Introduction

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has sought to find specific alternatives to the unidirectional transmission of knowledge. According to Imbernon and Medina (2008), students should take on a leading role in their own training and become involved in the teaching-learning process as its main subjects. In this framework the student's motivation and active participation are basic elements, and the teacher must design learning spaces and be a guide in the student's process of gaining knowledge and skills. How do we achieve greater involvement of the students? What kind of participatory and reflective strategies foster this involvement? Imbernon and Medina state that one of the most interesting pedagogical models is experimental reflexive learning. This model, according to the same authors, involves hetero-observational practices and is little known in the field of higher music education, despite its enormous potential for training and improving learning.

### Hetero-observation and group learning

Huber and Durfee (1995, p. 128) described the 'behavior observation as hetero-observation in which the behavior of individuals and groups is observed'. More recently, hetero-observation has been defined by Harré, Clarke and De Carlo (2015, pp. 5-6) as the observation that takes place when 'one examines human performances such as verbal replies to questions, act-action sequences [...] and in general all phenomena existing external to and/or independently of the researcher, and susceptible to being actually noticed'. **Hetero-observation is usually linked to peer assessment** activities. These help to create a learning community within a classroom. Students who can reflect while engaged in metacognitive thinking are involved in their learning. Carrison and Ehringhaus (n.d., p. 2) claim that 'with peer evaluation, students see each other as resources for understanding and checking for quality work against previously established criteria'.

Adamé Tomás (2010, p. 7) asserts that group work is highly beneficial to education, not only as a methodology for the realisation of certain activities but as an end in itself



due to the values it develops in people such as knowing how to listen, cooperation, responsibility, acquisition of active and participatory attitudes etc. In this sense the group dynamics, carried out through the round table and the directed debate, have sufficiently demonstrated that group work helps, guides and serves to support the development and evolution of each person given their active role and protagonism in their own process of teaching-learning (Parra-Meroño and Peña-Acuña, 2012, pp. 15-17). The didactic approach of these activities aims to achieve the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities by students, encouraging and improving their critical thinking and intellectual independence (Martínez, 2010, p. 63).

Group learning is based on small groups of students working together towards a task in which each member of the team is responsible for a result that cannot be achieved unless the group members work together (Trujillo, 2002, p. 152). Cooperation and collaboration are prioritised over competition and enable competency-based learning (Miguel, 2006, p. 72). Despite the many hours of class time that students spend in a group together, we have failed to exploit the potential of peer learning in the same way that we value group interaction with the teacher and one-to-one instruction. In the field of Western higher music education, Nielsen, Johansen and Jørgensen (2018, pp. 339-340) state that so-called 'vicarious learning' (Bandura, 1997) – referring to the impact of observation on learning from visualising the peers doing successfully the same task than that of oneself – that may be addressed through group learning strategies needs to be explored in music academies 'given the strong individualized conservatoire culture'.

## Peer interaction and collective scaffolding

'Peers' can be defined in several ways, e.g. in terms of age, skills and abilities that the students share in a classroom, or others. Philp, Adams and Iwashita (2013, p. 68) state that peers, as interaction partners in the classroom, can offer different types of learning opportunities. These authors describe the term 'peer interaction' as any communicative activity carried out between students where the teacher's participation is minimal or non-existent. Collaborative learning is closely related to a powerful sense of mutual and joint effort (Damon & Phelps, 1989, pp. 9-19), that is, it does not only refer to students who sit together and work on the same exercise (Galton & Williamson, 1992, p. 2). Students depend on each other to finish and complete the task. Swain (2000, p. 97) describes this collaborative dialogue as a dialogue in which subjects engage in the resolution of a problem and in the construction of knowledge. Peer interactions are characterised by a high degree of equality and mutuality which, according to the

research of Damon and Phelps (1989), has proven effective in problem-solving and in the productive exchange of ideas.

The interaction offers great potential for the development of higher cognitive learning processes (Esteve, 2004, p. 81). In this regard and of great interest are the proposals of the Vygotskian approaches aimed at collective scaffolding, which refers to the co-construction of knowledge from the knowledge that each member contributes and to the interaction (negotiation) within the group of apprentices (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997, p. 512). Blum-Kulka and Snow (2009, p. 298) refer to the term 'peer talking' – peer-to-peer conversation – as a symmetric, collaborative and multi-party participation structure. It is symmetrical in contrast to the teacher-student relationship in which the former has implicit authority and is perceived as a person with greater knowledge and experience. The role of the teacher in this peer interaction is essential, although sometimes it is not perceived (O'Donnell, 2006, p. 785). Responsible for the design of the work performed by the peers, the teacher is an omnipresent participant in the classroom, motivating and training the students in interpersonal skills as well as musical and linguistic skills (in the case of debates). According to O'Donnell (2006), the advantage of peer-assisted learning over teacher-student instructional learning is that the peer is perceived as closer and less distant as a model in terms of competition and closer in age and experience. In addition, each student can benefit emotionally from being temporarily placed in the role of teacher and, at a cognitive level, having to articulate explanations to their peers (Duff & van Lier, 1997, pp. 785-786; Watanabe and Swain, 2007, p. 121). In this regard, Logie (2012, pp. 7-18) states that the opinion of a colleague can help greatly, especially when giving feedback that helps make the conductor aware of leadership problems he or she may not be fully aware of when on the podium.

Regarding the types of groups, Donato (1994, p. 41) distinguishes between the collaborative interaction that can be achieved in groups without a connection (*loosely knit groups*) and well connected groups (*collective groups*), showing how the latter are able to jointly build the necessary scaffolding for the completion of a task. In the same line of argument, Nielsen, Johansen and Jørgensen (2018, p. 349) point out that 'not all collective learning forums may necessarily be experienced as constructive for all students' but, nevertheless, they suggest that peer learning forums can work as a supportive arena to diminish competition among peers and strengthen students' inner motivation.

## Self-regulation of learning through hetero-observation

Marijan (2017) defines self-regulation as the ability to respond and adapt to the environment in the behavioural, emotional and mental domains. She adds that self-regulation is developed through interaction with our socio-cultural surroundings. McPherson and Renwick (2011) highlight the importance of self-regulation theory as a tool for acquiring and supporting musical knowledge and musical skills. The teaching-learning process from a self-regulation perspective has great potential in music education, in particular in instrumental didactics (Ludovico & Mangione, 2014).

Schunk and Zimmerman (2007, pp. 7-24) state that individual self-regulation is developed in four stages: observation, emulation, self-control and self-regulation. The observation is based on the socio-cognitive theory of Bandura (1986) which suggests that through observation we can learn to do things that we would not have been able to do before observing the behaviour performed by others. According to this model, observational learning is the first step towards self-regulation. Jabusch (2016) proposes a self-regulated learning (SRL) structure consisting of three phases: forethought or strategy planning, performance phase (application of the strategy), and self-reflection or self-judgement. These phases can be considered to be self-generated thoughts on personal behaviour, task, time organisation, goals and applied strategies. Marijan (2017, p.1) proposes a self-regulated learning (SRL) model as a complex multidimensional structure formed through interaction with the environment/context. Self-learning, self-analysis, self-judgement, self-instruction and self-monitoring are the main functions in this self-regulatory structure. In Marijan's opinion, co-regulation is needed to activate and monitor self-regulation. She defines this co-regulation as the instructions that the teacher introduces in the lessons. In Marijan's approach to SRL, two types of self-regulation are described, both of them interrelated: 1) the regulation of actions, thoughts and feelings in accordance to the external stimuli/environment; 2) the regulation of the internal processes that occur within the person.

Shanker and Bertrand (2013) propose an interesting model stating that in self-regulation we can find two systems that are constantly applied in continuum: tension created by external and internal stimuli and relaxation (stage of recovery). Awareness of the tension-relaxation process is of enormous value because this process manages the whole structure of functions in SRL (Shanker, 2016).

Personality traits and temperament are also important factors in SRL. Nielsen (2004) has found in her research that advanced music students with high self-efficacy beliefs

are more successful in learning than those with low efficacy beliefs. She also states that in the context of music education and self-regulated learning, 'epistemic beliefs may concern issues regarding technical and musical problem solving in the development of musical skills' (Nielsen, 2010, p. 3). McCormick and McPherson (2003) have demonstrated that self-efficacy is the strongest predictor of performance scores. They have also found that students at advanced courses or grades nevertheless appear to have lower self-efficacy, probably due to 'an increased awareness of their stage of development' (McCormick & McPherson, 2003, p. 39).

Researchers have defined and studied two major goal orientations amongst students in motivation and self-regulation literature: mastery and performance. According to them, mastery approach goals concern learning, improving and improving one's skills; mastery avoid goals concern avoiding misunderstanding and perfectionism. Performance approach goals involve demonstrating competence and outperforming others, and performance avoid goals involve not appearing incompetent relative to others (Wigfield, Klauda, & Cambria, 2011, p. 36). According to these two orientations, students with performance approach goals focus on how they will be able to outperform others and how to get the highest grade possible. At the same time, these students will plan how to avoid looking incompetent while doing the activity. On the other hand, students with mastery approach goals will focus on how the task will improve their skills and which strategies to use for that purpose. Recently, McPherson, Nielsen, and Renwick (2013) have argued for the need for a shift in the way music students are taught, taking into account all aspects involved in self-regulated learning.

### The debate in the classroom as a learning tool. *The protective discourse*

Directed debate is an exchange of ideas on a specific topic and can serve to gain perspective on a situation from different points of view. Imbernon and Medina (2008) advise that the debate is neither a strategy for evaluation nor an objective verification: the student must perceive that it is a learning strategy. The same authors stress that in order to be effective, the debate must meet the following requirements: a) encourage the participation of all the members of the group; b) exhaust the subject of debate; c) the arguments must be logical, not based on personalisms; and d) everyone must respect and accept others.

Parra-Meroño and Peña-Acuña (2012, pp. 15-17) propose that in the debate phase, the one in charge of establishing the shifts of exposition and argumentation as well as

the reply must be the teacher. The intention of the teacher-moderator is to facilitate the exposure of all positions. In this way, the participation of all the members of the group is encouraged, and it is possible to appreciate not only the knowledge obtained about the topic of the debate, but also the logic of its argumentation, the attitude towards criticism, the ability to communicate etc. O'Donnell (2006) adds that the teacher must also intervene when the exchange between the pairs is unproductive or when behaviours that distract from the task take place, such as for example conflicts, exclusion or some dysfunction in the interaction.

Regarding the type of discourse generated during group debates, Ruiz Bikandi (2007, pp. 178-180) has studied the ways in which social roles are distributed within the group and how various identities are constructed and interlinked. She has also explored the declaratory polyphony concluding that there is a *protective discourse* that ensures that the interaction between the pairs does not hurt anyone, especially when it comes to highlighting faults or necessary improvement. The author summarises the characteristics of this protective discourse in the following: a) the voices of the group blur identity by submerging it in impersonal verbal forms that avoid direct attribution of the problem to the observed subject; b) when it is necessary to demonstrate a flaw, the entire group constitutes itself as one with the affected person so that the negative judgments are softened; c) through the use of subtle discursive mechanisms, the collective takes on the pinpointed error as its own; d) the group analyses and judges but does not take ownership of the achievements of the observed, contrary to what it does with the errors; e) this subtle distribution of merits and demerits between the group and the observed takes place thanks to the delicate management of the agentivity of the discourse, which enables good management of frustration and success within the group.

## **Previous research on hetero-observation in the field of orchestral conducting**

Hetero-observation as a potential group learning tool in the field of higher music education is very rare in general, especially in the context of the conducting classroom. The few studies related to hetero-observation in the conducting classroom focus on the impact of the conductor's performance on the musicians through questionnaires completed by the latter, or on peer assessment between two students when one watches a video performance of the other. Throughout the literature we have

not found experiences in which hetero-observation takes place live – without video mediation – in groups and through an open debate in which observers and observed interact with each other with the aim of improving gestures.

Johnston (1993) carried out a study on the use of video as a tool for self-evaluation, hetero-evaluation and teacher feedback when evaluating gestural skills in students training to become music teachers. Each participant received advice from a partner and feedback from the teacher. The review of the videos by the pair and the teacher led to the determination of three areas of gestural technical strength and three other areas in which the participant needed to improve. The results indicate that the instructional process was effective and that the inclusion of the peer evaluation contributed to a more adjusted view of the abilities of each conducting student.

Bodnar (2013) states that the evaluation of others might be of interest as a teaching tool in the conducting classroom and uses Jorma Panula (n. d.) as an example of someone who, during the period between 1973 and 1993, incorporated social interaction in his conducting class at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki as an integral part of the learning process. To that end, when the orchestra finished a practice session, the students and the professor analysed and openly discussed the video recordings made during the session.

