Live Weider Ellefsen

# Negotiating musicianship

*The constitution of student subjectivities in and through discursive practices of musicianship in "Musikklinja"*

Norges musikkhøgskole
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Now, having struggled myself through both a master's degree and a doctoral thesis, I can say that it has been unbelievably challenging. I have been confronted with ways of thinking about music and musicianship, knowledge and learning, identity and personhood that were all new to me. I am not exaggerating if I say that some of them have changed the way I experience the world.

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Hamar, April 1, 2014

Live Weider Ellefsen

# Abstract

*Negotiating musicianship. The constitution of student subjectivities in and through discursive practices of musicianship in "Musikklinja"*

The study has been conducted as an in-depth investigation of a Norwegian "Musikklinje"; a three-year upper secondary educational programme in music. Combining an ethnographic design of participant observation and interviews with an analytical framework based on Foucauldian discourse theory and performativity theory as elaborated by Judith Butler, the study has aimed at understanding *how student subjectivities are constituted in and through discursive practices of musicianship in Musikklinja.* To facilitate such an understanding, the study has examined how discourses of musicianship are practiced within and across a range of Musikklinja sites, and how students engage in performative work to achieve legitimate positions of music studenthood within these discourses. In this examination, analyses and discussions of how relations of power/knowledge are enacted – at micro and macro levels of discourse – have been important. Musikklinja, the thesis argues, works by relations of power/knowledge that include the relations students enact and establish to understand themselves, and make themselves understandable, within discourse.

Fieldwork was undertaken over a period of seven months. To create a productive space for interpretation and analysis, three different research methods, generating different forms of empirical representations, are employed. In *fieldnotes* produced through participant observation, the researcher's descriptions, reactions and field analyses are documented. *Group interviews* allow access to students' representations as collectively enacted when sharing and establishing stories and thoughts on the interview topics. And *individual interviews* contribute the representations of the students when performing

according to the power/knowledge relations of the interviews. Analyses are carried out in three stages. Stage one consists of a mapping of Musikklinja practices of musicianship; a coding and categorization that includes all fieldnotes and interview transcripts. In stage two, discourses of musicianship and strategies of performative negotiation are identified and examined in a theory-informed, abductive coding and analysis of selected practices. Building upon insights generated at stage one and two, stage three aims at understanding processes of performative subjectivation through in-depth analyses of selected empirical events across five sites of subjectivation.

The study's findings suggest that *dedication, entrepreneurship, competence, specialization* and *connoisseurship* are prominent discourses at play in Musikklinja practices of musicianship. It is by these discourses that the young people of Musikklinja are socially and institutionally identified and addressed as music students, and it is by understanding themselves in relation to these discourses that the students achieve music student legitimacy. The findings also propose that a main characteristic in the constitution of music student subjectivity in Musikklinja is the *appropriation* of discourse, even where resistance can be noted. Thus, the *negotiation* of discursive meaning intrinsic to performative subjectivation – in the present study, the negotiation of musicianship – could, in the case of Musikklinja, be understood as an *appropriation* of discursive meaning; an appropriation of musicianship. However, within the overall strategy of accepting and appropriating Musikklinja discourse, students subtly negotiate, twist and turn discursive meanings by *enacting counter- or complementary discourses, subverting performative interpellations, alternating between taking the initiative and withdrawing, and positioning themselves more or less at the periphery (or at the core) of discourse.* Enacting the music student subject, students avoid some impositions by replacing them with others. They appropriate – adapt, shift, juggle, subvert – the available discourses in ways that enable and empower their discursive legitimacy as music students.

The thesis aims to contribute to an understanding of how Musikklinja, as a music educational institution of discourse, enables, enacts and manages thoughts, actions, objects and subjects of musicianship. In examining how relations of power/knowledge play out in actual situations and events where students are subjectivated in and through discourses of musicianship, the thesis also attempts to contribute to an empirically anchored theorization of the relations between subject and discourse, agency and subjectivation, knowledge and power.

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# 1 Introduction

> Oliver: "Do I really have to stand like this?! Looking like I have a knife in my back? Seriously, I will quit playing the fiddle if this is how I have to stand!" The young musician arches his back and shoots out his chest, peering down his nose at the fiddle resting on his shoulder. His teacher laughs. Picking up his own fiddle, he plays a mock-virtuoso classical cadenza, nose pointing upwards, throwing his long hair backwards with the final high strokes. *(Fieldnotes)*[1]

We are at a fiddle lesson. In a friendly atmosphere and with a good deal of humour, teacher and student are practicing bow-grip and strokes, their mutual goal being mastery of the instrument and the successful playing of its repertoire. Moreover, we are witness to the staging and performance of important cultural values and distinctions pertaining to the repertoire, the instrument and identities associated with it. Seemingly, teacher and student cooperate in making distinctions between what characterizes folk musicians such as themselves and the airs and graces of the classical violinist. And of course, we are observing a display of the relationship between a student and his teacher, each acting his part in a cultural scheme that has inscribed in it specific positions and scopes of action.

The example serves to introduce some key concerns of the present thesis: the cultural production of meaning, the constitution of student subjectivity and relations of power and knowledge in music educational practices. Responding and adapting to the norms, truths and values available for him, Oliver constitutes the situation as a meaningful practice, while at the same time constituting himself as a meaningful subject. And, vigorously resisting what

1 Fieldnotes were taken in Norwegian, the first language of both the participants and the researcher. In the analytical process, I translated relevant notes into English. For a discussion, see section 5.2.2

seems like a mild disciplining of his body, he engages in serious negotiations concerning the who-to-be's and what-to-do's of music and music education, bodily behaviour and posture being of crucial importance.

The scene is taken from an ethnographically inspired study that involves observing and exploring everyday life at a Norwegian "Musikklinje",[2] the casual name, used by students and teachers alike, for music studies in Norwegian upper secondary schools. Following the fiddle player and his peers in lessons, auditions, rehearsals and concerts, talking and chatting to them at coffee breaks and between classes, and to a certain degree taking part in their informal social life at school, I have tried to understand how and by which means the young people of "Musikklinja" negotiate their ways into and become part of school discourses on music and musicianship, reinforcing, challenging or maybe even changing them as they go. I have been interested in their perceptions and enactments of ways of being and doing in Musikklinja, the norms, truths and values they are relating to and putting into play, the positions available to them and how these are taken up. In short, the overall aim of the project has been to investigate *how the young people of Musikklinja turn themselves into music students in and through discourses of music and musicianship as practiced across a range of Musikklinja sites and activities.*

An important point of departure has been that the school and school discourses are enacted and confirmed on an everyday basis in relations of power and knowledge that *include* students. Keeping apart what are 'institutional discourses' and what are 'students discourses' has therefore not been my ambition. Rather, I have tried to approach "Musikklinja" as a co-production between all participants. School cultures are open and dynamic situations rather than closed structures, and they are at all times constituted by participants' practices – including the practices through which music students enact, negotiate and confirm their positions *as* music students. Drawing on perspectives from Foucauldian discourse theory and ideas of performativity as elaborated by Butler (1993; 1997a; 1997b, 2007), such negotiations of meaning are seen as processes of subjectivation; a "simultaneous submission to and coming to subjective existence and agency through the discursive power embedded in sociocultural context" (Søndergaard, 2005, p. 299).

2 In an educational context, the Norwegian word "linje" means "course of study". "Linja" is the definite form of "linje".

## 1.1 "Musikklinja"

In everyday teacher and student discourse, "Musikklinja"[3] is the common name for the programme area "music studies" in the Norwegian upper secondary educational "Programme for Music, Dance and Drama" (MDD). In use, the name can refer simultaneously to the general option of specializing in music at the level of secondary education in Norway, and to particular schools (and buildings) offering the programme. Students attending Musikklinja have chosen music as their main programme area. They are organised into age-determined groups, even if some modules or courses might be organized otherwise, facilitating ensemble rehearsals and school concert projects across year levels. For practical reasons, music students may also be organized in groups of their own for some of the common core subjects. This differs somewhat from upper secondary education in countries like England and the USA, where students more freely choose between a range of subjects and courses on offer, and to a lesser degree constitute a distinct group accompanying each other through more or less the same educational trajectory. Also unlike English sixth-form colleges and American high schools, school bands, orchestras and choirs are options reserved for the music students, and not (in general) open for participants from other study programmes.

Norwegian upper secondary schools go by the system of levels; the first year of one's study (usually started the year students turn sixteen) is called the "upper secondary level 1" (vg1), followed by level 2 and 3. Levels build upon each other in the sense that they become increasingly specialized; more programme specific subjects each year, and more in-depth studies. The formal criteria for being accepted at a successive level is having completed the one you are at, and having passed in those subjects that are expanded upon in the next. Schools are separated from lower secondary in that they are located elsewhere, making up or constituting a school system of their own. County administrations are responsible for organizing upper secondary education in Norway, whereas primary and lower secondary school sort under the responsibility of Municipal administrations. Requiring practice rooms and musical equipment and storage, Musikklinja is typically situated in a purpose built area within a bigger school offering three to five different upper secondary educational options. The students' need to practice and have ensemble rehearsals outside school hours might even make it necessary to organize Musikklinja so that it can be accessed

3 Hereafter I will disperse with the quotation marks

without entering other areas of the school. Often, music teachers have their work stations within this unit instead of sharing a room with teachers in the other programmes, and students have sofas, chairs and lockers, and possibilities for making coffee and warming their food.

In Norway, school is compulsory for the first ten years, after which students can choose to continue studying in upper secondary school. According to The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet), most young people finishing compulsory school go on to study in upper secondary school. In 2010 this amounted to around 75000 applications for 1st year upper secondary, and around 200000 students attending the three upper secondary school levels altogether (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2010). Of the three programme areas music, dance and drama, music studies has by far the majority of the students. And unlike dance and drama, boys are as well represented as girls.[4] Judging by statistics offered by The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and NIFUStep (Borgen et al., 2010; Markussen, Sandberg, Lødding, & Frøseth, 2008), the MDD option in upper secondary is popular, with more applicants than places offered. In 2010, MDD programmes had a total surplus application of 45% (ibid). Applicants have very high average marks from lower secondary school (ibid). And as schools offering music studies in upper secondary are allowed to admit up to 50% of the students on the basis of musical ability (in addition to marks), it is also common practice to arrange admission auditions. However, talking with school leaders and teachers at a national conference in 2011 dedicated to discussing how the programme for specialization in music, dance and drama in upper secondary school qualifies students for higher education,[5] I get the impression that some schools have difficulty filling up the places with what they feel are qualified applicants, while other schools refer to long waiting lists and an excess of highly qualified students. Schools in big cities like Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim have a surplus of applicants. Other schools may be threatened with closure due to a combination of economization and poor recruitment.

MDD is one of three upper secondary "Programmes for specialization in General Studies" in which students achieve a general certificate allowing them to apply

4 In 2010, 94% of the dance-students are girls, as are 77% of the students attending the theater-programme. In music studies, 52% of the students are girls (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011a).

5 The conference was hosted by the Norwegian Academy of Music in collaboration with Norsk Fagråd for Musikk, Dans, Drama [Norwegian Academic Council for Music, Dance, Drama) and Oslo National Academy of The Arts.

for admission to universities or university colleges.[6] In addition to the common programme music subjects, students are obliged to study several common core subjects like Norwegian, English and mathematics. Moreover, students have the opportunity to choose optional programme specific and core subjects. Which optional subjects that are on offer vary between schools, time-schedule challenges being an important condition that regulates students' opportunities. By far, most music students' choices include music related optional classes. A central aim and purpose of music studies in Norwegian upper secondary then is to provide students with general university and university college qualifications. However, Musikklinja is also an institution belonging to music as a field of expertise and professionalism – it is supposed to prepare students for higher music education and a working life in the fields of music managed by specialists and professionals. As such, Musikklinja is one of the paths to membership of the elite musicianship community.

## 1.2 Background

When I started studying the piano at a Norwegian academy of higher music education, the majority of my fellow students were recruited from one of the Scandinavian upper secondary music programmes. Having attended a general studies upper secondary programme myself, the musical core activities and practices of the academy were new to me: composition and harmonization, ear training, music theory, music history and analyses, and masterclasses/interpretation classes. I struggled to understand, get aboard and catch up with my classmates, who seemed quite familiar with not only the main musical disciplines and learning practices, but also with the unwritten norms and rules regulating what to do and how to do it, what to say and how to say it, how to behave and how to feel about it in the academy. Obviously, I was anxious and stressed. Actually, some months into my first year, a pianist friend took me aside to say that my anxiety and stress were disconcerting to the rest of them, and would I please try to get it under control? They were *all* stressed, she could tell me, but acting it out in public, talking about it like I did, made it all the worse.

6 Upper secondary education in Norway also offers Vocational Programmes (a total of nine), with an option to take a supplementary programme for general university admissions certification.

She was right of course, and I was properly embarrassed. What I did not think of back then however, but have given some thought in more recent years, is that the students recruited from upper secondary music programmes were already living by the norms and rules that I was just then starting to learn. They may have been as stressed, as anxious and as eager to fit in, but equipped with the proper knowledge and know-how, academy participation was a more familiar enterprise to them in relation to both practices of 'learning' and to practices of 'being'. They carried themselves with ease in relation to the social and musical codes of a music student culture, whereas I dishonoured not only the norm of keeping ones anxieties to oneself, but also norms constructing certain kinds of knowledge and competence as self-evident (priding myself for competences that other students viewed as self-evident), norms of practicing (not having practiced all summer, because it was, well, summer, wasn't it?) and norms constructing the quality of music (proudly signalling my affiliations with music that were core markers of coolness in a previous student culture, but turned out to have no credibility within the academy music student culture). The music students with Musikklinja backgrounds were already comfortable with the musical and social learning culture of the academy, having encountered and negotiated their way into what might have been a similar culture at upper secondary levels.

Certainly, beginning a professional life as a musician after having completed five years of advanced classical music studies, I was as familiar and comfortable with the ways and means of higher music education as they were. I was equipped with the proper knowledge and know-how, and eager to practice my hard won musicianship. However, while professional musical life to some extent confirmed, acknowledged and facilitated such a practice, my academy attained musicianship was also thoroughly tested and challenged in meetings with musicians having taken other routes to the profession, with amateurs, choral singers, a variety of audiences, with piano pupils, producers, critics and concert arrangers. Furthermore, the cultural and musical ways and means attained through music education and familiarized into common sense universals and truths have been challenged even further on the music academic and philosophical path that I have been following in more recent years. No truth, it seems, can be universally sustained. Rather, we are all participants in what Foucault understands as different games of truth; sets of rules and procedures by which truth is produced (Foucault, 2000a). And in the manifold musical societies of the Western world, multiple games of truth are played, within as well as outside of music educational practices.

## 1.3 Musical multiplicity

Variety and diversity can be said to characterize Western musical life in the 2010s. The immediate presence and availability of all kinds of music, the enormous variety on offer and the range of technologies, sites and scenes for expressing, creating and sharing music make everyday musical life a multifaceted phenomenon. The continuous development and expansion of musical expressions and genres, musical activities and forms of communication and meaning production are intertwined with the increase of new professions and professionals in the fields of music. And the increase in musical groups and subgroups striving for attention and recognition of value in the attention economies of the West brings about further diversification: noticeability, uniqueness and distinctiveness of style, characteristics that seem to pay off when resources are distributed. Musical multiplicity drives itself, so to speak.[7]

This complexity is matched by an equally complex situation concerning the assumptions, values, truths and attitudes surrounding music. What Bohlman (2001, p. 17) calls "multiple ontologies of music" are enacted and negotiated across the diversity of human socio-musical behaviour and practices, interacting on the individual as well as the local and the global level. When sharing and experiencing, or teaching, or learning music in social settings, people make use of a multiplicity of assumptions and beliefs concerning music as a phenomenon, the characteristics and qualities of music and musicians, and the purposes and meanings of making music. Bohlman's point is that paradoxically, all ontologies are particulars; they are bound to a certain time, culture, person and relation. This stance has roots in poststructuralist thought, which emphasizes context and instability and the never-ending human re-creation of lived reality. Of course, human meaning making may always have entailed multiplicity in the form of ontological pluralism. What the philosophical turn at the end of 20th century brought about was an *interest in* and recognition of differences and an *attentiveness* to diversities, that furthermore exerted its influence upon scientific, political, religious, educational and musical human practices.

Defined broadly as the relation between music and human learning, the relevant field of interest for music educators and researchers then could be said to have expanded considerably. Both music education and music education

7 A paradox might be that we have to strive for attention in relatively identical ways giving that forms of communication and meaning have to follow certain rules of the game to get through.

research have experienced a turn of attentiveness from focusing solely on distinct and discernible intentional learning practices towards the diversity and pluralism of everyday musical learning. Moreover, categories and priorities that until recently have passed as self-evident and natural have been deconstructed or otherwise shown to be contextual and particular social constructions. This poststructuralist turn of thought challenges music education to recognize the musical and cultural multiplicity already existing within the particular music educational practices themselves.

Traditionally, educational subjects and programmes are identified by their more or less fixed and stable properties, characters or essences. The 'natural' contents and activities of the subject are thus given by its self-evident 'core'. A poststructuralist perspective, however, must underline the shifting and decentred character of school subjects and educational practices, detached from any essential point.[8] Educational practices are locally defined and constituted by participants, both students and teachers, living in and by a cultural multiplicity, accordingly bringing a variety of cultural experiences, attitudes and values to school.

## 1.4 The transmission of truths

Music educational practices and institutions like Musikklinja are sites of polyphony and the coexistence of multiple agendas. Yet, educational practices also imply the passing on of a body of knowledge and skills, and although this body might be questioned, expanded and to a certain degree changed, the hegemonic conveyance and transmission of a knowledge culture is an important aspect with educational programmes and institutions. A quite typical approach would be to treat this as an encounter between two sides: on one side the institution and institutionalized culture existing before and beyond students, and on the other side the students and student culture, bringing with them their previous experiences, shaped by their age, their music cultures and their social backgrounds. Research on these premises would differentiate between 'student discourses' as enacted and narrated, and 'school discourses', either enacted and narrated by teachers, or represented in curricula or the formal organization of daily life at school. Such an approach might similarly set up a dichotomy

8 The argument is taken from, and elaborated further, in "Music didactics as a multifaceted field of cultural didactic studies" by Dyndahl and Ellefsen (2009)

between 'the manifold and diverse discourses in present musical society' (students) and 'the frozen traditions of institutionalized musicality' (teachers or institution).

Reality however may be more complex. School cultures are made by participants who interpret, narrate, enact and live them. Students are *constitutors* of school culture. Of course, students may act as destabilizers and challengers of traditional views of what music education is and can be in particular settings. On the other hand, it may be that students do not question the values they meet when they start school, or also bring with them similar values. It is just as likely that students for the most part confirm, consolidate and strengthen the school culture, contributing to the transmission of a knowledge culture with its central idioms, practices and truths. An assumption that students represent something altogether different from the institutional culture, coming from a field of musical multifariousness, might not be sustainable. Their advanced musical taste, their fluency with musical technology, and their experiences with a vast and various world of music might be severely exaggerated. My point is, the musical multiplicity of Western societies does not necessarily pass through students and challenge institutional culture. The case may just as well be that students are more traditional and conservative than are the teachers, eager to learn and earn their memberships in a community of musicians. Furthermore, students' musical beliefs, preferences and values are probably as different from each other as they are from what could be termed institutional discourses. In the current research project, students' articulations and enactments are studied not as marginalized otherness in an institutional culture, but as articulations and enactments of institutional culture itself.

## 1.5 Subjectivity and identity

To further add to the multifariousness of music educational practices, musical learning and experience is inextricably linked to processes of understanding and expressing oneself. The intertwinement of learning and identity have been emphasized and explored by the "community of practice" literature (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) as well as in the field of music education research: you never just learn, you learn to be. The students of Musikklinja do not simply learn music, music theory and the mastery of an instrument, they learn of

course to be third years, fiddle players, jazz-nerds and talents as well as the wrong kind of student or even disappointments.

Rooted in modernist discourse and within the discipline of developmental psychology, the concept of identity normatively designates the uniqueness, continuity and stability of a phenomenon or person. When operationalized in research inspired by sociocultural theory or poststructuralist philosophy however, the concept of identity is often accompanied by a critique, directed at its modernist assumptions of a stable and unavoidable inner core of essential characteristics and dispositions. Preferring the rearticulation identit*ies*, personhood and individuality are investigated as contingent temporary products of a subject's various attachments to several different social groups, positions and categories of meaning making. The creation of such products is seen as on-going, everlasting identity work or construction, encompassing re-interpretations of the past as well as predictions of the future.

In the present thesis, the concept of subjectivity replaces what is traditionally understood as a self, the master brain, the originator of all action and the holder of true identity. Subjectivity is an idea founded on and developed in poststructuralist discourse. The concept emphasizes a subject's coming to existence through discourse, and hence its contingency. Thus, the locus of human agency is always already discursively constructed. 'Identity' would be the project of a reflexive and social subjectivity, creatively drawing on available and legitimate discursive technologies and positions, working and reworking them. Understood like this, we could take identity to represent a "technology of the self" (Foucault, 2000d), a way of relating to, performing actions on and adjusting subjectivity through the use of discursively offered resources. In this understanding, I lean on the writings of Hall (1996), who states that:

> I use 'identity' to refer to the meeting point, the point of *suture*, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to 'interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be 'spoken'. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us. (Hall, 1996, pp. 5-6)

Now, even if originally belonging to another tradition, the concept of identity seems to have a place within research narratives of subjectivity and discourse, and is frequently treated somewhat analogously to subjectivity. Having contributed significantly to the literature on subjectivity and the constitution of subjects, research traditions like gender studies still seem to make use of

'identity', if only strategically or as a "compelling illusion, an object of *belief*" (Butler, 1997c, p. 402, italics in original). An isolated preoccupation with the former with no connection to the latter however, creates the impression that a subject's self-reflexive projects, her presentations of herself and her identifications with social groups and spaces are limitless and open, with the potential of going in any direction. The concept of subjectivity emphasizes that the subject's existence in and through discourse governs and naturalizes certain reflexions, presentations and identifications over others.

The constitution and negotiation of music student subjectivities is of primary concern for my research. Following a poststructuralist and Foucauldian approach, subjectivity is studied in its dispersion (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 54); examined by looking into the various discursive practices that afford and authorize positions to speak and act from, legitimize behaviours and types of conduct, and hold certain explanations and interpretations to be true. The thesis offers no gallery of identities, but attempts a description of signifying practices at Musikklinja, and an analysis of how they facilitate the constitution of subjectivity in and through discourses of musicianship. Additionally, the view that subjectivity is *performatively* constituted (Butler, 1993; 1997b; 2007) emphasizes how individuals come to be through the imposition, reiteration and acting out of norms, values and truths characteristic for the various practices in which they participate.

## 1.6 Practices of musicianship

While recognizing the multifariousness of students' performances and negotiations, the main concern of the present project is how students navigate in and around discourses of musicianship. I do not presuppose the existence of the term musicianship as an established concept at Musikklinja. Indeed, the English word is not easily translated into Norwegian. In English however, the concept of musicianship is commonly used to describe levels of artistry and expertise in playing an instrument or singing, or more general musical skills like having a musical ear. Teaching good musicianship is a task for music educators. Yet, in the context of the relations between learning and subjectivity discussed above, the meanings offered by this concept can be expanded. Learning musicianship might be understood as learning how to 'be' in the fields of music in a broader sense, in terms of moral standards and rules of

conduct, discursive repertoires and schemes of interpretation, associated subject positions and modes of action. Some of these aspects are acknowledged and deliberately taught and practiced in Musikklinja, like how to behave on stage, how to criticize and give feedback to performing students, how to dress at choir-concerts, how to pay tribute to the accompanist, etc. However, how to react to criticism, which genres, styles and stars that are legitimate and how to get in positions to play and perform are part of the huge amount of non-intentional or informal learning that take place between all participants in every music educational practice.

Although lacking the specific term, I find that both teachers and students of Musikklinja are very much concerned with aspects of what can be called 'musicianship'. We could even say that developing students' musicianship is a central aim and objective. It is an intention shared by teachers, students, school administration and parents, materialized in curricula and the ways school practices are organized, the choice of contents and methods, the public displays of Musikklinja in concerts and the media. While general intentions of developing musicianship are made quite plain however, what musicianship might imply in Musikklinja is a less straightforward matter, negotiations happening in every relation in every practice at all times.

In the present study, my intention is to explore how subjectivities come to exist through students' engagement with discourses of musicianship. Associated questions of interest then would be: how is musicianship practiced in Musikklinja? As practiced across the various sites and activities of playing, singing, composing, listening, sharing, and otherwise doing music in Musikklinja, what form does musicianship take?

Discourses then are not treated mainly as underlying regulating principles or archives of knowledge even if this can, and has been, a fruitful approach for focusing certain dynamics in the fields of music. Discourse is practice. Whether prevailing or marginalized, categories, procedures and interpretations are always enacted by someone, somewhere, somehow, and always in the context of the practice in which they are operating.

Investigating discursive practices of musicianship in Musikklinja, I make use of the Foucauldian concept of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1978/1990; 1978/1995; 1980; 2000b). The concept underscores how truth, value and knowledge, rather that being objectives and universals, are inseparable from the social practices that empower them as objects of truth and as universal values, and that

simultaneously empower themselves as objective, universal practices. Relations of power/knowledge make up a complex and dynamic small-meshed web in that they are enacted and negotiated between all participants, not simply imposed on powerless subjects by a powerful unit. Musicianship is practiced in and through relations of power/knowledge as they form across Musikklinja; some along traditional hierarchical lines of superiority and discipline, others enacted as interpretations and adjustments of self on self.

## 1.7 Research questions and overall aims

The main theme of the research project is how music students are subjectivated – made into music student subjects – in and through discursive practices of musicianship in Musikklinja. Combining an ethnographic design of participant observation and field interviews with an analytical framework based on Foucauldian discourse theory and performativity theory as elaborated by Butler (1993; 1997a; 1997b, 2007), I ask:

How are music student subjectivities constituted in and through discursive practices of musicianship in Musikklinja?

Strategically dividing the overall research question in two, I concentrate observations and analyses on the following questions:

- How is musicianship practiced in Musikklinja?
- How are student subjectivities performed?

The first sub-question seeks to investigate discourses of music and musicianship as 'practiced' – as enacted and negotiated – across a range of Musikklinja sites and activities. The second sub-question focuses on music student subjectivity as 'performed' – enabled and constituted – in and through discursive practices of musicianship. As the sub-questions indicate, the terms 'practice' and 'performance' both denote complex processes of meaning making that are intrinsically bound up with the constitution of subjectivity. Their theoretical complexity and analytical potential will be addressed in chapter 3.

I have three overall aims and ambitions with this research project: for one thing, I want to bring discourse theory and poststructuralist philosophy to bear on Musikklinja. By putting to use concepts like power/knowledge and discourse, performativity and subjectivation, I want to enable understandings of Musikklinja as a cultural, signifying co-production that facilitates music

student subjectivities by working and managing meaning, leading it in certain directions, establishing it in certain discursive formations (Foucault, 1972/2010) and directing it at certain positions in discourse. Upper secondary music studies constitute important educational paths to higher music education and professional musicianship; however, little or no research into programmes like Musikklinja has previously been done. It is my hope that a discourse analytical attempt at untangling and mapping power/knowledge relations at work, the formation of musicianship as practiced and music student subjectivities as performatively enacted in Musikklinja could provide music educators, researchers and decision makers within the fields of music education with a basis for further, more specific inquiries into and considerations of music education at upper secondary levels.

Secondly, I want to bring Musikklinja to bear on discourse theory and poststructuralist philosophy. I want to study empirically, ethnographically even, the theoretical assumptions made by poststructuralist approaches as to the discursiveness of meaning and the performativity of subjecthood. I want to investigate the capillary relations of power/knowledge and the processes of performative subjectivation as they play themselves out in practice. In this way, I hope to contribute to a more empirically anchored understanding of poststructuralist theories of subjectivity, meaning and power.

And finally, in observing and analysing student's engagement with music through listening, sharing, playing, singing and performing, I would also like to contribute to an even better understanding of subjectivation within practices of music, to and through musicianship. In music educational settings, music is part of discourse as practiced. Acts of musicianship and instances of music are just as much discursive statements as are acts of verbal, visual or gestural communication. Music thus represents a condition of possibility as well as a mode of performativity, a point of departure as well as a result of discursive subjectivation. Investigating empirically episodes of musical subjectivation, I hope to reach further into the power/knowledge relations between music and subjectivity.

## 1.8 An overview of the thesis

The thesis is laid out in the following way:

**Chapter 1 – Introduction.** To those not familiar with the Norwegian upper secondary music programme, the chapter offers a short introduction to "Musikklinja" as an educational practice. My own background and motivation for studying life at Musikklinja is outlined, and some main theoretical arguments established. The introduction also defines the aims and research questions of the study.

**Chapter 2 – Situating the study.** Chapter two aims at showing how the present study has developed in dialogue with earlier research in certain research traditions, most notably music education, cultural studies and gender studies. Since I was particularly interested in the constitution of music student subjectivity in upper secondary practices of musicianship, I have given priority to studies concerned with *upper secondary music practices* and/or *discourses of musicianship* and/or *the discursive constitution of subjectivity*.

**Chapter 3 – Discourse, power and performativity.** The chapter is divided into three sections that each addresses a main theoretical argument supporting the study: the discursiveness of music educational practices, the intertwinement of power, knowledge and subjectivity, and the performative character of subjectivation. In a fourth section, I show how the arguments are integrated in the analytical framework of the study.

**Chapter 4 – A discourse ethnography? Methodological considerations.** In establishing the study's research design, I soon became aware of the epistemological tensions in combining a poststructurally inspired theoretical and analytical framework with an ethnographic approach to field investigations and data production. Chapter four discusses some of the methodological dilemmas that may arise from such a design, and aims at developing an attitude and approach to data production and analyses that are suited to the present study.

**Chapter 5 – Research strategies and design.** Chapter five describes fieldwork procedures and the strategies of data production applied. The final sections give an account of how analyses have been carried out in three main phases; mapping Musikklinja practices (1), exploring the discursive practice of musicianship (2) and understanding processes of performative subjectivation (3).

**Chapters 6 and 7 – Musikklinja, and Musikklinja sites of subjectivation.** Chapters 6 and 7 together make out what ethnographers in general refer to as an ethnography; a researcher's analytical narration of the field she has studied, complete with shorter and longer fieldnote excerpts and interview quotations. Thus, the ethnography represents the empirical data, the analysis as well as the result of an ethnographic study.

I have chosen to divide the ethnography in two. Chapter 6 aims at setting the scene by focusing on Musikklinja as an institution that organizes and governs its member subjects in and across spaces and places, schedules and practices. Chapter 7 investigates more closely these practices as sites of subjectivation where student subjectivities are constituted in and through discourses of musicianship. Summaries and short discussions of the main analytical arguments made are offered at the end of chapter 6, and at the ends of the main sections of chapter 7.

**Chapter 8 – Negotiating musicianship.** This final chapter presents an overview and a discussion of the study's findings. It is divided in four main sections. The first two sections seek to answer the study's research questions by recapitulating *the discursive practice of musicianship in Musikklinja* and *the performance of student subjectivity* respectively. In the section that follows, the findings are discussed in relation to the study's overall aims and ambitions, and its theoretical and epistemological points of departure. In particular, the discussion aims at highlighting the interplay of power/knowledge and subjectivity at both macro and micro levels of discursive meaning making in Musikklinja. Finally, I offer a few retrospective thoughts on the study, its main contributions to the research communities and fields of practice to which it relates, and its potential implications for future research projects conducted along similar lines.

# 2 Situating the study

## 2.1 Searching for relevant research and literature

The search for relevant research and literature to situate and help develop the present study has been carried out in mainly two phases of the project. The first phase entailed an explorative search to identify areas of interest connected to the research topic, refine and focus the research questions and prepare for the design and implementation of my own field study. Coinciding with a more structured reading and consideration of literature vital for developing the epistemological and philosophical stance taken, including methodological issues, this first search came up with several studies that, even if just mentioned briefly in the following, were significant in the initial phases of designing and developing the present project: Søndergaard's developments of poststructuralist methodologies and her applications of these in researching gendered trajectories in academia (Søndergaard, 2000; 2002; 2005), DeNora's investigations of musical agency in everyday human practice (DeNora, 2000), Small's advocacy of the activity musicking rather than the product music (Small, 1998), Nerland's use of a Foucauldian approach in studying the instrumental lessons of higher music education as cultural practices (Nerland, 2004), and Ruud's elaborations of music in relation to identity (Ruud, 1997). Additionally, the first phase of searching identified some research traditions (beyond music education research) to explore further, most notably gender studies, music sociology, educational sociology and cultural studies.

The second phase was performed as a more structured electronic quest and carried out after all fieldwork was completed. Knowing more of what were my research priorities, I was able to work with three refined sets of keywords and put them to use across a range of databases and online reference sources. The sets of keywords combined the case of 'upper secondary/music education' (*music education, MDD, Musikklinja, Arts Programme, Upper Secondary, High School, Sixth Form*) with a focus on subjectivity (*subjection, subjectivation, subjectification, identity, performativity*) and discourse (*music, musicianship, discourse, power, negotiation*). In addition, I took advantage of the option offered by many search engines to filter and refine a search by disciplines or journals (*music sociology, music education, educational sociology, cultural studies, gender studies*). In the online search, I made use of national, international and Scandinavian databases, catalogues of Nordic research, online library search engines and platforms giving access to peer reviewed journals, articles and theses.

When setting up a field of research studies and approaches in which to situate the project, searching and choosing within a body of works that could potentially be relevant, the theoretical, empirical and methodological premises of the current study have guided my selection (as my choice of keywords illustrate). Further, I have tried to keep in contact with at least one of my core concerns as expressed in the research questions. Thus, I have prioritized research into upper secondary programmes of music similar to Musikklinja. As for questions of student subjectivity, I have chosen to elaborate on studies that are set in the same scientific and epistemological paradigm and take an analytical approach similar to that taken by myself. Likewise, when looking into discourses of musicianship in educational settings, I have primarily been interested in discourses applied to contexts akin to the ones observed in Musikklinja as well as approaches that in a qualitative, ethnographic manner research discourses as enacted and negotiated by participants rather than, say, as apparent from documents and curricula.

## 2.2 The Swedish "Arts Programme"

Upper secondary programmes in music education have in general received little attention from Nordic researchers. Even if quite a few Norwegian and Danish master and bachelor degree theses and research assignments show an interest in music studies at high school levels, this interest does not seem to extend to

doctoral or senior research projects. In recent years, however, a small number of studies of the music option of Swedish "Arts Programmes" (equivalent to the Norwegian "Programme for Music, Dance and Drama) has been carried out, some of which are important to, overlap with and might be seen as complementary to the current project in many respects.[9]

Two main concerns seem to occupy the Swedish researchers: Art Programme teachers' practices and discourse (choice of content and conceptions of quality), and students' possibilities of identity work (including gendered identities). This division in focus seems quite typical. Music education researchers are, not surprisingly, very much interested in teachers' teaching – discourses and practices that in different ways create learning spaces for students.[10] Meanwhile, when focusing on students, music education research is very much concerned with identity, as opposed to for example investigating how students' discourses and practices in different ways make learning spaces for fellow students (and hence also themselves), or, for that matter, teaching spaces for teachers.

So also the current project. Aiming to understand how the young people of Musikklinja turn themselves into music student subjects in and through discursive practices of musicianship, I follow the typical research narrative of understanding students as 'receivers' of institutional discourses and investigating the constitution of legitimate music student positions and identities. What I further attempt however is to explore institutional discourse as something enacted and constituted by students themselves. It is students themselves that create and perform the discursive culture of Musikklinja. Even if this culture certainly exists before students enter school as novices, in the form of traditions and established practices, everyday and informal ways and means of interaction, stories that are told and objects that are handled; practices need further practice, ways and means must be interacted, stories must be retold, and objects used for culture to stay alive. Students are obviously very much involved in the maintenance, renegotiation and possible changing of institutional discourse, including discourses that constitute learning spaces and regulate subjectivities.

9 The licentiate theses of Asp (2011), Källen (2011) and Nyberg (2011) referred to in the following review are all to be seen as midway reports on PhD studies in progress.

10 Although studying students undertaking teacher training, a notable Swedish strand of music education research is actually focusing on music teacher identity, elaborating on the paradox of being either "musician" or "teacher". See Bouij (1998) and Bladh (2002)

In this context, Nyberg's qualitative study encompassing twenty-nine participants in four Swedish upper secondary programmes in music is relevant (Nyberg, 2011). Nyberg explores and discusses students' perceptions and conceptualizations of knowledge and learning (and hence, one might add, their discursive contribution to an institutional culture of upper secondary music studies). His approach is a Deweyan one, he uses the pragmatist key concepts of experience, action and meaning and the notion of resistance as a prerequisite for learning to describe how learning happens through a reaction to a challenge or a problem and through the active answer to that challenge. Asking how students conceptualize and speak of ("begreppsliggör") musical knowledge and learning, in other words what knowledge in music is and how to learn it, he addresses students' responsibility for their own learning by understanding them as (co)creators of that knowledge.[11] The students in Nyberg's study conceptualize musical knowledge as a contextual "three-part combination of theory, practice and expression/emotion that cannot be fully separable" which manifests itself through as well as depends upon action (for examples students' will to practice), curricula and teacher(s') experience(s) (English summary, p. 145). On an overall basis though, what strikes him as the most surprising and interesting result of his research, is that the students participating in his study have never before been asked to reflect upon musical knowledge, what it is and how to acquire it. If learners are responsible for their own learning, how come we do not ask or expect students to reflect critically upon what and how they are supposed to learn – upon various contents, methods and criteria of quality constituting musical knowledge? For Nyberg, the lack of will to include students in conversations and reflections concerning musical knowledge and know-how undermines education as a democratic praxis, and he takes the following pragmatic stance:

> If learning of music on a deep level is made possible through inclusion of those who are seen as learners, those who are seen as teachers – as well as those who have the power to shape educational prerequisites – need to address this issue,

11 "Ansvar for egen læring (AFEL)" – students as participants responsible for their own learning – has been a recurring theme in Swedish and Nordic educational politics for years. However, as the Norwegian originator psychologist Bjørgen notes (2008), what was intended as a theory and elucidation of learning processes have often been misunderstood and simplified as both a kind of moral admonition of pupils, and a devaluation of the importance of the teacher. According to Bjørgen, AFEL is meant to emphasize that learning happens through a reaction to a challenge or problem, and through the answer to the challenge (the Norwegian and Swedish word "ansvar" can be taken to mean both "responsibility" and "reply"). Effective and good learning are hence results of active learners' use of their own methods, strategies and techniques for learning and self-regulation.

> and start making it possible for music students' voices to be heard in music education. (Nyberg, 2011, p. 145)

Turning to a focus on teachers' discourse and practice, Zandén (2010) investigates discourses on music making, taking conceptions of quality in music teachers' dialogues on upper secondary school ensemble playing as his case and relating it to national curricula and syllabi. His rationale and aim for this choice of focus is similar to Nyberg's, namely the meaningful, dialogical interaction between teacher and students, brought about by making hidden assumptions and underlying assessment criteria open and accessible for all participants. But rather than suggesting a solution in which the sounding of students' voices bring these assumptions to the fore, creating new and more fitting interpretations of the whats and hows of musical knowledge, Zandén is critical to the withdrawn role of the teacher and the weight and status of informal learning strategies and approaches common in Swedish schools of today. Analysing focus group discussions between upper secondary music teachers watching videos of student ensemble performances, he concludes:

> The results show that the ideal of informal music-making is so strong that the [focus] groups describe teacher intervention as detrimental to musical progress. Very little is said about the sounding music, whereas physical expressivity, autonomy and joy of playing are prominent topics. (Zandén, 2010, English summary)

In other words, neither aesthetic criteria connected to genre and style performed, nor evaluations of the musical craftsmanship involved are prominent when the teacher colleagues discuss the student ensemble videos. The student performance they take to be of high quality is praised as original, autonomous, authentic and honest, and they agree that teacher intervention could spoil the natural expression of the dedicated youths. So, the criteria supporting the teachers' experiences of quality remain hidden, and important components of musical knowledge might potentially be missing in student/teacher interaction, making it difficult for students to gain mastery of them. For Zandén then, the apparent lack of music specific, contextual criteria to evaluate student performances by in teachers' discourses undermines meaningful student/teacher interaction, and poses a possible threat to music as a subject in upper secondary school.

The absence of a musical and creative/aesthetic dimension in teacher-student classroom interaction is also emphasized by Nilsson (2009) observing and videotaping the music lessons of five upper secondary music teachers and then interviewing them using film excerpts in stimulated recall. Even if the teachers

when interviewed state that aesthetic and musical aspects are their main concerns when isolating and working with theoretical, technical or craft related tasks in class, Nilsson argues that the relationship between tools or techniques taught and actual sounding music or students own music making and musicianship seldom gets explored. Furthermore, when the musical activity in class involves students actually listening to or playing music together, classroom practice is primarily regulated by needs to occupy and socialize every pupil, the teacher avoiding making musical or aesthetic demands that might exclude someone from participating in the groups' music making. Teachers' expressed intentions of working creatively with aesthetic aspects of a musical content are not reflected in their actual teaching, she finds. Instead, students' mastery of musical and aesthetic expression is taken for granted.

An interesting study very much related to Nilsson's is the investigation into teachers' choices of educational content in ensemble playing in upper secondary school carried out by Asp (2011). He asks explicitly about what music teachers perceive as essential contents in music teaching in the school subject "ensemble", and subsequently constructs two main discursive categories from his material; the "musicians'" and the "music teachers'". With the participants of his four focus groups, he finds that discussions of content are constructed mainly through what he terms the "musicians'" repertoire: their professional musicianship and experiences of performing. Music is a product to be mastered, aiming towards a concert or a recording. Through playing and listening to musical products, students are assumed to gain knowledge of aesthetic effects and style, i.e. how one genre relates to another, without a need for teachers to openly discuss such matters. The similarity to the findings of Zandén, Nyberg and Nilsson is striking. Neither classroom practice and interaction nor teachers' discourse focus explicitly on aesthetic (and contextual) features of quality musicianship, making the criteria and components of these remain presupposed, leaving it up to students themselves to figure them out.

An attempt at clarifying and bringing out participants' assumptions concerning musical knowledge and skills seems to be a shared intention in the research projects of Asp, Nyberg, Zandén and Nilsson. What remains a challenge for music education researchers though is that we are offering our analyses from within the self-same discourses we seek to unveil. When pointing to an observed preoccupation with music's social, instrumental and theoretical sides at the expense of the artistic, creative and aesthetic dimensions, the distinction between the two has already been forged. A missing link is presumed to

exist in teacher/student discourse, the 'real' aesthetic criteria underpinning evaluations and assessments. According to Frith (1996a; 1996b) however, the aesthetic and the functional can be understood as inextricable from each other in the way we respond to and make sense of music. Building upon this altered notion of the aesthetic, Dyndahl and Ellefsen (2009) argue that what might be called "aesthetic-functional" experiences are always already intertwined with experiences of our selves, shaping subjectivities and at the same time being shaped by them. So, it might prove both impractical and impossible to isolate strictly aesthetic criteria for discussing quality musicianship and performance. And teachers' preoccupation with how students 'are' while performing, how they look, act and interact, might be legitimate aesthetic-functional criteria to take into account, perhaps corresponding more to students' everyday life musical appreciation.

In the current project, I too share the above stated intention of investigating the discourses of musical knowledge, music making and quality that constitute and regulate Musikklinja. I have however no ambition to arrive at and reveal some genuine aesthetic criteria silently governing the development of students' musicianship. Rather, my aim is to explore some of the relations between aesthetic, functional and subjectivizing processes identified by Frith. When asking, *"How are music student subjectivities constituted in and through discursive practices of musicianship in Musikklinja?"* I seek to understand the discourses, the categories, truths and procedures used and negotiated by students when interpreting themselves and the world so as to be able to engage in the musical learning practices of Musikklinja: what adjustments does a metal loving bass player need to make, if any, to participate in the sounding "Amen!" of the school choir? What available subject positions and categories does he need to adapt to, challenge or transform to act (self)ethically within normative discourse?

Studying how student subjectivities, musical "acting space" and conditions for musical learning relate to each other in the Arts programme, but concentrating her research on constructions of gendered subjectivity, the licentiate work of Källén constitutes a somewhat similar approach (Källén, 2011). By using the concept of "gender regime" as an analytical tool, she investigates ensemble playing in upper secondary music studies as a practice in which it is possible to construct various feminine and masculine positions, and in which variations of feminine and masculine musical ways of acting are taken up, embodied and performed by the students participating. Her overall aim seems to be to

understand analytically how gendered power relations are constructed and reproduced in the ensemble practices. What I find especially interesting about Källén's approach is precisely this attempt at studying discursive power in its minuscule local relationships, power-as-interacted, as well as power-as-diffused. She finds support for this in Connell (2009), who emphasizes that both global and local gender patterns are constitutive for the gender regime of a specific community or context. The institutionalized and the diffused global spheres of power, she says with reference to Connell, work in parallel, both being produced and reproduced jointly by people through social practices like ensemble playing.

The interconnectedness of power relations on different levels is addressed in the current project as a dual focus on discourses of musicianship both as enacted and negotiated by students in the day-to-day practices of Musikklinja, and as currents or trends in the fields of music of which Musikklinja can be regarded as a member institution – the fields of music education, music education research and also music as a professional field of art and performance. Assuming that micro scale negotiations of meaning are both dependent on and constitutive of power relations on higher levels, ethnographic investigation into the "field of application" of power, the relationships where power "installs itself and produces its real effects" (Foucault, 1980, p. 97) would appear to constitute a productive approach. Källén (2011) follows and interviews three groups of students at two different Arts Programmes in their ensemble lessons. While she follows them ethnographically for quite a long time, actually a whole year, she does not however extend her observations beyond the defined arenas of ensemble rehearsals, breaks and concerts. As I see it, one strength of my own research project is that all compulsory music related activities that students participate in as part of their music studies are included in systematic ethnographic observation (over a period of 6 months), as are students' social and informal life between classes. This facilitates a study of power relations as enacted and exercised in singular practices at school, and as a pattern or structure across several sites and activities, constituting Musikklinja as a whole.

Like Källén, Scheid (2009) aims to investigate how youths attending upper secondary programmes in music[12] use stereotypes available to them through music and music activity in various self-projects. While Källén writes within a

12 Only one of the programmes, named "Music", is part of the Arts Programme. The other two are options that include music as a singular module. In one of his result chapters, he compares them to one another, but that is not followed up in every aspect.

gender studies research tradition however, building on the works of Connell, Butler and others with explicit reference to Foucauldian theories of power and subjectivity, the subjectivizing effect of discourse and the power relations constituting musical practices remain unaccounted for in Scheid's study. Instead, the rich description of students' opinions on the values, functions and uses of music as well as the relations between music and identity that emerge from his combined survey and interview study are interpreted with regard to theories on late modernity identity and youth culture. While his discussion is certainly valuable, and together with the richness and detailed descriptions offered in his analyses is of considerable relevance for the current project, the absence of a deeper understanding of how people come to be through the practices they participate in seems to diminish the role of music to a straightforward sociocultural signifier of identity; a reservoir of styles and attitudes for making oneself visible and knowable, and displaying one's cultural colours. Herein lie, as I see it, some of the differences between the research traditions that circle around music and identity, and those that struggle with concepts of subjectivity, subject positions and subjectivation.

## 2.3 Researching processes of subjectivation

Liberating the gendered subject from any stable intrinsic characteristics, Butler (1993; 1997b; 2007) has received massive criticism from within gender studies itself, especially from activists that through a lifespan have fought for women's rights, women's perspectives, and the 'womanhood' of women (for an overview of the critique, see e.g. Segal 2008). Her contributions nevertheless constitute an important part of the literature on subjectivity construction, providing researchers working empirically with questions of how gendered (Björck, 2011; Davies et al., 2001; Nayak & Kehily, 2006), racialized (Youdell, 2003) or classed subjects (O´Flynn & Petersen, 2007) come to be with tools for digging deeper into the processes of discursive subjectivation. Poststructuralist authors working within the sociology of education have been especially appreciative of Butler's ideas, and in a special issue of *British Journal of sociology of education (BJSE)* reporting on the relevance of Butler's work, her theoretical tools are employed by amongst others Youdell (2006), ethnographically studying subjectivizing practices at a multicultural "day-out", and Davies (2006) discussing in detail the simultaneous discursive submission and mastery of youngsters in a primary school. As the two articles clearly exemplify ways of

utilizing the key ideas of subjectivity, performativity and submission/mastery in empirical analyses, I will present them in more detail in the following, also touching on other research projects by the same authors.

Davies (1989; 2000; 2001; 2006) has contributed considerably to rendering the somewhat abstract and difficult world of poststructuralist thought methodically useful for detailed and insightful analyses of what she, referring to Butler, calls the "paradoxical conditions" (2006, p. 425) through which the accomplishment of subjecthood is made possible in educational settings. In *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales* (1989), she studies how preschool children perform gender when discussing feminist stories told by the author – fairy tales that explicitly deconstruct traditional gendered narratives. Another project involves the collective biographical memory work of female PhD students and academic colleagues on "becoming schoolgirls" (Davies et al., 2001). The BJSE article mentioned above likewise shows her operationalization of Foucault's as well as Butler's theoretical landscapes in careful considerations of how subjects, in the same act as becoming possible student/pupil subjects, also reiterate and confirm their own conditions of possibility (Davies, 2006, p. 426). Analysing a primary school reading session, a conflict between two youngsters and a teacher during playtime, a mail-exchange with a PhD student and findings from a study of literacy as conceptualized in school curricula, she focuses on relations of power – teachers or schools imposing interpretations, terms and definitions on pupils positioning them as appropriate subjects: "This is an oral reading session. You will all read", "Naughty boys", "You are individual learners". The way her analyses work, she describes the situation and the power relations at play, the "gaze",[13] an interpretation, a category, a definition. Emphasizing the importance of mutual acts of recognition through which subjects accord each other the status of viable subjecthood, she argues that pupils need to *relate to* the imposed gaze, but that when taken up and reiterated, the category, definition or subject position is also potentially reworked, shifted or subverted. The distressed reader avoids failure by repeating loudly what his peer whispers in his ear, the naughty boys reinstate themselves as successful autonomous individuals chanting "we are the naughty boys" down the hallway. A sense of autonomy and freedom (mastery) is accomplished even if success within one system may be unrecognizable as such within another. In this reiteration of power, Davies notes, agency can be found; radically conditioned, but never

13 See Foucault's descriptions of the panopticon in *Discipline and Punish* (1978/1995)

determined by the discursive power embedded in the educational context and the relations between its participants.

The "discursive agency"[14] implied in Butler's and also, I would say, the later Foucault's understanding of subjectivation is taken up by Youdell (2003; 2006) when asking "how the self comes into being, what the costs of the self might be, and how the self might be made *again differently*" (Youdell, 2006, p. 512). Her investigations of school inequalities and how they are sustained through the performance of gender/sexuality, social class, ethnicity and race, ability and disability in everyday school life lie in the tradition of critical school ethnographies like Willis (1981) and Aggleton (1985). Rather than asking how economic, social or linguistic structures and institutions produce and determine material inequality however, Youdell's application of performativity and her Foucauldian understanding of power leads her to consider students' practices of self as well as the constraint under which they are carried out. As with Davies' approach, Youdell assumes that submission depends upon mastery just as mastery depends upon submission, meaning that agency is crucial in discursive subjectivation processes. The subject is not a passive receiver, but always an active creator in becoming a subject of discourse. In a study focusing on year 11 students (age 15-16) in a multi-ethnic, outer London secondary school, Youdell (2003) argues that the successful performance of African-Caribbean male identity actually enables adolescent black boys to submit to educational power relations, but then again that this mastery undermines their chances of academic success since "Black students' discursive constitutions of race and subcultural identity are at once *censured* by the school organisation as undesirable and simultaneously *deployed* as 'proof' of this undesirability" (Youdell, 2003, p. 15). Giving an example of black males "slouching" in class she shows subjects working with their assigned category, making an agreement with all participants including the teacher of deploying the definition of themselves in ways that sustain their legitimate participation in education. Similarly, visiting a "Multicultural Day" event in a Sydney high school, Youdell deploys her way of thinking to analyse processes of raced-nationed-religioned subjectivation, focusing on struggles over the place and meaning of "Lebanese", "Turkish" and "Arabic" (Youdell, 2006) subjects within contemporary Australian high school culture. Through participants' engagement with discourses of multiculturality and orientalism, intermixed with discourses on adult and youth heterosexual-masculinities and post 9/11 Islamic threat, the 'good' and the 'bad'

14 Butler uses the term "discursive agency" in chapter four of *Excitable Speech* (1997a)

ethnic student is constructed: 'good' when contributing to the school's fund-raising effort by displaying their difference, dressing in costumes and serving traditional food, 'bad' when challenging multicultural stability and agreement by showing off the crescent symbol of Islam, tagging "Turks rule", and inviting their non-student and even more 'ethnic' friends to hang out by their food stalls.

Davies' analyses in the BJSE-article, like Youdell's analyses, contemplate subjectivities born of power relations between teachers/authorities and students. The teachers, the institution, the authority, are seen as granters of subjecthood and students are seen as subjects coming into existence. We might say that they ascribe the imposed categories to discourses carried by the teachers/schools (dominant), and the categories as reiterated to discourses carried by the pupils/students (sub-cultural). Youdell explicitly operates with "the dominant pro-school" discourse, and the discourse of "student sub-culture", comparing and discussing performance of identity across them. For this reason, pupils' or students' creative reiterating of imposed categories always seem to be grounded in negotiations *between* discursive practices – how to participate in one, without losing your legitimacy in another. Even if this seems to be true also for the students of Musikklinja, I find it difficult to sustain sharp borders between dominant institutional discourse and student sub-cultural discourse in the study of student subjectivities as constituted and performed in Musikklinja. For one thing, acts of recognition *among students* are as significant for the production of student subjecthood as are acts of recognition between students and teachers. Moreover, my approach assumes that institutional culture is co-produced, and that the subject positions and truths made available for students are results of collective endeavours and negotiations. Wanting to emphasize and investigate how students themselves contribute to, understand and perform their own conditions of possibility, assigning the categories and definitions in play to discourses with either teacher/institutional culture or student/subculture has hence been of lesser interest. The ethnographic field investigations has been as attentive towards students' contributions as the teachers', facilitating analyses of institutional culture as perceived and enacted by students, and of subjectivation processes in relation to discourses of musicianship encountered in students' interactions, language and conduct.

## 2.4 Subjectivation within music practices[15]

Addressing the depth and complexity of music's relation to subjectivity, Frith (1996a) argues:

> What I want to suggest […] is not that social groups agree on values which are then expressed in their cultural activities (the assumption of the homology models) but that they only get to know themselves *as groups* (as particular organization of individual and social interests, of sameness and difference) *through* cultural activity, through aesthetic judgement. Making music isn't a way of expressing ideas; it is a way of living them. (Frith, 1996a, p. 111)

Rather than considering music as a passive mediating sign and the articulation of some previously existing identities of subjects and social groups, Frith insists that identity is actually prepared, produced and recognized within and due to musical practice, aesthetic assessment and evaluation, and that aesthetic experiences make sense only by taking on both a subjective and a collective identity (Frith, 1996a, p. 109). An important conclusion can be drawn from this: Assuming that playing and experiencing music is subjectivizing, as are all human practices, the music involved matters. It is as discursively important as are linguistic or bodily statements. As a social signifier or statement, or, to use Scheid's expression, an "egologo" (Scheid, 2009), certainly, but stopping here underestimates the complexity of musical subjectivation.

In *Performing Rites – On the Value of Popular Music* (Frith, 1996b), Frith makes the case that such social 'functions' of music are inextricably linked to music's aesthetic aspects, and that this is so regardless of genre and style. That is, music is not an autonomous and external object, producing meaning in itself. In the encounter with music, and in music's aesthetic aspects, we experience our subjectivity and cultural identity, creating bonds between music, the sociocultural context and ourselves. As Frith sees it, the aesthetic dimension situates us in the world, at the same time – and in the same way – as it disconnects us from the world. The paradox of submission/mastery can be noted in that the musical, i.e. aesthetic and functional, experience helps to construct us socially, while we simultaneously experience the meanings as inherent in music, as musical intrinsic qualities, or as the essence of music. For Frith, moreover, this works in a similar way, regardless of music genre. Cultural studies have often been accused of reducing "text to context, poetry to propaganda, works of art to lumps of text churned out by a ubiquitous ideology

15 Some of the arguments made in this section were previously published in "Music didactic as a field of cultural didactic studies", written with Petter Dyndahl (Dyndahl & Ellefsen 2009).

machine" (Felski, 2005, p. 28). Frith, on the contrary, attempts to alter the notion of aesthetics. Aesthetic experience always involves the implementation and negotiation of subjective as well as collective identities, or "way[s] of being in the world", he holds:

> Music, the experience of music for composer/performer and listener alike, gives us a way of being in the world, a way of making sense of it. (Frith, 1996a, p. 114)

Aesthetic processes, then, can never be 'pure' in a Kantian sense, or, put another way: what seems purely aesthetic must necessarily include subjective and collective 'interests', i.e. values, ontologies and identities.

For culturally oriented music sociologists like Frith, the relation between music and identity/subjectivity is a central concern. But even in other disciplines of research related to music, such as music education, music therapy, music psychology and even musicology questions of music and identity and/or subjectivation in music have been thoroughly discussed the last 50 years. The approaches taken and the nature of the questions posed have of course varied according to the particular research discipline, its traditional aims, methods and core practices, its expert journals and conferences. Nevertheless, a preoccupation with 'identity' seems to have been central, investigations into subjectivity and subjectivation processes constituting a more recent approach, and one more often taken in projects interested in musical gender-constructions (for studies in a Scandinavian context, see Björck, 2011; Lorentzen, 2009).

In Ruud's empirical study of music therapy students' reflections on their autobiographical identity projects, *Musikk og identitet* [Music and identity] (1997), identity is discussed by means of a collection of metaphorical rooms: the personal, the social, the room of time and place, as well as the "transpersonal" room. These rooms provide a range of spatial openings for the construction of identity, understood as both provisional individual inferences and potential discursive associations. Ruud's analyses describes the complex relations between music and identity; the feeling, interpretation and presentation of the self as well as the self's possible scopes of action. He emphasizes how music as an aesthetic object appears to create local and individual affective attendance by connecting items and relations to time and place – putting them together as significantly present – to prevent the world from appearing accidental and pointless: "they are loaded with power, values, emotions and moods. They are experienced as real and embodied, not as accidental representations of things in the world or phenomena we encounter" (Ruud, 1997, p. 57, translated

in Dyndahl & Ellefsen, 2009). In this way, aesthetic experience produces an emotional context which might be repeatedly recalled, put into effect and transformed in the continuous reflexive process identity and subjectivity seem to be – in this case a process of memory-work simultaneously affording meaning to initial experiences.

In a corresponding perspective to those of Frith and Ruud, DeNora (2000) likewise applies the term aesthetic to the processes and relations between subjectivity and music, in addition to the musical qualities that people experience as meaningful. For DeNora, human beings are active social agents who use music to form and regulate their own agency, understood as: "feeling, perception, cognition and consciousness, identity, energy, perceived situation and scene, embodied conduct and comportment" (DeNora, 2000, p. 20). In everyday musical life, she considers that:

> Music is one of the resources to which actors turn when they engage in the aesthetic reflexive practice of configuring self and/or others as emotional and aesthetic agents, across a variety of scenes. (DeNora, 2000, pp. 158-159)

DeNora's comprehensive series of ethnographic studies closely investigate this "variety of scenes" in which we utilize music as a resource in our projects of self-regulation as well as in the bodily, emotional and biographical work those projects involve. Correspondingly to how Frith understands the social functions of the 'aesthetic', the active musical agents of DeNora's constitute their agency, as well as get their agency constituted, precisely in aesthetic, reflexive practices: "as this music happens, so do I" (2000, p. 158).

DeNora regards music as a technology of self, appropriated by individuals engaging in practices that structure, maintain and constitute the self. But even though she emphasizes that "the ostensibly 'private' sphere of music use is part and parcel of the cultural constitution of subjectivity" (DeNora, 2000, p. 47), and hence that the processes of self-structuration are fundamentally social, her way of conceptualizing the technologies of self, and her empirical analyses of human appropriation, lack the aspect of power that is intrinsic to the concepts' Foucauldian origin. For Foucault, the technologies of the self are the means of power by which the self relates to itself, and simultaneously comes into existence as a discursive subject (Foucault, 2000d). These practices are culturally created, ethical patterns of action and activity, at once offered to and forced on us, and always dependent on other technologies of power as well. In general, Ruud, Frith and DeNora's points of views can be taken to correspond to this understanding: musical practices form particular aesthetic processes

of negotiation of the self, through which we challenge and transform available subject positions and categories, constituting our identities and subjectivities, and, at the same time, we are subjectivized into acting, ethical, recognizable individuals within normative discourse. But even so, they all choose to focus more on actors "mastery", paying less attention to the "submission" side of the equation. DeNora strategically argues for this choice:

> Music is a material that actors use to elaborate, to fill out and fill in, to themselves and to others, modes of aesthetic agency and, with it, subjective stances and identities. This, then, is what *should* be meant when we speak of the 'cultural construction of subjectivity' – and this is much more than an idea that culture underwrites generic structures of feeling or aesthetic agency as is implied in so many post-structuralistic writings and by musicologists trained in semiotic analysis of texts. Such structuralist perspectives remain distanced from the heart of the matter, from how individuals not only experience culture, but also how they mobilize culture for being, doing and feeling. Anything less cannot address and begin to describe or account for the mechanisms through which cultural materials get into social psychological life. (DeNora, 2000, p. 74)

I agree with DeNora on this, and the current project tries to investigate students' mobilization of culture for being, doing and feeling in Musikklinja. Nevertheless, my stance is that music as a technology of self is a discursive power technology, meaning that while it unquestionably is utilized to care for the self (Skånland, 2012), it always simultaneously weaves the self into discourse, working to stabilize and reproduce already existing power structures.

## 2.5 Discourses of musicianship

In a philosophical discussion of musicianship, Jorgensen (2003) writes:

> So, musicianship, whatever it is, cannot be just one manifestation. Rather, it takes various forms across musical genres and practices. It is defined with respect to the particular musical tradition in which it is situated, but it can enable the musician to go beyond a particular tradition to join with musicians of other practices. (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 206)

According to Jorgensen, musicianship is contextual; it takes its form from the genres, practices and traditions in which it is enacted. Thus, we might presume, developing one's musicianship entails specializing, nuancing one's level of expression and increasing one's level of virtuosity within specific contexts, putting to use specific knowledges, skills and techniques. However, Jorgensen also assumes that 'musicianship' allows a musician to seek further, cross

musical borders and connect with music makers of other genres, styles, times and trends. Musicianship then is held to encompass more, and something else, than specialized competence, some sort of general musical understanding, ability and attitude. Following this line of thought, musicianship entails the skilful mastery of universal musical principles, supporting music making in any tradition, and hence enabling musicians to transcend contexts and still being recognizable as musicians.

Then again, one could imagine musicianship realized as musical 'allroundership'; versatility, usefulness and aptitude on several instruments and in several genres rather than the master treatment of a "main" instrument. Further, musicianship as a general ability might refer to endurance and motivation, seriousness in one's approach whatever practice, a musical 'drive' or a kind of 'will' towards musical knowledge. Additionally, we could speculate, musicianship might be observed as style and form, the visible enjoyment of music and a flair for showmanship, a displayed openness towards and pleasure in making and appreciating music, and a sense of the authenticities and specifics of different genres' and practices' on-stage expressions.

Zandén (2010) is surprised at the degree to which music teachers in the Arts Programme emphasize visible expressions of musicianship when assessing ensemble playing, taking students' enjoyment of music, their observable interactions and their style on stage to indicate appreciated qualities like originality, authenticity and honesty. The two forms of analyses conducted by Zandén, one topical, the other narrative, reveal a discrepancy between the frequent reference to forms of musical craftsmanship as criteria, and the hierarchies of ends and means teachers construct in their narratives in which instrumental proficiency gets a low ranking compared to musicianship as expressed autonomy, initiative and commitment. Ericsson (2006), studying discursive constructions of teacher and student subject positions and music as a compulsory subject in secondary school similarly finds that music teachers and pre-service music teachers tend to reward musicianship expressed as autonomy and initiative, as well as interest and compliance. Constructing a dichotomy that prefers an eager, hard-working and struggling, but not especially gifted student over a nonchalant, non-participating talent, Ericsson's teachers seem to define the masterly display of musical craft or connoisseurship as foreign to school musicianship, instead valuing the controllable if mediocre forms of musicianship displayed by suitably competent students. Even so, the development of musicianship as craftsmanship is central to what teachers feel

is relevant and valuable music education in a secondary school setting, Ericsson finds. Attaining the "basics" of musicianship, valid in all musical contexts, a general toolkit of theoretical and practical skills useful in other, informal musical arenas, is an enterprise shared by students and teachers. However, Ericsson, Lindgren and Nilsson (2011) argue, the attainment of such basics is expected to happen through activities actually demanding a certain degree of basics, namely student-led creative projects encompassing the writing, practicing, playing and recording of music. Students are expected to just 'do it'.

In the Scandinavian countries, as well as the UK, a concern with the formal versus the informal or non-formal (Folkestad, 2006) aspects of musical learning has been a signature issue in music education discourse for several years, instantiated in academic as well as educational practices. (Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2002; 2008; 2011; Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012; Karlsen, 2009; 2010a; 2010b; Lebler, 2007). Seizing on the assumption that young peoples' musical learning largely happens in informal contexts, classroom strategies developed from informal learning settings have been advocated by educators and researchers, and increasingly put to use in formal educational practices. In accordance with this, emphasizing the importance of learning in a friendship group and engaging with music of your own choice, Green (2008) suggests that all informal learning in school settings should start with "dropping pupils into deep end" (p. 25); coming to agreement on who to play with and what to play, choosing which instruments to use, figuring out how to play them and create and perform a musical product by listening, copying and imitating the recorded music of their choice without the interference of teachers. The approach is student-led, holistic and even "haphazard", and replaces the teachers' thorough preparations of a musical material into manageable bits and pieces, successively presented and rehearsed. Thus, in Green's research into how popular musicians learn (Green, 2002), the classroom pedagogies inspired by the insights provided and the evaluative study of English schools' engagement with informal musical teaching and learning strategies (Green, 2008), 'musicianship' follows students' motivated engagement with music. In playing with friends, interacting musically, listening, exploring sounds and instruments in working with music of their choice, students' musicianship is unavoidably developed, given enough time.

Drawing upon music pedagogical research and music education studies conducted during the last 10 years, Georgii-Hemming and Westvall (2010) present a critical discussion of what they find to be an extensive use of teaching

strategies acquired from informal music playing contexts in compulsory comprehensive schooling in Sweden:

> Usually, the students are relatively free to choose which songs they wish to play and with what students to play or 'form a band'. The process resembles as far as possible the methods of pop- and rock bands; basically listen, test and play. Students have the opportunity to make their own musical decisions, cooperate with one another and the music learning is mainly peer-directed. Singing and playing can be said to be the content, the method as well as the objectives. (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010, p. 23)

Assumed to increase student motivation, participation and inclusion as well as broaden the repertoire of music and musical activities deployed in Swedish classrooms, a shift from "school music" to "music in school" (Stålhammar, 1995; 2004), and a corresponding change of teaching methodology, is observable in both curricula and teachers' practice, Georgii-Hemming and Westvall note. However, they are less optimistic than Green and others about the benefits of such approaches. Referring to reports and evaluations from the Swedish National Agency for Education ("Skolverket") as well as results from a body of Swedish research studies, the authors argue that music education often lacks direction, tends to be short-term in character and seems unplanned and populist. Furthermore, the teachers' role is unclear and unsettled, the ambition to connect with students and include students' music is hard to realize for all musics and all students, and the development of artistic and creative competences by means of activities such as composition and improvisation falls short of a focus on musical activities, skills and reproduction. In addition, pop- and rock music dominate (limited to a few styles), while classical music, jazz or folk music is only marginally integrated into the teaching. Rather than the intended broadening of the school subject music, music education in compulsory school may have become too limited in relation to repertoire, content and teaching methods, Georgii-Hemming and Westvall argue. Another problematic consequence concerns the subject positions and possibilities of subjectivity construction in 'informalized' music education. The vaguely structured lessons might support existing structures of power/knowledge, leading girls to take traditionally feminine positions, dominant students to control the lessons' content and design, and quiet students to remain quiet.

The musical practices studied in Zandén (2010), Ericsson (2006) and Ericsson, Lindgren and Nilsson (2011) are student ensemble playing and students' creative music making in groups when playing and composing. Zandén finds that teachers evaluating group performances seldom refer to the sounding

aspects of pupils' music making in their assessments, regardless of this aspect coming through as extremely important in the lines of thought provided by the narrative analyses. Their unwillingness to use aesthetic judgment criteria or demand instrumental proficiency when assessing group performances (even if emphasizing the significance of musical connoisseurship and craftsmanship at a general level) might be due to group musicking being understood as a more social than musical practice, aiming at having fun, learning to cooperate and the inclusion of everyone. Moreover, the music rehearsed in ensembles modelled on informal music making practice is often the students' own, and this might make teachers reluctant to invade students' musical ownerships and self-identities by questioning and hence delegitimizing their musical performances.

There might of course be a difference between quality criteria as iterated in the evaluation and teaching of student group musicianship and as enacted in one-to-one main instrument teaching practices. And we might also assume that quality criteria performed in classroom compulsory music schooling differ from criteria used in higher music educations aiming at educating musicians. In a multiple case study executed at a Norwegian academy of music, Nerland (2004; 2007) investigated three one-to-one teaching practices of orchestral instruments in the classical music genre, looking into how discourses of music and musicianship construct teachers, students and the students' space for learning. All the cases observed related strongly to the professional life of a (classical) musician, implicitly defining musicianship with regard to advanced levels of professional prowess. Nevertheless, Nerland found significant differences between the discourses operating in the three practices pertaining to the relations, objects and agencies created. For example, she writes: "Whereas the discourses in [teacher A's] case construct the musician as a sovereign artist, the discourses operating in [teacher B's] practice advocate a vision of the musician as a keeper of and contributor to instrument-specific traditions" (Nerland, 2007, p. 412). Musicianship comes across as individual, exemplary artistry in the one, and collective membership and connoisseurship in the other. The main relation identified by Nerland in the case of A is between the musical work and the artist musician, in the case of B between the history of the discipline and its performer. Another well-known Scandinavian work on musical apprenticeship is Nielsen's investigation into the education of concert pianists at the Danish Music Academy at Aarhus (Nielsen, 1998; 2006). Understanding apprenticeship learning as learning by participating in on-going social practice, his focus is on how students become skilful and knowledgeable individuals in and members of a community of practitioners. His main sources

of information are students themselves. Fourteen individual interviews in combination with participant observation provide the material for analysing how students combine and use the learning resources available to them in their school environment in their pursuits of master musicianship. What Nielsen finds characteristic with the Academy of Music as a community of practice is how learning is organized around becoming a member of the musical culture and developing the identity of a musician. This happens largely due to what he calls the "transparency" of the culture, indicating that the profession aimed at, namely the performing pianist, and its real-life professional ways and means, come across at all levels of the education. Teachers are practicing performers, and teaching practices like master classes, studio lessons and concerts are events in which students observe and participate in the performance of a vocation. Musicianship is cultivated through two main strategies, both dependent on transparency: imitating master musicians and fellow apprentices and other significant journeymen, and participating in performance. Imitation, Nielsen underlines, is not only about adopting techniques and gestures, but also about acquiring what he calls 'a certain kind of being in a social musical setting': the learner is not simply taking over elements of action, but learns and absorbs more complex social behaviour and emotional reactions. Learning by imitation then is "a way of integrating other students', teachers' or pianists' ways of playing as experienced in the musical culture" (Nielsen, 2006, p. 7). As for performance, Nielsen calls attention to the role of concerts. In the Academy, students have several options for learning through performance – testing and rehearsing their musicianship in lessons and master classes, house concerts or informal student initiated concerts at cafes, village halls or museums. The gradual development of participation in concert activity is emphasized by Nielsen, who reasons that students thus have the opportunity to start in a "safe" environment, getting to play concerts at a "suitable" level.

More phenomenological than poststructurally inspired, Nielsen's study is not especially concerned with issues of power, or the discursiveness of musical practices. One could ask, however, whether students' access to the scenes, concerts, masterclasses, is regulated in some ways? Is transparency working for all or just for some? Does every student have the same possibilities for participating in the practices described by Nielsen?

Positioned between general music schooling at compulsory levels and the profession oriented programmes of higher music educations, Musikklinja is a mixture of practices regulated by discourses on professional musicianship,

everyday musicking, and music as a component in a general educational project, all of which might construct the qualities of musicianship differently. However, the influence of higher music education and its central practices of studio music teaching and master classes, ear training classes, ensemble playing, music history and analysis lessons and composition classes, in- and out of house concerts as well as traditional ways and means of assessment like entrance auditions and performance exams, is notable both in curricula and the organization of everyday school life. Evaluations of musicianship performed at Musikklinja are therefore in important ways linked to estimations of probability of accessing higher music education and succeeding in establishing a professional musical career.

# 3 Discourse, power and performativity

## 3.1 Discourse

### 3.1.1 Signifying practices

In the research tradition known as cultural studies one commonly studies culture as produced in and through social, signifying practices; "the production and exchange of signs generating significance, that is, meaning, sense and importance" as defined by Barker (2003, p. 448). In this, the approach is part of, and has contributed to, a shift of focus in social-scientific thought and action from investigations into the essential 'truths of the world' to investigations into the multifarious 'worlds of truth' and the human ways of creating and conceptualizing them. The shift implies first and foremost a change of interest from ontology to epistemology, from constituted object or phenomenon towards constituting processes. As argued by Søndergaard (2000, p. 69); empirical phenomena do not disappear the day new perspectives are brought into the game, rather, what is now widely referred to as poststructuralism entailed establishing new premises for studying those phenomena, and finding new angles from which to approach them. Instead of investigating the structure and essence of phenomena, researchers concentrate on how structures and essences are produced and maintained through human interpretive and signifying practices.