The main purpose of the present research was to contribute to the literature on orchestral conducting didactics by addressing the following questions:

1. Does the hetero-observation influence individual and collective gestural learning in the orchestral conducting classroom?
2. How do students feel about being observed and advised by their peers?
3. How do students feel about becoming judges and advisors on their colleagues' performances?

## **Method**

### Participants and their context

This research used a convenience sample composed of 28 students, 14 women and 14 men aged between 18 and 20, who were enrolled in the first course of orchestral

conducting as a compulsory subject in the music performance curriculum – Western classical music – in a institution for music higher education in Spain during the bienium 2015–17 (14 students on each course). None of the 28 students had received previous training in conducting. The experience took place at the end of the second semester of each year; during the first semester all participants received basic gestural instruction and learnt a methodology for scores analysis, always under the supervision of the teacher-researcher. During the research experience the students faced for the first time the independent preparation of a piece, without the help of the teacher.

### Design of the experience

The experience had two phases. In Phase 1 the teacher gave a different piece to each participant. All the pieces were similar (Béla Bartók's small orchestral pieces) in terms of morphological, syntactic and timbral characteristics, length, gestural and expressive technical difficulties. Each student prepared independently the piece during a one-week period (the time between the classes of the course) and conducted it in front of a small instrumental ensemble of 15 musicians. The participants completed a self-report immediately after their performance, before the beginning of the group discussion, so that they felt free to voice their opinions without being influenced by what their peers might say. Immediately afterwards a debate was opened in which the observers (professor and peers) made critical judgments about the gestural and postural aspects shown on the podium by the observed. Once the discussion session was over, all the participants took home a form to complete the post-debate self-report with peace of mind and time to reflect. After or during the debate the participants made notes in their respective scores on the issues that were raised during the course of the session.

In Phase 2, a week later, the students conducted the same piece as in Phase 1. After each performance a debate was again opened where all the participants discussed their impressions of this second individual performance.

### Instrument for data collection and analysis procedure

Pre and post-observational self-reports were distributed (See Appendix 1). For the analysis, the response types available for each of the questions were categorised, codified and applied to the same basic descriptive statistical analyses.

To facilitate gestural hetero-observation, the *Orchestral Conducting Gestural Competences Scale* (OCGCS) was used as a guide (Lorenzo de Reizábal & Benito, 2017). The students were familiar with this guide since it served as a reference for the study of gestures during the first semester (See Appendix 2).

## Results and analysis

Results of pre-observational self-reports

### Mood and emotions experienced

Regarding the mood and emotions experienced by the 28 participants during their first performance on the podium, three categories have been defined: a) Positive, when the experience has given the participant positive and rewarding emotions; b) Negative, when the experience has been a source of negative emotions; and c) Mixed, when the participant describes mixed sensations of both types or the remain undefined. The answers describing a positive mood constitute 43%, the negative ones 34%, and the responses with mixed moods 23%. Negative emotions include insecurity (43%), nervousness (29%) and frustration/discomfort (14%). A feeling of lack of control (7%) and feeling rushed (7%) are also cited in the self-reports.

I felt 'rushed'. At the beginning I saw that I had been mistaken about how I had thought about the piece, since I conducted it 'in 3' when I should have chosen to do it 'in 1'. (1501).<sup>1</sup>

I did not feel that I had the sound in my hands, it was cerebral, I did not conduct in the present moment; my mind was ahead of me as well as behind me with what had already happened. (1505)

As for the positive aspects they experienced, the following stand out: relaxation/comfort (45%), security (25%), enjoyment (25%), and 'very conscious' (5%). It is

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1 The research project lasted over two years. The first two numbers after the quotes refer to the year the student participated (15=2015/16 and 16=2016/17) and the last two numbers is the identification of individual students. There were 14 students from 2015-2016 and another 14 students from 2016-2017 in the sample.



necessary to clarify that one of the challenges of this experience is that they were required to conduct without stops or repetitions of passages. This corresponds to an ethnographic context of experimentation similar to that faced by a conductor when he conducts in public.

Regarding the category of mixed moods, the participants mainly refer to: lack of sufficient study (43%), improving over time (29%), worsening over time (14%), nervousness but controlled (14%). When the participant does not feel that the sound feedback corresponds to the previous idea that had been made mentally during the study, he feels discouraged and can begin to feel helpless and nervous:

I was relaxed about conducting, but I became uneasy when what I had in mind was not coming out. (1501)

The participants often described a degree of concern about getting the interpreters' response to be in line with what they wanted to communicate. This concern is an unequivocal sign that the participants have begun to focus their attention on the response of the sound to their gestures rather than on the gestural motor activity itself that had been the focus of attention during the gestural instruction received in the first semester.

(I felt) worried that the interpreters' feedback would not correspond. (I felt) better and better as I progressed, because the response was good. (1614)

I had the feeling that what I wanted to express corresponded to what I heard. (1513)

Lack of preparation was the biggest problem for participants who did not report positive feelings. Not knowing the piece in depth usually led them to 'get carried away' by what the musicians play, that is, they superficially conduct what they can read easily (the beat and little else) and feel that they are behind the sound events.

It also gives me the feeling that I have to process all the information of the piece very quickly since each passage goes by very fast and doing everything you want involves a lot of mastery, study and control. (1507)

## **Perceptions of lack of gestural efficiency**

In relation to the perceptions of lack of gestural efficiency, the participants felt that the gestures related to dynamics (17%), phrasing (14%), preparation (10%) and articulation (10%) were not clear and did not produce the desired effect. In relation to tempo, the problems perceived were largely a lack of stability, a lack of adjustment to the indication of the score, and a lack of clarity in the *anacrusis* (upbeat).

Regarding the entries (cues), participants detected a lack of gestural clarity in the cues (42%), incorrect use of preparation gestures (16%), or not giving all entries (42%). Phrasing was ineffective for 14% of the participants, reporting a lack of directionality, a lack of use of the left arm to express the phrases, and the need to improve the gesture to be able to show them. The participants also found a lack of effectiveness in articulation due mainly to the lack of contrasts (38%) and the lack of *legato*, overusing *staccato* gestures (25%).

Finally, 10 of the 28 students reported not being efficient in communicating the character and expression of the music they conducted. Of these 10 students, five believed that they had not managed to convey it, three believed that it had been achieved on some occasions but not throughout the entire piece, and therefore they must improve before the next rehearsal, and two considered that although they had tried to communicate the character of the music, they lacked the appropriate expressiveness in order to successfully convey it.

## **My colleagues are going to judge me later**

All the answers given by the participants to the question of how they have felt knowing that they were going to be judged later by their peers have been categorised into 6 blocks: 1- I do not care; 2- I want to learn from them and know their opinion; 3- It worries me and creates tension; 4- Nervous but positive; 5- I am interested in their judgments if I can take advantage of them and the criticism is constructive; and 6- Need to be recognised and valued by my peers.

A very interesting psychological point of view can be deduced from the answers regarding the relationships established between the subjects that are part of a system, as would be the case of the conducting classes in which this research was carried out. On the one hand, the first group under the heading 'I do not care' is dominated by the most uninhibited participants of the group who are not worried about the image they

might project to their colleagues when they conduct, or who at least have shown that they were not affected by the presence of colleagues as judges of their performance. The second category, 'desire to learn from others', expressed their commitment within the group. They are confident that the opinion of others will be helpful, especially since, as one of the participants says, 'we are colleagues who have gone at a similar pace, and you can learn a lot from their observations'. The group of responses collected under the heading 'concern and tension' reveals a certain resistance to being judged, valued or criticised by colleagues. Various emotions emerge, such as not wanting to be compared to another participant who conducts a similar piece, the feeling that you might be embarrassed in front of your classmates, or a fear of negative criticism.

The category 'nervous but positive' groups the responses of those participants who confess their nervousness about being judged by their peers, but on the other hand, they affirm curiosity and expectancy about knowing what their colleagues thought of their performance. In the category 'I'm interested insofar as I can take advantage' two answers have been included that share a certain sense of detachment or lack of interest in what they might get back from colleagues. One of them begins by expressing a thought with a tinge of irony: 'If we prepared our actions according to what people will say ...' (1607), which seems to mean that he will conduct the same way he usually does and that he is not interested in impressing his colleagues with his performance, nor does he care if his peers are judging him.

We must also make mention of the response that we have categorised as 'need for peer recognition':

I tried to do it as correctly as possible so that the opinions were as positive as possible. I wanted them to like what I did. (1511)

However, this participant also stated that her objective was to receive positive opinions from her colleagues in relation to her performance on the podium and that this is the motor that has moved her to work on the piece to be conducted as correctly as possible. This seems to suggest that hetero-observation can serve as a motivation for the study and preparation of the score and its gestures in order to 'look good' in front of colleagues and not be ashamed of their performance. On the other hand, when she adds 'I wanted them to like what I did', what can be interpreted is the personal need to feel valued and recognised by peers, reinforcing her self-esteem and self-concept.

## **Difficulties encountered during the study of the piece**

Regarding the difficulties encountered during the study of the score, the participants have reported the following: 1- Gestural/technical elements (38%): difficulties related to technical gestures in the morphological and syntactic elements of the score; 2- Musical/expressive elements (48%): difficulties referring to the variations in the basic morphological and syntactic elements, such as the different gradations of speed, dynamics, articulations and, in general, to the discursive aspects related to character and expressiveness; 3- Analysis/Decision-making (14%): difficulties encountered in understanding the music and making appropriate gestural decisions.

As for the musical/expressive elements, the participants reported fundamental difficulties in the preparation of changes of tempo, character, dynamics and articulation. Also, the speed changes and changes in patterns – very frequent in these pieces by Béla Bartók – were difficult to control. Some participants were explicitly concerned with questions of musical interpretation that point towards a maturation when it comes to understanding the act of conducting as a communication of ideas of sound, feelings and emotions.

The problem of slow tempi is the boredom that the piece can cause. (1612)

The biggest difficulty I found is that the piece is very expressive and rubato, and transmitting that gesturally is my weak point. (1603)

Regarding the gestural technical aspects, participants flourish in marking their preparatory material, anacrusis and entrances (cues). With regard to the difficulties related to the analysis of the score, it is striking that the majority mention the choice of beat (whether to mark each beat or to group them). This lack of definition when choosing the beat marking leads them to err with the chosen tempo or speed as well as the character, the phrasing, and everything else that depends on speed for clear communication.

## **What can I contribute to the gestural improvement of the peer group?**

This question was intended to inquire about the beliefs of the participants concerning their ability to contribute ideas, give advice and make value judgments to their peers. All the participants considered that they were qualified to advise and express opinions on the performance of their colleagues. They state in their responses that they can be

objective, provide an outside point of view and constructive criticism and highlight the failures and achievements that the observed is not aware of on many occasions.

I think that when you are conducting you are not fully aware of all the movements you make or don't. The people who are watching you see everything you have done at each moment and can convey it to you. (1603)

It is also important to highlight the affinity that is established in these debates between peers, since the dialogue takes place between equals, between peers who are learning in the same classroom, performing the same exercises, and with a similar level of knowledge. They are able to put themselves in the other person's shoes and to see their own faults in those of others, and *vice versa*.

I realised that I can contribute a lot. Through the score you see what has to stand out, and whether the gestures and expression of the colleague conducting resemble it. You ask yourself questions about what would be the best way to address the problems that you observe on paper, and study and observe the ways in which your partner has solved them. I think it's very productive. (1513)

### **How I give feedback to a colleague**

The feelings and ways of experiencing feedback sessions with colleagues can be categorised as follows: 1- Sincerity, I always say what I think (24%); 2- I soften my opinions, sometimes with a sense of humour (11%); 3- My opinion is respectful to avoid upsetting anyone (22%); 4- First I highlight the positive feedback (19%); 5- I try to give constructive criticism (11%); 6- I feel a lot of responsibility, afraid to advise wrongly (13%).

### **Results of post-observational self-reports**

100% of participants consider that the comments of the peers during the debate have been very helpful. Some explain why:

They have helped me a lot because they are in the same situation as me and they pay attention to details. They can understand why I have a particular flaw, because they also have it. (1605)

Yes, they have helped me to realize things I was not aware of. (1511)

Behaviour on the podium and general motor activity constitute the points in which the participants felt most helped thanks to the contributions of their colleagues. The same occurs with expressivity – understood here as the ability to communicate the character of the piece – as well as having a greater awareness of one's own image on the podium.

After the debate and in light of the advice from the peers, the participants focused their attention on the following items: 1- Size of the gesture (11.5%), usually linked to the dynamics ; 2- Corporal position (13%); 3- Clarity in the beat (13%); 4- Expressivity (13%); 5- Independence of the left arm (13%); 6- Tempo, especially the preparation of tempo changes (13%); and, to a lesser extent, the character and the changes of articulation and dynamics as well as agogic changes.