In using the term cultural studies, I have in mind a specific research centre and, with the passage of time, also a certain tradition, especially within an

Anglo-American scholarly community, including Australia and New Zealand.[16] The formation of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University in 1964 represented a key moment for the foundation of cultural studies as a more or less distinctive research field. In "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms", Hall (1980) shows how concerns and idioms of inquiry characteristic to cultural studies as an intellectual and political project rose from a critique of both Marxist reductionism and determinism and the elitist assumptions of high and low culture underpinning the cultural debate of the 1960s. Hall detects two rather different ways of conceptualizing culture in Williams' landmark *The Long Revolution* (Williams, 1961/2011). One definition understands culture as "the sum of the available descriptions through which societies make sense of and reflect their common experiences", and opposes an elitist view of culture as "the 'best that has been thought and said'" (Hall, 1980, p. 59).[17] The other definition emphasizes culture as signifying – meaning making – practice: "'Culture' is not *a* practice; nor is it simply the descriptive sum of the 'mores and folkways' of societies – as it tended to become in certain kinds of anthropology. It is threaded through *all* social practices, and is the sum of their inter-relationship" (ibid, p. 60). Williams famously epitomizes this stance in an earlier essay, when stating that "culture is ordinary" (Williams, 1958/2002). Interestingly, an engagement with both culture as description or text and as practice can also be said to characterize cultural studies today, judging from the qualified introductions to contemporary cultural studies theory and methodology by Barker (2003) and Saukko (2003). Moreover, Saukko identifies a third approach to the study of culture that emphasizes the social structures, systems and institutions underpinning both text/discourse and practice. An interest in the interplay between texts or discourses, lived experience and social context then is a trademark of cultural studies, Saukko argues (2003, p. 11). Which aspect is given priority in empirical research does of course vary, as do the research designs and methods involved. Ethnography within cultural studies research is commonly utilized to explore lived experience (Saukko, 2003), approaching questions about cultures, life-worlds and identities (Barker,

16 Cultural studies is, of course, not 'one' approach, but a field of study whose problems, aims and means of research are continuously debated and developed by its practitioners. For a more nuanced and thorough review of the various traditions and paradigms from which current cultural studies emerge, as well as the various strands constituting cultural studies research today, I refer the reader to Hall's seminal essay "Cultural Studies - Two paradigms" (1980), and to the methodological introductions by Saukko (2003) and Barker (2003) respectively.

17 While leaving out the reference, Hall cites Arnold (1869/2003, p. viii): "the best which has been thought and said in the world".

2003, p. 25) and studying values and meanings in the context of a "whole way of life" (Williams, 1958/2002, p. 93). Contemporary cultural studies is however largely eclectic in its methodology and draws on a variety of theories. The writings of Foucault have been immensely important, as have insights provided by gender- and queer-studies. Further, discourse oriented analyses are not uncommonly deployed in combination with ethnographic style field studies.[18]

In the current project, Musikklinja is conceptualized as a signifying practice, or, rather, as a set of signifying practices. An interest in the interplay between culture as discourse, as lived experience and as social, systemic materiality is thus signalled. However, in applying a framework based on Foucault's notion of discourse as materially and socially regulative practices (Foucault, 1972/2010), discourse becomes indivisible from social systemic reality; it becomes discursive practice. Additionally, a view of lived experience as performance, and selves as discursively performed (Butler, 1997b, 2007) emphasizes how individuals come to be through the signification – the reiteration and acting out of norms, values and truths – characteristic for the discursive practices in which they participate. The reciprocal relationship then may be reformulated as the interplay between discursive practices and performative subjectivation processes, a strategy that attempts to overcome any sharp distinctions constructing each aspect as an autonomous operation or system. When analysing the interplay however, deliberately and temporarily disengaging them is not only practical, but also necessary for attaining detailed understanding of a very complex signifying nexus. In the present study, research and analysis is organized in relation to two research sub-questions, focusing on musicianship as practiced across a range of Musikklinja sites and activities (emphasizing the discourses and subject positions made available), and on the performance of student subjectivities (emphasizing participants' simultaneous submission to and creative reiteration of discourse) respectively.

The study adopts a stance similar to that taken by Barker (2003): "Signification does not occur in a separate domain from other practices, and all practices signify. Meaning is the product of signs and social practice. We cannot distinguish between them" (p. 34). This constructionist approach to meaning and signification owes a lot Saussure (1983), who influentially argued that there are no fixed or natural relations between a sign and what it represents

18 Even so, an ethnographic study of participants' life-worlds may not run smoothly with either a poststructural attitude towards signification and social context, or a Foucauldian decentring of the autonomous signifying subject. These concerns are addressed in chapter 4.

or "signifies". Signs signify due to their difference from other signs, and the meaning relations between a sign (signifier), as well as between a sign and what it signifies (signified) are culturally and historically established. Saussure's main interest was the rules governing this system of signs – the *langue* providing the opportunity for statements to be made – rather than *parole*, the multitude of contextual expressions made possible by langue. As explicated by Dyndahl (2008), Saussure's stance is that "[signs] do not make sense as a result of an inherent referential function, but because they have been given a linguistic function within a language system which can, and will, vary in time and space. In other words, signs do not refer to the real world but to the system or the underlying structure" (Dyndahl, 2008, p. 126).

Dyndahl shows how Saussurean insights are further developed in the philosophy of Derrida, while also subjected to criticism both for their implications of the idea of a relatively sturdy (although not fixed) structure underlying the contextualism of parole, and for their tendency to focus on the stabilizing process whereby signifieds are linked to specific signifiers, although the relationship is in principle arbitrary. From the French words meaning "to differ" and "to defer", Derrida creates the notion of "différance" (1982, pp. 3-27), the neologism indicating that meaning is constructed through difference between signs, but since this goes for all signs, final and essential meaning is continuously deferred and delayed. Language refers to itself indefinitely (Dyndahl, 2008, p. 126), thus, meaning relations are both temporary and arbitrary. Further, the signifier spoken may connect to several signifieds, all of which could also be signified otherwise, implicating that multifarious meaning relations are in play at the same time, none of them having primacy over another.

We can see that Saussure's theories have implications beyond the structuralists' study of autonomous language- or sign-systems as a set of rules. Explaining Saussure's influence on Cultural Studies, Hall observes that:

> If the relationship between a signifier and its signified is the result of a system of social conventions specific to each society and to specific historical moments – then all meanings are produced within history and culture. They can never be finally fixed but are always subject to change, both from one cultural context and from one period to another. There is thus no single, unchanging, universal 'true meaning'. (Hall, 1997, p. 32)

When meanings are contextual, produced within history and culture, no essential truth can be found, and no universal statement made. Moreover, when experiencing, interpreting or expressing our understandings of the world, we

are subject to the signifying practices in which we participate, and in which meanings are produced. No "hors-texte"[19] (outside-text) can be accessed, as famously expressed by Derrida (1994, p. 158), from where texts can be seen or studied for what they 'are'. Neither can there be any outside-text more real and more present than the signifying texts and practices themselves from which underlying principles can be extracted and essential understanding established.

### 3.1.2 Discursive materiality

In a similar vein, Foucault insists that there can be no outside to discourse from where meaning can be grasped and defined (Foucault, 1972/2010). Also indebted to Saussure and structural linguistics, he elaborates on the notion of the statement, which, according to Saussure, has a material side, the expressed sign itself (the significant), as well as an immaterial side, the representative function (the significat). However, what makes possible a statement as conceptualized by Foucault is not an underlying structure or system of rules like "la langue", facilitating and organizing the utterance of potentially any meaning. Statements (énoncés) relate to and get their meanings from a discursive field constituted by already existing statements, and the procedures, practices and institutions through which statements appear. This discursive field of emergence (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 91) is material *and* social, potentially vast, but not infinite: not every statement is possible and some statements are more legitimate than others. Interesting for Foucault;

> The question posed by language analysis of some discursive fact or other is always: according to what rules has a particular statement been made, and consequently according to what rules could other similar statements be made? The description of the events of discourse poses a quite different question: how is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another? (Foucault, 1972/2010 p. 27)

It is important to note that Foucault uses the term "discourse" in an unconventional way when he compares his analytical ambitions to those of language analysis. What designates sections of written or spoken language within linguistics designates material, social practices with Foucault. Or, as put by Schaanning (1997), the 'discursiveness' of discourses is their connection to certain forms of procedures and techniques, practices and institutions, and the enunciative function is what makes the statement a (discursive) statement,

19 The famous quote is "il n'y a pas de hors-texte", there is no outside-text. See Dyndahl (2003) for a discussion.

not merely a (linguistic) utterance (p. 187, my translation). For historians, statements may be of concern as expressions of a certain time or *Zeitgeist*. Marxists may scrutinize statements for the ideology or false consciousness behind them, and a hermeneutic interpretation relates the statement to its use in subjective meaning making and the 'knowledge horizon' supporting it. Foucault, Schaanning argues, chooses to study statements as events. He concentrates on what he terms their enunciative function; their intervening in materiality, by materiality. A statement is not an abstract that may or may not have material consequences, neither is it a symptom of an underlying materiality. A statement emerges through materiality, in that it activates, sets motion to, brings "into play" or "into operation" (Foucault, 1972/2010, pp. 91-95) a whole range of places, procedures and practices, subjects and objects, whose task it is to acknowledge or dispute, distribute or neglect, statements themselves. We might say that a statement is a movement or an action, doing cultural work on and in the discursive field from which it has risen.

The discursive system that makes possible a statement then is one of formation, constituted by social and cultural practices. The choice of term emphasizes that statements, ideas, knowledge and truths are created and formed, not found and given. When speaking of "discursive formations" in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Foucault, 1972/2010), Foucault refers both to "a formation", i.e. a cluster of statements, ideas, knowledge and truths as well as their material "principle[s] of dispersion and redistribution" (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 107), and the notion of such clusters as "formed"; created, managed and moulded in particular practices within the discursive field of emergence. The Archaeology thus defines a discourse as "the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation" (ibid). This is how, Foucault argues, one can speak of the "clinical discourse" or the "psychiatric discourse". Discourse refers not exclusively to the expert language, but also to the acts and objects, procedures and practices of the disciplines. Statements may be verbal, but may also emerge silently but significantly through a gesture (of dismissal or recognition), the placement of a piece of furniture (the psychologists' couch) or the application of an instrument (designed to identify ADHD in pre-schoolers).

The emergence of statements through materiality is an important premise for research inspired by Foucault. Holding that every statement is generated by and in the materiality of discursive practices, a discursive 'outside' is rejected; no statement can ever come from a non-discursive place or position. Statements defining the constitution of materiality emerge through the same materiality,

or put differently, when we express our understandings of the world, we can only do so by working with, modifying and applying understandings already available to us. We do not have access to a 'real' world of things and phenomena to contemplate and present our autonomous views on, but only to things and phenomena as discursively re-presented. This entails also that every speaker, actor and interpreter must take a position within discourse to speak, act and interpret. Discourse regulates who can speak and what can be spoken, what acts are expected and appropriate within what contexts, and which interpretations may pass as legitimate and true. Both objects and subjects of knowledge are thus produced within discourse, through discursive practice. Hence, Foucault advocates that analytical attention is directed towards the discursive production of statements, subject and objects. In *The Order of Discourse* (1970/1981), he develops an approach to the task, identifying a range of mechanisms and procedures that police and manage discourse from within discourse itself, and, as Foucault formulates it, "whose role it is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality" (p. 52). The "formidable materiality" of discourse with its myriad of signifying practices has the potential of leading meaning in any direction. Discourse is in no way a static network, but rather a dynamic field of events that needs continuous policing and management to stay relatively stable and predictable. What seems important to bear in mind however is the following, emphasized by Young in the preface of the 1981 translation:

> The fact that there are systems of rarefaction and depletion does not mean that somewhere else there is 'a vast unlimited discourse', 'a great unsaid'. Instead, 'discourses must be treated as discontinuous practices, which cross each other, are juxtaposed to each other, but can just a well exclude each other and be unaware of each other'. These series of discourses must be put in opposition to the assumption of the 'unity of a work, an epoch, or a theme' (Young, 1981, p. 50)

There is no naturally occurring discourse that would unfold freely if not for the rules of formation and the range of practices and procedures designed to manage and order it. Instead, there are discourses overlapping, opposing each other, embodied within each other, and the negotiations of their borders are part of the discourses themselves. Statements may relate to a plenitude of other statements, and may set off a plenitude of reactions. Discursive meaning making has a capricious, arbitrary and disruptive character, but its capriciousness stems from the intertwinement and embedding of discourses in each other. Discourse

then can never be fully predicted nor determined, even if it emerges through practices that continuously try to do so.

### 3.1.3 The equivocal meanings of "discourse"

By conceptualizing signifying practices as discursive, I am employing a particular analytical and methodological approach, bearing on Foucauldian discourse theory and strategies of research developed therefrom. The curse and beauty though of constructing a research project based on the notion of discourse is how the concept avoids being pinned down to one level of operationalization:

> Lastly, instead of gradually reducing the rather fluctuating meaning of the word "discourse", I believe I have in fact added to its meanings; treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements. (Foucault, 1972/2010, pp. 79-80)

As Foucault notes in the above quotation from *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, the term "discourse" may refer to different aspects of the field of research, and to both macro and micro levels of interactions. Following *The Archaeology*, we could study music education or psychiatry as discourses; groups of statements connected to and made possible by established practices and procedures of specific systems of formation. However, even if we are able to identify a discourse of music education from a discourse of psychiatry, it is obvious that neither can be just one discourse, but several; intermingling, conflicting and overlapping. Furthermore, both music education and psychiatry could be studied as regulated by other discourses. Foucault oriented his historical analyses towards larger, time-spanning regimes of truth, "epistemes" (1972/2010, p. 191) and present studies in the field of education research not uncommonly refer to e.g. "neoliberalism" and "the neoliberal subject" as globally regulating macro-level discourses of our time. Even if researchers stress that discourse is practiced on the micro levels of meaning making and approach the task of discourse analysis by investigating situated interaction, a more abstract level of discourse is commonly invoked when discussing and categorizing the enacted discourses in more general terms.[20]

20 Schaanning (1997, p. 203-205) notes the same unsolved discrepancy in Foucault's insistence on how discursive statements always bring into operation a material, social field of possibility. When stressing the materiality that a statement activates, Foucault must necessarily also make the assumption that the statement as an idea comes from a plane of abstraction, and hence

According to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, ch.5), 'discourse' is best conceptualized and deployed as an analytical strategy in line with the research design, and adapted to fit the needs of the various projects' analytical foci. They argue that practical analytical work needs to construct the discourse theoretical framework in interplay with the research object and field of interest. Søndergaard (2000; 2002) takes a similar stance. Poststructuralist philosophy, she finds, offers exceptionally good tools for meta-reflections, but operationalizing them in a concrete research project demands careful and detailed translation on part of the researcher. Furthermore, as Foucault's own research designs tend to be grand, his "genealogies" (of madness, of sexuality, of punishment) mapping formations of discourse across several hundred years, researchers wanting to apply his tools for close-up empirical inquiry may need to downscale considerably.

A grand genealogy of musicianship may very well be possible, historically mapping the practices through which different notions of the musician, and of musical craft, skill and knowledge, as well as virtuosity, expressiveness, originality, talent and autonomy have risen. And indeed, the poststructurally inspired rethinking of music and musicology going on around the turn of the century was somewhat genealogical in its approach, tracing the historicity of present values and ontologies of music (see for example Bohlman, 2001; Goehr, 1992; Weber, 2001). In the current project however, the discursive formation of musicianship is traced across the everyday signifying practices of Musikklinja, as observed during a 6-month period of field study. Genealogy as a method is replaced by a focus on performativity (Butler, 1997a; 2007), entailing that the everyday iterative and citational performance of meaning is given analytical precedence over historicity. However, the performative everyday act is never merely a single moment, rather, it draws its force from chains of acts prior to it. Thus, discursive history is always implied in the discursive present. Similarly, by zooming in on Musikklinja, I give analytical primacy to certain practices and procedures through which discourses of musicianship are enacted, ordered and formed. The practices and procedures of Musikklinja however draw their force from being positioned within a discursive field of events, historically, materially and socially. Thus, discursive structures and relations are implied in the discursive particulars.

creates a distinction between discourse as concepts and immaterial thought, and discourse as material, social practice.

And herein lies the beauty of the equivocal meanings of "discourse". Even if adjusted to suit a certain aspect or level of operation, its ambiguity hints at other aspects and different levels, operative although not focused at the moment. Reading Foucault, one is constantly reminded that human meaning making is a complex, multifaceted and multidimensional phenomenon and that our research tools are tools, not the phenomena themselves. Moreover, his shifting focus on discourse as "fields of events", as "formations", as "practices" and as, simply, "discourses", can be understood as a strategy that seeks to capture some of the complexity of meaning making, not by dividing a phenomenon into different parts and processes for closer scrutiny, but by adjusting the focus so that some depths, details or relations are enhanced while others are temporarily left in the background. Hence, while materiality and corporeality are crucial to a Foucauldian understanding of discourse, the term itself often seems to draw our attention as well as our analyses towards abstracts – concepts, ideas, truths and ontologies and frames of reference; "repertoires" for meaning making, as Potter and Wetherell (1987) would have it. In turn, mapping a discursive formation in a field of events forces us to find structures and patterns of meaning making, historically and materially, over a range of social sites and arenas. And in researching the various practices of discourse, an emphasis on contextual performances and negotiations of discourse is possible, allowing for placing issues of the subject and processes of subjectivation more firmly on the agenda.

## 3.2 Power and subjectivity

### 3.2.1 Discursive power

I will approach issues of power and knowledge by returning to a paradox touched upon in the preceding discussion of discourse and materiality. Discourse, we have seen, facilitates and structures signification. This is the common definition of a Foucauldian approach to signification: discourses – sets or formations of statements and acts, that are socially and materially established – regulate what can be done and said, by whom, in which settings. However, the Foucauldian approach also holds that discourse is managed by the doing and saying that take place in certain settings. *The Order of Discourse* (Foucault, 1970/1981) identifies a range of practices and procedures dedicated

to control and overcome the impelling materiality of discourse, referring to the vast potential of human meaning making practices to multiply, articulate any relation and turn in any direction. The question that arises then is: from where comes the power to establish certain regimes that treat some meanings as truer than others, and sustain certain actions as more proper? What makes discourses the way they are, and what makes them change?

Traditionally, systems of truth are conceptualized as sustained by an authority: the king, the bishop, the landlord and the father, enforcing his will. In this form of power, the 'powerless' face threats of violence, deprivation or exclusion if resistance is attempted, threats that are supported by the authority's access to and control of physical, material means of sanctioning. The locus of power resides with a sovereign subject. Power, however, may also be understood as a systemic rather than individual feature. In the critical tradition following Marx, the power of capitalism is seen as distributed across the structure of a social system, working by ideology as well as by coercion. Ideological power secures the interests of the ruling classes by masking their economic and cultural control as a natural and normal condition. Even if power is socially distributed then, it is set in a certain structure, accumulated in certain hands. It is still "radiating in a single direction – from top to bottom – and coming from a specific source – the sovereign, the state, the ruling class and so on" as Hall describes a traditional understanding of power (1997, p. 49).

Foucault however calls attention to another form or modality of power. Although he does not dismiss the kinds of power relations that are suppressive and coercive, even violent, nor that subjects may occupy dominant positions in society, he does question the urge always to assign discourse to a subject or an author, an intention or an underlying social structure that in some way or other "has the power" to fix and stabilize discursive meaning (Foucault, 1978/1990, "Method"; 1980; 1982). Such an entity may dispose means of coercion like physical, military or economic strength, and may, of course, force subjects to act contrary to their will, but this is not the type of power Foucault addresses. Rather, Foucault wants us to consider a distinct kind of power, which we may call discursive power: the power of everyday, discursive routines, rituals, practices and procedures to manage and lead meaning in certain directions. To answer the question posed above, the power that makes discourses what they are reside with the myriad micro-practices of discourse itself. Comparing a Foucauldian notion of power with that underpinning Marxist philosophy, Hall

states that for Foucault, power circulates rather than radiates from a point of origin, and permeates all levels of social existence:

> Without denying that the state, the law, the sovereign or the dominant class may have positions of dominance, Foucault shifts our attention away from the grand, overall strategies of power, towards the many, localized circuits, tactics, mechanisms and effects through which power circulates – what Foucault calls the 'meticulous rituals' or the 'micro-physics' of power. (Hall, 1997, p. 50)

With Foucault then, power is defined largely by what it is not: something you have, something you hold, some-thing. Rather, power is something you do, something everyone does; it is a "mode of action" (Foucault, 1982, p. 789). Power is practiced or exercised – in the relations between yourself and your sister or your lover, your lead guitarist or your fiddle teacher. Indeed, power is even practiced when "the self relates to itself", reflexively and physically, performing different acts on body and soul, thought, conduct, and way of being (Foucault, 2000d). In Foucault's understanding, power is capillary; distributed throughout society, and exercised in all of societies everyday micro-events and relations. Power relations may cluster in particular forms of networks – subcultures, fields of expertise, institutions. Even so, they are always modes of action that act upon other entities within society: other groups of people, other fields of expertise and other networks of power relations.

> What defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future. (Foucault, 1982, p. 789)

Crucial for Foucault then, the practice of power works upon other peoples' practice. It is, as Foucault argues, the performance of actions upon actions. Acts of power may facilitate, change, moderate, accelerate and in other ways influence the acts of others. In connection to this, an act of power, a power relation, will always be met by another act of power:

> [A relationship of power] can only be articulated on the basis of two elements that are indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that "the other" (the one over whom power is exercised) be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up. (Foucault, 1982, p. 789)

Discursive power opens up and structures a field of possibilities that subjects may cross in different ways. Consequently, power relations will not work predictively; they do not causally determine the movement and actions of subjects. Even if it always already happens inside discourse, subjects may

challenge and convert the positions they are offered and creatively interpret the categories they are presented with. Power relations make different discourses meet, merge, blend or split. Hence, it is through power relations that change and invention is possible. In this, relations of power imply freedom – recognitions of the other's unpredictability as a subject capable of power-acts.

### 3.2.2 Power/knowledge

Foucault's conception of power further emphasizes its productive force in the perpetual performance and negotiation of knowledge. Power and knowledge are actually inseparable, "power/knowledge",[21] to the extent that in practical, empirical research, it may be fruitful to conceive of power as the enactment of knowledge: the intentional and unintentional performance of definitions, interpretations and structure – choices, rules, regulations – upon other peoples definitions, interpretations and structure. Following this, power/knowledge is enacted in students' negotiations of which meanings that come to the fore, whose truths that prevail, what choices are viable and which goals are worthy of pursuing.

Importantly though, the relation between power and knowledge is more complex than the one (knowledge) being a function of the other (power). O'Farrell (2005) points to the common sense notion of a distinction between power and knowledge characterized by the virtue, truth and clean-ness of knowledge, and the marked, manipulating strategies of power. Where there is knowledge, one assumes, power disappears. In Foucault's words: "If there is knowledge, it must renounce power. Where knowledge and science are found in their pure truth, there can no longer be any political power. This great myth needs to be dispelled" (Foucault, 2002, cited in O'Farrell, 2005, ch.8, section 1). O'Farrell argues that even if the interconnectedness of power and knowledge is now a common sense stance, it is usually assumed that knowledge follows power. The relation power/knowledge is taken to undermine the validity and the truth claims of science (O'Farrell, 2005, ch.8, section 1). Foucault questions this distinction. As he describes it in one of his early 70s Collège de France lectures;

21 To emphasize the inseparability of power and knowledge the terms are on several occasions hyphenated into "power-knowledge" (Foucault, 1978/1995; 1978/1990; 2000b), or "power/knowledge" in some English translations (Foucault, 1980).

> No knowledge is formed without a system of communication, registration, accumulation, and displacement that is in itself a form of power, linked in its existence and its functioning to other forms of power. No power, on the other hand, is exercised without the extraction, appropriation, distribution, or restraint of a knowledge. At this level there is not knowledge [*connaissance*] on one side and society on the other, or science and the state, but the basic forms of "power-knowledge" ["*pouvoir-savoir*"]. (Foucault, 2000b, p. 17)

Power relations do not simply play a "facilitating or obstructing role with respect to knowledge" (ibid); power is productive of knowledge, and knowledge is productive of power. In *The History of Sexuality*, for example, Foucault explains that while the constitution of sexuality as a research area depended on relations of power establishing it as a possible object of research, power was only able to take sexuality as its target because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investigating it (Foucault, 1978/1990, part 4, ch.2, section: 1. Rule of immanence). Moreover, in *Discipline and Punish* he argues that one should abandon the idea that knowledge can exist only where power relations are suspended, and rather admit that power and knowledge "directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault, 1978/1995, p. 27). His point is by no means to discredit or render invalid science and scientific knowledge, rather, as put by Gordon (2002, p. xvi); "Foucault was interested in the role of knowledges as useful and necessary to the exercise of power because they were practically serviceable, not because they were false". What seems important when studying power/knowledge relations then is not to unmask the relation itself, but rather to come to an understanding of the specific constellation, or even constellations, that regulate specific practices.

### 3.2.3 The technologies of power

The complex notion of power develops and changes across the numerous papers, interviews, articles, monographs, courses and lectures Foucault gave and wrote. Foucault scholars typically discuss the various phases in his body of works and whether the one is in opposition to, an elaboration of or a serious break with the other. Commonly, a significant shift of emphasis is located to the late seventies. Having engaged himself in the clinic, the prison and the scientific disciplines as dividing practices that objectify the subject, constitutive of the mad, the sick, the sexual and the criminal as well as the rational, normal human being (Foucault, 1982, pp. 777-778), Foucault constructs and turns his attention

to the concept of "governmentality" (Foucault, 2007). In his previous analyses of power/knowledge as coercive, disciplinary relations (Foucault 1978/1995), Foucault was predominantly concerned with the subjugation of individuals occurring through surveillance, regulation and structuring of movement and conduct in place and time. Scientific and disciplinary power/knowledge relations organize subjects of education, of medicine and health and of the penal system in buildings and across time-schemata, planning their meals, positioning their bodies, posing their diagnosis, their grade, their class, their level or their sentence. Foucault famously deploys the idea of the panopticon, the ring of prison cells circling a control room from which every cell can be overlooked, but into which no inmate can peek. Never knowing whether we are watched and judged, we behave as if we are controlled all the time. Thus, subjects themselves are vital in supporting the disciplinary power/knowledge regime, internalizing the procedures through which they are disciplined and applying them to themselves.

In the mid seventies however, analysing the history of sexuality, Foucault shifts his interest from the disciplinary regulation of individuals to the control of entire populations through techniques of "bio-power" or "bio-politics". Starting in the seventeenth century, Foucault argues, bio-power evolves alongside disciplinary power. But where disciplinary power is centred on the performance of the body as a machine, in parallel increasing its "usefulness" and its "docility", bio-power is centred at the performance of populations with regards to biological processes: "propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary" (Foucault, 1978/1990, part 5, para.5). With the introduction of governmentality in his 1978 lectures at the Collège de France, Foucault turns his attention even more towards the everyday government of normality.

The notion of governmentality enables Foucault to press his criticism of the traditional understanding of power as a state of dominance, distinguishing it from his own comprehension of power as a "domain of strategic relations" (Foucault 2000c, p. 88) or a "strategic game between liberties"; "in which some try to control the conduct of others, who in turn try to avoid allowing their conduct to be controlled or try to control the conduct of the others" (Foucault 2000a, p. 299). His investigations turn from a preoccupation with the governing state to an interest in governmentality as procedures for "guiding the possibility of conduct" (Foucault, 1982, p. 789) in general – within the relations of the family, the workplace, the school, the institution or the pair of lovers. To

conduct, Foucault holds, is both to "lead others" and a way of "behaving within a more or less open field of possibilities" (ibid). Thus, Senellart argues in the afterword to Foucault's series of lectures on *Security, Territory, Population*:

> Governmentality is […] the rationality immanent to the micro- powers, whatever the level of analysis being considered (parent-child relation, individual-public power, population-medicine, and so on). (Senellart, in Foucault, 2007, p. 389)

Moreover, Foucault's elaborations on governmentality give rise to a notion of the "techniques" or "technologies" of the self, the ways that a human being turns him or herself into a subject through relations of "self-mastery" or "self-knowledge":

> [The technologies of the self] permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault, 2000d, p. 225)

For Foucault, technologies of the self do not exist isolated from and independent of other technologies of power. There is no autonomous subject operating outside discursive power. Even if emphasizing how subjects constitute themselves through different forms of self-practice, the means of power by which the self relates to itself, and is, simultaneously, constituted as a discursive subject, are grasped as culturally created, ethical patterns or "procedures" of action and activity; "suggested or prescribed to individuals in order to determine their identity, maintain it, or transform it in terms of a certain number of ends, through relations of self-mastery or self-knowledge" (Foucault, 2000c, p. 87). In other words, practices of the self work as subjectivizing practices in much the same way as other technologies of power: the subject submits to control, simultaneously achieving subjective existence and agency, self-mastery and self-knowledge, through power/knowledge relations.

Included in Foucault's analyses of historical and temporary forms of governmentality (Christianity and the pastorate, Greco-Roman culture, liberalism) is, always, the consideration of resistance. For Foucault, the multiplicity of practices of government *includes* practices of resistance and "counter-conduct", a term he prefers (in his 1978 lectures at the Collège de France) to insubordination and dissidence because it "allow[s] reference to the active sense of the word 'conduct'" (Foucault 2007, p. 201). Moreover, I would add, conceptualizing resistance as active counter-conduct rather than passive misconduct (ibid) – failure to behave properly – seems more in line with the

notion of power as relational, strategic and productive that develops through his late seventies' and early eighties' production, in which an act of power/knowledge always facilitates and enables another act. While Foucault's interest was mapping forms of governmentality and counter-conduct characteristic of ages, cultures and societies, we could, following his way of thinking, comprehend every micro-event of subjectivation as an act that always entails counter-conduct in one way or another, a contextual reaction to government that brings about self-mastery.

### 3.2.4 A note on power and the subject

In one of several retrospect accounts of the aims and emphases of his works offered by Foucault, he writes that while having become "quite involved" with questions of power, his main objective was never analyses of power as such:

> My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects. The first is the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status as sciences; […] In the second part of my work, I have studied the objectivizing of the subject in what I shall call "dividing practices." […] Finally, I have sought to study – it is my current work – the way a human being turns himself into a subject. […] Thus, it is not power but the subject which is the general theme of my research. (Foucault, 1982, pp. 777-778)

Foucault might not have been very concerned with speaking, living, acting subjects per se, but his interest in how individuals are *made subjects* persists throughout the different phases of his production. In a similar effort at recapitulation, and under the pseudonym Maurice Florence, Foucault offers the following description of his most recent pursuits:

> Foucault has now undertaken, still within the same general project, to study the constitution of the subject as an object for himself: the formation of procedures by which the subject is led to observe himself, analyse himself, interpret himself, recognize himself as a domain of possible knowledge. In short, this concerns the history of "subjectivity", if what is meant by the term is the way in which the subject experiences himself in a game of truth where he relates to himself. (Foucault, 1984)

My point in presenting Foucault's retrospective efforts at synthesis is not to draw a picture of his oeuvre as a coherent whole and I do not wish to simplify or underestimate the complexity (including the loose ends, conflicts and incongruities) of his philosophical, historical and political endeavours. What I do suggest is that, if Foucault acknowledged the constitution of the subject as a

main topic of his theoretical and empirical studies (if only retrospectively), we need not treat the different emphases of his production as incompatible, even using the one to criticize the other. Ball (2013) notes that secondary literature tends to see Foucault's late period work as "an attempt to redress or unpick the supposedly totalizing theoretical cage constructed by his work of discipline and government by attending instead to resistance and self-authorship" (Ball, 2013, ch.1). The general stance that Foucault is all discourse and shows no interest in the subject, it seems to me, also stems from the presupposition that a subject, 'qua subject', is a psychic rather than a discursive state. Assuming that an interest in the subject entails an interest in the subject's psychological constitution, Foucault is definitely not interested. Assuming, instead, that the subject is a social and cultural category (an assumption Foucault by no means is the only one to hold), Foucault's project could indeed be localized to the subject 'qua subject'. If so, Foucault's later writings on how subjects enact themselves and relate to themselves according to the power/knowledge structures in which they are embedded need not stand in opposition to his famous *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972/2010) pledge to study the various positions and functions a subject can occupy or be given in discourse (rather than studying his will or intention). Neither subject is a psychological 'state', both are discursive constellations.

In the current project, an emphasis on practices of self as represented in the later interviews, writings and lectures of Foucault is combined with analyses of the power/knowledge relations and regimes that regulate, facilitate and organize such practices. While certain modalities or forms of power may characterize certain practices at certain times in history, power as such, Foucault holds, is not a primary and fundamental principle. The forms and the specific situations of power/knowledge regulating the various practices of a society are multiple; "they are superimposed, they cross, impose their own limits, sometimes cancel one another out, sometimes reinforce one another" (Foucault, 1982, p. 793). In other words, individuals may be subjectivized through different forms and technologies of power even within the same practice.

## 3.3 Performativity

### 3.3.1 Performative subjectivation

Although they are generally acknowledged because of their non-essentialism and their new take on power as socially diffused rather than forced, the usefulness of Foucault's works have been seriously debated within cultural studies concerned with the cultural constitution of identity and subjectivity. Feminist scholars and activists in particular have argued that the idea of subjects as effects of discourse is of no use for the emancipatory political struggle, having been robbed for all the agency needed (Hartsock, 1990; Sawicki, 1998). The accusations however seem to be directed towards Foucault's writings on the technologies of domination, discipline and (state) government rather than the later writings on governmentality, ethics and the practices of the self (Foucault, 2000a, 2000c, 2000d). In the late seventies' and early eighties' turn of engagement towards the subject's exercise of power over himself, a marked capacity for creative re-signifying and altering of power relations can be noted. As argued in the above however, this kind of agency is not mainly about resistance or emancipation; it is about the creative arrogation of power for the purposes of ethical and aesthetic self-transformation (Armstrong, 2005). The freedom and agency attributed to the subject as understood by Foucault is *powered* by discourse. In order to make good use of Foucault's theories in empirical research, it is necessary to accept this important paradox, and even to develop it further.

Butler's writings on the constitution and performance of "sex" and "gender" as regulative norms have been pivotal in this regard. In a number of works, she has developed a nuanced understanding of discourse as regulative and productive practice that supports her view of subjectivity as performatively produced and enacted. Although she has published on racism and injurious speech, ethical violence, war, Judaism and anti-Semitism, her main concern has been the performative production of gender, sex and sexuality. Gender is achieved by *performativity*, Butler (2007) holds, a discursive mode of action by which ontological effects of sex, masculinity/femininity and heterosexuality/homosexuality are produced: "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results" (Butler, 2007, p. 34).

The notion of "performance" however does not assume an actor that enters, performs and exits a role.[22] Butler distinguishes her theory from theatrical or phenomenological models that, for all their emphasis on the ways in which social agents constitute social reality, still seem to assume the existence of a choosing and constituting agent (Butler, 1997c). Likewise, she distinguishes her notion of performativity from the performance analogy implicitly incorporated in the symbolic interactionism of Mead and Goffman who "posits a self which assumes and exchanges various "roles" within the complex social expectations of the "game" of modern life" (Butler, 1997c, p. 412). Rather, the famous claim of Simone de Beauvoir – "one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman" – is deployed to guide our understandings towards a notion of constitutive acts as constitutive not only of meaning, and not only of the identity of the actor, but also of that identity as "a compelling illusion, an object of *belief*" (Butler, 1997c, p. 402, italics in original). Butler's stance, then, entails the denial of a pre-discursive subject that discursive practice is practiced upon. Rather, subjectivity emerges *through* discursive practice.

For Butler, the actor is inseparable from the act, never a self-constitutive doer behind the deed. Instead, "the 'doer' is variably constructed in and through the deed" (Butler, 2007, p. 195). Her theory of performativity does not entail "a return to an existential theory of the self as constituted through its acts, for the existential theory maintains a pre-discursive structure for both the self and its acts", she argues (ibid, pp. 195-196). Thus, we may assume, a performance of the self will always activate power relations in the sense that any utterance or bodily gesture, any subjective statement in discourse, any trajectory crossing the field of possibility and all the processes through which the self relates to the self, activate and bring into operation the relations of power/knowledge that structure the field. The performative self as conceptualized by Butler can never be a cogito outside of discourse or outside of the power relations that produce the field of possibility for performative confirmation, negotiation or transformation of subjectivity.

With the concept of performativity, Butler thus puts on the agenda the simultaneous submission/mastery involved in becoming a subject, emphasizing the close bond between the constitution of subjectivities and the constitution of discourses. Situating her theory of the performative within a predominantly

22 "It is important to distinguish performance from performativity", she says in an interview; "the former presumes a subject, but the latter contests the very notion of the subject" (Butler, Osborne & Segal, 1994).

Foucauldian framework, she states that: "Power acts on the subject in at least two ways: first, as what makes the subject possible, the condition of its possibility and its formative occasion, and second, as what is taken up and reiterated in the subject's 'own' acting" (Butler, 1997b, p. 14). When enacting discursive categories on self or others, we are enacting power. We are subjects of power in the sense that "'of' connotes both 'belonging to' and 'wielding' [power]" (ibid). Butler hence adds to Foucault's insistence on the active and productive character of power. Performativity concerns how the subject practices herself (as gendered) in daily life, and how subjectivity is produced through different modes of conduct; ways and modes of speaking, being and behaving. However, where Foucault in his genealogies is primarily concerned with investigating the discursive technologies by which subjects are governed and disciplined and the larger truth-regimes within which they operate, Butler uses the concept of performativity to think about how these technologies actually apply themselves to human bodies, constructing subjectivities. Challenging the traditional conception of gender as the cultural enactment of a biologically given sex (Butler, 1993; 2007), she argues that even the latter is a cultural practice, performatively producing the bodies it names. Rather than seeing matter (bodies) as sites of cultural signification, Butler suggests we contemplate matter as:

> *a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter*. That matter is always materialized has […] to be thought in relation to the productive and, indeed, materializing effects of regulatory power in the Foucaultian sense. (Butler, 1993, pp. 10-11)

As pointed out by Jagger (2008, p. 11), Butler does not reject the corporeality of bodies, rather she aims to emphasize the material side of signification, and accentuate the regulating frameworks, norms and discourses through which the corporeal subject gains its cultural viability. The female or male body, the biological sex, is no ontological constant, but a "materialization" of norms and ideals for gendered behaviour and conduct. In performative practices, bodies are lived and experienced, trained, cultivated and formed.

### 3.3.2 The performative (speech) act

Butler's initial conceptualization of performativity begins with a phenomenological understanding of "acts of performance" (1997c). However, she soon turns to theories of language and speech, drawing support from the works of Searle and Austin as well as the critique subsequently posed by

Derrida. In the tradition of speech act theory, the "illocutionary" speech act performs what it says in the moment of the saying – declaring, warning, and ordering.[23] As Austin's argument goes; the efficiency of the speech act, its performative force, is related to "a total speech situation". Meaning is defined contextually and by conventions (rituals or ceremonials) that provide speakers with authority as they speak (Austin, 1975). Butler however argues that:

> The illocutionary speech act performs its deed *at the moment* of the utterance, and yet to the extent that the moment is ritualized, it is never merely a single moment. The "moment" in ritual is a condensed historicity: it exceeds itself in past and future directions, an effect of prior and future invocations that constitute and escape the instance of utterance. (Butler, 1997a, p. 3)

The total speech situation is by no means an easily definable, simple sort of context, she holds. As the performative force of a speech act is dependent on repetition, the efficiency of the act depends on more than the immediate moment. Every act is itself a recitation, Butler argues with Derrida; "the citing of a prior chain of acts which are implied in a present act and which perpetually drain any "present" act of its presentness" (Butler, 1993, n. 7, p. 244). In the chain of repetitions necessary for the performative to have an effect resides the possibility for a repetition to be altered, changed and shifted, pointing the performance of meaning in new directions.

In a discussion of injurious speech (Butler, 1997a), she holds the analyses of Matsuda to be built on an 'illocutionary model'. Matsuda understands hate speech to constitute its addressee at the moment of its utterance, as a performance of injury itself, Butler writes. And such a view "presumes that a social structure is enunciated at the moment of the hateful utterance; hate speech reinvokes the positions of dominance, and reconsolidates it at the moment of the utterance" (Butler, 1997a, p. 19). Recalling Foucault's notion of the enunciative function of a statement, it may seem as though Butler's critique could be applied just as much to Foucault's analyses as to Matsuda's. There is a significant difference between the two approaches, however, regarding what Butler terms "dominance". Whereas Matsuda, and even Austin, anchor the efficiency of a performative in a sovereign performer, dominance emerging as a result of someone dominating, Foucault decentres the subject from the scene (Foucault, 1972/2010). Foucault's stance is, always, that effects are discursive,

23 "Perlocutionary" speech acts, on the other hand, are utterances that by consequence might have an effect, for example statements seeking to inspire or persuade. As explained by Butler: "The illocutionary speech act is itself the deed that it effects; the perlocutionary merely leads to certain effects that are not the same as the speech act itself" (1997a, p. 3).

not the result of a sovereign dominator's will. The effect of a performative then is located in actual social, material practices. Moreover, the effects and consequences of a statement can never be fully predicted nor determined by discourse, even if it emerges through practices designed to do so. The sheer complexity of the discursive field of events entails that statements are likely to activate and engage with several other, perhaps contradictory, statements simultaneously.

Butler also engages with the readings of Austin offered by both Bourdieu and Derrida to underscore her suggestion that discourse's performative production of what it names always happens through a certain kind of repetition and recitation. She tries to negotiate between a Bourdieuian position emphasizing the social structures, social rituals and social authority needed to endow performatives with their powers, and a poststructuralist, Derridaen account of the *différánce* through which citation and reiteration may facilitate new and alternative performances. One of her main points is that Bourdieu and Derrida conceives very differently of the reasons and consequences of performatives "failing":

> Performatives fail either because, for Derrida, they must fail as a condition of their iterability or, for Bourdieu, they are not backed by the appropriate expressions of social power. Derrida claims that the failure of the performative is the condition of its possibility […] That performative utterances can go wrong, be misapplied or misinvoked, is essential to their "proper" functioning. (Butler, 1997a, p. 151)

For Bourdieu, power resides with the judge and the priest, and the social structures in which their conventional agency is embedded, to ensure that judgement and benediction is performed. Butler however argues that Bourdieu, in making social positions and institutions static, "fails to recognize that a certain performative force results from the rehearsal of the conventional formulae in non-conventional ways" (Butler, 1997a, p. 147) and even "fails to grasp the logic of iterability that governs the possibility of social transformations" (ibid). Holding that Bourdieu tends to think about performatives as successes or failures, right or wrongs, Butler finds support in Derrida, who rethinks the 'social rituals' thought by both Austin and Bourdieu to enforce performatives as iterations and citations. The break from context, from social ritual, which for Bourdieu causes the performative to fail, is for Derrida the logic of performative practice since every act is, in some sense, a break: an iteration and citation, not a static repetition.

Working with her notion of 'the performative', Butler also draws on the works of Althusser, in particular his seminal essay on "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses" (1971). Subjects of ideology, Althusser argues, are constituted through *interpellation*; acts of identification and recognition similar to that of a policeman hailing a subject on the street – "Hey, you there!" Responding to the hailing (turning around), the subject recognizes and confirms that it truly was he who was hailed, the hail was 'really' meant for him, thus even recognizing and confirming his own subjecthood within the ideology supporting the call (Althusser, 1971, p. 163). Significantly though, what Althusser for the sake of clarity illustrates with an example temporal in character is rather a paradoxical situation in which the subject is always-already a subject of ideology:

> Ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects, which necessarily leads us to one last proposition: *individuals are always-already subjects.* (Althusser, 1971, p. 164)

Following the argument of Althusser (even while noting his take on power as singular and sovereign), Butler assigns the performative a similar function: addressing the subject, imposing on her the workings of the law, pinpointing her to a position always-already within discourse. However, Butler argues, Althusser neglects the range of disobedience, refusal and rearticulation that the interpellation might produce. A response to interpellation, an answer, even a deliberate confirmation, will never be a clean re-citation of the law. The failure of the performative is its proper functioning.

What seems to have become something like an 'official' definition of performativity then should be easier to grasp:

> Performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate "act", but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names. […] that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains. (Butler, 1993, p. 2)

Performativity is reiterative, citational discursive practice; not 'a' discursive practice but one of the ways that discourse *practices*. Continual, repeated speech acts and events may stabilize discourse, enforce its ontologies and maintain normative assumptions on categories like gender, sex and sexuality. However, reiterations are at the same time repetition and renewals and may potentially generate a multitude of discursive relations and put into effect unanticipated meanings. Thinking about statements as performative acts may thus facilitate inquiries into how discourse is negotiated; appropriated, subverted, resisted and maybe changed. It emphasizes the active renegotiation

of discourses rather than the statement of existing discourses. Similarly, what the performative act 'does' is more open, it does not 'state', it 'performs'.

## 3.4 An analytical framework

*How are music student subjectivities constituted in and through discursive practices of musicianship in Musikklinja?*

Posing a research question in this way quite explicitly demonstrates the project's emphasis on Musikklinja as a site of discursive practice and constitution of subjectivity. The terminology and characteristics of the phrasing signal specific theoretical affinities, and activate and bring into operation a certain field of possibility for analyses and discussions of music educational practices. The question can be asked only because of previous statements within the field, and the established practices in which such statements have a stage and an audience.

This understanding of a 'statement' serves to highlight the epistemological stance taken in the present project: statements, including research questions, are moves in what Foucault terms "games of truth" (2000a). Put the other way around, specific "games of truth" produce specific research questions whose value and legitimacy depends upon the already existing instances and procedures for distributing, interpreting and authorizing statements of similar kinds:

> When I say "game", I mean a set of rules by which truth is produced. It is not a game in the sense of an amusement; it is a set of procedures that lead to a certain result, which, on the basis of its principles and rules of procedure, may be considered valid or invalid, winning or losing. (Foucault, 2000a, p. 297)

Formulating research questions, establishing the theoretical rationale underpinning them, designing the study that produce the answers; all these are procedures central to scientific and academic games of truth. This chapter has outlined and elaborated on some theoretical assumptions and rules regulating the field of possibility activated by my research question, and tried to clarify how they are brought into operation in the present study. The question is a legitimate move in a specific game of truth taking its rules from the poststructuralist epistemologies of cultural studies, Foucault's theories on discourse and power/knowledge, and notions of performativity and subjectivation as developed by Butler.

Before entering into a discussion of the challenges of combining such a theoretical framework with ethnographic strategies of data production, I would like to present the theory as operationalized in my analytical approach. The analytical model below (figure 1) represents a researcher's tool for addressing and thinking about processes of subjectivation and discursive meaning making.

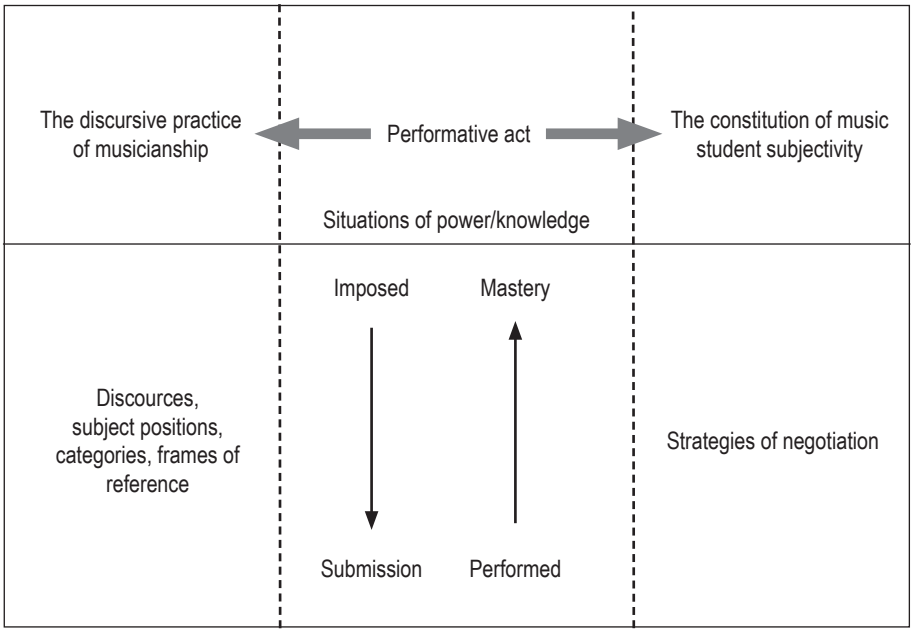


Figure 1: Analytical framework

As the project has developed, the model has taken various shapes; concepts have been replaced, emphases have changed. However, I have been intent on keeping the *performative act* at the centre of analytical (as well as ethnographic) attention. In and through the performative act, discourses are practiced – cited and reiterated. Power/knowledge-relations are enacted and subjectivities are enabled. It is, of course, tempting to conceptualize signification and subjectivation in a chronological order that takes off with the discursive imposition and lands in the successful subject. Moreover, the rhetoric of an analysis falls most easily into patterns of temporality and succession, rendering the chronological presentation almost inevitable. By placing the performative act in the centre of attention and disengaging from it the discursive practice of musicianship to the one side, and the constitution of music student subjectivity

to the other, I try to address the interplay between them while keeping sight of how they are performatively and paradoxically intertwined.

The analytical framework as illustrated by figure 1 corresponds to the deliberate and strategic division of the overall research question in two sub-questions:

- How is musicianship practiced in Musikklinja? (Left side of the figure)
- How are student subjectivities performed? (Right side of the figure)

Mapping and investigating discourses of musicianship as practiced across a range of Musikklinja sites and activities (left side of the figure), I want to enable an understanding of the discursive conditions of possibility that govern music student subjectivity. In and through the performative act, discourses of musicianship are *imposed* and *performed*. The performing subject *submits* to discourse. Moving to the right side of the illustration and the second sub-question, the analytical focus is on the strategies of negotiation through which discourse is taken up and reiterated, and through which students enable subjective understandings of themselves as music students. Performative enactments entail, always, the citation and reiteration of discourse, and this reiteration allows for the adjustments necessary to emerge as *master*, as a legitimate music student subject.

The analytical framework sets acts of performative subjectivation within situations of power/knowledge. In this way, I want to emphasize that power/knowledge is deployed and enacted in every signifying relation established throughout the event. Addressing issues of power/knowledge in Musikklinja, we can come to understandings of Musikklinja as an *institution* of discourse, of how discursive practices of musicianship are institutionally sustained, and how specific forms of music student subjectivity are enabled and maintained.

In the analyses of chapters six and seven, instances of performative subjectivation in Musikklinja are discussed. Investigating how discourses of musicianship are enacted – imposed and performed – the analyses sometimes make use of a terminology identifying discursive 'categories' or 'concepts' or 'frames of reference'. Where the first two fill the function of designating specific aspects within a discourse, the third is utilized in situations where the performative enactment takes the form of a very obvious explanatory narrative. Moreover, the analyses make use of the concept 'subject position'. In the present project, the term designates a specific position available in Musikklinja discourse, that of the 'music student subject'. Rather than mapping and arriving

at a gallery of possible 'music student subject positions' though, the analyses address instantiations of the music student subject in performative practice. In this, the 'music student subject' is understood as a main signifier open to various meanings in various situations rather than a definite configuration of specific qualities and competences.

# 4 A discourse ethnography? Methodological considerations

## 4.1 Dangerous encounters?

The current study combines a discourse theoretical framework with an ethnographic approach to data production. Even if the theoretical assumptions and epistemologies that have shaped ethnography may seem contradictory in several aspects to poststructuralist methodologies like discourse analysis, combining the two is not that unusual. Ethnographers Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) and cultural theorists Barker (2003) and Saukko (2003) all note that ethnography have come to represent a key methodology in the discipline known as cultural studies, its traditional methods of data production – participant observation, formal and informal interviews and focus group conversations – being widely deployed across a range of sites. As cultural studies developed as an area of investigation overlapping with anthropology and sociology, Atkinson and Hammersley argue, work in this field "moved from broadly historical and textual approaches to include the use of ethnographic method, notably in studying audiences and the whole issue of cultural consumption" (2007, ch.1, section 1). In many cases however, an ethnographic attitude to data production is combined with a poststructuralist approach to analysis without giving the potentially powerful or destructive blend much consideration. An important exception is the collection of essays on genealogy and ethnography edited by Ball and Tamboukou (2003); *Dangerous Encounters*. While recognizing tension and possibilities of dissonance

between ethnography's modernist roots and what they perceive as a critique of modernist science inherent in Foucault's approach, the editors hold that ethnography and genealogy "share several orientations and points of reference" (Ball & Tamboukou, 2003, p. 3). Furthermore, they claim that while genealogy and ethnography have emerged from very different traditions, contiguities and overlaps can be identified in their applications as contemporary research practices. In a similar vein, Hammersley (2005) argues that there are "considerable overlaps in orientation and practice between various kinds of work that come under the headings of ethnography and discourse analysis" (p. 7) and that incompatibilities are between particular forms of ethnography and discourse analyses rather than between the types of inquiry overall (see also Atkinson, Okada, & Talmy, 2011).[24]

As a research methodology, the Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis is hard to apply 'as is'. He famously invites researchers to treat his works as a tool-kit,[25] but, as O'Farrell humorously puts it, if we try to walk away with the whole box, the entire kit seems to fall apart at the seams (O'Farrell, 2005, chapter 4, section 1). The discourse analytical traditions following Foucault have taken different routes, creatively utilizing some of his concepts and theoretical constructs, creatively avoiding others. Discourse analysis as an approach to research appears a discursive practice itself, in which meaning is continuously negotiated, reproduced and changed, and in which different stances struggle to define significant concepts like "discourse", "power" and "practice" for their own aims and purposes. But even if discourse analytical designs may be pragmatically adapted to the single research project, we can also identify some significant premises underpinning these designs, culturally legitimizing them as discourse analytical endeavours. For one thing, they share an epistemological attitude regarding truth and meaning as social constructs. Rather than "discovering" meaning, discourse analysts study how meaning is

24 Discourse analysis is not one kind of analysis. However, while approaches like critical discourse analysis, discourse psychology and conversation analysis have also engaged with ethnography in different ways, discourse analysis in the following refers to approaches close to what Wetherell calls "Foucauldian research", (Wetherell, 2001) and Atkinson, Okada and Talmy refers to as "Foucauldian discourse analysis" (Atkinson, 2011)

25 "I would like my books to be a kind of tool-box which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however they wish in their own area [...] I would like the little volume that I want to write on disciplinary systems to be useful to an educator, a warden, a magistrate, a conscientious objector. I don't write for an audience, I write for users, not readers." Foucault, M. (1974/1994). Prisons et asiles dans le mécanisme du pouvoir. In *Dits et Ecrits vol. 11.* Paris: Gallimard, pp. 523-4, cited and translated in O'Farrell (1997)

"constructed" in discursive practice. Secondly, discourse analyses are qualitative studies, relying on data produced from texts, documents and other cultural products, interviews and observations, commonly supplemented with audio or video recordings. And thirdly, while recognizing, even emphasizing, subjects' capability of acting within, through and on discourse, a discourse analytical study nevertheless sets limits to a subject's agency, committing itself to the discursive structuring of the individual.

Like discourse analysis, the research tradition of ethnography includes several separate and entangled branches. Posing the question "What is ethnography?" in their book *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) trace the discipline's origin in anthropology; ethnologists building on travellers' descriptions and tales but soon designing and performing their own "ethnographic" fieldwork. From studies of strange lands and cultures, sociology turned ethnography towards the study of western urbanization and industrialization, more and more often designed as shorter "case" studies rather than large scale, longitudinal investigations. Subsequently also taken up by cultural studies, ethnography is now being deployed as a research strategy across a range of sites and in service of a variety of research questions. As a method for data production, ethnography has become a feature of qualitative research spanning a wide range of research fields and foci. As a defined discipline however, some methodological characteristics may be emphasized. Geertz (1973/2000) has argued that, rather than a matter of method, ethnography is an intellectual effort, aiming at describing and understanding the impressive "thickness", complexity and particularity of culture, and doing so by staying true to the perspectives of the people being studied, the natives or insiders of the culture we seek to produce knowledge about (Geertz, 1973/2000, ch.1). His stance is echoed by Atkinson and Hammersley when describing what constitutes ethnography as a "distinct analytical mentality" (2007, epilogue, section 1). More attentive towards unresolved tensions connected with these principles however, they note a potential conflict between the "participant" and the "analytical" perspectives of ethnographic research. While ethnographers are obliged to be 'true' to participant perspectives, an analytical perspective – informed by knowledge that participants may not have, taking note of behaviour that may go unnoticed or be routinely ignored by participants, and locating what people do and say in wider socio-historical contexts – may be different from and possibly also in conflict with how the people studied see themselves and their world (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007, epilogue, section 2). An equally important methodological problem, one also addressed by Geertz

is that, while ethnographers respect the complexity and particularity of social practices, generalization in some way or another is often attempted, moving from "local truths to general visions" (Geertz, 1973/2000, p. 21). Ethnographers commonly seek to interpret and not only to depict or describe what is happening, and in this, they can hardly avoid constructing and employing analytical types and concepts that involve idealizations, generalization and theoretical categorization.

If remaining a source of recurrent trouble for ethnographers, these are tensions intrinsic to the dynamics of ethnographic work, Atkinson and Hammersley argue (2007, epilogue, section 1). They have however been put firmly on the agenda by social-constructionism, poststructuralism and in general the 'turn to language' occurring in the humanities and social sciences, heavily criticizing the positivist and realist implications of traditional ethnographic naturalism aiming to capture an undisturbed, 'natural' social world. While retaining the attitude of respect for the phenomenon under study, ethnographic methodology has to a certain extent accepted the criticism and over the years implemented a high degree of reflexivity concerning the value of its data, the social and cultural entanglement of the researcher in the practices studied, and the always-already theorized lenses of research. Moreover, with the additional development of new technologies facilitating the study of speech and language in everyday use, ethnographers have become more aware of, and concerned with the role of language in social, even discursive, world-building and interpretation. Participants' statements, formerly mainly treated as a source of evidence pertaining either to the "inner life" of informants or to events and occurrences that the researcher herself lacks access to, are investigated for the cultural work they "do" in signifying practices (Hammersley & Gomm, 2008). With these adaptations, it seems that ethnographic and discourse analytical research may not be such different enterprises. Working ethnographically within an overall discourse theoretical framework, I have however experienced some tensions I feel need to be addressed and if not completely resolved, at least clarified and displayed in the open. In the following, I address three of them in more detail: a) Power as deployed and power as sovereignty[26] b) What status do we grant the data collected? and c) Open versus pre-defined research design.

26 The categorization is from Popkewitz and Brennan (1998, ch.1)

## 4.2 Power as sovereignty, power as deployed: the status of the subject

Despite the title, the editors of *Dangerous Encounters* Ball and Tamboukou (2003) are generally positive to the combination of ethnographic and genealogical research methodologies described and discussed by their contributors. Introducing their collection of essays, the editors elaborate on a range of aspects and aims shared by both approaches. However, they do emphasize a significant difference not easily evaded or glossed over; the approaches' very different presumptions concerning the distribution and location of power. Ethnographic work puts the subject in charge, installs her/him as the centre of meaning, continuity and stability and the sovereign locus of possible change. This presumes a form of power held by some actors and used on other actors. Ethnographic research thus frequently focuses on power relations as dominating. Such projects may have emancipatory aims and ambitions in making the voices of the suppressed heard; black students, women, queers, the cultural minority, the working class.

Even if discourse analysis and genealogy may be carried out with emancipatory intentions and ambitions, their take on power is completely different from that of traditional ethnography. Genealogy, Ball and Tamboukou argue, is interested in the how rather than the who or what of power, not excluding 'people' as such but seeking to analyse "the complex ways they are constituted within historically and culturally specific sites where power, truth and knowledge are interrelated" (p. 89). The actual object of study then is somewhat different from that of ethnography. While the generative, creatively signifying subject is the centre of attention in ethnographers' work, studying how she powerfully constructs and understands her social world, discourse analysis generally and genealogy especially is concerned with the power relations constructing and structuring the subject herself.

Thus, when Hammersley and Atkinson argue that in ethnographic research, one must "avoid the danger of serious misunderstanding of peoples' intentions and motives" (2007, epilogue, section 2) it seems like a reasonable stance: one is actually trying to understand the understanding of others, including their intentions and motives. However, in a discourse analytical approach, peoples' intentions and motives are not objects of study. Meanings, intentions and motives are assigned to discursive power, not to a subjective locus of will.

Following Foucault, the subject is thus to be studied in its dispersion – that is, in the practices through which she becomes a subject:

> In the proposed analysis, instead of referring back to *the* synthesis or *the* unifying function of *a* subject, the various enunciative modalities manifest his dispersion. To the various statuses, the various sites, the various positions he can occupy or be given when making a discourse. To the discontinuity of the planes from which he speaks. And if these planes are linked by a system of relations, this system is not established by the synthetic activity of a consciousness identical with itself, dumb and anterior to all speech, but by the specificity of a discursive practice. (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 54)

This marks a significant difference between ethnographic methodology and discourse analytical attitudes. As I see it, this does not mean that the issue of subjectivity is dismissed in Foucault's approaches to studies of discourse. Rather, subjectivity itself is discursive. Experiences and expressions of subjective intention are initiated and structured by discourse; thus, discourse becomes the object of study. Meaning is decentred from intention. Moreover, I agree entirely with Ball and Tamboukou when they emphasize that Foucault saw the two modalities of power, power as deployed and power as sovereignty, as simultaneously exercised discourses of our time (Ball & Tamboukou, 2003, p. 8). One can even establish a topos between the two forms they argue, studying how regimes of power and knowledge are discursively created and sustained while paying attention to the asymmetrically distributions of power relations in certain clusters and networks. Britzman (1995) suggests:

> Ethnographic narratives should trace how power circulates and surprises, theorize how subjects spring from the discourses that incite them, and question the belief in representation even as one must practice representation as a way to intervene critically in the constitutive constraints of discourses. (Britzman, 1995, p. 236)

This suggestion brings the ethnographic and the discourse analytical enterprise somewhat closer to each other, differentiated mainly by a pragmatic methodological change of attitude in the different research phases or tasks. With reference to Britzman, Ball and Tamboukou write that "the tensions produced by epistemological incongruities can be used creatively to escape from theory or research 'as usual' and to evade the seductive tyrannies of comfortable binaries" (Ball & Tamboukou, 2003, p. 10). The bridging of the two analytical foci is also supported, I find, when analytically operationalizing the modality of power explored by Foucault in the later phases of his work, the practices of the self to and on itself. When investigating the practices of self, discourse analytical research closes in on subjects' active engagement with

discourse, granting them agency in the enactment and negotiation of discourse, and the positioning of themselves within it.

## 4.3 The validity of 'data'

Addressing the various methodologies utilized under the mantle of cultural studies, Saukko recognizes a significant difference between what she understands as a hermeneutic ("dialogic") methodological approach, in which the validity of research is evaluated according to "how well it manages to capture the lived realities of others", and a poststructuralist ("deconstructive") methodology, assessing the value of research in terms of "how well it unravels problematic social discourses that mediate the way in which we perceive reality and other people" (Saukko, 2003, p. 19). While the main criteria of validity in the first seems to be how well one fulfils the ethnographic mantra of being true to, and respecting, other people's lived world and realities, the second is evaluated by its successful exposition of truths that are taken for granted, unravelling their specificity within historical regimes of power and questioning the binaries that organize our thoughts and actions (ibid, pp. 20-21).

How then do the two methodologies support their respective analyses? By which arguments are their data accorded validity? Assessing what he refers to as "the radical critique" of the qualitative interview as a research method, Hammersley (2005; 2008) identifies two distinct ways of treating interview data in ethnographic research. For one thing, the interview may be used by the researcher as a source of evidence pertaining to events and environments in the social world; that is, the informant becomes a kind of assistant or surrogate researcher offering evidence on situations that she knows better than the researcher herself. Secondly, the interview provides information on the informant's self-understanding, explaining her behaviour, attitudes, beliefs and personality. Not directly accessible through observations, the researcher accesses informants' preferences, presumptions and motives directly or indirectly based on what they say in interviews, drawing inferences about how they might behave in settings other than the interview.

Thus, the traditional roles of researcher and informant is that the informant "informs" the researcher. Informants are sources of information about their "real" worlds, experts on their own culture, and the ethnographer is the learner or the novice. The source may be corrupt, informants *acting* like insiders

without actually being legitimate participators in the practices to which they refer, or they might deliberately mislead the researcher, even trying to please and therefore mould or change their "true" stance better to fit the researchers'. Moreover, the researcher may simply misunderstand because of her lack of insider knowledge and experience. These are classic methodological hindrances that the researcher needs to address and resolve by way of a reflective analysis, theoretical and empirical triangulation, follow-up interviews or even giving informants the possibility of verifying statements and analyses.

The radical critique posed by poststructuralist discourse analysis seriously questions this approach to data: no reality, subjective or objective, can be 'discovered' through interviews or otherwise. Rather, reality is constituted in and through the interview as a discursive practice:

> Informants' accounts must be treated not as true or false but rather as constitutive – as themselves producing one of many possible versions of events. From this point of view, reality is constructed in and through the telling, rather than having characteristics that are independent of this. (Hammersley, 2005, p. 12)

What is more, psychological phenomena like attitudes, motives and intentions are socially and discursively constructed, and narrations of these are better understood as public displays in which subjectivities are activated and temporarily constituted. What people do and say then are not representative for or deduced from a 'reality' on the inside of their heads. On the other hand, what interview-data can give evidence of is the discursive work being done by both researcher and interviewee in the interview itself. In the discursive psychology of Potter and Wetherell (1987) for example, instead of using interviews to gain information on the lived reality of insiders, categorizing or positioning them, interviews are analysed for the flexible interpretative repertoires and the rhetorical strategies that people use for talking about themselves and their lives. And by displaying the resources utilized, interview data may thus facilitate analyses of available discourses and the power/knowledge regimes regulating them.

In some phase or other of a research project however, even discourse analytical approaches tend to treat data at face value, drawing on the realist argument underpinning traditional ethnographic work which goes something like 'taking information at face value, is how we cope in everyday life. We rely on peoples' statements as pieces of evidence as to how s/he feels, what s/he is doing or going to do, or what happened whilst you were away' (see for example

Atkinson & Hammersley 2007, ch.1, section 8). To be able to perform analyses of discourses as initiated and negotiated, the researcher needs to be positioned within the relevant discourses, accepting and participating in the worlds of the people and practices studied on a less meta-reflexive, more common-sense basis. And discourse analyses that investigate subjects and cultures not only as representations, texts and documents but as material, social practices and events, may need to employ ethnographic techniques of participant observation and informal conversation that demand everyday strategies of interpretation and interaction.

Thus, we might find that we need to adopt different epistemological stances at different stages of a project, or, that the researcher needs to juggle parallel and multiple research subjectivities acting more like a team of researchers eying the project from different stances. When investigating the discourses of musicianship available in the daily life of Musikklinja, such a pragmatic epistemological attitude has turned out to be very fruitful. In practical field work, getting to know the institution, its practice and participants, I have treated data both as sources of information about 'what is going on here?' and as indications of participants' 'inner state' of emotional and personal being, much as one normally does in everyday life. For fieldwork to be successful, I have found it extremely important to adopt an ethnographer's somewhat realist attitude, assuming both that there is a 'reality' of which informants speak and that informants have privileged and special knowledge of the world in which they act and participate. However, as the research questions guiding field studies were formulated within a certain theoretical framework, a simultaneous discourse analytical attitude to the practices I observed was virtually unavoidable, resulting in shifts between ethnographic participation and discourse analytical distance even while undertaking field work. Thus, data have been given strategic epistemological status according to the specific purpose involved in consulting them – whether for enabling myself to observe, participate and relate to the people and practices under study, for writing up field notes, delimiting the field of study, coding and categorizing and constructing preliminary and final analyses.

Using fieldnotes as an ethnographic tool for working the field in a relatively traditional way poses no threat, as I see it, to the overall discourse analytical design. Fieldnotes and field diaries are important aids in the process of getting to know a social world. They are vital tools when mapping and navigating the practices observed, in learning and accumulating knowledge,

for reflecting on both that which seems strange and that which coincides with one's expectations, and for documenting and exploring ones own, subjective reactions. Nevertheless, we need to pay some attention to what status we grant fieldnotes in analytical processes. A good fieldnote offers extensive, detailed and concrete descriptions of social interaction, verbatim and/or approximate records of speech, poetic renderings trying to recreate a moment gone by so that readers may access it, and elaborations of the researchers own reactions and emotional responses. How are these qualities utilized in discourse analyses? The poststructuralist criticism of interviews as a source of information obviously also applies to observational data presented in the form of fieldnotes. Fieldnotes may even represent more of a problem, since they are indicative of the discursive work performed by one actor only, the researcher herself. My stance in this is the following: fieldnotes are above all *analytical constructions*. Meaning, they are always already interpreted. Produced in the field and written up immediately on return, they are front line experimental analyses and preliminary frames of understanding. In later phases of the project they are statements in an emerging regime of truths produced by the researcher. In this, they do not differ from other analytical constructs made by the researcher, on the basis of interview transcripts or documents. The main difference, of course, is that no empirical material is available for the research society to have recourse to in order to verify the analyses proposed, other than the analyses themselves. Secondly, fieldnotes are *rhetorical constructions*, intended to support and help the development and understanding of a chosen research focus. In this, they use rhetorical means to emphasize the importance of certain aspects of a practice, neglecting and excluding other aspects. If a little problematic from a traditional ethnographic point of view, this is totally acceptable within a discourse analytical research enterprise, even if reflexivity towards the constitutive role of the researcher is required. And finally, fieldnotes are *expressive constructions*. When included in various forms of reports, they may fill the function of a vignette or illustration, preparing and supporting the following analyses. Using the techniques of poet, author or playwright, the researcher seeks to engage readers, guide their understandings and gain their confidence.

## 4.4 Open ended or pre-defined research

Another potential conflict arises from the different positions held by discourse analytical approaches and ethnography regarding the design of a research project. Traditional ethnography strongly opposes starting from some set of prior theoretical categories in describing peoples' behaviours. Rather, one recommends an open ended approach, posing the typical ethnographic preliminary research question of "so, what is going on here?" Discourse theories, on the other hand, provide precisely such categories. At the outset, the theoretical constructs offered describe a kind of philosophical, epistemological level, providing frameworks for studying how meaning is constructed and regulated, how subjectivity emerges and the interplay between signifying practices and regimes of power/knowledge. Thus equipped, the single research project addresses exactly what meaning is constructed in what context, which knowledges are legitimate in which regimes of power/knowledge and what kinds of subjectivities can possibly emerge through what kinds of practices. That said, intentions of researching some specific, pre-defined idea are not unusual for discourse analytical projects, delimiting a specific discursive order or formation, a specific set of subject positions, or even a specific collection of truths and concepts from the very beginning and choosing the empirical field of study based on this delimitation. The genealogical projects of Foucault can be said to follow this design, investigating specific discourses by analysing their historical development across documents, practices and subject positions chosen for how well they instantiate, exemplify or articulate the topic at hand.

Ethnography's opposition to starting with a prior set of theoretical categories into which data is labelled and categorized may seem in conflict with the more structured arrangements of discourse analysis. Indeed, there seems to be a significant difference between the two as unfolding research designs. In 'real' ethnography, it seems, the focus of enquiry emerges out of the researchers struggle in the field. The narrative of ethnographic research seems to be: the researcher goes in with an open mind, she is surprised, she struggles but finally succeeds, experiencing some clarity and understanding of the strange culture in which she has immersed herself. In seeking and gaining further clarification, she finally gets a grip of things and chooses a focus, delimits the scope of observations and reformulates her research questions to fit a closer study of carefully selected topics. She returns to her own world, writing a detailed, grounded ethnography that captures the inside of a culture and gives voice to its participants, while also being highly personal and reflexive. The narrative

of discourse research seems be somewhat different: after initial struggles with establishing a consistent (enough) discourse analytical framework, the researcher approaches a specific empirical material. Conscious of the apparatus she mobilizes for viewing the world, she has carefully chosen the appropriate theoretical and analytical tools. Moreover, on the background of earlier research or a chosen field of interest, topics have been selected beforehand and are hence built into the process of collecting and/or producing the empirical material. During the process of analysis, categories may change or merge, sub-categories may be added, and analyses go in unexpected directions, based on insights emerging from close-reading the material. However, the researcher tries to stay close to the original theoretical framework, knowing that consistency between theoretical framework and analytical description validates her research.

The differences in research design shown by juxtaposing these exaggerated narratives may be significant, but I would not say that they make the approaches incompatible. For one thing, reflexivity in some form of other has always been demanded of the ethnographic researcher needing to "know herself" and her theories to be able to know and define "the other". Furthermore, the open-ended approaches of ethnographic designs are temporary, and during the initial phases of field studies, researchers seek to delimit their focus by establishing categories and refining research questions. From the stance of conversation analysis, ethnographers are even criticized for constructing theoretical top-down designs. By imposing concepts like class, identity, culture and ethnicity rather than seeking to discover principles of social organization within moment-to-moment social interaction, ethnography depends upon a priori categories it is argued (Atkinson et al., 2011, p. 88). As for discourse analysis, the consistency of the theoretical and analytical framework applied is produced in interaction with a field of research, not only in advance but even during the course of study. It develops and changes. To better account for the empirical material, theories are added and replaced. Some categories for interpreting data may be built into the data collection process from the beginning, while others are generated out of the processes of analysis. Discourse analyses may also assume an initial "what is going on here" attitude within an overall theoretical framework, following the same process as ethnography closing in on a group of discourses. And, whether our 'findings' are discourses, subject positions, identities or cultural truths and rules structuring relations in a social group, both ethnographers and discourse analysts are

expected to contemplate the ways in which we actually constitute what we find and find what we have constituted.

For both ethnography and discourse analysis then, research follows an abductive dynamic (Peirce, 1934-1935), segueing between interpreting and structuring a material using certain theoretical and conceptual tools and changing and shaping them to better fit the material at hand.

## 4.5 Combining methodologies

While we can identify conflicting theoretical presuppositions built into the approaches of discourse analysis and ethnography, the discussion above shows that they do share some of the same methodological attitude and mentality, making it *possible* to combine them in one research design. Even so, is the trouble worthwhile? Is the combination a powerful one? One could probably argue that combining these two ways of studying and describing culture might rather be counterproductive. Ethnography's close relations with a "grounded" form of theorizing suggest that going in with a pre-defined set of theoretical ideas and interests, be it a constructed order of discourse that the we want to study or a selected set of power relations that we would like to subject to closer scrutiny, is inconsistent with the essence of ethnography. Moreover, ethnographers' concern with actors' or participants' perspectives – their actions, their interpretations and their expertise on their own lives – conflicts with an interest in the discourses, the subject positions and the power relations *structuring* participants' perspectives, actions, descriptions and expertise. Thus, in the case of Musikklinja, why not simply implement the strategies of participant observation, interviews and informal everyday conversation, treating them as available methods, detached from the tradition of ethnographic research and the ethnographic methodological attitude? What follows is my response to such a suggestion.