A very important issue that emerged from the hetero-observation of the pairs is the attempt to correct the image of lack of self-confidence, which often takes place on the podium. This evaluation from colleagues is of great value to the participants because other people's watchful gaze brings to the table what can only be seen from the outside. This outside view is less polluted, or, at least, less biased. The confidence the conductor exudes on the podium is part of the path towards an image of leadership recognisable by musicians and also part of the attributes that define the 'conductor' attitude or, as they sometimes express it, 'to really look like a conductor'.

Most participants said that they received advice on issues of which they were not aware. 36% affirmed that they already knew everything that they were told, however, they specified that receiving this redundant opinion pushed them to focus their attention on those aspects. Likewise, the vast majority of the participants considered that the opinions received from their peers have helped them to get an idea of the external image they project on the podium when they are conducting.

More or less yes, let's say that I find it similar to a video recording, with the bonus that you also receive advice that gives you much more than self-criticism. (1508)

The comment made by this participant shows a very interesting nuance that can make the difference between the feedback that one receives in a video recording and that of hetero-observation through the debate: the results when it comes to getting an idea

of one's own image from outside can be equally valuable, but in hetero-observation external advice is also received, while in self-observation only self-criticism is available.

After receiving the feedback from their peers, the participants mentioned that in the second performance on the podium they wanted to improve their musical expressiveness and gestural technique and achieve greater self-control by showing the confidence and security necessary to give the image of a leader. The frequency with which issues related to the image of leadership shown on the podium by the participants have arisen in the debates has caused concern over personal image and the projection of musical personality on the podium. This is one of the most interesting aspects that hetero-observation and peer assessment have promoted: focusing participants' attention on their image as a whole that projects music not only through technique, but also through attitudes and behaviours on the podium.

Finally, once the second performance had been repeated, the participants answered the last question of the self-report, which referred to the aspects that they considered to have improved or not. The perception of having clearly improved in their actions in phase 2 is shown amongst a large majority of participants (84%) compared to those who felt that some things had improved, but not others (16%). The improvements that they refer to are not only technical, but mainly related to the positive feelings they have felt on the podium such as greater confidence and more control. The aspects in which they perceived improvement are the following: a) Greater clarity, improvement of gestural technique; b) Knowing how to transmit what I want; c) Positive feelings in conducting: students report having felt comfortable, having been calm, enjoying themselves and wanting to conduct and continue doing it; d) Greater security and self-confidence; e) Greater body awareness; and f) Greater visual contact with the musicians.

## **Discussion**

The responses to self-reports in our study suggest that hetero-observation positively affects individual and collective gestural learning, which was our first research question. These findings are in line with the results obtained by Johnston (1993) in his study.

In this research we have proposed a scenario for constructive interaction between peers inspired by methods and tools derived from ethnographic research, trying

to make a design as close as possible to the 'real' context in which the action to be learned takes place, in our case, in a simulated concert in which the student conductor is on the podium, alone, with the musicians in front and the audience – his colleagues and the teacher – behind, interpreting the assigned score 'in one go' without stops and in real time. With this scenario we have intended to use a perspective from the participants themselves (emic principle) where, as pointed out by Duff and Van Lier (1997), the central objective is to understand and interpret reality from the stance of the people involved. In this sense, we agree with Esteve (2004) on the idea that in these hetero-observational practices the process has been more important than the final result, since over a period of two weeks the gestural competencies of the students have improved. But what will allow them to continue to advance autonomously in terms of gestural issues is the experience of making informed criticisms, learning to observe and getting used to being observed.

In relation to the other two research questions, the students have at all times shown a high degree of involvement in the tasks entrusted to them. As they indicate in their self-reports, they have also understood the impact that this experience of hetero-observation has had on their own learning. At times they have perceived that they changed their role in the classroom: from students they went on to act as teachers of the rest of the peers during the debates, and this new role demands responsibility, knowledge, reflection on the observed and even a search for solutions and/or tips to convey to the colleague who is on the podium. Suddenly they become aware of what the teacher's role is and that they are sharing with her the task of correcting, of putting value on positive competencies, and of collaborating in the competence advancement of others. Interestingly, what they cannot perceive in themselves, they do see in the others, in the pair that is being observed. And when they become aware of what the others are doing, they turn their gaze towards themselves to try to visualise internally whether the errors of the others coincide with their own and whether the right gestures and correct attitudes are also within their own competence capacities. That is, when you look at the others, it is inevitable to 'look' or 'imagine' yourself in the same situation. Thus, the collective reviews its gestural activity while observing that of others in the hetero-observation sessions. This is consistent with the idea of vicarious learning from Bandura's socio-cognitive theory and shows that the collaborative dialogue that took place during the debates in this research were characterised by a high degree of engagement of participants in the effective resolution of individual problems, as stated by Swain (2000) and Damon and Phelps (1989).



On the one hand, it is worth reflecting on the fact that the hetero-observation process that has been carried out in this experience supposes the first stage for self-regulation of students, if we stick to the four levels defined by Schunk and Zimmerman (2007) to develop said self-regulation. During this experience the first observation level was covered according to the socio-cognitive theory of Bandura (1986). In our opinion, this hetero-observation activity has also covered the second level of development of self-regulation, since the students have tried to emulate, imitate the observed behaviour - or, where appropriate, avoid that observed behaviour. The next stage of self-control is, in our opinion, the limit to our investigation. It is true that there has been an improvement of all the gestural items treated in the classroom. Even new, more evolved ones have emerged, but the participants have not yet been able to complete this self-controlled search that leads them to an authentic self-regulation of learning. However, and according to our own experience, the progress made in the two-week period with this observational practice is of great value compared with the advancements experienced by the students following a traditional teaching methodology in conducting during the same period.

On the other hand, the two groups of students involved in this research during both academic courses can be classified as 'collective groups' as defined by Donato (1994). In line with this author, we have verified that our groups worked in a cohesive manner with a high degree of collaboration and commitment to the proposed task. Therefore, they can be considered as collective groups which, together, are able to build the necessary scaffolding to complete a task entrusted to them. The idea that the group was cohesive has been proven by the affection, solidarity, understanding and help that have been generated within it. The groups have shown themselves to be a cohesive system in which co-construction of knowledge has been possible thanks to the contributions of each member and the interaction between them during the debates. The results suggest that the metaphor of collective scaffolding as proposed by Nyikos and Hashimoto (1997) has been fulfilled during this experience of hetero-observation, and, according to Miguel (2006), we think this has been possible due to cooperation and collaboration being prioritised over competition. We are warned by the results of some studies (Donato, 1994; Nielsen, Johansen and Jørgensen, 2018) that not all collective learning forums are constructive for all students, but the results of our experience are aligned with those of O'Donnell (2006) and Blum-Kulka and Snow (2009), pointing out that the high degree of commitment, closeness and symmetry established within both groups in our study has functioned as a supportive arena to avoid competition among peers and reinforce the participants' inner motivation.

We agree with Adamé Tomás (2010) when he states that group work is not only beneficial at an educational level for the attainment of learning, but also as an end in itself since it encourages the development of very important values in education such as knowing how to listen, cooperate, take responsibility for one's actions, help others etc. We did not specifically intend to promote these values in the course of the collective sessions, but these hetero-observational forums have come to be a very powerful tool for establishing bonds of friendship, cooperation and empathy between very different people. All this has made possible a very cohesive group concerned not only with their individual achievements but also with those of the peers.

The self-reports have revealed the students' concern for not hurting their classmates and how they try to soften the opinions and put themselves in the others' place. The care that all participants have put into this task is endorsed by the use of a 'protective discourse' similar to that described by Ruiz-Bikandi (2007): use of impersonal forms, socialisation of errors, periphrasis etc.

In line with Watanabe and Swain (2007), it seems that the participants in our study have benefited emotionally (better self-concept, as has been explicitly seen in some self-reports) and also at a cognitive level, having to articulate a spoken discourse with explanations to their classmates. In accordance with Janbush's SRL structure (2016), the participants have also shown an ability to generate thoughts about their own gestures, goals and strategies encouraged by external stimuli from the group context in a necessary co-regulation to activate self-regulation, as Marijan (2017) proposes. However, in our study this co-regulation has been carried out mainly by the participants, not just the teacher, as proposed by this researcher. In the light of the results, we suggest that the regulatory mechanism of the participants has been set in motion to a large extent thanks to what we might call 'peer-regulation', which we could define as the dialogical intervention of the observers with the observed in a scenario of hetero-observational learning.

We have also observed during the rehearsals that participants have been emotionally changing from a state of tension to another of relaxation, which is consistent with the SRL theory proposed by Shanker and Bertrand (2013). In our study the participants have reported tension – prior to conducting before others, prior to receiving the assessment – together with moments of relaxation – after the practice, during the individual reflection, or at the moment of giving their opinion in the debate.

Likewise, we have found in our study groups the two types of motivation described by Wigfield, Klauda and Cambria (2011): on the one hand, most of the participants have shown personal traits consistent with the definition of 'students with mastery approach goals'. On the other hand, only a few have shown a profile of 'performance approach goals', as we have previously commented on in relation to participant 1511.

Finally, following the proposal of Parra-Meroño and Peña-Acuña (2012), during the debate the teacher has been in charge of establishing turns and replies and has addressed and coordinated the debate, directing it towards the previously planned objectives. A conclusion that emerges from this experience at a pedagogical level is that in order to raise an educational debate in the classroom, teachers must have sufficient preparation and knowledge and be able to obtain interesting results for student learning. These practices require planning from the teacher, clarity of objectives and application of principles that allow the collective to function as a cohesive system that learns from a socio-critical paradigm and enables the collective scaffolding. We agree with O'Donnell (2006) that the teacher is not the protagonist; she is in the shade, but always alert to redirect, inform, correct, propose, raise, organise, etc.

## **Limitations and possible future research**

This research has only tackled the interaction of peers during the debates ('peer interaction') within the multiplicity of approaches that admit the interaction between equals. It would also be possible to design 'peer tutoring' activities – used often in language teaching, for example – 'peer talking' – conversation between two peers – or 'peer modelling' within the conducting classroom. It is intuited that these types of collaborative dialogues could be an appropriate scenario for the resolution of tasks in which two students have to solve a given problem through the exchange of ideas and knowledge, such as analysing a score to be conducted. It is also essential to investigate personality traits and their influence on SRL as well as the regulatory potential of peers in other important topics in the field of orchestral conducting, such as leadership, epistemic beliefs or professional identity.

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## Appendix 1.

Pre-observational and post-observational self-reports to be completed as part of the hetero-observational experience. Source: self-elaboration.

<b>HETERO-OBSERVATION EXPERIENCE</b>	
<b>PRE AND POST HETERO-OBSERVATIONAL SELF-REPORTS</b>	
<p><b>GUIDE TO REFLECTION ON INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE BEFORE THE DEBATE</b></p> <p>1- How did you feel during your conducting performance? Brief description of your state of mind, sensations, emotion experienced, etc.</p> <p>2- Make a self-critical comment on the positive and negative aspects perceived during your conducting performance, related to the effectiveness of the gestures used to transmit the following dimensions / musical parameters of the score:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Tempo</li> <li>b. Rhythm and metric</li> <li>c. Cues for entries</li> <li>d. Articulation</li> <li>e. Dynamics</li> <li>f. Phrasing</li> <li>g. Character/expression</li> </ol> <p>3- How did you feel knowing that your classmates were going to judge you later?</p> <p>4- Preparation of the score:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Dedicated time (in hours)</li> <li>b. Difficulties encountered</li> <li>c. Work plan followed</li> </ol> <p>5- What do you think you can contribute to improving the performance of your classmates?</p> <p>6- When you review the performance of another colleague, how do you feel? How do you give feedback?</p>	<p><b>GUIDE TO REFLECTION ON INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE AFTER THE DEBATE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you think your peers' comments have helped you?</li> <li>2. In which aspects specifically?</li> <li>3. What have you worked on to improve your performance after receiving the opinions of the group?</li> <li>4. Are there any aspects that have been suggested in the group that you were not aware of during your first performance?</li> <li>5. Are there any aspects that you did not like about your performance which have not emerged in the opinions of the group?</li> <li>6. Listening to your peers, can you get an idea of what you look like from the outside when you conduct?</li> <li>7. What aspects do you think you can improve today in your performance?</li> </ol> <p>8- ONCE THE PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN REPEATED IN THE SECOND SESSION, describe your feelings, aspects that you think have improved and those that have not.</p>



## Appendix 2

Orchestral Conducting Gestural Competencies Scale (OCGCS). Lorenzo de Reizabal & Benito, 2017.