Cultural studies in general pays little attention to the classical questions of research methods and methodology, Barker notes (2003, p. 24). In some sense, neither does discourse analysis. As approaches to research, discourse analyses following Foucault are theoretically well elaborated, but provide few instructions as to the production and analysis of an empirical material. Ethnography on the other hand may be theoretically weaker, but the tradition has developed a range of styles and strategies for the methodical investigation

of culture and social interaction. The art of participant observation is thoroughly discussed, problematized and exemplified, including the various techniques of writing fieldnotes. Turning to ethnography, I was able to take a participant observers role. Equipped with notebooks and a portable computer, I followed students in the moment-to-moment interactions of their day, varying the angles from which a practice was observed (also metaphorically speaking), and experiencing the dynamics of their everyday life more in the flux of things than if stuck with video or audio equipment that needed transportation and technical attention, as well as hours of recordings documenting the details of specific, pre-defined sites and practices.

When undertaking forms of field work, adopting what researchers within this tradition have identified as a distinct ethnographic attitude was crucial for the quality of the data produced: approaching the field of research with an open curiosity as to "what is going on here", emphasizing complexity and particularity even if aiming to identify patterns and offer interpretations, seeking to understand the perspectives of the participant and staying true to this, and finally, paying attention to one's own position and influence on the practice studied. While always located within an overall discourse theoretical epistemology, the implicit realism of the ethnographic mentality was strategically and temporarily accepted. As explicated by Atkinson and Hammersley:

> We can work with what we currently take to be knowledge, while recognizing that it might be erroneous; and engaging in systematic inquiry where doubt seems justified. And in doing this we can still make the reasonable assumption that we are able to describe phenomena as they are, and not merely how we perceive them or how we would like them to be. (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007, ch 1, section 8)

Adopting this stance allowed me to observe, participate, learn and understand whilst undertaking field work, and to produce material that is expressive of this engagement – of my experiences, interpretations and responses to Musikklinja as a set of signifying practices.

Ethnographic field investigations are thus something more than a convenient way of generating material for discourse analyses. They position the researcher in the field of practice, accessible to and preferably also acceptable to participants. This may be of significance for getting access to particular practices and particular ways of speaking that require a degree of trust and confidence to be established. But of even more value is how they add materiality and social context to the analyses of transcriptions and documents.

In this, they constitute a set of front line analyses of social interaction, based on researchers experiences, to be compared and contrasted with those produced in interviews or from documents. The ethnographic approach, I hold, provides the opportunity of performing what Foucault terms an "ascending analysis of power" (Foucault, 1980, p. 99); starting from its "infinitesimal mechanisms" (ibid) and concentrating on "the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application, there – that is to say – where it installs itself and produces its real effects" (ibid, p. 97). For Foucault, power/knowledge is capillary, distributed throughout society, and exercised in all of societies everyday micro events and relations.[27] And if we are to study relations of power/knowledge in their application, it seems necessary to investigate empirical instances in which actual subjects, objects, procedures, methods and instruments of knowledge are at play. Keeping in mind their differences, constructing a strategic liaison of ethnography and discourse analysis may successfully close in on relations of power/knowledge as they circulate in the capillaries of the social body.

27 "But in thinking of the mechanisms of power, I am thinking rather of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourse, learning processes and everyday lives" (Foucault, 1980, p. 39)

# 5 Research strategies and design

In this chapter, I account for the strategies of research design, data production and management, coding, analysis and presentation applied in the present study. As the previous discussion of the perils and pleasures involved in combining discourse theory with ethnography addressed the epistemological assumptions inherent in ethnographic methods like the interview, the fieldnote and participant observation, this chapter will concern itself mostly with giving a presentation of how the project was carried out in practice. However, in addressing some specific situations that arose from the project and the project design, the chapter also touches upon questions of research ethics and reflexivity.

## 5.1 Fieldwork procedures

### 5.1.1 Casing Musikklinja

Upper secondary programmes of music are interesting sites of study. Situated in between options of higher music education and musical professionalism on the one side, and the school subject music, non-formal music studies and amateur and community music practices on the other, they offer access to, formalization of and enculturation into musical expertise. In appropriating the position of music student, the young people of Musikklinja become legitimate discursive actors following an expert trajectory of musicianship. Furthermore, the in-between position of music studies in upper secondary may also be a position in between discourses, or rather, a position of considerable discursive overlap,

struggle and negotiation. Thus, music studies may constitute interesting sites for studying the discourses and the strategies of negotiation involved in accomplishing music student subjectivity.

The music studies programme that I have chosen for my empirical investigation is housed in a medium-sized upper secondary school situated in a well-populated area of Norway. Musikklinja has a discursive history stretching back several decades, and is well known and solidly anchored in local cultural life. It is what I would call a well settled discursive practice in that its staff of teachers is relatively stable, yearly traditions are kept up, procedures of timetabling, curriculum construction and assessment established and meetings routinely held. The dynamics of daily life at an institutional level are fairly predictable for both teachers and students. Thus, in choosing Musikklinja, I chose to carry out the project in a setting that seems confident enough to welcome a visiting researcher, active enough to mobilize and engage a range of adjacent sites – and discourses – of music and education, and settled enough to facilitate the study of musicianship as institutionally practiced. Offering a range of educational activities related to music and musicianship, including frequent concerts (in-house and out), choral singing, ear training classes, ensemble playing (school initiated and student initiated), one-to-one teaching on main as well as second instruments, composition classes, music history and appreciation practices, concert production management and so on, Musikklinja also offers a range of opportunities to turn oneself into a subject of musicianship, a music student subject. In short, I chose a setting that enables the constitution of a case rich in information, a case that maximizes what we can learn, as Stake says, addressing *The Art Of Case Study Research* (1995, p. 4). If we go along with the terminology of Stake, my interest in the case of Musikklinja would perhaps, but not quite, fall into his definition of "instrumental" interest:

> In what we may call *instrumental case study*, a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed, but because this helps us pursue the external interest. The case may be seen as typical of other cases or not. (Stake, 1994 p. 237)

In comparison, an "intrinsic" case is studied because of a researcher's intrinsic interest in the case itself, its particularities and uniqueness (ibid). Now, my research interest as explicated in research questions, sub-questions and overall aims does indeed signal an ambition to get at the 'issue' of performative processes of subjectivation and even 'refine', through empirical

studies, our understanding of such processes in music educational contexts. I intended to investigate the accomplishment of music student subjectivity through discourses of musicianship – as practiced, enacted and negotiated in Musikklinja. However, I would say, Musikklinja plays more than a 'supportive' role in this. An important aim has been to facilitate an "ascending analysis of power" (Foucault, 1980, p. 99); an investigation into the capillary relations of power/knowledge enabling empirical instances of submission/mastery. In such an endeavour, the empirical instances are of intrinsic interest. Power exists only as enacted between subjects who are trying to make sense of themselves and others in the contexts they are in. Thus, understanding the constitution of music student subjectivity demands intrinsic interest in the particularities and unique empirical situations of Musikklinja.

The setting of Musikklinja could of course open for several case variants. "A setting is a named context in which phenomena occur that might be studied from any number of angles; a case is those phenomena seen from one particular angle" Atkinson and Hammersley argue (2007, ch.1, section 4), noting that ethnographers may misleadingly talk about studying a "setting". Even the most descriptively oriented study, they hold, relies on criteria of selection and inference. Casing a setting then entails setting up a plan for fieldwork with details of certain research topics or even questions, within a certain setting. In subjecting Musikklinja to my set of research interests, I chose among the myriad of features and possibilities that the setting of Musikklinja contains. Most prominently, I made decisions as to what practices to observe, what sites to study and what activities to include in my project. Participant observation was delimited to the music subjects, that is, programme specific subjects and activities, and to daily life on Musikklinja premises. Interested in relations between subjectivity, music education, and discourses of music and learning, mathematics and geography were of less importance. For students though, a school day may certainly be experienced as a continuum where practices of mathematics and geography alternate with practices of main instrument and composition. It may be considered a weakness of my research design that it fails to grasp students' daily life as a whole that *includes* general subjects. While there probably is some truth to this, I would have to say that even when delimiting participant observation to sites of musical activity and learning only, getting around whole school days and weeks of participant observation and fieldnote production was a challenge. Moreover, whereas mathematics and geography (or Spanish, or social science, or religion, or sports) certainly

may represent important sites of subjectivation, what makes students *music* students is their participation in, and access to, *music* related school activity.

### 5.1.2 Negotiating access

My first initiative towards Musikklinja was in the form of an email addressed to head of music studies and leader of the music, dance and drama programme respectively. Somewhat colloquial in style, but containing an attachment describing my project, I hoped to awaken their curiosity and encourage further communication. Knowing something of how programmes like Musikklinja work beforehand, I reasoned that while I eventually would need an authorization from the Upper Secondary principal, in addition, of course, to the informed consent of teachers and students, I would benefit from the head and leader speaking favourably of my mission to administration, staff and music students. Indeed, without the approval and cooperation of those running Musikklinja's daily life, the project would most certainly be hard to realize despite official permission.

In the following weeks, negotiations of access were carried out with Hannah, head of music, by email and telephone. She was positive to and interested in the project from the start, and even more so in the course of our conversations. To me, Hannah became what ethnographers think of as a "gatekeeper" (Atkinson & Hammersley 2007, ch.3, section 3), sponsoring and facilitating my introduction to Musikklinja. She took care of important preparatory negotiations with the school administration and principal. Significantly, she invited me to a staff meeting where I spoke about the aims and purposes of my project, what my hanging around in Musikklinja would entail for the teachers themselves, and how they could easily reserve themselves against participating if they wished to. Teachers were given the opportunity of clarifying certain issues, most notably what practices I was going to observe and for how long.

Initial negotiations also included what group of students to get access to. Among other things, this was a question of which teachers were most positive to my attendance, as well as what year Hannah (in agreement with the teacher staff) considered to have the social, musical and educational energy to accept and work with a researcher in their midst for weeks, without it interfering too much with their school performance. Thus, the year of students I was allowed to follow around was a group of people whom teachers found well functioning, satisfied and positive. Having discussed things over with Joseph, this group

of students' main teacher, Hannah also invited me to present my project to the students themselves. This proved to be a wonderful occasion for making contact, telling them of my aims and intentions and creating some enthusiasm for the project. The students asked a lot of questions; what lessons I was going to observe, what was my background and what was I going to do with it all. In general, they were a positive, laughing bunch of young people, and when the time came to collect their active consent, everyone had decided to participate, some of them even drawing smileys on the piece of paper they had been given (the collection of consent was done by Joseph later on, and I was not present). Appendix 6 is a translation of the student letter of consent. As for the teachers, proof of consent was collected by placing the letter in their workroom pigeon holes. Teachers handed in their answer to Hannah, who passed them on to me. Most teachers agreed to participate, and some gave their consent on the premise of me refraining from observing practices of one-to-one tuition, stating that they would consider my presence there too disturbing. The teachers' letter of information and declaration of consent is translated as appendix 4.

Preparatory and formal negotiations of access having been completed, I was ready to start fieldwork. I placed a formal request with the school to participate in the research project and got the principal's agreement. As Atkinson and Hammersely note though (2007, ch.3), negotiations of access often persist throughout the whole period of ethnographic fieldwork. So also in the present study. Other teachers than the ones participating in the initial negotiations came into the picture. Access to individual lessons was always a matter of renegotiation – with students as well as teachers. Ensemble rehearsals also seemed to represent closed, private sessions to which I would have to renew agreements of attendance. Individual interviews had to be arranged with individual students. For choral practice, which includes all students of Musikklinja, I had to take some minutes of the first rehearsal I attended to tell my story and state my business in the choir, opening for reservations. In addition, subtle hallway, lunch-break and classroom negotiations allowing me to listen in, sit down with, follow around and generally take part, were part of every day's fieldwork.

### 5.1.3 Planning and undertaking fieldwork

Fieldwork was undertaken over seven months, organized in four periods: two intense periods of participant observation and two periods of interviews

of which the first entailed a set of group interviews, the second a series of individual interviews. In advance, a period of negotiating access and discussing options, schedules and approaches with school administration and teachers entailed a few visits and preparatory meetings, and several phone calls, letters and emails. Table 1 below gives a short summary and overview of the different phases of fieldwork.

| Period | Method | Practices and sites | | Who |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. period (Four weeks)** | Participant observation | Collective music practices | Music in perspective, composition, ear-training, choir, concerts, interpretation forum and term exams, everyday life | All students<br>Groups of students (same year)<br>Teachers |
| **2. period** | Group interviews | | | Groups of students (same year) |
| **3. period (Six weeks)** | Participant observation | Individual music practices. Ensemble-playing | Main and second instrument lessons, ensemble playing, concerts, auditions, everyday life | All students<br>Groups of students<br>Individual students<br>Teachers |
| **4. period** | Individual interviews | | | Individual students |

*Table 1. An overview of the fieldwork*

In the periods of participant observation, I spent full workdays and whole weeks in Musikklinja. Fieldnotes were continuously produced; jotted down during or in between observations and written up in the afternoon. The two periods were planned and carried through with some variation as to practices observed and participants followed:

The first four weeks of fieldwork were dedicated to collective practices of music, practices in which students were together in larger groups: choir (including all three years of Musikklinja students), music history and appreciation classes ("music in perspective", encompassing all students of a year), composition and ear-training classes (larger groups of students), and interpretation classes ("forum", consisting of one or more instrument-groups). Encouraged by the students, I also visited a few Norwegian classes. At the end of the first period of observation, I attended the two yearly Christmas church

concerts, and the extra rehearsals leading up to them. Group interviews were carried out the subsequent week. Dividing the year of students I followed into four groups, I held four sessions that each lasted about one hour.

Period three entailed observing student ensembles in rehearsals, auditions and concerts, as well as attending main and second instrument lessons. In Musikklinja, both school initiated and student initiated ensembles are formed across years. The folk rock band however consisted mainly of students from the year I had formally been granted access to and obtained written consent from. I thus chose to follow them, paying shorter visits only to a piano duet, one of the rock bands and a vocal ensemble. I also attended two afternoons of ensemble auditions for upcoming concerts. In addition to the regular house concerts, Musikklinja concert practices in this period included the Festival Weekend; offering a classical Chamber music concert, a late night Rock Show and a daytime Cafe concert in locations outside school.

The choice of ensembles to observe influenced my choice of students to follow for their main and second instrument lessons and further my selection of informants for individual interviews. Some adjustments were made to achieve variation in the group of informants – not to arrive at a 'representative' selection of some sort, but to have different voices heard. Hence, the group of ten interview informants consists of players of both acoustic and electric instruments, classically and rock/popular music oriented students, girls and boys, students who had expressed their frustration with as well as students who seemed to thrive in Musikklinja, students satisfied with their own performances and students who found themselves struggling. Having followed the year of music students for some time, and already interviewed them all in groups, I used my previous knowledge in the selection process, trying to facilitate the performance of a range of different statements being made from a range of different positions. As interviews were conducted in the lunch-break, they lasted up to one hour.[28]

All periods of fieldwork included observations of the everyday life in Musikklinja. House concerts were regularly held. Hall meetings and year meetings were scheduled every week. And I spent almost every lunch-break in the student lounge or wandering along the hallways. Fieldnotes were also produced from conversations outside Musikklinja premises. I left an after

28 All with the exception of one interview, where my informant did not have to run to the next class but lingered on to talk some more.

concert party to which I had been invited by the students though, considering it ethically problematic to be both an observing researcher and a responsible adult person at an event where minors were drinking alcohol.

In using different approaches to generating empirical data, I hoped to create a productive space for interpretation and analysis. The methods facilitate three different re-presentations: Fieldnotes and field stories offer the researcher's direct representations – observations, reactions and field analyses. Group interviews give access to students' representations as collectively enacted when sharing and establishing stories and thoughts on the interview topics. And individual interviews offer the representations of the student when performing according to the power/knowledge relations of the interview. While methodological triangulation certainly fails as a 'guarantee' of overcoming biases and ensuring validity, it does provide a researcher with some action space in which to create in-depth analyses informed by different kinds of empirical material and different discursive representations.

To open for further richness in the material, I could of course have audio recorded or video taped ensemble rehearsals or choral practices or main instrument lessons, or even daily life in Musikklinja Indeed, video documentation could have supported analyses of students' performative acts, especially when happening through music. Musical interaction is, of course, difficult to re-present in fieldnotes. Working with the analyses based on situations from main instrument lessons and concerts, I sometimes wished I had video or at least audio recordings to support interpretations. In an observed bass lesson for example, verbal and musical interaction overlapped considerably, a statement beginning in a verbal mode ending with a musical expression or the other way around, or modes continuously shifting: "If I [plays], then I would [plays], and that would be like [plays], you know?" Audio and video recording have become increasingly easy, and a smartphone probably could have been put to use without much ado or interference. However, my all over research design would have had to be reconsidered. Video material is rich and complex, and I would have had to severely cut down on practices subjected to structured analysis. In future research projects though, I would like to use video and audio recordings of students' musical performances – in addition to fieldnotes and interviews – to really get into the complexity of musical subjectivation. In the present study, an important premise has been to investigate into relations of power/knowledge from micro to macro levels and from singular incidents to everyday institutional practice. Thus, experiencing

as much of students' life in Musikklinja as I could, spending whole days and whole weeks following them around, in and out of Musikklinja premises and across a range of sites and practices has been prioritized over a focus on fewer happenings.

### 5.1.4 Managing, transcribing and translating data

Fully aware that my strategies of data collection would produce a lot of empirical material, and taking the "friendly advice" offered by Bogdan and Biklen – "pledge to keep your data physically well-organized, develop a plan about how you are going to do it, and live up to your vow" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 118) – I was conscientious about naming every fieldnote with type of practice, place, participants and time/date. All notes were written up and filed digitally, a separate file for every set of notes, date first to have them appear in chronological order. A complete index list of all types of material and sources was created. Research logs and memos produced throughout fieldwork were included, as was email and paper correspondence with the school. The index, and the digitalized fieldnotes, were filed and kept safe in password-protected folders. Original, handwritten field notes and collected documents were stored chronologically in ring binders and kept in a locked office cabinet.

All interviews were conducted in Norwegian, the first language of both the participants and the researcher. They were transcribed in their entirety, using the computer software HyperTranscribe. The transcriptions are primarily content oriented, that is, they are not meant to capture details such as the length of pauses, how particular words or sentence fragments overlap when people speak with each other or accents and tones of voice by use of appropriate transcription tools. But neither have I chosen to contract or make more coherent participants speech by omitting all the hesitations, breaks, er-s and um-s and uh-s in their statements. Um-s are written out, and breaks represented by three dots or a dash; the dots more hesitant, the dashes representing where students are cut off in their speech, either by each other or by myself. Thus, the transcripts are as close to recorded speech as I could get without employing the specialist tools of, for instance, conversation analysis.

Fieldnotes were also taken in Norwegian. To a greater extent than the interview transcripts, the notes report spoken interaction as performed in participants'

various dialects.[29] The notes do not report dialect in any systematic fashion however, and the instances recorded typically represent events where a person's dialect was very noticeable (as when a teacher popped her head into a practice room and in her characteristic way asked what the group of students I was observing were doing), or students deliberately exaggerated their dialects. Apart from a discussion in section 6.2.1 however, students' dialects do not constitute a topic of analysis, and all participants' statements are translated into Standard English when quoted in the analyses of chapters six and seven.

Presenting a translated empirical material in the analyses is of course not without its problems. In qualitative research, we anchor our analyses in empirical 'pieces of evidence', which we then offer our readers so that they may evaluate our claims and assertions for themselves. Offering these pieces of evidence in a translated version may seem to undermine validity and transparency, given that translations are never straightforward re-presentations of meaning but creative interpretations. Then again, "to transcribe means to transform" (Kvale, 2007, ch.8, section 1) – whether we are moving between oral or written discourse, between spoken dialect and the rules of standard language or between different languages.

To ensure transparency, researchers (especially within the traditions of conversation analysis or other more language-oriented studies than the present one) may choose to have both the original excerpt and the translation in their reports. This is of course space-demanding, and as the present study, in an ethnographic vein, offers relatively long quotations and excerpts to illustrate events and interactions in practice, I have refrained from taking this approach. Another qualifying approach would have been to work with a professional translator throughout the process. Since it would have proved both expensive and time-consuming, not in the least due to the many cycles of trying out and dismissing different 'pieces of evidence' for analysis, I turned this opportunity down too. What I have done, however, is discuss particular challenges that arose from the translation process with a professional English proofreader. Aiming at an idiomatic translation, the proofreader was helpful in finding functional interpretations and translations of expressions native to the Norwegian language but which lose their meaning (and performative effect) in literal

29 Regional dialects, which may vary with respect to vocabulary and grammar as well as pronunciation, are important identity markers in Norway. There is no formal standard corresponding to, for example, British Received Pronunciation, towards which students tend to gravitate in the academic sphere.

translations. A good example would be the Norwegian expression "overkjøre noen" which literarily translates into "driving over someone" but is used to indicate that someone imposes their will upon someone else without caring for or listening to their opinions. In section 7.3.3, I have chosen the translation "Am I taking over from you?" to represent the vocal student Molly's statement, even if she is literally talking of "driving over" her vocal teacher. Since some of the abruptness and violence of the statement is lost in this translation, the word-for-word translation is offered in addition.

Translating interview and fieldnote excerpts into English so as to be understandable for readers not fluent in Norwegian may be a difficult and even hazardous task when it comes to research transparency and validity. However, as Björck (2011) notes in her study of gender constitution in music practices, working with another language offers new ways of conceptualizing data, and "provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on the meanings conveyed by the text, meanings which are more easily taken for granted when using one's first language" (p. 38). Working with the empirical 'pieces of evidence' and the field stories that support my analytical narrative in two different languages may indeed have made me attentive towards meanings and possible interpretations not as easily yielded by the language in which I am fluent, accustomed and – perhaps –discursively short-sighted.

### 5.1.5 The ethics of fieldwork

The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) accepted the project. One factor proved to be decisive in getting their approval though: I would have to change the wording of my letters of information to the school, the teachers and the students to draw a more realistic picture of what I initially described as a guarantee of full anonymity. As empirical data on students' gender and main instruments was to be included in publications from the study, NSD argued, participants risk indirect identification. I would need to inform participants sufficiently of this in letters seeking approval and consent. The Social Science Data Services also suggested further minor refinements of data collection methods[30] and wording, all of which contributed to secure participants' rights and validate my study from a research ethical point of view (see appendix 1 for the NSD letter of approval).

30 For one thing, I changed my strategy of obtaining consent, from collecting participants' reservations as well as confirmations, to collecting only active consent.

The question of confidentiality however has remained a delicate issue throughout the project period. During fieldwork, students spoke freely with each other about having me following them for a main or second instrument lesson for example. Similarly, they were all open about participating in interviews. Consequently, many students and teachers knew whom I visited and interviewed, and are probably capable of identifying the various owners of various statements in the final research product. To give my participants more protection, I could have changed their sex, their instruments and their music in writing up my research. As I see it though, this would undermine the kind of analyses I am carrying on the constitution of student subjectivity in discursive practices of musicianship. Music matters immensely; genres, instruments, traditions and voices. Gender *always* matters.

However, time passes. By the time analyses and results are published, these students, as well as their peers, will have moved on. More delicate then is the possibility of teachers being recognized. Whereas students leave, teachers stay in the same context also after the publication of my research. In a letter of information, I ask teachers' permissions to accompany students into their lessons. I state my business as investigating "how students work themselves into and become part of the culture of music and learning that Musikklinja represents" and emphasize that since teachers are active participants in the same culture, including them in my research is highly relevant. Appreciating, perhaps, my interest in their everyday working life, their successes, their wishes and the specific challenges of upper secondary music studies, the teachers were forthcoming and positive, sometimes tending to forget that they were participants in a research project and talking to me as if we were colleagues. To protect teacher participants, I have anonymised statements offered outside the contexts of Musikklinja educational practices, that is, statements made in common rooms and hallways, or in breaks between lessons. In such cases, teachers are referred to as "a teacher", or "teacher A" and "teacher B". Moreover, having emphasized that my focus would be on *students'* statements and performative enactments, several informal conversations with teachers are left out of the analyses altogether, interesting though they might be.

Almost without exceptions, the students of Musikklinja seemed not only comfortable with, but even happy about having me following them around.[31]

31 Two significant exceptions should be mentioned: in an early observation of students in the lounge, a student close to me said out loud to another, across the table: "Do you feel watched? I do. I don't like it". I left immediately. At a later event though, the student welcomed me and

Indeed, I encountered an ethical dilemma I was unprepared for: students seemed to interpret my gaze as indicative of their legitimacy, their 'music student-ness'. Having explicitly stated my interest in the "music student" – without yet realizing how much energy and effort the young people of Musikklinja spent working themselves into acceptable positions of music studenthood – I was also a discursive resource for achieving that specific position. My background as an academy trained musician in combination with the powers of definition that come with being 'a researcher' represented a position in discourse to which forging a relation or from which to receive recognition could enforce music student legitimacy. Similarly, of course, failing to establish oneself as an interesting enough music student by this relation could certainly also destabilize their Musikklinja project.

This is not an easy problem to get around, either in terms of research ethics or the traditional question of 'reactivity'; the "effects of the ethnographer's participation on how members may talk and behave" (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011, p. 4). However, that the researcher is/gets intertwined in the social (power/knowledge) relations of her field of research is not only unavoidable but could even be considered a necessity in both ethnographic and discourse analytical research. Neumann (2001) argues that possessing what anthropologists call "cultural competence" within her chosen discursive field of research is a necessary prerequisite for a good discourse analysis (Neumann, 2001, p. 50, my translation). And Emerson, Fretz and Shaw hold that "relationships between the field researcher and people in the setting do not so much disrupt or alter ongoing patterns of social interaction as they reveal the terms and bases on which people form social ties in the first place" (2011, p. 4).

As a visiting researcher, I was an outsider, but my intertwinement with and position within some of the same discourses as those governing everyday Musikklinja life allowed me to experience how students mobilize those selfsame discourses in relation to me. Students might be more intensely and energetically enacting certain discourses of musicianship to perform themselves as legitimate music student subjects in the eyes of the researcher, but as Emerson, Fretz & Shaw argue, that puts me in a privileged position to study just these "terms and bases" of social interaction. That does not of course lessen the ethical obligations I have towards the students. On the contrary, the relations of

made no objection to my presence. Another student refused to have me visiting her in her main instrument piano lesson. Asking her again when the opportunity reoccurred, I got the same negative answer. However, I was let into her second instrument lesson.

power/knowledge between us demand my acute sensitivity with regard to how and when I might threaten or otherwise compromise students' self-assurance, their various projects of demonstrating music studenthood and their legitimate positions in discourse.

Conducting interviews, and in particular individual interviews, I found, were true acts of balance in that regard. For one thing, the ideal of testing out my analytical understanding during the course of the interview, as Kvale suggests (2007, ch.9), had to be weighted against the risk of offering interpretations that "categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him" as Foucault says in "The Subject and Power" (1982, p. 781). In presenting the interview participant with my interpretations of his or her statements or narrations, I positioned the other and defined a closure and a solution, even if the other still had the option of rejecting the available closure. The act of balance happened in between inscribing the situation with my own interpretations to achieve an "understanding", and facilitating the emergence of still new statements and interpretations. Secondly, my researcher's obligation to generate deeper and more detailed understanding, or richer and more interesting discursive material, had to be weighted against the obligation to care for the informant placed within my researcher's sphere of power and knowledge. If I was too afraid of awkward silence, the obvious discomfort of an interviewee or of pushing someone out of their zone of comfort, I missed out on important insight and statements on the margins of discourse. In paying too little respect to the norms of everyday conversation on the other hand I could have closed the interviewee up or even seriously overstepped the limits of ethical research procedure. And thirdly, when the students and myself had already established social and even friendly relations to each other during the course of the fieldwork, an act of balance was demanded between speaking an everyday language in which elaborate understanding and rich discourse risked being obstructed by assumptions of common knowledge and shared experience. Thus, in some sense, I would have to take a step back to be the 'stranger' even while maintaining my productive relation with the participant.

These are ethical balancing acts, in which there are at least two ethical obligations involved: an ethical responsibility to care for participants' rights and needs, and the ethical obligation to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic. Listening to the audio recordings and reading the transcripts

of the individual interviews, I find that I tend to lean towards caring for the students in the interview situation, supporting their self-narrations rather than testing or unsettling them to achieve an even richer empirical material for discourse analyses. An untrained interviewer, I resorted to everyday politeness and conventions of speech that refrained from pressing a topic if I sensed some reluctance from the participant. While I have a lot to learn in the art of interviewing though, I have found the empirical material produced through interviews satisfactory when subjecting it to analyses. In combination with fieldnotes and group interview sessions (which to a much larger degree were student-driven), it offers a variety of possible interpretations as to the constitution of student subjectivity in Musikklinja practices of musicianship.

## 5.2 Methods of data production

### 5.2.1 Participant observation

Written up and presented as a dissertation, my research project places the question of "How are music student subjectivities constituted in and through discursive practices of musicianship in Musikklinja?" at the end of chapter 1, making it the conclusion of an introductory rationale and the point of departure for the following presentations, analyses and discussions of empirical material. Upon starting my field investigations however, the question had yet to find its final form. I was interested in Musikklinja as a discursive institution of power in the Foucauldian sense, an institution that enacts, manages and sustains discourses on music, musical learning and music education. Additionally, I was interested in music educational practices as arenas of identity work, that is, arenas where students negotiate social and cultural selves. What I wanted to investigate was how these aspects were related and even intertwined in Musikklinja, I was curious as to the relations between *music educational practices*, *discourses of music/musical learning* and *subjectivity*.

Thus, three aspects, each of them with its set of observation focuses, guided the observations:

1 Music (educational) practice: What kind of music (educational) practice is this, where is it taking place, who are taking part and what

are people doing? Around what activities and objects are practices organized, and how?

2 Music and musical participation in Musikklinja: What music is in play, and how? Who are doing what with music, and how?

3 Subject positions and scopes of action: How are different people participating in different ways and from what places and positions? What social and cultural relations are evident in the group of people participating?

The main reason why I chose participant observation as an approach to the field and a method of producing empirical material for analyses, was that I wanted to observe students' performative enactments in actual school situations of doing music, not only in interview settings. I wanted to experience relations of power/knowledge as they were played out, and I wanted to study discourses of music and musical learning as they were mobilized, turned over and reconstituted in their materiality across the various practices of Musikklinja. Moreover, I wanted first hand experiences of Musikklinja daily life, including a feeling of space and distance, of time and tempo, of smells and sounds and visual environments. For a researcher, getting to know Musikklinja from a "student's point of view" would of course be an utterly impossible ambition. However, having gained a feeling of Musikklinja everyday life by spending days and weeks and months there have added to my understanding of student interactions, enabled me to follow the logic of their statements and to contextualize their performative enactments. The interviews certainly started off on another level of conversation when we already knew each other and had a range of shared experiences of which to speak. And significantly, my fieldwork following students around in Musikklinja also brought some balance to my previous experiences with upper secondary music education, all of which has been as a part time piano second instrument teacher, chamber music teacher and accompanist.

Now, to get in a position to observe at all, I had to overcome my own embarrassment at being a visible outsider. I had to force myself to sit down amongst the students rather than take up a solitary place in the periphery, or even resort to the teacher's sphere. I deliberately took a desk at the second back row in music history class to be in the middle of the student group. I placed myself in between the rehearsing folk rock students rather than by their teacher's side. And the biggest challenge: eating my lunch and spending time in the student lounge rather than the adjacent teacher room. As my intention was to observe student everyday life, I had to be in the middle of things, even if I felt

awkward and uneasy. I did not want the students to categorize me with their teachers – better, then, to be a kind of silly, freestanding curiosity in the couch corner. However, as students got used to seeing me sitting there with my cup of coffee, I felt the unease lessen. I engaged more frequently in conversations, and was addressed and included in things going on; the playing of a YouTube clip or the discussion of a choir rehearsal. During house concerts and auditions, I seated myself in between the student audience, listening to their reactions and observing the students on stage. I do regret not having manoeuvred myself backstage just before auditions or one of the Festival Weekend or Spring Concerts though. While waiting with the audience, note book in lap, certainly gave me the advantage of observing students performance of self to others within the concert/audition practice, my understanding of their performance of self to self could have been deepened by following them closely just before stage entrance. Knowing something of the vital importance of these performative acts though, my in-field decision was to leave the students alone for their preparations.

Choral practice similarly represented a challenge to my intention of being in the middle of the action. Feeling that I would be far too noticeable and represent a real disturbance to the young people singing if I took up a place within the choir, I positioned myself on the floor by the wall, looking up at the students in the gallery. A researcher in her late thirties in the middle of the student group, behaving differently, refraining from singing (or even worse, actually singing), scribbling notes, looking around to take it all in, would have disturbed choral interaction too much, and drawn the attention of the conductor. Moreover, the choir setting being such a hierarchical practice, my attention would almost unavoidably have been directed at the conductor. In retrospect though, I think it could have worked had I talked with the conductor beforehand, refrained from taking notes and held a music sheet like the rest of them. My experience would certainly have been different had I been positioned amongst the sopranos or tenors singing rather than outside the choir itself.

### 5.2.2 Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes were produced in different ways, depending on the practices observed. In classroom practices, where students themselves often used computers, I could write fieldnotes directly into a document on my own laptop. The document was duplicated when later expanded upon, making it

possible to differentiate between what was produced on site, and what was written up later. I did however find that the pen and notebook sometimes gave richer fieldnotes, even if digital jottings actually produced more text. My awareness might have been more acute with the pen and notebook. I am quite comfortable with digital tools, but the laptop nevertheless seemed to claim a lot of my attention and even lull me into a false sense of security, making me think that my jottings were already satisfactory and relax a bit on the urgency of writing-up. That being said, writing digitally helped tremendously in recording verbal interaction. A relatively rapid writer, I was in many cases able to jot down long sequences of speech that would have been difficult to collect manually.

At some sites, taking notes was almost impossible. Writing in the student lounge could only be done with much secrecy, for example by obviously surfing the internet on my laptop computer while keeping a tiny document going at the screen's lower right-hand side. Regularly, I would have to visit the toilets to scribble down keywords later to be expanded upon and filled in. Casual hallway or classroom conversations likewise had to be reconstructed. A technique I used more and more often during the time of fieldwork was to speak my notes into a dictaphone. This approach produced relatively chaotic and non-linear notes. However, they were rich in detail with many analytical onsets.

Most afternoons, I sat for hours writing up fieldnotes. It was a time consuming process, spoken notes had to be transcribed before they could be expanded. Digitally produced fieldnotes were long and full of verbal interaction that had to be contextualized and enriched. Representing a mix of descriptions, direct language, observer's comments and analytical onsets, the writings had to be marked, formatted and structured into a layout that would ease later engagements with them. A surprise to me though was that *remembering* was less of a challenge than I had foreseen. Prodded by my fieldnote jottings, I recalled and was able to reconstruct the site and scene in more detail. However, if too much time passed between the experience and the write-up, detail and richness would be lost, and the fieldnote would take a plainer and simpler form.

As argued in chapter 4, fieldnotes are analytical, rhetorical and poetic constructions. When processed, placed in an ethnographic account and presented as a backdrop and point of departure for further analyses, they do not convey 'reality as happened', rather, they represent front line analyses already made that install in the new setting of analysis a preliminary frame of understanding. What they 'convey', then, is a researchers first interpretation of an incident. Thus, rather than deploying fieldnotes as evidence for analyses

already made, organizing the analyses over results, chapters six and seven mobilize fieldnotes as starting points of further analysis. As richly described as possible, events are narrated from my point of view as a participant observer. Validity should be evaluated on grounds of the interpretative, argumentative relations established between the empirical stories and the analyses following them, as well as their fit with the theoretical framework enabling them. As to the field stories themselves, what validates them must be the conscientiousness with which they are produced, the relationship in which they stand to the statements of the group interviews and the individual interviews, and their place in the total ethnographic account.

### 5.2.3 Interviews

Interviews were conducted during the school day, in the lunch-break. Except for one, all group interviews were conducted in the closed library, the students gathered around a small circular table.[32] For individual interviews, one of the group rooms was available on most occasions, but two interviews were carried out in a smaller practice room. We were mostly left undisturbed, which was more than I could have hoped for given the buzz and activity of the lounge and hallways during lunch-break. Only a few times did someone knock on the door (which I had locked), and if so, I would close the inner door when answering to prevent the knocker from peeking into the room.

All interviews were audio recorded, and the students were duly informed of this before the interviews started. They were also told that they could, at any time, ask me to stop the recorder, and that I would do so without questioning them as to why.

The group interviews were conducted as "semi-structured" events (Kvale, 2007). An interview guide consisting of several topics was derived from the project's focus on relations between *music educational practices*, *discourses of music/ musical learning* and *subjectivity*:

- Previous expectations and school milieu
- Musical preferences and the musics of Musikklinja
- The music student and the music teacher
- Musikklinja learning practices
- Musical learning and musical competence

32 When the librarian informed me that someone else needed the room in the lunch-break, school administration immediately gave me one of the larger administration offices to use

Under each main topic were nestled a hierarchy of possible questions, some endowed with the status of being an entrance question, others intended as follow-ups (appendix 2 offers a translated version). While I did bring the guides along, I felt uncomfortable about consulting them during the interviews. I did not want to spoil the conversation as it unfolded, or take charge of group dynamics by referring to some document or protocol. Fortunately, I knew the guide mostly by heart, and was able to steer the conversation towards the topics of interest. Nevertheless, the four group interviews unfolded in different directions, some of them lingering on topics of learning and competence, others more concerned with musical preferences and the school concert practices. Moreover, compared to the general topics and questions of the interview guide, the group conversations, including my own questions, to a much larger degree revolved around actual events and experiences shared by the participants (and myself).

For the individual interviews, I chose an even less structured approach. After an opening question of "How do you find life at Musikklinja?" I tried to follow topics as the students suggested them. In a few cases, the informant and myself had just shared an experience (a concert or a main instrument lesson) that set the topic from the start. In other cases, the informant seemed to have something she or he had planned to say, and this became a central topic in the opening of the conversation. In addition, there were particular topics I wished to discuss with particular informants, based on field observations and conversations. When interviewing Henry for example, the guitarist in the folk rock ensemble I had been observing, I was interested in having him talk about his folk rock ensemble experiences. I also wished to resume a field conversation we had earlier about the school choir. Moreover, knowing him to be particularly active in forming ensembles and getting on stage, I was interested in hearing his opinion on the Musikklinja ensemble, audition and concert procedures. The other interviews similarly represented opportunities to speak with students of specific topics, and discuss specific events.

My intention in using group interviews as a method of data production was to establish a scene within the scene, a practice where students might engage in conversation in ways not all that different from the sofa-chats of the student lounge, but that would give the researcher a more privileged position of observing and recording their interaction, and even leading the conversation across specific topics of interest. Realizing, of course, that a group interview setting is as 'constructed' a setting as the individual interview, I still

reasoned that putting together friendship groups where social and personal relations are already established and people enjoy each others company could facilitate discussions that, if not actually taking place, at least could have taken place in a more naturally occurring Musikklinja setting. Arguing for the key affordances of focus group interviews, Dimitriadis and Kamberelis (2013, ch.3) hold that "Although not entirely "naturalistic," focus groups can afford a closer approximation to natural interaction than do individual interviews" and that mobilizing already established social networks gets a group up and running fast (ibid, ch.4). Moreover, they make the case that:

> Focus group interviews can (and often do) mitigate or inhibit the authority of the researcher, allowing participants to "take over" or "own" the interview space, which usually results in richer, deeper understandings of whatever is being studied. The leveling of power relations between researchers and research participants usually also allows the researcher to explore group dynamics, the lifeblood of social activity, as well as the constitutive power of discourse in people's lives. (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2013, ch.3)

For three of the four group interviews conducted in the current project, this was certainly the case. Indeed, I was somewhat surprised, and utterly relieved, when the interviews conducted themselves so to speak; students asking each other questions and offering their personal opinions without being prompted, the conversation running easily from topic to topic, and the dynamics shifting from unison agreement to disagreement (fierce, in some cases) and back again and from serious discussion to giggling nonsense. In a somewhat anthropological act of gift-exchange, I had brought food (sodas, cinnamon buns and fruit) in return for their time, and the students seemed relaxed and happy, laughingly pointing out that I would not be able to hear a word they said on my audio recording because of their loud munching and slurping. One group though, consisting of boys only, proved to be hard to motivate. I had to poke and prod, and the session felt more like me trying to conduct individual interviews with six boys at the same time. They were all speaking to me more than to each other. This bunch of boys was an established social group as were the other three, and I do not think that they were afraid to speak their mind to each other. Rather, I think that they were afraid to trespass on their group identity, betraying or exposing the others by offering me information. With this group, I would have had to conduct several sessions, I think, to reach the free-flowing discourse of the other groups. Working with the interview transcript however, I found that while conversation was a bit slow-going, the boys are reflective and serious in their answers and their statements are invaluable for how they enact discourses of music, musical quality and musicianship.

The research interviews as conducted in the current study are, of course, *discursive practices* similar to the other practices of Musikklinja, but with one major difference: sessions are established because of my interest in Musikklinja as a site of research and a case to research, and are not native to Musikklinja itself. They are procedures that manage discourse and enable forms of subjectivity to emerge in the context of the interviews. They are specific sites of performative meaning making by which both researcher and the people interviewed make themselves discursively understandable within and through the relations of power/knowledge enacted. Then again, research interview procedures rely heavily on norms and conventions of everyday interaction, and, in the case of the current project, on relations of power/knowledge already worked out between researcher and informants, and between informants themselves. The unique interaction of the research interview overlaps with everyday Musikklinja interaction as it takes place in more established school practices.

With this in mind, interview data are put to use in two different ways in the analyses of chapters six and seven. For one thing, participants' statements are interpreted for how they mobilize and enact available discourses. Thus, I presume that the discursive repertoires of Musikklinja are available for students also within the new context of the research interview. Or put differently, I assume that the relations of power/knowledge governing both students and myself in our everyday Musikklinja life make it through the door to govern our actions also within the setting of the research interview. And secondly, participants' statements are understood as performative acts that enable participants to speak in the context of the interview, that is, they are analysed for the performative *work* they do. In this way, excerpts from interviews and excerpts from fieldnotes serve more or less the same purpose in the analyses, and are used alternately to enquire into performative processes of subjectivation.

## 5.3 Analytical approaches

My enquiry into the constitution of student subjectivity in and through musicianship as discursively practiced in Musikklinja has proceeded in three main analytical stages:

1 Mapping practices: a coding and categorization comprising all field-notes and interview transcripts.
2 Exploring discourses of musicianship and identifying strategies of performative negotiation: A theory-informed, abductive coding in several rounds, comprising practices of musicianship as delimited in stage one.
3 Understanding processes of performative subjectivation: an in-depth analysis of selected empirical events, organized over five sites of subjectivation. Building upon insights generated at stage one and two.

Table 2 below offers an overview of the different analytical stages:

<table>
<tr><td>Mapping practices (stage 1)</td><td colspan="3">Exploring the discursive practice of musicianship in Musikklinja (stage 2)</td><td>Understanding processes of performative subjectivation (stage 3)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Observation study<br>All fieldnotes, research logs and memos<br><br>Interview study<br>All individual and group interview transcripts (10 + 4)</td><td>Study: Ensemble playing</td><td rowspan="3">Practices of musicianship</td><td>Added: Main instrument lessons</td><td rowspan="3">Sites of subjectivation<br><br>The student lounge<br>Choral practice<br>Ensemble playing<br>Main instrument lessons<br>Concerts and auditions<br><br>Writing out analyses of selected empirical events</td></tr>
<tr><td>Study: Choral singing</td><td>Added: Everyday and student lounge interaction</td></tr>
<tr><td>Study: Interviews</td><td>Added: Concerts and auditions</td></tr>
</table>

*Table 2. Three stages of analysis – an overview*

Rather than a straightforward labelling of text using a pre-defined set of categories and category groups, the first stages entailed an exploration of the empirical material in several rounds and from various angles. In the process, codes and sets of codes were generated and revised continuously, analytical terms were reconsidered, and the analytical framework adjusted. Moreover, I shifted between modes of working with the material: close reading, coding/recoding/categorizing, annotating instances of coded material and developing tentative analyses, and exploring how to organize and present the material in chapters, subchapters and sections.

Stages 1 and 2 were carried out using the research software HyperRESEARCH (HR). Same as any other research method (including paper index cards,

sticky-notes and marker pens), HR is a discursive power technology that governs how the user acts and thinks. A tool for qualitative analysis, it facilitates the organization of qualitative data into "studies" that may house several "cases". The "code list", either set in advance or gradually generated through the process of naming and categorizing sequences of empirical material (or a combination of the two), applies to all cases in a "study" and follows the logic of a hierarchical tree-structure with groups and subgroups. Codes may belong to several groups, and sequences of imported material may be tagged with one or multiple codes and belong to one or multiple cases. Every coded sequence can be annotated in detail in a separate field.

### 5.3.1 Mapping practices (stage 1)

For my first excursion into the material, motivated by an intention to map student activities and identify and delimit the discursive practices that would serve as main sites of further analyses, I set up two kinds of studies: an "observation study", containing all fieldnotes and field memos, and an "interview" study containing all group and individual interview transcripts. Starting with the interview study, creating cases that followed the group or person interviewed, my aim was to construct sets of codes corresponding to practices as identified. That is; as named and delimited *in* the conversations by participants themselves (including the interviewer), and *from* the conversations through categorizing statements and sequences of speech. With the observation study, cases were set up to represent these practices, and they were revised as I added, coded and annotated more and more empirical material. Using codes to further demarcate and identify practices within and across cases made evident how they overlapped, intersected and enclosed each other.

Now, it follows from the epistemological stance elaborated in chapter 3 that the act of identifying a practice represents a signifying practice in itself. It is an act of meaning constitution rather than meaning discovery. Identifying Musikklinja practices, I demarcated and named sets of discursively related events, statements and activities on the basis of their shared (and recognizable) characteristics, their articulation and recurrence on a somewhat regular basis and their distinctiveness from other discursively related events. In this act, I drew up a map of Musikklinja signifying practices as observed and experienced by a researcher paying attention to students' perspectives as uttered in the research interview. The map provided me with a useful overview of the field

observed, and an interesting alternative to the schedules and curricula through which Musikklinja practices are formally communicated.

The selection of which practices to include in further analyses was based upon the interpretative work of stage one. The body of collected empirical material – fieldnotes, documents and interview transcripts – was extensive, and granting some of it the status of main material while putting the rest aside as reference material seemed an unavoidable necessity given the scope (time/space available) of a doctoral thesis. Thus, while I have observed weeks of music history classes, these observations make up a backdrop and a reference material for understanding students' everyday life in Musikklinja but do not constitute main practices of musicianship to be further analysed. Piano second instrument and keyboard harmony likewise inform and sometimes even make it into the final analyses, but have not been granted primary positions in the final text. The selection of sites to include – ensemble playing, choral practice, main instrument, the student lounge and concerts and auditions – was made on account of these representing practices that students themselves seemed to invest a lot of energy in. And just as significantly, they were sites of musicianship in which students engaged with music in very direct ways; performing, playing and singing.

### 5.3.2 Exploring the discursive practice of musicianship (stage 2)

Parallel to the mapping and selection of practices, I had also been exploring codes and categories closer to the theoretical framework. As my main focus lay elsewhere however, this coding was very tentative and probing, and stage two entailed a more thorough approach to the task. Fieldnotes and interview transcripts having already been coded and made searchable, I imported the relevant empirical material into specific studies of ensemble playing and choral practice. I also rebooted the interview study to start anew. Working through this empirical material, I paid attention to participants' enactments of "discourses and frames of reference", "discursive concepts and objects", "subject positions" and "modes of participation and negotiation". Thus, the codes developed during this second stage were tested against and sorted under broader, analytical categories of understanding, which were also subjected to continuous revision. Annotations, memos and emerging analytical arguments were saved together with the code/statement that triggered them. The process was time consuming and difficult, and as codes multiplied I had to keep on my toes to reassess,

merge, split, move, and group my decisions and definitions. At one point, I merged the three studies of ensemble playing, choral practice and interviews into one larger study of the "practices of musicianship in Musikklinja", before adding, one by one, field material related to main instrument lessons, everyday (student lounge) interaction and concerts and auditions.

For my research purposes, coding sequences of statements and acts seemed as productive an approach as coding single utterances for specific concepts or enactments. Contexts, interactions, events and situations are important units of analysis in a project investigating the processes or performative acts through which the young people of Musikklinja turn themselves into music student subjects. Thus, while also coding single statements successively, I have as often assigned multiple codes to smaller and larger passages of statements. Below are two examples:

| Fieldnote/interview excerpt | *Code and (Category)* |
|---|---|
| 1 *Informal ensemble rehearsal with Molly's vocal ensemble, with invited teacher Elise:*<br><br>"We'll take it from the beginning" Molly says, playing the opening chord on the piano. They find their tones and are about to start when she suddenly turns to Elise and exclaims "Am I taking over from you?" It comes somewhat abruptly, like many of Molly's statements do. Elise raises both her arms in the air: "No, no, I'm just here to listen!" (section 7.3.3) | • *Owners and leaders (Subject positions)*<br>• *The teacher (Subject positions)*<br>• *Teacher-led or student-led (Modes of participation and negotiation)*<br>• *Questioning (Modes of participation and negotiation)* |
| 2 *Group interview. Having been asked if there is such a thing as a "perfect" music student, the group tells of students from previous years.*<br><br>Michael: Yes, they were … epic, and they … didn't make so much of themselves, but even so, they were very noticeable.<br>Sophie: yes.<br>Michael: you noticed when they weren't around, like!<br>Henry: they were really good on their instruments, and at the same time, had their eyes open towards other things, like, Fredrick B, he was awesome on his guitar, but still very active in the choir and concerned with how it sounded, his passion was jazz and rock, but he was very open towards classical music and that kind of thing, so… (section 6.2.2) | • *The very competent (Subject positions)*<br>• *The music student (Subject positions)*<br>• *Getting it right without being 'good' (Modes of participation and negotiation)*<br>• *Specialization and main instrument (Discourses and frames of reference)*<br>• *Dedication (Discourses and frames of reference)* |

*Table 3. Examples of coded fieldnotes*

While I did frequently return to read again, code again and re-evaluate my categories of understanding when writing the empirical analyses of chapters six and seven, it is on the basis of the codes and categories of stage one and two, or rather, the preliminary insights and understandings they generated, that the analyses of student subjectivation are performed.

### 5.3.3 Understanding processes of performative subjectivation (stage 3)

In ethnographic research, writing is inextricably intertwined with analyses. Ethnographies are "tales" or "stories", Emerson, Fretz and Shaw argue with reference to Van Maanen's now classic *Tales of the field* (1988), not in the sense that they are "fictional", but in the way they use literary conventions:

> Such tales weave specific analyses of discrete pieces of fieldnote data into an overall story. This story is analytically thematized but often in relatively loose ways; it is also fieldnote-centered, that is, constructed out of a series of thematically organized units of fieldnote excerpts and analytic commentary. (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 202)

To achieve a coherent account that tells of and describes the sites, practices and participants investigated even while analysing them, the ethnographer must edit or reconstruct her fieldnotes. Sequences of interaction logged in detail might have to be left out for the sake of telling a somewhat more general story. Descriptions of architecture and atmosphere produced during an earlier visit might have to be imported into the narration of a later event. However, while poetically and creatively reconstructing fieldnotes so as to communicate context and conditions to the reader and focus her attention on "those bits of talk and action that most clearly and economically support the story the ethnographer is attempting to tell" (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 224), the writer-researcher must at all times take care to re-narrate places, people and events as accurately and conscientiously as possible, in ways that do justice to the setting as experienced and the temporality and logic of interaction as reported in the original notes.

The analytical "tale" of how student subjectivities are constituted in and through discursive practices of musicianship in Musikklinja is organized over two chapters; the first (chapter 6) aiming to facilitate an understanding of Musikklinja itself, its spaces and places, its subjects and its practices, the second (chapter 7) investigating more closely these practices as sites of subjectivation. Whereas stage one and two of the analysis represented an interplay between empirically generated codes and categories and analytical concepts drawn from

discourse theory, stage three also operationalizes analytical concepts from performativity theory as conceived by Butler: the performative act, citation and reiteration, submission/mastery, appropriation and subversion (see the section 3.4 on "Analytical framework"). Like Butler, I also utilize the Althusserian notion of interpellation (Althusser 1971). Mobilizing empirical fieldnotes, and on the basis of insights already generated in stage one and two, I construct analyses that identify and take as their point of departure the performative acts narrated in the fieldnote. Discussing the power/knowledge relations enacted, the discourses imposed and the ways in which they are taken up – cited and reiterated – by participants, I try to describe and understand how the young people of Musikklinja turn themselves into recognizable, legitimate discursive subjects.

Thus, the selection of fieldnotes/interview excerpts mobilized in the stage three analyses is based on evaluations as to how interesting I perceived them to be in terms of my stated research interest and analytical framework. I had been identifying and labelling empirical places of interest across the material throughout stages one and two; critical events that offered particularly rich field description, instances of obvious negotiation and even conflict, surprising statements or statements representing especially good examples, and happenings in which a multiplicity of various discourses seemed to circulate. Returning to the fieldnote examples in table 3, the "Miserere" rehearsal is selected because of how Molly questions (and constitutes anew, as we shall see) the relation between herself and Elise, the interview section on the "perfect music students" are chosen for how students enact what I came to see as highly important discourses of musicianship in Musikklinja. Some of the events had already triggered my interest on site, and some made more of an impression when revisiting them in the material. Whichever, the fieldnotes included in chapters six and seven have in general been selected for their analytical potential. In addition, my selection of fieldnotes also depended upon evaluations as to how vividly they narrated the site of subjectivation and the practices of musicianship going on, who participated in the event described and how richly I had managed to capture it. While analysing instances of performative subjectivation, it has been my intention also to write up an ethnography that captures the atmosphere of the place and the fuss and buzz of students' everyday being and doing, enabling the reader to experience Musikklinja through my re-renderings as vividly and in as much detail as possible. Thus, upon 'entering' Musikklinja, and also when shifting focus to another site of subjectivation, I have included some rather long field

descriptions and episodes. In this way, I hope to provide the reader with a context and a kind of discursive materiality in which to situate and understand the analyses that follow.

# 6 Musikklinja

Episode 1: Introducing Musikklinja

My computer bag feels large and bulky and the heels of my winter shoes click against the tiled floor as I cross the school entrance hall, heading for the wing that houses Musikklinja. I make a mental note to settle for notebook only tomorrow, and swap my new boots back to the old pair of sneakers. Due to the bright coloured doors of the auditorium and the large windows overlooking an inner courtyard, the small foyer that connects the Musikklinja premises with the rest of Upper Secondary feels quite spacious. My impression: this is as far as most students and teachers belonging to other programmes go. Here they wait to be let into one of the regular lunch-break concerts, dance performances, drama productions or meetings. The hallways leading further into Musikklinja territory seem to draw music students and MDD teachers only, even the dance and drama crowd stick more to the canteen and their lecture rooms in other parts of Upper Secondary than hang out in Musikklinja.

Keeping left, walking down the corridor that leads to the small student lounge, I pass several rehearsal rooms. Double doors encapsulate the musician with her music, still, the familiar sound of people practicing seeps through. One studio is reserved for percussionists I know; they all have a piano, a mirror, a music stand and a simple chair. Acoustic guitars or electric amplifiers are available in some of the rooms. There are a few somewhat larger floors for ensembles; other rooms are equipped with keyboards and technology for recording or listening to music. The lecture rooms have blackboards and desks.

Along the corridors organizing Musikklinja into rooms and spaces, framed concert posters from previous musical successes decorate the walls, with spaces left for successes to come. One wall displays pictures of Musikklinja final year classes, humorously dressed up in various costumes as tradition goes. Coat racks align the wall along which I walk, a series of posters dedicated to the life and works of Edvard Grieg adorns the space above them. Due to the one hour lunch-break dividing students' work day in two, music students are filling up the

hallways, getting or leaving their bags and jackets, or even dropping down on the floor for their lunch break, sharing earplugs with a friend or flipping open a computer in their lap.

Following either one of the corridors, one arrives at the meeting point where they open up to define a small common room or lounge: a few sofas, tables and chairs, wooden stools in stacks, lockers, a coffee maker and microwave. Although it's located at the far end from the school main entrance, reachable through the windowless corridors only, the lounge feels neither remote nor secluded. On the contrary, it feels like the hub of Musikklinja life and activity. From this area, doors, corridors and windows open in every direction. Whatever place they are going or errand they currently have, students most probably need to cross the lounge floor, stopping to get something from a locker, talk to someone or check the notice board: concert information, exam results, audition lists (who was accepted?), schedules, messages. The lounge seems to be the preferred place for eating ones lunch as well, even if those that haven't brought anything from home need to go to the canteen to buy it. Now, it's crowded with people eating, talking and laughing. I force myself to sit down at a small round stool, my stiff smile probably betraying my anxiousness and discomfort rather than signalling the intended air of relaxed casualness. Several weeks into fieldwork, the lounge still makes me feel like a stranger; stupid, awkward, improper. The girls close by smile at me but continue talking among themselves about conducting patterns and techniques, leaving me to observe the buzz and activity around me. *(Fieldnotes)*

## 6.1 Spaces and places

### 6.1.1 A purpose built facility

Resting in an open landscape: an independent structure of bricks, hooked onto the school main body. Lecture rooms, practice rooms, concert rooms, equipment rooms, corridors, stairs, lounges. Housed in an almost freestanding wing designed and built to fit the various aims and purposes of music studies in upper secondary school, Musikklinja very much appears a unit of its own. To visit, you enter the glass doors of the school main building, where the staff and administration offices, general studies teachers' workrooms and common room and the student canteen is situated. Headed for Musikklinja, you need not pass any of those, however. Like me, you can cross the hall and skip straight down the few steps to the foyer connecting Musikklinja premises with the rest of Upper Secondary like there was no other function to this main body than serving as your entrance into the facilities of music studies.

Apart from the auditorium foyer, Musikklinja shares no doors, walls, windows or roofs either with the school main body or the wings housing the other programmes Upper Secondary has to offer. Musikklinja closes around itself and envelopes and embraces its resident subjects, setting them physically apart from the residents of other domains. The autonomy of its architecture and its definite location and structure enable us to say, "yes, that is Musikklinja". "I work there", and even "this is the object of my study". It physically delimits Musikklinja as a group of signifying practices, demonstrating its material discursive borders.

Passing through the foyer, you are simultaneously reconstituted as a subject in relation to Musikklinja; a visitor, a teacher, a parent, a first year, a researcher. Whether a native or a stranger, the act of entering challenges your position(s) and your scope(s) of action, they are tested against and fitted into the various discursive practices that are Musikklinja. Simultaneously, the act of entering reconstitutes Musikklinja itself as a recognizable, appropriate and autonomous unit. You hail Musikklinja, and you are hailed, and both acts serve to confirm its being and its borders. You may be a visitor, like me, a spectator to the practices of musicianship taking place inside. Regardless of the nature of your gaze – be it explorative, evaluative, criticizing, acknowledging or just plain bewildered – it constitutes and confirms the coalition, the entity of the spectacle. Or, you are a music student, a third year maybe, having skipped the few tile-clad steps and turned left by the auditorium almost every day for the last three years: the act confirms and enforces your right to enter every time you perform it, and by entering, you confirm and enforce the entity that is Musikklinja.

Now, your reasons for entering, the aims and expectations guiding your participation in the practices of Musikklinja, may be very different from those guiding your peers. Indeed, the aims and expectations of Musikklinja practices may be as many and as varied as its subjects. Positioned within a larger discursive formation of music educational practices, there can however be few doubts about Musikklinja's obligations towards the general project of developing students' musicianship and educating musicians. Regardless of the intentions of its practitioners, Musikklinja remains an *intended* practice, planned and made possible by national guidelines and government, local curricula and schedules further demonstrating its discursive borders. Musikklinja represents a purpose built, autonomous facility offering a combination of activities and knowledges that is distinct from other facilities and that is reserved for certain subjects. The nationally given, locally adapted

programme and schedule of Musikklinja materializes like a structure as concrete and substantial as the physical structure of bricks that houses it, distributing subjects across timetables and syllabuses, spaces and places.

The three very obvious delimitations – towards other structures, other subjects and other programmes – identifies Musikklinja as a distinct unit; in relation to the rest of Upper Secondary, in relation to the local culture and community in which it is situated, and in relation to music education as a national endeavour. Rather than set in stone from the start and once and for all given however, discursive delimitation takes continuous discursive work. Discourse, we know from Foucault, is generative, multiple and overlapping. And controlling its dispersal, seeing to its borders, keeping up its delimitations – keeping Musikklinja meaningfully together, anchored in its own culture and tradition – is a never-ending task. The distinct, recognizable entity *Musikklinja* is achieved both by managing its discursive practices 'outside in' – through national and institutional government (purpose built architecture, purpose built curricula and schedule, and purpose built institutional structure and organization) – and by the management of discourse 'inside out'; participants exploring and performing its borders in every practice at all times.

Consider the discursive work being done by the wall of Musikklinja concert posters (episode 1). At a glance, decades of Musikklinja activity can be accessed and taken in. Summing up the successes of the past, the wall creates and holds the entity of Musikklinja in glass and frame. Citing itself, Musikklinja carefully builds and performs its own history. Further, the spaces left open for concerts to come bring the past to bear on the future: "Aw, how come we can't do something cool, like *Queen* or something", I overheard a student complain upon studying the wall of posters, comparing his year's spring concert with a legendary Musikklinja project from a few years back: "No, *we* have to listen to Simon reeling off *musicals*!" *(fieldnotes)*. The posters and the empty spaces hail their spectator, asking: where are you in relation to the tradition we represent? Are you part of it? Will the concerts from your time earn their place on the wall? Will they be remembered and admired?

On another wall, pictures of music student cohorts: a small group in clothes characteristic of their decade, smiling broadly, the first set of students admitted to Musikklinja. Following this, picture after picture up to last semester's third years. John, administrator of music studies, tells me that in those early years, he insisted on finding money in a hard pressed budget to take photos of students in their final year and hang them on the wall. He has purposefully

been "building culture", he tells me, even if there was no "understanding of such things in those days". Now, he says, when former students come back, they look for themselves in the pictures *(fieldnotes).* For John, the purposeful building of Musikklinja culture through concert posters and group pictures serves to expand and uphold a Musikklinja community that includes former students, many of them now active performers and music teachers. The life span of Musikklinja stretches into and overlaps with professional life. Students studying the pictures can find several of their current teachers in them, as well as several active, successful and celebrated musicians. Moreover, the legendary students of former times are up there on the wall, the one that locked himself in at school over night, the really nerdy one they just called "Mozart", the girl that didn't have a musical bone in her body, the guitar teacher and so on. The unity and community of Musikklinja is constructed by this history of former students; that are siblings or even parents to current students, that are renowned and respected musicians, that are teaching in Musikklinja, or have won a place at a prestigious music school abroad. And again, when studying those pictures, you are hailed (into Musikklinja continuity and tradition): who are you in this company? What will you turn out to be? What legitimizes your place in Musikklinja history?

Both the concert posters and the student pictures contribute to the performance of Musikklinja as a distinct demarcated entity. They expand Musikklinja in space and time, performing the present by citing the past. Furthermore, they stretch the Musikklinja span into school afterlife: the persons behind the posters and in the pictures are now out there, performing their Musikklinja background in new practices and on new arenas, performing Musikklinja present from the outside, the future. In this, the posters and pictures also inscribe in the student beholder a promise of what is coming out of their Musikklinja present; possible successes, possible ways out, possible ways in.

While representing a national music educational purpose and objective, the MDD programmes materialize into institutions like Musikklinja through day to day performative practice. And in every performative practice, we can presume, forces of discursive control and management are at play, as well as forces of discursive eruption.

### 6.1.2 A familiar structure?

Approaching Musikklinja, I feel the familiarity of its structures. A musician, music student and music teacher myself, its spaces and places, architecture and organization seem logical and satisfying to me, and confirm me as one of the natives of music educational practices. I recognize and acknowledge the purposes they seem to serve: practicing and developing your musicianship in solitude or together with other music students (in sound-proofed studio cocoons or group rooms), with possibilities of experiencing and testing it on stages similar to those found in the music societies outside of institutional life (a miniature concert hall, adaptable to the needs of different types of ensembles). Receiving the instruction and evaluation of expert members of this society (in rooms equipped with relevant instruments, technologies and facilities). Learning to *know*, learning *from* and learning *in* a peer community of music students (classrooms, scenes and hallways offering spaces for collective interaction). Similar systems of corridors and studios, lecture rooms, scenes and lounges may be found in every higher music education institution in Norway, and in many municipal schools of music and culture. And like Musikklinja, they often constitute autonomous structures; self-contained zones entered through doors, stairs, gates or hallways that typically display signs – posters, pictures, brochures, notes – of the activity going on inside. The Musikklinja system of places and spaces confirms its connection to these other practices. It follows and cites a range of discursive conventions concerning the layouts and structures of 'the school', 'the concert hall' and 'the master's studio'. It suggests certain kinds of activity, interrelationships and forms of participation. In the same way as other educational institutions, Musikklinja answers to a discourse of "relevance": higher education institutions expect it to produce relevant candidates for their studies, productive, professional society expects Musikklinja's curriculum, organization and schedule be relevant for the society for which it prepares. Fulfilling these expectations, the structures and dynamics of Musikklinja imitate, remind of and utilize practices of higher education and of society at large.

Still: while the discourses governing Musikklinja's architecture and organization are familiar to me, the feeling of unease with which I walk Musikklinja's grounds is all the more urgent. I feel very visible, strange and improper in its materiality. The lounge is full of people, both students and teachers, owning it with their bodies, laughter and voices; they are legitimate, accustomed discursive actors whereas I am in between discourses. I have no established

role, neither the students covertly keeping an eye on me nor myself know what to expect of me. Where will I sit, who will I talk to, what do I know, what can I do? The purposes of the lounge and the hallways are not my purposes. I may have been granted access to corridors and classrooms, but they are far from easily accessible. My point is: much as Musikklinja answers to general expectations of what goes on within the spaces and places of music educational practices, and much as newcomers like myself have been granted formal access, the position as 'other' is the only one initially available for us. And, I presume, the uneasiness and visibility I feel in the lounge probably also apply to most new Musikklinja students upon entering – whether they are already associate members (due to former musical experience and education, family relations or geographical connections) or not. Certainly, the atmosphere of the lounge is casual and playful, its actors seeming comfortable and happy. Yet, the lounge constitutes a most critical site of negotiation that manages and facilitates further navigation into the Musikklinja networks of power/knowledge. For some subjects, a position as peripheral 'other' in the lounge may indeed be as far as they come.

Musikklinja may be purpose built, but it represents no all-encompassing, objective discourse on music education. It supports merely a fraction of the multiple discursive practices of musicianship going on in todays' societies, even in current Norwegian musical life. Musikklinja's rooms, equipment and facilities seem to favour some forms of musicianship while other music makers will need to adapt their practice to the rooms, if there is room for them at all. Judging by my own familiarity with the set-up of Musikklinja, its structures agreeing with my academy training as a classical pianist and piano teacher, the discourses governing Musikklinja (architecture and design) correspond to the traditions of Western classical music education.

The necessity of hours and hours of individual practice to reach the level of virtuosity demanded is supported by the availability of small rehearsal cocoons, perfect for the solo clarinettist or the conscientious jazz guitarist, useless for rehearsals with the rock, metal, pop or folk band. These are rooms with a purpose. They are sparsely furnished with no more than what is considered absolute necessity for the practicing student. Windows are placed high up on the wall, and are not to be opened during practice. You are not to be disturbed, and not to disturb others. You are supposed to clean up after yourself, leaving the room in the same 'neutral' state as when you entered it. The importance of the acoustic piano as an aid in appropriating the classical tradition can

be deduced from its presence in almost every room in school, studio or classroom. In comparison, a stationary drum kit can be found in two practice rooms only; the drum studio where percussionists have their main instrument lessons, and the "band room", a somewhat larger (but still small) rehearsal space. Musikklinja offers no operational sound studio for students to practice in, recording and mixing their music. Built some decades ago, when music education in Norway was almost synonymous with classical music training, Musikklinja's spaces and places unquestionably facilitate acoustic musicianship and the training of the solo instrumentalist. Since its establishment, a discursive as well as a technological explosion regarding ways of listening, recording, performing and educating music has occurred, to which Musikklinja has only to some extent adapted. Accommodating new forms of music and musicianship is an economic strain, investing in necessary equipment and adjusting lecture, practice and concert facilities. The auditorium has been equipped with a collapsible 'black box'; thick curtains that absorb resonance and make a sound rig easier to arrange and adjust. Technological equipment of various sorts, mixing consoles, microphones, amplifiers and speakers, are available in a storage room and fetched when needed for a band rehearsal in one of the lecture or group rooms. During a rock band rehearsal in the ear-training room (drum kit transported from the storage, placed on a carpet, amplifiers stacked on the floor in between the desks pushed towards the walls and the grand piano in the corner) Nicholas the band/guitar teacher laughed:

> We have to play ridiculously low…this is kind of like 'comedy night'. *Silly voice, imitating a string instructor:* "OK, everyone, remember to use your *down-bow* there" (***fieldnotes***)

A string quartet would probably not be very satisfied with practicing in between school desks either, but for the rock band, their whole approach to the music, the dynamics between the members, their ways of listening and playing need to be reconstituted to fit the location. However, neither Nicholas nor the band members seem to find that the lack of proper facilities undermine their musicianship and legitimacy as Musikklinja subjects – rock music may not be meant for an educational setting anyway. Neither would I suggest that their rock band practice challenges Musikklinja as a proper and relevant unit. Indeed, the authenticity of Musikklinja rock practice is confirmed, and the rock music subject with it, by the sheer irony of playing in a lecture room. Moreover, the folly of playing ridiculously low having been established, the band members can confidently and comfortably submit to the classical regime of nuance, listenership, detail, types of sound, finely adjusted technique, and work like

a chamber ensemble in the school setting. They are constituted as more than your regular barbarian rock musician; educated, knowledgeable, influenced by the respectful classical tradition. At the same time, the obvious misfit between the music and the conditions of its performance protects the authenticity of their game. Consequently, the band members are subjected as qualified and legitimate 'others', proudly performing their otherness in relation to the Musikklinja set-up. A similar effect is produced in the auditorium, by the black box. By drawing a set of heavy, black curtains to damper acoustics, it is possible to adjust the concert hall to fit the needs of electric instruments and rock bands. However, while this solution may be practical and easy, the rock band/guitar teachers of Musikklinja still describe the auditorium as a location "not meant for us, you know, but we'll have to work with it" *(fieldnotes).* Moreover, neither teachers nor students are seriously complaining about the conditions under which they are placed. On the contrary, they claim that it's useful to practice in this way, arguing that they can hear what is going on so much better. During my period of observation, I never heard a student with a preference for rock, metal or similar genres complain about school facilities, although there was some dissatisfaction with the attention given to the same genres in lectures, school subjects and schedules. The school building's inherent precedence with respect to classical music seemed to be accepted and acknowledged, functioning both as confirming and reinscribing the educational traditions of western classical music, *and* the out-of-institution authenticity of rock and popular music practices.

### 6.1.3 A working environment

Episode 2: Building a working environment

I'm in a pitch-dark theatre. I didn't realize until now how scary, and how intense, and how fantastic the Rock concert must be for the performing students. The room is jam-packed. Present and former Musikklinja participants lean back in their chairs, arms crossed, beanies and caps on their head, whistling, shouting and commenting. Family and friends fill up row after row. The stage is enhanced with a professional sound and lighting setup. On stage is a bunch of energetic youths, a rock band of music students, one of several performing tonight. A slender, dark haired first year has positioned himself in the front, he is playing his guitar insanely fast and his fellow musicians have broad smiles on their faces as they accompany his solo. Nicholas, his guitar teacher, is sitting next to me. He leans over: "He's a first year! We do *not* have to work with *that*, to put it mildly" he laughs. In the concert break, Nicholas again refers to the impressive guitar solo, saying that "It's *vital* to provide arenas for them to do their own stuff, to show off

> their own things." John, who has joined us, agrees: "we need to offer a balance between important arenas like this, and training arenas.[33] We need to offer them enough training arenas". His ambition, he says, has been to create a working environment more than a school: "The really interesting stuff happens in between the school-like and students' spare time and interests, between the teacher's world and competence, and the student's world. *Between* the formal and the "informal" that everyone seems to be so concerned with these days. We don't have to know what the students know, in that, they are self-monitored. But, we can create a working environment" *(fieldnotes)*

More than a school, John insists, Musikklinja should be a working environment. John has served as head of the MDD programme for years, teaches several of the music subjects, performs frequently himself, and is smilingly and noticeably present at every school concert. Tonight, he is enthusiastic about the show: "General studies teachers, they may *never* see their students striving to outdo themselves like this!" he assures me. The key to success, John and Nicholas find, is providing students with a *working environment*, that is, a place or a condition in between what is a school, and the informal (non-school) practices of the students. A learning space where students' "own things" and interests are welcome and acknowledged, but do not necessarily have to constitute curriculum content or activity.

The idea of a working environment is enacted in many ways by the participants of Musikklinja and overlaps considerably with other prominent Musikklinja discourses as I have come to see them. In the episode above, a "working environment" is depicted as a kind of space or ground (common ground, meeting ground, battleground, playground…) between formal intentions of tuition, aims and purposes expressed in curricula and teachers' competences, and the expectations, wishes, needs and native competences of the students. One line of thought seems to be that, if students have legitimate and acknowledged high-status arenas for living out their "own things", they will be more motivated and open for the knowledge, competences and arenas that formal tuition has to offer. There is, of course, another side to this too: one could interpret the Rock Show and similar arenas as governmental technologies of *appeasement*; ways of keeping students' initiatives out of the formal practices that (really) matter within the education system as an evaluative, qualifying structure of power/knowledge. Defining what are students' "own things" and what are teachers' concerns, teachers remain in control of tuition, (and surprises for which teachers are not prepared are avoided). Musikklinja

33 The translation is literal, from the Norwegian "treningsarena".

teachers I speak to in concerts are respectful of, as well as duly impressed and entertained by, their students' competences. However, I never observed students contributing with "own things" in the school subject "music in perspective", to use an example in which listening to, analysing and discussing music is a main activity. As a general rule, neither did students offer their musical preferences and current projects as nodal points for main instrument tuition. On a few occasions, towards the end of a lesson, a teacher would ask "what else?" or something similar, and the student would tell of her or his own projects, and maybe receive some help with a technical issue.