Dimensions	Associated gestures	Indicators	Variables	
Tempo	Starting upbeat	Relationship upbeat-tempo	V1	
	Speed maintenance	Pulse stability	V2	
	Tempo terms in the score	Fit to score	V3	
	Tempo changes		Correct preparation of tempo changes	V4
			Correct setting of new tempo	V5
	Agogical changes (accel. & rit.)	Progressive changes	V6	
Rhythm and Metric	Beat patterns	Beat stability inside patterns	V7	
		Patterns technically correct	V8	
	Polymetries	Accuracy in metric changes	V9	
	Proportion changes	Accuracy in proportion changes	V10	
Cues	Preparations for cues	Gestures technically correct	V11	
	Use of left arm when giving cues	Left arm independence	V12	
Articulation	Legato	Correction in 1:1 Relations	V13	
	Staccato	Correction in 3:1 Relations	V14	
	Change of articulation	Clarity in articulation changes	V15	
Dynamics	Different degrees of dynamics	Adjusting the size of the gesture to the intensity of the sound	V16	
	Dynamic changes	Preparation of changes	V17	
Phrasing	Use of the left arm	Plasticity of gesture	V18	
	Separation of phrases: caesuras and breaths	Gestures technically correct	V19	
	Interruption of movement: pauses, fermatas	Adequacy of resting time	V20	
		Anacruses for resumption of the tempo	V21	
	Final cut off	Adjusted to dynamics	V22	
		Adjusted to articulation	V23	
Character of the music (Musical expression)	General body attitude	Correspondence body/music character	V24	
	Facial expression/eye contact	Correspondence facial expression / music character and eye contact frequency	V25	
		Expressive use of the left arm	Degree of involvement of the left arm in expressiveness	V26
	Character/expression changes	Preparations technically correct	V27	



## Interplaying Folk Songs: giving first year bachelor students the floor

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### Abstract

*How can we as teachers support our students in preparing for different practices in and with music? In this text we aim to explore this question by presenting and discussing the project Interplaying Folk Songs, taking place on the first-year bachelor programme at the Norwegian Academy of Music in 2018. The project is a part of a larger course module, and as teachers we wanted to explore methods for teaching together, inviting the students to share performative practices, knowledge and reflections. With activities ranging from traditional lectures to offering the floor to the first-year students, we aimed to create a process-oriented project with emphasis on discussion and musical interplay amongst the students, letting the voices of all students be heard. In addition, we wished to put ourselves in a situation where we got first-time experience, similar to the situation the students were exposed to. Interplaying Folk Songs takes Luciano Berio's Folk Songs as a starting point. Through introductory lectures, group work, student presentations in plenary and discussions, we worked on songs from Berio's collection. In this text we give examples from three of the student groups to illuminate experiences of cooperation, learning and teaching. The project has a pedagogical core reflecting on our practices and experiences as teachers.*

## Introduction

- Could we borrow some lurs?
- What?
- We want to perform Black is the colour of my true love's hair on lurs – is that okay?

Just a few weeks earlier, The Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) had received 12 of these rare Norwegian traditional instruments. The students had used them during the course in Norwegian folk music, and now they wanted to extend their repertoire. For us as teachers, the question about the lurs came as a surprise. When we created this project, based on Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs*, we tried to prepare for various questions and inputs, but using lurs was never on our minds. In this chapter we ask: perhaps giving room for surprises of this kind is exactly what we aim for?

Music students of today will enter various professional contexts. Our students will be working as performing musicians, teachers, producers, conductors and composers, just to mention some. They will combine different roles by organising concerts, writing applications and reports, and they will probably perform music within many genres. How can we as teachers support our students to prepare them for different practices in and with music?

This text takes Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs* as a starting point. However, the core of this text is not Berio's music, but cooperation, learning and teaching. Here, we will share some experiences from a project called *Interplaying Folk Songs*. This is a pedagogical project designed for first-year bachelor students at NMH. The project has a pedagogical core, it is not designed as a research project, and our reflections are based on our practices and experiences as teachers.

Still, we will venture to illuminate some overarching questions which might constitute a basis for further research: how can we as teachers explore methods for teaching together? How can we invite the students to 'take the floor' within the scope of a course mainly organised as traditional lectures? How can we facilitate a learning environment that supports projects across study programmes?

## Music comprehension and musical practice

*Interplaying Folk Songs* took place over four weeks during the spring 2018. The project was an integrated part of the course EXMUS10-Musikkforståelse I,<sup>1</sup> which covers music history, analysis and aesthetics as well as two introductory courses in Norwegian folk music and the music industry, required professional skills and identity. It is mandatory for all students on the first-year bachelor programme at NMH, and the student group, which consists of approximately 80 students, includes students within the fields of folk music, composition, conducting, jazz, improvisation, church music and classical music. The final assessment in the course is a written examination at the end of each semester. In *Interplaying Folk Songs* we had no specific assessment apart from the student presentations at the end of the project period – an aspect which we will return to.

At NMH the curriculum is divided into main and supportive subjects. This dichotomy defines performative fields such as principal instrument and chamber music as ‘main areas’, while courses on music theory, aural training and music history are defined as ‘supportive’. In contradistinction to most of the supportive courses at NMH, which are linked to the different study programmes, Musikkforståelse I is a common platform across the study programmes. In other words, the subject is meant to be a course that supports the student’s own performance practice, but exactly which performative practice might differ from student to student. While one dreams of being a soloist, another may want to be an ensemble musician, a teacher, a conductor, a creator of the music that is performed or perhaps a combination of the above. In Musikkforståelse I we seek to embrace different approaches to music that are relevant to the students.

The learning objective of Musikkforståelse I is for the students at the end of the course to be able to demonstrate insight into music in a historical, analytical, philosophical, cultural and social perspective and to reflect on their own role as musicians in a cultural and social context. Musikkforståelse I generates a total of 10 credits (ECTS), and the lessons are mainly organised as lectures in our auditorium every Wednesday throughout the academic year. This gives an opportunity to work across study programmes.

We consider learning and teaching as knowledge we can approach and elaborate together – through verbal discussions with peers and teachers and reflection through musical practice. As teachers we discuss the teaching and learning activities in relation

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1 The term ‘musikkforståelse’ can be translated to ‘music comprehension’.

to the intended learning outcomes. What kind of knowledge and skills does a music student actually need? For instance, do different musical genres and areas require different kinds of competences?

Our experience from the traditional lectures in Musikkforståelse I is that a handful of the students are often very proactive – asking questions and giving comments – which often means a dialogue between the teacher and some of the students. But still, most of the students are silent. Considering the aims and learning objectives and the course as a supportive course, we wanted to investigate how we could create space for more voices to be heard within the framework of Musikkforståelse I. Not just because every voice is important, but also because we believe that verbal reflection might be a fruitful way to develop critical thoughts on music as an art form, as music history and in relation to social contexts. We also think it is important to facilitate more performing activities for the students within Musikkforståelse I – which will in turn hopefully inspire them to incorporate the knowledge gained in this subject into their principal instrument performance and musical creativity.

The project described in this text is just a small part of Musikkforståelse I. As two of many teachers involved in the course, we wanted to explore methods for teaching together, inviting the students to share performative practices, knowledge and reflection – and we wanted to hear the voices of all the students. We decided to create a project with just one musical work as a core and chose Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs* from 1964.

## Why Berio's Folk Songs?

*Folk Songs* became the scope of this project, first and foremost because we find this work to be a fruitful starting point for dialogues on certain historic, aesthetic and ethical perspectives as well as the students' own artistic practices. The format with short songs is suitable for first-year bachelor students, and of course we love the music.

In future projects Berio's piece could be replaced with other kinds of music, such as one of JS Bach's cantatas, music by Duke Ellington or a tune from the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle repertoire, just to mention some ideas. Nevertheless, Berio's music became *our* starting point many years ago – and that is perhaps why we looked to Berio for our first comprehensive cooperation as teachers.

We met as master students of music performance at NMH. Gjertrud studied contemporary music for clarinet and Unni traditional singing from Western Norway. As part of our master studies, we decided to do Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs*, a work that we had heard on CD recordings and both wished to perform. Working with Berio's music led to several questions: what did we want to bring in from our different musical backgrounds? Which musicians did we want to invite into our collaboration? Did we need a conductor? Should we perform the music as written in the score?

Later on, as professional musicians, we have both performed Berio's *Folk Songs* in different settings, with established ensembles and more spontaneously with the instrumentation at hand. Looking back, we see that our common work on *Folk Songs* as students helped us to move boundaries as performers which in turn might have contributed to how we approach this music today.

There are many reasons for choosing Berio's *Folk Songs* as the core for a pedagogical project for first-year bachelor students. Perhaps the most obvious is that each song is quite short, approximately 1–3 minutes, which makes it suitable for this project. We wanted to divide the students into groups and let each group focus on one song. In sum, the project would illuminate different perspectives on Berio's *Folk Songs*.

Secondly, the work can easily be rescored. *Folk Songs* consists of 11 songs scored for voice and small chamber ensemble with seven instrumentalist. From our previous experiences as performers we knew that although the scoring from Berio's hand is detailed and concrete, it is quite easy to adapt the score to the instruments available.

Thirdly, studying *Folk Songs* enables an overriding discussion on collaborations between composers and performers. Luciano Berio was without doubt one of the most prominent composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the fact that the songs are dedicated to Cathy Berberian gives us the opportunity not just to shed light on Berio as a groundbreaking composer but also to focus on Berberian, who was a remarkable singer and also composed music. In addition, the collaboration between Berio and Berberian, on *Folk Songs* and other pieces, as well as Berberian's own collaboration with other composers such as John Cage, give us the opportunity to illuminate different kinds of cooperation between composers and performers – a topic that is often neglected in the traditional narratives of music history, which is dominated by the narratives of the composer and his work, overlooking the performer's perspective and the perspectives of collaboration, which so often play a leading part in the processes of developing new musical works.

Fourthly, the 11 songs are inspired by folk songs and classical traditional music from different regions: France, Italy, Sardinia, Sicily, USA, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The work can be closely connected to different types of folk music as well as contemporary music and jazz.

And last but not least: Berio is often credited as the author of these songs, but strictly speaking he has just created two melodies which have both been published in an earlier composition.<sup>2</sup> The other nine songs are arrangements of folk melodies or melodies written by others. Taking this into consideration, *Folk Songs* can constitute a basis for discussions about the work concept, musical arrangements and ethics regarding intellectual property in general. These features make Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs* a good starting point for critical reflection, discussion and performances of the music by the students themselves.

## Interplaying Folk Songs

We divided the students into 11 groups based on the same groupings that we had created for the introductory course in Norwegian folk music a few weeks earlier. The basis for those groupings was to mix students from different study programmes. Our aim was to create opportunities for the students to collaborate across genres, with a strong emphasis on social relations. By using the same groups, we knew that the students were able to work in a constructive way. But unlike the previous project where each group was led by a teacher, *Interplaying Folk Songs* went a step further: now the students had to work on their own, with some guidance from us. The groups worked in separate rooms, and the students were responsible for the backline and bringing in their instruments.

We had developed exercises tailored to each group in advance with a short written introduction and a two-part exercise: giving an oral presentation and a musical performance. In addition, we had collected material that we considered relevant to each task such as audio recordings, excerpts from the score, links to websites, tips on relevant books or recordings etc. The material was uploaded on Canvas<sup>3</sup> before the project started so it was available to the students from the start as a point of departure for their work. Even though the specific Canvas pages were suited to each group, all

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<sup>2</sup> La donna ideale and Ballo from *Quattro canzoni popolari* for voice and piano, written in 1946–47, first performed in 1952 by Cathy Berberian and Luciano Berio.

<sup>3</sup> Canvas is the educational software used at NMH.



groups had access to all the uploaded material. This way the Canvas pages constituted a shared collection of material which was relevant to us all.

The project took place over four weeks and included approximately 50 students. Due to the size of the student group, we found it most suitable to concentrate the project around the regular timetable of Musikkforståelse I. Of the four weeks allocated to the project, we spent the first two giving short introductory lectures both on the aims and framing of the project as well as historical and artistic contexts that we found relevant in connection with Berio's *Folk Songs* and letting the students work in groups. Our role as teachers was to follow each group and give input. In between the working sessions we communicated with the groups via Canvas and email. At the end of the project period, in weeks three and four, the students presented their work in plenary in the auditorium at NMH followed by discussions on specific topics. Below we will give a few examples to show how the students and we worked.

### Three student groups

One of the groups that formed quickly was the 'lur group' referred to in the introduction. This group consisted of students from the fields of jazz/improvised, classical and folk music. They soon agreed on how to perform 'their' song, *Black is the colour of my true love's hair*. The Norwegian folk instrument lur is not the main instrument of any of our students, but this specific group was given the opportunity to perform Norwegian folk music on these instruments earlier the same spring. The members enjoyed playing lurs and established a kind of 'identity' during the Norwegian folk music project. In *Interplaying Folk Songs* they chose to continue with this instrumentation, except one student who played fiddle with fuzz. Their choice of instrumentation very much defined how they would approach their task. One of the students chose to prepare the verbal presentation.