While both aspects are recognized as legitimate and important, performances of the working environment discourse are supported by and maintain distinctions between formal school tuition and student's "own things". In John's ambition however lies also the contrary; it's *in* the between, in a kind of merging we may suppose, that interesting things happen. Neither the school like behaviour of good students following the book nor the reserved attitude exercised by students unwilling to challenge what they already know is interesting. The "working environment" exists as a possible space of excellence for students who are competent entrepreneurs as well as comfortable natives of the power/knowledge relations structuring Musikklinja, excelling by navigating in and out of the formal and more informal school practices. For others, this possible space of excelling might be difficult to find: "I do what I'm told" (Alice, see section 7.1.3).

Several students emphasize that membership of a milieu of musicians is the most important thing Musikklinja has to offer. Making friends, being in a social milieu where people share your interests, having the possibility of establishing musical connections and relations with other musicians and being supportive of each other are important in students' enactments of the working environment discourse. Henry puts it like this:

> Henry: I don't know, but I think that others too, more people than me, many of those that start here and have been playing their instruments and, well, not that they've been *lonely*, they might have been recognized for what they were doing, but [in Musikklinja], you meet grown-ups, musicians that have made a career out of music, and it adds a new dimension to you playing your guitar in your room, like, it becomes more respectable than it used to be. Not that I haven't felt supported, I've always been supported in my music, it's not that, but it gets more *real*.
>
> […]

> Henry: I think that, well, my experience after nearly two years is that we do learn a lot that's very useful when it comes to music, a lot of important theory and a lot related to ear training, and to the practical *playing*. But, for a person that's into jazz and rock, more like in a rock band kind of ensemble, and probably also for the classical people, a just as important thing about being here is meeting others, with the same interests, and making contact. Me starting here, it took only a few months before I made contact with local bands and, like, underground bands. It's like: you get like a ticket straight into music milieus, and milieus that you really want to be part of, but you haven't found the right entrance ticket you know, or you never knew where they were. *(Interview)*

Enacting the discourse of a working environment, Henry emphasizes how Musikklinja represents a pool of fellow musicians, an arena for getting in touch with others and hence giving access to the local musical scenes and milieus. Musikklinja is his "entrance ticket" to more music activity, more playing, more performing, preferably with others. While he accepts and acknowledges the importance of learning the theories and the craft of playing an instrument, rehearsing and performing with others is what Musikklinja is all about.
A working environment in this version is also a working space shared by experts and beginners rather than teachers and learners. Sharing space with professionals, one's motivation is boosted by the prospects of real (neither imaginary nor "school-like") respectable (no silly toying around) musicianship. A new dimension, reality, is added to your guitar playing. In main instrument lessons, I've observed the discourse of working environment enacted in similar ways by the professionals to whom Henry refers. Especially in one regard this discourse becomes very noticeable; the distribution of *responsibility:*

> *A bass lesson. Expert to beginner:* When you get stuff from me, you have to practice in between lessons. You won't learn very much in the lessons! *(Fieldnotes)*
>
> *A fiddle lesson. Expert to beginner:* Good! That was so much better. Repeat this for next time. If you do well, you'll get additional tricks from me that will make it sound even better! *(Fieldnotes)*

Active musicians with several projects of their own going on, both the fiddle teacher and the bass teacher come across as experts. Presenting and sharing their "stuff", their tips and tricks, with the beginners, they are responsible for delivering tools to develop ones musicianship, but not answerable to any possible lack of success. The performance of the expert includes showing and sharing, the performance of the beginner includes obtaining and realizing what is shown and shared. Translated to a more general Musikklinja discourse of working environment, one stance could be narrated as: Musikklinja presents

you with arenas, tools and opportunities, but it's up to you to take advantage of this. Your developmental trajectory through school is your own responsibility.

There is also possible tension inherent in the discourse of a working environment. Students' musical entrepreneurship may not be confined to Musikklinja's schedule and programme. Their musical projects, their "own things", may include obligations towards big bands, municipal cultural schools, rock bands, marching bands, choirs or talent programmes.

> Some time back, one of the teachers tells me, a student wanted out of the school spring concert project because his rock band was scheduled for a UKM-performance[34] the same evening. His request was turned down as a matter of principle; Musikklinja obligations come first. School is school, Musikklinja concerts are learning arenas where educational quality is assured by the teachers. The case grew into a serious conflict the teacher tells me, and ended up being presented as a "warning example" to the hall meeting to avoid these kinds of disputes in the future. *(Fieldnotes)*

While working on my study, I noticed a similar case of conflict: because it clashed with a school concert event, Caroline's request for permission to participate in a National Championship with her marching band was turned down. The matter even made it to the local papers, the leaders and conductor of the band indignant that Musikklinja didn't recognize the importance of, and the learning potential in, such a mission. The 'working environment' is, it seems, mainly confined to Musikklinja premises and practices. The discourse of a working environment may be prominently present, but always within the greater discourse of formal educational intention and responsibility.

In students' enactments of the "working environment", the interrelated discourse of "a socially inclusive milieu" surfaces fast and frequently. Henry testifies that the social milieu of like-minded people was a main reason for choosing Musikklinja:

> Henry: one of the main reasons I chose Musikklinja was to meet like-minded people you know, and I must say I've really found them. I think that's why people feel at ease here right, we have something in common. That's what I feel, that and the concerts, they've been great. That were my expectations I think, and, you know, Musikklinja is well known for its social milieu too, so that was also an expectation. *(Interview)*

34 The Norwegian youth festival of art [UKM] is arranged in 400 local and 19 regional festivals every year throughout the country. In 2012, the festival gathered more than 24000 young people, 500 of which were selected for a national festival in Trondheim (http://www.ukm.no).

When I ask Henry what he thinks makes up the good social milieu, he suggests that music students might not be so concerned with being "cool", they might not have so much to "prove" in that regard. You are allowed to "be yourself". Daniel thinks that it's because of everyone sharing the same interest in music, and because of all the concerts and the choir rehearsals; everyone rehearsing and performing together. Molly emphasizes the *solidarity* between Musikklinja students, Caroline insists that everyone likes each other and feels safe in each other's company. No one wishes any harm to you, Oliver says, and the social milieu is really inclusive. The including, supportive and friendly social community of Musikklinja is attested to by *everyone*, and strikingly few choose to speak of discordance or enmity within the student group. Musikklinja solidarity and safety seems a very important discourse for students to perform, at least in conversations with an observing researcher. Returning to episode 2, John's concern with "training arenas" could be seen as a related line of thought: a Musikklinja "working environment" should be a safe, supported training area. A place where you work – in the meaning of train or rehearse – before presenting or performing on the important arenas. House concerts, year level concerts and forums could be seen as training arenas in this discourse (whether they are perceived as "safe" by all students however is another matter. See section 7.5.2).

The Musikklinja "working environment" is enacted between nationally and locally governed schedules and the unpredictable, messy world of practices that students organize and engage in. And of course, while students repeatedly state that the social milieu and the possibility of finding people to play with is the most important thing about Musikklinja, they are acutely aware that a "school" is what they are attending, a learning arena where they are evaluated and judged, where they need to write their assignments and do their exercises. Indeed, a topic sure to come up in conversations was that of the Musikklinja study workload:

> Live: ok you guys, that's about it. I'll let you go, but before I do, is there something that you think I should have asked you, but didn't? That you would like to comment?
>
> Henry: how do you find life at Musikklinja? (Laughs)
>
> Group: (laughs)
>
> Molly: (laughing) yeah, how come you didn't ask us how we feel about studying at Musikklinja? Why have you just asked us, like, way-out questions?
>
> Live: (laughing) ok, ok, then let's do that one as a last question: How do you find life at Musikklinja?

> Henry: ok, I want to answer this, I want to go first: It really is a lot of fun, but there is WAY too much to do
>
> Molly/Michael/Sophie: yes/you're right/there is
>
> Henry: it's overwhelming; hopeless much to do
>
> Sophie: it's enough to make you cry
>
> Michael: I'm so stupid to have chosen advanced mathematics, such a bloody dumb ass.
>
> Molly: (happily) yes you are!
>
> Oliver: (laughs)
>
> Henry: but it's really a lot of fun too! I tell all my mates from secondary that it's so much fun, but way too much to do. That's my opinion (group agrees). We have too many subjects, and too much to do for each subject.
>
> Live: then what do you prioritize?
>
> Michael: music subjects, easily.
>
> Molly: yes, music subjects.
>
> Live: (to Henry) how about you?
>
> Henry: yes. Or (hesitating)… I prioritize the subjects that I struggle with, that I need to work with
>
> Jennifer: I prioritize the ones that have final assessments this year (Henry: agrees). Like, this year, that's geography and social science. *(Group interview)*

During my own piano studies in the conservatory, I was frequently presented with the same summing up of MDD life from friends and acquaintances that the group provides in the above interview excerpt: music studies in upper secondary is great fun, but the workload almost insuperable. For Henry, it is a topic so immediate, and so pressing to communicate, that he poses the question of "how do you find life at Musikklinja?" himself, knowing that "so much fun, but WAY too much to do" is the logical answer to follow. Judging by the open, introductory style of his question the topic should indeed have been *starting off* the interview, constituting a background for whatever would be discussed next. Performing the discourse of study workload (and great fun), Henry experiences and constitutes himself as a proper Musikklinja subject in relation to me as a researcher, his fellow interviewees, and his former school friends (none of whom had chosen Musikklinja). Study workload and great fun is what sets Musikklinja apart from other programmes, it seems.

The rest of Henry's group quickly add to and enforce his argument. They all confirm that demands are high and prioritizing a necessity. Michael performs

appropriately; assuring us that music subjects are what he prioritizes – *easily*. His answer corresponds to and enforces a discourse of music students' *absolute dedication and commitment* that I experience to be important in Musikklinja (section 7.1.2). The discourse is in accordance with the enactment of a Musikklinja "working environment"; an arena where you meet and hook up with people, have access to equipment and locations, and are offered guidance and support. Dedicated students are part of several musical constellations, both school initiated and student initiated. They linger on after school hours to keep playing, discussing and enjoying music. They are competent, self-driven musical entrepreneurs, taking advantage of their "working environment" to develop their musicianship even further, creating their own trajectories through school. Thus supported, Michael effectively constitutes both Musikklinja as a unit of its own, and himself as a legitimate subject.

Henry agrees almost automatically it seems, but adds hesitantly that he prioritizes what he finds most difficult. Assuming that the music subjects are what he refers to, I'm a bit taken aback when Jennifer introduces the common core subjects of social science and geography and Henry agrees. A researcher focusing on music studies, I tend to forget that students' school day and school life is a whole that *includes* general subjects, and that music student subjectivities may be constituted through relations of power/knowledge enacted in non-musical as well as musical practices. Jennifer is doing very well in the music subjects; she performs well in the discourses of absolute dedication and is sharp as a razor in ear-training class, getting a lot of credibility from it. Her honouring of the discourses of commitment and dedication does not prevent her from taking her general studies seriously though; neither does her Musikklinja legitimacy seem threatened by this interview performance.[35] As for Henry and Michael, they are both active and rich in initiative within the discourse of a working environment, signing up for gigs and auditions and

35 For example, as in the UK, higher education courses set their own entry requirements. For undergraduate courses, students need to have achieved further education qualifications – A and/or B levels – in related subjects (British Council, n.d.). In Norway however, admissions to undergraduate courses are granted on the basis of students' general qualifications from upper secondary education as a whole - which include, for example, sports, religion and geography. Thus, students need to perform well across a range of different school subjects even if their interests and aspirations are directed at some of them only. Even if some study programmes have requirements in specific subjects from upper secondary school, or require entrance auditions, this comes in addition to the general requirements.

playing in several ensembles. They are not, however, regarded as top musicians, neither do they excel in the music subjects. A persistent enactment and citation of prominent Musikklinja discourses and main structures of power/knowledge give both boys a stronger footing.

## 6.2 Subjects of musicianship

### 6.2.1 Categories of classification

Episode 3: The foyer

Today's house concert is "closed", meaning that only Musikklinja students and teachers are admitted. As we stand in the crowded little foyer waiting for the auditorium doors to open, people laugh, chatter, eat and sip their sodas. Michael sails down the hallway towards us. "You mind holding this a sec?" he asks Robert the ear-training teacher, handing him a paper tray with two pieces of white bread. Robert accepts the plate with a smile and no further comment, and Michael continues hastily towards the canteen. Anna and Amelia arrive laughing. "We are calling all first years Terrence and Trudy" they giggle, "because we cannot remember their names!" "Well, do they know, so they can respond?" I ask them. "Oh yes, well, at least one of them" the girls laugh. A short, thin boy approaches us with a broad grin on his face. The girls greet him: "Hello Terrence!" Molly turns around, looking bewildered: "His name's not Terrence?" Anna explains, Molly lifts an eyebrow and turns back to Jennifer and Mia. "Terrence" has a check-patterned shirt, and Anna points to his upper button: "you forgot that one". The boy responds by buttoning down the whole shirt, revealing a dark blue plain T-shirt. "Ah! Ready for house concert!" he says decisively. "That's the Musikklinja outfit" Anna laughs, pointing to his chest, "a check-patterned shirt and T-shirt underneath." "Is it?" I ask. "I thought hoodies were the thing." The girls protest. No, music students wear shirts. "What about the middle row of boys in your class, they often wear hoodies? But the girls, they wear shirts." Yeah, Anna and Amelia agree, the girls wear shirts. But, they maintain, Daniel, and Carl, and Henry – they all dress in check-patterned shirts, the main Musikklinja outfit. I look around. The girls and boys in the foyer make up quite a homogenous group. Ethnically, they all have a typical Scandinavian appearance except for one with Asian features. They are casually dressed, no school uniform but some outfits nevertheless seeming to constitute a certain dress code: boys in plain jeans, the skinny type rather than the baggy. T-shirts showing some band or brand under unbuttoned, check-patterned long sleeve shirts. A few pale, all-in-black metal guys. Several wearing hoodies or sweaters. Girls, feminine with blouses or tight sweaters, pearls even, earrings, belts around their waists. Or in similar shirts to the boys,

> albeit a bit more oversized. Scarves. Jeans, short skirts and tights. Sneakers for the boys, sneakers or smart winter boots for the girls. Molly in woollen socks, Julia in black, thigh-high boots. With a few exceptions, no hip-hop street-wear. Some stand out, sporting large, plastic framed glasses, beanies or hipster hats, striking hairstyles or jewellery. I point to Elliot, who is wearing a nicely fitted white "Moods of Norway" hoodie. Eva, who has joined us and followed our conversation smiles: "well, he *is* gay you know." *(Fieldnotes)*

Who are the subjects of Musikklinja? What discursive categories are, or can be, used to identify, name and organize them? In the above, Anna and Amelia effectively confirm and enforce the category of music student by assigning to it an outfit and providing me with a sample: the broadly smiling "Terrence", who, with self-irony, performs his part perfectly, acting like a newbie first year trying to act like a full blown participant: "Ah, ready for house concert!" This is an interesting aspect of the performance of music student subjectivity in Musikklinja: students frequently and explicitly utilize the notion of music student performatively, citing and inscribing the term and the discourses that surround it with irony and pride, using it to set themselves apart from other types of students as well as equip themselves with some of its attached agency. Subjecting themselves to the term knowingly and with proud irony, they gain legitimacy and discursive agency without fully accepting a (prestigious) position in which they would have to exhibit a range of expected qualities, competences and knowledges. In this way, knowingly wearing the Musikklinja clothes and answering to his Musikklinja name, "Terrence" safely works his way into a comfortable Musikklinja position. And the giggling girls likewise confirm themselves as insiders and knowledgeable actors.

Of course, in front of a researcher who has expressed a major interest in the 'music student', the category would indeed be performed with energy (see, for example, the drama students' revue in section 7.1.2). Judging by the enthusiasm with which the term is enacted throughout the interviews, group interviews and practices observed though, the category is vital to the young people of Musikklinja. Performing as a legitimate music student, in some way or another, in all or some practices at least, including the interview and observation practices of a visiting researcher, seems no less that a prioritized project. A huge amount of energy is spent constructing a place for oneself in Musikklinja related to the category of music student, and stories of how one went from an insecure first year to a more confident and comfortable senior participant many (see section 6.2.3). Additional categories, also vital to Musikklinja subjectivizing practices are terms signifying what instrument one plays (flutist,

drummer, fiddle player), what genre one primarily operates within (the classical people and the band people), terms of honour like the musicians and the professional musicians (applied to both teachers and students) and even a notion of the 'real' or typical music student, indicating a level of legitimacy.[36] Since Musikklinja represents an educational setting, the categories of student and teacher are main formal means of differentiation and organization, often articulated through sub-categories like ear-training teacher or flute teacher, music student and first year. To the categories, the subject positions, of student and teacher are attached different privileges and obligations, and they occupy different spaces and places in the network of power/knowledge relations that is Musikklinja. The present study is even based on this distinction; when using the term 'participant', including all subjects involved in Musikklinja day-to-day practices, my ambitions and my texts are explicitly oriented towards the performance of student subjectivity.

As episode 3 illustrates though, the power/knowledge relations creating and connecting the positions of student and teacher in Musikklinja do not necessarily follow a traditional pattern of student subservience to an authoritative master. Apparently, Robert the ear-training teacher submits to the whimsical hallway authority and dominance of Michael, a student native owning the foyer and the passage to the canteen with his happy ways. One could, however, see it the other way around. The teachers of Musikklinja are not only teachers; they *are* Musikklinja. Several are living legends – "you wait until third year, then he'll do his dwarf-dance! You just wait, it'll be hilarious!" *(fieldnotes)* – having taught their school subjects and walked the school floors of Musikklinja for years. Robert, leaning into the wall of the foyer, *is* Musikklinja as much as the foyer itself. Expecting Robert to keep his plate of bread (while he himself skips off to the canteen) enacts a casual familiarity that constitutes Michael as an absolutely subjected music student. That this power/knowledge relation is enacted in full view of an observing researcher and a student audience adds to its performative effect.

Important as they are, the positions of student and teacher remain relatively large categories open to nuances and overlaps. In the above fieldnote, Eva provides the category 'gay', one of only two times during my Musikklinja stay that Elliot has been thus named. The other exception was Michael ensuring me

36 Moreover, subjects' religious and cultural background are signalled through categories such as "the Filadelfia girls" and "the YMCA's"

that, while I might have noticed him preferring the company of girls to that of boys, this is not because he's gay:

> Michael: so it's like, me and Elliot sitting with the girls. And that's funny you know, because he is gay. And I'm not, not anything like it. So people wonder you know. But I'm just more comfortable with the girls, always have been. *(Interview)*

The naming of Elliot points him out as different and inscribes in him certain characteristics (good taste in clothes, prefers feminine company). Neither Eva nor Michael's remarks are deliberately meant to ridicule, criticize or injure though. In general, the students of Musikklinja seldom use injurious language related to sex and sexuality (that is, they seldom do so in conversations observed or attended by a female closing-in-on-forty researcher). There is a smile on Eva's face as she cites the discourse of the fashion conscious gay man, but her comment is made quite matter-of-factly: Elliot's stylish hoodie may stand out in the crowd, but then again, everyone knows he's gay. He is not, obviously, subjected to entirely the same discourses as the rest of them, or at least, we can reason from Eva's comment, Elliot has obligations towards other discourses, discourses of the gay man, that may trump those of the music student. This is not to say that gay is an unproblematic or conventional subject position in Musikklinja. The lack of discursive activity on the topic rather suggests the opposite; there is little room for action from a position as gay. It may be recognized, but only silently, and it remains on the periphery. The row of active, noticeable boys in the middle of the "music in perspective" classroom does not include Elliot.

I presume that sex and sexuality is of great interest and concern to the 16-18 year olds of my study. However, the topic never surfaced in interviews or field conversations. Nor was that an ambition. More noticeable were differentiations following discourses of gender. Michael grants Elliot privileges he himself feels a need to defend: Elliot's gay, so he can spend time with the girls without anyone caring or commenting upon it.

> Live: is there something you wonder why I haven't asked you?
>
> Michael: yeah…why haven't you asked me how come I sit with the girls rather than with the boys?
>
> Live: oh, I didn't ask you that, no.
>
> Michael: people usually notice…
>
> Live: (laughs) why do you sit with the girls rather than the boys?

> Michael: I don't know why really, it's just how it is. Maybe I'm a bit more feminine? No (laughs). But they are like bragging and taking up a lot of space.[37] Like, Leo, Daniel, Lukas, Henry, Carl, those guys, they … (smacks his tongue) don't behave in a way I like to behave. So, I kind of ended up with the … girls rather than the boys. […] I feel safer with the girls. *(Interview)*

Friendships and social groups, it seems, follow gender. If you transgress, you need a reason (like being gay). In the year of music students to which Michael belongs, two feminine centres of gravity are obvious: Molly, Jennifer and Mia draped around (or on, or across, even under) a table at the front window side, Caroline, Anna, Amelia and Eva in a row at the back, tipping their chairs and leaning towards the wall. A masculine stronghold is often constructed in the middle of the classroom, boys putting together their desks in a straight row and sitting shoulder to shoulder. While there is some variation to who is actually in the row, the main rule is all rock band people; guys playing guitar, drums and bass. A notable exception is Leo, who plays a brass instrument and is taught by a classical brass teacher. However, he performs enthusiastically and frequently both on the electric bass and as a rock vocalist, and for ensemble he chooses the funk brass band in addition to the classical quintet. The gendered distribution of instruments and musical genres in Musikklinja is striking, and it very much enforces classroom strongholds. Only boys play electric instruments, none of them plays the flute, and very few sing in the classical genre. The girls of Musikklinja are not rock musicians. None of them plays the drums, the bass or the electric guitar. Once, at one of the house concerts, a slender, pretty, dark haired girl 'screamed' with a rock band. Watching her transgressing the discursive limits of her gender like that actually made me feel embarrassed and uncomfortable; a reminder of my own embedding in the gendered discourses of music. Molly and her girls sing, play the guitar, the ukulele, the piano and other acoustic instruments. The (few) brass girls, like Caroline, have the option of participating in the funk ensemble and a flautist at school sometimes played in prog-rock constellations. As a rule however, when Musikklinja girls participate in rock band settings, it's as (alternative) pop singers, leaning towards jazz.

The nodal points of sex and gender may be vital categories to the performance of subjectivity, but they are not main analytical categories in the current study. The project has not been tailored to understand the subjectivation of students through discourses of gender but through practices of musicianship. Then again, gender is, *always*, a part of it. According to Butler (2007), no practice

37 In Norwegian, Michael uses the word "brautende" in a way that describes a "masculine, loud, self-assertive manner".

avoids the gendered, heterosexual matrix that motors the western societies. As they are navigating and negotiating discourses of musicianship, students are always also subjected to and through discourses of gender. Musicianship remains masculine and feminine, girls and boys having access to different discourses and subject positions.

Just as they are governed by discourses of gender, positions of Musikklinja musicianship may of course also be governed by discourses of *ethnicity* and *class*. These are main nodal points of identification in sociological and cultural studies analysis of educational practices, and the fact that Musikklinja students are all white, Western looking young people is certainly an interesting starting point for a discourse oriented investigation. Who indeed has access to positions of Musikklinja musicianship? Who has access to positions of formal music education outside mandatory schooling? Within Musikklinja walls however, ethnicity seems not to be a topic, and constitutes no significant nodal point of identification, classification and performance of subjectivity either amongst students or teachers. What matters more, it seems, is where you *come from* in terms of local geography. Musikklinja is situated near a larger town, but recruits from a broad surrounding countryside, farmland characterizing the landscape. Several students have their homes in smaller towns and communities nearby, and need to travel some distance to get to Musikklinja. Students speak a variety of different local dialects (in some cases only nuances distinguishing one from the other), which they often humorously and deliberately exaggerate. When working together analysing a piece of classical orchestra music, when answering a question put in composition class, when discussing what to do the upcoming weekend, dialects are put performatively to use with two notable effects. For one thing, the discursive distance between one's background and one's current position is highlighted, strengthening and reinforcing the impact of one's achievements in Musikklinja. For the other, one's affiliation with other Musikklinja subjects is proudly performed, strengthening and reinforcing the legitimacy of one's own Musikklinja attendance. Additionally, a third performative effect is achieved: when emphasizing one's rural geographical background through a caricature dialect, its binary opposition, an urban background, is simultaneously cited. In Norway, the urban/rural binary opposition continues to inform political debate as it has over decades,[38] generating discussions of centralization versus decentralization within sectors

38 The 1933-slogan of the Norwegian Labour party "By og land, hand i hand" (City and country, hand in hand) still known to most people

like culture, education and health. As discourse goes, an 'urban centre' remains more qualified, effective and up to date than the 'rural periphery'. Moreover, urban centres attract the more qualified and up to date subjects. A music, dance and drama programme situated rurally represents according to this logic a less qualified, effective and up to date institution, attracting the attention of less qualified subjects. For the students of Musikklinja though, invoking the urban/rural binary opposition by exaggerating their dialect may work as an act of subjectivation through subversion: the position of rural periphery is accepted and at the same time subverted, given new status, through the inherent self-mockery of their statements. Urban irony combined with rural roots creates a unique, stable platform for further self projects.

### 6.2.2 The proper subjects

Similar to how Musikklinja spaces and places, programmes and schedules constitute Musikklinja as a definite, recognizable unit, categories of identification sort and distribute subjects in ways that outline Musikklinja borders and define Musikklinja practices. The formation of various subject positions possible within Musikklinja delimits it in relation to the subject position formations of other programmes and subject positions currently not active in nor supported by Musikklinja's practices of musicianship. For example, Musikklinja has no rappers, disc jockeys or computer musicians. Some delimitations are enacted through recommendations, rules and procedures of admission. *The Norwegian Education Act* (The Education Act, 1998) says that young people have a statutory right to three years of upper secondary education; no prerequisite knowledge or competence beyond having completed mandatory schooling is called for. *Vilbli.no*, the counties' information service for applicants to upper secondary education and training, calls it "helpful" if you can play an instrument and warns applicants that they must be "…prepared to practice a lot, alone and with others, both in school and outside school hours" (vilbli.no, 2005-2014). And, in folders and web sites addressing potential students, Musikklinja aims to attract proper subjects by emphasizing the programme's focus on the "practical" and the "performance-oriented" aspects of music, and the importance of previous musical experiences and qualifications. However, music programmes at upper secondary levels have no formal right to

refuse applicants on the grounds that they lack musical competence as long as there are places available.[39]

Who, then, are the *proper* subjects, the ones Musikklinja wants to attract? After spending days and weeks in the classrooms, common rooms and practice rooms of Musikklinja, I would say that both teachers and present students of Musikklinja expect new students to exhibit not only a little but a considerable amount of prerequisite musical competence and knowledge. Indeed, a stance frequently taken is that applicants, and todays' music students in general, are *less* musically competent and knowledgeable than before, and that this represents a huge problem:

> Teacher A: Generally, student levels are low. Some of the first years, they know *nothing*. And half of the third years, they're excess baggage too. *(Fieldnotes)*
>
> Teacher B: They are unable to concentrate. They live in a world with so many impressions, they just flutter around. That's not good. And it has changed considerably in ten years, it wasn't always like this. Before, I could use my one hand to count those who were *unable* [to concentrate]. Now, I use the hand to count those who are *able*. *(Fieldnotes)*

> Michael: you know, those first years, that's not really a *music*-class
>
> Molly: ah, yes, but…
>
> Sophie: whoa, you mustn't *say* that!
>
> Michael: ah, but, no no, that's not what I mean. I mean that last year's third years, for example, they were like a *classic* music class. And the third years before them, they too made up a classic music class.
>
> Sophie: they were, they were above…standard
>
> Molly: but, they had so many *good*-
>
> Michael: yes yes, but they were a *music*-class, and I'm thinking, we are like not *quite*, we are like "middle", we've got *you guys* (nodding towards Molly) and you're like really 'humptidumptidi' –
>
> Molly: humptidumptidi?!
>
> Henry: we're considered to be a quite *strong* music class? I think?
>
> Michael: but, the first years, they are like Kirk Hammett guitar, long hair and metal
>
> Molly: I know what you mean…but…

39 As a rule, admissions to upper secondary are granted based on grades from the 10-year compulsory school. However, in the case of MDD programmes, half of the applicants can be admitted through auditions in combination with grades.

Michael: they have very few classical instruments when you consider-

Molly: yes, that's true, they have like-

Michael: and then, they've got seven girl singers, none of who can actually sing!

Molly: ok, so they're crappy, kind of, but we have to let them in? We can't-

Sophie: I think they're cute

Molly: we think they're cute!

Michael: yes, but they are not *music* students, like *classic…*

Henry: huh, you, no, you can't say-

Molly: everybody learns!

Michael: right (sighs). *(Group interview)*

The teachers and students in the above excerpts identify several lacks, faults and flaws with the new first years, as well as with present cohorts of students (compared to previous years). For the teachers, a major problem is *ability* – an agency, it seems, constituted by the knowledge, the will and the capacity to concentrate and focus on tasks given, and the potential of *contributing* rather than making up an unneeded, unwanted extra burden. Musikklinja has an on-going project of education, constructed and enforced across years of practice, and it requires that students contribute by signing up for concerts, singing in the choir, managing and engaging in concert productions, following and organizing their own schedules, carrying, rigging and fixing musical and technological equipment. This project of education, formalized in local curricula and realized in all Musikklinja practices, depends upon students' contributions even in school subjects such as ear-training, music in perspective, composition and music theory: if students are unable to answer, understand, follow up, do their assignments and practice their given tasks, the Musikklinja project is very difficult to carry out. Students that make the project hard to carry out then would be "excess baggage". Proper subjects, on the other hand, are knowledgeable enough, focused enough and able enough to accept and understand the practices that they meet upon starting Musikklinja, so that they can utilize the time of introduction offered (the preliminary, preparatory practices of the first year) to become full-blown music students. This is what Molly alludes to in her concluding remark above; everybody learns! First years are to be granted a period of initiation, learning and adaption, during which they are supposed to grow out of their "cute" beginners' ways. Their faults and flaws include a Kirk Hammett style metal musicianship, as well as "crappy" female vocals, both coming across as some kind of child's disease.

Michael however holds that this group of students won't ever pull through to constitute a *classic* music class. His use of *classic* explicitly refers to the classical instruments, indicating that a proper music class should sport its share of acoustical strings, woodwinds and the likes, instruments that operate within the genre of "classical" music. In the first year, there are only Hammett-guitarists (indicating that they have learned by copying an idol) and girls who actually can't sing (implicitly: although they obviously think they can, having chosen Musikklinja). Although the others protest, acting horrified even by what Michael says, it is not an uncommon argument in Musikklinja. Nowadays, all boys are guitarists and all girls are singers, teachers exaggerate to make a point. We recruit poorly from the wind bands and the municipal cultural schools, and fill up the years with girls from local choirs and boys from local bands. Forming ensembles becomes difficult I'm told, because of the lack of instrumental variety. One teacher tells me of a boy who "only likes hard rock, you know, like, black metal. He almost puked when we put on Haydn". The teacher had to inform him that he wasn't attending "hard rock studies" (fieldnotes).

In the following group interview excerpt, Leo, Daniel and Adrian similarly complain about the musical preferences of the first years:

> Leo: the first years, they are listening to the Jonas Brothers and Hannah Montana and that kind of shit.
>
> Daniel: yes.
>
> Live: oh, they are?
>
> Leo: yes.
>
> Live: and that's ok, listening to Hannah Montana if you are a first year?
>
> Leo: yes, but you are looked down on, or, *I* don't think it's OK, like.
>
> Group: (laughs)
>
> […]
>
> Live: is it a kind of child's disease that they will pull through?
>
> Leo: might be.
>
> Live: or are they just different?
>
> Adrian: we certainly didn't go around showing each other Hannah Montana our first year if that's what you mean. I don't know, I might just be *stupid* or what, if that's how it was, but I can't remember us showing each other (laughs), or anyone in our year, going around sharing that kind of music. *(Group interview)*

When I ask the boys directly if the musical taste of first years could be a kind of child's disease, they are in doubt though. Leo politely gives my suggestion some

support, but Adrian protests. The thought of them showing each other that kind of music (or *shit*, to use Leo's words) is ludicrous, it makes him laugh out loud. If *that* was the case, Adrian must have been *stupid* not to notice. The boys position themselves as far above the immature Disney Channel music as they can possibly get, "looking down" on its first year advocates from their possibly hard won senior legitimacy.

The uniform and inadequate background of the discursively established 'new' type of students represents a challenge to the educational project of Musikklinja. New students are slow learners, because of what they do not know and have not experienced. This is Oliver, reflecting over the quality and level of Musikklinja students:

> Oliver: …there's no use hiding the fact that the quality of the students has dropped you know, the last few years.
>
> Live: (surprised) wha…where did *that* come from?
>
> Oliver: that's what I think anyway. 'Cause, you know, a few years back Musikklinja was the ultimate thing. You needed over a *five* average to be admitted, if you weren't admitted through auditions that is. There used to be over a hundred applicants, now, there's only thirty-something, right? So it's not as *prestigious*, and what happens is, fewer people apply, and that affects quality, that's only natural. What were we talking about?
>
> Live: the Christmas church concert
>
> Oliver: because, neither my year nor the other years are especially – good. I'm not saying I'm any good either, I'm comparing us to those that went here before us. Especially in the choir, we have no male singer, well, there's one, but he doesn't sing, almost. So we struggle, you know.
>
> Live: when you say you aren't that "good", do you mean singing?
>
> Oliver: no, I'm thinking, there's like *no variation*, we've got forteenhundredandfortyfive guitarists and forteenhundredandfortyfive singers, and, I know it sounds kind of cheeky, but none of them are *really* good […] There's still people out there who are really good, but they don't … prioritize Musikklinja. 'Cause it's not as prestigious as it used to be. *(Interview)*

Oliver states the low quality of today's students in a matter-of-factly way. It is a situation so self-evident ("you know") there is no use pretending otherwise. Nowadays, Musikklinja fails to attract the best students as there is less prestige to be gained. Those that take their music and their musicianship seriously choose other educational trajectories, as do those with the best grades from lower secondary. The students that Musikklinja *do* attract are either guitarists or singers, and none of them are any good; that is, they have neither the best grades nor a serious enough engagement with music. Neither,

Oliver's performance in the above seems to presume, do they have the "right" musical competence and knowledge – they aren't *really* good. And this is a very interesting aspect of Musikklinja discourse: a guitarist may perform impressively in concert, even in his exam. Yet, since he has practiced the same piece for months (too slow, not useful: "he played the same thing last years term examination" (fieldnotes)), using guitar tabs rather than a lead sheet (immature, amateurish approach), he isn't *really* good.

Returning to the first group interview of section 6.2.2, Michael's use of the word "classic" can be seen to do similar performative work. The distinction between *classic* as in 'archetypal' or 'paradigmatic', *classic* as in 'outstanding', and *classical* as in musical genres or instruments does not exist in Norwegian. When first articulated – emphasized, and immediately after launching the idea that the first years do not constitute a *real* music-class – the word *classic* generates a discourse of musical standard (below and above). The third years of last year, they were "classic" as in both outstanding and paradigmatic. Later, however, the fact that they also played classical instruments is added. Put together; while the outstanding and the paradigmatic/archetypal do not necessarily have to be *realized* within the various theoretical and artistic practices of classical music, those practices make up the basics for what is *considered* as outstanding and paradigmatic/archetypal. And last year's third years excelled both in the choir, the students' lounge and on the rock stage, performing with self-confidence across genres and sites:

> Live: does the "perfect music student" exist?
>
> Molly: no…
>
> Michael: that'll be Steve!
>
> Molly: Steve was good
>
> Michael: Steve was good. And Fredrick and those people.
>
> Live: what made them perfect music students?
>
> Molly: they were just that good, and worked hard, like
>
> Michael: yes, they were … *epic*, and they … didn't make so much of themselves, but even so, they were very noticeable.
>
> Sophie: yes.
>
> Michael: you noticed when they weren't around, like!
>
> Henry: they were really good on their instruments, and at the same time, had their eyes open towards other things, like, Fredrick B, he was awesome on his guitar, but still very active in the choir and concerned with how it sounded, his

> passion was jazz and rock, but he was very open towards classical music and that kind of thing, so… *(Group interview)*

When questioned, Michael offers me Steve and Fredrick, "epic" music students from last year, as prototypes of perfect. Steve and Fredrick were plain "good" – the sheer simplicity of the term emphasizing their excellence. The group goes on to provide credentials that seem to honour a good many of the discourses governing the practice of musicianship in Musikklinja: Steve and Fredrick were awesome musicians (very qualified), hard workers (responsible and dedicated), socially active and noticeable (contributing to the working environment), active in the choir (recognizing and redeeming a Musikklinja core practice) open towards other things (dedicated to music as a general practice), open towards classical music (subjecting themselves to the real music).

### 6.2.3 A three year trajectory

> Episode 4: First years in the lounge
>
> In one of the more quiet periods in the lounge, I stand studying the notice board for information on who has been chosen for the Christmas church concerts. Thomas approaches me, saying: "not exactly lively here now, is it?" I turn around and smile at him. "Tell me, the lounge cannot possibly accommodate everyone. Where do you sit when not sitting here?" "In the canteen" Thomas answers, "our first year, we always sat in the canteen. It's become kind of a tradition that the first years sit in the canteen until they're properly *integrated*, like. Only that, it's a bit different this year. I guess we integrated them a 'bit more." I smile, and give a little laugh: "as a rule, it's the second and third years that sit here?" Thomas: "Yeah. We were in the canteen our whole first year. It's different this year though. But, like you say, there isn't room for everyone."
>
> […]
>
> Later, speaking with Caroline and Nora in the lounge, I tell them what I have learned; that they were exiled to the canteen as first years. Caroline confirms this, adding: "that's why we were so surprised when the new first years just sat down in the lounge!" Nora agrees, but holds that the first years have returned to the cantina *now*, because "they have learned their place". She is quite serious, although I do not think she is aware of how brutal it sounds. She says it matter-of-factly, like it follows a natural logic; they have learned that they must wait to assert themselves until they have something to assert. *(Fieldnotes)*

Upon starting my fieldwork investigations into the practice of musicianship and performance of music student subjectivity in Musikklinja, I had not given the categories of educational "levels" or "years" much thought. I knew, of course, that Norwegian upper secondary schools go by the system of year levels.

What I didn't expect though was the significance of year levels as categories of identification and subjectivation within Musikklinja itself. The formal terms (vg1, 2, 3) was mainly used in curricula and written documents, but their commonplace equivalents – first year(s), second year(s) and third year(s) – were put to daily use by students and teachers, doing more performative work than identifying students' year of study.

In the episode above, Thomas, Caroline and Nora tell a story of "integration": first years should avoid the music student lounge until they have been "properly integrated" in – and *by* – the existing music student society. While formally accepted into Musikklinja on the basis of assessment marks and auditions, newcomers have yet to be recognized as 'real' music students. Meanwhile, they should use the student canteen, which is upper secondary common ground. First years' potential to be real music students is vital to the story though. Fulfilling this potential is what Thomas, Caroline and Nora have done, and their telling of the story constructs an important discursive distance between their beginners' and their realized music student positions. They have learned, they have matured, they have changed; they have been recognized and accepted. Looking back with eyes of experience and recognition at new generations of music students is proper upper year behaviour, affirmative of one's time and place on the three-year trajectory that is Musikklinja. In Thomas' narration, responsibility for recognition lies with the second and third years: this year, "we integrated them a 'bit more". First years' evolvement into fully-fledged music students depend upon older students granting them opportunities for asserting themselves. That this year's newcomers immediately took possession of the lounge must be due to active "integration" on the part of the music student society of elders. Molly provides a similar explanation in the following:

> Molly: I feel that us, we had more respect for those in the second and third year when we started, because, none of the first years now really are like "wow, third years!"
>
> Sophie: yes, exactly
>
> Henry: we weren't respectful; we were scared out of our pants (laughs)
>
> Group: (laughs)
>
> Molly: yes, that's true; we really were… (laughs) scared
>
> Sophie: it's much nicer now, even if it's a lower –
>
> Molly: but now, even if they were kind of bossy…

> Sophie: – or, I don't know if levels are lower, 'cause I don't really feel that way, but it's nicer because we're all more *equal* like. Last year was like "wooo…" (sounding scared) because the third years were way up there and we were…
>
> Molly: I think that was good!
>
> Oliver: (laughs)
>
> Sophie: you did!? I don't think that's right.
>
> Molly: I think 'twas good.
>
> Sophie: I think it was really scary. *(Group interview)*

Molly and her group insist on a difference between Musikklinja social dynamics of last year, and how things are now. As incoming first years, they were respectful, in *awe* even, of those already established in Musikklinja ("Wow! Third years!") Indeed, *scared* out of their pants would be a truthful description the group laughingly agrees. And the "way up there", "bossy" former batch of third years is what constitutes the difference. Rather than mingling with the newcomers they kept to their elevated positions way up there, and rather than providing opportunities for first years to assert themselves and become "properly integrated" they were bossing people around. Now, last year's students were *classic* Michael argues in section 6.2.2. As discourse goes, they were way above today's standard. If Sophie actually *objects* to the stance that the former third years were that much better than the rest of them, she recognizes the discursive impact of it and follows suit: now, we are all more "equal", and that's so much nicer. Implicit in her statement seems to be that now, we all *behave* more like equals.

While power/knowledge relations seem to form durable networks, conscientiously enacted and enforced by subjects positioned within, they are not static constructions. Their layers may shift, their centres of gravity change. The power/knowledge networks of Musikklinja are not quite the same from year to year, although enough is repeated to recognize its main practices and borders. What Molly and her group establish in the interview are two variants of the Musikklinja power/knowledge network. One has a self-evident centre of gravity, the perfect practices of the classic third years. The other has less of a defined core, consisting of the lesser practices of "equals". The first relies on and calls attention to the distance between core and periphery performance, the second seeks to diminish possible distance. For Molly, the first setup is "good", for Sophie, the second is. Different constellations of power/knowledge relations facilitate different forms of subjectivation. For Molly, a virtuoso in navigating the (loophole) discourses of musical quality, competence and dedication that

govern Musikklinja, the setup with peak performers is unproblematic, even attractive. Its subject positions are within her reach. For Sophie, they may not be, and discourses of equality and justice ("I don't think that's right!") are put to the task of re-establishing her legitimacy.

The 'legendary former third years' is a frame of reference available and enacted across interviews and field conversations. A related frame of reference is the 'lower level' of the current and incoming students. A *third* popular frame of reference related to the subject positions of first, second and third years takes the form of an autobiography and can be constructed from the following:

> Henry: you could say that the first half-year broke down all my self-confidence in music. But then, slowly but surely, I managed to build just enough confidence to register for my second year. And I'm really happy for that now!
>
> Live: the first year was hard?
>
> Henry: yes, and others probably said that too, and even if they didn't have quite the same experience, you soon enough figure out where you stand. […] Then, you might try to find a place for yourself within a musical genre, like me, many people do that, try to find themselves and show what genres are "your" genres. Like Carl and me, when we played Nirvana at last year's rock concert, we showed everyone that we like grunge music. And that may be the reason; things got a bit better, we raised our confidence in ourselves.
>
> […]
>
> Live: [because initially], you were downcast, feeling bad?
>
> Henry: yes. Yes, I felt I didn't meet the demands, like…
>
> Live: right…what did you do? Talk to your guitar teacher or someone?
>
> Henry: no, I didn't – speak with anyone here about it. I don't know, but after a while, the variety in how good or lousy we were became more obvious, it was all more, like, "fair enough", you know. You know, it's ok not to be the brilliant musician here, even if most people really want to be. I think I became like the "sports" guy, I had planned a few races during the winter, so I kind of found an alternative. But in February, when we were supposed to apply for our next year, I toyed with the idea of going abroad for a semester. I talked with mum and dad about it, and they asked me, "well, is that what you really want?" And then I figured out I rather wanted to be here. I don't know, something keeps us here. *(Interview)*

> Live: how were your first weeks in Musikklinja?
>
> Oliver: well, my first year, I was *mega* insecure as to my fiddle playing. I felt I there was *nothing* for me to do here. Then, I swapped my teacher for Jonas and since that, things have only gotten better.

> Live: you were insecure about your fiddle playing compared to others, and felt inferior?
>
> Oliver: well (pause), kind of. At the same time, I wasn't good in *any* way, I was worse than all the others that played the fiddle, so …
>
> Live: you're thinking of Sarah, Jennifer and Toby?
>
> Oliver: yes, them. Now though, my term exam was better than both Jennifer's and Sarah's, but that's because I worked really hard, and Sarah's almost put away her fiddle. So, Sarah was pissed off (laughs), but it really was just a matter of time. Anyway, I was really not that confident in myself, and I was insecure about all the others, 'cause, I didn't know what they were like. But the thing is, with Musikklinja, the social environment here's just so bloody good, and no matter how hard we have to work it all works out you know, it's that good an environment, that's the coolest thing. I don't regret starting here one bit. *(Interview)*

The autobiographical frame put to use in Henry and Oliver's act is relatively simple: 'the first (half) year in Musikklinja broke down all my self-confidence in music. I was insecure about myself and others, and felt inadequate (I didn't meet the demands, I wasn't good in *any* way, I was worse than all the others). I nearly gave up, but I chose to stay on, listening to what I *really* wanted. Little by little, as time went by, I managed to rebuild my self-confidence. I worked hard. I met my teacher. I figured out who I was and what would be my place in Musikklinja. I got better at playing. And I learned to know Musikklinja and the milieu here as the most including, good social environment. I don't regret starting here one bit.

In the main, it's a story about *developing*, about growing or evolving into a proper Musikklinja subject. Its primary function, it seems, is to establish the backdrop of having developed, and emphasizing the discursive distance between then and now, between yourself then and yourself now. Henry's autobiography tells of him realizing "where he stands" in relation to the others, figuring out what makes him unique and building his confidence and Musikklinja life around that. In addition, he learns to see Musikklinja as more varied and complex than was his first impression, and to accept his own place in the variety. Henry thus constructs his development as an inner journey of personal growth and trust in his abilities. Oliver's autobiography similarly opens with his shock at realizing he was "worse than all the others that played the fiddle". Compared with Henry however, Oliver's story of having developed is more specifically related to his growing musical skills and the influence of his main instrument teacher. Measuring his musical achievements against the achievements of his peers, he gets an indication of how much he has developed,

how far he has come from what was his point of departure. Emphasizing his underdog opening position in his autobiography makes his current position all the more impressive. Oliver's is a story of developing his musical skills beyond what was thought to be possible.

Another main function of the autobiographical frame of reference is to establish a discursive distance between your current self and the first years aspiring to *become* a proper Musikklinja subject. The frame imposes on the first years expectations of insecurity, inferiority and immaturity and constructs positions for them on a trajectory of development. However excellent a first year pianist may be, she is still an embryo Musikklinja subject. And the frame provides a standard by which to understand and evaluate first years, enabling Molly and her friend in the previous group interview to establish the qualitative difference between themselves, last year's bossy third years and this year's disrespectful first years.

While first years are expected to start out as insecure inferiors however, they are equally expected to follow the expected trajectory of development during their Musikklinja stay. Now, an important aspect of the autobiographical frame of reference is; your development doesn't happen all by itself, neither is anyone responsible for developing you. Oliver "worked really hard" to become a better musician, Henry "found himself" and "showed everyone" what were his genres, his preferences and capacities. Both of them took responsibility for how they felt (inferior, insecure), struggled, and built up their self-confidence. Not giving up, they found Musikklinja to be the warm and including environment in which they are now confident, full-blown participants. Put differently, if you don't develop, if you never find your place in Musikklinja, if you never feel the inclusive warmth of its social milieu, you have not taken responsibility.

## 6.3 Sites of subjectivation

### 6.3.1 Two maps of activity

The Musikklinja school day is organized over a seven-hour timetable; three full hours of lessons, one hour lunch-break, and then another three full hours. The three-hour periods may consist of half and hour, forty-five minutes or even 22,5 minute sessions, students having to rush from the one to the other. The

lunch-break is typically not a complete break but used to catch up on practicing and school work (especially if you have piano second instrument straight after the break), to have rehearsals with ensembles (preparing for auditions or house concerts), or for hall meetings, concerts or theatre and dance performances. Although school administration advises against it, teachers sometimes use the lunch-break to catch up on teaching missed out on. Thus, the Musikklinja everyday schedule is a messy structure of individual, group and class lessons, some here, some there. Practices overlap, and informal practices like students' own musical initiatives and students' leisure time and leisure activities intertwine with formal school practices and activities.

Since 2006, Musikklinja has been regulated by a national curriculum known as the *Knowledge Promotion* [LK06] (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011b). Systematizing specified knowledge areas into school subjects, LK06 requires upper secondary students to follow both programme specific subjects and a set of common core subjects like Norwegian and mathematics. Programme specific subjects are typically organized in 140 hour blocks, in everyday teacher discourse often called "5-hour subjects" referring to weekly tuition hours. In music studies, each block gathers various musical activities and traditions into "main subject areas" under one heading and prescribes for them one overall achievement mark. The programme specific subjects of year 2 and 3 for example are organized as shown in figure 2. Distinctive about LK06 however, its subject curricula do not designate activities, contents or learning methods. Rather, the reform promotes "outcome-based learning" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011b), defining subject specific "competence aims" for each main area. Thus, conscientious local curriculum work is needed to turn the relatively open frame provided into schedules and timetables that distribute knowledge and students across spaces, places and practices over days, weeks and school years. Programme subjects must be broken into several practices and described in detail, complete with criteria for goal achievement, and each practice given time and place in a schedule and an assessment system.

Observing life in Musikklinja, one may not even recognize the LK06 given structure of school subjects. Consider the programme subject *Instrument, choir, ensemble* (figure 2), mandatory for second and third years in Musikklinja, and gathering the main areas of "main instrument", "(piano) second instrument", "keyboard harmony", "choir and ensemble", and "direction and management" under one heading.

The first area, "main instrument", is realized as individual, weekly lessons. Teachers of main instruments are often part-time employees however, they are freelance musicians, pedagogues with their main jobs elsewhere, or orchestra musicians. Several students have their main instrument lessons scheduled outside regular school hours, some even traveling far to meet up with their teachers. Oliver, for example, travels two hours for his fiddle lessons. In the lesson, his teacher is eager, enthusiastic and dedicated. However, he knows little of what is going on for Oliver in Musikklinja. What projects are coming up and what other school obligations Oliver may have constitute topics of polite conversation, quickly set aside to focus on the more important present. My impression is not that the fiddle teacher is uninterested in Oliver's ambitions or current aims and goals. On the contrary, what kind of fiddler Oliver wants to become and what kind of music he wants to play constitute nodal points of the lesson. However, the teacher does not relate his teaching specifically to "Musikklinja" as an educational project, and certainly not to the programme subject *Instrument, choir, ensemble*. And Oliver's participation in and preparations for the various ensembles of Musikklinja is his own responsibility: "how's your practicing coming on? And by that I mean what you are doing *here*, with *me*" *(fieldnotes).*

In other cases, students are taught by resident teachers more involved in Musikklinja's day to day affairs than their part time colleagues. Singers, pianists, flautists and guitarists meet their main instrument teachers in other weekly scheduled school activities like ensemble playing, music theory or choir, as well as in the hallways and the lounge. Every end of semester, group masterclasses ("forums") are organized to prepare students for term examinations. Resident instrumental teachers are assigned to their respective instrument group, while part time main instrument teachers almost never attend, some of them not attending term examinations either. The two guitar teachers are heavily involved in both main instrument and ensemble tuition, and the practices overlap considerably all the way down to detailed repertoire work. For band instrumentalists like guitarists, bassists or drummers, playing and practicing their main instrument together with others in various ensemble constellations may even be what "main instrument" is all about. Moreover, while LK06 and locally adapted curricula presume a "main" instrument of study, students may be very ambivalent as to what their main instrument is: Henry's main instrument is the guitar, but in playing with others he usually performs as a lead singer/guitarist, even a bassist, depending on what he has to do to *get in* an ensemble, to get in a position to perform. For the pianist Molly, singing

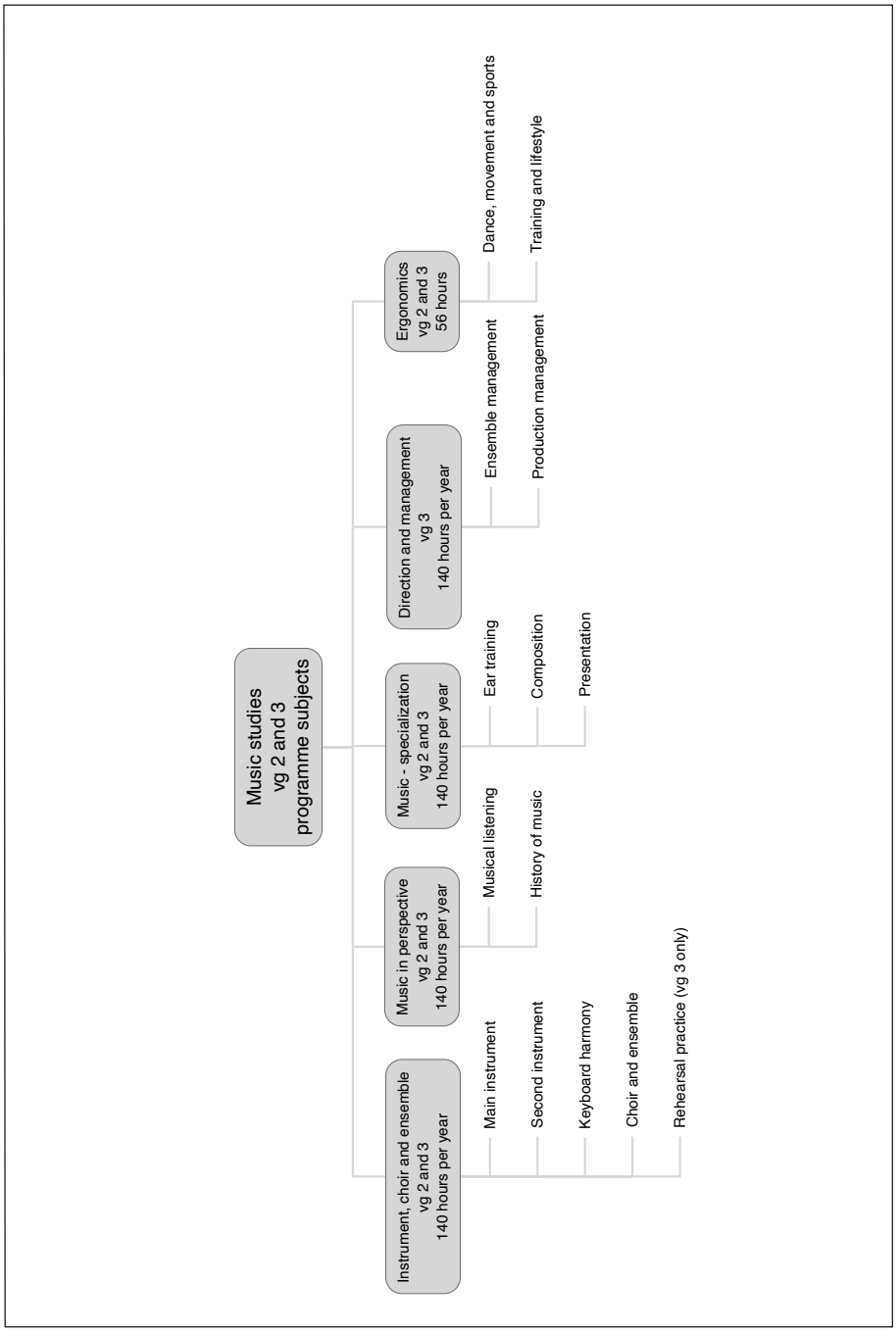


Figure 2: A formal map of activity

is the absolute preferred mode of performing with others. Additionally, she plays the saxophone and the double bass. Sophie, also a pianist, is still active as a clarinet player in a community band but tells me she lacks the motivation to practice the piano. She keeps studying jazz piano at the municipal cultural school though. Sarah the classical violinist insists that she hates classical music, and prefers folk music in ensembles. Michael too wavers between following his urge to be a "singer", and staying with the drums, and Mia recently changed her main instrument from singing to playing the classical guitar. For students, the curriculum defined "main instrument" practice (lesson) may be but one specific activity performed within the broader practice of "playing and practicing one's instrument(s)".

As for piano second instrument and keyboard harmony, most students talk about their piano practicing as a chore that has to be done and that has little to do with their other practices of playing and performing. Rather, they include piano second instrument and keyboard harmony in a general discourse of "music subjects", along with "music in perspective", "ear-training" and "composition". A few students though, the singer Elliot for example, have been studying the piano before entering Musikklinja:

> Elliot: I try to practice the piano every day, maybe half an hour.
>
> Eva: that's really good Elliot!
>
> Ruby: yes, you are really good.
>
> Elliot: but I still study the piano in my spare time, so…*(Group interview)*

For Elliot, the piano remains an important practice of his musicianship, and the girls are duly impressed, finding piano playing and practicing a stressful exercise themselves. However, during my stay in Musikklinja, I never saw Elliot perform as a pianist in concerts, in ensembles or otherwise. His piano playing seemed like an isolated activity, neither connected to the activities of ensemble playing nor to performing. Actually, I only once saw a non-pianist perform on the piano in concert; Oliver playing for Mia and Julia in their ironic 'sexy schoolgirl' house concert version of Britney Spears' "… Baby one more time" (section 7.5).

The third main area of *Instrument, choir, ensemble* described in the curriculum (figure 2) is "choir and ensemble". Rather than constituting one of five aspects of a 140 hour programme subject, I would say that the Musikklinja "choir" and "ensemble" practices are highly important and prominent in themselves, exceeding their modest positions as aspects – within an aspect – of a school

subject. Indeed, the opportunity for forming bands and ensembles and going on stage with them may be one of the major attractions Musikklinja has to offer. The opportunity is scheduled: in the weekly timetable, "ensemble playing" alternates with choral practice according to what Musikklinja concert is coming up. For the autumn semester the choir rehearses twice a week culminating in the Christmas church concert, towards Festival Weekend ensemble playing takes over the choir's rehearsal time. Based on suggestions and wishes from students, the current distribution of instruments in Musikklinja, traditions and earlier experiences, teachers assign students to overall genre related groups like "chamber ensemble", "jazz ensemble", "rock ensemble", "vocal ensemble", "funk ensemble" and "folk rock ensemble". Each ensemble is appointed a teacher that sometimes leads the rehearsals but just as often lets the student groups work by themselves.

What Henry refers to in section 6.1.3 when talking of "making contact" though is the myriad of more or less temporary constellations formed on students' initiatives, overlapping with and exceeding the formal practice of ensemble, aiming for one of the house concerts or larger Musikklinja projects, a gig or a festival outside of school. Moreover, Henry refers to the bands and ensembles *outside* of Musikklinja, a musical milieu that one may have access to through a teacher or a fellow student. Ensemble playing in Musikklinja could thus be renamed "playing and rehearsing with others", the curriculum anchored activity of "ensemble" constituting only one of a myriad ensemble activities, within, across and even outside school.

The Musikklinja choir, I find, similarly represents a considerably more significant practice that one might deduce from its position in the nationally given subject curricula. The choir, the choir's rehearsals, the upcoming choir concert, the choir's repertoire and the choir's members were central topics of lounge and break talk throughout the autumn semester of observation.
The choir isn't up to standard, the word went. So, 'people' were frustrated, because, other 'people' didn't know their parts, they were not concentrating, they didn't practice, they were inexperienced, or not serious enough, or they didn't *care*. William the conductor even went round all the classes, expressing his frustration, saying that he never *ever* was this frustrated with a school choir before. Students as well tended to compare the current choir's capacities and performances to those of "last year's choir" and even the choir from "a few years back". "The choir" as such is recomposed and reconstituted from one year to another, a batch of third years leaving, a batch of first years entering. It is

an institution within the institution, an apparent autonomous, self-explaining practice, every new performance contributing to a yearlong tradition of successful performances. Its repertoire is solely that which will be performed in concert, entailing that all singing is purposeful singing and all rehearsal aimed towards end performance.

Figure 3 charts the signifying practices of Musikklinja as 'sites of negotiation'.

Following students around Musikklinja for several months produced a map in which the curricular activities to some extent are reconfigured and renamed, and other, non-curricular activities, are incorporated. Most noticeably, I have given the music student lounge the status of a core site. A combined information, communication, socialization, relaxation, waiting, working and transfer area, the lounge truly feels like an important place; the heart of Musikklinja. The students' everyday school schedule is complex and somewhat fragmented, taking them out of Musikklinja for their general subjects and back again for their music related activities, positioning them in various constellations, leading them from one room to another, with and without their instruments. Some of the practices in which they participate follow a traditional educational discourse with a lecturing teacher, note-taking students and the raising of hands, other follow the traditions of rehearsing musicians in a more or less structured ensemble. Some activities are student-led, even student initiated. Some are not scheduled at all, but still expected to occur on a daily basis; students' own practicing and preparation, alone or in groups. Their frequent returning to the lounge in particular may very well be what binds the students' day together, confirming the day as yet another day in Musikklinja, and *them* as music students.

For their common core subjects ("General studies" in figure 3), students must leave the lounge and the Musikklinja wing. However, they still form a group of their own, a group of "music students", in subjects like Norwegian, social science, geography and history. What is more, they are hailed as such also by their teachers:

> "Hi music students!" The Norwegian teacher greets her class. She opens by talking about the upcoming Christmas church concert. "I am really looking forward to it" she tells us. Every year, the music students impress her even more, and she has volunteered to sell tickets. One year, she continues, they even inspired an author friend of hers to write a book chapter while waiting during a rehearsal. Their teacher then turns to the theme of the term examination, which has been "really difficult to schedule because of the Christmas concert

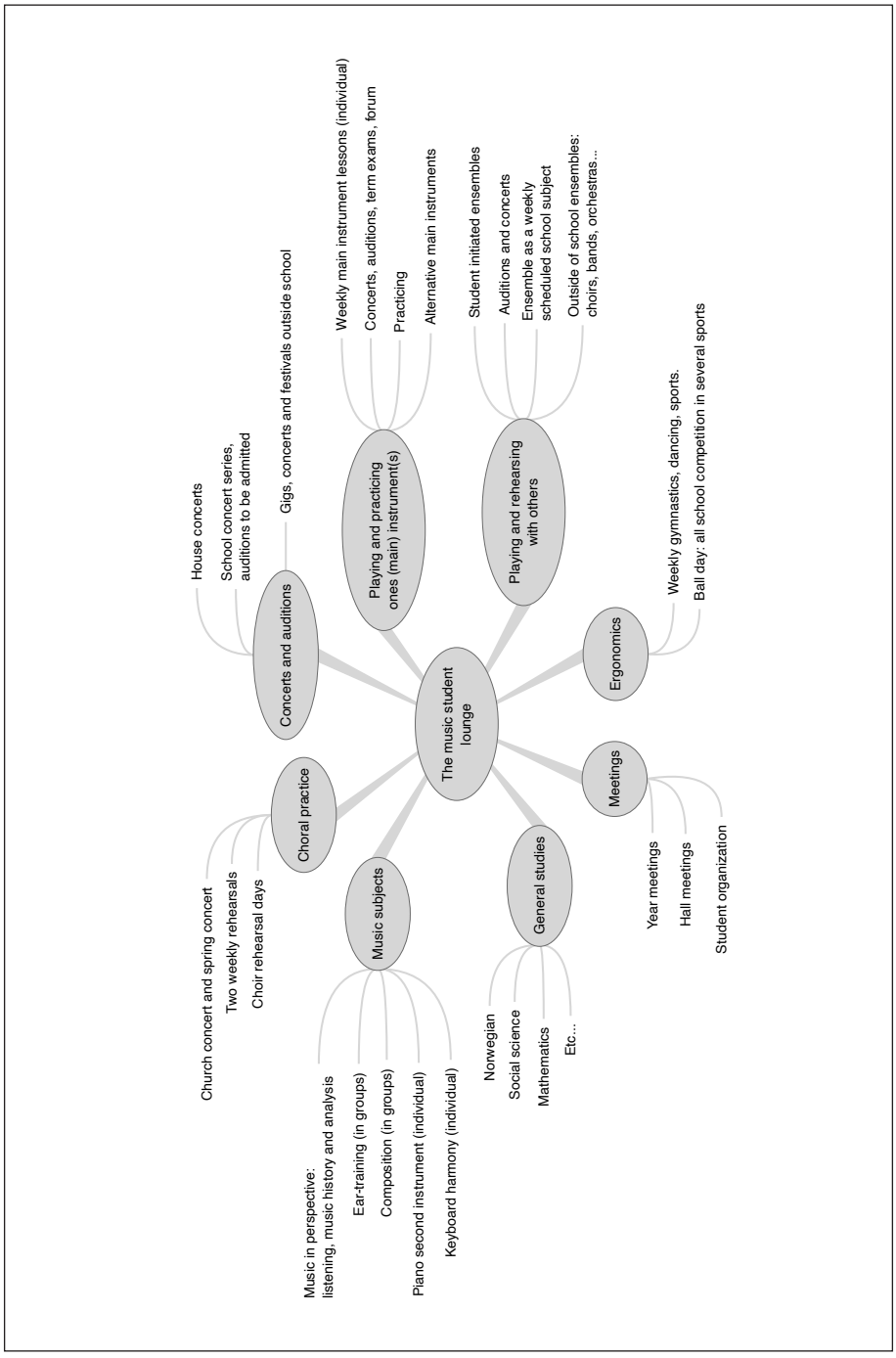


Figure 3: An observer's map of activity

> preparations". In the hour that follows, she keeps referring to music, music subjects and to her class as 'music students'. *(Fieldnotes)*

In the fieldnote excerpt, an understanding of the students as "music students" (despite their currently studying Norwegian) is enacted. Opening the lesson by citing a most prominent tradition of Musikklinja, the Christmas concert, the teacher offers the Musikklinja discourse of dedication also to her Norwegian class. Telling them of how they, as "music students", continue to impress her, she opens for a range of discourses related to *being* a music student, granting them legitimacy also in the common core subject of Norwegian. This in turn entails that power/knowledge relations working within other practices of the "music student", within practices of musicianship, may be legitimately enacted also in the practice of Norwegian – and student subjectivity performed accordingly. Put differently, while general studies subjects like Norwegian may represent alternative sites of subjectivity negotiation to those of the music programme, they are still accessed from a position as music student, and thus by submitting to discourses of musicianship. Even if they take up several hours in a student's week, the general studies subjects seem less like 'other' or alternative practices to those of the programme subjects than they seem to be adopted into Musikklinja life, supporting Musikklinja discourses and adding to their weight. In the Norwegian class, you are unquestionably a music student currently studying a general subject, not a general studies student with music in your range of subjects. Hence, Alice whom we will meet in section 7.1.5, takes up a peripheral position – not a "real" (music) student – also on sites of general studies. For second language and mathematics however, the music students are grouped with students of other programmes according to what variants of the subjects they have chosen. Alice being the only Musikklinja girl in her advanced mathematics class, the teacher (and the class) may not even know she *is* a music student. The power/knowledge network of Musikklinja may not reach into mathematics class except through Alice herself, and this may provide an opportunity of at least temporarily performing differently:

> Alice: 'cause I don't want people to have the wrong impression of me, kind of, I want them to see me like a person without an instrument, without the flute and a 'musical background' you could say. *(Interview)*

The observer's map (figure 3) further includes a practice that LK06 barely mention but that guides and motivates everyday life and learning in Musikklinja in detail; concerts and auditions. Observing life in Musikklinja for some time, I couldn't fail to notice the significance of the 'concert'. During my stay, regular house concerts were held (of which I attended three) and five major public

concert projects involving all students of Musikklinja carried out. In addition, the internal term exams and forums also take the form of a concert. These events very much influence daily life in Musikklinja. They lay out a certain path of progress to follow across the hours, days and weeks of the semesters. Upcoming concerts and auditions are at all times given prominence in the student lounge, the notice board even counting down days to premieres. The concert series, the auditions leading up to them, and the house concerts outline and give meaning to the school year by representing ultimate goals for many of the practices going on; ensemble and choral practice, as well as main instrument playing.

In chapter 7, both the student lounge and the concert are studied as core sites of subjectivation and main practices of musicianship. Furthermore, the chapter investigates the very prominent practices of ensemble playing and choral singing, and visits three sites of main instrument one-to-one instruction. Analysing instances of subjectivation to and through discourses of musicianship as practiced across what I find to be a most important range of sites for the students, I hope to arrive at a detailed understanding of both musicianship as a discursive formation in Musikklinja and the performative practices that enable music student subjectivity.

## 6.4 Musicianship institutionalized (summary)

An institution of discourse, Musikklinja emerges as the result of signifying practices that delimit its borders, define its purposes and situate it in a larger discursive field of events. Some of these practices occur on a national, political level, managing discourse and enabling Musikklinja by developing and administering educational structures. Others occur on an institutional level, fitting Musikklinja into a general Upper Secondary school project as well as organizing it into programme specific places, spaces, schedules and activities. And through the myriad everyday signifying practices of teachers and students, Musikklinja is more or less purposefully built, enacted and defined from within.

The entity resulting from these overlapping grids of power/knowledge relations appears, as we have seen, both an *autonomous unit* and a *unit of discourse* positioned within larger discursive formations. A purposefully built physical structure to which is associated a specific schedule reserved for particular participants, Musikklinja materializes as a distinct, closed system

that constitutes and sustains its own agenda as well as its own subjects. The performative doings and sayings of these subjects contribute to upholding its autonomy, entrenching it in its own history as well as stretching its significance into the future. What is cited in performative doings and sayings however, as well as in Musikklinja spaces and places, programmes and schedules, is supported through power/knowledge relations involving other institutions, procedures and practices of discourse: educational, professional, commercial, everyday. The practices and purposes of higher music education and the traditions of Western classical art music are easily recognizable. Less evident in physical structure but all the more so in participants' performances are the practices and purposes of the professional music industry and the traditions of Western rock, jazz and popular music.

Conceptualized and enacted, Musikklinja is constituted in various ways by its participants. A major discourse sets Musikklinja up as a *working environment*; a facility where peers get together, beginners learn from experts, bands and groups form and educational content and intent meet and possibly merge with students "own things". In conjunction with this, understandings of Musikklinja membership as your "entrance ticket" to a milieu of musicians and musical arenas are enacted: Musikklinja gives access to a pool of possible liaisons and possibilities of playing and performing. Other important discursive constructions of Musikklinja includes *a warm, supportive social milieu* and *a safe, quality assured training arena*. Comprehended as upper secondary education, a discourse of *immense study workload but unrivalled fun* contributes to set Musikklinja apart from other study programmes.

The performing participants, constituted by and constitutive of Musikklinja, are identifiable by a set of classification categories. Of major significance is the *music student*, a main subject position imposed and enacted across all the various sites and signifying practices of musicianship that Musikklinja offers. In chapter 6, I have argued that the discourse of the working environment facilitates a music student *entrepreneur* that is *dedicated* and *responsible* and takes advantage of the practices and procedures offered to get in positions to play, perform, learn and develop her/his musicianship. The entrepreneurial actions of the music student significantly *contribute* to sustaining the discursive practices enabling it, the conditions of its own possibility. Additionally, the entrepreneurial music student subject is both *gendered* and *'genred'*. Highly valuing informal student ensemble initiatives and "own things", the working

environment discourse tends to serve the "band people" in particular, exclusively male, as are their teachers.

Discourses of *competence* equally favour particular enactments of the music student subject. Identifying and idealizing the 'properly competent', discourses of competence presume both prerequisite knowledge and prerequisite experience, and install a standard of musicianship that positions some (former) music student subjects above what could be expected – epic, legendary, in a league of their own – while others (current students) are positioned below what could be expected; they are "excess baggage". In both students' and teachers' enactments of musicianship as competence, notions of *ability* is working that points to some kind of personal disposition or capacity to appropriate, master and develop musical skills. These notions are intertwined with ideas of the *real* and *classic* music student (as in typical and/or classical and/or outstanding) anchored knowledge traditions and practices of Western art music education.

A three-year educational trajectory, Musikklinja constitutes its student subjects largely through discourses of *development*. The trajectory of development is one of increasing competence, integration, responsibility and legitimacy. Discourses of development overlap considerably with discourses of competence however, and frames of reference constituting the "low level" of current and incoming students also doubt their possibility of developing into proper music student subjects.

While chapter 6 pointed to some of the performative strategies involved in enactments of the music student subject, chapter 7 addresses in more detail how discourses of musicianship facilitate various performative enactments of the music student subject and the strategies of negotiation put to use by the young people of Musikklinja. Before taking analyses further though, it is worth emphasizing that in one sense, the strategy of *appropriation* could be said to motor them all. The research project itself hails the young people of Musikklinja as music students and thus guarantees that appropriation, an appropriate, affirmative answer to the hailing, is what follows. It is the position that speaking, acting subjects are given. The same interpellating, constitutive call is made by the unit of Musikklinja: for its young members to act or speak from a position within, appropriation of the category music student, one way or another, is mandatory. However, the definitions, descriptions and suggestions accompanying the category are negotiable, hence, so is the position of music student itself. By juggling discourses, or citing and adding

alternative definitions, descriptions and suggestions, the interpellating call may be slightly shifted or even subverted. The discourses of Western art music education inherent in Musikklinja spaces and places and rock music discourses of authenticity foreign to the theory classroom rehearsal site may be ironically forged to support the listening, learning rock music student subject. Discourses of dedication may be enacted to legitimize a performance of the music student subject otherwise vulnerable to discourses of competence. And notions of quality and ability may be combined with discourses of musical tradition and/or taste to secure the potential and legitimacy of certain music student subjects over others.

# 7 Musikklinja sites of subjectivation

## 7.1 The student lounge

Episode 5: The lounge

Lukas and another boy are studying the large notice board covering almost all wall space above the sofa lounge. The board is packed with information; lists, schedules and messages, much of it produced *by* students *for* students such as the apparently carelessly scribbled, stained note saying: "Christmas church concert auditions are coming up: You need to practice!!!! You are running out of time!" Sheets of music are also stuck to the board, forgotten maybe, or left there by a teacher for a student to pick up. A long list of rules, handwritten in several colours, tells students to clean up their mess, not to play instruments or music from computers in the lounge, to close both doors when practicing, keep their sound level down, not to eat in the auditorium or the rehearsal rooms, and not to slurp their food. The last rule is a joke, I suppose. Lukas and his friend scrutinize the list for signing up for Chamber/Cafe/Rock Festival Weekend auditions, due right after Christmas. This year's theme is "the best of three worlds" it says; "Sign up with your favourite music!" The list stretches over two pages already.

From an open laptop, I can hear drums and guitar, and a high pitched, intense voice. Leo, Henry, Daniel and several other boys are grouped around it, they discuss the drummer, praising his technique. "Who's the old guy?" Henry asks, starting a discussion among the boys on what drummer and what guitarist played with whom. One of them stands up to address the lounge, triumphantly: "who was actually at the [x] concert?" All the boys at the table, including him, raise their hands. They start talking about the concert, an international rock legend has visited a local venue, and the boys are enthusiastic. It was wild, awesome.

At my table, the girls talk about a TV show currently on, in which celebrity actors, musicians, TV-hosts and athletes compete for the title of "Maestro" by conducting

a full symphony orchestra in concert, coached by a crew of professional conductors. "Did you see that rap guy?" they laugh, trying to remember his name, "He was, like, duu, duu du duuu, and then he just, 'noooo'! He was really pissed off!" They have returned to the theme of conducting, having finished telling a story about a pianist that locked himself in at school one evening, and had to sleep there for the night. How would John react if they were to do the same thing, they giggle. John and several other teachers have actually passed us while we have been sitting in the lounge, going into a classroom for a meeting, some of them stopping to laugh and chatter with the students on their way. The MDD teachers have their own little lounge as well as personal workspaces in a converted classroom adjacent to the student lounge, and conversations in the door opening between the two lounges seem to be characteristic of Musikklinja's social dynamics.

As the students gather their stuff and start to leave for their classes, a boy next to me tells his friend that he was home this weekend, checking out his new bass sampler. The floor was shaking, he says, it was awesome, fucking insane. They walk up the corridor towards the main building and the wings that house the other programmes this upper secondary school offers; a general as well as several vocational studies. I follow to find a place to write, walking behind Michael, listening to him humorously faking Spanish and wondering if I will be able to reconstruct the chaotic jottings I have produced into a meaningful fieldnote. *(Fieldnotes)*

### 7.1.1 Lounge notice board

The most prominent feature on the walls of Musikklinja is the giant notice board in the student lounge, hanging right above your head when seated on one of the sofas. The board is an extremely important element in Musikklinja communication. It communicates schedules: lists and tables showing when and where students have their main instrument or keyboard harmony lessons, when and where they are supposed to audition, or the time and place for main instrument term examinations. In addition, teachers tend to put up their own lists of names and dates for main and second instrument tuition (not necessarily corresponding with the official schedule) as well as putting up small messages of cancellations or a change of location. It also communicates who your teacher is, offering an exclusive list of names under the heading of "Nicholas", a highly respected guitarist, producer and sound engineer. Another list tells you (and others) whether you receive your piano harmony tuition from John, one of the teachers that "*is*" Musikklinja according to students ("whatever *would* Musikklinja be without him?"), an actual living Musikklinja legend, even getting his portrait on the back of the Musikklinja college sweater. Taking part

in his tuition, you take part in the legend, and it provides you with invaluable Musikklinja legitimacy. And the same goes for the other teachers, Lillian, Joseph, Elise, William, Hannah, – being under their tuition you are accredited in a certain way, you can rightfully perform your self and Musikklinja using the myths, the stories, the characteristics that surround them. The point is not that your quality of musicianship is assured by being a student of so-and-so, because there is no (official, anyway) policy that the "best" students are assigned to the "best" teachers. Rather, what teacher you are assigned to shapes the narrations you can take part in and creates a trajectory through Musikklinja for you, also in the eyes of others. And, of course, the evaluations and marks you are given are tested and reconciled against who your teacher is: "I wish Elise was my teacher, then I too would have been given a 6/top mark" *(Group interview).*

Towards main instrument final or term examinations, lists showing when you are to present yourself in the auditorium to perform are put up on the board. Similar lists are put up for other events: lists for the group session in which students perform their exam programme for each other, showing what groups (and teachers) students are assigned to. Lists of the ensembles formed for the school subject ensemble playing. Lists presenting the rehearsal and sound check schedules for Festival Weekend. Lists on which you can sign up for house concerts, and lists of who made it through auditions. Some of the cultural work being done by the lists is of course obvious: managing students, enabling them to be where they are supposed to be, when they are supposed to be there. More significantly though is the cultural work being done regarding students' (possibilities of) musical interaction. Scanning the lists, students access who plays with whom, who gets to play a lot, who else is going to audition, and what kind of music they choose to perform.

The scene described in episode 5, with Lukas and his mate scrutinizing the list for signing up for auditions, is quite typical. Auditions are arranged by groups of third years, assigned to the production of a particular concert in the school subject called direction and management. Audition juries thus consist of third years exclusively, assisted by their direction and management teachers. On the list Lukas is accessing, they ask for the following: "*Song, Artist, Participants, Equipment, Time, Cafe/Rock (mark off the proper concert)".* Rows and cells provide space for writing your name and other relevant information. Daniel's name is all over the place already; the drummer certainly has a lot going on for him regarding Festival Weekend. Michael too is represented in a few cells. Significantly though, while Daniel is added in the middle or at the bottom of the

lists of participants for a song, the songs that Michael appears on has his name right at the top, indicating that the pen and the initiative are his own. Lukas' name (also a drummer) has yet to make it to the board.

By the number of times your name appears, by the company of names it keeps, and, of course, by the music attached to it, your position in discourse may be deduced by the observer. *Getting in a position to play* is extremely important amongst the students of Musikklinja, and how many songs someone *"is in on"* or how much someone *"has to do"* this year, or even legends of how much a *former* student had to do for Festival Weekend is a typical topic of conversation, even indicating the quality of someone's musicianship. Daniel is certainly in a position to play. The company of highly respected students in which his name frequently appears confirms his position as the preferred drummer. Moreover, Daniel's mastery is constructed independent of genre: while he is well represented in the genres of rock music, his name also appears in several of the entries for the Café-concert, his percussion wanted for both jazz-, folk/country-, pop- and singer/songwriter-styled numbers. Daniel *is* in a position, he is *asked* to play and 'signed up', and the lists testify to this dynamics. Michael, and also Henry, however, need to *get* in a position to play:

> *The lounge:* When I round the corner, I find Henry and Michael studying the Festival Weekend audition lists. Henry holds a pen up to the board (afterwards I see that he has written his name in the "participants" column, but left every other cell open), and says he doesn't know what to sign up for. Anna walks by, throws me a smile, and says to Henry and Michael in the passing; "I'd like to sing!" "No" Michael says over his shoulder, gesturing towards Henry; "he'll do the vocals". "Write my name too" he continues, but Henry tells him they'll have to speak with Lukas before deciding who'll do the drums. Michael nods seriously, answering "yeah, he's just had enough, hasn't he?" "At any rate" Henry tells him, "we wont ask Daniel. He's in on a lot as it is". (*Fieldnotes)*

In this fieldnote excerpt, Michael negotiates with Henry to get in a position to play. Henry is taking the initiative, he is signing up. He is the owner of this entry, and as such, it is his right to choose his fellow musicians. Securing his name in one of the available cells is the main thing; filling in the blanks can obviously be done later. Both Michael and Henry tell me in interviews that *getting to play with others* is the most important thing for them, even the main reason for choosing Musikklinja (section 6.1.3). Their inclusion of Lukas, agreeing that he needs to be asked, indicates that they apply the interest of *getting to play* also to others. While Henry refrains from saying why Lukas needs to be asked, Michael decides that it's because "He's just had enough". Lukas recently experienced a

family tragedy, and Michael attributes Henry's hesitation to pair up with himself to a concern for a mutual friend, rather than a preference for a fellow musician.

Who you play with, who you sign up with, matters of course. Daniel is free to join whatever constellation – his craftsmanship/musicianship is conceived of as neutral; like the skills of a hired, professional session musician they have a value detached from the music to which they are put to use as well as the group of people wanting him in on it. Others may be more dependent on getting in the *right* position to play. The boys' negotiations before the board are quite typical; ideas are born and arrangements and deals made in the lounge, listening to (and watching) music on a laptop or contemplating the lists on the board. Anna's off the top of her head suggestion to sing, without actually knowing what to sing, contributes to the discourse; *wanting* to be in on things is an expected Musikklinja state of mind. *Not* wanting to participate in concerts is met with disbelief:

> Sarah: I told you before, I can do the vocals for now, but I *won't* do the concert!
>
> Henry: Whatever are you made of?! *(Fieldnotes, folk rock ensemble rehearsal)*

In conversations with Henry, he performs as a hard-working and conscientious learner trying to get all he can out of his studies, although, he says of himself, he is not the most brilliant musician. That being so, he "cannot afford to say no to any gig" he tells me, he cannot pick and choose but needs to take advantage of every opportunity he is given. Sarah, in Henry's eyes, must be made of a different stuff altogether, since she refrains from getting in position to play (or sing, actually). Henry's exclamation constructs Sarah's stance as *otherness*; strange to him, strange to his understanding of ways of being and doing. His comment may be humorously framed; nevertheless, the discourse making it possible is that of reaching for opportunities to demonstrate your musicianship and your passion to play. The lists thus demonstrate your engagement, your eagerness and your passion about music.

The tables and lists on the board are editable to everyone with a pen and an initiative. However, 'initiatives' are generated in the webs of power/knowledge that constitute Musikklinja. Thus, you cannot take an initiative that is not supported by the discourses of the web. Furthermore, your editing rights are regulated through your positions in those webs, so you cannot take an initiative that is not supported *for you*. The necessary support may be drawn from discourses and positions of musical craftsmanship; if, as in the case of Daniel, everyone agrees on your competence and quality, your place on the list goes unquestioned. As a performative statement, the listing of Daniel depends

on, cites, and reinscribes discourses of quality musical craftsmanship. The system with lists receiving and revealing one's initiative works also for Henry, whose agency to put his name on the board is supported not by an exceptional musicianship but by an exceptional position in the power/knowledge fields of social interaction and friendships. His scope of action is enforced by his position in the row of respected, active and place-taking boys that sit together in the centre of the classroom, shoulder to shoulder, that have the teacher's attention and that are seriously dedicated to Musikklinja as a place for meeting each other and developing their musicianship and *also* for getting their general studies qualifications. Support may also be drawn from discourses and positions of musical connoisseurship and informed distinction: *what* music is articulated up there with your name is of course of major significance. Finding and signing up with cool and hip music that others may yet be unaware of, and knowing its connections to other bands or musicians already established as cool and hip, is a highly respected skill. And the same goes for finding the proper vocalist or backing vocals, the proper clothing, or the proper instruments: using the ukulele, the Hardanger fiddle or the cajón helps with making valuable distinctions.

The concerts of Musikklinja are major events, even defining how work and studies are organized throughout the rest of the Musikklinja year. The music presented at such concerts needs to be very presentable indeed, not only showing off the qualities of musical craft, but also the quality connoisseurship of students and their familiarity with as well as ownership of the proper musics. What is deemed proper is of course a variety of musical expressions, dependent on the type of concert that is coming up, and I will (re)turn to a discussion of the various (value-laden) musics of Musikklinja in sections 7.1.3 and 7.1.4. For now, it is important to emphasize that the lists of the notice board (one after another, of auditions and house concerts and term-examinations) can be understood as performative, subjectifying acts. Through the repeated articulation of your name with your musics as well as with your team of co-musicians, your discursive position and scope of action is cited and elaborated on, worked out and rebuilt. And your absence from the list is as strong a performative act as your presence.

Above the rows and columns of the audition lists, an introduction says:

> Auditions for [Festival Weekend] concerts are coming up. […] This year's theme is "the best of three worlds", meaning that we can have a very broad repertoire, but you WILL need to practice A LOT to be accepted!

> Sign up on the list below if you have something you want to play! DO NOT HESITATE TO SIGN UP!!
>
> START PRACTICING NOW! THIS IS GOING TO BE LOTS OF FUN! :D *(Fieldnotes)*

The colloquial style of the introduction, mixing capital and lower-case letters, talking of a "broad repertoire" and "lots of fun" and ending it all with a smiley, encourages students to sign up without hesitation and plays down the strategy of censoring and selection that an audition is. Everyone is welcome to participate! If you have something you want to play, just do it, be part of the fun! An additional message is just as clear though: If *so*, you better *start practicing*. Only those that have practiced A LOT will make it through auditions. While the introduction refrains from arguing that quality performance follows practice and that quality performance is the main criteria for being accepted, this presumption may be read between the lines. What is more, the presumption has offspring all over Musikklinja, in the form of small, witty posters: on a visit to the girls' toilets, I was amused to see a picture of Ella Fitzgerald, hair in two bundles on top of her head, accompanied by a text reading "You have ears like Mickey Mouse? That is *no* excuse. Practice for Festival Weekend!" Similar reminders were taped to the inside of every toilet door, at eye height when sitting down: Ray Charles, sunglasses and broad smile: "I'm blind, but still I practice! Hit the road Jack and don't you come back until you practiced!" Norwegian artist Jahn Teigen, in his famous *Eurovision Song Contest* skeleton costume: "I'm a skeleton, but I still practice! So must you. Practice for Festival Weekend!" Dizzy Gillespie, characteristic cheeks and instrument: "My trumpet may be bent, but still, I *practice*. So must you. Practice for Festival Weekend!" *The importance of practicing* was repeated across Musikklinja space and place, humorously, in a direct, verbal style indicative of a student author, the third years responsible for the production I suppose.

The necessity of such repetition is intriguing. In music education, *the importance of practicing* goes almost without saying. If performers prepare, performers will succeed. And it is of course vital that Festival Weekend turns out successfully, maybe even legendary, its concert poster becoming one of those that will hail future students from the wall, daring them to do better. However, *the importance of practicing* seemed not to be a prominent discourse for students preparing and signing up for Festival Weekend auditions. *Getting in a position to play* is so important that one signs up first, and thinks (of practice) later. And constructing the right groups, putting together the right people, finding and choosing the right music, using the right instruments and the right soloist, is more of a concern for students than actually finding time

for and organizing practice. In the end, the list for Cafe/Rock auditions added up to over seventy entries, and the third years responsible for this production (together with Hannah, their teacher) addressed the Hall Meeting to ask people to consider the quality and number of potential contributions, and possibly withdraw some of their suggestions. The notable focus on practice in the audition list introduction and its witty offspring might be understood as a technology for managing discourse – avoiding its multiplication into instances and practices that no longer represent the Musikklinja discourses of *quality performance*.

The third years are offered the positions of managers; they are installed (through the school subject "direction and management") as guardians of the discourse of quality performance. Taking up and executing this position by citing the *importance of practicing*, they submit to the discourses of quality performance. Moreover, the humour and easy irony of the posters, while possibly taking some of the edge off the message both for sender and receiver, could also be understood to strengthen the discourses of practice and quality by reminding everyone that this is a student concern: the decree is horizontally distributed rather than vertically enforced. It's 'our' business. Third years are owners and managers of the concerts, helped by their teachers and the student organization of Musikklinja (also directly involved in all external concert productions). But all students of Musikklinja participate in one way or another. The topics and themes of the concerts have been discussed in Hall Meetings and put to vote. All students are responsible for selling tickets (everyone is obliged to sell three for each concert), students are involved as riggers and stagehands, and in marketing. And, of course, they are the performers; in ensembles, as soloists, in the choir. Success, then, reflects back on students themselves, as does failure. And this accountability is repeated by notice boards and posters (including the concert posters of previous successes) all over Musikklinja. Concerts are not an MDD endeavour that students join in on, they are student endeavours facilitated by the MDD programme, and the notice board is an important performer of this joint enterprise.

Another interesting aspect of the "practice for Festival Weekend" posters is that they all leave out the names of the artists pictured. The set-up seems as deliberate as the choice of artists: in presenting the iconic heads of legendary musicians and presupposing your familiarity with their identity and characteristics, it constructs both sender and receiver as knowledgeable insiders of music. All should know the identity of these faces. I never asked

students directly if they actually knew who was pictured, but a qualified guess after six months of fieldwork is that the presuppositions of the jokes probably constitutes as many outsiders as insiders. Students recognizing the poster as a joke between insiders but failing to fill the criteria presupposed would need to performatively reconstruct and reinstall their legitimate membership or even accept more peripheral, even inferior, positions of discourse.

Given a prominent place in what feels like the hub of Musikklinja activity, the student lounge, the giant notice board attracts the regular attention of both teachers and students. It is an important means of Musikklinja communication, and, as we have seen, an equally important means and resource of subjectivation through the discourses of musicianship displayed. The following chapters further explore the lounge as a practice of connoisseurship.

### 7.1.2 A discourse of dedication

Episode 6: The drama students' revue

The auditorium is dark, packed with laughing, cheering and applauding students and teachers from all the programmes of Upper Secondary. The leitmotif of this years' show is an enthusiastic researcher with thick glasses and haystack hair, dressed in a white lab coat. She introduces herself, telling us that she's there to study the school animal life, and that the music students are her main concern, "they are *that* interesting and *very very* special, you just watch this:" The scene is set as a religion and ethics class with a group of music students. I think I recognize several from the way they are caricatured, amongst them Molly, at the back, feet on the table, playing a guitar. The students obviously have no interest in the teacher's lecturing, they are discussing music amongst themselves, playing the guitar, singing, listening through shared earplugs, bodies moving to silent rhythms. When the teacher tries to take Molly's guitar, everyone screams, the room is blackened, and the researcher enters the stage: "Things get no better when they move to a storage-room of some sort," the music lounge. On a stool, hunched over a laptop sits one of the pianists, portrayed as a hipster nerd both in clothes and behaviour, expressing his exceptional knowledge of music, history, theory and instruments to a group of music students standing around him. On the sofa, a bunch of other music students, listening to music coming from a computer and pointing to the screen: "let's do that one in the house concert!" Christopher, a loud, easily recognizable rock guitarist, walks by and shouts in the passing: "we'll do that one in the house concert!" Addressing the piano nerd, he commands: "you do the keyboards". "El-organ!" the pianist hipster responds, somewhat irritated. A boy from general studies enters the lounge but is immediately thrown out by the rest.

> The scene freezes, crazy scientist again entering the stage, explaining that: "when school is out for the day, the students go home. Or to a party, maybe?" None of the students in the lounge show any sign of leaving. "Well, actually they just stay, it seems…" Finally, the students agree to leave for the party. The scene changes, we are at a block of bedsits located near Upper Secondary. A music student is telling a funny story: "I thought he was going to end it at the tonic, but actually, he ended it at the dominant!" Everyone laughs loudly. A General Studies boy, dressed in a white, tight t-shirt and thin hairband puts on "Bad Romance", causing every music student to wail and shield their ears: no, no, they object. One of them stops the music and they all start to sing, with force, the first few bars of "Landkjenning" by Edvard Grieg.
>
> The show continues to portray every programme at school in different ways, but the music students are given a lot of attention. Molly is actually given a whole scene: A girl, alone on stage, with a ukulele, demanding the eyes and ears of everyone. Taking her time, looking very serious, she waits for absolute silence before doing a few warm ups, and then launches into a song of how she *loooves* Musikklinja, has no social life, just wants to be with her instrument and practices all the time. "I'm just *neeerding*" she sings, "I spend all my time in the music section (the sofa lounge of Musikklinja), saying difficult things like *legato* and *allegro*." (*Fieldnotes)*

The drama students' humorous narration of music student life tells us something about the discourses that surround and govern who and how to be in Musikklinja. Music students are actually *expected* to linger on in the lounge after school hours, and only reluctantly part with each other and their lounge. Music students want to do nothing but music, and have no normal social life outside Musikklinja premises. Extremely dedicated to and protective of their lounge and their group identity, they dismiss and eject anything that does not belong, be it Lady Gaga or a preppy General Studies boy. They denounce the commercial music industry, preferring their own, alternative music including the classical repertoire of their beloved choral practice ("Landkjenning"). For the crazy researcher, the music students are obviously *that* much more interesting than any about the other student groups in Upper Secondary, she is as enthusiastic of their 'nerdiness' as they are proud of it themselves.[40] Molly and a couple of other students are portrayed as characteristic Musikklinja personae, living up to the myths as perceived: the self-pitying, emotional artist genius, the extremely nerdy, knowledgeable musician, and the full-of-himself rock wannabe. A

40 A striking aspect with the drama students revue is of course the character of the researcher, undoubtedly developed from my own presence at school. She is fascinated by the music students, and her fascination, her gaze, enforce the students positions as precisely "music students"; a definite place in discourse.

shared trait seems to be that they all expect everyone else (including ignorant General Studies teachers) to listen and applaud. "Let's do that one in the house concert" they decide on the spot, signalling an unfaltering confidence in their own abilities and an obsession with performing, as well as an arrogance towards how house concert programmes are put together: there and then, not necessarily entailing much preparation and practice.

The story told by the drama students presents criteria and characteristics connected to the subject position of "music student". Actual students of course behave in a lot of different ways, most of them in fact leaving (for home) after school hours, some prioritizing other musical milieus and communities (talent programmes, their own rock band projects, a local church's musical activities), some telling me that they prioritize going home for their general subjects studies or that they simply prefer to practice at their own place. Even so, the narration offered by the drama students draws a performative inscription of 'music student' as such, recognized and enforced by the enthusiastic response of the audience. Lingering in the music lounge, nerding, seems essential to a valid performance of music student subjectivity. Explaining to me about the current students of Musikklinja, one of the teachers says:

> Teacher: Students now are on ego trips. They don't care to form new groups or milieus, they keep communicating and exchanging within their regular/already established communities. They have so diverse lives outside school. The YMCAs parties with the other YMCAs. The Philadelphia girls that we used to have here[41] prioritized a get-together with their school class mates even if there was a wild party going on elsewhere; they really felt obliged to. Almost no one spends time here in the afternoon any more [...] Students these days have no previous knowledge, no endurance, and no work ethic. *(Fieldnotes)*

Where former (better?) students were dedicated to the "Musikklinja milieu", showing it by investing time and energy in the lounge and the fellowship with their classmates, todays' students are primarily dedicated to their individual trajectories (ego trips), their lives outside determining their engagement with Musikklinja rather than the other (proper?) way around. The better/more proper connotations are supported by the articulation of 'not spending time in the lounge' with 'lack of knowledge, endurance and work ethic'. A student's choice to leave after school hours is taken to indicate that a necessary drive is missing, maybe the dedication (work ethic) and passion (endurance) illustrated by the revue's portrayal of music student life. In this teacher's performance,

41 "Philadelphia" is the local Pentecostal Church.

current student behaviour is constructed as a deviation, a less proper variant of 'real' music student behaviour.

Michael confirms the same deviation in the interview excerpt below. The drummer is, as far as I have observed, one of the more active students of Musikklinja, playing in several musical constellations and frequently staying behind in the lounge after school hours. Still, he submits to a discourse that constructs his music student behaviour as insufficient; Musikklinja is an all-consuming activity:

> Michael: I live kind of a "double life" (laughs). It's like, Musikklinja until eight in the evenings, then I try too keep in touch with my friends. I'm not back home until past midnight, and I still have to get up at seven. At the weekends I have to work, act like a son and help my father building, try to be with my friends and go to the party they want me to go to, and then I must … do homework […] I'll die next year (laughs), it'll be way too much.
>
> Live: [next year] will be hard?
>
> Michael: yes. I'm not ready; maybe I'll be over summer.
>
> Live: yes?
>
> Michael: yeah, it'll be intense. I lack the previous knowledge; I'm not a musician at that level.
>
> Live: you really mean that? At what kind of level, the school level?
>
> Michael: yes. Molly will do fine, Jennifer too, Oliver, Thomas, like…
>
> Live: how come? Why them?
>
> Michael: they are musicians at that level (laughs) […] They have the technical skills, the knowledge; it comes easy…I'm not that kind of musician. I'm more like, the one that is discovered, by chance, at a concert. I'm not like a "professional musician" […]
>
> Live: they have what it takes, while you need to struggle to keep up?
>
> Michael: I'll struggle because I want to keep my life outside school going.
>
> […]
>
> Live: your way of being a music student, and Daniel's way of being a music student; do you feel that teachers or school find Daniel's way more appropriate?
>
> Michael: yes. It's more proper to be Daniel than me. But…I guess Daniel doesn't have that life outside school anymore. I try to, and that's why I struggle, in both arenas, like. I really need a vacation, if not, I can't take it no more (laughs). Daniel, I don't think he feels like that. I think he'll manage. He studies at home, for tests, like, yes.
>
> Live: he meets the expectations of what a music student is supposed to know?

> Michael: mm. And I guess I could have managed just as well as him, but I just haven't the capacity any more. *(Interview)*

Submitting to the discourse that Musikklinja demands your absolute attention, Michael ascribes his struggles and his lack of "technical skills" and "knowledge", even "professionalism", to the fact that he wants a social life outside school. His shortcomings, then, are due to him refusing Musikklinja his full dedication, but "choosing", as he says elsewhere, to keep up his social obligations towards friends and family. Later in the interview we talk about his classmate Daniel, approved (by teachers and students) as one of the best drummers, *musicians* even, Musikklinja has seen in ages. While Michael trusts his "feeling", Daniel is more of a knowledgeable, "technical" drummer, Michael maintains, learning his thing "by paper". When I ask Michael if Daniels' way of being a music student is more appropriate than his own, Michael again reaches for the discourse of "no social life outside school" (very prominent in the revue's performance of the proper music student); explaining that while the Daniel way of doing and being probably is the more proper, he himself refuse to sacrifice his social life. Hence, he must lead a "double life", dividing his "capacity", knowing that this will result in him failing to meet the standards and criteria (technical skills, knowledge, endurance) held by Musikklinja. However, in citing the discourse of absolute dedication and its implications of "no social life", Michael reinscribes himself: He *could* have managed, had he chosen full participation. He acknowledges the demand of absolute dedication; he does not challenge the reason for it. But since he submits to and could have met the criteria of Musikklinja (had he not chosen otherwise), his performance is that of a fully legitimate music student.

There's a tricky paradox in the discourse that both Michael and the teacher submits to however, and it says something very important about Musikklinja: to acquire the technical skills, knowledge and professionalism that is available in Musikklinja, students are expected (and that includes expecting each other) to dedicate themselves completely to its spaces and schedules, places and practices. At the same time, students' lack of dedication is taken to indicate a lack of *prerequisite* skills and knowledge, including endurance/work ethic/capacity. They do not stay behind in the lounge and they do not prioritize Musikklinja social activity, because they are simply not Musikklinja material, musicians at "that level", as Michael expresses it. Previous knowledge and skills are prerequisites for dedication. Yet, they can only gain such skills and knowledge by dedicating themselves completely to Musikklinja activity.

What is more, the discourse of dedication applies also to those that without doubt meet the criteria of technical skills, knowledge and endurance/passion. In connection with organizing third and second years in ensembles, one of the classical violinists represented a problem for the ensemble teachers. "He sabotages *any* attempt at putting together a functional group", the teachers complained, "he is only interested in auditioning and being accepted in places". While acknowledging his skills as a musician, Henry (guitarist) too is annoyed of the violinist's priorities, telling me that "he certainly knows how to handle the violin, but that's about it". The violinist in question attended an external talent programme, and both teachers and fellow students were, at times, very annoyed that he chose to skip Musikklinja related rehearsals and obligations. He is a *really* difficult student, a teacher told me, "he just doesn't give a shit about Musikklinja".

### 7.1.3 The names of the bands

The student lounge is an extremely important arena for working on, displaying and confirming one's musical connoisseurship, and through that negotiate one's legitimacy in Musikklinja according to the discourses of the lounge. While playing music loudly in the lounge is forbidden, students often group around screens or mobile phones to share and show off their music, talk about what is good or cool and what is not, who is awesome and who is not, and plan for future performances. And as important as knowing the awesome rock artists and their bands are knowing about the technical equipment related to electronic instruments; amplifiers, pedals, samplers:

> Henry: [at first] I felt like I had less to offer, than… even if I never actually attended the other's guitar lessons… I felt that I had less *experience* really. The others knew more, knew about more bands and more songs and, well, more *brands* (laughs), names of amplifiers (laughs)
>
> Live: equipment, musicians…
>
> Henry: right, equipment, and they had more of a musician's experience, solid, like.
>
> […]
>
> Live: quite often, someone flips open a laptop and plays some music video, is that the kind of situation when you–
>
> Henry: yes, you're right, and like: "*everyone* knows this song!" and if you haven't heard it before yourself, then, like…(laughs) *(Interview)*

For Henry, a "solid musician's experience" is what counts in Musikklinja, an experience identifiable by your knowledge of bands, songs and brands. Upon entering Musikklinja, he found that "they", the others in his year and the other music students, had more, he had less. Rather than question them though, he complies with the conditions under which "musicianship" is constructed as "solid" and confirms and enforces this discursive articulation. His way to stable membership and unquestioned legitimacy must go through attaining the same knowledgeability as he perceives in his peers by getting in a position to acquaint himself with the discourses of the lounge. Henry is therefore one of the more active participants in lounge discussions of music, and always interested in forming band-constellations and suggesting repertoire.

Confronted with the discourses of the lounge, Alice however ends up questioning her music student legitimacy:

> Alice: Musikklinja's fine, I just think, like, I don't know if I belong here. Whether I should have chosen another programme instead, the General Studies Specialization maybe. I don't know what I want to do after upper secondary yet (laughs) […] I'm not that music–, I don't know so much about music… words, like, or… I'm not that interested in playing gigs outside of school or, like, festivals. Lots of the others are at festivals and work there or, they know about lots of bands that I never heard about. They are more committed like. And I'm like; I do what I'm told! Ah, yes…
>
> Live: I understand, or, I think I do. You think the interest in music that others have is more like a "lifestyle" than yours? With bands outside school…
>
> Alice: yes, yes, its very – they know of many, and have heard of many, and have, like, people or family that plays a lot too, they have relatives that they hear news about.
>
> Live: mm. Do you think they already belong in a music culture, and that school –
>
> Alice: yes, yes. And they prioritize the music subjects more than their general studies, while I prioritize the general studies. Or, I try to do everything well…
>
> Live: I think I understand. Does this cause you to feel a bit … left out?
>
> Alice: yes. Yes, absolutely.
>
> Live: in what contexts?
>
> Alice: when I'm socializing you know, talking with others in the student lounge. […]
>
> Live: typically when someone talks about a concert or a band or a festival or something?
>
> Alice: yes. And they reel off the names of all the awesome bands and then others go; "yeah, they are *that* good" and stuff, and I have no idea at all of who they are talking about.

Live: yes. You're not exactly on their wavelenght?

Alice: no, I'm not. And then they say; "what, you don't know who that is? You never heard of them?" like, "they are *that* good, and one of them actually went to Musikklinja and…", well, yes. And I just think, I don't know who did and did not go to Musikklinja, I never had any relatives or the likes who went here before me!

[…]

Live: are some of the students in your class more excited about discussing music than others? And is there someone that never engages in discussions of music? How about yourself?

Alice: I really don't discuss music like that, but, Molly, and Jennifer and Mia (laughs), they are really music-, people think about them like 'really' music students. Because they sing all the time, and suddenly, they launch into two-part or three-part song or, like, make up strange intervals or (laughs) I don't know, they do a lot of that stuff.

Live: they make a lot of noise? In the hallways, they are very noticeable?

Alice: yes. Very noticeable. Or, they go around in the hallways playing ukuleles like, and…yes. Very "music student".

Live: how do you react to that, do you get like "ah…" (response to Alice pulling a face)

Alice: ah, I just give up! (Laughs) I don't get it, how can one be *that* enthusiastic about playing *all day* like. And…aren't they a bit afraid of making asses of themselves, don't they care about what other people think?

[…]

Live: starting out, you told me that you are one of those that still haven't tired of the music subjects. On the other hand, you say that you sometimes feel …

Alice: a bit on the outside. Yes. I'm not a *real* music student. I wouldn't say that. (*Interview)*

Alice is a very good flautist, she's getting top grades in both programme and general school subjects, and has several friends in Musikklinja that she hangs out with and sits with in class. She takes her piano second instrument lessons seriously, and her teacher tells me he is *very* satisfied with her efforts. She states, however, that she does not know if she belongs in Musikklinja, questioning even if she is a "real" music student. From a formal school evaluative perspective, she certainly belongs I would say. More than that, she is a top student, meeting every formal demand. She honours the discourses of quality performance and the importance of practicing and she is always prepared and attentive. In the interview, however, other criteria come up as significant in governing her sense of belonging and constituting her Musikklinja

subjectivity: knowing about music, knowing the "names of the bands", being interested in gigs and festivals outside school, and having relatives who are musicians or who attended Musikklinja before her. Other students are more *committed*, Alice holds, and knowing about music, knowing the names of the bands and doing gigs and festivals are indicators of their commitment. Her just doing what she's told (by the teachers) makes her less committed and less proper. Her conscientious practicing of the (classical) flute and the (pedagogical) piano, the amount of energy she puts into school work and her teachers' acknowledgements of her efforts are not sufficient to inscribe in her a sense of legitimate belonging, as this subjectivity needs to be at least partly constituted through the lounge discourses of the names of the bands and absolute commitment. Alice's conclusion must be that she is not a "real" music student. Real Musikklinja subjects, it seems, should burst into music at every opportunity, like Molly, Jennifer and Mia do when singing, dancing, conducting, discussing and acting out their musicianship in the hallways and classrooms of Musikklinja. They should pursue every chance of performing (signing up for concerts and auditions with music that displays and confirms their connoisseurship) and even be associated members of professional musical life through their families or acquaintances.

In the power/knowledge structures of school everyday life, Alice thus takes the position of a peripheral participant: in MIP ("music in perspective" – music history, appreciation and analysis) she waits, even if it later turns out that she knows the answer. She is quiet, even though she is among friends and peers in the school-initiated folk rock ensemble. When interviewing her, she had not yet played a house concert, even though she gets the best marks for her flute playing in term examinations. The discourse of absolute commitment and dedication, as well as the conditions of musical connoisseurship facilitated by the lounge regulate her legitimacy, and she consciously reaches for positions outside of Musikklinja's main discourses to re-establish legitimacy for herself: she is more of a "natural science girl" she tells me later in the interview, her ambitions going in the directions of mathematics and physics. She is *the only* Musikklinja girl in her advanced mathematics class, she proudly states. Performing herself as a "natural science girl", Alice submits to the main discourses of connoisseurship and dedication, and retires to a position in the periphery. She sees herself as *other* in Musikklinja, but performs her otherness within the acceptable, "doing what she's told", fulfilling the formal demands of the programme. What is more, her performance of the "natural science girl"

hooks up with and depends upon the discourses of commitment and dedication, as well as the "names of the bands":

> Alice: I don't know, I'm one of those that still enjoy the music programme subjects I guess […] Playing the flute and that. Main instruments.
>
> Live: yes. That's your impression?
>
> Alice: yes, that's my impression, when I hear that people aren't bothered to practice or things like that. But I still find it OK, or, fun even.
>
> Live: why is that do you think?
>
> Alice: I'm not sure; I don't give up that easily maybe? I set out goals for myself. And I have fun when practicing. I don't practice, like, "normally". I invent some, try out new things […] Different things, I listen to music on the PC and try to play alongside, a bit of jazz for instance, and then I try to improvise [Alice looks at me and smiles], or, like, try to make up melodies of my own. And then I do the technical stuff afterwards.
>
> Live: etudes and the likes?
>
> Alice: yes, practicing, like, "seriously" (laughs). First having fun and then practicing seriously.
>
> […]
>
> Live: is that the reason why you keep motivated and interested?
>
> Alice: yes, maybe? Because I find it fun, I don't find playing a lot of fun if it's to rehearse for, like, if I get a gig or a concert or something, I don't find that a lot of fun really. I would tire very easily if I were to have a lot of gigs and the likes I would have to practice for. Because the flute is more like a hobby to me.
>
> […]
>
> Live: you say that you know of several people who are starting to tire of playing, and of their instrument?
>
> Alice: mm. More like tired of *practicing* I guess.
>
> Live: how come?
>
> Alice: maybe because it's no fun, and we only get to play classical pieces. Practicing them is no fun, and you have to rehearse the same piece for weeks [laughs], and teachers make high demands on us, maybe? That's my feeling anyway. *(Interview)*

The argument constructed between Alice and myself in this excerpt seems to be that in Musikklinja, there is a good chance that playing for a reason (main instrument lessons or concerts/gigs) and for evaluation (by teachers or audiences) comes to replace playing for your own fun and pleasure. Subjecting yourself to the professionalism of music you risk losing your "authentic" interest, your original motivation and your passion – important aspects of

the discourses of dedication and commitment. Claiming to have kept her musical curiosity, passion and motivation, Alice re-establishes legitimacy in her peripheral position. She rejects a position and trajectory that she recognizes as central in Musikklinja, arguing that music is not her end goal and that a career in music is out of the question, but nevertheless performs attractively on the periphery re-working the main discourses of Musikklinja. Refraining from putting herself in positions that would make music and playing something unpleasant (avoiding concerts and gigs), she protects her authentic dedication to music.

While constituting her as Musikklinja 'other', the lounge discourses of musical connoisseurship simultaneously provide Alice with a resource for making her position as 'other' more attractive, both to herself and in the gaze of her fellow students. In the interview excerpt above she emphasizes an interest in improvisation, and how the classical and technical repertoire of the main instrument lessons risks killing motivation. Later in the interview, she tells of a preference for the sound of drums and bass as well as a dislike for the classical violin (although claiming to enjoy the folk fiddle). She also highlights both the Rock concert and the Cafe concert as some of the best moments of her Musikklinja life, before adding that this year's Chamber concert (classical repertoire, classical ensembles) was good too. Talking with her about what music rules the lounge and what music seems "proper" in Musikklinja, Alice without hesitation puts the rock band *Muse* on the top of the list, at the same time assuring me that she herself has started listening to Muse now, and finds them really good (see section 7.1.4)

Alice's performance of Musikklinja subjectivity, it seems, demands that she signals her affiliation with the prominent lounge discourse of the names of the bands and the activities that surrounds it; the student initiated formation of ensembles and bands, the sharing and showing off of the coolest music and the display of personal connections to professional musical life. These are high status activities, owned and driven by students themselves, while school subjects and teacher- or school-initiated activities are perceived by students as being almost all classical in their emphasis and orientation. Being interested in, and good at, school-initiated activities is a definite plus, adding to your Musikklinja legitimacy, but even *more* so if you are solidly positioned within the lounge discourses of musical connoisseurship.

As Alice is a successful and much liked student, respected by teachers and fellow students, the actual periphery of her position might of course be

contested. She unquestionably succeeds in all her formal school endeavours, a winner in the practices that students perceive as school practices. However, in the discourses of the lounge she feels clumsy and unfamiliar. And the discourses of the lounge are loud and prominent, stretching into school concert activities, ensemble playing and other practices, even into teachers' discourses of the competences and qualities of students. What Alice *can* and *knows* is not valued as loudly by the student collective and the student lounge, even though her abilities get her successfully through Musikklinja.

### 7.1.4 This is the kind of music we like!

Episode 7: The connoisseurship of Carl

Carl, Mia and Oliver are in the lounge when I arrive. Oliver has tried one of the "what instrument are you"-tests that have been circulating on Facebook the last few weeks, and now he points to his computer screen: "I'm a guitar. I wrote that I like the lowest notes. I didn't bluff, except when there were only stupid alternatives". He seems very satisfied with the result. Carl tries the test on his own computer, but stops at a question where he has to choose between the timbres of the guitar, the saxophone and the vibraphone. He sighs, and says seriously: "I can't choose, I like them all". Then he turns to Mia: "Mia, want to hear? The most *beautiful* record! He plays on ice, he made a vibraphone from ice". Mia leans over, listening: "Oh, *that's* really nice…." Carl: "Mhm, I *know!*". Mia: "You are so good at finding this stuff you know, how do you do it?" "Thanks". Carl smiles. "You really have to spend time looking around, and you need some luck too". Carl talks of the kind of music he likes: folk music, folk music is really good, and combinations of folk music with other musics. And jazz, it's so harmonically complex. A red haired boy I haven't seen around so often squats down behind the back of Carl's chair, watching his screen. They start a discussion on the timbres of vibraphones and marimbas; ice sounds, greasy sounds, sustained sounds, and I get the impression that they are playing together in some constellation or other. Carl points to the screen: "if I were to choose an instrument…" The redhead: "it's not very practical though". He asks Carl if he knows [*name of webpage*]? Carl hesitates before confirming: "yes, yes"… Redhead: "Good, I was starting to wonder…". He leans over, and finds the page on Carl's machine. "This is the kind of music we like!" he says. "This is the kind of music we like to play" Carl agrees. The boy tells Carl that once, he was at a concert with Ravi Shankar, "you know who that is?" "Well…" Carl hesitates again, uttering sounds of 'trying-to-recall'. "Yeah, him, yes I know", he finally concludes. "It was awesome" the redhead says. *(Fieldnotes)*

It's late morning, and the students are supposed to be working with a social science group assignment on Norwegian political parties, their mission being to find out more about The Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet). Even if the

lounge is (almost) deserted at this time of day, offering a nice and quiet place to work, they are easily distracted. The purposes and patterns of lounge practice seem to overrule their social science assignment, and as often they are multitasking: Facebook, YouTube, some music related web page, The Progress Party home page and a word document window open at the same time. Oliver, usually very specific about playing the *fiddle* and being a *fiddler* (rather than a violinist) seems happy about his 'guitar' result. It's a childish game, he knows of course, still, he has answered truthfully – no bluffing – on questions about his personality, his looks, his preferences and tastes, his forms of friendships and so on. And the guitar, not the trumpet, the harp or the bassoon, is his proper match. He "is" the guitar. Silly as it might be, the performative value of the test is great. Oliver might be a fiddler, but he is a fiddler with the soul of a guitarist rather than a classical violinist. It's a satisfying combination, helping the connection he is forging between his own folk music and the musics of the lounge, and hence, helping his Musikklinja lounge legitimacy. An ultimate position of legitimacy in Musikklinja seems to be that of the free roamer, the one performing well in his/her native genre (classical, folk, rock), but doing surprisingly well also with other musics. While performing convincingly as a classical violinist is difficult for Oliver, neither note reading skills nor technique up to the task, he *can* convincingly enter stages where folk overlaps with pop and rock music. Carefully making his way into the lounge discourses of music, while at the same time insisting on the differences of classical and folk, preserves his quality musicianship by *adding* capacity (rock/pop music understanding) rather than *subtracting* capacity (identifying flaws of techniques or note-reading skills).

Carl too is working on his lounge legitimacy. He actually *is* a guitarist, albeit not the most experienced, struggling to keep up in main instrument. His enthusiasm for music and musical instruments of all sorts is all the more noticeable though. Searching for and discovering music is the main asset of Carl's musicianship, his connoisseurship securing Musikklinja legitimacy as his main instrument craftsmanship undermines it. Besides, there is *craft* to his connoisseurship: how do you *do* it? A bit of luck is needed, Carl modestly suggests, but even so, he is obviously thankful that Mia acknowledges that skills are involved in "spending time, looking around". In the above, it's the sound of melodic percussion that has caught his attention, and Mia's response provides him with necessary support: he is *especially* good at finding "this stuff", the good, the interesting, the beautiful music. While he works persistently to expand and deepen his knowledge of a variety of musics and has managed to become something

of a Musikklinja authority on jazz, extensive *affection* rather than extensive knowledge characterizes the connoisseurship of Carl. What he *likes*, what he likes to *play*, how things *sound* seem as important as the names of the bands, and who plays and with whom. When his red haired friend pushes conversation in the direction of musical facts and 'should-have-known's, Carl is obviously more uncomfortable, although trying his best to keep on top of things. His enthusiasm for the sounds of music is not enough; it should be supported by knowledge of bands and brands.

There is an interesting parallel here to musical connoisseurship as taught in the formal educational practices of Musikklinja. Musikklinja school curricula have formalized musical appreciation as a practice to be learned with objects to be appreciated and techniques to be mastered in school subjects like ear-training class, general music theory (AML) and music in perspective (MIP), the latter incorporating music history, the learning of genres and styles and analytical musicology concerned less with the interpretation of meaning than categorization of form and musical elements. And there seems to be a significant difference between the ways of appreciation and criticism performed in corridors and lounges, and the ways of appreciation performed in the classroom where one's preferences and one's opinions on quality, relevance and meaning seem like inappropriate issues. Frith, discussed earlier in connection with subjectivation practices in music (section 2.4), says:

> In universities then, just as in high schools (and however many pop icons are now pinned up on classroom walls) there is still a split between what Frank Kogan describes as the discourse of the classroom (with its focus on a subject matter) and the discourse of the hallway (with its focus on oneself and one's opinions about a subject matter and one's opinions about other people's opinions about a subject matter and one's opinions about other people). (Frith, 1996b, p. 12)[42]

Hallway connoisseurship and appreciation is as much about working out a place for oneself within certain networks of power/knowledge through the making of aesthetic evaluations, as it is about the aesthetic evaluations themselves. Agreeing that this is the music he likes (to play), Carl's focus is himself, what he feels about the subject matter, what his friend feels about the subject matter, and his relation to his friend. This does not mean that his performance is a social performance only. On the contrary, his social performance of himself depends on the aesthetic evaluation and appreciation of certain musics. In comparison, I found the school subject most specifically addressing musical

42 Frith sites Frank Kogan, in the fanzine *Why Music Sucks* 7, 1991, pp. 3-4

appreciation, music in perspective (MIP), to focus almost exclusively on 'neutral' subject matter. In MIP, listening to, analysing and discussing music against the background of periods and style trademarks is the main activity. However, observing the MIP practice for several weeks, I found next to none of the affective, personal evaluations of music and musical sounds that characterize Carl's connoisseurship. Irrelevant to the universal value of the music presented perhaps, questions of "what we like", "what you like" and "why" were never posed. There was plenty of identifying topics and themes, counting bars, recognizing form and learning style characteristics, but very seldom did someone utter a statement indicating a personal evaluation rather than a neutral description. Upon hearing a Mozart symphony (number 40) the class went unusually silent, most students listening attentively. As the first movement ended, their teacher sighed, looked out on his class and smilingly exclaimed: "ah, *this* is beautiful music!" What trigged the silence of the class in the first place, I don't know. Possibly, since previous lessons were dedicated to lesser known musics and styles (Italian Stile Galante, amongst others), the students were happy to hear something they recognized. Their sudden (albeit fleeting) attentiveness however expanded MIP-space enough to accommodate a personal and affective response from their teacher. He did not, however, open for further affective, aesthetic evaluations and discussions along the lines of "How do *you* find this music? How does it sound to you? Why do you (not) like it? How does it make you feel? What kind of people like this music? What is it good for, what does it mean, how can you use it?" On the contrary, keeping his focus on topics, themes and numbers of bars, "what we like" remained under-communicated in the MIP classroom. MIP music 'is' valuable music, disconnected from liking. Its aesthetic has nothing to do with liking at all, it is universal.[43] The MIP teacher was obviously in love with the music he chose for his lessons. The look on his face said that he really enjoyed what he played. However, it was never a topic for discussion, although, one can imagine, it could have been.

The difference between Musikklinja MIP and lounge connoisseurship and appreciation seems obvious. Yet, in some ways, they are very similar practices. As we saw, Carl's friend demands of him a kind of connoisseurship that is knowledge based rather than grounded in aesthetic pleasure. "What we like" needs to pass a reference test that secures quality by citing the proper bands

43 It should be mentioned that during the period of observation, the epochs thematised in MIP music were baroque and classicism, and early romanticism. I know that other kinds of music were scheduled for other years of study.

and brands, or other nodal points of reference; style and period characteristics for example (jazz). Moreover, "what we like" in Musikklinja constitutes a selection in much the same ways as does MIP subject content – a formation supported by (lounge) power/knowledge relations:

> Alice: what's with Musikklinja, you can't listen to, you know, "party-music" like "remixes" and that sort of thing. If you do, people will think you're weird, like straight general studies or sports or something. So that's not an option […] I think it's because it's not "real" music (laughs). Well, no, but it's not "real instruments". Well, it is of course, but it's not like "an instrument that you can make a lot of sound on". I don't know. I think it's OK. I like working out to that kind of music (laughs). So…
>
> Live: what's the proper music then that you ought to listen to? That has some kind of status?
>
> Alice: Muse. Yes, really. Muse. I didn't know them before I started Musikklinja. But now, I started listening to it.
>
> Live: is it rock music?
>
> Alice: well, more like "metal". And also, like, weird melodies, calm songs by bands you never heard of. Like [*Norwegian band*].
>
> Live: (laughs) I never heard about them before coming here
>
> Alice: me neither (laughs). They haven't a lot of songs either, but people say one of them actually went to Musikklinja, I think. *(Interview)*

According to Alice, a Musikklinja participant needs to follow Musikklinja recommendations for listening and appreciation. If you transgress by listening to something that is not "real" music, you are no longer a real subject but something else, someone following the "straight" course of education, the "general" studies. The proper music, that would be: weird, calm songs, or metal music, by bands you never heard of like Muse and [*Norwegian Band*]. And unlike the electronically generated, computer produced 'fake' sounds of the remix; "real" music is made by playable, "real" instruments. As often during the interview, Alice performs from a position on the periphery, keeping up a cool distance between the lounge core practices and herself. Her descriptions of the proper music are given in tones of amusement, trivializing rather than problematizing her alienation to practices of lounge connoisseurship. At the same time, she assures me that she has started listening to Muse now. By acting like an amused observer (a position well facilitated by the interview situation) rather than an obliged, committed participant, she secures and enforces the connection of her peripheral position to positions of the core without needing to honour the demands placed upon core participants. Interestingly, arguing

that she finds party music and remixes OK for working out, Alice enacts the discourse of functionality that has been very influential on pop and rock music appreciation and analyses. Art music is commonly subjected to analyses based on aesthetic criteria: themes, form, and instrumentation. Popular music, on the other hand, has more often been subjected to sociological analyses based on function: its impact on generations of young people, its political influence, and its function as a symbol of group identity. Categorizing real and fake music along the traditional lines of art and popular music, Alice enforces the aesthetic, autonomous value of the one through constituting the functional, context-dependent value of the other. Henry does something similar:

> Henry: now, I have been to Musikklinja parties where house music has been played all night.
>
> Live: you have?
>
> Henry: um, I'm no big fan of house, but when I'm partying, I have no objections to it, 'cause, you know, it's a genre that's meant for partying, it's customized to partying, so I…but many would, I've heard, when asking if they're going, they go "no way, I can find no reason for going to a party to listen to music I don't like" (laughs), that would be the typical music student's attitude you know.
>
> Live: you become evaluative in relation to music?
>
> Henry: yes, I think so. Maybe too evaluative, not just, "come on, music's music!"
>
> Live: I see. You get very conscious of what you like?
>
> Henry, right, you get too conscious, over-conscious, of what you like and don't like. *(Interview)*

Asserting that house music is not his main interest, Henry cites the discourse of functionality to argue for its value. The implication of the argument seems to be that house may neither be good nor real music, but it *is* useful music, made for partying. There is real music meant for listening and appreciation, and there is functional music meant for partying, working out, or whatever. While no big fan (not his listening music), Henry nevertheless enjoys house music for partying. The "typical music student attitude" though, would be to dismiss all that is not listening music, even avoid being exposed to it. Citing the traditional dichotomy of the aesthetic and the functional, Henry, like Alice, attains subjecthood through well-established relations of power/knowledge. While recognizing and acknowledging the superiority of the first, he competently utilizes what the second has to offer, emerging as a knowledgeable and able actor. Moreover, he emerges with a profit: inducing the "typical" with a sense of narrow-mindedness ("over-consciousness"), Henry renders less attractive

positions even more rooted on the side of the aesthetic. In his performance, the "typical" is indicative of the 'extreme' rather than the 'average', thus affirming and inscribing the normality and centrality of his own position.

Interviewing Alice, neither of us acts like proper musical connoisseurs when talking of the "real music" though: is it rock music? – Metal more like, and what about those others; weird calm songs, never heard of them, we laugh. The proper connoisseurs of the lounge, the masters of the names-of-the-bands discourse, would most probably react to our descriptions. Muse, that is alternative rock, or new-prog, they would probably go, not *metal*. Actually, metal isn't even in the Musikklinja selection it seems:

> Live: is there music that one really shouldn't confess to listening to, or should avoid playing at parties?
>
> Adrian: yes, I feel that there is.
>
> Leo: yes…kind of
>
> Adrian: I couldn't play just any song at house concert. Well, I really could, 'cause I don't care what others think right, 'cause I should be allowed to play metal without people hating me for that reason!
>
> Group: (laughs)
>
> Live: is that a genre that will get you into trouble?
>
> Lukas: you won't be bullied, if that's what you mean, but it's – not so many *like*…
>
> Max: depends on the band
>
> Adrian: yeah, depends on the band really
>
> Lukas: if you play Metallica, people wouldn't really … like you
>
> Max: yes, that would be so-called mainstream you know
>
> Lukas: it's because of the people here…
>
> […]
>
> Leo: I think, what is important is that really good musicians are performing
>
> Live: more important than genre?
>
> Leo: yes, really […] there are rappers that are respected by Musikklinja, if they're only good enough, *unique* enough. *(Group interview)*

Similar to Alice's differentiation between music for the "straight, general" students and the "real" Musikklinja music, the boys differentiate between what is "mainstream" music and what is music for Musikklinja. Metal as performed by Metallica, for instance, would be mainstream – music for the main stream of people, the straight, those not at Musikklinja. When I ask Henry if he has

musical preferences he avoids parading in Musikklinja, he tells me that his musical upbringing was in the genres of pop, like "eighties pop and hair metal", and that he still avoids bringing Bruce Springsteen in to the picture when the rest of them "talk prog-rock". For the group of boys above though, genre by itself doesn't seem to be the decisive factor in this. As Max says, it "depends on the band", even rappers being respected if they're only "unique" enough. What rather characterizes "the music we like" in Musikklinja is "really good" musicians performing "unique" music, that is, music outside the main stream of music production. Put differently, *quality*, *originality* and *authenticity* – traditional hallmarks in Western classical as well as rock music – are properties held in high esteem also in Musikklinja. Furthermore, the sign of equation between person and music made by Alice ('people will think you are like straight general studies') is even more obvious with the boys. If you openly play or otherwise enjoy Metallica, people wouldn't really…like you. The formulation may be childish, helpless even, but Lukas is expressing a relation of power/knowledge that is strong in Musikklinja: actually, you *are* what you play, be it by ear-phones or instrument, be it your cell phone ring-tone or your term exam repertoire. It's because of the people here, Lukas further suggests. In a more theoretical language we could say that music is an important resource of subjectivation in Musikklinja, and that students emerge as Musikklinja subjects partly through the music they play and listen to. However, subjectivation through music is not an isolated person-music affair, its outcome depends on the recognition and acknowledgement of a whole field of power/knowledge, populated, enacted and maintained by other (student) subjects. And the means of subjectivation, *what* music you play and listen to, is vital to how you will be recognized, and hence, what subject positions are available to you. Now, this is how Sarah's group talk about the Musikklinja music. I have asked the students if they have changed their taste in music since starting Musikklinja:

> Sarah: *I* didn't change at *all*, neither am I going to. What I feel anyway is that "you're *supposed* to like this" or, "you're not supposed to like hit music and such"…(group confirms)
>
> Live: that's how it was in the revue, wasn't it?
>
> Elliot: it's kind of like that.
>
> Ruby: it's *very* much like that.
>
> Sarah: yes. Like, at a party, I think you should play party music you know, but they wanted to listen to Deep Purple and stuff, that's "typical musician" like.
>
> Ruby: that is party music in Musikklinja

Sarah: yup / Elliot: ugh

Ruby: but, actually I agree. I would rather listen to Deep Purple or Led Zeppelin or something like that when I'm at a party than listen to hit music

Mia: yes, me too

Live: (to Sarah) so, you feel that [hit music] is kind of low level in Musikklinja?

Sarah: people look at me like I'm stupid if I…or, I'm not *allowed* to play anything else than…

Elliot: it's like "What, you listen to Gaga?! Yuck."

Ruby: not Gaga, lots of folks listen to Gaga

Eva: Gaga's cool

Sarah: yeah, not Gaga but –

Elliot: Gaga was probably a stupid example, but – Karpe Diem, that's *not* OK. (Sarah and Ruby agree)

Live: Gaga's accepted, Karpe Diem is not?(group confirms)

Mia: it's because she's so weird, she's a phenomenon

Ruby: yes, it's, like, she communicates the whole "be yourself" package that is considered…good, you know. Personally, I never listen to Gaga and that kind of music, but within some circles, like Simon and those – but if you go to Charles and Christopher and those people …

Live: it's not accepted?

Ruby: it's not accepted because; they are like – guitar, old rock music…

Live: type, Deep Purple?

Ruby: right. *(Group interview)*

Sarah firmly insists that she hasn't changed, vehemently launching into the topic of what music one is "supposed" to prefer. You are supposed to change, her quick articulation implies, the irritated tone of her voice signalling protest, refusal, a promise to stand her ground. Assisted by Elliot and Ruby, she narrates the rules of participation established by "people" (who think you're *stupid* if you don't follow them): only "typical musician music" is allowed. The "party music of Musikklinja" is music with guitars, old rock music, like Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin. Hit music, like the music of Norwegian rap duo Karpe Diem, is *not* OK. Contrary to Ruby's act of subjectivation however, admitting that she shares the preferences of Musikklinja "people", Sarah remains in a position of resistance. The categories in which she is placed are appropriated – understood, acknowledged and evaluated – but her way of mastery, her way of submitting, is the resistance. Resistance creates a subject position of fierce opposition,

but this opposition depends, of course, upon the categories it opposes. Sarah has definitely found a place for herself in Musikklinja discourse. She is not something "else", something unrecognizable; on the contrary, she is quite obvious, noticeable, as the one in opposition. By relating vehemently to what is constituted as core "typicality" in Musikklinja, she manages to create a core position for herself too.

Interestingly, the case of Lady Gaga gives rise to some dispute among the students. Elliot holds that people would go "yuck", they would be appalled, if they caught you listening to Gaga. Ruby and Eva disagree though, "lots of folks" listen to Gaga. The students have different reference groups in mind obviously, and what is legitimate within the one may not be legitimate within the other: Simon "and those" may like Gaga, but with Charles and Christopher "and those" (the guitar, old rock music people), she is far from accepted. While both stances seem to be accepted, Ruby (with Mia quick to follow) repeats her affiliation with one of them: personally she *never* listens to Gaga. She does however recognize the iconic status the American singer is accorded by Mia calling her a "phenomenon": Gaga represents and conveys the idea of "being yourself" that is highly appreciated by the Musikklinja crowd. The explanation provided enacts similar discourses of *originality* and *authenticity* to those utilized by Leo and the other boys. Music should be real, not just in the sense of being played on "real" instruments (no remix), but in the sense of conveying the real and original intentions of a real, authentic, artist. For some students, Gaga may represent an icon of authenticity, for others, she might be just another product of the main stream of the commercial music industry.

### 7.1.5 Student lounge connoisseurship (summary)

While the discursive formation of musicianship across the various sites of Musikklinja very much concerns the doing and performing of music, section 7.1 elaborated on the lounge as a practice of *connoisseurship*, arguing that knowing and displaying knowledge of 'the bands, the brands and the awesome music' are considered important aspects of students' musicianship and understood as indicative of their music student-ness. Moreover, the discursive practice of connoisseurship is a practice of *taste and appreciation*, one's musical preferences as constitutive of one's music student legitimacy as one's musical knowledge. Governing the lounge practices of connoisseurship and constituting the 'proper' music(s) are discourses of *originality and authenticity*, *quality*

*and craftsmanship*. Students may enact the dichotomy between the aesthetic and the functional to find a place for themselves in between the mainstream commercial "hit music" and the "listening" music of the musician/music student. Likewise, they may cite aspects from the discourse of development to construct the "over-consciousness" and the narrow-minded impressionability of the "musicians' music" advocates. Nevertheless, we saw that failure to perform properly thorough lounge displays of 'the bands, the brands and the awesome music' may question students' right to "real" music studenthood, as in the case of Alice. Her possibility to succeed is even lessened by the intertwinement of Musikklinja lounge connoisseurship with the practice of the "working environment" discourse and the activities facilitated, in particular *student entrepreneurship*: the informal formation of ensembles and bands. As we saw, *getting in a position to play*, getting on the carousel of informal ensemble formation, is an urge and an agency definitive of the music student subject but at the same time easier to enact for the male "band people" than a female classical flautist. The discourse of the bands and the brands and the awesome music is thoroughly 'genred' as well as gendered.

There are however other acts and aspects of connoisseurship that facilitate both female and 'classical' participation to a larger degree. Discourses of *musical craftsmanship* and *competence* reach into the practice of lounge connoisseurship to constitute the playful display of vocal capacity, theoretical knowledge, ear-training competence and composition skills as "very music student". They also regulate entrepreneurial opportunity and activity in detail. As enacted between the students of Musikklinja, expert craftsmanship is constituted and recognizable by certain quality criteria of which *flexibility and usefulness* are as important as *technique and virtuosity,* and genre *authenticity and authority* confirm the intertwinedness of craft with knowledge and taste (connoisseurship). Fulfilling all of the above, Daniel is considered an expert craftsman. His participation is unquestioned. Others however need to manoeuvre themselves into positions to play by working the adjacent discourses of connoisseurship, social milieu/friendship and dedication/responsibility, signing up but accepting the risk to their legitimate music studenthood that it entails.

The grand Musikklinja discourse of *dedication* was also considered in section 7.1. Recapitulating and summarizing the previous analyses of how 'dedication' is enacted, cited and recited, some principal features can be identified. Most significantly, the discourse of dedication comes through as

an expected *commitment* to the musical projects, practices and purposes of Musikklinja, even at the cost of other (musical or not) projects, practices and purposes. When you are a music student, the quality assured musical learning arenas and activities of Musikklinja (including the lounge) constitute the main realm of your musicianship. The discourse of dedication further implies *impressionability*: an openness towards Musikklinja learning content and learning activities, to new musical styles and genres, and new ways of understanding and working with music. Sticking to that which you already know, already master and have already been recognized for (avoiding that which is difficult or disagreeable) compromises Musikklinja's educational intent and the body of knowledge, skills, activities, works and styles that Musikklinja manages and administers. In Musikklinja, *impressionability* is assured by providing appeasing "own arenas" that buy Musikklinja the goodwill presumably needed for students to accept and appropriate what is new and strange and boring and difficult, easing the rendering of educational content and musical tradition. A third aspect of *dedication* is *passion* – for music, and for performing, playing and singing. Both Alice and Michael cite passionate dedication in their negotiations of music student subjectivity, invoking the discourse to trivialize and repel other discursive impositions (demands of technical craftsmanship, initiative and entrepreneurship), using it to recast their legitimacy. Dedicated passion is further enacted as a form of "work ethic" or possibly even morality: your interest and your authentic dedication makes you endure, keep trying and even overcome the hardships of the Musikklinja study workload and intense periods of rehearsal and practice. And finally, *dedication* is enacted as *responsibility*. For one thing, as a responsibility for Musikklinja's inclusive, supportive social milieu: lingering on in the lounge, forming musical and personal liaisons, socializing with the other music students and rejecting that which do not belong to this milieu – the main stream subject, the main stream music, main stream activities. Secondly, as a responsibility for the active musical community of players: establishing ensembles, signing up, organizing rehearsals, carrying equipment, selling tickets, practicing to secure the quality of the concerts. And thirdly, as a responsibility for your own musical development: following your teacher's advice, taking part in activities facilitating your development, practicing conscientiously.

Musikklinja discourses of connoisseurship, competence/craftsmanship and dedication are put to continuous use in taking on the subject position of music student. Significantly, they are in general accepted. The power/knowledge relations of Musikklinja are barely challenged, questioned or otherwise

destabilized through students' enactments of music student subjectivity. Rather, a common strategy seems to be to *comply* with the conditions under which musicianship and music student subjectivity is constituted but enact a *counter-discourse* or a *complementary discourse* securing safe subjectivation, that is, subjectivation by which one's legitimacy remains stable and safe. By calling on adjacent frames of reference, concepts or ideas, one's music student legitimacy may be reinstalled if threatened by interpellations of craftsmanship or dedication. Both Alice and Michael utilize the discourse of dedicated passion (motivation and feeling) to temporarily defer interpellative calls for connoisseurship and craftsmanship, reinscribing themselves as proper subjects. Henry cites discourses of entrepreneurship (initiative, getting in a position to play) to attain viable subjecthood through demands of craft and competence, Carl performs himself as a craftsperson through the merging of musical appreciation with a connoisseur's skills at finding and sharing quality music.

Interestingly, students' strategies of negotiation tend to involve reconstitutions of themselves as music students somewhat to the side of what they perceive as the proper Musikklinja subject. Strategically taking up more peripheral positions, establishing some discursive distance to the core subject, but still tapping into core discourses, they avoid unwanted interpellations bringing about demand, which they are incapable of meeting. Another performative strategy entails *bridging* discursive distance by imposing oneself and ones preferences straight on to the core, taking ownership, leadership and responsibility. While discourses of craftsmanship and connoisseurship may constitute Henry as lacking, less proper, they offer useful and accessible ways of subjectivation through which he can approach and appropriate core positions of musicianship by bridging the distance between the call and himself. A male guitarist, bass player and singer, Henry has every possibility of attaining the knowledge and agency needed for lounge participation by simply participating. He may be inexperienced, but the bands and brands discourse endows him with a natural right to experience that the flautist Alice is too peripherally positioned to utilize.

## 7.2 A choral practice

Episode 8: A choral kind of practice

Entering the school auditorium, I find that students have yet to fill up the rows. The room has been made ready though. A small brown piano is placed by the

window wall, facing a podium centred in front of the auditorium; chair and music stand ready upon it. William, referred to by students as the "conductor" rather than the choir teacher or choir leader (and as often by his last name, as by his first), is flipping through his scores. From a small wooden chair next to piano, I have an overview of students as they arrive and seat themselves in the gallery for their regular Monday rehearsal. Blue-grey floor mounted chairs distribute them evenly in lines and columns, two rows of boys behind three rows of girls, basses and sopranos to the conductors left (wall/window side), tenors and altos to his right (aisle/entrance side). To seat everyone, a line of loose wooden chairs makes up the foot row.

Those that I have come to think of as 'my' students seat themselves where they usually do; next to one or two of their friends and according to their enthusiasm for choir-singing it seems. Thus, Oliver, as usual in the corner of the upper row, leaning against the window wall, chin and mouth lowered into his scarf. Molly and her girls, eager smiling faces in the front middle, joking and laughing. Sarah and Helena heads together over Helena's iPhone in the third row, Daniel, Henry and Leo forming a broad shouldered centre in the middle. Michael, leaning forward, happily chatting with the girls sitting in front of him. To the far right, Adrian, arms folded around himself, neutral expression.

William performs a roll call, concluding that most students seem to be present. From his usual position on the podium, resting against his conductor's chair, he continues: "this morning, I visited all classrooms to give a speech of 'moral responsibility'[44] that I hope will prove musically rewarding". The students are normally quiet, faces neutral. If they are shaken by the speech they received from William earlier in the day, when he threatened to leave some of the repertoire out of the programme and maybe even call off the concerts altogether, it doesn't show. They will be prioritizing the "Amen" today he tells them, but first they will do warm-ups. As on most occasions, one of the vocal teachers of Musikklinja takes the students through ten minutes or so of typical exercises. In comparison to earlier observations however, I find students to be concentrated, everyone participating in stretching, massaging, humming and vocalizing themselves across scales and triads. Pay attention to your neck, Elise the vocal teacher says, feel the stretch, make the sound taste good and make it pleasurable. Taking over, William adds an exercise: "the 'ria', you know. First years, you will just have to follow, learning as you go." Starting with a unison, rising octave, they go scale down, the different voice parts stopping on the octave, the fifth, the third and the keynote. The exercise modulates upwards, William controlling each turn with his hands and arms.

William once again positions himself on his podium. "Today, I will not be hushing you up. You will have to take responsibility for yourselves". They go from the

44 The original Norwegian expression was "moralsk opprustning", literarily "moral rearmament". The purpose of William's speech was to instil in the students a sense of discipline and responsibility.

> beginning of the "Amen". A gospel-style spiritual, "Amen" has a soloist part somewhat freely delivering the text ("Mary had a baby") over a chorus of steady, rhythmically repeating amens. Starting quietly, the music proceeds along a continuous crescendo, modulating up half a tone for each verse, gaining intensity. It's a song of obvious character and identity, and, I would think, quite easy to get the feel of and have fun with. However, the students seem neither comfortable nor playful. On the contrary, they mumble into their written scores, no body or energy put into the task of singing. No smiles, no laughs. The basses in particular are all hunched up, withdrawn into their seats. They never look at each other; much less seem to enjoy the companionship of choir singing. "Shame?" I jot down in my field notebook quite a number of times. Most of all, the basses really look shameful. "Give a bit more in the bass!" William demands. "And when you sit, don't collapse onto your seats, that's good for nothing, either physical or psychical. Straighten up!" They do, for a short while. When reaching the end of the first verse, the piece falls apart. Several students give embarrassed laughs, some chattering spreads around. William hushes them up, but immediately puts his hand over his mouth. After giving some instructions, he hushes them up again. (*Fieldnotes)*

### 7.2.1 An architecture of discipline

How can we tell that we are observing a choir rehearsal? What characteristics make the practice recognizable as a choral kind of practice, even if you have never participated in one? Assuming a Western, 21st century generally informed observer, episode 8 probably contains several key indicators of choral practice 'as expected'. A conductor, a person thought to be especially qualified for the task, administers the rehearsal. He is easily identifiable by his on-stage ownership, sovereignly leading the rehearsal from a raised platform situated at the centre of attention. This being a school setting, his age also sets him apart from the 16-18 year olds making up the choir. Upon entering the room, the students organize themselves as choral singers according to their voice types, with the result that bodies are distributed and angled in the shape of a fan, boys behind the girls, facing the conductor, making them effectively approached and led. Observing this traditional arrangement, the conductor's hands opening to define the fan, we can sense some of the hierarchical relations governing choral participation and initiative: students are expected to stand/sing when the conductor says so, and quietly sit/receive instructions when they are not singing. After all, William is the appointed teacher, arguably the most competent choral musician in the room, responsible for getting the best out of the ensemble of student choristers. Thus, we are not surprised at this arrangement; disciplining students' bodies and voices into a choral regime and at all times

staying in command of communication seem within a conductor's rights and a teacher's obligations.

Choir practice, then, may be recognized by its 'architecture' (O'Toole, 2005). It organizes subjects in certain social and physical ways. If not always happening in as suitable a location as Musikklinja's auditorium, it invariably makes use of spaces and places in distinct manners that preserve the hierarchical relations described above. The main activity, singing, is practiced within this architecture. On his platform, William has a music stand upon which a stack of scores is placed. This he confers with both before and during rehearsal. The singers also have their written scores, aiding the rehearsal and performance of a certain repertoire, approved and usually chosen by the conductor. After initial warm-up exercises, the conductor and the singers practice systematically so that this repertoire may be successfully performed at concerts. The conductor communicates his musical ideas and intentions through the moving of his hands and arms, head and body, the looks on his face and tones of his voice, and by giving verbal instructions. Singers are expected to concentrate and work hard at realizing the criteria inherent in the conductor's directions, enabling the choir to reach their shared musical goals. Thus, music is accomplished through a set of established procedures and routines. These procedures and routines emphasize certain knowledge objects and competences, like knowing and performing the particular setting of your voice part adequately, singing in tune, knowing and using a voice that favours the distinct musical expression the conductor is aiming for. An observer familiar with choral practices might make a further point: what characterizes a successful performance is typically defined by the conductor and announced as evaluations of the choir's efforts, and instructions as to further effort. Knowing that singers may have their own opinions, an insider nevertheless recognizes that as a main rule, they refrain from voicing them out loud. Occasionally, and if prompted by a conductor, singers may offer comments or suggestions. However, the conductor sovereignly chooses whether their suggestions are to be followed up, neglected or put aside. Or, whether they should be treated as improper breaks of convention and the suggester firmly put back in his or her place.

Choral communication may of course be more or less hierarchical, depending on the size and qualities of the ensemble. In chamber choirs, singers may (or may not) have more of a say in the aesthetic and technical moulding of timbre, phrases and dynamics than in larger symphonic choirs. Conductors too have different styles and qualities. Nevertheless, that singers both physically

and psychically fan out from the conductor is vital to traditional Western choir dynamics. Singers must submit to this arrangement, to the instruction of a sovereign instructor. Even highly competent musicians in professional ensembles know this to be the rule. Although both conductor and singers may acknowledge the expertise and capacity of a singer, the subject position of conductor endows the person inhabiting it with an agency of superiority. In the case of Musikklinja's choir, the superior position of William the conductor is fortified by other, traditional positions of superiority: age (middle age), gender (male) and rank (teacher). The positions made available for the singing subjects of this choir is addressed in the following analyses, but we can assume that they, too, are informed by the nodal points of gender, age and rank, functioning to reinforce the subordination of the singer to the conductor but also to determine their relations to each other: sopranos to bases, third years to first years, the knowledgeable to the ignorant, the insiders to the outsiders of this practice. From the scenes above then, an informed observer may recognize that, by and large, choir practice within the setting of Musikklinja is firmly rooted in a Western high-arts choral music tradition that values certain kinds of (art) music, grants sovereign musical leadership to a qualified master (the conductor), focuses predominantly on the music involved (instead of, let's say, the personal/musical growth and development of the singers) and aims at future performances (instead of instant musical satisfaction).

### 7.2.2 The choral body

Choral musicianship can be recognized as a collective feature. A choir's musical qualities, competences and characteristics are evaluated by their collective articulation. Moreover, individual musicianship is expressed and experienced through choral musicianship, collectively constituting a choir's musical potential and agency. Choral excellence thus depends on the excellence of each and every singer, behaving like one competent choral body, a multiple subject. From a conductor's point of view then, performing and teaching choral musicianship rely on access to the individual through the collective. Collective, perceptible changes of expression require multiple individual changes, and instructions as to these must access individual levels of participation in the most efficient ways. However, as the conductor cannot simultaneously address sixty-something individual positions, each individual must be manoeuvred into a proper, predictable choral subject standby mode, ready for manipulation.