A second group worked with *Malorous qu'o un fenno*, a traditional song from Auvergne in France. The text in this song describes life with or without a spouse – a text that can be interpreted in a humorous way. This group consisted of mainly classically trained students, involving wind instruments and piano. Four of the six students focused on the musical part of the assignment, and the two others worked with the verbal part.

A third group consisted of students on the jazz/improvised and classical music study programmes. Their song was *La donna ideale*, originally composed by Berio in the middle of 1940s and later included in *Folk Songs*. At their first meeting they played through their song, just trying it out together. Then they talked about the music and

invited us into the discussion. They asked the following question: should they establish a common voice, adjusting to each other as they had done in their first version, or should they strengthen the distinctive qualities of each musical voice? They discussed and tried out different musical solutions before making their decision. In the end they chose to create space for different voices and to mix their musical expressions. This group worked together on both assignments.

By observing these three groups, we found that they formed in different ways. In some situations one or two of the students presented a concrete idea that the others agreed to. In other situations several students suggested different ideas, and the members discussed these. We found that the allotted time and the final performance constituted a common framework that structured the work of the groups. Taking a closer look at each group, we saw that they developed differently regarding group dynamics, working processes and their choice and use of material.

### Three approaches

The members of the 'lur group' presented the idea of bringing in these instruments as a common agreement on the first project day. Most of the members play brass instruments. Lurs are related instrument and offer an opportunity to experience and cultivate overtone playing. By using lurs this group also established a sonorous platform which differed radically from the better known versions of *Black is the colour*, sung by the originator John Jacob Niles in his tune created early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Nina Simone in her version developed in the late 1950s and from then on included in her standard repertoire, and Berio's version in *Folk Songs*, first performed by Cathy Berberian in the mid-1960s. By using lurs, this group of students established a contrast to these different musical traditions – and by using instruments rooted in the Norwegian tradition, they contributed to a broader interpretation of what we might call 'folk music'.

All members of this first group contributed with musical ideas, and one of the students organised the ideas in a score. Their music became partly written, partly improvised and partly learned by ear. They showed a playful and generous attitude to each other. In the final performance the fiddle player created their own variation on the melody, and the lur players were positioned in the gallery, at the sides and on the stage in the auditorium, creating a surrounding accompaniment.

In the second group the members were concerned with their own interpretation of Berio's score in relation to the text. In their musical performance the students used the

English translation of the text, which we had uploaded on Canvas, and built a musical performance mirroring how they experienced the lyrics. They chose to perform a purely instrumental version with piano, flute, French horn and trombone. They used the original score of Berio, but unlike Berio's version, which has the same tempo in both verses, this group created a version that started quite slowly, then accelerated, aiming to end in a chaos. In the verbal part the students presented Berio's life and compositional works. Two students developed a manuscript and presented it together.

The groups worked in different rooms. By visiting them, we could observe just small parts of the group processes. For example, when we met group two they had already chosen to distribute the tasks between them, worked on one part each. We asked the students about which alternatives they had considered. The students explained that for them this was an effective use of time but also that this way of working gave them the opportunity to focus on what they were inspired to do. Some of them really wanted to play or sing, and some wanted to read, write and reflect in words.

With the third group we were more involved in the discussions, listening to musical suggestions and reflecting together with the students. In the beginning the members discussed how they could adjust to each other's musical expressions. We asked them to put into words what musical decisions they had made and if there were other possibilities. They explored different musical approaches together and started to focus on form early on in the process. In the end, they decided on a version of *La donna ideale* with a musical performance in three parts, first with a classical approach, letting the classically trained students lead a version based on Berio's score. Then they moved on to a more jazz-influenced version where they developed new chords and made an improvisation based on the tune. Finally, they combined these two approaches, letting the classical approach and the jazz/improvised approach melt together.

The three groups mentioned here made different decisions on how to build their musical cooperation: group one with their choice of instruments, group two with their own interpretation of the musical score and lyrics, and group three with their choice of mixing the different voices and experimenting with form. It was interesting to observe how decisions like these, made early in the process, came to shape how the process developed.

### Versatile processes

Many students have versatile musical interests and work within several musical expressions. This project allowed for many different approaches. One example is the

lur group, where everybody except one played lurs. Another example is a group that decided to form a small wind orchestra, which implied that most of the members brought their secondary instruments. The group with *La donna ideale* is another example where the students kept their main instruments but looked into different musical styles and expressions. In other groups the students tried out other instruments or musical expressions which differed from their main specialisation at NMH, such as a classical brass student who chose to play the piano in a jazz style.

When we designed the project we aimed to shed light on different approaches, such as presenting as many of the songs as possible, comparing different recordings of the same song, discussing relevant connections to contemporary music, performers and composers, and last but not least to ask and discuss what folk music is and might be.

We found that the working model for this project gave us access to communication between the students and insight into their group processes. As an example, the students asked us questions such as: what kind of music can we build together? Should I adjust to the others in search for a common expression? Should we choose to nurture the features of each specific voice? For some students this was a first meeting with these types of questions; for others they were more familiar.

In addition to the dialogues with the students, we carried out our own reflections before, during and after the project was completed. These reflections were carried out as dialogues between ourselves and recorded. Here we discussed specific situations such as the processes of concrete groups and students, and we agreed on certain adjustments such as adding a lecture when needed.

We also discussed how we were taken by surprise in our encounters with the students. For instance, we faced our own prejudices when we realised that we took for granted that music students of today, especially within the field of jazz or improvised music, have extensive experiences of a variety of different types of collaborations, while in fact some students revealed that this project was the first time that they had worked across genres. Experiences like these were a reminder for us to really see the individual student.

Some months after the completion of *Interplaying Folk Songs* we had the opportunity to give a presentation at the AEC and CEMPE conference *Becoming musicians – student involvement and teacher collaboration in higher music education*. In preparation, we listened to our recorded dialogues from the execution of the project. This re-hearing of our

conversations reminded us of things that we had forgotten, such as the kind of 'learning chaos' a first-year bachelor student might experience with different courses and teachers. What is it like to be a first-year student? Are we capable of imagining the student's situation? *Interplaying Folk Songs* was a new experience for both the students and us, and during the re-hearings of our dialogues we discussed how *Interplaying Folk Songs* meant putting ourselves in a similar situation to the first-year bachelor students in many ways.

### Facilitating performances and discussions

In *A Framework for Mentoring* (2009) Peter Renshaw presents different roles, attitudes and practices that are relevant to consider as teachers in higher music education. He defines ten approaches: buddying, shadowing, counselling, advising, tutoring, instructing, facilitating, coaching, mentoring and co-mentoring (Renshaw, 2009, pp. 2–3). The different approaches might be suitable for different situations, and the preferable approach might vary depending on the type of relation, duration of the relation, concrete goals and so forth. For instance, Renshaw presents *instructing* as an approach that includes 'little scope for dialogue', while the very concept of dialogue is at the heart of *counselling*.

Renshaw writes under the umbrella Lifelong Learning, and reflective and reflexive practices constitute the core of his thinking. If we follow his list, we pick *facilitating* as our overall approach for *Interplaying Folk Songs*. His definition of *facilitating* can also act as a main concern for our attitudes: 'Facilitating is a dynamic, non-directive way of generating a conversation aimed at enabling or empowering a person(s) to take responsibility for their own learning and practice' (Renshaw, 2009 p. 3).

The fact that we both knew the music thoroughly was crucial to how we could conduct and approach the project and the plenary sessions. We had discussed in advance our approaches and the kind of roles we would play in the different meetings with the students. Along the way we frequently discussed the types of input that would be fruitful for each group (or each student) at certain stages. During the first two weeks we asked the groups what kind of feedback they wanted from us. Sometimes we were both present in the meetings; other times we met the groups alone. We discussed, coordinated and tailored our feedback to each group and tried to adapt our approaches to the concrete situations: in some situations we asked open-ended questions; in others we presented concrete suggestions.<sup>4</sup>

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4 Gjertrud Pedersen has earlier published reflections on coaching in connection to *NAIP-Innovation in Higher Music Education* (Smilde et al., 2016) (see <http://www.musicmaster.eu/coaching>, accessed 1/12/18).

The last two Wednesdays were dedicated to student presentations in the auditorium. By using the same location and the same timeframe that is used for traditional lectures in *Musikkforståelse I*, we wanted to create a slightly different situation with the students positioned both on the podium and in the audience. It was striking to see how attentive the students were to these presentations. Perhaps it is more exciting to learn from 'one's own'?

Besides being an arena for learning from peers, we soon realised that the student presentations were a crucial and necessary goal for the project. On a project like *Interplaying Folk Songs* one can work towards two slightly different kinds of goals: the process and the presentation/performance. If on the one hand we focus on the process, we can try out and reflect on different artistic possibilities, which can lead to valuable experiences – yet we might run the risk of not having enough rehearsal time for the final presentation. On the other hand, if we focus on the performance, we might jump too early to certain decisions, not leaving enough room for creative try-outs and dialogues along the way. In *Interplaying Folk Songs* we tried to do the groundwork for a balance between process and performance. By letting the project culminate in closed presentations within the student group rather than a public concert, for instance, we wanted to make room for process-driven working methods. This way the project can be a taster for future projects which might lead to public performances.

Our role during the final presentations was to facilitate, listen and learn. We invited questions and comments from the others and we challenged the groups to give reasons for their choices. For instance, the lur group was asked to explain and give reasons for their decision to use Norwegian folk instruments in a performance of an American tune, and the group with *La donna ideale* was asked to elaborate on their reflections on musical expression and stylistic choices. This way the students had the opportunity to reflect and explain the decisions behind their verbal and musical presentations. This led to further discussions on what kind of artistic expressions and artistic decisions performing musicians can make.<sup>5</sup>

## Evaluate and remodel

When we encounter new knowledge, situations or people we evaluate, adjust and hopefully grow. In a learning and teaching situation evaluation can have different

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5 Inspired by practices discussed in Helena Gaunt and Heidi Westerlund's *Collaborative Learning in Higher Music Education* (Gaunt & Westerlund, 2013).

formats and purposes and be used in many ways. On this project we evaluated through observation, reflection, dialogues and surveys in order to become aware of our own views, learn more about the students' perspectives, make adjustments and finally to constitute a basis for further development of the project.

During the dialogues with the students, we learned that many of them were not used to this kind of collaboration. Some had questions connected to the group processes, while others had questions about the concrete exercises. Through these dialogues we noted some striking differences in perspectives between the students and us: while some students seem to focus on the final exam, which is evaluated with marks, we as teachers often tend to put emphasis on the learning processes. Dealing with questions like 'in which ways is this project relevant to our exam?' helped us not just to sharpen our pedagogical tools and make adjustments to the project plan when necessary, but also to pay special attention to the relationships between learning activities and assessment tasks, particularly on this project but also in *Musikkforståelse I* as a whole.

Participating in *Interplaying Folk Songs* was not mandatory for the students, and we found that some students chose not to attend. The student presentations at the end of the project period were not evaluated with marks, but we included questions from *Interplaying Folk Songs* in the final exam in the course later the same semester. In retrospect, we have been discussing whether projects like this should be non-compulsory and lead to presentations without marks, as was the case with *Interplaying Folk Songs*, or whether they should be mandatory and/or evaluated with some kind of assessment.

Achieving distinct connections between learning objectives, content and final assessment is challenging on a versatile course like this one. In *Teaching for Quality Learning at University* John Biggs and Catherine Tang underline the importance of what they call 'constructive alignment': the accordance between the learning objectives of a course, the teaching/learning activities involved and the concrete assessment tasks (Biggs & Tang, 2011). From our point of view, learning objectives within *Musikkforståelse I* can be brought to life through reflection and dialogue. *Interplaying Folk Songs* tries to adhere to this perspective by carrying out group collaborations, student presentations and discussions in plenary. Nevertheless, the perspective of constructive alignment might be difficult to achieve when it comes to creative practices in higher music education. Sometimes obstacles, dead ends or just focusing on processes instead of a final assessment are necessary experiences for development. As teachers we can face a dilemma between, on the one hand, contributing to the student's preparation for a final exam, and, on the other hand, trying to help a student to focus on certain processes along the way.