Consider, again, the architecture of choral practice in Musikklinja as narrated in episode 8, and how efficiently it facilitates the subjectivation of individuals into a choral body. The gallery, upon which singers are seated, have floor-mounted chairs, distributing the choristers evenly in lines and columns. The space between rows does not give much room for turning around, neither for changing your position nor leaving altogether. The arrangement efficiently organizes all bodies face forward, at an acceptable distance from other bodies, each defined in his or her space. Motion and action that deviate, that are not choral motion and action, are easy to register for the conductor, positioned on his platform overviewing the gallery: "don't collapse onto your seats!" William warns in episode 8. Almost every rehearsal includes adjustments of these kinds. "No fooling around in the bass!" and "you, there, no leaning into the wall!" as well as general hushing. Choral practice is concerned with establishing and moulding specific motions and actions, namely those that are seen to effectively enhance the total agency/potential musicianship of the main choral body. Hence, bodies 'off guard' are reprimanded, sideways communication, chatter, jokes, anything that breaks the vertical line of efficient manipulation, is systematically hushed down. In episode 8, sticking with the correct line of communication is inscribed on the individual as her or his *responsibility,* even cited in William's speech as *moral* behaviour. Your responsibility as a singer is, at all times, to place at your conductor's disposal an attentive, readied and impressionable being. Even if you do not know if it will be addressed immediately, in just a moment, or perhaps in fifteen minutes, as he is currently working with one of the other voice groups. Consequences of not honouring these demands are that the choirs' collective aims and goals will fail, and they will be unable to present their repertoire at concerts. The legitimate choral body respects the work being done by the conductor and the characteristics of communication that facilitate this work; it performs as if at all times monitored, ready to sing.

In the terms of Foucault (1978/1995), we can say that the panoptic design of surveillance inherent in standard choral architecture renders each singer to be addressed and modified from the control tower (elevated platform, conductors chair), and passes the flow of information vertically along the axes of conductor-singer rather than horizontally along the axes of singers-singer. Thus, for the individual:

> The arrangement of his room, opposite the central tower, imposes on him an axial visibility; but the divisions of the ring, those separated cells, imply a lateral invisibility. And this invisibility is a guarantee of order. If the inmates

> are convicts, there is no danger of a plot, an attempt at collective escape, the planning of new crimes for the future, bad reciprocal influences; if they are patients, there is no danger of contagion; if they are madmen there is no risk of their committing violence upon one another; if they are schoolchildren, there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time. (Foucault, 1978/1995, p. 200)

While collectively subjected, the choir participants of Musikklinja are, through this architecture, simultaneously individualized (ibid). Rather than an uncontrollable crowd of people, a choir is a categorized and systemized entity of distinct and visible individual bodies, in which "the panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately" (Ibid). And while his person is visible enough, the power/knowledge regime supporting the conductor's position may be as invisible to participants as the guards within the panoptic observation tower.

In this collectively subjected, individualized position, choral bodies are built. A range of rehearsal routines are applied to construct bodies that are efficient, manoeuvrable and predictable, well adapted to the task of choral performance. In this, choral pedagogy manipulates bodies in capillary detail, regulating breathing, posture and muscular contraction/relaxation, visual and auditive attention, even requiring and governing singers' emotional attachment and investment to the choir, its music and quality. In warm-up routines, subjects are encouraged to perform on their bodies exercises of moulding; stretching and massaging; to get into the right, well grounded, properly upright but still relaxed and impressionable comportment. Instructions from the vocal coach typically include "notice how you feel" or "pay attention to the muscles in…" or "enjoy the sound of…", comments that motivate singers to experience, evaluate and adjust their bodies to the collective ideal as presented by the vocal coach or conductor. Singers are thus expected to be their own guardians as to the mouldability of their choral body and the effectiveness of themselves as choral instruments. The conductor depends upon the same mechanisms of self-surveillance for his instructions to reach their target. As one cannot expect to be the object of the conductor's attention continuously, receiving personalized instruction directed at oneself at all times, both instructions and source of instructions must in some sense be internalized, so that one behaves as directed, conducting ones own conduct.

Through instruction, and the repetitions and rehearsals of instructions, the choral body is programmed to behave in a certain way during concerts; the end goal of choral practice in Musikklinja. Extending the metaphor of a collective choral "body", panoptic mechanisms of surveillance and control apply not only

to particular singers' self-monitoring, but also to the choir's monitoring of itself. The choral multiple subject has internalized the power/knowledge relations regulating it, resulting in participants monitoring each other, telling each other to act responsibly and hushing each other up. Moreover, since concert production is a mandatory activity in third years' curricula, including the production of the Christmas church concerts for which the choir is practicing, the self-monitoring of the choral body is enforced with a certain sense of duty and obligation, the third years positioned as guardians as well as singers.

This form of power, relying on the systematic and capillary management of bodies, (self-)surveillance, and the self-conditioning of conduct has been described by Foucault as *disciplinary* (1978/1995). Disciplinary techniques, Foucault argues, operate infinitesimally, working bodies at the level of their movements, gestures, attitudes and rapidity. Their object of control is the efficiency and internal organization of movements, in which the exercise is the "only truly important ceremony" (Foucault, 1978/1995, p. 137). Moreover, control/coercion is uninterrupted and constant, aiming at the activity itself rather than the results of the activity. Through these workings, disciplinary power constructs and controls bodies;

> […] not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies. (Foucault, 1978/1995, p. 138)

Disciplinary power creates docile bodies; surrendered, cooperative, receptive subjects that have internalized its guardians (teachers, conductors, prison guards) and their knowledge regimes to the extent that they follow the regime of power/knowledge whether they know themselves to be guarded/monitored or not.

As has been argued in the above, the power/knowledge relations supporting the structure and dynamics of episode 8 do come across as somewhat asymmetrically distributed. The subjection of students' bodies to the conductor's surveillance, command and disciplinary techniques seems like a non-questioned, normalized condition, an expected prerequisite for choral activity. It is important to keep in mind however, that while there is little doubt that William holds a vital position within the choral web of power/knowledge relations in Musikklinja, his is also a subjected position within the web. Power/knowledge is distributed and sustained relationally, by practice and by architecture, and regulates the positioning and actions of all participants. Its

disciplinary character though is quite obvious, and to some extent, I agree with O'Toole when she states that "The choral body does not exist naturally; rather, it is an instrument made through discipline" (O'Toole, 2005, p. 2), and criticizes choral pedagogy for creating docile, complacent singers who are subject to a discourse that is more interested in the production of music than in the labourers. Although this may well be interesting and important a point, I find that the concept of docility only to a certain degree captures the complexity of students' participation in choral practice. For one thing, it under-emphasizes the horizontal power/knowledge relations enacted between students. William certainly acts as a guardian of knowledge, but so do the students themselves. To an observer, the architecture may seem to favour the conductors gaze, for a first year with identities to sustain, affiliations to defend and musicianship(s) to assert, the gaze of a fellow student may be just as defining. Secondly, it under-emphasizes the discursive work being done by participants through what Foucault has termed the "technologies of the self", and Butler has developed as "performative" practices. The performative practices of the self and the relations of power/knowledge as horizontally enacted between choristers may be more difficult to observe and document than the technologies of domination and the vertical lines of communication passing between conductor and singers. They nevertheless define and regulate subjectivation to the same extent.

### 7.2.3 Bodies performed

The field note excerpt presented in episode 8 is one of several that note a lack of energy, enthusiasm and confidence in student's choral participation. From day one observations, I was surprised at the discomfort students bodies often seemed to signal, and the absence of ease, humour and playfulness in their interactions, both musical and social. Hunched, arms folded around themselves, shrinking into their seats, they seemed to cover themselves up, protect themselves, making their bodies, and also their voices, take up as little place as possible. When using floor space rather than the gallery for rehearsals, the possibilities of hiding from sight included standing behind the rack of amplifiers, withdrawing to the corners, the back walls and door frames, turning around or standing behind others. Even if the girls in general, and also a few of the boys (the tenors especially) usually did keep their bodies fairly upright, attentive and accessible, more obviously making an effort at producing a good sound and a musical expression, the enthusiasm and joy that I was expecting to find remained, for most of the time, absent.

When students' bodily practices are discussed in educational research, the topic is often that of protest and resistance. Through ritualized ways of sitting, walking and moving, students bring into the classroom alternative discourses challenging those already present, citing and enabling other identities and forms of participation. The bodily practices of the students in episode 8 can similarly be understood to resist the choral docility cited and inscribed in choir practice, and the disciplinary regime supporting it. By tensing up, avoiding the conductor's gaze, collapsing onto their seats, their bodies become more difficult to manipulate. By lowering their voices, saving their energy, neutralizing their expressions, they expose less of their body to evaluation and inspection, and make less body available for moulding and manoeuvring. No active protest, no subcultural counter-discourses aiming at displacing or destabilizing the regime of docility seem to be put forth through their quiet withdrawal though. Rather, their avoidance of each others' gaze, their embarrassed laughs upon the end of the first verse, and their physical belittling of themselves suggest that they admit to failure; citing the body language of the shameful and blameful, while at the same time silently alluding and submitting to notions of what they were *supposed* to be achieving. Oliver, fiddle player and singer within the folk music tradition, sits among the basses in the choir. I ask how come he seems so uninterested and unsure in the choir, whereas he performs so excellently singing with the folk music trio:

> Oliver: well, I don't want to ruin it for anyone, and besides, I feel more safe doing things on my own. I trust myself more than the others (laughs). Really, I have no role in a choir… I feel like, when I open my mouth and really make an effort, I sound louder than everyone else because my voice is kind of massive. And I don't want to have a dominating position, and then, I rather fool around, joking and stuff. Cause that's something I also enjoy. It's like, I feel like, I don't want to ruin it for anyone so I'm more passive, often. But I've pulled myself together, and I'm more into it now, but I don't get, like, a kick out of it. If I do things on my own, It's just myself that I ruin it for, and that's OK. *(Interview)*

Oliver submits to the notion of a proper docility imposed on him by choral practice. He accepts both that there is a correct body mode in terms of energy, loudness and availability, and that he is supposed to perform it. Unable adequately to do so however, maintaining that his voice is improper as it "sounds louder" than the others, he cites and inscribes on himself a position of passivity, that neither contributes to nor destroys the choir's chances of successful musical performance. He takes the moral position that holding back, he wont "ruin it" for others. Reiterating the notions of responsibility that seem to regulate choral practice enables him to act his part in discourse,

even providing a mitigating frame of reference for his "joking and stuff". In the interview, these linguistic performatives reconstitute him as a legitimate participant; in the choir his bodily performatives enact a similar legitimacy. Interestingly, Oliver's answer contests my positioning of him as unsure and uninterested, and reconstitutes himself as knowledgeable (both of the standards and of his own capacity) and a morally responsible participant. Moreover, while he does not explicitly refer to folk music practices, the description of his voice as "massive" can be taken to implicitly cite alternative standards of which he is proud, and which he is unwilling to destabilize by adopting the classical vocal ideal offered by the choir. Having "no role" in a conducted and conditioned ensemble may cite the same tradition, performing himself as one of the free and unfettered *spelemenn* (fiddlers) of the Norwegian folk music tradition.

Oliver's bodily and linguistic performative strategies constitute him as a legitimate, albeit peripheral discursive participant, only partly engaged in the values and wonders of choral practice, but not actively contesting them either. He recognizes, submits to and reiterates the power/knowledge relations regulating choir, at the same time mastering them by linguistically and bodily performing a discursive subversion of the choral docility demanded; a moral form of passivity.

This negotiation strategy is interesting to investigate with respect to how it applies to other participants. In the following interview excerpt, I ask Adrian, a metal loving all-in-black bass player, how he likes singing in the choir. Having observed what I interpreted as an extremely self-protective and resistive body language with him, his answer surprises me:

> Adrian: that has been excellent – actually. Because, I like to sing, and I get to do that in the choir, kind of have the chance of testing my voice and finding out like how far I can go with it. And I've had, you know, singing lessons last year, and that was excellent. […] At first, I was a bit insecure, cause I never sung before, and then I was suddenly to sing for a vocal teacher, like. I was very nervous to begin with, I didn't dare to let go, but then, after a while, it was really, good, like. I dared to give it all I've got.
>
> […]
>
> Live: do you feel, like, triumphant, when you reach those top notes?
>
> Adrian: yes. Because, you can sing anything if you use your falsetto. But my goal is to manage without using the falsetto. Managing to get really high without that. So I really push my voice, some times I get so exhausted that I stop singing and just sit there and relax and drink a lot of water, because I always bring

> my water bottle. Because, like, I have become so much better at singing after I started here, that at least I have become better at.
>
> Live: do you sing in your band?
>
> Adrian: I was supposed to. I was supposed to do the clean-vocals, because we have another one who screams. He is *really* good, and we were thinking about mixing clean and scream, a lot of bands do that, so it won't always sound so *hard.* […] Then I tried, because I'm the only one that can go that high. But I couldn't do it on that song. *(Interview)*

How are we to understand the discrepancy between my field observations and Adrian's verbal constitution of himself in the interview? His bodily enactments in the choir do not convincingly embrace and employ the possibilities facilitated by a docile mode of choral participation. He withdraws, holds back, protects himself with his arms and takes up as little space as possible, most often to the far right, by the aisle and by the wall, always with his black beanie down his forehead, black hair falling down his neutral face. As with Oliver, I suggest that the bodily and linguistic performative work done by Adrian functions to renegotiate a position for him in discourse that avoids submitting to docility. Rather than reinscribing himself to suit choral practice though, Adrian apparently reinscribe choral practice to suit himself. Citing and reinforcing aims and goals of personal vocal development and achievement that are only peripherally articulated in the practice itself, its legitimacy increases as does his possibility of legitimate participation. "Pushing" ones voice and going as high as one gets without the use of a falsetto is certainly not a type of vocal behaviour endorsed by classical choral pedagogy. Rather, the style belongs to the musical tradition of which Adrian is a dedicated practitioner, and within which he wants to develop his musicianship further. By bringing his non-choral singing practices to bear on choir practice, he simultaneously submits to and masters the discourse of docility. His performance is further informed and enforced by deploying well-established educational discourses of development and growth, in Musikklinja especially concentrated on aspects of musicianship.

More students than Oliver and Adrian probably engage in negotiations like these, their bodily enactments lessening the impact of disciplinary modification, (both as hierarchically imposed and horizontally policed) and making room for alternative inscriptions. While accepting and subjecting themselves to the power/knowledge regime of choral practice, they may need to negotiate between its demands for perfect docility, and demands placed on them by other practices through which their subjectivities are also constituted. Choir practice is perhaps a fairly distinct type of practice in Musikklinja. Even so, walking

through the main entrance of the school auditorium and positioning oneself in the gallery does not entail that rules and routines governing your subjectivation in other practices are left at the doorstep. Quite the contrary; since legitimate participation in choral practice depends upon others' recognition and acknowledgement of your position, predictability is an important asset. Put somewhat bluntly, your recognized teacher's daughter, metal, fiddle player, Christian, homosexual, gorgeous, couldn't care less identity features will probably not be left out of the choral equation. The power/knowledge technologies governing students' subjectivation in the sofa lounge, the music history lessons, the ensemble rehearsals and the house concerts enter choir practice as relations between students themselves, and, furthermore, as the examples of Oliver and Adrian show, as relations to the self by the self. Hence, in the power/knowledge relations enacted, both previous and future events have a say, lending meaning to the current situation. Students need to manage criteria for legitimate participation enacted in both vertical and horizontal power/knowledge relations to attain a feasible and functional performance of themselves in the choir setting, attempting to keep a sense of credibility across contexts.

For Oliver and Adrian, I have suggested that their affiliations with certain types of musicianship and certain genres of musical (as well as the non-docile types of subjectivity going with them) render necessary some kind of translation or negotiation to legitimately take part in choral practice. In the case of episode 8 and the rehearsal of "Amen", this may also go for several of the other participants. "Amen" is a spiritual, praising the Virgin Mary and the birth of the saviour. However, as all students I have talked to (without exception) state that the anthem "Sing and Rejoice" is their choral favourite this autumn, religious content alone does not seem to be what makes full participation difficult and performative translations, subversions or reinscriptions needed. Rather, it may have to do with the style of the "Amen"; its spiritual, happy gospel character. While "Sing and Rejoice" includes a similar exuberant, rhythmic middle section, even citing the genre of the spiritual and the gospel, the piece so clearly belongs to the serious art music tradition that it offers a whole other set of discourses altogether. Art music discourse subordinates religious content to aesthetic form, legitimizing the pure aesthetic consumption by non-religious consumers and the pure aesthetic performance by non-religious musicians. In the setting of Musikklinja, the "Amen", on the other hand, most of all cites and inscribes the practices and the positions of the YMCA/Ten Sing movement; for Norwegian teenagers the most noticeable protagonists of the genre. Performing the "Amen"

in character, with enthusiasm, may equal subjectivation through socially citing and inscribing the YMCA/Ten Sing discourse that for the general young public connotes a naive feel-good-Christianity, its subjects ridiculed as having "found" Jesus and wanting to dance, sing and tell everyone how insanely "hip and cool" he is. Hence, negotiating strategies of some sorts are needed, even for those that actually *do* identify with practices similar to those of YMCA/Ten Sing. While accepting the subjectifying power/knowledge regime of choral practice, students hold back on their expression and engagement, afraid, perhaps, that exuberant faces and loud praising voices would render them vulnerable to ridicule and defining discursive inscriptions. Attributing the bodily signs of 'shame' registered in field observations to students' rejection (by withdrawal) of a set of sociocultural identity markers is too simple an explanation though. What students may try to avoid is not only the association with such markers but the actual, physical and material *coming to existence* through vocal, aesthetic performance of the games of truth that they signify, and the discourses of which they are part. The act of singing is a very real performative indeed, bodies and subjectivities materialized – composed and constituted – through the act.

### 7.2.4 Stepping down, stepping up

Episode 9: "Amen"; church rehearsal

Julia raises her voice: "do we have to stand still while singing this?" William: "well no, you can move, but it needs to be a bit organized… The most important thing for now is that you sing well, you can think of that other stuff later." Another girl: "do we have to use our scores?" William: "no, you can put them down for this." Most students lower their black choir folders. Some girls in the front row joke about using them as props for dancing, holding them up with both hands, swaying from side to side like robe-clad gospel choristers.

Starting from the top, they perform the "Amen" as uninspired and passively as I have heard on earlier occasions. And it's not just the basses; the altos and sopranos too sing flatly, no smiles, no fun. However, having observed Julia, Mia, Eva and some of the other girls fooling around with the piece outside choir rehearsal, I'm aware that they, at least, know exactly how to make it work; the style of it, the rhythm, the sound.

William, however, seems at a bit of a loss. Declaring that "I do not want to conduct this one" he starts the choir, then steps down from the podium and retreats a few rows down the aisle, watching them. He soon cuts them off. They are not sustaining the notes that are to be sustained. Having identified and corrected the place, he approaches Simon: "would you mind acting more like a 'choir leader' so I don't have to conduct?" Simon looks at him inquiringly: "like

how?" "Well, you know, like…" he wiggles his hips and makes a few dancing arm movements snapping his fingers, suggesting a less apt conductor of a less high art, more popular music kind of practice.[45] "Like this?" Simon humorously exaggerates the hip and arm movements.

They start again with William positioned some meters down the church aisle. Having stated that he won't interfere, he keeps instructing nonetheless. Several times, he races back up the aisle, his hands, arms and body signalling that they are too fast and too loud. His activity draws the students' attention towards him, away from Simon, who tries to acts his part as a 'choir leader' by regularly turning his body towards the choir, moving his right hand rhythmically, but always keeping his attention on William.

William tells Simon how to start the choir: 1-2, right hand. "Now, do try to sing with some youthful enthusiasm!" he urges them as he walks back down the aisle. Simon turns towards the choir and makes a pretty but very modest 1-2 upbeat with his right hand. The girls carefully start their amens. In the choir, some of the students make an effort at lifting the spirits. Michael and Leo try to get the people around them going, moving from side to side, hands in the air for a short while. No immediate success, even though people seem to be somewhat more enthusiastic and interested than before. William continues to instruct the choir from his position down the aisle. They are on their own, he has told them, but his hands are constantly moving, his face is full of expressions. Even if standing still, arms crossed, observing them, his presence seems to subdue and modify the choir, the singers' attention being almost fully directed towards him.

Carl raises his hand. He feels something is lacking, he says. He struggles for words when trying to explain what he means. Christopher responds to Carl's efforts: "He means that we need a bit more of …" he snaps his fingers a few times, closes is eyes, knits his brows and makes a show of really enjoying music heard in his head. None of the other students add to their line of thought though. William concludes that "this is about articulation", asking them to set the "a" in each of the amens more clearly. *(Fieldnotes)*

While generally confirming the regime of power/knowledge governing choral architecture and action in Musikklinja, episode 9 differs in some crucial ways from previous observations. Most notably, it shows William stepping down from the elevated podium on which he usually performs, potentially leaving the choir and the soloist to step up; in charge of their performance. The episode also show students uncharacteristically offering their opinions on the choir's efforts, and making suggestions as to what could improve their performance: putting down the scores, moving, dancing, trying to get more 'feel' into it. However, while these key changes may have the potential to shift the established power relations enough to enable alternative performances and

45 William actually uses a Swedish word to describe the role he wants Simon to take: "körledare"

forms of subjectivation, neither the stepping down nor the stepping up does so convincingly. Repeatedly stating that "I will not conduct this", "you are on your own" and "I will not interfere", William nonetheless continues to conduct, instruct and monitor the choir from the church aisle, leaving the students in a position of ambivalence as to the meaning and the significance of his (both linguistic and bodily) statements. Moreover, initiatives coming from students, like Julia, Michael, Leo and Carl, are not taken up by the student collective as such, but rather met with silence and caution.

To investigate these issues further, it is worth looking more closely into the discursive doings of William's declarations not to conduct the "Amen". As performatives, their force is drawn from a range of earlier practices that they cite and inscribe anew in the setting, and that provide frames of understanding for the students. Leading up to concert weekend rehearsals, there have been other rehearsals, situations and conversations amongst students and teachers, constructing its critical importance in advance. There has been talk of the choir not being up to standard, of singers disregarding their responsibilities and of the possibilities of failure. There has been talk of the frustration felt by William, and about his obvious stress and annoyance. Most important of all, the absolute necessity of securing a *quality performance of music* for the upcoming concerts has been repeated in rehearsal after rehearsal. The discourse of quality performance is very strong in Musikklinja choral practice, cited in almost every musical instruction given and taken. It extends beyond the choir lessons, humorously in student made toilet posters – a picture of Dizzy Gillespie playing, with the text: "My horn may be bent, but I still practiced, and so must you. Practice for concert weekend!" – less humorously in the speech on moral betterment angrily delivered by William, implying that the concert will be cancelled if they do not perform up to standard. Given the thoroughly established discourse of quality performance, students may reasonably assume that William steps down in order to improve their performance, welcoming and trusting their initiative and competence in his absence. He certainly identifies the genre of "Amen", it's style and effects, as benefitting from a looser type of musical leadership, illustrated by William as a 'wiggling hips, snapping fingers' kind of leadership, somewhat ridiculed through his silly parody. The role of "choir leader" is given to Simon. As William steps down, the choir is expected to step up, realizing a pent-up expressive potential of "youthful enthusiasm". Given the discourses constructing their choral efforts as below standard and the talk of frustration and failure however, students may just as reasonably assume that William steps down in order to avoid answerability. He is obviously

uncomfortable with their performance, and he does not want to "put his name to" something that is not good enough, as he clearly tells them in his speech of "moral responsibility". Moreover, given the rumour, circulating amongst both students and teachers, that William is stressed, frustrated, *desperate* even, his position as an unquestionable guardian and a natural centre of command and control is destabilized by his decision not to conduct the "Amen". Students may assume that he wants out because he is unable to conduct the piece adequately, in the style that it is supposed to be performed. With the Nystedt anthem "Sing and Rejoice", William's authority remains undisputed, with the more popular style "Amen" however, most students can probably identify at least what *doesn't* work, including what doesn't seem to work for the conductor.

For the students then, the performative force of William's decision not to conduct the "Amen" opens up a field of possible action between discourses of trust and distrust in their capabilities and competences, between recognitions and devaluations of their contributions. The potential unsettling of the conductor's superiority further adds to the possible action space. While these ruptures or slight shifts in the established regime of power/knowledge relations could have enabled forms of participation different from those documented in previous observations, students seizing the opportunity to prove their individual musicianship and appropriate new positions in discourse, only a few step up, and only very carefully so.

Julia is a singer, more in the pop/musical genre than the classical. In a house concert, she and Mia dressed up in school girl uniforms, complete with ponytails, and performed a choreographed "…Baby one more time", "just to have a laugh", for spring concerts she did "Roxy" from *Chicago*; red dress, male dancers, full orchestra. She is, I know from previous observations, well aware of how to make the most of the "Amen", and given a real opportunity, she probably would. As could, and would, Mia, Eva, Michael and Leo, and, I'm sure, several more of the students. Apparently though, the rehearsal described in episode 9 does not provide such an opportunity. While formulated as a question, Julia's "do we have to stand still while singing this?" implicitly states her own opinion and authority. Tacitly referring to the gospel performance traditions more obviously cited by the dancing girls in the front row, she offers her suggestion as to what may better their performance. Her initiative is more or less rejected by William though. Concerned mainly with how they "sing", he suggests they can "think of that other stuff later". Even though he acknowledges the musical discourse Julia implicitly cites, allowing them to move if it's done

"a bit organized", he is not willing to prioritize choreography over "the most important thing", namely that they rehearse until they "sing well": sustaining the notes that are to be sustained, keeping within the dynamics of the written score, but still sporting a youthful enthusiasm. Moreover, his answer constructs the topic as outside the conductor's field of responsibility (*you* can think of that other stuff later) and, hence, outside what really – *musically* – matters. Neither has William previously addressed the use of scores for the "Amen". Within the discourse of quality performance regulating choral practice in Musikklinja, the technology of musical scores is naturalized into the non-questionable, their possible obstruction as to musical expression, or even musical learning, never discussed. In episode 9 however, a student asks if they *have to* use their scores, implying that she, at least, would rather not. For students, scores may not be the unproblematic, neutral music-mediating technology that they are to William, but part and parcel of the musical expression, and apparently in the way of performing the "Amen" like they want to.

In his efforts to make the "Amen" work then, William treats singing as distinct from "other stuff". For Julia and the other choristers though, singing and "other stuff" may be the same ting, a restraint on body movement entailing a restraint on voice quality and musical expression. In the following excerpts from a group interview, Elliot, Alice and Mia talk about the relations between musical style, expression and moving their bodies:

> Elliot: "Amen" was kind of awkward really. […] I was thinking that we were going to have fun with it, moving a bit (Mia: yes, yes) but we just stood there, and that made it kind of awkward to sing.
>
> Alice: yes, and I thought we were to have a crescendo towards a real climax in the end?
>
> Mia: we were told to hold back, not sing so loud, all the time, and I was kind of "shit, I'm too loud!" (laughs) […] I think that for me anyway, a song like that, you use your chest voice because it's a gospel, you don't use your classical voice. And it's really unnatural to stand straight and stiff while singing, and it's unnatural to sing very softly. (Group confirms.) So, I was like, *okay*… (sceptic tone of voice), I didn't know whether to hold back or really get going. Cause, if I was really to get going, it would have been weird to stand still. I would have had to move, snap my fingers, happy face, you know, but no one else did. So I just kept holding back. And because of that, it was difficult to get into the 'spirit' of the song, if you know what I mean. *(Group interview)*

Elliot, Alice and Mia all identify a discrepancy between what they expected and would like the "Amen" to be, and how it was rehearsed, instructed and performed towards Christmas concert weekend. Their own musical knowledge,

competence and previous experiences as to what would make the "Amen" work did not match the strategies or priorities realized in choral practice. According to the group, just *standing* there, "straight and stiff", made the "Amen" awkward, even "unnatural", to sing. The proper choral body mode, cited and inscribed in rehearsal after rehearsal, counteracts the body mode they identify as not only *belonging* to the "Amen", bodily expressions enhancing the musical ones by invoking the right discourses, but actually required for the "Amen" to be singable and doable. For Mia, keeping within the physical, dynamic and expressive ideal imposed (by the score, and by William's verbal and bodily instructions) makes it impossible to use the voice and body she identifies as enabling her to perform satisfactory. The initiative called for by William when stepping down is, for Mia, as for Julia, not possible to realize within the disciplinary relations of power/knowledge structuring their participation. So, getting into the spirit of the song is thwarted by them having to "hold back" and keep within the standard choral body mode. For Elliot, the "fun" he expected "Amen" to offer may similarly be a requirement for making music rather than a bonus effect of music made. And it may require a choral body mode somewhat different from the purposeful and effective docility preferred by Musikklinja choral practice. Disciplinary power prioritizes efficacy, the reaching of a set goal at a minimum of cost. Fun may of course be part of it, even desirable, as it may actually increase productivity through increasing motivation, but fun is hardly treated as a requisition for musical production in choral practice, and certainly not as an end goal. However, the *impression* of fun and enjoyment remains an important criterion of quality. In a group discussing what was wanting in the "Amen", Lukas says:

> Lukas: it's difficult when you go around feeling that the choir is like, so *serious*, then it's kind of difficult suddenly to start acting "happy" and jump around, like… (laughs). *(Group interview)*

Lukas finds himself negotiating between a discourse of strict choral docility, efficacy and purposefulness, and a demand that he shows some apparently unconstrained playfulness, initiative and "youthful enthusiasm". Within the disciplinary power/knowledge relations of choral practice however, the two may be wholly compatible, their differences simply pertaining to different modes or expressions of docility. The student initiative and enthusiasm called for by William in stepping down from his podium is not one that transgresses disciplinary docility; rather, it is one that cooperates in the display of fun as a criterion of quality. Refraining from conducting, William nevertheless expects his aesthetic and musical ideals to prevail. When students' initiatives show

signs of transgressing, in volume, in detail, in articulation, William races back up the aisle to modify, subdue, and reinstall docility. Knowing that the opportunity is not real, and that their competence is not really asked for, neither Julia nor Mia, both girls whom I presume have the capability and interest of getting the "Amen" going, takes or challenges the position offered them by William. Instead, they choose to keep their competence and initiative in check.

The form of proper, docile initiative that William expects when stepping down seems to be avoided by more students that Julia and Mia. I suggest that the students' withdrawal, rather than stating their incompetence and indifference is a statement of their competence and concern. The genre of "Amen" is well known, most students are probably familiar enough with how it is supposed to sound to recognize that the musical expression they are producing per now is quite definitely not it. Given the discourse of quality performance and the approaching concerts, they are also acutely aware of the urgency in making the "Amen" work. They need, however, another position from where to act than the docile alternative offered them by William. As we have seen, some students find that the musical/technical ideals and strategies affiliated with the position of docility disagree with their own ideals and strategies, and hence actually delimit or shut off their possibilities of participation. Acting within their place in the discourse though, they prefer to put on hold or even renounce their competence than challenge the regime of power/knowledge governing choral practice.

For other students, taking the position of docility offered them in the "Amen" may be difficult because it compromises their musicianship in other ways. Performing the "Amen" in the Musikklinja choir risks citing and inscribing the practices of the YMCA/Ten Sing movement and similar Christian youth organizations. If no careful, conscientious work of translation or re-inscription is done, students may find themselves exposed to the definitions of "feel-good" worshipping and wannabe hipness that ridicule and stereotype such practices and their members. The position of docile initiative offers no strategies of re-inscription. Rather, it assumes that students will step up, sing, and display their "youthful enthusiasm" for all to see. This makes the position nearly impossible for students to act from, and they choose instead withdrawal. In the following interview excerpt, a group of students discuss why they had difficulties with the "Amen":

Max: it sounded dull, like, Simon was really into it and the rest of us were just standing there looking into our scores and weren't part of it, or I don't know what happened…

Leo: we weren't filled with the Holy Spirit (laughs)

[…]

Live: what was lacking?

Adrian: soul…

Leo: some intensity maybe, like, giving a bit more, getting more into it

Daniel: a bit more punch maybe; using more energy, being more in the role, it's supposed to be livelier

Group: (agrees)

[…]

Live: (to Leo) you and Michael really got into it for a while there?

Leo: yes, but we didn't during the concert. Gospel hands, like, no…but, yes…

Live: what, is it embarrassing?

Leo: yeah, sort of?

Max: it's because just one person is doing it and no one else. If we are to do that, then everyone has to do it

Adrian: when you are in a choir you are like, a group, and you have to act in unison. It would be stupid if one person in the middle really gets going, gets in a trance or whatever

Group: (laughter)

Leo: listen, what if, I think that if Simon could have been given just 10 minutes off a rehearsal, giving us a kind of (snaps fingers) 'pep-talk' on how to act when doing that song, that would really have given it a boost

Group: (agrees) *(Group interview)*

Max attributes the dullness in their performance to the passivity of the choir, but offers no explanation as to why they were not "part of it". Leo, however, jokingly cites the state of inspired worship that the "Amen" would undoubtedly benefit from displaying, but that was wanting in the choir. The other boys agree that being more energetically, soulful and "in the role" would provide the "Amen" with the intensity and liveliness that was lacking in their performance. The agency to act energetic, soulful and "in the role" is not immediately available from the position of docile initiative. Neither can it be easily drawn from the power/knowledge relations enacted between students themselves. It is an agency that needs to be prepared for; constructed and sanctioned by

the choral community. Humorously feigning spiritual inspiration like Michael and Leo do in episode 9, gospel hands and all, may of course enable students to seize and take advantage of the position of docility without losing musical and personal credibility with their friends, thus enhancing the quality of their performance. As they are all deeply respectful of the aims and goals of the choir, the serious effort it takes getting there and the professionalism of their conductor, taking responsibility by acting irresponsibly is a strategy neither recognized nor followed up by the collective of singers. Rather than inspiring and spreading, the humorous initiative taken by Michael and Leo is censored by the collective, on the grounds that "not everyone is doing it". For initiatives to be something other than irregular behaviour, they must, as stated by William, be a bit "organized". Choral agency must be collective agency, and collective agency must pass through William.

Constructing a more stable agency for the "Amen" takes collective work, as the field of power/knowledge defining their participation must be shifted to accept new relations. The suggestion offered by Leo in the above interview excerpt is interesting in this regard. With the help of Simon and given some time on their own, collective negotiations as to how to move, behave and look might have reinscribed the "Amen" with new meanings, and shifted the power/knowledge relations enacted within the student collective enough to open for more functional types of participation. When Carl towards the end of scene 3 tries to identify and explain what he feels is lacking in their performance, similar negotiations could have started. Carl is respected for his serious engagement with and curiosity about all kinds of music, and a discussion of the effects, roots and influence of gospel music could have put into play discourses enabling and authorizing the energetic, soulful and "in the role" kind of agency that everyone knows to be crucial for a successful performance. With the exception of Christopher, no one follows up Carl's initiative though.

### 7.2.5 Choral docility (summary)

Choir practice in Musikklinja, we saw, is thoroughly modelled on traditional Western art music enactments of the 'choir' and the 'choir rehearsal'. Indeed, the power/knowledge relations through which Musikklinja choral practice is enabled seem almost independent of their school setting and give little if any evidence of being a more didactic, intentional arena of upper secondary music education than any other choral practice. Thus, we may conclude, choir,

as practiced in Western art music traditions and communities, is taken to be both educational content and method, both a practiced to be learned and appropriated in itself and a practice that offers students the opportunity of developing their musicianship.

Governing this practice are discourses of *the quality performance of music.* Focusing predominantly on art works to be performed in concert, the overall aim of Musikklinja choral practice is to perform masterpieces of music, singing them as well as possible. The *quality performance of music* discourse holds certain actions and procedures of power/knowledge to be desirable and true over others. Singing one's part correctly is prioritized over dancing and choral choreography. Reading music is prioritized over learning by ear. Learning to sing in a good, classical voice is prioritized over mastering and displaying a pop or gospel sound. Following the conducting and instructions of the conductor is prioritized over student initiatives and peer learning. Intertwined with the knowledge objects of Musikklinja choir practice and the discourse of quality performance facilitating them are discourses of *competence, dedication* and *development.* The discourses facilitate three popular frames of reference, put to use in enactments explaining about the choral semester, the choir rehearsals and the choir subjects: 1) *(In)competence*: the level of today's students is too low, and the choir sounds accordingly. 2) (*Lack of) commitment*: students do not take responsibility, they are not dedicated enough to the choir. 3) *(In)experience:* students, first years in particular, lack the experience, but will (probably) come good in due time.

A main topic of section 7.2 has been how the power/knowledge relations, discourses and knowledge objects of Musikklinja choir practice presuppose a particular constitution of the music student subject; the docile subject. *Choral docility* entails presenting the conductor with an impressionable, manageable choral body and mind. Structured by a *disciplinary* form of power, the docile body behaves as if at all times monitored, thus engaging in continuous self-surveillance, conducting its own conduct. Choral competence, ethical behaviour and experience then are about managing ones own body and mind into docility; an open, predictable, mouldable state of being subjected to the manipulation of the conductor.

Again, *acceptance of and submission to* imposed categories seem to characterize student enactments of the docile subject. There is hardly any protest and resistance, no active initiation of counter-discourses aimed at destabilizing the power/knowledge regime that supports Musikklinja choir practice. But as we

have seen in previous analyses, students' performative appropriations tend to entail *subversive recitations* that shift power/knowledge structures so as to facilitate a docile subject somewhat to the side of what is being imposed. The folk musician Oliver masters choral docility by recasting it as a moral form of passivity. Citing the assistant discourse of dedication, he submits to notions of choral docility and emerges as knowledgeable and responsible rather than incapable and irresponsible. Adrian cites discourses of entrepreneurship and development to recast choral docility as personal agency. Both boys juggle the major discourses of Musikklinja, enhancing some aspects while postponing and deferring others, to emerge as legitimate choral subjects in spite of their failure to enact choral docility as imposed upon them.

A major bodily performative in strategies of subversion is that of *withdrawal,* a tensing or closing up that puts less body up for manipulation, but remains within the expectations of choral docility. This performative, we saw, functions also to negotiate between the 'horizontal' field of student power/knowledge relations, defined and supported by enactments also outside of the choral setting, and the hierarchical relations of power/knowledge linking conductor and singers and defining the site of choir practice in Musikklinja. Withdrawal works to protect students' musicianship, as valued and displayed in other contexts, from potential harm following from the imposition of choral docility, without rejecting the imposition itself.

*Withdrawal* as a performative strategy additionally entails a withdrawal of competence and initiative. In interviews, students may question the methods, music and even aesthetic interpretations and choices of the choir. In practice though, they choose to hold back. When William steps down in section 7.2.4, and calls for more initiative and enthusiasm, only a few students, and only very carefully, step up. One way of interpreting students' withdrawal and modest initiative is of course that their trained and self-practiced docility prevents them from more radical takeovers. Another interpretation could be that William is not really stepping down and that students thus remain within the cells of the panopticon, conducting their own conduct as if still supervised. But we could also assume that students' performative self-practices actually *depend* upon the superiority of their choral teacher, constructing him as invaluable, his musicianship eminent, his importance unquestionable. For them to be successful music students, they need William to be a successful music teacher, even more, a successful musician. Their ways of taking responsibility for the musical expression must avoid degrading the conductor; hence, their initiatives

need to stay within the limits of regular choral power/knowledge relations, avoiding challenging the regime while also working to secure their own musical success. They postpone and defer, even renounce, their own competence rather than challenge the regime of power/knowledge.

That choral practice works by the enactment of disciplinary power/knowledge relations does not make the conductor a 'suppressor' that inhibits the constitution of music student subjectivity. Of course, conductors may employ a 'gentler' or otherwise 'nicer' approach to choral conducting than does William. However, the relations of power/knowledge that enable the superior, short-tempered conductor genius also enable and authorize performances of the choral 'music student'. The conductor is a credible professional of his practice; his serious engagement with music and dedication to the choral project of Musikklinja is never doubted. Supported by recognizable discourses of dedication, passion and quality musical performance, William's enactments of the 'choral conductor' add to the relevance and importance of choral practice, and offer the young people of Musikklinja the possibility of constituting themselves along much-desired trajectories of musicianship and musical expertise, even though the position as 'singer' may be difficult to take up.

## 7.3 Ensemble playing

### 7.3.1 Getting in a position to play

A couple of weeks before Christmas, Hannah posts a sheet of paper on the notice board, upon which "suggestions for ensembles for Festival Weekend" are listed. The list distributes students, by instrument, across different categories of ensembles. All the singers are assembled in a "vocal ensemble". The "chamber ensemble" counts classical guitar and classical piano, violins, flutes and a clarinet, and the brass players are all assigned to a constellation called "band with brass quintet". The "rock band" is a typical four part line-up with drums, guitars and bass, the "jazz band" sports an additional alto saxophone, a trumpet and a flute as well as a "jazz piano". The "folk rock ensemble" consists of two fiddles and two flutes, two guitars and a clarinet. The categorization, I later found, corresponds nicely to the upcoming Festival Weekend, ensuring that all ensembles have an event and a scene to set as their ultimate goal: a chamber arena (a proper, acoustical concert hall, dominated by the classical

constellations and the vocal ensemble), a rock arena (a Saturday evening event, unquestionably the one held in highest esteem by students and packed with student initiated ensembles) and a more loosely defined "Cafe" arena (early afternoon coffee and cookies) facilitating the performance of both folk, jazz and other (alternative, surely) musical expressions. Moreover, the ensemble categories seem to cite and reassure the dominant musical genres in Musikklinja according to students: classical, jazz and rock (in that order), with folk music 'on the side', respected and valued but not as practiced.

Students are allowed to express their wishes for ensemble constellations and genre. I know, nevertheless, that the distribution of students across these ensembles to all intents and purposes follows the logic of main instrument (as formally enlisted) and associated genre. Hence, both Molly and Sophie are listed with classical piano in the chamber ensemble, even if Molly certainly more often performs as a singer (jazz/alternative pop), and Sophie prefers to play other genres of music (and still studies the jazz piano in the municipal cultural school). Sarah however, a classically trained violinist, has asked to be in the folk rock ensemble and is listed as a fiddler together with Oliver. Amelia and Alice too, playing flutes, have signed up for the folk rock band beforehand. Daniel, Michael and Lukas (drummers) are assigned one band each; the rock, the jazz and the funk band. In all probability, the boys have been asked for their preferred genre. However, it is no surprise that Daniel is positioned with the jazz ensemble, playing drums and percussion in the genre that is considered the more difficult, demanding and prestigious. For Daniel, the rock drums represent his background, his "secondary school" musicianship, whereas being in the jazz ensemble signifies his development since starting Musikklinja:

> Daniel: I've played a bit of jazz since starting Musikklinja, and I listen to it more often, other genres too. Playing jazz for ensemble, I think it's all right 'cause then I get better. It's like an area I didn't yet cover and then I feel it's more interesting. Because that rock-thing I've…well, I *did* that. It's kind of secondary school; I did it so much, so, yeah…
>
> Live: you seek new challenges?
>
> Daniel: yes. It's challenging to play jazz, to play it good. It's another culture, how to play the jazz drums, so yes, it's very challenging. *(Interview)*

Michael plays with the band/brass funk ensemble; he has "developed enough as a drummer", he tells me, to have "found" what is his genre *(interview)*. Lukas however, the least experienced, plays the rock drums that for all three of them represents their first love.

The electric instruments, the guitars and bass players (and chords), are distributed across the three ensembles following a similar evaluation of expressed interest, capacity and even friendships. It seems like a difficult matrix to create. However, I never registered much frustration either on the part of the students or the teachers. It seems to me that students have a comprehensive understanding of who occupies what (discursive) position and what positions they may legitimately occupy themselves; that Adrian plays bass with the rock ensemble while Peter plays with the band/brass seem only natural. And Mia, having swopped main instrument from song to classical guitar, takes responsibility for repositioning herself when 'wrongly' situated: "I couldn't possibly play a duet with Harvey, his level is way beyond what I'm capable of" she says, and asks to be relocated to the vocal ensemble *(interview)*. Furthermore, being *formally* positioned through a school edict like the ensemble suggestions, students may find themselves supported for positions that would otherwise be difficult to take. Carl, Hannah says, was thrilled to be in the jazz ensemble, and he wouldn't change when the rock crew asked him to. That Carl, for all his musical connoisseurship, is a rather poor guitarist is a Musikklinja discursive fact I suppose Carl himself is acutely aware of. Getting to play with the jazz band, he probably also knows that he is transgressing. His transgression though is formally and pragmatically supported; the list endows him with the position, and besides, his classmate Benjamin also fills in on guitar for the jazz band.

When I ask Hannah what she thinks would have happened if they left it be all up to students themselves to organize ensembles and rehearse a minimum of fifteen minutes ensemble repertoire, she hesitates, wrinkles her brows and struggles coming up with an answer. "What, it would create chaos?" I ask her. She nods, students like Alice and Amelia, they would have difficulty finding a group. And as for being responsible of organizing rehearsals – many of them would neither manage to find time to practice nor prioritize ensemble rehearsal time. I can understand Hannah's doubts. Alice, as we have seen (section 7.1.3) struggles finding a place for herself in relation to the lounge discourses of connoisseurship and musicianship (getting in a position to play), and excludes herself from the processes through which student initiated ensembles form. This is Henry describing how ensembles form in Musikklinja, and what it takes to get in a position to play:

> Henry: it happens in a lot of ways. Typically, someone has a song he wants to play and asks a friend or maybe just someone that he wants in on that song. Some people are taken on because they're just that good musicians. Daniel you

> know, he's in on several songs that he didn't initiate himself, even songs he isn't that enthusiastic about, he's just brought in as a musician, like. I think most of us have the attitude that, if you are asked, you say yes no matter what. I'm like that, I say yes before I even hear the song, just to get to play […]. Then again, I'm not really in the privileged position that I can pick and choose what I want to get in on, like others can.
>
> Live: it seems to me though that you're in on a lot?
>
> Henry: yes I am, but much of it is my own initiative. And it's probably related to – there are not many male singers here, and not many who sing rock. I like singing as much as I like playing the guitar, rock music in particular, and I tried to promote myself in that regard (laughs), and I've probably been successful too (laughs)
>
> [...]
>
> Live: so, what you are saying is that you need to be active, to manoeuvre yourself into a position to play, you cannot just sit in the lounge and wait to be asked?
>
> Henry: that's my opinion anyway. But, it depends on who you are. Daniel, his big brother was here before him. And he's related to one of the boys in the third year too, and also, he played in a band with two of those who left last year. He'd kind of built a reputation as a good musician before even coming here, so he was asked immediately, upon arrival. But that's the exception you know, almost everyone else, even those who have attained, like, "elevated" positions as good musicians, they've had to prove themselves in some way or other. So anyway, you need to promote yourself; 'sign on'.
>
> Live: was it awkward in the beginning? Are you OK with it?
>
> Henry: no, I'm not always OK with it. I *have* participated in quite a lot, and many, even most, hasn't been my own initiative, others have said, like, "we'll do that one". But, I found, I realized early on that I was one of those with (laughs)… rather poor musical abilities, so I'd have to take what I got. *(Interview)*

Getting in a position to play, getting in an ensemble, requires a certain amount of activity and initiative on your own part Henry explains. It even requires a certain amount of strategic thinking, you need to "promote" yourself in a way that is distinctive, attractive and in demand. You need to "sign on" to the negotiations of ensemble forming by actively advancing your qualities and competences. Henry's narration of ensemble forming procedure very much reminds me of John's outburst in house concert: "This is entrepreneurship, I tell you!" While I never heard the word itself used by students, nor in ensemble lessons or hall meetings where concerts and auditions were discussed, a discourse of entrepreneurship seems to be available for students as a frame of reference for their ensemble (and concert) participation. The whole idea of a working environment (section 6.1.3) rests on the assumption that students are

active entrepreneurs, creating their own practices and possibilities for learning and development. Hannah however doubts the entrepreneurial skills of her flute students. Amelia, she holds, is totally in lack of initiative. Stepping back and leaving it all to the dynamics of the working environment would hence rob the girls of chances to learn and develop in ensemble constellations. What seems to be her worry is that the idea of informal learning settings and the practices of a "working environment" facilitates the performances of particular students at the cost of others. Traditional, formal teacher-led learning practices on the other hand facilitate the performances of students like Alice and Amelia. Moreover, teachers may to a different degree recognize, acknowledge and empathize with students' different needs of government. John, an advocate of discourses of entrepreneurship and 'informal formality' (section 7.5 and 7.5.1), is a jazz pianist, confident and easy in the discourses of the lounge. He is the only one that sometimes joins the students in the sofa group, and boys wanting to discuss music and musicians often approach him. He is sad to see students spending less time in the lounge after school hours than before, and that they seem to keep to their already established social milieus rather that forming new, Musikklinja milieus. Hannah, however, is a flute player herself. What is more, she is a former student of Musikklinja. She knows how the discourses of the lounge work, and whom the idea of a working environment supports. Wanting to secure the learning possibilities of her two students, she maintains a relatively firm hold on the organization of school ensembles and the particular ensembles to which she is the assigned teacher.

Returning to Henry, he also initiates the discourse of quality musicianship to provide me with a frame of reference for ensemble forming. Some students, he holds, have already proven themselves and achieved the "elevated" position of a "good musician". Henry positions Daniel thus: he is one of those that are "taken on" primarily for their musical skills and competences, not their enthusiasm for a certain song or band or their friendship with others in the crew. The frame of reference enacted by Henry installs a distinction between the "elevated" and the "typical". Daniel belongs to the elevated; Henry himself performs at the "typical" level. Daniel's "privileged position" is anchored in the discourse of quality musicianship, but also explained by means of his social and cultural connections: like Alice in section 7.1.3, Henry contrasts his own musical upbringing in an ordinary family of eighties-pop lovers *(interview)* with that of others (Daniel) whose relatives and contacts have prepared the way for them. Other students too have managed to elevate themselves, but only through the necessary entrepreneurial activities of promoting oneself and signing up.

Getting in a position to play is crucial for getting the opportunity for proving oneself. While Henry talks of the elevated and the typical in a somewhat unconcerned way, when questioned, he confirms that he is not always "okay" with the entrepreneurial activity required of him to get in a position to play and perform. Initially installing himself on the "typical" level, he now classifies his own position as "poor" – he is/was one of those with lesser musical abilities than the rest. And this classification, we can imagine, is potentially cited and reiterated when enacting strategies that 'secure' participation: asking rather than being asked, uncritically accepting every invitation to play rather than prioritizing constellations of the elevated. I can understand his worries. Several times during my period of observations and interviews students offered statements that supported the ultimate idea of just "being good" without working too hard. Molly, she's just a genius, Michael says. She doesn't care to "make herself good". Daniel, he's just "like that", he isn't even trying. Oliver, he doesn't want to "make a buzz" out of things, he likes to take it as it comes. And generally, people "didn't really rehearse". Trying too hard seems as detrimental to becoming elevated as transgressing the limits of ones capacities, acting like something you are not.

Of course, everyone is not as concerned about getting on the carousel of informally initiated ensembles as Henry. Nevertheless, my impression is that at least with the electric instruments, being "in on" a lot is a hallmark of musicianship and a measure of your Musikklinja involvement and legitimacy. Before concert events in particular, there is much talk of who is in on what, and how much. In the interview excerpt above, I tell Henry that my impression is, "he's in on a lot". As much as that is true – it did seem to me like Henry usually had many projects going on – the statement also reveals my own immersion in the Musikklinja discourses: it is a compliment. As discussed in section 5.2.3 on interview method, I tend to confirm rather than challenge my interviewees' narratives of themselves, and in this case, knowing how important "getting in" is to Henry, I use the discourse to comfort and support him. I do the same in the following:

> I meet Henry, Adrian and Benjamin in the hallway; they are waiting for Rock auditions to start. They're auditioning with The Ramone's "Blitzkrieg Bop", with Henry on lead. He has been talking about it for weeks. Am I listening in today, they want to know. Yes, the first half, I tell them, excusing myself for not being able to attend the whole thing. Benjamin says that his acts are spread across the whole afternoon. Henry tells me he has four numbers today. "Five tomorrow, for Café auditions?" I ask. Yes, he smiles. They all seem eager to start, nervous

> and excited. Live: "you guys are in on a lot?" The boys agree. But Daniel, he's in on eighteen numbers! "It's because he's the … " Adrian hesitates, and smiles at me. Live: "…best?" I laugh. Adrian laughs too. "Yeah. He's the best that ever was here." Daniel suddenly passes us, jogging round the corner and disappearing in direction of the student lounge. We laugh, and Henry imitates him: "He's just like that you know", showing us an eager, purposeful, rhythmical body. "That's just the way he is?" I say. "Yeah" Adrian laughs. "He is that bloody good." *(Fieldnotes)*

Having several numbers to audition – spread across the afternoon even – is really something worth recounting, and worth recognizing. And while stating the obvious is kind of taboo, broken only by the blunt researcher, the more numbers you have, the better musician you are. Daniel is simply the "bloody best", but the other boys too seem rather satisfied with their own level of activity. They have already reached their goal, I suppose, being able to state and confirm that they have several numbers for audition. Whether or not their numbers are accepted may even be of less significance. Teachers too acknowledge the importance of getting in a position to play by asking, or referring to, how "much" one has to do for auditions:

> Hannah, to Daniel: you're not the worst this year, are you? That would be Peter and Oscar and Charles.
>
> Daniel: me, I've got fifteen. Peter's got twenty I think.
>
> Henry: that drummer last year actually sat a new record. *(Fieldnotes)*

The "worst" in this case, we could imagine, meaning the "baddest" – signifying the "best". Typically, Daniel and Henry are fully informed about how many numbers the others are in on, Henry even knows of the current record-holder.

Now, classically educated/oriented performers like Alice, Amelia, Jennifer, Thomas, Ethan, Eva and others (flutes, violin, clarinet, song) seem more distanced to the procedures and practices of 'getting in a position to play'. Indeed, very few classically oriented ensembles formed outside scheduled ensemble hours and teacher initiatives in my period of observation. And when students playing acoustical instruments were involved, the repertoires were almost exclusively non-classical – folksongs, jazz, musicals, alternative pop, even progressive rock. An explanation could be that the classical repertoires are time- and practice-consuming in a way that the "Blitzkrieg Bop" is not; technically and musically virtuoso repertoire cannot possibly be assembled at a week's notice. Hence, jumping on the carousel of informal ensemble auditioning may take too much energy to be worth one's while. Rather, one follows the path of formal main instrument practices steadfastly, one's repertoires and activities governed by one's teachers. Observing the fuzz and buzz that surround

students' negotiations of getting in a position to play, and how much focus and attention the auditions, the informal formation of groups and the non-classical music are given in Musikklinja daily life, I am not surprised that classically oriented students like Alice feel somewhat displaced, no matter how "official" and "prioritized" her genre is perceived to be. Like the violinist Sarah however, Alice chooses the folk rock group for her ensemble practice rather than forming liaisons with the other acoustical instruments. In this way, she draws nearer to the field of informal negotiations; Henry is in the ensemble, and Max, the rock guitarist. As is the fiddler Oliver, who also has become somewhat of an attractive lead vocalist and frontman in certain genres. At the same time, she is under the protective wing of her flute teacher Hannah, supporting and securing her participation. The next section tells of negotiations of musicianship in the folk rock ensemble.

### 7.3.2 Folk rock ensemble negotiations

The folk rock ensemble practices in the composition studio. Tables in a double row fill the middle of the room, each with a small keyboard and a swivel chair. There's another row of chairs, tables and keyboards by the back wall, and a teacher's desk in front of the blackboard. In between the rows, the students arrange themselves, placing their coats and jackets, instrument cases, polishing cloths and amplifiers on the floor and the tables. The flutes, Alice and Amelia, share a simple music stand upon which balance a single sheet or two of paper. Beside them, Sarah swivels slowly on her chair, in a huge dark blue quilted jacket, her lipstick very pink, her mascara very black. While Henry maintains a firm stance to the right of the door, attentive and concentrated at all times with his bass guitar strapped around his shoulders, Oliver tends to wander between the rows, playing constantly, even while others are talking. Max sits by the window, seemingly a little to the side of what is going on in the rest of the room.

The group often practices on their own, but when present, Hannah is in charge. Her place is by the door, in front of it, facing and overlooking her students. She regulates rehearsal dynamics in detail, identifying places in need of more attention, criticizing interpretation, and asking them to repeat. Although the students initially were given the assignment of learning the songs they are playing by ear, Hannah has arranged them at least partly. The flutes have been given a score, and she has written down both text and harmonization for Oliver and Max. Henry has made his own notes of how the songs proceed.

Over the nine rehearsals I observe, the folk rock ensemble practices two songs: the Celtic folk inspired Gary Moore hit *Over the hills and far away*, and a folk-styled drinking song with an amusing text; *It doesn't matter where I end up when I die*. The drinking song is Oliver's idea. However, he isn't really taking the initiative and leadership that is his right as "owner" of the song. Rather, he follows Hannah's instructions somewhat reluctantly. Today, he keeps ridiculing Hannah's attempts at making the ensemble sound more 'folk-like':

> Episode 12: Jamparira
>
> Hannah: "What do you think, are you really playing like a folk dance group now?" The flutes hesitate: "mm…well…I don't know…" No one else answers. Sitting on the stool by the keyboard, Hannah starts singing, stamping her foot in the floor at the first beat and swinging her closed fist and bent elbow in front of her, illustrating what a 'folk-groove' could be like. Oliver draws back towards the wall, out of her sightline, and mockingly imitates her gestures.
>
> "Maybe it's a bit too slow?" Hannah suggests, looking at Henry. "We could try a more up-beat tempo", he responds. Hannah asks Sarah why she doesn't keep the fiddle-riff going through the whole song. Sarah: "It doesn't fit". Oliver: "We can try, but I don't think it'll fit though. (To Henry:) Play another verse". They start, Oliver sings and plays while looking at Sarah who keeps the riff going. Hannah sings loudly to the flutes, indicating that she wants them to give a bit more. Henry, uncharacteristically, is rather passive. He leans towards a desk, playing without his usual enthusiasm. Max makes little of himself in his corner by the window.
>
> Hannah isn't satisfied. "Can we all just *sing* it once? – Jamparira, rira, riraarii (she sings). Oliver, you too!" Henry has straightened himself up and follows Hannah, but neither Sarah nor Max are singing, and Oliver makes only a half-heartedly attempt, standing crooked with his weight on one foot, looking down at the floor. They all seem somewhat embarrassed by the situation. Alice and Amelia sing as they are told to do, but avoid looking at anyone, their eyes roving from one place to another. They hold their flutes straight up and down with both hands in front of themselves. Henry: "Doing like this might help?" – he stamps his foot and swings his elbow like Hannah did. No one responds.
>
> Hannah: "Ok, now, try to *play* it; one-two-three-four!" This time the flutes make an effort, Alice even adding extra trills. "Yes, good!" Hannah shouts as they play. Oliver too tries his best, marking the upbeat from his rubato verse to the tutti part and improvising under the flute's solos. Hannah: "*That* was much better, now you did like "jamparira", sustaining the beats." Oliver looks secretly at Sarah, bending down so Hannah can't see him pulling a face. *(Fieldnotes)*

In the above, Hannah verbally and physically enacts her definitions of what the ensemble should sound like. Imposing the traditional Norwegian "folk dance group" as a category of identification, she discursively establishes the

assumption that this is the sound and the style they should be striving for. Moreover, stamping her foot and swinging her arm, even adding a "jamparira", she also adds to the practice assumptions of what a "folk dance group" sound and style is characterized by. When the ensemble fails to perform accordingly, she suggests that they all *sing* it once, on the understanding, I assume, that the singing will provide a more hands-on experience with the groove as latent in the musical material, the sustained beats in particular.

Thus providing the students with categories and definitions they must relate to, Hannah, we could say, is an important supplier of material for performative enactments of music student subjectivity. The subject position "teacher" through which she performs ensures that her statements receive the proper attention. Now, as for the folk music fiddler Oliver, we could imagine various reactions to the conditions of possibility as supplied by Hannah. Being both the 'owner' of the song and representing genre authenticity to the other students, he could have protested openly, arguing, maybe, that a "folk dance group" sound is not what they should be striving for, or even that Hannah's illustration of the groove seems wrong, stupid and naive to him. He could have come forth, taken the lead and exemplified the sound and the groove by singing and playing. He could have taken Hannah's opening question as a direct invitation and entered into a discussion of what sound and groove they should be pursuing, and how to do it, acknowledging her initiative while enriching or even subverting the definitions on offer. Instead, he withdraws into the door opening and undermines Hannah's efforts by demonstrating his embarrassment, making her turn to Henry instead for communication with the group.

Obviously, him taking the lead doesn't represent as evident a possibility to Oliver as it does to me. For one thing, the sheer fact that Hannah is a teacher might subdue initiatives towards student leadership:

> Henry: for ensemble this year, the way things were in that room, I kept restraining myself from speaking, from 'taking' control. 'Cause, if I don't concentrate on that, I will, right? But it's supposed to be Hannah who's in control, she being the teacher. […] when a teacher is assigned to a group, to "her" ensemble, it's kind of on the cards that she's in a more superior position. *(Interview)*

Explaining to me about his role in the folk rock ensemble, Henry enacts a frame of reference that seem important to his Musikklinja participation; that of the teacher's 'superiority'. While continuing to say that "I think I have a better 'band' way of carrying out rehearsals than Hannah has, and we really had better rehearsals when she wasn't here, for the Gary Moore at least", thus indicating

that while the teacher's strategies may not always be the better, her superior position and right to act *as* a teacher is to be respected. His own enthusiasm and urge to take the lead thus needs to be kept in check. Expressing something similar, although less concerned with respecting the teachers' superior right to teach, Oliver holds that Hannah's active presence "put a damper" on student opinions and restricted their opportunities for getting things done:

> Oliver: she made working almost more difficult. When she wasn't there, we got a lot more done. She had opinions on everything, and her opinions weren't always as good as those within our group, and I think she kind of put a damper on us. So when she wasn't there, I felt we got a lot more done. (*Interview)*

This discourse is well established also within teacher education and teacher education research: teachers may hinder the flow of student development and cooperation, especially when the aims and contents of the practice are student initiated and owned (see section 2.5). In Oliver's statement, the discourse serves to inscribe himself and the others with an agency and an initiative that was never realized, and provides a frame of reference for their passivity and their failure at "getting things done". Moreover, as Oliver presents it, Hannah's opinions are not at all of superior value, worth paying attention to just because she is the teacher. Rather, opinions are to be valued for how "good" they are, no matter whether the holder is a student or teacher. Even so, Oliver's performance is given to and through the discourse of teacher superiority. That is how the statement "she made working almost more difficult" is made possible. It acknowledges that Hanna's words and actions are material through which he must work, and, for all his objections to the value of her opinions, that his successful performance of music student subjectivity depends upon their discursive precedence.

Continuing this line of thought, another interpretation of Oliver's rather withdrawn attitude despite his 'right' to lead is precisely that to take the lead, he needs to openly acknowledge the opportunity as offered by Hannah. He needs to submit to her categories to be able to subvert and master them, and this submission is to happen in plain sight, in front of his fellow students. Now, the definitions and discourses offered him by Hannah, we observe in the fieldnote excerpt, may be very problematic for him to accept, even shameful. Compared to the nuanced, cool musicianship of his longhaired rock-styled fiddle teacher, Hannah's elbow-swinging, foot-stamping enactment of folk music may seem rough, crude and naive. And compared to the enactments offered by the new folk performers that his fiddle teacher is an example of, operating across genres but always careful to respect the traditions they represent,

Hannah's enactment deflates and generalizes, and is neither innovative nor respectful. The only option for Oliver, then, is submission through ridicule. He distorts Hannah's significations of folk music even further, citing them ironically and reluctantly. In this way, he cites, but avoids committing himself to, her categories. He recognizes, but avoids confirming, her initiatives. He submits to, but avoids accepting, her interpretation, thus escaping responsibility. For Oliver, this strategy of negotiation enables him to remain in authority with respect to folk music definitions while also submitting to and attaining subjecthood through the power/knowledge relations regulating the practice. He does not risk his authenticity by testing its value in a leadership position.

Alice and Amelia, however, do not have the option of ridiculing Hannah's proposals without placing themselves outside regulative power/knowledge relations. Though they respect the genre of folk music and accept Oliver as its authentic proponent, Hannah is their main instrument teacher. They cannot but relate to what she offers, and recognize and accept the value of her efforts. They are attuned to her way of teaching and filter her enactments through a history of previous enactments, reconstructing what she is currently offering to fit their own legitimate participation. Furthermore, they benefit from Hannah turning the practice from 'by ear' towards 'by score', music stand and musical notation enabling them to participate more effectively. Not once during our conversation on the folk rock ensemble does Alice point to Hannah or her teaching style as an inhibiting factor in the flow of ensemble dynamics and learning. Rather, it's interesting to observe, Alice has another explanation for their lack of productivity:

> Live: [the drinking song] came from Oliver?
>
> Alice: yes, of course (laughs). He came with it and wanted to sing and play it. But since it was his song, he was like the leader, but he's always being silly and making jokes (laughs) so it took quite some time before we even got started, 'cause…well, it wasn't as serious. *(Interview)*

Oliver's silliness and failure to redeem his rightful, even mandatory, responsibility as owner and leader, is what inhibits progress, Alice finds. When I ask her if she could have stepped up, taken responsibility, she refuses: she does *not* want to be seen as an overachiever, the good girl. While dependent upon the power/knowledge relations to her main instrument teacher, she must perform at a proper distance, at least in the context of the folk rock ensemble. She sings, but holds back. Her embarrassment at Hannah's "jamparira"-act is expressed by her stiff upper body, her reluctance to look at the others and her weak voice.

Oliver's presence is very noticeable, and *his* enactments count for a lot too. For both the flautists, this practice has two leaders, even if one of them leads through protest and ridicule.

Sarah too holds back. A violinist, she has neither a personal relation nor any obligations to Hannah outside ensemble. Hence, she is free to place herself fully behind Oliver's objections, mostly by refraining from contributing. While classically educated, she has an expressed interest in folk music and has played with Oliver on several occasions. She knows, probably, that taking what Hannah offers could undermine her folk musicianship legitimacy, at least in the eyes of Oliver. An interesting aspect, however, not so obvious in the situation above, but evident in other situations, is that Sarah manages to balance *between* Hannah and Oliver, utilizing both discourses to her own benefit. In general, she is a more virtuoso violinist than Oliver, who respects the classical technique that enables her to play convincingly in registers he has trouble with himself:

> Episode 13: Playing bullshit
>
> They have finished playing through the Gary Moore. Hannah says: "I think that middle part's really cool, but it would be even cooler if you'd dare to be more reckless with it." Sarah: "In the auditorium, we played more…bullshit like." Hannah: "you think that was cool?" Sarah: "or, like, we were just kidding…" Hannah: "yes, but did you think it was cool when you did?" Sarah: "or…it was improvisation, kind of."
>
> Oliver has played softly since the song ended. Hannah looks at him: "could we do the instrumental, trying to play more bullshit like? Oliver has always had a prejudice against that part." "Yeah, but it sounds like…" – Oliver plays a parodic, ugly version whilst pulling a face. "Those glissandos, they require that I go up in position, and I *hate* playing in positions." Hannah looks at him. "How about you start, keeping down, and Sarah takes over? What do you call it when you press the bow into the strings to make almost like a creaking sound?" Oliver: "Yeah, 'cause that'll be *really* nice." He demonstrates, playing long, screeching tones. Hannah: "Yes, but what do you call it?" Oliver lets the strings go: "It's called ugly." Hannah: "Ok, but like in a *musicians* terminology?" Oliver: "It's called fucking ugly."
>
> They try again. This time, Sarah really takes off into the upper registers. She has removed her giant quilted jacket, and sits beside Oliver on top of a desk at the back wall. Her pose is the classical violinist's; instrument well up on her shoulder, back straight, chin raised. She takes chances, aiming for the really high notes and flageolet tones. "Yeah!" Hannah shouts out to her. "Oliver don't *think*!" "I'm not 'thinking'" Oliver says. "I'm just fucking unfamiliar with being up there". Hannah: "well, play in the lower register then?" Oliver: "I'm afraid of heights…" Hannah: "Really, it's totally ok if you stay down there, and Sarah can play in

> the upper". Oliver, mumbling: "it *was* a joke, you know". They try again. Now, Oliver keeps down in the lower register, playing folkish ornamentations. "Swell!" Hannah shouts to both of them. "This was really the best version I ever heard" she exclaims as they finish. "Don't you agree, Oliver?" "Yes," he says, "'cause now, I did nothing." *(Fieldnotes)*

This week, the folk rock ensemble is back in their composition studio after having held a full student-led rehearsal with drummers, microphones and all in the auditorium a few days back. The auditorium session was a success, a real boost, despite them having trouble with the sound. Neither the flutes nor the violins could hear themselves properly. However, observing the rehearsal from the galleries, it seemed to me that the sheer loudness of the performance, the distance between the groups of performers (violins to the right, flutes in the middle, bass to the left, drums and guitar at the back), and the roof height (literally speaking) provided the violins in particular with space enough to break out of the composition studio discourse in which they previously performed. Not being able to hear themselves gave them the excuse, or opportunity, to play louder, broader, stronger, faster, indeed more recklessly, paradoxically enacting the discourses later imposed by Hannah through challenging, "kidding with" them. What is more, it seemed Sarah figured out how to play the instrumental on her own premises, showing off in the upper registers.

Back in the composition studio though, Sarah modifies her performance. Oliver also is much more subdued, playing less, playing more softly. But when Hannah calls for more recklessness, Sarah somewhat uncharacteristically tells her of how they played, "bullshit like", in the auditorium. Shrugging off the incident with the fact that they were "just kidding", she doesn't show any more enthusiasm than she usually does. Hannah refuses to let the opportunity go though, daring Sarah to step up, and she actually does: admitting that it was "improvisation". The negotiations lift Sarah's musicianship from careless bullshitting to serious improvisation, even without her needing to submit to the somewhat embarrassing notion of thinking what you're doing is "cool". Accepting the category of "cool", indulging in Hannah's persistence, would have been too risky I would think, considering Oliver's reluctance towards the whole idea of a verse with improvised violin glissandos.

These negotiations well carried out, it's even easier for Sarah to excel further, using the classical techniques and effects that she knows and masters to perform herself successfully through discourse as imposed both by Hannah and Oliver. Oliver though struggles somewhat more with mastering the

opportunities he is presented with. The instrumental improvisation, called the "hover-verse" due to the violin/fiddle glissandos and hovering, high tones, is something he has never become comfortable with. Every single time the band rehearses "Over the hills" the hover-verse is debated, and Oliver's fellow musicians have eventually become somewhat annoyed with his never-ending protests. The auditorium rehearsal was an exception; Oliver was having a good time, even dancing around the microphone rack, working in unison with Sarah. Today however, he seems intimidated by the strong subject position Sarah requires for herself. For Oliver, "Over the hills" represents a technical challenge; he must play outside the tonal range and positions with which he is comfortable and where he normally plays when doing his preferred repertoire. Folk fiddlers like Oliver do not usually play over the first two positions, and very seldom up in the high register that Sarah elegantly masters. Interviewing Oliver, he proudly says that he has developed from being the inferior fiddle player to passing Sarah, getting better grades than her for their term exam. Submitting to her superior musicianship now, accepting a less prominent position in the lower register and "doing nothing" of value to the quality performance of music require of him that he finds other strategies for performing.

### 7.3.3 Am I taking over from you?

Episode 14: "Miserere"

In the ear-training classroom, Molly stands waiting beside the grand piano in the corner. Mia and Jennifer sits shoulder to shoulder on top of a desk to her right. Cynthia stands opposite them by the door. The altos couldn't come, she says. Invited by the girls to help them out, Elise the song teacher has positioned herself on a desk by the blackboard. It's the lunch-break, and an open lunch pack lies in her lap. "We'll take it from the beginning" Molly says, playing the opening chord on the piano. They find their tones and are about to start when she suddenly turns to Elise and exclaims "Am I taking over from you?" [In Norwegian "Overkjører jeg deg?" lit. "Am I running you over?"]. It comes somewhat abruptly, like many of Molly's statements do. Elise raises both her arms in the air: "No, no, I'm just here to listen!" Molly plays the chord again and counts softly to start them all off, conducting precisely but cautiously with her right hand. The girls sing in lovely but somewhat frail voices. It's an intense, pleading "Miserere" (Eva Ugalde) written mostly in piano/pianissimo, with a few tightly written climaxes.

They get almost to the end, then they stop. "This is as far as we practiced" Molly says, "and we asked William to conduct us in the concert." They rehearse for a while without Elise interrupting. Molly is the leader, she tells the others where and when to start by referring to bar numbers, upbeats, notes and chords. She

> does not instruct the other girls however, telling them how to sing, what sound they should strive to produce or how to form the phrases. Mia and Jennifer seem happy and comfortable, they sit dangling their legs, following Molly's leadership easily.
>
> After a while, Elise starts instructing. She is careful always to praise their expression: "that was beautiful" or "ah, cool sound!" or "you sing perfectly in pitch". Molly looks at me and smiles happily. "Shall we do it again?" she asks Elise. They've had some problems with the climax of the song; the group falls apart at the top notes. "Should we drill notes?" "Well…" Elise says, "it's better to sing it several times I think. We need to rehearse the dynamics, and make it all fit together." Molly: "Ok. One more time, and now, we look at Elise." Taking this as an invitation to get more involved it seems, Elise rises up to show the girls phrasings, dynamics and rhythm with her hands and arms and body while they sing. The musical expression intensifies. Molly: "It really helps when you do that. I feel stupid when I'm like this" – she conducts weakly with her right hand. Elise, looking directly at her: "Molly, you are a lot of things. Stupid, though, is *not* one of them." She says it in a firm voice and none of the girls giggles. *(Fieldnotes)*

The "Miserere" has been accepted for Christmas church concert through auditions. It's a three-part contemporary motet, tonal, but with somewhat challenging harmonies. Like the Nystedt motet "Sing and rejoice" they are singing with the Musikklinja choir, it is a piece of music with a tonal language and a level of difficulty – as well as a genre-affiliation – that emphasizes the girls' music student-ness: the fact that they know, like and are able to perform this kind of music sets them discursively apart from other music lovers and actors their age. It may even set them apart from their family backgrounds and previous social milieus, representing developing musicianship and the girls' emerging credibility as actors in the expert fields of music and music education.