We faced challenges and problems. For instance, some groups were striving to find suitable musical solutions. Some students also found it demanding to be spontaneous and creative with fellow students. To us such situations represented possibilities for working with different ways of problem-solving: what was difficult and how could we solve it together? In some cases we altered the compositions of the student groups. We tried to meet the students in constructive ways, trying to be positive, encouraging, challenging and adjust our feedback to each situation.<sup>6</sup>

This brings us back to our introductory question: how can we as teachers support our students in preparing for different musical practices? Looking at other performative art fields, we see that many emphasise 'being on the floor' with collaborative processes and long-term trial periods, while within the field of music, and especially the field of classical music, there is a strong tradition of long-term individual practice and relatively limited time scheduled for joint rehearsals. In *Interplaying Folk Songs* the students had to share group processes. The experience of being in the middle of a creative chaos can sometimes feel unfamiliar or distressing, yet still lead to valuable results. Early on in the project some of the students asked for more concrete information about what they were meant to learn. We tried to meet these questions with conversations, adding a lecture and presenting more information on Canvas. After the final presentations the same students communicated that the questions they had in the early stages of the process, had been answered during the process and the final presentations, and that they now understood more of the learning processes and learning outcomes of the project. This corresponds with our observations as teachers: it was with the student presentations that the different parts were connected into a meaningful whole. By adding 'their' song, each group contributed with unique perspectives to our common platform. The territory expanded from each group's single song to multiple approaches to several songs.

## Ideas for further development

Our students have different aims for their studies, learning processes and musical life – which invites us to rethink learning and teaching within established subjects. *Interplaying Folk Songs* is one way to confront it. What do our current students need

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<sup>6</sup> We have both worked with and draw inspiration from Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process. In this project we brought in elements from this method.



to do to prepare for a future career as musicians, teachers, composers or conductors? How can we as teachers contribute to connect 'supportive' courses to the students' performance practices? Perhaps we teachers should be even more arm's length in projects like this? Perhaps we can give the students even more space on the floor?

For us, creating and experiencing *Interplaying Folk Songs* has been highly valuable. It was inspiring and fun to collaborate as teachers and to challenge ourselves to teach in different ways and learn from each other and the students. It was good to have a partner in situations where we had to make quick decisions, such when we reduced the number of groups. We have different styles in our teaching, which we find to complement each other when working with the students. Still, we are aware that we only got a glimpse of insight into the students' work, processes and discussions. It will be interesting to do the project again with a new group of first-year students. By meeting new student groups, we continue to develop the project, listen and rethink. In our further development of the project we ask the following questions: instead of tailoring specific tasks to each group, perhaps next time we should create just one common task? And perhaps we should let the students themselves upload new material on Canvas in addition to what we have prepared?

Berio's *Folk Songs* was our source this time, but the project is not limited to one specific musical work. Perhaps next time we should create a project with another piece as a core? The selected piece of music must have some qualities that can be suitable starting points for discussion, but they do not need to be connected to one musical tradition or genre. We are playing around with the idea of creating a project on *La Folia*, a tune that has travelled across Europe for several hundred years. We imagine a new project, *Interplaying La Folia*, where the students and we can follow the tune (and dance) from its Portuguese and Spanish origins in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, via Archangelo Corelli's version in his *Violin sonata in D minor ('La folia')*, and then to Franz Liszt's version in his *Rhapsodie Espagnole* and Sergei Rachmaninov's *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*. From there we might turn our eyes and ears to certain Scandinavian traditions, with the jazz-pianist Jan Johansson's *Sinclairvisan*, inspired by Swedish folk tunes, and perhaps end our journey in Hornindal, a district in Western Norway where the tune bears the name *Eg gjekk meg ein gong over store myr* (I once crossed the marshes). If so, *Interplaying La Folia* will explore one single tune in different musical framings.

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## Music in the Making: experimenting with an open and collaborative learning environment

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### Abstract

*The musical world of young conservatoire graduates is increasingly diverse. Many graduates end up playing in educational performances, musical theatre performances or other innovative crossover musical practices. Such multidisciplinary practices seem to demand different skills than technical virtuosity alone. How can we train tomorrow's musicians? What kinds of non-musical skills and competencies do they need to flourish in contemporary music practices? These questions inspired our experimental learning environment Music in the Making. Acknowledging the changing musical practices of young musicians, we set out to experiment with learning skills that evolve around collaboration, creativity and engagement. In this article we outline some of our findings from Music in the Making and discuss implications for the role students and teachers play in such a learning process.*

*We show that an open collaborative learning environment, without formal assessments, does not have to result in chaos or poor musical performances. Rather, it can encourage students to take ownership of their own learning process and to develop different kinds of skills by which they become more reflective about their own role as musicians. Fostering learning in such an open learning environment does require a different attitude from the teachers: less directive and more facilitating. We argue that working on technical skills in solitude should ideally be balanced with open projects where the students can learn to collaborate and 'tune in' to themselves, other musicians, audiences and others who have become part of their contemporary musical practice.*

## Introduction

Contemporary conservatoire graduates face multiple challenges. Due to the rise of the creative industries, rapid technological developments, budget cuts, increased (global) competition and a shift in the position of art and music in society, students at Dutch conservatoires no longer end up in clear-cut professional practices (Netwerk Muziek, 2017). Fewer and fewer students will work in orchestras on fixed contracts. Only a few make it to successful world class solo careers. At the same time, orchestras and ensembles aim to find new ways to keep classical music relevant in our contemporary media-infused 'experience society' (Hamel, 2016; Schulze, 2005). As a result, young graduates increasingly find themselves performing in a diversity of musical practices such as chamber music concerts, mini-operas, educational performances, musical theatre performances or other innovative crossover musical practices (cf. Idema, 2012). Such multidisciplinary musical practices demand skills of musicians that go beyond technical mastery. How can we train tomorrow's musicians? What other skills and competencies do they need to successfully perform in a variety of contexts?

These are the questions that started our experimental learning environment called *Music in the Making*. It was a six-week project at Conservatorium Maastricht, where we experimented with a collaborative and creative form of musical learning.<sup>1</sup> Acknowledging the changing musical practices of young musicians, we set out to experiment with learning skills that evolve around *collaboration*, *creativity*, and *engagement*. In this article we outline some of our findings of Music in the Making and discuss implications for the role students and teachers play in such an open, collaborative learning process.<sup>2</sup> In the next section we explain the setup of the course and the methods by which we studied and observed the students. In the section that follows we discuss some observations on how the students participated in this experimental learning environment. We then discuss some implications of our findings for the role of both students and teachers before we end with a short conclusion.

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1 The coordinator and teacher of this project is Inge Pasmans, teacher of music theory at Conservatorium Maastricht. As a teacher-researcher she conducted the experiment Music in the Making, a project that was supported by the Research Centre for Arts, Autonomy and the Public Sphere (Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands). Dr Ties van de Werff is a researcher at the same centre and at Maastricht University. Ties served as a critical coach and sounding board and participated in and jointly prepared the evaluation interviews with students and teachers.

2 Some fragments of this article were published in an earlier description of the project on the website of Learning and Teaching in Music Performance Education written by Susanne van Els and Ellen M. Stabell in collaboration with Inge Pasmans (<https://latimpe.eu/the-lied-project/>).

## Music in the Making: an innovative educational project

Music in the Making was designed as an elective, interdisciplinary module, involving students and teachers of composition, music theory, organ, piano, voice and theatre. For the Classical Department at the Maastricht conservatoire this project was rather unique due to its focus on creativity: students are mainly trained to reproduce classical repertoire from the score and work on interpretation in an historical context. In contrast, this project invited the students to create not only a composition, but also the concept, the performance and the score themselves. Music in the Making is part of a recent policy aim of Conservatorium Maastricht to include more project-based practices that combine theory and practice (Van Els, 2018). Our aims for this open, collaborative project were threefold: 1) stimulating creativity, interdisciplinary collaboration and engagement; 2) integrating music theory and practice; and 3) letting students experience a complete process from concept to performance in a project-based setting (similar to their future musical practice). There was no formal assessment at the end of the course, no fixed learning outcomes and no ECTS grades.

For a period of six weeks, fourteen students collaborated in groups of three or four with the aim of composing a lied and performing it in the Basilica of St Servaas in Maastricht. The groups usually consisted of a composer, a singer and an organist. There were two coaching sessions per week: one lasting two hours at the conservatoire and one lasting one hour at the church. The coaching sessions were led by five teachers in total: one composition teacher, one organ teacher, one music theory teacher, one organ / choral conducting teacher and one theatre performance teacher. The project started with a series of workshops and lectures by the teachers. This included a performance workshop by a teacher from the local theatre school (Toneelacademie Maastricht) who focused on the perspective of the audience. It also included an organ workshop focusing on the instrument in the church space, a lecture on Romantic lieder, studying songs by Schubert and Schumann and a lecture on contemporary composition techniques. Afterwards the students received a text and musical material as a starting point for their own compositions. The German text selected was *Der Ganzumsonst*, a text from the Dutch theatre group Hauser Orkater (1980). The musical material selected was from György Kurtág's *Jatekok* (1973–2017). The musical material by Kurtág was chosen for its diversity and its opportunities for development in a composition. See below for the text and score fragments. Finally, the students were also given a clear deadline.

### *Der Ganzumsonst*

Ich bin der Ganzumsonst  
Für mich kommt nichts in Frage  
Ich bin der Mangelmensch  
mich grauen alle Tage

Ich habe keine eigene Weise  
Das Leitmotiv ist mir verstorben  
Mit dem Suchen aller Arten  
Habe ich mir die Lust verdorben

Weshalb? denke ich immerzu ein Ganzumsonst  
Noch so oft ein Fragezeichen?  
Könnte es nicht ein Anderer sein?

Warum ich?  
Die Abwesenheit die meinen Alltag stört  
Sie ist nicht erwünscht

Unerzwinglich,  
Ganz niedrig  
Ohne Gegenstand

Umsonst, umsonst, umsonst und ewig immer

Mein Anteil an dem Dasein  
Unwichtig  
Jede Tat und jede Leistung  
Nichtig

Alle Mühe all das Trachten  
Vergeblich  
Die Unfähigkeit jedoch erheblich

Ich kann nicht durchhalten  
Beschlüsse kommen nimmer  
Und wie einfach auch die Frage ist  
Die Antwort fehlt mir immer



## Omaggio a Endre Bálint

György Kurtág

*p* *f* *m.s.* *m.d.* *pp* *molto*

Lento

*p, dolce* *con Ped.*

## Methods: teachers as researchers

Music in the Making is an example of what we call a 'research studio'. A research studio is both an educational intervention and a platform for practice-based research. Based on the experience and knowledge developed at the research centre in the past ten years, we draw on qualitative, ethnographic methods such as observing, documenting, interviewing and participating (Benschop, 2015; Benschop et al., 2018; Van de Werff & Benschop, 2017). Students in a research studio are encouraged to practise artistic

research: to critically reflect on their own skills, to use documentation and to cultivate a sensitivity to the implicit choices made with the aim of becoming reflective about their own practices in new ways (Benschop et al., 2018; Van de Werff & Benschop, 2017).

In the learning environment of the research studio, teachers have a double role. The coordinator and teacher on this project (Inge) was a teacher-researcher: coach and participant-observer at the same time. As teacher of music theory, she coached the student ensembles. She was also a participant-observer, documenting the students' creative and collaborative processes as well as the kind of opportunities and challenges that emerged in the process. This role takes some training. Due to the unconventional teaching method –to coach, to facilitate and to motivate– Inge could find the space to observe and document the process. Inge observed and documented the different student group sessions on a weekly basis. She had regular evaluative meetings with colleagues over the course of five weeks to discuss the process of the students, the approach of the teachers, the teachers' experiences and interventions in the group sessions and possible points of improvement for the project. After the project she conducted a focus group and semi-structured individual interviews with the students on the following topics: collaboration, learning outcomes, points of improvement for the project, the role of music theory, the value of the project to their regular studies and practice. Furthermore, the Head of Education, Josien Mennen, conducted an interview with the students on artistic research related to the experiences of the students on this particular project. She also conducted interviews with three of the five teachers (with Inge in the role of one of the teachers) on the following topics: teaching activities and interventions, opinions on the project, goals of the project, documentation, points of improvement and value of the project to regular studies and practice.<sup>3</sup> The observations and documentations of the group sessions, the focus groups and the interviews with colleagues and students provide the empirical sources for this article.

### Listening and reflecting: emergent student soft skills

In this section the learning outcomes will be discussed from the perspective of the students. Learning mainly happened in the group sessions during the creative process. Many activities can be witnessed, such as exploring the given material, brainstorming, discussing concepts, improvising, experimenting, rehearsing, composing and designing a score. To order these activities we subdivided them into four categories:

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<sup>3</sup> Parallel to Music in the Making, Josien Mennen, former Head of Education, conducted a research project into tacit knowledge with performing musicians. Her material is used with her permission.



instrument and expertise; context and concept; sound and design; and audience and communication. These activities were mainly content-oriented; on a (micro) level one could witness a number of research activities in the actions of the students.

### **Instrument & expertise**

Each student entered this project from the perspective of his or her domain: as a singer, composer, organist or pianist. During the creative process the students explored both their own and each other's expertise. Surprisingly, they did not start off by introducing themselves, their expert domains, instruments or repertoire to each other, let alone their cultural background. We witnessed a shyness in that area and noticed an impatience (urge) to start the creative process. During the project we observed mainly two typical situations where students learned about each other's expertise.