The idea is Molly's. Having learned to know the "Miserere" in the female choir of adult singers she sometimes performs with, she has established the Musikklinja ensemble especially for the piece, aiming at the Christmas church concert audition and performance. Thus, she leads the rehearsal. I doubt her leadership has even been a topic of discussion, the owner-leader logic being discursively self-evident in Musikklinja, regulating both scheduled and non-scheduled ensemble activities. Moreover, Mia, Jennifer and Molly have been in several other constellations together where Molly takes – and sings – the lead, and the girls seem quite accustomed to and comfortable with these dynamics. Cynthia though is less familiar with the threesome dynamics. *And*, unlike Molly, Jennifer and Mia, Cynthia *is* a singer. Song is her main instrument. In addition, she is a member of the Christmas church concert production group, which grants her special ownership of the project. Indeed, at one point during the

rehearsal, she does remind the others of her superiority and ownership by stating that "It will sound *so good* in the church, that's why I *fought* to get us in!" She does not however question Molly's leadership or interfere with her during the rehearsal. She pays attention, follows instructions and refrains from offering her own suggestions. In addition to the Musikklinja owner-leader logic, what saves Molly from the interference of a senior owner and participant, I think, are the discourses of quality performance and lounge connoisseurship. Molly is an exceptionally strong discursive actor in both regards: even if her somewhat loud and visible presence off-stage may irritate and even earn her a few enemies, her vocal stage performances continue to earn her credibility and increased respect from both students and teachers. She guarantees quality performance in the same way that, for example, Daniel, Oscar, Harvey and Isabella do. Moreover, she operates off the main stream, always finding music and arrangements that are suited to the setting in one way or another but never plain, common or everybody's property.

For the above lunch-break rehearsal though, Molly has brought in Elise the song teacher to help them, which potentially may shift group dynamics. She sits relaxed eating her lunch in one side of the room, Molly is seriously and carefully (and with none of the giggling and chattering that I associate her with) conducting her ensemble from the grand piano in the opposite corner. Elise's casual pose on the desk, leaning towards the blackboard with her lunch in her lap, cites and confirms several important discursively regulating aspects in the setting. For one, her pose and lunch pack remind everyone that this is a lunch break, her time off as a teacher. No arms crossed over the chest, no wrinkled brow, no standing, no leaning forward, no gesticulation, no singing while they perform. She is here outside her scheduled teacher time and teacher role Elise's act seems to signal, a singer, a colleague, a friend being asked to help out. This means she neither has obliged herself to teach/instruct nor takes responsibility for the result of the session. Furthermore, Elise holds herself well outside of Molly's territory. She does not place herself in the focal point where a conductor can control her fan of choristers. She does not join the curve of singers, and neither does she take up a position beside Molly at the grand piano. Remaining at the borders of the girls' practice, Elise does not take possession of the music or their musical acts. Their ownership remains intact, their project remains a students' enterprise.

Molly reacts to Elise's performance in an interesting way. While Elise has made no indication of wanting to lead – on the contrary, she quite demonstratively

takes a withdrawn position – Molly hits her with "Am I taking over from you?" It's a peculiar statement, coming from out of the blue. It has a very real performative function though: yes, it cites the discourse of teacher superiority and innate right to lead. But in this context I think, it works, by subversion, to support *Molly's* superiority. It reinstalls Elise in the 'teacher' subject position that she has tried to avoid. The question "Am I taking over from you?" is, paradoxically, an act of taking over. It rejects Elise's efforts at taking the positions of friend and fellow singer, and keeps her out of informal student activity by citing her immersion in formal power/knowledge relations. Moreover, if Elise's performance refrains from promising to be of help beforehand, Molly's performance refrains from giving any promise that help will be accepted. She recognizes, even supports, Elise's position as teacher, however, Elise will have to prove her worth before her advice is accepted as more than pro forma. And, at the last minute only, Molly 'suddenly remembering' her position in relation to Elise, the question of "Am I taking over from you?" affirms Molly's capacity to do precisely that. It is a reminder of Molly's privileged position in the informal world of ensemble activity and thus works as a warning, even while Molly submits herself through the proper relations of power/knowledge. Elise certainly reacts as if she is under attack, throwing her arms defensively up in the air: hey, I'm not here because I begged to be, I don't want to intrude. With the gesture, she confirms Molly's leadership and disclaims responsibility.

In other words, Elise is invited to the girls' practice, but both sides are concerned with keeping their distance, at least initially. What then, we might ask, do the girls gain from inviting her? If the usefulness of Elise's contributions are somewhat uncertain, Elise being careful not to commit herself to help, Molly being careful to emphasize that she might not really need it, why is Elise there? Considering the various power/knowledge networks at play in Musikklinja, my suggestion is that Elise (and William, whom they asked to conduct) offers Molly and her ensemble the safety of formalized power/knowledge. Informal ensemble activities in Musikklinja tend to spring from well-established ownerships – one chooses a repertoire with which one is familiar, confident and (relatively) sure of success. During the Rock concert, Nicholas the guitar teacher says: "It's so important to offer them arenas where they can do their own stuff, show off their own things", and this seems to be the general stance. Since Musikklinja requires students' participation and performance in practices that are new to them and challenge what they already know, Musikklinja must also provide arenas that are familiar to them and confirm what they already

knows. The informally established ensembles represent students "own things", and only occasionally, it seems, do student initiatives include repertoires that push the limits of their ownership, songs they are unfamiliar with or even unsure if they can perform well, putting themselves in positions of risk. The "Miserere", I think, represents such an occasion. Classical, choral, contemporary 'art music', it stands out from the main body of Molly's vocal ownerships. While being a serious chorister, even participating in choral practices outside Musikklinja, Molly's "own things" are mostly in the genres of jazz, singer-songwriter and alternative pop music. In establishing a small choir of her own to perform the "Miserere", she potentially takes ownership of new territory. It is a difficult enterprise though. Taking the informally established "Miserere" to audition on her own initiative is equivalent to presenting it as her "own stuff", confidently, naturally. Thus, she needs Elise, and she needs William. Not primarily to increase the quality of performance, but to perform through formal relations of power/knowledge that support her choice of repertoire, attempt at conquering new territory and lack of authentic mastery. Molly establishes her initiative in between what are 'own arenas for own stuff' and, we might assume, 'school arenas for school stuff'. Her performance does not need to adhere fully to the discourses governing informal ensemble activity, but neither does it need to redeem fully the criteria of qualifications that govern formal practices of musicianship like the school choir. This becomes very noticeable when William enters the stage as 'conductor' at the dress rehearsal. Like Elise, he refrains from interfering in detail with the girls' project, and performs his role without assuming ownership or responsibility. Even so, he enacts relations of power/knowledge that ease Molly's (and, we might assume, the other girls') performance, shielding them from potential harm by installing the formal in the informal.

Also worthy of note in the above fieldnote excerpt are the completely different approaches taken by Elise and Molly. While I know that Molly cares a lot for musical expression, she does not take the opportunity to instruct the others in more detail on musical matters. She refrains from complimenting and criticizing their musical and vocal performances, and offers no evaluation of her own singing or the total musical sound. Her leadership is limited to keeping the rhythm, organizing starts and stops and identifying places that needs more attention. When Elise starts instructing however, the focus shifts to sound and expression, and she is generous in and with her feedback. While Molly suggests that they "drill notes", Elise talks of "dynamics", making it all "fit together" and just "singing it several times". And, where Molly conscientiously beats a

small pattern, Elise rises up to show dynamics and expression with her whole body, but refrains from 'conducting'. If "informal strategies of learning" are characterized by addressing the whole musical complexity at once rather than isolating small manageable blocks (Green, 2002; 2008), Elise's approach would indeed seem the more "informal" and Molly's the more "formal". A native of this musical practice, Elise is not at all afraid of crossing its discursive borders, and she acts with the 'informalized' style of a master. The newcomer Molly however is rather more sedate, applying none of her enthusiasm and creativity to the practice, rather following safe and simple patterns of performance.

Recognizing that her ensemble sounds better under Elise's 'informal' instruction, Molly loses some of her safe footing. There is quite a discursive distance between her sudden and somewhat aggressive "Am I taking over from you?" opening the rehearsal, and the disappointed "I feel stupid" uttered towards the end. While the first statement entails a performative subversion of discourse, the second seems to represent submission only, even failure. Molly submits to the musical enactments of Elise, recognizing the mastery of her teacher while stepping away from ensemble leader responsibility. Thus she steps away from the possibility of establishing a new kind of ownership. Looking at her "stupid" efforts from the side, Molly abandons her project. However, this causes her to receive a firm reprimand from Elise. Not allowing Molly to retreat to a familiar, less demanding position, Elise talks to her as if the other girls are not in the room. Her voice is almost harsh when she admits that Molly is "a lot of things" – irritating maybe, noisy, unfocused, messy, whatever – but that she should refrain from excusing herself on the grounds of being "stupid". Acknowledging her potential, she simultaneously imposes on Molly the responsibility for fulfilling it. She can only do so much as a teacher, the rest is up to students themselves. In this, Elise is in line with the Musikklinja discourses of providing a working environment for student entrepreneurship. And students that give up, avoid responsibility, and refrain from taking the opportunities provided them are disappointments.

### 7.3.4 Ownership, leadership and musicianship

Episode 15: The folk rock ensemble extra rehearsal.

Having practiced "Over the hills" without a drummer for weeks, the folk rock ensemble has finally organized an auditorium rehearsal with Michael. He is waiting behind the drums on the small platform, having had his playing abruptly cut off by Henry ("Michael! Not now!") who is running around, rigging equipment

> and adjusting the sound. The flutes are standing somewhat helplessly by their microphone rack in the middle of the room. Oliver wanders around, playing softly, Max is setting up his guitar. I'm watching them all from the gallery, wondering what Daniel is doing here – and Oscar. Daniel sits backwards on the piano stool, resting against the keyboard, overviewing the room. Oscar leans towards the piano from the other side.
>
> Michael puts his hand to his head; he looks like he's in pain. "Couldn't you just play it for me once so I can hear…" he starts. "No!" Henry cuts him short. "It sounds like shit when we do it alone. Shall we begin – Daniel, adjust the sound if you hear something wrong." Michael counts, Henry starts singing and the others join them. Henry looks worried, Michael smiles and grimaces as usual. "Fucking hell!" he suddenly exclaims, bewildered. "Da, da, da, da, it's only half a refrain the first time" Henry shouts. They have stopped. "I can't hear shit" Michael says. "Is it OK?" Henry: "Come on; once more." "We can hear everything" Daniel says, leaning back with his arms crossed. They rehearse for a while. Henry instructs Michael, counting and singing, shouting out to him while they play. When they stop, he immediately approaches him to explain and adjust his playing.
>
> Daniel leaves the room but returns with a giant bass drum. He sets it up in front of Michael, and seats himself on a stool by it, facing the other drummer, his back to the galleries. From now on, Daniel is in the lead. He pilots Michael through the whole rehearsal using gestures and sounds and verbal instructions. When he doesn't play the bass drum, he keeps percussion going using a tambourine. At one point, he overrides Michaels tempo by banging his drumsticks together in the air, going on to instruct him over the bridge by playing air-drums with the sticks and singing the fill loudly. Michael seems to be playing "through" Daniel, who nods, points, shouts encouragements and communicates with Henry. "Okay, yes, okay, I see" Michael says. "It's just that I…" He takes his hand to his head again: "could we have three minutes?" *(Fieldnotes)*

Not surprisingly, Henry takes the main responsibility in getting this rehearsal going. He is a principal owner in more than one regard – he brought the song, he is native to the genre, and in addition, he is certified to use the sound equipment, having taken the short sound engineering course offered by Musikklinja. In comparison, the flutes, being neither repertoire owners, genre natives nor sound-certified, are passive observers to his preparations. Moreover, this afternoon's rehearsal involves a be-or-not-to-be: if Henry can't make "Over the hills" sound less like "shit", their Rock concert participation is at risk. Agreeing that nothing would be more embarrassing than a bad group performing a bad cover badly *(fieldnotes)*, the folk rock ensemble members have agreed that unless the song improves considerably when they add the drums, they won't, they *can't*, play it in concert. Thus, Henry is even more active, and a lot more irritable, than usual. It is essential that they make the rehearsal,

and the repertoire, work at this point, and, while they also agree that everyone needs to practice more and take responsibility for their own playing, Michael's drumming has been designated as the key success factor. "Us rockers you know, we're helpless without drums" Henry says. *(Fieldnotes).* Hence, Henry does what he can to get Michael on board as effectively as possible, counting, singing, shouting, gesturing and instructing. In addition, it seems, Daniel has been brought in to secure a quality performance. However, while Michael is refused his wish to hear them playing at least once before joining in, Daniel is allowed to listen, evaluate, and consider his possibilities before joining. And when he does join, he replaces Henry as coach and instructor. In effect, he also replaces Michael as main drummer, taking over responsibility for counting the up-beat, delivering the cues, keeping the groove steady and communicating with the rest of the ensemble.

In a way then, there are three principal owner-leaders of this practice. Henry; the initiator, Michael; the key to success and the reason why they have met up to practice, and Daniel; guarantor of quality performance, leading and instructing like it was his natural-born right. Henry's leadership is, as we have seen, anchored in the fact that he, together with Max, came up with the song. Unlike Henry though, Max mostly refrains from voicing his opinions. He instructs the others only when asked to, he communicates with Hannah only when spoken to, and takes no responsibility for arranging rehearsals or making sure the others in his group are prepared and ready. Rather, his ownership is recognizable in his musicianship: he knows the riffs, he practices the guitar solos, he even knows how the other voices go and helps out when asked to. Leadership, though, is something I never observed him actively pursuing. Henry, on the other hand, tells me he tends to *seek* leadership:

> Henry: well, to you at least, I could admit that I like being the centre of attention (laughs) at least on stage.
>
> Live: (laughs) it's quite all right to say that you know
>
> Henry: I like taking the leader role, being the bandleader and front man. I guess that's why I like singing. Well I do like singing, but I like being the front man too. And I tend to take the leader position in various ensembles, independent of genre. But I guess that reflects who I am you know?
>
> Live: you carry your identity or way of being from place to place?
>
> Henry: mm, I've got this theory; Daniel playing the drums for instance, reflects the way he is as a person. Because, he is not one to talk a lot and…you know, he has his drum kit, he does his stuff, he isn't as concerned with everything else like me, the hyper-eccentric vocalist (laughs) *(Interview)*

Owner-leadership, it seems, is intrinsic to Henry's musicianship. He may not be a good craftsman, nor a sensitive artist or a theoretical music geek; what secures and qualifies his musicianship in Musikklinja are his capacities as front man and bandleader. Rather than performing himself through discourses of musical competence and technical craftsmanship, Henry cites other subject positions of rock music: the hyper-eccentric vocalist and the passionate stage persona that thrives as the centre of attention. He even "admits" to this confidentially ("to you, at least"), giving it away as some kind of underlying disposition: his tendency to take the leader role and his hyper-eccentric behaviour "reflect the way he is as a person", hence, we may assume, it bears witness to his inner musicianship and musicians' soul rather than to his deliberate staging or assuming of a role character. Hence, performing himself as a band leader and front man in interviews, on stage, in rehearsals and in other musical practices, Henry is able to meet criteria of musicianship that (to some extent) exist detached from demands of technical and musical craftsmanship or theoretical excellence. Furthermore, explaining his tendency to take the lead through citing the eccentric rock persona, he keeps at bay alternative and less flattering categories of identification: an overachiever, a 'good boy', a bossy nuisance. Alice also holds the possibility of being thus classified to be a real threat, and uses it to explain why she avoids leadership and holds back on initiative (section 7.3.2). Henry though, while knowing that actively taking responsibility for the rehearsal and rehearsal dynamics might put him in positions that are less desirable, nevertheless argues that without someone taking up such roles, ensemble projects could fail completely:

> Henry: I'm more active when we practice and form groups on our own initiatives [than for the scheduled ensemble practice], but at the same time, when there's no teacher to hold the whip over us, there's a chance we just waste our time playing and jamming absent-mindedly. It's important to be like, "hello, we got to play this part, we got to practice that part" and – [smacking his fist into the palm of his other hand several times, illustrating efficiency]. And I've been in several groups where we've had the intention of rehearsing and learning songs for auditions but have failed because it was all too loose and slack. On top of that, you need to fit it into one of the lunch-breaks.
>
> Live: right. So you feel the need to take charge, to give the rehearsal some direction then, to achieve some progress?
>
> Henry: yes. If no one else does, I take that role. *(Interview)*

"If no one else does", Henry must take the job of "holding the whip", insisting that one stops wasting time playing aimlessly and with no particular focus, and starts addressing the real problems at hand. It may expose him to unwanted

characteristics. Still, he is willing to put himself in that exposed position to avoid the project failing. Now, the frame of reference Henry presents me with here actually seem to help him enact more attractive power/knowledge relations: it bears witness to his absolute dedication, a major discourse by which Musikklinja subjectivity may successfully be performed. It explains why he keeps running rehearsals on a tight schedule and nagging the others to keep in focus; he is neither "bossy" nor an "overachiever", rather, he is absolutely concerned with and dedicated to the musical product they are establishing between themselves and taking to auditions.

One could, however, apply a quite different frame of reference to understand Henry's preference for leadership and ownership. Knowing him to accept his "rather poor musical abilities" *(interview*, see section 7.3.1*)* but actively taking responsibility for creating his own learning arenas (by getting in positions to play), I can see how Henry's owner-leadership might work as a strategy to manage the ensemble context so that it fits his needs. Rather than "playing and jamming absent-mindedly", a structured focus on properly isolated problems helps Henry overcome technical and musical difficulties. And running the show, deciding where to start and what to repeat, enables him to focus the rehearsal on matters of importance to himself, for example the drum groove. Both Henry and Max have been very frustrated that they can't manage to keep in the groove, they continue to "fall out" *(fieldnotes)*, without the drums. The matter has grown to become the main issue when rehearsing "Over the hills" and a problem applying to the whole crew, and constitutes the primary agenda for tonight's rehearsal. While the flutes and the violins may have their own agendas to focus upon; they are for example not able to hear themselves at all and have serious trouble finding a place for themselves in the music, Henry absolutely prioritizes the communication between bass, drums and guitar.

The responsibility of securing "Over the hills" for the Rock concert is firmly placed with Michael, the drummer. Michael's owner-leadership though seems to be dwindling by the second. Initially taking full possession of the practice, filling the room with his drumming and confirming that he is ready to take the responsibility he is given, he soon has to give way to Henry who claims the space to carry out his own preparations. And while being endowed with responsibility for making the song work, he is not put in charge of what needs to be *done* to make it work, much less what *he himself* needs to make it work. We could have imagined another group dynamics altogether, Michael ensuring that he performs to task by defining places in need of attention, insisting that

they repeat certain passages and even instructing the bass (Henry). However, neither Michael nor the others seem to conceive of this as a real option. What they *do* seem to find only natural are Henry's instructions and Daniel's detailed government.

To an observing outsider, the treatment Michael is given seems harsh bordering on cruel. Michael however is all smiles and grimaces as usual, and follows Daniel's government without protesting. Rather, he utilizes it for his own success and emerges as a fast learner, a serious actor and a musician aware of his limits as well as his competences. For all his headache and demonstrative hand-to-forehead, he is focused and attentive, watching Daniel closely, listening to his instructions and doing what he suggests. Through the one hour or so long rehearsal, Michael is up to speed, securing the repertoire as instructed. In one way then, his ownership is increasing rather than dwindling, he is gradually coming to full mastery of the repertoire and able to redeem the ensemble's expectations of responsibility. Interviewing him a few weeks later, I was curious about his relation to Daniel and how he perceived the whole situation. Interestingly, I found that Michael during the interview juggled two or even three alternative frames of reference:

One constitutes Daniel as the better drummer and himself as subordinate. Daniel was better than him already in primary school Michael laughs. Realizing how "brutally much better" he was made him feel embarrassed upon starting Musikklinja he says. However, Daniel has taught him a lot, especially in the beginning; easy jazz and prog-rock when he was all new to the genres. Indeed, he has been functioning as a kind of *mentor*:

> Michael: Daniel, he is kind of a mentor for me
>
> Live: that's how you see him?
>
> Michael: yes, I learn a lot from him.
>
> Live: but how is it for you, like in the auditorium, playing with Daniel?
>
> Michael: ah, well, Daniel is so skilled. Playing with him is easy. He doesn't take up a lot of space when you are the one to play, like. He gives his advice, but he doesn't take your place in the song. I like better to play alone, but when he's needed for a song, he's ok to deal with (laughs) *(Interview)*

Enacting this frame of reference, Michael accomplishes himself as a music student subject by placing Daniel in another league; the teachers' league. In describing Daniel as a mentor that facilitates his own development and emerging musicianship, that offers advice but refrains from doing the work for

you and that is all good intentions, Michael holds that subordinating to Daniel serves his own interests and needs, thus constituting himself as the appropriate entrepreneurial actor.

The second frame of reference concerns how Michael has developed through Musikklinja and found his own ways and styles of drumming, making Daniel a less important other:

> Michael: Daniel used to be better than me at everything, and that was bloody irritating (laughs), 'cause it was like "yeah, I am playing, but rather not with you, I'd rather have Daniel in on it" you know. They still say that, but I haven't got a problem with that because I know I passed him in some other regards, in funk for example, and in rock. It's not something I'm *sure* of you know, but it's something I *believe* in. It's what I focus upon. […] we have gone in different directions now. When I was new however, well, I had been playing for some years, but I was new to "genres", I wasn't really familiar with specific genres. Then, I learned a lot from him, easy jazz-stuff and prog-rock and stuff. But after that, I have taken my own direction towards funk and soul, and I haven't the need for him. I can accept his tips, but he's not like "teaching" me anymore. *(interview)*

To construct this frame of reference, Michael enacts two discourses of musicianship available in Musikklinja: a discourse of *development* and a discourse of *specialization.* Developing one's musicianship is, of course, fundamental to Musikklinja practices, aims and purposes. It is deemed acceptable, it seems, to start out as a newcomer with potential, but one is expected to be developing during one's stay. The other, specialization, concerns one's ability to excel in at least one or two ways, one's ability to perform oneself as unique and original, and ones ability to find the styles and the genres fitting ones musical talents. Articulating the one on top of the other, choosing to "believe", Michael is able to frame his musicianship as mature, safe and personal. Thus, that people may still prefer Daniel's musicianship to his own is of less consequence.

The third frame of reference emphasizes how Michael's musicianship fundamentally differs from Daniel's anyway:

> Michael: I'm not a technical musician, I never was. I play from *feeling*.
>
> […]
>
> Live: why did Daniel get in on "Over the hills?"
>
> Michael: we needed to have some more drums, the drumming takes up a lot of space in that song. It's a drum machine in the original, and he (laughs) took the place of the drum machine!

> […]
>
> Michael: Daniel doesn't play the way I do. He, he learns from paper, and learns it a hundred per cent, and uses it […] and he plays, he hasn't really got feeling, I think…(laughs). He plays very technically. Er, that's no problem you know, it's just that, I've got some difficulty doing that (laughs). *(Interview)*

Michael could never play like Daniel, because his musicianship is constructed altogether differently. He plays from *feeling*, while Daniel is a drum machine, a hundred per cent precise, technically perfect. But, "he hasn't really got feeling". Michael laughs a bit when he says this, taking some edge off his statement, knowing, probably, that this is a provocative claim. Nevertheless, it's a claim he needs to make. Recognizing his own pleasure in playing, enjoying himself in Musikklinja, wanting to get on stage, he needs to "believe" in his feeling. Returning to the folk rock auditorium rehearsal, Michael being positioned in the very centre of both Henry's and Daniel's massive instruction, we could see how the three frames of reference would help him cope with, even master, the situation: For one thing, subordinating to Daniel's government is quite all right, Daniel belonging to another league and Michael benefitting from his attention. Secondly, Michael is the better rock drummer. His position behind the drum kit testifies to that, and Daniel's instructions are advice that he may choose to take or neglect. And thirdly, whereas Michael represents the feel of the song, Daniel replaces the drum machine.

As for *Daniel's* ownership, it seems firmly anchored in his quality musicianship as collectively agreed upon in Musikklinja. His background includes a variety of musical practices; playing with his father's friends, playing with his own friends, playing in the marching band. He is both theoretically, technically and practically competent. He knows how to read drum notes, he learns easily by ear, he can manage a lot of repertoire and is familiar with several genres. His technique is brilliant, and he is, as we have seen, granted the position of "the best that was ever here" by his friends, even by his drum teacher. He is an attractive partner to play with and was adopted by the third years from the very start. And above all, he is trusted; his opinions are valued. His ownership then is self-evident and his leadership automatically accepted. Observing how Daniel pours himself into the practice with all his strength and enthusiasm, taking over and taking the lead, it seems to me that his owner-leadership is self-evident also to himself. Believing in his own musicianship and intent on making the music work, he takes the position from which he can most effectively act, in this case, between Henry and Michael. Thus positioned, he focuses solely on the drumming and what they need to do. Trusting his musical talents, abilities

and skills, he does not have to ask either Michael or the others what the music needs, he just communicates it, intensely, convincingly, effectively. In the interview with Daniel however, he performs somewhat differently:

> Live: does your drum teacher expect you to get the highest mark?
>
> Daniel: yes. Yes, judging by what he has said, I think he does. He has told me quite a few times that, right, um, that I'm at a level that's above average, so, kind of, yes … for me it's, sort of, he said that I've got, right…I know a lot of it already, basic stuff. So for me it's more about getting additional experience and even more experience in areas that I haven't yet had the opportunity to practice.
>
> Live: […] there seems to be a general attitude in Musikklinja that, "Daniel, he's like on a level way above everyone else". How is that for you, to be given that role?
>
> Daniel: (laughs). Well, it's like, really I, I do the best I can at all times. And it's important to me always to be serious in what I do, always trying to become better and, yes. So it's like, kind of, I have, it has always been, one becomes… It comes gradually you know, I've gotten used to it. I noticed, I've always had this kind of developmental curve, I noticed when I started playing the drums that … things just fell into place at once, and since then, since I started school, I just always played the drums. And played football, it's just "me" you know.
>
> Live: you are used to having that position?
>
> Daniel: yes, that's how it's always been. Like, naturally. So I don't think so much about it, I'm just happy to be playing drums. I like it, and I like playing with others.
>
> Live: what about your relation to Michael and Lukas and others?
>
> Daniel: well, Michael and Lukas, we're good. Because, yes, it's like, we are drummers in the same year and then…yes. And, we don't really talk about the drumming. It's like…yes. But I get to hear very often that, kind of, how shall I put it, that *I*, I'm "like that" and they are "like that". So it's…ah, yes, I just, I try not to talk like too "positively" about myself. It's like I said, it's just the way things have become or, not that I'm "used to it" you know, but it has always been that way. *(Interview)*

We are talking about what it feels like, being positioned in a league of ones own. Daniel is not comfortable with the topic at all. He knows, and must be proud, I suppose, that his teacher has the highest expectations of him. He knows there is a qualitative difference between himself and the other drummers, and that others think so too. What is more, he knows he is a fast learner and that his curve of development points through the roof. Apparently though, he struggles with formulating answers that do not turn him into an arrogant, self-assertive prig, starting his sentences again and again before deciding on a statement. In the above rehearsal, Daniel performs himself wholeheartedly to and through

musical craftsmanship, supported by discourses of quality musicianship and unparalleled excellence. In the interview, he enacts a frame of reference that takes the edge off and belittles the same discourses, putting to use arguments that any student of Musikklinja could enact: I do the best I can. I'm happy to be playing the drums. I like playing with others. I try not to talk too positively about myself. Daniel may be in a privileged position. Nevertheless, he is just as reliant on his friends and fellow musicians to enact his privileges, to get in positions to play and have people to work with and learn from, as the rest of them are. Being loud about what sets him apart from others, Henry for example, and Carl, his closest friends, would probably not be a good idea. Still, frequently being confronted with his qualities by teachers, fellow students and nosey researchers, Daniel needs a frame of reference through which he can safely perform, avoiding arrogance even while keeping his privileges. Emphasizing that it is just how it has always been, he has always felt that drumming is "just "me" you know", it came naturally from the start, he emerges as a down to earth, unpretentious natural talent.

### 7.3.5 The formalized informality of ensemble playing (summary)

In Musikklinja, the activity of ensemble playing constitutes a learning arena thought to be of major importance. "It's when you play with others that you learn", Adrian argues, citing a discourse of *informal peer learning* significant to ensemble playing as formalized and scheduled as well as student initiated. Indeed, the discourse of informal peer learning overlaps with the discourse of the *working environment* to inform and support student enactments all across the material presented in chapters 6 and 7, offering what seems like the default frame of reference for explaining one's choice of Musikklinja: to meet and play with others that have the same interest. Thus, *getting in a position to play* equals getting in a position to learn and develop. Similarly, getting in a position to play equals getting in a position to prove yourself and hence have access to more positions to play, learn and develop.

Section 7.3 has addressed the ideas of *student entrepreneurship* presumed by the practice of ensemble playing in Musikklinja, formalized and 'informalized'. To get in positions to learn and develop, the practice of ensemble playing implies, you need to engage in active entrepreneurial construction of your own learning arenas. You need to secure your own participation by *promoting* yourself and your qualities, taking the initiative and *signing up,* hooking up with people

that can add to your competence and legitimacy and even by *specialization:* finding a niche or a speciality that renders you identifiable, original and thus desirable. We also saw, however, that entrepreneurial agency is discursively constituted. Student initiatives need to be supported by major Musikklinja discourses like *the quality performance of music, competence/craftsmanship* and *connoisseurship*. Hence, getting in positions to play is less of a struggle for the "elevated musicians", discursively constituted as competent, knowledgeable and experienced. Moreover, the formalized informality of ensemble playing seems to facilitate the subjectivation of the (rock)band instrument subject over the classical music student subject, and thus, due to the gendered distribution of instruments in Musikklinja, the male subject over the female.

Important in the entrepreneurial ensemble activity of Musikklinja students are notions of *ownership* and *leadership.* Every initiative has an initiator, the one 'owning' or coming up with the musical idea on which the ensemble is based. Ownership and leadership are intertwined, endowing the owner with the right and obligation to choose the crew, organize rehearsals, instruct and make aesthetic, musical decisions. Cited and installed in scheduled practices of ensemble playing, student ownership may conflict with discourses of teacher superiority. Discourses of *dedication* and *working environment* notwithstanding, Musikklinja remains a hierarchical structure of power/knowledge, a school, where teachers preside over students. Indeed, the overlapping discourses of dedication and working environment seem to support and enforce hierarchical power/knowledge relations also in situations where students' ownership/leadership is acknowledged, even called for, by the teachers themselves. Teachers *are* Musikklinja and thus part of the project to which one should be devoted. Additionally, they are professionals, already positioned within the professional field of music to which Musikklinja trajectories points. While students may question the methods, the authenticity and even the competence of their teachers in conversations and interviews, their field enactments acknowledge the teacher as owner and leader of the situation, and they refrain from taking initiatives. Section 7.3 suggested that students, through enacting and supporting teacher superiority, are subjectivated in ways that ensure their safety and even opens for alternative performances. Installing the formal in the informal, framing ones initiatives in a "school-like" setting by trusting the teacher with ownership, leadership and responsibility may open enough discursive space for students to take positions not immediately available to them. Thus, Molly can do the classical "Miserere" with less risk, Carl can play in the jazz ensemble and the flutes are allowed to participate

in the folk rock ensemble. Indeed, Oliver can perform with a group of less authentic, less proper people while keeping up his folk fiddler dignity and musicianship, by surrendering his ownership to Hannah. Discourses of *teacher superiority*, it seems, may override the effects of *student entrepreneurship* by formally assigning students to positions they can hardly achieve by "signing up". We can say that teacher superiority facilitates discursive *transgression*, the overstepping of one's discursive agency.

Summing up strategies of enactment more specifically, we have seen that students need to negotiate between, combine and juxtapose different discourses to emerge as master subjects in practices of ensemble playing. Creating *discursive distance* and escaping accountability through ridicule and withdrawal, Oliver stays in authority without risking authenticity. Sarah *combines* discourses and discursive subject positions of classical and folk music, quality and competence to manage her folk rock ensemble performance. Somewhat uncharacteristically, she also *steps up* to secure the possibility of acting out classical violin competence. Henry too 'steps up', or 'signs on' to secure his own chances of mastery and success. Taking owner/leadership, he gets in position to manage discursive procedure to his own benefit. Henry cites notions of band leadership, rock music agency and the energetic front man persona to *subvert* potentially destabilizing discourses of craftsmanship, also avoiding the injurious labelling of the overachiever or 'good boy'. Michael runs three *parallel tracks* of discourses that together enable and support his mastery, legitimacy and music student subjectivity. And while Molly seems to temporarily *resign*, abandoning her ambitions and aims, she manoeuvres successfully in between *acknowledging* and *challenging* teacher superiority to secure her entrepreneurial transgression.

## 7.4 Main instrument

### 7.4.1 A violin lesson

Episode 16: A violin main instrument subject

Scene 1, Sarah's violin lesson

Sarah has removed her quilted jacket, unpacked and tuned her violin, and placed her sheet music on the music stand. She is all set when Pauline arrives, and waits in silence while her teacher unpacks her own instrument. They start immediately,

without any small talk: "Sarah, shall we warm up with the Kreutzer?" Pauline suggests. It's one of the etudes, belonging to the classical core repertoire of violin studies. Sarah starts out in her typical, violinist style; chin high, instrument upon shoulder, back straight, good vibrato. She has a pearl bracelet on her left hand, and a tight fitting dark blue cardigan. The further Sarah gets into the piece, the more she struggles. However, she never stops, and makes no excuses or grimaces. Every time she arrives at one of the longer notes, she treats it to a nice vibrato and a good bow.

Pauline starts adjusting her; pointing to the score, supporting the harmonies from the piano, correcting fingerings. She sits on the piano stool, soft cardigan, white blouse, skirt. Her voice is firm, and she keeps her instructions short. When Sarah finishes, Pauline launches into a justification for the repertoire; yes, it still needs work, don't you agree, and you must concentrate on playing all the notes. This is a *very* famous etude, and it is *very* good. And, using etudes like this, we do not have to invent gunpowder. And this is an *excellent* etude; I used it for another purpose too, to practice positions, falling with the fingers. Kreutzer is an *excellent* book of etudes, you must really get down to the notes, you must concern yourself with picking up all of them, it is not so difficult, but you must spend time on it… Sarah listens. "Yes", she answers.

"Well" Pauline looks at her. "Shall we play Bruch? Have you a lot to do for school?" Sarah: "Yes. We recently got our assessment marks…" Pauline: "Yes, yes, are you happy? At least with my mark?" She looks at me with a smile, and a twinkle in her eye. Sarah smiles. She tells Pauline that she's in the folk ensemble, but that she plays with Jennifer too, the classical ensemble teachers wanted her to since Toby didn't show up. "Lillian asked me for ideas, and I suggested the Wieniawski." Pauline: "Excellent! And it is so playable for violin!"

Invited by Pauline to start, Sarah begins the Bruch; very beautifully, with a rich tone and a nice vibrato. She moves softly while playing, and it sounds to me like she is enjoying herself. The way she plays, I cannot help but think that this music, she understands; technically, musically, emotionally. I don't understand at all why she claims to find it uninteresting, even to *dislike* it. They work for a while. Pauline leads and instructs, Sarah follows, nods and takes instructions. She is compliant and concentrated, but not eager. When they finish up, Pauline says: "I think this piece suits you very well, don't you?" Sarah smiles and answers with a plain "yes". *(Fieldnotes)*

Scene 2, interview

Sarah: I guess it's weird but I don't *like* classical music (laughs). If the concerts were all classical, I wouldn't have enjoyed them as much. […] I play classical music here, and I play classical music in my orchestra, I know it sounds weird… But I feel that, ah, I don't *understand* that [music] in a way. It gives me *nothing* back, if you understand. I, well, I have much more fun when I play folk music, and I'm like… another type. *(Interview)*

Having studied the violin in the municipal culture school since childhood, Sarah is entirely indigenous to the main instrument lesson as practiced in Musikklinja. She has attended similar lessons hundreds of times. Violin teachers' styles and approaches have varied, I suppose. Yet, the classical violin lesson follows recognizable norms and conventions of musical master-apprentice learning practices in which expert and learner meet in a suitable location and practice a suitable repertoire, the expert listening, adjusting, providing advice and giving instructions for further practice, the learner obliged to follow up, both in and between lessons. In fact, all Musikklinja main instrument lessons seem to be carried out in accordance with this scheme; one-to-one, in a quiet rehearsal room, the master mastering, the learner learning. But while the situation may be new to several of the guitarists, bass players, drummers, singers even, upon entering Musikklinja, Sarah can rely on twelve years of routine. She knows how to perform properly as a main instrument subject. Indeed, having heard her complain about how she dislikes classical music, I am surprised at how apparently wholeheartedly she submits to the discourses setting her up as the classical violinist apprentice. To begin with, she is ready to start long before her teacher arrives; violin, scores, music stand ready. Unlike her folk rock ensemble performance – swivelling in her chair, keeping her huge jacket on, chewing her gum and leaving her untuned violin in the case until being prodded (by Hannah or Henry) to take it up – she is perfectly present, prettily dressed and ready with her instrument upon Pauline's arrival. She is not leaving her master waiting, she is not wasting her master's time, she is ready to take her master's advice. While she may be dissatisfied with her playing or sorry to hit the wrong notes, she refrains completely from excusing herself. No master is interested in excuses and how you *really* would have played if not for lack of practice time, having been ill, or your sore index finger. When you attend the class, or studio lesson, of a master, your point of departure is how you perform here and now. Playing, Sarah holds her body to the ideal of the classical violinist. She does not bend her knees, swing around, dance about, sing along, or stamp her feet. She follows the conventions of violin sound aesthetics, as well as the score instructions and her teacher's suggestions. And, she performs core objects in the violin educational literature, a Kreuzer study, a Bruch piece, a Wieniawski duet; working with fingerings and strokes that have been delivered from teacher to student over three hundred years.

Pauline the violin teacher confirms and supports Sarah's performance of the classical violin 'main instrument subject'. This is a subject she knows, and the subject she expects to meet when going to her teaching studio. It is a

subject anchored in performance traditions, in well established categories and conventions designating what is good/excellent, suitable, renowned and worth one's while, and positioned in an infinite row of learners becoming masters starting long before Kreuzer and stretching far into the future. In cooperation with her apprentice, she cites and enacts a violin main instrument subject position already established in music educational practice; a subject position from which to expect certain actions and towards which certain actions are appropriate. Neither master nor learner explores the borders or pushes the limits of such a subject's actions, rather, they enact and reinforce power/knowledge relations constituting its core repertoire.

Now, with a music education researcher in the room, Pauline is proud to recognize Sarah with what I understand to be a high mark of assessment, thus confirming her student's excellent performance of the main instrument subject. However, while Sarah accepts Pauline's recognition with a smile, she is less interested in being thus recognized when I interview her some weeks later. On the contrary, on the grounds of neither *understanding* nor *liking* classical music, she insists that it gives her "nothing back". She'd rather be "another type" (scene 2), more like what she experiences herself to be when playing folk music. Later in the interview, she argues in a similar vein:

> Sarah: it's difficult to put it into words, but I guess I recognize myself more in [folk music], so I can put more into it too. Compared to classical music. […] It's the music itself, I feel – I know it's up to me, what I do with the piece, but I feel it's more…decided, like, systematically in a way.
>
> Live: yes. It's a sheet with music…?
>
> Sarah: like, Vivaldi, baroque music and that sort of thing, it's really…yes (laughs)
>
> Live: you are given a 'systematics'?
>
> Sarah: yes. Just like that.
>
> Live: 'this is the way to do it'?
>
> Sarah: yes. And that's – too boring for me, I cannot make it my own. *(Interview)*

Thus, Sarah constructs folk music and classical music as two different practices, the first offers her a way of being and playing that corresponds to some 'real' self, the other represents a learned way of being and playing that she performs despite her feeling of being estranged by it. While she can "recognize herself" in folk music, classical music gives her "*nothing* back". While she can "put more into" folk music, classical music is too "systematically decided" for her to make it her own. She is perfectly aware that what she says sounds "weird"

(*scene 2)*, "stupid really" (*group interview)*, considering her background and her achievements within the practices of classical music. She knows what she is expected to do upon entering Musikklinja, what path of progress she is expected to follow. However, this is not what she wants to do, what she likes, or the "type" she is. When I tell Sarah how incredulous this sounds to me, and how convincing a classical violinist I find her to be, she shrugs pragmatically and says that she knows what looks amateurish and what looks more proper; she has played for twelve years.

Taking her pragmatism at face value, her performance of the classical main instrument subject could be interpreted as an act in the more traditional meaning of the word, a 'submission through pretence' or 'hidden resistance', or a temporary deference of her own mastery. Or, I could take her convincing performance of the classical violinist apprentice and apparent emotional and personal investment in the music she expresses at face value, interpreting her interview efforts as a similar act: in conversations with a researcher Sarah installs a frame of reference that emphasizes her uniqueness and complexity, and positions her closer to the informal world of ensemble formation that the researcher seems so fascinated by. Rather than the one being an act covering another 'true' disposition however, I suggest we understand the various performative acts of Sarah as reciprocally dependent, the one rendering the other one possible. I will explain what I mean by this. While Sarah knows that she gives a satisfactory performance of the violin main instrument subject, she is also aware that she might not have what it takes to follow the path laid out for her all the way into a violinist carrier. She is not going to be a musician, she says. A few years back, she auditioned for a talent programme without being accepted:

> Sarah: I wasn't accepted. At first, I was cast down you know, but now I'm glad I didn't make it 'cause it wouldn't have been right for me. The pressure would have been even worse. I don't know what kind of milieu they have there, but I feel that it's all about being the 'best'. *(Interview)*

Sarah's problem, however, is that there seems to be no alternative trajectory to that of the ever improving, specialized classical violinist. The repertoire rewards her dedication and keeps her on course, refining, specializing and increasing her skills. Her teacher is kind, able and experienced, but sees no other trajectory for her student than specialization and refinement. While playing the violin – and playing it well – remains a performative act of great significance for her, and the violin an important means of subjectivation, it keeps positioning her on that one trajectory, leading, ultimately, nowhere. Neither is the option of

"folk music" a real alternative. She lacks the proper background and the proper experience to be one of the genre tradition bearers. Thus, we could understand Sarah's efforts in the interview as performative acts citing and instigating a different play belonging to "another type" of player altogether. This other main instrument subject would be free to use her qualifications across genres and practices, following her desires of "putting more into it" and "getting more out of it" without committing to a certain style or repertoire. Choosing the folk rock group over the chamber ensembles (and participating in a few other projects of Oliver's) similarly contributes to constituting the possibility of a violin main instrument subject with a scope of action less bound up with the never ending struggle for specialized perfection. Since this practice of the violin main instrument subject is lacking in Musikklinja, Sarah stays on the track offered her. However, what initially reads as a wholehearted submission to discourses of specialization may on second thoughts be read as a performative act in which Sarah recognizes and redeems prevailing discourses in the relation with Pauline (submission) and simultaneously enacts an alternative discourse of violin musicianship in relation to herself (mastery).

### 7.4.2 A bass lesson

Episode 17: Adrian, electric bass.

Jack the bass teacher sits on the piano stool, bass in his lap, black jeans, black t-shirt. Adrian (also in black, as usual) is on a chair facing him. He is enthusiastically talking of a song he's going to play, the "Glasgow kiss" by John Petrucci. Jack: "What genre is it?" Playing it from his phone, Adrian picks an air bass before taking his instrument in his lap. "Yeah" Jack says, "it won't be just a side-project for you then. Cool, I really need to get this record!" Adrian changes the topic, telling Jack about today's house concert and how he was "really pissed off!" Jack agrees. Speaking like a news reporter he says: "had been practicing – his mate stole the song". They tune their instruments.

Jack: "Ok. This is what we do today. We must practice a situation: the term exam interpretation assignment. I need to check you out to know what to give you. It'll be similar to "Spread your love around", standard, a page with keynotes and harmonization. You'll play walking bass." Adrian has been paying attention, but he's still more interested in the Glasgow kiss: "shall I get my PC and run the song while I play?" "Glasgow?" Jack says. Adrian: "Yes, and Spread the love around?" He seems eager to show Jack what he can do. Jack sticks to his agenda though, and they fall into a discussion of how Adrian performed "Spread the love" in the previous Musikklinja concert. "It wasn't…It wasn't quite by the *notes*" Adrian admits. "I used six pages of tabs…" "You'd benefit from mastering notes better if

> you want to have the bass as your profession" Jack replies. "If you're playing in a big band, you need to be a *machine*, that's just the way it is." He leafs through a book with lead sheets: "when you play from a lead sheet you need to interpret the music yourself. What about this one?" Adrian: "I was thinking, maybe we could work a bit more on the walking bass?" Jack continues without responding: "for the swing bass, you needn't necessarily do like…" He plays the piano, very well. Adrian falls against the back of his chair: "'Cause I wouldn't stand a chance!" "You could rather do like…" Jack plays again. He starts questioning Adrian on the chord symbols. Adrian answers quickly but he makes a lot of mistakes. Jack: "You need to think like this: what do I not understand here? I *don't* want to get you *stuck* for an interpretation assignment!"
>
> They try out different songs for the rest of the lesson, Jack demonstrating from the piano, Adrian trying to follow on the bass. He is concentrated, asks questions and plays without being prompted. "No!" Jack shouts in the middle of a song, "Swing! You are playing *bossa*. We did this before!" He sounds irritated and impatient. "There was a *lot* of swing on Sunday." Adrian looks puzzled: "wasn't that disco?" Jack: "Marcus played swing, you heard of swing?" Adrian: "Walking bass?" Jack, annoyed: "the *style* is called 'swing', "walking bass" isn't a *style*!" They keep trying out different songs, clapping rhythms, practicing bass lines and figuring out the meaning of chord symbols and numbers. While he follows up on every instruction and suggestion his teacher offers, Adrian has lost the energy and enthusiasm he started out with. When Jack finds yet another song – how about this one? This is a bit like what you can expect to be given? – Adrian exclaims: "I *never* played slow, *never* played slow, I only played heavy, all my life!" *(Fieldnotes)*

In general, Adrian's main instrument lesson follows a similar pattern of one-to-one master-apprentice learning as Sarah's (section 7.4.1). Like Pauline the violin teacher, Jack is an able master. Pauline positions herself as a master *teacher* in the long tradition of classical violin masters and apprentices, referring to previous teaching successes for support. Jack, however, positions himself as one of the "machines" of the profession, a master *craftsman*, displaying as well as referring to skills and competences needed to have the bass as one's profession. What is 'taught' by both masters are musical traditions, objects, skills and competences that the teachers and the discourses governing the respective instrument tradition hold to be proper objects of learning. In the fieldnote excerpts presented in the above and in section 7.4.1, a difference could be pointed to with regard to the two practices' emphasis on 'pieces' of music, standard musical works through which students are supposed to develop. Sarah's lesson is organized around three acknowledged works of art that she needs to play in order to develop her musicianship across a number of areas, technical and musical. Adrian's lesson is organized around the musical

conventions, genres, patterns, techniques and skills he needs to master in order to *learn and play* acknowledged works. The violin apprentice is subjected to and through a certain repertoire, the bass apprentice is subjected to and through a certain set of skills and knowledges.

The growing irritation of Jack – "we did this before!" – indicates that the various styles and genres of bass playing are a recurrent topic, as are Adrian's shortcomings confronted with the lead sheet. Having said that, it's important to emphasize how Musikklinja curricula and assessment practices regulate main instrument master-apprentice lessons by partly outlining, partly deciding, aims and goals, contents and methods that both teacher and learner must relate to. In the case of Adrian, the upcoming interpretation assignment directs the lesson's focus towards techniques and skills needed for the task at hand. Indeed, my impression is that other lessons could very well differ in this regard, rather making a piece of music to be learned the centre of attention, similar to what Adrian suggests with the "Glasgow Kiss". Musikklinja term exams also demand the display of mastered musical objects, selected in agreement with main instrument teachers. Compared to Pauline however, Jack allows and enacts a far greater overlap between his student's informal practices of musicianship and the formalized practice of main instrument through the one-to-one master-apprentice setting. He recognizes Adrian's various projects in and out of school and grants them legitimacy, converting the "Glasgow Kiss" from a "side-project" of Adrian's to a piece of work for upcoming main instrument lessons. He acknowledges the importance of getting in a position to play and Adrian's disappointment at his friend "stealing the song" – whether it meant taking centre stage, stealing the solo part or cheating him of the gig altogether. Adrian, for his part, submits to the categories and definitions constituting the bass main instrument subject as imposed on him by Jack and by Musikklinja curricula even while articulating his own interests and agendas. Now, the previous section discussed how Sarah searched for another repertoire and another practice in which to play it to constitute herself as "another type" of player. She assumes an already discursively established main instrument subjectivity in her relationship with Pauline, but runs a parallel track for herself in search of alternative ways of performing. Adrian however seems to operate on one trajectory exclusively, on which he tries to *merge* different aspects and practices of his bass musicianship, new and old, formal and informal. He is trying to make Musikklinja fit him, but also to make himself fit Musikklinja. Thus, he needs to be the *owner* of the main instrument lesson, the synthesizing subject. While Sarah keeps her distance, performing the main instrument

subject through compliance but passivity, Adrian tries to constitute himself *as* the bass main instrument subject *in* the lesson: bringing his music, asking questions, suggesting activities and actively imposing his playing upon Jack's. When Adrian fails to emerge as master though, gradually getting replaced by an imagined main instrument subject who knows the difference between swing and bossa, who knows that walking bass isn't a style and who plays from a lead sheet without the need of tablatures, he resigns to a more defensive stance and gives up his project of reconstituting himself: he *never* ever played "slow", he only played heavy. A metal bassist, he never practiced the skills Jack expects him to display. He surrenders, gives up his claims of mastery and accepts a position as an inferior by citing his lack of the proper experience and hence the lack of fit between himself and Musikklinja.

One of the main tensions leading to Adrian's surrender, as I understand it, is the disparity between his already established strategies of learning, preparing and playing, and the strategies held in esteem by both Musikklinja and his professional "machine" bass teacher. In the fieldnote excerpt (episode 17), Jack even interprets Adrian's tablature approach to repertoire as an obstacle to potential professionalism, that is; Adrian's way of learning is the amateur's and the immature's way. Six pages of instrument fingering is not quite "by the notes" as Adrian himself puts it, and does not develop or display your musicianship like working by a lead sheet does; demanding you "interpret the music for yourself". While the bass and the violin lesson in many respects differ, it seems they have something important in common: both practices take as their subject a main instrument apprentice situated on the trajectory leading *through* Musikklinja and into professional musical life, applying criteria of musicianship from its destination to the process of traveling. When Jack pushes these criteria through, devaluing the use of tabs rather than rewarding Adrian for his conscientious transcription from notation into tablature (with the help of computer software), the success Adrian experienced with "Spread the love around" is lessened, lowered. And when Jack leafs through the book of standards, displaying his expertise on the piano as well as the bass, lowering his ambitions for every leaf, the distance Adrian performatively needs to bridge to keep in the game becomes too great. Throughout the lesson, he has performed as the 'main instrument subject' by articulating the expectations and categories imposed with initiatives and competences already mastered, shifting both sides slightly. In the end though, the discursive distance between the two sides gets to big for him to make the articulation, and resignation takes over. The statement below is offered me when I talk to him right after the lesson:

> Adrian: when I play jazz with Jack and that sort of thing, I feel I cannot *do* it. I *can't*, I don't know what to do. So I just sit there, feeling…well, I don't know, like I "can't" *(interview)*.

In the interview, Adrian performs as resignedly as he does towards the end of the bass lesson. When all is said and done, he takes up a position on the outside, unassailable, unchallengeable and unchangeable. He simply "can't". The main instrument subject that is within his reach is not the subject that main instrument practice prefers. Worth emphasizing here is that neither Jack nor Musikklinja assessment practice find Adrian a poor bass player. On the contrary, Jack's frustration could well stem from a fear of getting a good student "stuck" in an interpretation assignment. Musikklinja term exams keeps favouring Adrian's performance, emphasizing his playing then and there rather than how he got there and how long it took him. For Adrian however, what he "can't" outweighs what he "can" in the main instrument lesson and installs in him a sense of inadequacy and insufficiency.

Now, we could very well imagine a more pragmatically organized main instrument practice in Musikklinja that kept within schedules and everyday Musikklinja life and focused on enabling subjects' participation across a range of various musical constellations and events in all ways possibly, rather than stretching their capacities to their uttermost governed by ideas of professionalism and specialization. Such a practice would help Adrian get in the right positions to play, plan for his repertoire schedule and avoid activities and approaches that would take too much time compared to how much there would be to gain. Repeatedly stating that Musikklinja isn't what he *thought* it would be – a *music* school with more bass playing, more of the music he loves to play and less theory *(interview)* – this is the main instrument practice he might have expected upon entering. Instead, his meeting with Musikklinja and the bass lesson undermines what he already knows, and replaces it with theory, music and activities he never thought were part of the deal.

### 7.4.3 A singing lesson

> Episode 18: Molly, singing lesson
>
> When I ask Molly if I can sit in on her singing lesson, she jumps: "ah, yes, no, well ok, you can come, well, okay then!" We walk to the studio, and I take a chance: "could I also join you for your piano lesson today?" Molly: "You certainly can't! I didn't practice anything, no, most certainly not, you can't!" I smile at her: "Okay, I won't. Some other time, maybe?" Elise is already there. Molly addresses her, eyes

> wide, in her somewhat manic fashion: "I have four instrumental lessons today, on one day – I'm starting with the double bass today too; my first lesson!" Elise looks at her: "four instrumental lessons in one day? But then, I don't think it's a good idea for you, to start yet *another* thing, do you have time for all this?" Molly: "Yes, well, It's too late now, anyway. We already agreed." Elise: "You know, I think that's really stupid of you, but it's your problem, I'll keep my mouth shut." She holds up a music sheet: "what do you want to sing today? This one?" Molly looks at it: "that's boring." Elise: "boring!?" Molly: "I mean, it's nice to listen to, but boring to sing." Elise, a bit taken aback: "...then what do you want? Something rhythmical?" Molly: "You decide, I trust you, you're the teacher, you are smarter than me." Elise: "I can teach you how to sing. I can teach you how to use your body. But I know you sing better when you are motivated. Okay. Let's do the warm ups."
>
> The warm-ups are traditional vocalizations over various intervals and scales. Facing the mirror, Elise exaggerates the sound she wants, working with her whole body, grimacing to illustrate her instructions. At her side, flushed and repeatedly stating that she can't do it and that it sounds terrible, Molly nevertheless sings the various exercises without needing to be prodded. She keeps in focus and learns rapidly. After a while, even the self-criticism stops, and she concentrates completely on learning a song Elise has found for her, the jazz standard "For Heaven's Sake (Let's Fall in Love)". Elise accompanies from the piano, encourages and instructs, Molly sings every phrase even more expressively as she learns it. Well off into the rehearsal, she has made her typical transition from acting tense and stressed to behaving like a serious and focused professional. She takes responsibility, sings even while Elise instructs, she repeats, starts again, asks a question, plays a few notes in the piano upper register. Elise looks up at her: "well? Yes?" Molly smiles: "I like it". Elise: "you need to go now for your piano lesson?" Molly: "it's not until two." They keep working past scheduled time, both of them seemingly enjoying themselves. *(Fieldnotes)*

Molly is a pianist. Or, 'piano' is what she is registered with as main instrument and the instrument on which she auditioned to get in. However, I tried negotiating access to her piano main instrument lesson for two months without any luck. While Molly makes quite a point of her poor piano performance in conversations (including a group interview), joking about the lack of effort she puts into practicing and laughingly feeling sorry for her teacher, she panics at the thought of exposing herself to me in an actual master-apprentice situation ("you can't!"). Indeed, considering how nonchalantly and carelessly she goes about her piano business, her absolute refusal (occurring several times) and panicked hostility surprises me. I *did* get access to a student-led piano duet rehearsal with Sophie and Molly and spent an hour observing them doubling up with laughter, ridiculing their own efforts on the piano, ensuring each other that neither of them had practiced, expressing their sympathy with the poor ensemble teacher who would have to listen to their crap, and generally having

a great time. In neither girl's performance though could I find any objection to, or criticism of, the demands and expectations imposed on them as piano main instrument subjects. Quite the contrary, the girls acknowledged these demands and expectations while at the same time situating them with the competent, dedicated, motivated and specialized classical pianist apprentice – a subject position they abnegated through ridicule and self-irony. I can imagine, however, that Molly's main instrument lesson with Joseph, one of the grand masters of Musikklinja, would display another dynamic. Rather than abnegate the classical pianist apprentice position, Molly would probably have to act the part at least temporarily, subjecting her full playing, feeling and thinking self to the power/knowledge relations constructing them. And I assume that her submission to a regime in which she is bound to act out, performatively, *failure*, with small chances of redeeming herself through ridicule or other strategies of mastery, is something she would like to keep from the observing researcher.

Singing though is an activity that for Molly carries the potential of performing masterfully, successfully and well within the discursive borders of Musikklinja. While the piano may be her formal main instrument, she is certainly recognized as a singer in the lounge discourses of music and on the informal carousel of ensemble playing. Being a pianist, she has taken the opportunity of continuing her song second instrument lessons (where others are obliged to study the piano), this year with Elise as her teacher. The power/knowledge relations constituting their master-apprenticeship are as complex as I found them to be in the "Miserere" rehearsal (section 7.3.3). Consider the interaction ending the first part of the above field excerpt. The song Elise suggests for today's rehearsal has apparently been introduced at a previous lesson. Molly, however, dismisses it as soon as she recognizes it ("boring"), jerking Elise out of the plan she seems to have ready. When Elise somewhat puzzled accepts her objection and asks "what she wants", Molly offers a statement that may read like a declaration of confidence, but that sounded and felt like a challenge, an attack even, in the context: "You decide, I trust you, you're the teacher, you are smarter than me." Through a performative act similar to the question of "Am I taking over from you?" in the "Miserere" rehearsal, Molly submits to, while simultaneously subverting, the discourse of teacher superiority. Reminding Elise that she is the teacher, the smarter one, she cites and reconstitutes her puzzled question as a pitiful blunder, an embarrassing exposure of inadequacy. Moreover, the statement emphasizes the discursive distance between herself and Elise: Elise is the *teacher*, not one of the singers Molly admires, not a peer, and not a friend. It's the 'teachership' of Elise, not the musicianship, Molly

is obliged to trust. And as teacher, her contribution is only to some extent applicable and legitimate within the lounge discourses of musicianship and informal ensemble formation that house Molly's singing. Recognizing the challenge from Molly, Elise easily exchange her forthcoming and democratic style for the performance of 'teacher as master', declaring in an almost theatrical way that "I can teach you how to sing. I can teach you how to use your body." One may legitimately wonder why Molly pushes her singing lesson in the direction of a more traditional, authoritative master-apprentice learning situation. Her performance in the individual interview may help us understand:

> Molly: singing, that's just something I can do, no matter what. But the other day I got a long speech from Elise. It was really weird, she was almost angry because – I don't care that much what she says, she says a lot of things, it's hard to follow her when she talks 'cause she talks (laughs) so much, and she has all these strange theories and, yes, I feel she's dawdling really, that she never decided on a way to teach but improvises as she goes and it's all a jumble, too much to understand. I just play along saying "yes, yes, ok, well all right". She felt I was being superficial, which was true really, she felt I didn't really care about what she said. *(Interview)*

The teaching practice of Elise may be more open, less formal and more dependent on students' initiatives, wishes and contributions than Molly expects from a master. Where William, the choir leader, performs with a classic male conductor authority that guarantees superior musicianship, Elise is "dawdling", "never decided", "improvising" and offering "strange theories" in a "jumble" rather than running a tight, planned schedule to impose her superior musical regime on an expectant apprentice. With Elise's fragmented, hesitant, exploring mastery, Molly finds it difficult to perform the apprentice, to "trust" her master. What Molly trusts is her own *singing*, her vocal strategies of negotiation already established. Contrary to piano playing, singing is "something she can do, no matter what". "Caring" more for Elise's advice would entail destabilizing already functional performative strategies, and it would indeed take the undisputed master Molly cites in her challenge ("You decide, I trust you, you're the teacher, you are smarter than me") to make her do it.

"Playing along" with Elise, Molly soon enough engages herself more wholeheartedly in what they are doing, though. Flushed, embarrassed, refusing to acknowledge the usefulness of sounding "terrible", she still accepts the programme of Elise the teacher, dutifully following the conventions of one-to-one instrumental learning. And, similar to the "Miserere" rehearsal, the space of action that emerges from having positioned a responsible teacher in charge but not promised to "care" for her advice enables Molly to submit, 'carelessly',

while attaining mastery without risk. She does not claim ownership before she is on her way to mastery. Moreover, the *music* in question also seems to offer her a technology of self-mastery, mediating what is offered her by Elise. Molly gradually takes ownership of both music and interaction, performatively claiming legitimate music student subjecthood for herself through phrases that are mastered more fully for every repetition. And from directly and physically adjusting Molly's efforts in the warm up, Elise withdraws to encourage and facilitate Molly's own strategies of learning.

What Elise does *not* encourage however is Molly's dispersion of her capacity, energy and interest over several fields of musicianship. For Molly, singing represents her main approach to musical performance in Musikklinja. She keeps initiating various vocal projects, and she performs occasionally with a choir outside school. However, while she has stated that she wants to change her main instrument for song, the piano is still her formal main instrument, with all the duties and obligations that entails. In addition she plays the guitar and the ukulele, and she has taken up the saxophone again, having played for a few years previous to Musikklinja. Now, she wants to start playing the double bass. In Elise's opinion, this is *not* a good idea, on the contrary it's "really stupid". Following the discourse of specialization, prominent also in the main instrument practices of Sarah and Adrian, students are expected to prioritize their main instrument. And according to the discourse of the general study workload of MDD students, there's already too little time to practice and perfect one's main instrument skills; indeed, this is a discursive fact so significant that it governs current debates on upper secondary programmes in music (see section 8.3.1).

While the lounge discourses of dedication and connoisseurship acknowledge students' mastery of several instruments, interest in several genres and familiarity with several practices, the Musikklinja assessment system, schedule and curricula hardly appreciate multi-instrumentalism and a broad rather than specialized form of musicianship. Molly's unwillingness to save herself for song (or piano) only is easily interpreted as an indication of her haphazard, disorganized, carelessness, a lack of ability to concentrate on the task at hand, a lack of *seriousness*.

### 7.4.4 Specialization and main instrument (summary)

A major aspect in the discursive formation of musicianship in Musikklinja is, I would say, *specialization*. While the discourses of *dedication* and *competence* certainly value versatility and flexibility, ability on several instruments and in several genres, and a passion and enthusiasm for music that crosses musical arenas and activities, main instrument is practiced as absolute specialization. Students are taught and formally evaluated for their performance on one instrument (percussion excepted) exclusively. Following a practice of master-apprentice learning modelled on Western art music education traditions, main instrument tuition is realized as one-to-one instruction with an emphasis on the single student's development along a trajectory that ideally leads to expertise. Indeed, the *trajectory of specialization* could be regarded a core Musikklinja power/knowledge *technology of the self*, discursively imposed, together with the position of the *main instrument subject*, as a correct means of working oneself through Musikklinja as the successful, happy, ethically responsible participant.

Formalized and scheduled, this technology of the self applies to all Musikklinja student participants. In section 7.4, we saw that both Sarah and Molly are interested in constructing *alternative trajectories* on which a diversity of musical activities and interests are more equally emphasized, trajectories that do not legitimize themselves by aiming for professional musicianship. However, the discourse of specialization was actively imposed by their teachers to secure a continued focus on assumed 'specialities'. Notions of a 'main' speciality (even if this in Molly's case is her 'second' instrument) keep positioning the girls on a path of progress that leads them in a very specific direction and that may block other opportunities along the way. In Adrian's bass lesson, curricular regulations of assessment enforce a focus on skills and competences needed to perform as the professional bass "machine". The discourse of *specialization*, in this case, is realized as assumptions of acquiring the specialist's approach, and constitutes Adrian's competences and strategies of learning as the amateur's, even the amateur music student's.

Sarah, Adrian and Molly go about performing the 'main instrument subject' as imposed somewhat differently. They submit to the discourse of specialization, accepting and acknowledging the main instrument subject they "should have been". But whereas Sarah responds by constituting two *parallel trajectories* of importance, deferring the one while following the other, Adrian's strategy seems to be to *merge* tracks, *adapting discourses* to fit one another. He works hard to stay in a position of ownership, from where he can influence the aims,

activities and ambitions of the lesson, and *resigns* when finding himself in a peripheral position. Through ridicule and irony, Molly renders harmless the discourses constructing her main (piano) musicianship as insufficient and redeems herself as a proper subject. And whereas Sarah cites and enacts the violinist apprentice position offered without subverting it, Molly subverts the power/knowledge relations constituting her song lesson to support her entrepreneurial version of the main instrument subject. Placing Elise in a position of teacher superiority rather than friendly colleague, she creates the necessary discursive distance to enable her to learn from Elise without subjecting herself fully to the responsibilities of the specialist or expert.

## 7.5 Concerts and auditions

Episode 10: House concert, the auditorium

On my way to the auditorium to observe the preparations for todays house concert, I meet Mia and Julia in the corridor. They are wearing tiny mini-skirts, white blouses and pigtails. When I smilingly comment on their smashing looks, they tell me "It's only for the concert! You know, we don't go around like this every day!" "Unfortunately" Julia adds.

Entering the auditorium through the back door, I find the room to be very busy. Students are rigging equipment, preparing the black box, testing microphones and adjusting amplifiers. Daniel is one of them, he walks around, talking, smiling, helping out and eating his lunch pack. On stage is Henry, all ready to play, a bass guitar strapped over his shoulders. He looks eagerly out over the galleries. Others are just wandering about: Elliot, in a signal yellow bow tie. Oliver too, up and down the gallery, in and out the door. He is in black and white, so are Alice and Caroline. Oliver's tie is crooked, purposefully so I guess. I notice that Molly also looks different today. Her hair is carefully combed, shiny and straight; it hangs prettily over her shoulders instead of being pinned up in a tousled bundle on the top of her head. The grand piano is brought out from the adjacent studio. I wonder if she's going to play, I didn't see the list for signing up, but it would indeed surprise me. A group of third years sit in the gallery eating. It smells of baked potatoes. I seat myself a few rows down from them.

Hannah and Adam the guitar teacher arrive through the same door as me; Hannah with an open packet of sandwiches in her hand. Adam starts assisting students with their sound check. Hannah munches her lunch, answers questions and shouts instructions, and sips coffee from a thermo cup. She is in her regular outfit; jeans and sneakers, looking very much like one of her students.

Behind me, a couple of boys discuss the sound of the bass drum, and how to do a count off. One of them sings a groove, it's "the hard part to manage" he sighs.

Another boy says: "It's my first time playing at a house concert". "Me too" the reply comes. "Like, Daniel, he's at them all. Bit annoying really."

Now, the audience is pouring into the auditorium. It's one of the "open" house concerts I understand, attracting students and teachers from all Upper Secondary. The room gets packed immediately. Henry has been standing ready on stage for a while now. He is tripping with impatience. "Henry, play Hysteria!" someone calls from the audience. John arrives by the back door at the last minute, and takes the seat to the left of me. The lights are dimmed, just some stage light is left, and Hannah announces that the last house concert of the year is on.

Henry and his band can get finally get going. They are a mix of first, second and third years: Simon's on lead vocals, and he has with him one of the highly admired guitarists at school. A boy I never saw in concert before plays the drums, he might be the one I heard talking of the drum groove. I wonder how Henry came into this constellation. They play a rock song I don't recognize, with a very cool guitar solo. The room is surprisingly quiet during their performance, but when they finish the audience applauds and cheers.

Mia and Charles get on stage without being announced. Molly is with them, and Lukas too, on a melodica. A boy plays an acoustic guitar. "This is yet to be released", Charles tells us, "but it's a song from [local band]". As he sits down by the grand piano, he puts a crumpled sheet of paper inside it, on which is written some kind of notation. John points to his sheet, and leans over to me: "informal learning within the frames of formal learning, that's the only thing that works. I have no idea how these constellations meet! This is entrepreneurship, I can tell you." Mia is wearing a size-too-big square patterned shirt over her mini-skirt now, she sings with a nice, somewhat rusty voice. Molly does the backing vocals, calm and professional in the concert situation as usual, singing really well and expressively. Considering her whimsical, impulsive style outside of the concert situation, I'm (as always) surprised by her concentration, and her intense presence when performing. John is too, obviously: "whatever shall I do with gifted scatterbrains like Molly?" he says happily. "She's phenomenal in composition class too, but she doesn't know what she's doing at all". When the girls and their band have finished, the audience again cheers, loudly this time, whistling and applauding. Molly smiles, and makes a pleased little bow.

Michael's next, he is doing lead vocals today and he is all excuses: it's not, as earlier announced, Ethan on the guitar, he doesn't have the text; they're having some trouble with the sound. But when they finally get going, Daniel hitting the drums and the two guitarists starting to swing their instruments over their heads, the audience immediately breaks into cheers. Daniel is all smiles, steady as usual, and the lead guitarist, an impressive speed player in the first year, gives us what we want. Michael manages well even without his text, (however, he seems a bit uncomfortable, keeping his arms crossed over his chest). Much laughter and

> smiles both on stage and in the audience, lots of whooping and hooting when they are done.
>
> The shouting continues as the black and white crew comes on stage: "Jimmy, you're clever!" "Jimmy, Jimmy!" ("He's the son of [local musician], John tells me). "Michael's gold!" someone shouts as Michael takes over the drums. Together, they are a surprising lot: Oliver the folk music fiddler on the piano, Jimmy on the bass. Alice and Caroline, usually playing the flute and the euphonium, are doing backing vocals, Elliot too. With Mia and Julia in the lead – whom I never saw together before, either on or off stage – they perform Britney Spears' debut single "...Baby one more time"; complete with choreography, pouting mouths, the whole sexy schoolgirl look. They all seem to enjoy themselves immensely. Mia and Julia especially seem to love what they are doing. Oliver's foot is rocking by the piano, and John leans over to me again, laughing: "this is the real aim of keyboard harmony – being able to play at parties!". Oliver comes up to us when the concert has finished. "That was great Oliver!" John says. Oliver: "bah, no one heard me" John: "oh yes, we heard you. Especially me, I heard you". *(Fieldnotes)*

### 7.5.1 A house concert

House concerts are regular events in Musikklinja, scheduled across the semesters. Some of them are "closed", meant for a Musikklinja audience only. As a general rule, the closed concerts are "teacher-led" – they are at the disposal of (main instrument) teachers to see that their students have some stage-experience, allowing them to try out repertoire for the first time or rehearse an exam/concert programme. Students sign up on the lounge notice board list and play at their teacher's suggestion. Attending a closed concert, I found room lights to be kept on, and the audience – Musikklinja students and teachers – seated at the same side of the auditorium as when having choir rehearsals. Hannah led the closed session, telling us that: "this is his last performance before the Christmas church concert" and "the second years are having their term exams next week". The above episode (10) though is from one of the "open" or "official" house concerts. Open concerts are student-led, a programme of 30-40 minutes filled by whoever and whatever initiative is taken on the lounge notice board list. These are very popular events in Upper Secondary, attracting students and teachers across all programmes as well as every music student and most regular music teachers. The room is packed and darkened, stage lights are on, the air is denser and the show-factor considerably higher. Having announced the start of the concert, Hannah retreats to the audience, available if someone needs assistance (tuning, adjusting sound, rigging equipment) but leaving it up to the performers to announce what they will be playing.

Observing the concert preparations, I'm struck by the various acts of appropriation that are going on. Students seem to work hard to 'own' the room and render the situation commonplace, setting themselves up as natural masters of the upcoming event in different ways. Most obviously, they walk about, crossing the floor several times, wandering in between the gallery aisles, covering the room with their bodies, breathing its air, taking in its space. Regularly scheduled, house concerts are nothing out of the ordinary, on the contrary, they are part of what music students do and are expected to do. The open events invite the rest of Upper Secondary to get a glimpse of that everyday practice, thus, the native, self-assured practitioner may be one of the more obvious subject positions available. Hannah, teacher of production management, certainly acts her part; casually dressed, bringing her lunch, sipping her coffee like there was nothing at stake. The third years in the upper gallery too are having their lunch in the auditorium. They remind me of the Cafe/Rock concert audition I observed in the auditorium some weeks back, an appointed panel of third years making quite a number of ordering pizzas and sharing them while on jury duty. Hungry? Yes, probably. But the act of eating in the gallery does additional performative work: it makes it possible for students to emerge as masters (eating one's food casually in front of nervous auditioners), owners (eating despite the rule that says "do not eat in the auditorium") and professionals (eating like the busy touring musician, even like a panel of IDOL judges in between hours of auditions), much like Hannah does when breaking the same rule. The act is facilitated by the Musikklinja discourse of a "working environment", in which the dynamics of informal learning practices and/or professional musical collaboration replaces the intentional and the "school-like". A musician's practice trumps 'schoolish' rules of behaviour and order. Moreover, like eating on a plane, eating on stage adds a layer of easy routine and infuses the extraordinary with the ordinary. Daniel too, carries his lunch pack around. He talks to everyone, walks with ease and acts like this is a routine event. And in fact, it might be. As the two boys behind me notice: Daniel is "at them all". He played at almost every concert I ever saw in Musikklinja. Him eating his lunch, helping someone here, joking with someone there, carrying and rigging cables, drums and amplifiers adds to the impression that this is home ground for him, he walks the room with ease and familiarity, and behaves like a professional. And the often cited, established discursive fact that Daniel is "at them all" keeps strengthening and consolidating his position as a native, self-assured practitioner, a master participant and preferred drummer. For other students, less frequent participants in house concerts, his mastery and

ownership may be "irritating" indeed: with every new performance, his position is consolidated and his ways of participation confirmed; overshadowing or even concealing alternative positions and ways of participation. The discourses supporting Daniel's participation – professionalism, craftsmanship and experience – are cited and inscribed anew, again and again, at the expense of, we could assume, other discourses legitimizing participation: equal opportunities, fun and individual development. The legitimate participation of Daniel may hence undermine the legitimate participation of others, making it harder for them to get in a position in which their presence can be consolidated and secured.