In the first situation problems occurred in the performance of composed material, and the students felt the need to explain their expectations and traditions as a singer/composer/organist to each other. For example, in the fourth group session we observed one singer who stated that the composed melodic line was unfeasible for her; there was no metre, so she could not find the timing of the melodic fragments together with the organ. On top of that she claimed that she could not find her tone from a cluster in the organ. In general, she felt uncomfortable with this type of open composition, which included improvised elements. She mentioned that she had never improvised before. As a coach, Inge advised them to experiment with material from Kurtág to find melodic fragments that were fitting for the range and agility of the voice but also contributed to their concept of the given text. This was a chance for the composer to learn about the vocalism of the singer and for both of them a chance to learn how to proportion open elements and improvisation in a compositional structure. The students documented their experiments in a recording or score, which finally led to the full structure. This was a challenging process: one of the students confirmed later in the evaluation interview that the group struggled to find a common method of working and composing. Once they did, they dismissed their first composition and wrote a new piece one week before the concert.

In the second situation of learning about expertise, the students 'simply' got involved with other disciplines than their own. Many singers, organists and pianists made musical suggestions, improvised, provided material and literally composed. In the interviews the students mentioned how remarkable it was that singers and organists had such a large stake in the composition and not simply reproduced what was written, as is often their traditional approach to classical repertoire. Furthermore, all

the students, including the composers, participated in the performance, some even in another discipline than their own: organists and pianists sang, singers and composers played the organ, and one composer played the electric guitar. One of the composers reflects on these shifting roles in the student evaluation interview:

It was very different than I expected. I expected to be writing for a singer and organist, getting to know the organ in the process. Instead [...] we learnt about teamwork and which role everyone had. There was a lot of input from the singer and organist, and I was not the only creator but 'merely' the guy who put our decisions in notation. It was a true collaborative composition.

### **Context & concept**

To stimulate the students to explore the context of the performance, the teachers asked them questions such as: what is a Romantic lied? What is the history of the organ? What is the role of an organ in this performance? What does the church mean as location for a concert?

In the workshops and lectures the teachers provided context information for the Romantic lied and the organ but left the translation to the performance open. Every group developed its vision on these topics. One group associated the church with a living and breathing organism, symbolised by the air in the organ; they also associated the church with eternal humanism. Another group wanted to express feelings of depression by contrasting huge clusters in fortissimo with long, dense silences. And another group pictured the organ as destiny or fate.

Both the given text and the musical material from Kurtág were non-Romantic in atmosphere and therefore inconsistent with a Romantic lied, which invoked questions about the context of Romantic lied repertoire, as illustrated in the documentation from a piano student below:

#### **QUESTIONS SO FAR?**

Is this still lieder? We are using the text and adding our own colour and interpretation. But is this musical theatre? Should we write a Romantic lied, and then take it apart? [...]What do we want the audience to feel?

Developing a concept from a text may not be one of the daily activities of a classical musician, but in this case it strongly inspired the students in their compositional process. Most students translated and analysed the German text, chose important words, improvised suitable musical fragments and designed performative elements, which all led to a complete structure. One group took it one step further: they did not only want to word paint the text, but to provide a musical answer to the text. This was the students' modern view on the lieder genre. The following notes were made by one of the students during several group sessions:

Develop an answer to the text. What does the church (not the institution but the space) have to do with it? [...]

Our vision: so it's a depressing poem, and we feel that there's no place in society for people who are depressed, have burn-out etc. They are being ignored, laughed at, 'thrown out of the nest'. [...]

We want to use the second, big eruption as a 'mirror' in the composition. So first, before the big eruption we portrayed the content of the poem. Then, after the big eruption, we wanted to counterbalance the despair: the inability of people/society to understand (in the end people want happy people around them...)

The quality of the discussions in this group was very high and consistent; they regularly reflected on their concept in order to adjust and deepen it. Similar to Schubert and Schumann, who expressed the text by musical means but also occasionally gave the piano the role of antagonist, this group wanted to add a layer by expressing the text in the first part of the music and giving a musical answer in the second part.

### **Sound & design**

The teachers urged the groups to use the selection from *Jatekok* by György Kurtág as musical building blocks for the compositions; Kurtág's pieces could be selected, reduced, combined in any way the students found suitable for their concept. However, some students were reluctant to use the material from Kurtág. The contemporary idiom discouraged them somewhat, as also became clear in the student evaluation interview:

I learned to appreciate the music of Kurtág, normally I would quickly skip this kind of music. (Student 1)

We did not use the Kurtág compositions. We listened to them, but we did not want to be influenced by them, instead we wanted to find our own sounds to the text. (Student 2)

The groups that did research deep into the compositions by Kurtág concurrently also found more layers and depth in their own material. They analysed Kurtág's pieces, but as a result of that they also analysed their own melodies, harmonies, rhythms, dialogues, climaxes etc. They had a better grip on their material and could mould it into the form they envisioned.

At this stage the students experimented and improvised a lot to develop their musical material in relation to the text, using Kurtág as a starting point. As stated previously, the students sometimes felt uncomfortable improvising, but the organ teachers designed simple improvisation exercises, interacted with the students and, most of all, created a safe environment in which to experiment without judging them. Consequently, the students quickly picked up this tool and had fun doing so.

Not knowing what you are doing makes you more free. (...) This project should definitely be repeated; everyone should do such a project. It makes you much more open-minded. You work outside your comfort zone; we are not used to creating. Now everyone was creating and improvising. (Student 3)

In the notes and sketches by the students we found many examples of word painting and form design. The composition (*Vergeblich*) below is inspired by one of the pieces by Kurtág. Using the cluster technique, abandoning it note per note, the students linked this to the text 'Das Leitmotiv ist mir verstorben.' (The leitmotif died within me). And they added colours in the organ.

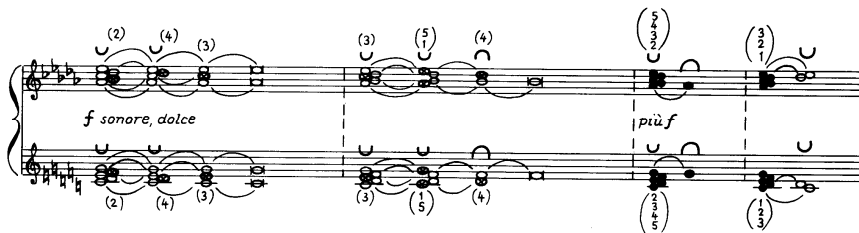


Figure 2: from Kurtág *Jatekok*

T. Ich habe keine eigene weise,  
*p*

Flute 4  
Flageolet 1  
Third manual

Add notes one by one and keep them

abandon notes one by one

Org. *pp*

Ped.

T. Das leitmotiv ist mir verstorben, Das leitmotiv

Org.

Ped.

Figure 3: *Vergeblich*, composition by students

Teachers and students alike gave feedback on performed passages and constantly reflected on their concept and musical interpretation. The teachers encouraged the students to focus their listening during the experiments. This is not a given quality for musicians, but a skill that needs to be sharpened and developed in each new situation. Teachers and students all listened critically to the dialogues between voice and organ, for example. Does the reaction from the organ express the text well enough? How does the timing of the dialogue contribute to the expression? How does this timing develop? Are the voice and the organ well enough articulated in the acoustic of the church? One group documents the following on this last aspect:

## CHURCH SESSION #2

Shorter attacks and slower heartbeat in these acoustics

Intensifying the heartbeat is not accelerating but using more stops on organ, clusters (clusters changing from white to black keys, not only e.g. black). So the beat stays the same rate because of the big acoustics

A certain knowledge of music theory was generally useful in this phase of improvising, composing, adapting and reflecting: analytical skills, knowledge of harmony, melody, rhythm and form were tools to shape the composition. The teachers stimulated the analytical and aural skills of the students as mentioned above. In the evaluation interview the students were also asked about the role of music theory in this project. They answered as follows:

Student 4: 'I am not such a theory person. I don't think I did a lot of theoretical things in this project, not like my group mates'

Student 5: 'I totally disagree. I think this whole project was the most practical theory ever, dealing with sound, melody, material and form'

Student 6: 'It was project-wise: a lot of theory in a short time, quick, a lot of different teachers saying different things'

The first comment seems to be the most striking one. As a teacher-researcher, Inge witnessed this student working on the composition together with the pianist. They made a reduction (see figure 4) of one of the Kurtág pieces (see figure 5), derived a leitmotif (see figure 6) from bar 11, designed variations and developed a ternary form with a rhythmically varied middle section. She just did not experience these activities as music theory!

Figure 4: chord reduction

The image displays five systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The notation is written on grand staff systems (treble and bass clefs). The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *p* and the instruction *con Ped.*. The second system features a *poco a poco cresc.* instruction. The third system includes a *f* dynamic marking and two *Ped.* markings. The fourth system contains *rinf.* and *sonore, dolce* markings, along with a *Ped.* marking. The fifth system starts with *pp* and includes an *(eco)* marking. The score uses various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings to convey the piece's structure and performance requirements.

Figure 5 Kurtág Consolazione

Slow (around 60beats per minute)  
Tempo Rubato Spoken : "Mich Grauen alle Tage"

Soprano

Organ

Ich ha-be kei-ne ei-ge-ne wei-se

Figure 6 Leitmotive from *Die Antwort*, composition by the students

Similarly, the students perceived their actions quite differently from the research activities envisioned by the teacher-researcher. In a group interview conducted by Josien Mennen the students were first asked to react to a set of typical research activities; the question was to which extent they recognised these research activities in their own actions on this project. In Figure 7 you can find the result of their first reaction.

First associations  
Verbs related to what you have done in the Lied project  
Ranking: 1 = most important, 5 = least important

Verbs	+	+-	-	Ranking
Ask				2 3 2 1 4 6
Gather knowledge				4 6 2 5 5 7
Experiment				1 1 3 1 1
Work methodically				7 7 2 7 6 4
Reflect				3 2 2 2 3 3
Document				5 5 3 4 7 5
Share knowledge	(   )			6 4 1 6 2 2

Figure 7 Associations to artistic research terminology

From this picture one can conclude, that the students thought they reflected, experimented and asked questions but also that they did not work particularly methodically or documented a great deal. Concentrating on this last statement, the students were



asked what they considered to be ‘documenting’ and what kind of documenting they applied in this project. Surprisingly the students said:

Student 4: ‘[...] every meeting we had, there was always someone writing down what we did, and I think that really helped me.’

Student 6: ‘Yeah, just to keep track of ideas because there were so many, especially at the beginning, ... So, [...] I just had a book where I wrote everything down to help you go back, ...for me that worked. (...) I wrote down all the ideas we had, I drew graphs of the church, just like what the spatial thing would be like. Signs like the stops I wrote down what they sounded like, so we could remember...’

Student 7: ‘Yes, we also did that, after every session, we ... did the documentation. Just trying to accurately write down all the ideas; we had so many, and we talked so much [...], we’d meet each other before the session AND after the session, just talking. If we didn’t do that [documenting], that’s a suggestion for next time, if people don’t think about documenting the ideas, yes, that is really helpful. It’s necessary actually.’

In addition to the abovementioned work notes, the students’ documentation consisted mainly of notating music. According to some teachers, this is the most adequate method of documenting. In the fragment below, from the teacher’s evaluation, it is once again apparent how different the interpretation of documenting can be:

Teacher 1: ‘Speaking just for myself now [...] documenting would take all my energy out of the creative things. So, if I am creative, then I must not document, it would drive me nuts.’

Interviewer: ‘But, what do you do when you are creative?’

Teacher 1: ‘Then I am all “into the piece”’

Interviewer: ‘Do you write anything down?’

Teacher 1: ‘Yes! Notes.’

Interviewer: ‘Yes! That is also documenting, right?’

Teacher 1: ‘No, that would also mean to describe the process.’

Interviewer: ‘No, that’s not my question. Documenting is not limited to writing words.’

Teacher 1: ‘O, well, then I agree...’

Assuming that documenting can be realised in many forms, musical notation required special attention in this project. Many compositions contained improvised elements, and their notation formed a challenge; traditional music notation was inadequate for this purpose. The students handled this challenge in different ways: the scores ranged from a memo with one musical motif and some expressive indications to a full traditional notation and a large timeline with detailed indications (but no notes). The most exciting score was a half open notation of the music. One of the composition students put in a considerable effort to overcome the limitations found in digital music notation programmes in order to design an adequate notation for their music. In the group interview he explained his reasons for his extensive work on the notation. Firstly, he wanted to literally preserve the composition, otherwise it would be lost after it had sounded in the performance. Secondly, as a memory support for the group's work process, as one can only adapt and develop music that can be remembered. And thirdly, as a practical performance support to synchronise the elements of the performance. He described his own emerging notating method as follows:

I think what we did was break the methods, because all the materials we had were, musically speaking, classical material, but yet we created something that is considered contemporary, which was very irregular. All the material we had, (classical singers, organ, church, lied) is in a certain structure, and we were experimenting with things which would never be on paper if we wanted to write it down with a classical (notating) system. [...] So what really helped us was breaking the classical rules, and that's how we ended up with a graphical notation. And that freedom would allow us to bring what we were doing onto paper.

As researcher, Inge observed that there was a clear relation between the quality of the documentation of the groups and the development and consistency of the compositions.

Generally speaking she witnessed more research activities than the students would admit to in their own actions or reflections. Many of the research terms are surrounded by assumptions and academic interpretations; in creative processes artistic research terminology may need a different interpretation. For example: the students did not conduct a source study but gathered knowledge by playing, listening and touching. They did not ask a research question, but they did *ask* relevant questions about the audience, lied and church for example. They did not work according to well-known research methods but designed their own *methodical cycles* for composing and creating (idea – experiment – listen – analyse – reflect – notate – idea). They did not document

their work with a full report but found ways of *documenting* supporting their collaborative process: many ideas needed to be ordered, and the sound possibilities and sketches needed to be collected and scored. Their acquired knowledge was mainly shared with their colleagues in the project and finally with the audience in the concert.

### **Audience & communication**

The first workshop of the project, by the performance teacher from the Academy of Theatre, was important for the mindset of the students. He created the following assignment for all the students and teachers:

Please give an answer to one of the following questions: what is your experience of church? Which scene of a movie, theatrical piece, opera or musical is very dear to you? Which song do you feel it is written just for you? Please answer not only in words but also in movements, position, sound and expression.

A grand piano was available in the hall. One by one, students and teachers gave a brief performance, and afterwards everyone discussed the expression, associations and observations. This was a very interesting assignment, because everyone's relation to the project became apparent in a very authentic way. In addition, the observations by all participants, but especially by the performance teacher, served as a kind of mirror for the performer, reflecting what the audience might experience. Consequently, the students were motivated from the outset to communicate their own concepts to the audience. One of the students documented:

Play with position of audience for the good of the composition and the experience (from close to far from organ)  
Task for audience: breathing? Walking with a map with 3 indications?  
We can use the crypt? The sound is so nice there that it's an idea to put the audience there  
Before the performance, we want to give the audience something to trigger them (together with the map). You don't want to have to explain everything, but it's harder than we think for an audience to follow our ideas as logical as they are in our minds.

Oddly, the above-mentioned ideas never became reality; the audience was seated during the whole performance, turning around in the pews to be able to see the

performers at the back of the church. Maybe the students did not know how to organise these kinds of requests for the audience and needed more coaching in this area. During the last rehearsals the students were coached in their performance positions and movements. Transitions between the compositions were created, which was an unfamiliar phenomenon for the organists, pianists and composers (the singers seemed more used to this). The so-called 'dead' time between the compositions was now to be reduced to a minimum. Musicians generally do not seem to care much about the audience having to wait several minutes while the musicians take their positions or disappear from the stage; the students needed several attempts to simply move in time to their positions in the space or behind the organ. The aspect of audience and communication was somewhat underexposed in the project; the students needed more coaching in the whole process. This is an aspect that needs further development and more thorough coaching.

## **Discussion: changing roles for student and teacher**

So, what have we, as teachers and researchers, learned from this project? What were the main challenges and outcomes? Based on the previous empirical observations, we now discuss some implications of our findings for the roles of the students and teachers in the following.

### Collaboration, autonomy and responsibility

Teachers and students participating in the project came from different disciplines. The students were expected to collaborate as experts in their field with other expert students belonging to other disciplines. The intensity of the collaboration depended on the social and communicative skills of the participants, such as aligning different expectations, work tempo and making sure progress was made as a group. Some students were too polite and friendly and were afraid to voice their opinions. Other students had to be encouraged by the teachers to start experimenting and creating instead of merely discussing ideas over and over. Being able to collaborate appears as an important factor for the success of a performance. Groups where there was open communication, a safe atmosphere and an overall feeling of mutual respect and equality performed better in every creative aspect throughout the project. Assumptions about each other's roles, misunderstandings or even quarrels blocked creativity and progress in general. The importance of group dynamics also means that the teachers

should from time to time coach the students in how to collaborate. As it turned out, the teachers were rather hesitant to intervene in these aspects and preferred to focus on the musical material.

In all the groups, expectations and assumptions about each other's roles became explicit when working together. As this student reflects:

We needed to (learn to) trust each other with certain responsibilities. As a pianist I am not used to that; I like to do everything myself. (student 6)

When social group dynamics and collaboration flourished, the students became more open to trying out things outside their own main subject of study. It was remarkable to find that students in such groups did not feel limited by their usual role, level or preferences.

The students were in control of their process and found that to be a rather positive experience. They took charge of their own coaching and asked for more availability of the coaches to 'shop around' and get the expertise they needed at that moment. The students both displayed and reported strong motivation for producing a high-quality performance, even without the usual drivers of assessment, ECT grades and fixed learning outcomes. As there was no formal assessment at the end, the students felt free to experiment and take risks in the creative process. The combination of a feeling of freedom and responsibility, the collaborative aspect and the aim of performing in the grand Basilica might have contributed to the high motivation the students both reported and displayed during the process. Teachers involved in the project were convinced that having no formal assessment even worked as a trigger for the students to push themselves more than expected. And indeed, the quality of the result, the *lieder*, was consequently higher than the teachers had expected.

An important learning objective for the assignment of creating their own *lieder* was to enable the students to develop ownership and more ease when performing the original *lieder* of Schubert and Schumann, which students often perceive as 'God-given notes'. Reflections on how the students' experiences from the creative *lieder* project could transfer back to performing Schumann and Schubert could have been part of the project, but then preferably retrospectively as such reflection during the process could make the students over-conscious. What seems to be of utmost importance is to hand over the project to the students and leave as much as possible for them to decide, including goals and methods. The students' ownership of the project was crucial.

## Changing teachers' roles: from master to facilitator

The open character of *Music in the Making* probably proved the most challenging for the teachers involved, as their role and relationship with the students differed substantially from the traditional master-apprentice relationship. In a way, the teachers in this project were trying not to teach in the form of instruction. Instead, they asked questions, helped organise the process, developed the students' ideas further and stimulated consistency. The biggest challenge for the teachers involved was to determine when to intervene and when not to. To intervene in a group process and take charge often evokes a passive response in the students. This was to be avoided. At the same time, at certain moments in the process the students did benefit from the teachers' expertise or support, for example in the strengthening of their ideas. As this teacher reflects:

You have to pay attention to the moments when they are creative, and when ideas freely flow, and when they need additional direction. (...) For me, that is a delicate and beautiful challenge. To find the right moment to say: let's do this or that.

In the evaluation interviews, the teachers also became aware of the musical criteria they implicitly seemed to apply and silently all agreed on. Consistency in a composition, listening to each other in improvisation and dialogue, balancing between repetition and variation, and an overall sense of form and tension seemed to be recurring criteria. In improvisation in particular, the musical qualities of the students such as imagination, inner ear, aural skills, sense of harmony and form become apparent – far more so than in any traditional exam. When the students struggled with these aspects, some of the teachers tended to become more directive; they deployed their expertise. This inspired the students and helped them to find possibilities and direction in their composition. In some cases, when the students could not pick up on the given directions and with the concert deadline approaching, the teachers became more and more instructive. Some teachers even felt the performance needed to be 'rescued' by giving detailed instructions, which perhaps came at the expense of the students' learning process. In a multi-disciplinary, collaborative learning project, where the students are given the responsibility not only to come up with a performance but also develop ways to do this fruitfully together, teachers have to strike a fine balance between being directive and facilitating.

The teachers also had to collaborate. Just as the students, they came from different disciplines. Collaborating with each other and supervising an interdisciplinary group

of students forced the teachers to step out of their traditional roles as music theorists, organists or composers. One teacher of music theory confessed to being an amateur organist for the last twenty years. Another teacher enjoyed bringing his 'entire background' as an organist, choral conductor, theorist and composer into the project. The alignment between the teachers in the preparation and especially in the coaching process was at times an issue; students pointed out that the coaching styles were very diverse between the teachers, ranging from very open to more restricted. While these 'multiple voices' appear to hamper teaching consistency across the board, they do in practice spur on the students to take ownership of their own learning process.

As a teacher-researcher, Inge experienced some resistance from her colleagues at the conservatoire when introducing research assignments or a possible method / work model for the students. It was thought by some teachers that the students should not be bothered with these assignments in the middle of a creative process, as it would distract them from their musical material. Documenting the process (making notes in text or graphs) was considered necessary by some teachers to generate awareness in the students, but again it was considered too distracting from their creative process by others. This hesitance to incorporate process-gear research assignments seems linked to assumptions surrounding artistic research (i.e. 'documenting is writing'). The students themselves showed multiple aspects of research in their creative activities (i.e. documenting, reflecting, finding a method together).

For the teachers one learning outcome was that grades and tests are not needed to motivate students; they worked very autonomously and were very motivated for their performance. The teachers learnt to trust the students with this responsibility – however difficult this sometimes proved to be. Instead of a traditional assessment, a final evaluation followed the concert, arranged as a group interview with all students, teachers and head of education. In this dialogue, awareness of the implicit learning was addressed as a central topic. These evaluations were of key importance to the learning process in the project: during these talks the students became more aware of their role, their pre-conceptions, habits, strengths and weaknesses. In these evaluative moments, the students became aware and found words to explicate their actions both in the creative process and during their performance as well as their own methods and criteria for success. However, while no formal evaluation increased the openness of the project, the lack of ECTS given is also a danger: a proper weighting in terms of ECTS awarded to the students would help to institutionalise such innovative teaching electives.

## Conclusion

As in many conservatoires, the curriculum of the Conservatorium Maastricht traditionally consists of practical courses (instrument, chamber music, projects) on the one hand and theoretical courses (music theory, entrepreneurship, conducting & arranging, teaching skills, research skills) on the other hand. This separation of components contrasts with the musical profession, where all components are practised more or less simultaneously with a specific focus on an upcoming performance and the repertoire at hand (cf. Peters, 2012). Moreover, such a strict separation does not align well with the skills demanded by the current and future musical practices of our graduates of today. Collaboration, flexibility, innovative and creative thinking, and self-reflection are becoming increasingly important qualities for the contemporary professional, including the musician (cf. Eraut, 2009; Janssen-Noordman & Van Merienboer, 2002; Kuh, 2008; Kindelan, 2012; Muziek Netwerk, 2017).

With this article we aimed to show that contemporary conservatoire students can benefit from courses on which they learn to collaborate and on which they together have to creatively come up with an engaging music performance. Such an open collaborative learning environment, without formal assessments, does not have to result in chaos or poor musical performances. Rather, it can encourage students to take ownership of their own learning process, and to develop *different* kinds of skills. Working within a heterogeneous group of musicians encourages students to experiment and to develop their own ways of working (together), making them more reflexive about their own role as musicians. As we showed, to foster learning in such an open learning environment also requires a different attitude from the teachers: less directive and more facilitating (including paying attention to social dynamics).

Motivation is key to becoming a professional musician. It helps the musician's passion for music survive the huge technical and mental demands of the profession. Individually learning the craft of an instrument – the dominant focus in the curriculum of the majority of contemporary conservatoires – is an important part of becoming a skilful musician. But, as we argue, that is not enough to prepare students for the changing musical landscape in which they will work. Nor is training in entrepreneurship. Working on technical skills in solitude should ideally be balanced with open projects where the students can learn to collaborate and to 'tune in' to themselves, other musicians, audiences and others who have become part of their contemporary musical practice.



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# LATIMPE Anthology

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In recent years, student involvement has become a central topic in higher music education. Many argue that students should be the central agents in their own learning processes and that teachers and higher education institutions should strive to empower students and engage them more actively. Teacher collaboration is at the same time an evolving topic in higher music education practices. In many cases, teacher collaboration intertwines with student involvement. But how do we understand these concepts? What are the pros and cons of involving students more actively and of increased collaboration in learning and teaching practices? What can student involvement and teacher collaboration mean in learning contexts ranging from one-to-one contexts to cross-disciplinary or cross-institutional practices? We hope that this publication will present some possible answers to these questions and, equally important, that the book will present a range of new questions.

This anthology contains a selection of papers from the conference *Becoming Musicians, student involvement and teacher collaboration in higher music education*, which took place in Oslo, October 2018. It was the first AEC and CEMPE Learning and Teaching Conference, and gathered students and teachers from 44 institutions worldwide.

The anthology comprises three parts, 1) Higher music education institutions and students, 2) Instrumental learning and teaching, and 3) Perspectives and practices. The fifteen chapters are written by authors from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Austria.

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