Henry is *not* eating his lunch pack. And neither does he give the impression of easiness and routine. Rather, his way of mastering the expectations of native, self-assured participation is to be, as always, prepared to his teeth and on his toes, ready for whatever might turn up. His instrument and equipment already in order, he has positioned himself on the spot where he is supposed to stand when performing. Even if Henry too is one of the more active performers in Musikklinja, he behaves as if today's performance – like every new performance – has the potential of destabilizing the foundation he has been building. Every new performance counts as the first, he needs to keep persuading people that his position is rightful and deserved. Rather than acting from an already secured position *within*, like Daniel, citing and reinscribing the discourses that support you, Henry keeps acting from a position *outside*, always needing to argue his way into what always, for him, seems to be temporary legitimacy. And where Henry usually puts to use a range of correct genre-characteristic symbols like hand gestures, facial expressions, dance movements and clothing, Daniel looks the same regardless of what genre he plays. Where Henry works into his position from the outside, Daniel works from the inside. They both cite and inscribe discourses of 'authentic' musical behaviour, but where Henry plays with different, genre-related subject positions, Daniel performs like a hired hand, a session musician, contributing with his skills and crafts regardless of genre. And where Henry's stage persona gives the impression of being a temporary part played, Daniel performs as "himself", consolidating and affirming the articulation between subject and discourse on which his subjectivation to this practice rests; professionalism and craftsmanship.

Like Henry, Julia and Mia too support their house concert performance by assuming a character, dressing up and acting. The teen school girl uniform, symbols repeated in the rest of their black and white crew, both unifies

and protects: they are a duo, a group of people even, not single individuals. Additionally, the girls' outfits make them look attractive – a quality inseparable from feminine claiming of space. The act and the outfit serve yet another purpose though: emphasizing the irony with which their performance is executed. I cannot imagine neither girl performing "…Baby one more time" in all sincerity, in check-patterned shirts, standing straight up and down, one hand resting on the grand piano. However, delivering it with humour and irony, constituted by the fact that the girls are music students and really should know better, is another thing altogether. Besides, the time that has passed since its release in 1998 (when today's Musikklinja students were 4-6 years old) provides them with the necessary ironic distance, and the actual song with legendary status. It may have been more problematic for the girls to perform one of the current chart hits. When I meet Julia straight after house concert, and ask her about the performance, she tells me they chose the song because they wanted to do something completely different for the house concert:

> Julia: me and Mia, we talked about house concert and we figured – it's always so serious, solemn like, and that gets boring in the long run, so we had to do something silly! And then we thought, "Hit me baby one more time", let's do that, since it's a song that everybody just hates (laughs)
>
> Live: (laughs) Ok, is it?
>
> Julia: yes, it's not…*(silence, smile)*
>
> Live: it's not a typical Musikklinja song? (Laughs)
>
> Julia: it most certainly isn't (laughs)
>
> […]
>
> Live: so it's just something "silly"…or do you also enjoy it?
>
> Julia: of course I enjoy it, but not, it's nothing that I take 'seriously' you know, not to promote myself as a singer. It's just to make things less serious.
>
> Live: what kind of singers do you respect then, do you find Britney's voice cool?
>
> Julia: no! (Laughs). No, I really don't. I'm more into, like, Eva Cassidy. *(Interview)*

Explaining to me how they planned their performance, Julia says that they asked people they knew would get their point (Oliver, Michael and Jimmy – none of whom are main actors in the lounge discourses of connoisseurship) rather than the "guitar boys" at school who wouldn't have found it cool *at all*. Then, they just "happened" to ask Alice, Elliot and Caroline to do the backing vocals; Caroline because she isn't "afraid to make a fool of herself", the others because, "I don't know, it just happened". It was *not*, Julia insists, a well-planned performance, like, something they had given a lot of thought. And it is *not* part

of her "serious" project of developing herself as a singer. Julia is very careful to emphasize that, while she enjoys the diversion it provides, her "…Baby one more time" act really isn't meant to promote herself as a singer. It's just silly amusement.

The triviality, irony and silliness of their performance well established though, both Julia and Mia perform convincingly, doing their very best. No affectation or ridicule in their voices, rather, they deliver the best pop sound and pop style they can muster. In this way, I find, they come out as masters without any risk: citing a discourse of irony and fun, they get to show off their good voices and their competence in a genre that very seldom makes it to house concerts (nor to main instrument lessons, term exams or the school's public concerts). Choosing "…Baby one more time" and performing it for fun (and probably being well aware that it suits their voices and that they will impress), the girls alter house concert space enough to make room for themselves. The repertoire legitimizes the act of participating in house concerts (which, again, legitimizes the subject) and the act itself, the ironic performance, legitimizes the repertoire.

I never spoke to Mia about her "…Baby one more time" performance. But her appearance in what seems like Julia's initiative was somewhat surprising to me, since she's usually part of Molly's little crowd: seated in the opposite corner to Julia and Sarah, hipster glasses, tousled hair and oversized shirts rather than heeled boots, waist belts and lip-gloss, singing polyphonically and sharing earplugs rather than heads together over Facebook and various fashion websites. Observing her Britney-act though, I'm impressed by the cool pop sound of her voice. And while she holds her main interests to be "modern music" and "folk rock", (group interview) leaving the concept of pop out of it altogether, I would say that "…Baby one more time" gives Mia the same chance of displaying her competence and proving her worth as it gives Julia. The cover of irony and fun lets Mia leave her usual position in the power/knowledge networks of both the classroom and the school, and participate in a performance that all in all enforces and consolidates her Musikklinja participation.

Appearing with Charles and Molly though, Mia performs a very different kind of repertoire. A song "yet to be released", the repertoire places her solidly outside the "mainstream" and testifies to her connoisseurship. The liaison with Charles likewise vouches for her: while positioned as a somewhat strict music nerd in students' discourse, Charles has a lot of credibility. His musicianship is acclaimed and his connoisseurship admired. Judging by his stage behaviour,

this is his initiative, a knowledgeable insider with access to the backstage of music, performing what is not yet common property. Moreover, he is known to be very particular (and very clear) about what he likes and dislikes. In choosing to play for Mia – or choosing Mia to sing his song – he acknowledges her style and her qualities, which seriously strengthen her Musikklinja legitimacy. Moreover, the liaison may be mutually favourable. While Mia has performed frequently in the background, especially in Molly's various projects, this house concert is the first time I see her in the lead. Playing for her, choosing her to sing his song, Charles too performs successfully outside the mainstream, finding quality music and quality artists that others yet have not discovered, a *singer* "yet to be released". The constellation of Mia on lead, Molly on backing vocals, Charles on the piano and two relatively non-profiled students on melodica and guitar may be, as John seems to think, a bit surprising. Nevertheless, it makes perfect sense on stage; the music, the actors and their acts citing a range of the discourses that govern Musikklinja musicianship. In addition to performing outside the mainstream (honouring the lounge connoisseurship discourses of the names of the bands, originality and authenticity), they also perform outside the "school-like". Both Charles' crumpled sheet of handwritten music notation and the entrepreneurship he and the others demonstrate by forming unexpected liaisons resonate with Musikklinja intentions of representing a working environment rather than a school, as performed by their teacher and Musikklinja head John. His enthusiasm for Oliver's appropriation of keyboard harmony – utilizing what he has learned to party on stage – likewise cites and reinforces the expectations of entrepreneurship and informal activity that applies to students. This discourse is closely related to that discussed in section 7.1.2 on absolute dedication: ultimate Musikklinja behaviour is choosing and utilizing Musikklinja as a working environment to support your own projects, creating your own trajectory through school while fully acknowledging and taking advantage of what the school has to offer. "Informal learning within the frames of formal schooling", as expressed by John in section 7.5.

A virtuoso performer in between what is 'schoolish' and what is seen as informal student culture, Molly too creates enthusiasm in John. Even if she "has no idea what she is doing", neglecting every rule he tries to teach in composition class, she still succeeds. She redeems the discourse of quality performance every time she enters a stage singing: visibly concentrated, her usual whimsical, capricious behaviour is replaced by an attitude that observers like John, obviously, and myself, certainly, recognize as dedicated musicianship. For me, the quality of her voice, the intensity of her expression and the way she

acts on stage all bears witness to her musical understanding and capacity. And while there was little talk of musicality and/or musical talent in Musikklinja – understood as an almost innate disposition – John's characteristic of Molly as a "gifted scatterbrain" puts into play an equivalent idea of authentic musical ability. Her talent may be unpolished, yet unschooled, still, her performance is already solidly positioned within governing discourses of musicianship. The small crumpled sheet of notated music that Charles puts inside the grand piano similarly gives evidence of an unpolished, authentic talent. He never once looks at his pro forma score; it's there to show that he actually *has* written something down. An aspect of "proper school behaviour" is placed on top of what actually *is* proper musicianship; musical ability just pushing its way through. Charles' act is recognized by John, and pointed out to me as a curiosity, but also as an example of successful Musikklinja behaviour.

Now, Molly may act like a "gifted scatterbrain"; her authentic musicality regulating her behaviour. However, she also seems to me to be a very capable music student entrepreneur, using the school system with ensembles and concerts to form liaisons and participate in constellations that enable her to do the music that suits her and displays her musicianship well. She always performs with people well positioned and well regarded. In music history lessons, ear training class and composition, she works with her school friends Mia and Jennifer, who are highly competent in theoretical subjects. While none of them have song as their main instrument, the three girls also perform frequently as a vocal ensemble, with Molly in the lead. She seems to have no problem with asking Daniel, Charles, Harvey (the very busy and very brilliant acoustic guitarist) or other renowned Musikklinja personalities to play for her. She also manoeuvres *adversity* with expertise:

> Live: you were about to tell me of Fay?
>
> Molly: yes, Fay, she sang a song that Charles had written for her and I was like "oh my god she is good, what, its beautiful!" and then I was a bit angry, like, "shit, someone's better than me", I get like that…
>
> Live: yes…'cause you need something to be like "yours"?
>
> Molly: yeah, but I really never saw singing as "mine", its more like something I really can do, but then I was like …aargh!! […] Because she sang so nice. But then I thought; "you know, I have to tell her 'cause if I don't I'm a real bitch, I have to tell her." And then, I walked up to her and told her "you know what, that was really great!" Because that's what I thought, I though it was excellent! "I think you were very good" – and she almost cried, 'cause she had tried to sing like me, I was like her idol (laughs), and I got so embarrassed, and it was so nice.

> […] So now, when I asked her to sing with us at the Cafe-concert, she was so happy, like, insanely happy. *(Interview)*

Fay is a new girl in school, the concert Molly talks of is the first time she hears her sing. Already singing a song written for her by Charles, and singing it in a way that speaks to Molly, making her genuinely impressed, she represents a threat to the specificity of the position that Molly is making for herself in Musikklinja. Constructing a liaison out of what is a potentially destabilizing event, incorporating Fay in her ensemble, Molly operates as a very competent musical entrepreneur. Recognizing one another's musicianship and utilizing the possibilities of a liaison, both girls are empowered, although somewhat differently: Fay, a new girl at school, gets what Henry calls a "ticket" straight into the action. Molly keeps her authority, and broadens and enforces the network of friends and fellow musicians that cites, recites and stabilizes her position in Musikklinja.

Molly may seem less organized, less structured and less focused than obvious entrepreneurs like Henry who plans ahead and follows his time scheme. However, she certainly knows how to navigate in Musikklinja. Her priorities and choices of action may be to the irritation of some students and teachers, others, like John, see them as evidence of true musicianship. And where Henry's display of musicianship includes a range of various musical symbols, actions and attitudes, his stage acts often dramaturgically organized, adapted and rehearsed, Molly, like Daniel, always performs as "herself", repeating the articulation between what is music, what is musicianship, and what is Molly. They do share one thing though; they are both in positions to play. Molly and Henry alike have the agency to sign up, to ask fellow students to play, and to present themselves at house concerts. This agency, vital to the Musikklinja programme, schedule and curricula, is not equally distributed, I find. In the following, I explore what Alice, Caroline and others have to say about house concerts and the exhibition of one's musicianship.

### 7.5.2 A training arena?

*Interview with Alice:*

Live: did it take long before you played a house concert?

Alice: ahem. I still haven't, actually….

Live: today's your first time?

Alice: yes, and I'm not playing, I'm singing (laughs), like, doing back-up vocals. In the background. No, playing in a small room with lots of people who are almost, like, 'there', up in your face, sitting and looking down at you, that's not my thing. But if it's a larger room, with people I don't know, it's OK. If I *know* them, it's not … I don't like that.

Live: so there's more anxiety involved in playing a house concert than the Cafe-concert?

Alice: oh, yes. Much more. The Cafe-concert isn't awful (laughs) at all, it's fun.

Live: what's the difference?

Alice: it's just that, at house concerts, you know the people there, and you get their comme-, *feedback*, straight afterwards. And you have to be around them the rest of the week you know. So if it went bad, you are afraid they will say something…not, necessarily something nasty, but something that's…not very positive for *me*, like.

Live: why do you have house concerts do you think?

Alice: (laughs) I guess it's to make us feel more secure, on stage and all, performing. But I did perform for a lot of people, in the culture school, and I was usually all alone 'cause my flute teacher couldn't be there, so I'm used to managing by myself.

*Interview with Caroline:*

Caroline: I'm somewhat of a … coward really (laughs), I don't dare to take the final step, like signing up on the lists. I'm afraid I'll make a fool of myself. I know, I do that in the hallways all the time, but standing in the spotlight, everyone's eyes at you, and you are alone … in the hallways, you do something, people pass you, we laugh, we go on…

Live: as a student representative, you are very often in focus? What's the difference?

Caroline: yes, I am. But then it's all about the *talking*, and not the thing I love most of everything on earth. I don't *play* in front of everyone. I'm afraid people will…see me as *lousy* or something, I'm afraid of the criticism…

Live: that's beautiful; "…not the thing I love most of everything on earth". I can see the difference. But, what's the worst that can happen?

Caroline: for me, it's OK if people… like, but if they; "Oh my god", whispering in the hallways, "Jesus Christ, she didn't exactly practice" or "jeez, why is *she* in Musikklinja?" – that's the worst thing that could happen.

[…]

Live: is performing at the Cafe-concert, for example, easier that playing at a closed house concert then?

> Caroline: yes, I would say that. Because you play for other people, more people, not Musikklinja people.
>
> Live: Musikklinja people are the toughest crew?
>
> Caroline: yes. But I've always been more sceptical to performing for people I know, than playing, like, a big concert.
>
> Live: so, when teachers tell us that 'training arenas' are important, and that house concerts are to prepare us, to give us courage – is it rather the other way around (laughs)?
>
> Caroline: I feel, for *me* anyway, they don't work like that. But, my goal is to play at a house concert. When the right time comes.

The concerts of Musikklinja, public and house concerts, are important means of learning musicianship: this the girls know. The house concerts, for example, are meant to give you experience of "performing on stage", the end goal being that you feel "more secure". Using teachers' phrasing, they are "training arenas" for more "important arenas" like the Cafe concert, the Rock concert and the Chamber concert (section 6.1.3). While these public events constitute more critical situations of public display, the house concerts are meant to represent safe zones of trial and error. Alice however, insists on the opposite. The Cafe concert is "fun", house concerts are "awful". Playing with the Musikklinja gallery crowd looking down at her, she argues, knowing that she must face their comments – or, "feedback" – afterwards, is very different from performing for a lot of people she does not know, "managing by herself". Caroline too maintains that "big concerts" for "other people, more people" are easier than those reserved for the "Musikklinja people". Both Alice and Caroline knows very well that performing is central to the project of becoming and being a musician, and hence to the project of becoming and being a music student of Musikklinja. You cannot be a proper musician; neither can you be a proper Musikklinja student, if you refuse to perform, if you have no interest in performing, or if you take no pleasure in performing. The importance of performance is a discourse that the girls need to acknowledge to take up a music student subject position. Careful to communicate their embarrassment – "ahem" / "I'm a coward" – they both acknowledge the shame one is supposed to feel for avoiding the house concerts, a shame cited and inscribed in the interview also by my own assumption that they already played.

What both girls also know, however, is that house concerts are far from "safe" zones, even if this is supposed to be their function. On the contrary, playing a house concert means putting one's legitimacy and one's right to belong on the line. Not that public concerts are not critical events, of course they are. The

music students are displaying and performing their musics, their musical skills and abilities, their Musikklinja fellowship and their music student subjectivities. But that's just it: performing at public concerts students are performing from already secured positions *as* music students, performing musicians even, in relation to an audience. Public concerts are – *concerts*, not concert simulations or training arenas. They are arenas for displaying and consolidating the "I", a music student, and the "we", Musikklinja. Distinctions are made between them and us. House concerts on the other hand, and the closed, teacher-led sessions in particular, are shielded "school only" arenas for training, testing, preparing, rehearsing and evaluating one's musicianship *before* displaying it. They are explicitly related to students' main instrument repertoires, auditions, term exams and other assessment practices. In that sense, they are arenas of 'trial' rather than 'display'. Distinctions are made within the group of Musikklinja participants themselves. And this is a real threat: what is at stake may be no less than one's Musikklinja legitimacy; one's Musikklinja subjectivity. Unlike an ignorant, uninformed audience, the knowledgeable, informed Musikklinja crowd can raise doubts about your legitimacy. They can compare, contrast and evaluate you in relation to Musikklinja standards and position you in relation to terms of suitability.

To justify her reluctance to putting herself on trial, Alice emphasize the difference between playing for a small audience of friends, and playing for a larger crowd of strangers. She appreciates and takes advantage of the Cafe-concert comparison I offer, insisting that the Cafe-event is plain "fun", not "awful" at all. In this way, she redeems and submits to the very important discourse of performing for pleasure and fun. Further securing her music student subject position, Alice enacts what is a completely legitimate discourse in Musikklinja: concert simulations like term exams, forums and class concert events are unnatural practices that at best imitate the proper dynamics between a musician and her audience. Giving their group of students a pep-talk on forum day, Hannah and William both called attention to the "artificial" setting, and the stress and anxiety involved in playing for your friends, and asked them to try to "have fun with it" and "do a bit of role-playing". Nicholas and Adam, leading the band forum similarly stressed the "odd, unnatural" situation of the term exams, asking students to "use it to their advantage". With an evaluative jury of music students and music teachers in the gallery, the absolute preferred focus on the expressive performance of music for a real, listening concert audience is threatened, as is the sheer "pleasure and fun" of it. So, when Alice explains about the difference between signing up for house concerts and performing at

larger events, she does so safely anchored in a Musikklinja attitude that accepts and understands the anxiety she feels towards the house events without questioning her dedication, pleasure and passion for performing.

By speaking of playing as "the thing I love most of everything on earth", Caroline too sets the discourse of dedication and passion as a frame of reference for her failure to fulfil Musikklinja expectations of participating in house concerts. And like Alice, she tells me that the response of her fellow students is what she fears the most – but not necessarily the criticism she has to face straight afterwards. Much worse are people's whisperings in the hallways, the way they talk about you and your performance behind your back, undermining your position and right to belong: "Jeez, why is she in Musikklinja?". Like all the other Musikklinja students, both Alice and Caroline rather emphasize the solidarity, safety and support of the student milieu than admit to conflict, anxiety and insecurity. The discourse of solidarity may even make the resistance towards playing at house concerts all the more shameful – one is supposed to feel the warmth and the support from one's fellow students. While admitting to fearing the response of the student audience, Alice quickly replace "comment" with "feedback", accentuating positive, helpful encouragement over negative, destabilizing critique. However, both girls have probably experienced the "whisperings in the hallways" that may follow students who are positioned as less suitable in that they fail to display proper musicianship. In one of the group interviews, Caroline even contributed to questioning the legitimacy of a certain Musikklinja participant. This person showed no understanding of rhythm at all, the group laughingly agreed, even worse, s/he didn't seem to have an ounce of "musicality", unable to comprehend how and where a piece of music was going, unable to perform in tune, and finally, completely unable to understand how bad s/he really was. Another group likewise talked of how they had tried to put together a number for a concert, and how they "…chose a song, and, ah, it was just so, so, sooo bad. […] Those that should have taken responsibility and said that, "I can do that, 'cause I do that well" they didn't, and the people that couldn't do it ended up saying "that's ok, I can do it"." Not being "able to do it" due to a lack of what are considered basic, crucial even, requirements, is of course bad enough in itself. But the cardinal sin being committed, the sin that places certain participants firmly outside Musikklinja grounds, is failing to know and act in accordance with one's own musical limitations. And that is why signing up for house concerts is such a "final step". The worst "fool" one can make of oneself is thinking and acting like you have something to display when the general discursive stance is that you have not – that is, attempting

to override the power/knowledge relations that structure your possibilities of action. For Caroline, the fool is constituted through the whisperings that follow her down the hallway and consolidated by the fact that she remains in oblivion. And this is the worst possible outcome of house concert performance; the consolidations of one's illegitimacy through power/knowledge enactments from which one is already excluded.

Now, if we return to the open house concert narrated in episode 10, Alice and Caroline appear on backing vocals in Mia and Julia's "…Baby one more time". This house concert event is "open", entailing that all upper secondary students may attend; hence, the Musikklinja crowd is less obvious. Moreover, the concert repertoire can be chosen based on its show-potential and chance of going down well with the upper secondary lot as much as for its capacity to display and consolidate the music student-ness of the performers. Both factors facilitate the appearance of Alice and Caroline. Where the teacher-led, closed sessions expect students to perform on their main instrument(s), the open concerts seem to welcome crossover participation to a larger degree. Neither Alice nor Caroline is participating with their main instruments, nor do they act from any other positions they formally claim a right to. The context of irony and fun legitimizes their temporary appropriation of the "vocalist". And as they are both classical music students, they do not have to prove themselves within the pop-genre that "…Baby one more time" represents. The only thing that they have to prove is that they are "not afraid to make fools of themselves", as Julia says in an interview, explaining to me why she asked Caroline to participate. Thus, serving to prove that they do take pleasure in performing, the girls' "…Baby one more time" act secures their position within the appropriate discourses of stage performance while minimizing the risk of rejection that follows house concert participation.

### 7.5.3 Auditions

Episode 11: Auditions

Scene 1: Hall meeting

Caroline and Simon from the student organization address the hall meeting: Chamber auditions are coming up, they say, and the Cafe/Rock auditions are due to be held the week after. We have seventy-one numbers registered so far! Leo raises his hand: "I'd like to remind people that withdrawing a number or two is totally ok". "It's better to practice a few songs thoroughly than practice several just a little" adds another boy. Hannah comes forth: "really, there's no way we'll

> listen to seventy-one numbers. You will have to consider if 'this is something I can show off or if it's better to back out'. That list will have to get down to forty numbers, and it would be better if you attended to the job yourself. Those who signed up with five numbers will have to cross out four of them. If you don't take responsibility, Nicholas and me will start crossing out numbers without even listening to them. Cafe/Rock audition-lists are taken down on Friday!" "And, practice! A LOT!" someone shouts from the gallery. *(Fieldnotes)*

Like performing, auditioning is a familiar practice in the fields of music and musicianship. One auditions for one's studies, for orchestra or ensemble positions, for talent programmes and scholarships, for grants and prizes. With the emergence of reality shows like "The Voice" and "Idol" (the Norwegian equivalents to shows like "The Voice UK" and "American Idol"), auditioning has even become TV-entertainment, every young person knowing something of how an "audition" is supposed to happen, and how a "judge" is supposed to act. Musikklinja auditions are held in connection with every main event of the school concert series. While parts of a programme may be set prior to auditions; the choir's repertoire for example, and the repertoire of the school initiated ensembles if vouched for by their teachers, the rest of the concert programme is decided through auditions. These are held and judged by groups of third years as an assignment for their school subject "direction and management". With their teacher Hannah, they plan and carry out afternoons and evenings of listening, watching, questioning and taking notes, meeting up afterwards to discuss, prioritize, accept and refuse. Their conclusions are pinned to the board for all to see, together with a short explanation stating, for example, that:

> Selections are made on the basis of seeing the concert as a whole, and variation in characters, crews and soloists. Some of the numbers were excluded because the soloist/s participates in many numbers, others because they needed more time to get ready for performance [in Norwegian "konsertklar", lit. "concert ready"]. Questions about the selections are to be addressed to Hannah. *(Fieldnotes)*

I never saw any official criteria of audition acceptance offered on the board beforehand though, except from descriptions of the concert themes ("The best of all worlds"), and the repeated citing of the *quality performance* discourse through messages urging students to practice. Of course, this doesn't mean that such criteria do not exist. Some of these issues have been discussed in the previous analyses, and I will explore them in greater detail in the following. First however, let us apply Foucault's stance on the discursive mechanisms of acceptance and exclusion to the procedure of auditions: the Musikklinja auditions could well be seen as one of the mechanisms that seek to police and

manage discourse from within discourse itself; "ward off its power and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality" (Foucault, 1970/1981, p. 52). Auditions certainly function to manage and lead meaning in particular directions. Indeed, audition mechanisms are in play even before auditions have properly started, regulating who feels comfortable with signing up on the notice board lists. Already there, the procedures of auditioning are sorting, weeding and policing discourse. And characteristically, discursive power works in a capillary fashion, reaching into the subject's performance on herself, her policing of her own discursive participation. In the hall meeting described above, the responsibility for discourse management is explicitly placed at the level of the subject: "we cannot possibly listen to everyone, so you need to cross out yourself". Engaging students' self-criticism, self-censorship and self-technological routines, the mechanisms of auditioning manages subjects to manage themselves, thereby helping the management of discourse: Is this 'something I can show off' or not? Would it be better to 'back out'? Which of my four suggestions are the more appropriate? Have I practiced this 'a lot'?

Now, "variation" concerning character and crew/soloist, the suggested numbers' suitability for the concert as "whole", and the degree to which it is deemed "ready for performance" (quality) are stated as relevant factors in sorting and managing the many entries for Cafe/Rock auditions. However, several other regulating factors may also be involved: the deemed suitability of a proposed song may be as related to lounge discourses of connoisseurship as to an idea of a concert programme "whole". The position of the participants in relation to discourses of quality performance may influence decisions as to who is accepted and who is not, in that the participation of certain people guarantees quality, and the participation of others represent a higher risk to Musikklinja standards. Discourses of originality and authenticity may favour the cajón, the banjo, the melodica, the Hardanger fiddle and the weird, jazzy vocal arrangement, and even trump discourses of quality performance if the idea is cool enough. If you sign up with the right piece of music, if you have a really cool idea, you can actually make it through auditions without giving the best performance in terms of quality musical craftsmanship. Hannah, teacher of production management, tells me that when assisting juries of third years in putting together good concert programmes, she finds that "students tend to draw their arguments from totally other things than the musical. They'll argue that the song is so awesome, that the guy singing it is so cool, or that while it's not yet perfect, there's still two weeks until concert!" *(Fieldnotes)*. For Hannah,

students tend to weight coolness above what she defines as "the musical" – qualities, we may suppose, related to interpretation, technique, intonation, timbre, timing, style and so on. Students' definitions of what qualifies for concert admittance, she finds, are related to non-musical aspects like what song is suggested and how cool the performers are, aspects that we have seen are very important in the student lounge discourses of connoisseurship; originality, authenticity and knowing the "names of the bands". Whether Hannah's description of audition dynamics could be applied to the group of third years in charge of this year's Cafe/Rock auditions I would not know, as their meeting was a practice to which I lacked access. But on a general basis, I would say, finding the proper music, the proper crew and the proper instrumentation to take on for the Cafe/Rock is unquestionably as important a concern with the jury as it is with the auditioners. Now, let us look at the procedures of the auditions, first visiting the preparations for the audition taking place in the auditorium a Thursday afternoon.

Scene 2: Cafe/Rock audition preparations

In the auditorium, nothing is ready even though auditions are due in just a few minutes. "We really have to get going, we're already five minutes late!" shouts a third year. "With what?" Charles says, probably meaning, "what is the first number", but earning himself an irritated look: what do you think? What are we doing here? Charles rolls the acoustic piano nearer the stage front, and goes back to fetch his shiny, red keyboard. I look at the list I have been given; the first ones on are a group performing the Jethro Tull "Bourée". Daniel has been drawing the curtains for the black box, now he's getting ready on the drums. Caitlin has been ready with her flute since I came in. The bassist, however, is on his way out the door: "I need to go get some money", he says. Daniel: "Hey! We're about to start you know!" Henry and a group of boys have entered, they mosey around the stage for a while before leaving again, Benjamin having received a guitar pedal from his teacher Adam. We're really on overtime now, but Adam whistles leisurely, adjusts the mixing console and plugs in equipment without nagging or rushing anyone. "Does someone take responsibility for timing everything?" he asks. A girl in the gallery raises her hand. She's with the production group/jury, consisting of eight third years. They are distributing boxes of pizza (and bags of candy) between themselves on the gallery second row. Adam leans over and grabs a slice. Charles plinks the piano absent-mindedly, and asks if he can have one. "Nah, we're four on each box" the answer comes. Two of them discuss the audition list: "we need to straighten this out: Jane's Addiction, it doesn't say that Simon's singing, but he is." "Does it make any difference?" "Well, I do think we need to know, when we decide on who to accept." "Fuck, now we have a lot to catch up on!" one of them says. "Ten minutes already". Adam seems to have finished rigging: "For your information, I am recording everything tonight, so

> what is said goes directly to Hannah. Ok, lets see, what now?" "The Bourée" one of the jury boys says. *(Fieldnotes)*

Observing the audition preparations, I was intrigued by the effort and energy with which students constructed an *everyday ordinariness* out of what they seemed to perceive as an *extraordinary event*. The group of third years in charge were readying themselves in the gallery when I arrived, on two lines, in two rows, four plus four, laptops, sheets of paper and pencils on the integrated table tops in front of them. While most of them refrained from participating in the actual rigging, they followed preparations closely, urging people to go faster, watching the time, looking at their laptop or sheet documents and expressing their frustration with running late. Of course, their actions could be taken to indicate stress and worry due to a fear of failing at the task they have been given: managing and sorting the many contributions for Cafe/Rock auditions. Failing this task, going seriously overtime, messing up audition lists, not taking detailed enough notes for the follow up discussion, could potentially draw the criticism and dissatisfaction of a crowd of students waiting to audition, as well as the disapproval of the teachers supervising how they do in relation to their school subject of "direction and management". Looking at it from another angle of analysis however, we could ask: what are these actions doing for the students in question? How are they helping them attain viable music studenthood in the relations of power/knowledge governing this practice? My suggestion would be that their actions construct 'everyday ordinariness' out of an extraordinary situation that they have been looking forward to for two years. Enjoying themselves, behaving like thrilled, happy children, would take the significance out of it. Rather, actions saying that 'come on now, we have a lot to do today, nothing special about it, let's all get going, we need to wrap this up in a few hour's time' confirm that they have successfully appropriated the position of what third years do and what the position of a third year jury member entails. This is nothing extraordinary, if it was, they wouldn't be in the positions they are. Dragging their pizza eating into it may seem very silly indeed, but, as was argued in section 7.5.1 on house concerts, their distribution of pizza boxes and slices between themselves in the gallery does important performative work in establishing their mastery of, their professionalism in, and their everyday experience with, the situation at the same time. Besides, it contributes to making absolutely most of the situation, enhancing and enforcing the experience of being a third year jury gallery member, pen and paper ready, audition list ready, watching the preparations happening onstage. Being able to refuse Charles a slice probably adds to the experience too.

Their teacher Adam, whistling around with cables, microphones, amplifiers and pedals, also contributes to ensuring their successful performance as responsible, proper third year producers. He does not overrule them, even if the rest of the students are almost falling in the door to get going. Refraining from nagging and urging them on, although they are way behind schedule, he recognizes and supports their ownership of the audition setting. His leisure style even adds to the "it's all in a day's work" atmosphere that they are striving for. Him grabbing the piece of pizza reminds me of his presence, but at the same time it positions him in line with the third years themselves in the net of power/knowledge relations; not outside, not 'above'. The one act reminding us that he is firmly positioned also in another cluster of power relations is his warning that he'll be recording tonight's event, including all that is said, for Hannah to listen to. As the main teacher of production management as well as the leader of music studies, Hannah being inscribed in the situation also inscribes a discourse of school authority, assessment and evaluation. He immediately re-establishes his students' superiority by asking "ok, what now?", placing the responsibility to get auditions going with the students themselves.

Except for some candidates bringing one or two friends in with them, auditions were held before the group of third year producers and their teacher (and myself) only. In general, the performers got no applause from the panel (of judges), only a few comments and questions, and they left quickly having given their performance. The third years whispered to each other and took notes on paper and laptops, but refrained from expressing their opinions on what they just heard out loud, not even in between numbers. Each time the door opened, we could hear chatter and laughter from the hallways and the student lounge, where people waited for their turn, or lingered on after having played. The following fieldnote describes the performance of Henry and a group of classmates, having signed up with the Ramones classic "Blitzkrieg Bop". Having met them in the foyer some fifteen minutes before auditions, expectant-smiling faces, wanting to know whether I would be listening in, I knew they were both eager and proud to present their suggestion for the Rock Show.

> Scene 3: "Blitzkrieg Bop"
>
> Henry pops his head in: "can we come in now or what?" His "Blitzkrieg Bop" crew of Benjamin and Sebastian (guitars), Lukas (drums), and Adrian (bass) enters. Carl and Leo follow them, seating themselves in the first row. "The intro goes two times!" Henry calls out to the others, eager to start. Adam, hunched over the mixing console, asks him to speak in the microphone. "Scream, that's what you're going to do!" Carl says. They start with no further notice, at full speed and

> a high volume, Henry running around the mike rack twice before throwing himself into the "Hey ho, let's go!" True to the genre as usual he jumps energetically around, when not tipping the mike rack and leaning over it with one foot in front of the other, posing like Joey Ramone. Lukas plays with a broad smile on his face, Sebastian too. Benjamin looks a bit embarrassed when Henry leaps over to him, but joins in the "hey ho". Towards the end, Henry rips his shirt off and kicks the microphone rack. I expect a lot of cheering when they are done, but the gallery is dead silent. The boys start unplugging immediately. "Thanks", Henry says without irony, looking up at us. A few jury members responds by politely clapping their hands, one of them saying "hell, that was really something". Another one remarks rather drily: "If you're in, would you mind bringing something to destroy with you on stage rather than wrecking the equipment?" Leaving, Henry raises his arm: "Anarchy in the UK!" "Ok…, but this is like, eh, *American?*" a boy says as the door closes. *(Fieldnotes)*

The "Blitzkrieg Bop" was put together only days before auditions Henry tells me in an interview a few weeks later. He and Sebastian wanted to do something together for the Rock Show, but what with auditions coming up shortly, they needed something "easy". So, it had to be punk, Henry laughs, and something that everyone *knew* at that. Choosing the Bop, they could approach their friends and almost jokingly insist that they joined in; "you're in on it, right, you're in on it?" *(Interview)*. The process as narrated by Henry illustrates some of the pragmatics involved in choice of repertoire: initiative and audition participation may just as well come from a desire to *play* and a wish to play *with* someone in particular as from a wish to play *something* in particular. Repertoire then needs to be considered in terms of difficulty and how well known a song is: will we be able to manage this in time? Can we find people who are familiar with the song and who can do it with us in the amount of time we have available? Moreover, choosing a three-chord well-known punk chant like the "Blitzkrieg Bop", Henry and Sebastian can safely demand the participation of their friends without risking their refusal. Picking one's crew by jokingly insisting that they join in on a stunt performance entails, I would think, less risk of failure than asking people to take up positions in a 'serious' project launched several weeks before auditions and perhaps getting a negative response. However, there is more to Henry's choice than the pragmatism of feasibility I would say. He has selected a genre that suits his voice and his range of action. Punk singers needn't be virtuoso artists; they need to be highly energetic. Not at all afraid to do what it takes, the punk genre lets Henry play it out for real without requiring that he display technical craftsmanship or nuanced musical expression. Besides, he has selected a safe song, a classic that without discussion fits into the Rock show's "best of" profile. Charted on several "of all time" lists, and representing the early

beginning of punk rock as a genre, The Ramones and their "Blitzkrieg Bop" have earned a place for themselves in music history, and in addition, it is absolutely sure to win the audience over. Henry's choice enables him to perform with and within the power/knowledge networks governing what musicianship is all about in Musikklinja. He should be safely subjected through a musical act that avoids challenging or otherwise disrupting the network's constitution. All the same there may be elements in his act that in some way trespass the limits of what constitutes proper or legitimate behaviour. Benjamin's rather withdrawn attitude creates a distance to the vigorous scenic style of Henry, marking him off as something else, something other than his own guitar musicianship. The same distance is acted out by the jury, refraining from supporting his act by prolonging it into an audience response of cheers. The compliment of "that was really something" feels more like an attempt to mask or cover an uncomfortable silence than an actual strengthening of Henrys position, and in the attempt, the distance is lengthened rather than bridged. And the somewhat sourly put suggestion that he brings his own equipment to destroy actually undermines and ridicules Henry's attempt of claiming legitimate music studenthood by throwing himself into what he considers to be the rules of the game, as does the rejection of his Sex-Pistols citation.

What is problematic with Henry's performance, it seems, is that it lacks the proper distance, the irony, that Mia and Julia play with in their "…Baby one more time"-act (section 7.5). Although he submits to, and enacts, the proper musical connoisseurship, Henry nevertheless trespasses because he submits too wholeheartedly – rather than displaying his craftsmanship and connoisseurship by ironically playing with styles and effects, he acts as if he is something he is not. The jury members respond by distancing themselves from his performance, their initial silence creating a wall of cool between their positions in the gallery and Henry's below them on the stage floor. Their comments take the magic out of Henry's act, reprimanding and correcting him rather than supporting his attempt at creating a musical moment. In the next fieldnote audition example, one of the third years similarly distances himself from the performances on stage, but by other means:

> Scene 4: The liquorice walk
>
> It's the first time I see Ruby in the lead, except for the term exam. She has pulled her hair back in a tight ponytail, and her all-black outfit with thigh-high boots differs somewhat from her more preppy, everyday style. She's doing a quiet ballad with Sophie on the piano and Mia on the acoustic guitar. Mia has obviously practiced a lot. She seems very concentrated as she plucks the strings. In front

> of Ruby is a music stand with a sheet of paper, and she sings with her eyes glued to it. During their performance, one of the boys in the jury rises from his seat, works his way out in the aisle, into the next row, takes a liquorice stick from one of the other panel members and slowly returns to his own seat, where he continues studying a web page with advertisements for used cars on his laptop. *(Fieldnotes)*

The girls impress me. I know they all struggle with presenting themselves on their main instruments; Sophie keeps repeating that she has lost all motivation for playing the piano, Mia recently changed her main instrument from song to guitar (because she wasn't allowed to sing the kind of music she liked the way she liked, she tells me), and is a beginner on the classical guitar. And Ruby seems to be opposed by several of the discursively well-situated people – Leo and Molly for example often express their irritation with her. Ruby stubbornly refuses to step back though, and she keeps answering "hey!" rather than "yes" when teachers perform their roll call (to the sighs and groans of the others), she keeps taking the floor in class meetings and keeps telling me and others of how certain people restrict and obstruct the actions of others, like her. Here, the girls offer a serious ballad, trying to sing and play as well as they can, concentrated, well prepared, well dressed. The performative effect of the tall, dark haired third year boy's walk for liquorice though is massive. While I know nothing of what are his intentions, the act itself states that the girls' performance is of lesser interest. The girls themselves, too, are of lesser significance; one need not give them the respect of listening through their act. The liquorice walk enacts and materializes the discursive distance between the walker and the girls on stage; he has nothing to do with their act and cannot be infected by it. The difference to how Molly's act is met in the following audition fieldnote excerpt is striking:

> Scene 5: A jazzy voice
>
> Molly stands between the mikes: "which one shall I use?" Someone tells her, and she adjusts the rack. Hair in the usual bundle, big glasses, check-patterned shirt, she looks up at the gallery: "I will be singing the four thirty-three". "I think you are performing it on a mandolin" one of the boys says. "I think you are playing really bad" a girl adds. "Where's Daniel?" asks another. Michael, entering with a pair of bongo drums, says: "I'm his substitute". "You are his substitute?" someone replies. "Won't Daniel be playing in the concert?" Michael shrugs: "I don't know". "Will there be a percussion group?" Molly: "*No*, there *won't* be a percussion group". She seems somewhat irritated, but she smiles. She did perform the "Gatekeeper" with a percussion group consisting of Daniel, Michael and Lukas at a house concert earlier this year. She sings as expressively now as then, to the playing of Michael and a really good guitarist. Eyes closed, leaving the mike on the rack, woollen socks tapping the rhythm on the floor, her hand accompanying

> her phrasing now and then. Michael ends the song with a purposefully silly bongo drum fill, and Molly giggles. "Hey, that was great Molly" one of the boys says. "That's some *jazzy* voice". *(Fieldnotes)*

Molly is accepted from the start, it seems. Her reference to John Cage's 4'33'[46] is immediately recognized and supported, the third years securing her position even before she begins to sing. Moreover, they confirm her masterly enactment of discourses of musicianship immediately upon the end of her performance: personally hailing her by name to give their compliments, designating her act of musicianship as "jazzy". Compared to Henry's stage performance, throwing himself into a role, Molly, does the opposite. She acts out a stage authority related to 'herself', a stripped display of clean, understandable musical skills. What we tend to oversee of course, is that Molly's act too cites a range of discourses for scenic and musical behaviour within the genre she performs. Rather than interpreting them as feigned or affected stylistic effects though, as we tend to do in the case of Henry, we attribute her expressions and gestures – her closed eyes, her cocked head, her flat hand pushing the air downwards as she sings or tight fist grabbing the mike – to her intense and authentic musicianship. Moreover, we know, and expect, her musicianship to impress us.

Now, what about Michael, he should have been Daniel. His position is questioned from the beginning. They are right; the list I have been given says Daniel. However, the panel questions more than the whereabouts of another drummer, they question the competence of the one onstage. Rather than seeking ratification, the question "you are his substitute?" serves to create an opposition between the two, questioning if the one really can replace the other. Indeed, a string of statements – Where's, Daniel, are you his substitute, won't he do the concert, will there be a group of percussionists – seems dedicated to emphasize the discursive distance between the two drummers and undermine the position Michael tries to achieve as what Molly needs for her "Gatekeeper". Michael meets the questions with a shrug; neither protesting at the doubt impelled on him nor confirming it. I don't know if I can be his substitute, his gesture seems to say; you tell me. Molly however acts like she finds the jury's preoccupation with Daniel somewhat irritating. She is ready to sing, she has picked her crew and the panel's enquiries are in the way. No, a percussion group that includes Daniel is *not* part of this audition, *Michael* is. Her decisive and somewhat sharp tone of voice attends to and vouches for Michael's

46 The piece instructs the performer (of any instrument) to play absolutely nothing for four minutes and thirty-three seconds, its three movements thereby being constituted by the sounds of the audience and the listening environment.

participation, putting a stop to further questions. Speaking of the "Gatekeeper" in an interview, Molly tells me that for her first house concert performance of the piece, she asked Daniel and the guitarist to "play for her". But then "Michael was so hurt" so she asked him as well, thinking that; "Ok, we can have Michael too". And then she even included Lukas, the third drummer in her year, although "I don't think he was hurt actually". Molly's act and reputation may be that of a "gifted scatterbrain", but when it comes to her singing performances, she is both strategic and strong. She goes straight to the people she knows will fit and support and also enhance her musical efforts, even though these people may not belong to her usual circle of acquaintance. Asking them to "play for her" is, I would think, like asking if they find her good enough to play for, but the agency stemming from being a gifted (quality guaranteed) scatterbrain (probably doesn't know what she asks) enables Molly to work herself into perfect positions of performance. She even has surplus agency to include Michael (and Lukas): she asks Daniel to play because she needs him to perform safely; then, she includes the other because they need *her* to perform safely.

The last audition fieldnote example I include in this section is the "Wagon Wheel", the signature single of American roots/folk band "Old Crow Medicine Show":

> Scene 7: The "Wagon Wheel"
>
> One of the jury members has already stated several times that he is *so* looking forward to play the "Wagon Wheel". Now, he and the rest of the Wheel crew are getting ready on stage. It's an all male constellation and three of the jury members are in it: Oscar playing a dobro, Peter playing the bass, and Mason the eager one doing backing vocals together with three other boys: Simon the high profiled singer, Harvey the excellent classical guitarist and Christopher, a tall, loud lead singer/guitarist usually playing rock and hard rock music. Charles plays a banjo for this rather than his usual rack of keyboards and pianos. Michael has put a giant bass drum in the middle of the stage floor: "I'll use the cajón in concert, but I can't be bothered with fetching that now, so I use this." "What's a cajón?" someone in the gallery asks. "It's like, a box, raised up like this" Michael tries to illustrate with his hands. Oliver enters with his fiddle. "Do I need a mike?" he asks, and sings a phrase out in the room. He starts walking around, softly tuning and playing his strings. "When we rehearsed this yesterday, I forgot to make notes" he says. Simon: "well, let's just…" Mason, smiling, clapping his hands: "Ok, lets get going!"
>
> Oliver's in the middle, on lead, he stamps his foot and plays with his fiddle straight out from his chest. When he sings, he tends to close his eyes and knit his brows, when not looking down at the floor, up at the roof, or turning to the row of boys seated, casually, on a desk behind him and enthusiastically joining him in

> the "rock me, mama, like a wagon wheel" chorus. They all look so proud, and so happy, even if Oliver barely seems to have the self-confidence to go through with this. "Fuuucking slow, insanely slow!" he exclaims when they finish. Mason sings the song much faster, to illustrate. Charles explains to the panel: "it's supposed to be much faster you know!" When seating himself back in the galleries, Mason says: "if it was four minutes now, it actually takes only three". *(Fieldnotes)*

It seems immensely important for the performers that the "Wagon Wheel" makes it to the concert. Not satisfied with their presentation and anxious too have missed their chance, they argue with energy and persistence that they were too slow, but that the actual tempo will be quicker, hoping, probably, that the panel will take this into account when deciding on the programme. All of the boys have other constellations going on for Festival Weekend. Still, the "Wagon Wheel" comes across as one of their major investments. Not necessarily in time; I do not know how many rehearsals the boys have had or how much time they have spent listening to, arranging and securing their performance. According to Oliver (interview) they practiced only once or twice to make it work. (Then again, no one ever admits to having spent hours planning and rehearsing for Musikklinja auditions, the usual story is that they just met up a week or even days before the event). Rather, the significance of the "Wagon Wheel" seems related to the performance as an instance of musical subjectivation, one in which the boys invest, even risk, their Musikklinja positions and legitimacy, and where there is a lot to gain from success. For one thing, the music itself positions its performers within the proper lounge discourses of connoisseurship. While the song is very popular within folk- and country audiences (and reached new levels of popularity in 2013 after the covers by Daniel Rucker and by Mumford and Sons), it is definitely not mainstream as defined by the Musikklinja students – dance music, hit music, commercial music, music produced without the use of "real" instruments. On the contrary, it is by a band that played on street corners for several years before finally being discovered, a live band that uses acoustic instruments like banjos, mandolins, fiddles and the double bass, and that sings three and four part harmony in concerts. What is more, the song is inspired by an unpublished sketch from the king of authenticity and originality, Bob Dylan. Charles being one of the initiative takers – his is the name on the audition list together with Oliver and Mason – I presume the whole crew is informed of the song's background, the original source and the Old Crow Medicine Show version and music video. And; representing something different from the safe genres of classical, jazz and progressive rock music without transgressing, something new and original in Musikklinja that others have yet to discover, the "Wagon

Wheel" not only complies with and confirms the lounge discourses on music and musicianship, but shifts and reconstitutes them to the benefit of the Wheel crew student performers. Connected to the genre and the song is also, of course, the instrumentation. Managing a sound that is unique, exciting, honest and surprising is part of the originality and authenticity discourse, and in addition to the mandatory fiddle (the front man of Old Crow is a fiddle player), the Wheel crew has included a banjo, a dobro and a cajón. Charles seems totally enchanted with his banjo, in the actual concert he even reels off a phrase from the "Dueling Banjos" (made famous through the movie "Deliverance") as he waits for the others to get ready. Besides lending Charles and his group a touch of bluegrass and country authenticity, the banjo also supports the 'music nerd' style that Charles is both subjected to and subjected by. The banjo – simple, earnest, modest like the ukulele – has become very popular with certain audiences the last few years, and could be regarded as somewhat of a hipster accessory – as Chrissie Dickinson of the Chicago Tribune states: "You can't swing a cat these days without hitting a hipster with a banjo in his hands" (Dickinson, 2012). The cajón similarly helps Michael enact the appropriate discourses and thus legitimately take up the position as music student. He is careful to emphasize that the drum he is playing now won't be the one he will play in the concert. Rather, the cajón, Musikklinja property but still unknown to many of the students and unorthodox in ensembles, is his choice. The instruments lend their players some of their mystique, uniqueness and unconventionality. Oliver states the fact pretty bluntly, referring to another project he auditioned with: "I played the Hardanger fiddle for that one, so of course we made it" (*fieldnotes*).

Another aspect, also supporting and enforcing the discursive positions of the performers, is the constitution of the crew itself. There seems to be nothing arbitrary with this constellation of people. Judging by the audition list (as well as their energetic argumentation after the audition), the initiative comes from Mason, Charles and Oliver. Both Charles and Oliver are high profile students. In addition to being lone representatives of their instrument/genre, they are characteristic personae in Musikklinja, frequently cited and referred to by the others. So are the two boys that do backing vocals together with Mason; Simon is a very active and outgoing singer oriented mainly towards the pop and stage musical genres. The other two are guitarists; one a highly competent classical performer that also seems to be a tenor first choice when in need of more male voices, the other a loud, visible rock front man, one of the main music student characters of the revue discussed in section 7.1.2. Michael, Peter and Oscar constitute the percussion/bass/guitar trio of the crew. The three are good

friends, comfortable in each other's company and often play together. While the musicianship of Michael tends to be overshadowed by that of Daniel, both Peter and Oscar are highly respected musicians, and Oscar in particular vouches for quality and credibility in this setting: he is a good performer in the genres of blues, bluegrass and country, and together with Oliver on the folk fiddle, he communicates native and authentic musicianship. To sum up, the crew seem to be put together with care, the group's total agency ensuring everyone's successful submission to and mastery of the power/knowledge network in which auditions take place. Now this is an important point: agency is relational in Musikklinja. Performing with certain people enables you to subject in ways that would be difficult on your own, and this goes for classroom and sofa lounge as well as concert hall subjectivation. As a group or in a duo, one borrows from each other's agency, gaining a temporary space and range of action. Oliver may lack the confidence and the experience, but has the credibility and authenticity. Simon has both the confidence and the experience, but could not have done the "Wagon Wheel" with as much legitimacy. Instead, he leads the backing vocals of four good, dedicated singers in harmony, convincing us of their musicianship in an activity that has a lot of significance and status in Musikklinja (choral song) while at the same time supporting Oliver, enabling him to perform as a winning front figure. Christopher, the lead rock singer (or "screamer", or "growler") draws agency from both Simon and Harvey to attain subjecthood through the discourses of classical musicianship that also (and, if you ask the students, *mainly*) govern Musikklinja learning practices. Peter, for all his competence on the bass, needs the others to work in a structured manner, even to be where he should when he should, according to Michael. And Michael, falling short in his main instrument lessons when it comes to technique and detailed mastery, really needs to play with others to have his position as a drummer and music student confirmed and supported.

### 7.5.4 Concerts: procedure, purpose and pay-off (Summary)

The concert, I would say, is one of the main *procedures* of Musikklinja, dedicated to managing discourse and subjectivation through the facilitation and regulation of performative acts. As we have seen, concert auditions function as *discursive mechanisms* that lead meaning in particular directions and position subjects thereafter. Audition lists hail the subject and interpellate her as a manager of discourse, offering her the opportunity of censuring her own participation in accordance with the subject positions available to her. Indeed, a complementary

view could be to regard concerts as one of the main *technologies* Musikklinja imposes on the *self*: applying the procedures of the concert (rehearsing, auditioning, performing, subjecting) to themselves, students are expected to emerge as more proper, *better*, music student subjects. Technologies of the self are discursively imposed technologies of subjectivation. In Musikklinja, students are expected to, even *obliged* (by curricula) to take the opportunities for learning and developing musicianship facilitated by the "concert" and the "audition". Supported by the discourse of the *working environment* and notions of the entrepreneurial student subject, concerts represent safe training arenas, an educational self-technology of *trial and error*. Then again, the concert may also constitute a site of *trial and judgement* that potentially destabilizes or even refuses to acknowledge music student legitimacy. Performing in house concerts entails putting one's music studenthood on the line. *Not* performing in house concerts however is also destabilizing, as you fail to redeem the discourses of *dedication* and *development* that construct the passion of music and urge to perform as crucial in enactments of the music student subject.

The concerts and auditions lie in between what is considered "school-like" and what is considered the students' "own things". And they most of all facilitate and reward the *music student entrepreneur* able to inform the one side with the other and to exert competence and connoisseurship properly without being the *good girl/boy*. Section 7.5 reports on John laughingly describing the *scatterbrain giftedness* of Molly, citing and reconstituting a form of competence that combines school interest and learning abilities with unpolished talent, passionate dedication and entrepreneurial recklessness. The same desired music student subjectivity is enacted by Oliver when playing "party piano" harmonization, and Charles when displaying a pro forma sheet of handwritten notation. Another subject position in favour is of course the master craftsman. Discourses of musical craftsmanship are prominent and decisive in facilitating and validating student concert performance. Daniel's discursively accepted excellence makes him out as the preferred drummer, a native and an entrepreneur, a craftsman free to perform his craft independent of genres and constellations. He cites and reconstitutes the discourses that enable his performance with every concert attendance.

In the Musikklinja sites of concerting and auditioning, discourses of the *quality performance of music* and discourses of *connoisseurship* meet and interact. Although instructions and explanations of audition selections repeatedly cite the *quality performance* discourse and prefer music student enactments based

on *quality craftsmanship*, students are equally preoccupied with signing up with the proper music, the proper crew and the proper instruments. Performing, subjecting, through music that is original, surprising, off the main stream, generating a unique sound through the use of interesting instruments that add hipness or authenticity, and playing with a crew that suits the song or piece of music and adds to your own safety or comfort, seem to be as important as practicing and displaying your technical and musical craftsmanship and virtuosity. Indeed, the *music* involved in auditioning/concerting could be comprehended as a discursive technology of the self, facilitating the master performance of music student subjectivity. Through his careful selection of music for performance, Henry is able to constitute himself as the passionate, competent, genre-authentic bandleader, rather than submitting as a mediocre guitarist. Julia is able to display her superior pop-musician skills, delivering her piece with proper ironic distance. Mia can comfortably expand her scope of action by participating in an alternative, jazzy repertoire deemed to secure her musicianship and thus open up for more playing, more displaying.

Recapitulating and summing up the various negotiations and enactments of discourses constituting the music student subject, some main strategies can be identified. As the analyses of chapters 6 and 7 have shown, students generally seem to perceive of the interpellative calls of Musikklinja discourses as true and legitimate, meeting them to the best of their abilities. The power/knowledge relations through which their enactments of the music student subject must happen is largely accepted, also those structuring the sites of the concert and the audition. One way of answering the call for dedication and active entrepreneurship is *routinizing* or *rendering commonplace* a discursive practice. Acting out easiness and routine (eating, yawning, relaxing in the galleries), one turns the extraordinary event into everyday ordinariness and successfully performs as the native Musikklinja practitioner that the audience, the newcomers and even the teacher expect to see. In a similar way, *enacting an adjacent discourse* of connoisseurship that values your musical choice over your virtuoso display meets and defers the demand for craftsmanship and quality performance. So does *subverting a discourse* of dedicated passion to support rather than challenge a music student subject that avoids signing up for auditions and concerts.

The analyses of performative acts as facilitated by concerts and auditions have also emphasized the importance of the *company* with which you perform, the knot of very local, temporary power/knowledge relations that support

your enactments. Agency, we know, is discursively constituted. And for the young people of Musikklinja, their music student scopes of action seem indeed to be *relationally* established. Charles and Mia, Molly and Fay, the "Wagon Wheel" crew, all benefit from each other's performative enactments, subjecting as masters by and through relational agency. Relational agency is also established through applause, or by voicing your support, as we saw when Molly auditioned. Confirming her jazzy musicianship, the connoisseurship and thus the legitimacy of the jury member is confirmed too. However, since relational agency may work the other way around, your music student legitimacy can perfectly well be jeopardized through a power/knowledge relation that connects you with a position less desirable. If so, *ridicule* and *irony* may contribute to expanding the discursive distance between your own and the 'other', as seemed the case with the jury's reaction to Henry and Ruby's performance.

# 8 Negotiating musicianship

From the empirical and analytical stories in chapters 6 and 7, about these people, in these practices, what can we say of how student subjectivities are constituted in and through discursive practices of musicianship in Musikklinja? How is musicianship practiced in Musikklinja? How are student subjectivities performed? My immediate answer would be; in as many ways as there are situations of subjectivation. Performative subjectivation is an on going process, every instance both a citation and a recitation, new, while building on discursive history. Moreover, although the analyses presented in the previous chapters aim at in-depth understanding, they are simplifications nonetheless, the results of discursive management strategies and procedures like the research question, the analytical framework, the ethnographic narration and the scientific argument.

In the recapitulations and discussions that follow, yet further simplifications of the rich, complex and fascinating discursive practices of Musikklinja will be made. Whereas I prioritized delving into instances of subjectivation and singular performative acts in the empirical analyses, this chapter creates a pattern of signification by offering summarizing categories, relations and transections. As research traditions go, these synthesizing simplifications serve as 'findings' and represent the ultimate 'outcome' of the research project. While I am in favour of the clarifying overview, the model and the focused discussion as discursive management technologies, I would also urge the reader not to lose sight of the empirical instances of signification en route.

## 8.1 The discursive practice of musicianship in Musikklinja

What is meant by *musicianship*? Jorgensen (2003) poses the question philosophically; aiming to demonstrate what philosophy might bring to music education while clarifying the concept of musicianship itself. For music teachers in the English speaking world, she notes, musicianship is one of the ends of music instruction: "Taken to refer to thinking, being, and acting as a musician, musicianship is a perennial and pervasive goal of music education practice" (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 198). I find her loose, commonplace definition a good place to start when summing up how musicianship is practiced in Musikklinja and how this practice facilitates the subjectivation of young people into music students. I would even paraphrase Jorgensen and suggest that; taken to refer to thinking, being and acting as a *music student*, musicianship is a perennial and pervasive goal of Musikklinja practice. While Musikklinja practices of musicianship certainly relate to and draw support from the discursive characteristics, qualities and accomplishments one recognizes a musician by, the constitution of legitimate, successful music *student* subjects is a more immediate task. And the music student-ness of the Musikklinja young people, the legitimacy with which they answer to the discursive hail of "music student", is largely constituted through their practice of musicianship, their "thinking, being and acting" like music students.

Performing themselves as legitimate music students, the young people of Musikklinja display their thorough knowledge and skilful enactment of a host of beliefs, attitudes, competences and knowledges intertwined with the practice of musicianship in Musikklinja. Their performances show that Musikklinja practices of musicianship concern much more than the narrow understanding, evident in a body of dictionaries and educational texts, that musicianship is mainly about musical craftsmanship; technical skills and musical artistry.[47] While notions of musical craft certainly pervade students' performative enactments, discourses of entrepreneurship, dedication, specialization and musical connoisseurship govern their interactions in capillary fashions, along relations of power/knowledge that also include those enacted on the self by the self.

47 In the Oxford Music Online, we find the concept used in the more narrow sense, typical phrases being "fine musicianship", "a high level of musicianship", "basic musicianship" and "practical musicianship".

With regard to research design and analytical approach, the present study is somewhat broader than the strand of Swedish research looking into Arts Programme practices (see section 2.2). Concentrating on teachers' discourses, Zandén and Asp base their analyses and findings on focus group interviews on ensemble playing, Nilsson on videotaped lessons in ensemble, ear-training and music theory and individual interviews. Concerned with students' practices, Källén's ethnographic investigation of gendered musical actions takes as its cases two ensembles and a composition group. Nyberg and Scheid investigate students' discourses by use of surveys and interviews. In comparison, the discursive formation of musicianship drawn up in figure 4 below, and also in section 8.3.1 to 8.3.5, is suggested on the basis of field observations and interviews exploring everyday life in Musikklinja in general, and a range of selected sites in particular. Students' discursive enactments – musical, verbal, gestural or otherwise – constitute the main focus of the study, but it has been an ambition to localize these within the general school environment; its

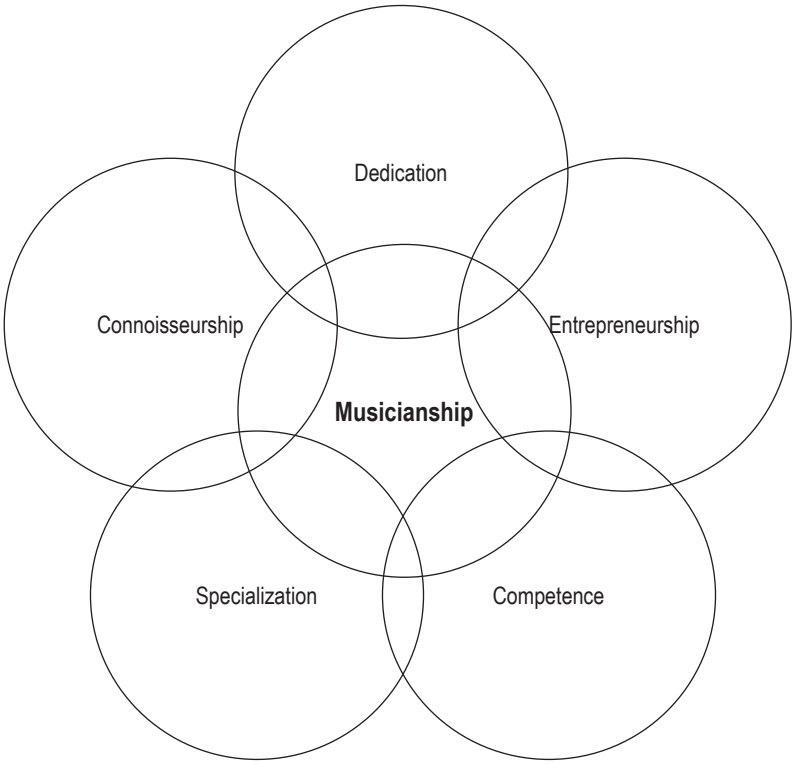


Figure 4: A discursive formation of musicianship

architecture, schedules, traditions and sites of signification. The Musikklinja teachers are discursive participants in and of the same school culture and to a large degree on the same sites of signification, and are included in the observations even if excluded from the interview study. Thus, I consider the discursive formation of musicianship as presented in figure 4 as a co-production; by students and teachers, and also the observing researcher.

### 8.1.1 Dedication

If I, having completed months of field investigations and in-depth analyses of an extensive empirical material, was allowed *one* conclusion only, I would say: the main discourse of musicianship, the main performative enactment and the main position of the music student is one of *dedication*. Throughout the process of gathering, reading, analysing and writing up the story of music student subjectivation, I have been amazed at the force and sophistication with which the discourse of dedication is practiced in Musikklinja and its impact on the music student subject. A proper performance of the music student subject seem to require an enactment of the discourse of dedication in some way or another; it is a mandatory reference when claiming for oneself a legitimate Musikklinja position no matter how discursively peripheral this position may be. Indeed, important Musikklinja sites and activities of musicianship – choral practice, the formalized informality of ensemble playing, concerts and auditions – rely heavily upon students' dedicated commitment for their educational quality, trusting that the music student subject, in her priorities, activities and statements, contributes to upholding and managing Musikklinja as a distinct group of discursively relevant, acknowledgeable and proper practices. As *commitment*, the discourse of dedication expects students to realize their musical aims and ambitions within the quality assured learning contexts of Musikklinja primarily, and follow other musical trajectories of development secondarily. An associated aspect is that of *impressionability.* Student participants in the Musikklinja educational project are to come with impressionable bodies and trustful minds, dedicating themselves to practices and procedures they do not immediately like, understand or see the relevance of. The impressionable body and mind is open and impressionable in *all* Musikklinja activities; composition and form analysis as well as ear training exercises, vocal warm-ups and music history. Similarly, the impressionable body and mind is open to new musical styles and genres, in particular, the repertoire of the choir and of the main instrument lesson. Moreover, the

discourse of dedication imposes an expectation of *passion*. The music student subject is motivated and driven by a passion for all that is music that sustains commitment and work ethics throughout periods of hard work. Passionate dedication also speaks of authentic, true musicality and thus interacts with discourses of competence to either reinstall or confirm students' capability and legitimacy.

As it overlaps with and informs other prominent discourses of musicianship in Musikklinja, the discourse of dedication (committed, passionate, impressionable) installs in the music student subject *responsibility* for her learning environment and learning possibilities. Responsibility includes accountability; the music student answers for the results of the choir and the ensembles, the successes of Musikklinja concerts, the warmth of the social milieu and her own musical development. In this, the discourse of dedication presumes an *entrepreneurial* student subject.

### 8.1.2 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is neither taught nor formalized in schedules and assessment routines in Musikklinja. Nevertheless, the discourse of the *working environment* with its overlapping practices of formal and informal ensemble playing, main instrument specialism and range of smaller, isolated theoretical and musical learning activities like ear training, music history and analysis and AML (general music theory) assumes a synthesizing entrepreneur able to sign on, "get in a position to play", participate, take the initiative, utilize technologies acquired in one setting in another and generally make sense across contexts. Such entrepreneurs recognize and take advantage of all that Musikklinja has to offer, most significantly by establishing their own projects and ensembles in addition to (but not in contradiction with) Musikklinja scheduled and formalized activities. In between enactments of *student owner-/leadership* and teacher *superiority*, the entrepreneur is excelling, although not in a 'schoolish' way (doing what she's told). Entrepreneurship thus implies a form of competence across contexts that overlaps with discourses of specialization and craftsmanship: the proper entrepreneurial subject possesses and exercises fundamental musical abilities and capabilities enabling her to create a trajectory through Musikklinja that merges and makes sense of different approaches to and forms of musicianship. This competence also endows the successful entrepreneur with a form of *credibility* across contexts that

constitute her as "*very* music student", "a *real* music student", "a musician on *that* level", an "*elevated* musician" and even "*epic* good".

### 8.1.3 Competence

While the practices of musicianship in Musikklinja are regulated by discourses of dedicated entrepreneurship, they are also heavily invested with ideas and ideals of *competence.* Comprehended as expert *craftsmanship*, expert playing, *competence* is not surprisingly a major signifier of music student musicianship. In Musikklinja, expert craftsmanship is constituted and recognizable by quality criteria like *authenticity and originality, technique and virtuosity and flexibility/ usefulness.* Most strikingly though, both teachers and students make distinctions between highly competent previous years of students and less competent current (and future) years of students. Important to these distinctions are notions of *(in)experience*, (*in)ability* and *(lack of) commitment.* Enacted as frames of reference in and across the Musikklinja sites of choral practice, main instrument lessons, ensemble playing and the student lounge, they constitute the less competent student as lacking in terms of previous musical experience, in terms of 'inherent' musicality and talent and in terms of perseverance and concentration. The properly prepared music student apprentices have enough previous musical experience to understand and appropriate the range of new approaches, skills, techniques and theories they meet upon entering Musikklinja. While musicality or talent are concepts scarcely ever put to use, the 'ability' of the proper music student seems to be cited with similar connotations: the apt and the able have a superior inherent capacity of understanding and doing music, theoretically and practically. With experience and ability comes the disposition to act as an ethical music student subject by concentrating and focusing, enduring hardships, taking responsibility and contributing to the Musikklinja social and musical community.

### 8.1.4 Specialization

Now, Musikklinja curricula and local syllabuses hold the appropriation of specific musical competences within and across a range of areas (related to traditions, instruments and genres) to be the music student subject's main concern. Broken down into definite techniques and tasks, distributed over scheduled approaches and activities, formalized in competence aims and assessment criteria, musicianship is a *specialist's* craft. The main trajectory of

musical development offered is assembled by and enabled through a discourse of specialization presuming that students, regardless of their ambitions, study as if aiming at professional musicianship. Indeed, taking into account the weight with which discourses of musical dedication, entrepreneurship, competence and specialization are enacted in Musikklinja, it is somewhat surprising that almost no one expresses any ambition to try for a career in music. In the situations analysed in chapters 6 and 7, students seem careful to navigate in between and around the edges of such discourses, placing themselves in peripheral positions rather than in the core of ideas and ideals. Such a core position would indeed be the aspiring musician that attends Musikklinja to better her chances of professional musicianship. Onto her, the full implications of dedication, entrepreneurship, competence and specialization would be imposed, and she would have to answer to her *future* as well as her current legitimacy. Hence, the music student subject is performed through various subversions and displacements that reconstitute the performers a bit to the side of the core subject as hailed by the core discourses. Nevertheless, students utilize the discourse of specialization when constructing and arguing for their place in Musikklinja: having a speciality, a musical genre or style perhaps, signifies musicianship developed and specialized. Thus, it might even temporarily defer discourses of quality craftsmanship.

### 8.1.5 Connoisseurship

Learning and displaying musical *connoisseurship* is highly important to the practice of musicianship in Musikklinja. Scheduled and formalized, developing a knowledgeable connoisseur's ability to recognize and identify the aesthetic characteristics of music historical periods and of musical styles and genres is a core aim of the school subject "music in perspective". In main instrument lessons too, the student may be required to display a connoisseur's thorough and detailed understanding of musical features. However, the full implication of connoisseurship as *informed appreciation*, as expert judgement on matters of musical value and taste, comes through in the student lounge, where negotiations of one's music student-ness entail sharing and signing on with the awesome music, displaying your (personal?) knowledge of the awesome musicians, and discussing the awesome brands of musical equipment. In these negotiations, *originality and authenticity*, *quality and craftsmanship* (as opposed to *mainstream* and *hit-music*) are discourses constituting the value of your preferences, and thus, your music student legitimacy. Furthermore, learning to

appreciate the school genres of music as students see them – *classical (*and the *contemporary* repertoire in particular*)*, *jazz* and (old) *rock,* in that order – sets *educated connoisseurship* apart from the everyday connoisseurship of friends and family and emphasizes the increasing specialization and expertise of the music student subject.

## 8.2 The performance of music student subjectivity

### 8.2.1 Appropriation and resistance

By the weighty discourses of dedication and passion, entrepreneurship, connoisseurship, specialization and competence/craftsmanship, the young people of Musikklinja are addressed as music students. And on the whole, these identifying calls of discourse are accepted rather than rejected. They are answered in ways that acknowledge and enact anew power/knowledge relations governing what and how the music student subject can be. Indeed, *appropriating* the identifying call of music student seems to be a main strategy of performative enactment. Now, appropriation could very well entail a recitation almost identical to the imposition, a friction free merging of selves with discourse that utilizes and affirms prominent definitions and categories. Citing and submitting to the discourses of musicianship practiced in Musikklinja provides a performative experience of oneself *as* music student that secures and supports further subjectivity negotiations.

From the analyses of chapters 6 and 7 though, we could gather that appropriations of the music student subject position very much also depend upon additional discursive articulations and reiterations that enable the young people of Musikklinja to take up a position as a legitimate music students even when failing to redeem core concerns of the interpellating call. The call itself may be identifying and even unavoidable, but the discursive definitions and categories following the call are workable and negotiable. They can be twisted or temporarily deferred to facilitate an emphasis on additional or alternative definitions and categories that make possible a legitimate music student subject somewhat to the side of the call's focal point. Strategies of appropriation seem always also to include strategies of negotiation. Enacting the music student subject, students appropriate – adapt, shift, juggle – the available discourses in ways that empower and enable their discursive legitimacy *as* music students.

Such negotiations, we have seen, may indeed take the form of *resistance* and even *rejection*, as in the case of Oliver's objection to Hannah's performance of the "folk musician" (section 7.3.2), Molly's complex manoeuvring of herself in relation to Elise (sections 7.3.3 and 7.4.3), and Sarah's (interview) resistance towards the main instrument subject imposed on her (section 7.4.1). Nevertheless, since they serve to make room for alternative performances of the music student subject rather than challenge, destabilize the value of or seek to overthrow the imposition itself, I would suggest that they happen within the performative frame of appropriation. While students may disagree with or dislike the implications of the interpellating call, the discourses from which it rises go largely unchallenged. Resistance and refusal happen within an overall strategy of appropriation that subtly recites and reinscribes discursive meaning to successfully answer the call rather than try to change or overturn discourse itself.

### 8.2.2 Initiative and withdrawal

As the analyses of choral practice and ensemble playing in Musikklinja suggested, strategies of *withdrawal* are put to good use in appropriating discursive interpellations of musicianship and the music student subject. Indeed, proper choral performance entails that students withdraw or set aside their initiatives and personal opinions to merge with the choral body and follow the government of the conductor. Choral docility is a form of withdrawal or postponing of 'self' that presents an unconditionally mouldable and flexible body, ready, willing and able but with no agenda of its own. Demands of docile withdrawal are however met with further withdrawal by students who are unable, unwilling or not ready to submit to choral docility. Hiding, recoiling and hunching up, less body is proffered for manipulation and evaluation. Interpellations difficult to honour without discrediting selves carefully constructed in other practices can be warded off without actively proclaiming resistance. Thus, music student legitimacy is sustained across contexts. Withdrawal is also a strategy that strongly supports and secures the power/knowledge network holding and making available positions as music students. In choral practice as well as in ensemble playing, and even in main instrument lessons, students are careful not to destabilize teacher superiority and in that way undermine the relevance of Musikklinja as a place to study. Choosing to refrain from taking the initiative, even when sure of their own competence,

students protect the structures facilitating successful subjectivation from potential harm.

In apparent contradiction, strategies of *initiative* are as important to proper performance of the Musikklinja music student subject as are those of withdrawal. Following the prominent discourse of student *entrepreneurship* and its related comprehension of Musikklinja as a *working environment*, enacting the music student subject entails *signing on*, reaching out for the practices and discourses through which one can successfully perform as a music student and put them to use in ones own entrepreneurial self-project. Opposite to a strategy of withdrawal, a strategy of initiative entails actively setting oneself up as owner, leader and main interpreter, managing discourse around one's own needs. For the students of Musikklinja, balancing in between withdrawal and initiative seems crucial to successful subjectivation. Where Sarah's main instrument lessons show her withdrawing, postponing her initiative to act the violinist apprentice, she constructs an alternative trajectory for herself in the interview. Adrian attempts to stay the owner of his bass lesson, keeping in charge of the kind of bass instrument subject that is enacted. Speaking of his own efforts he resigns though, emphasizing the insufficiency he feels upon meeting and trying to redeem the demands he is presented with. Henry balances between organizing ensemble rehearsals to suit himself and honouring the discourse of teacher superiority.

### 8.2.3 Core and periphery positioning

While the precise target of a discursive imposition may be as difficult to define as the "proper" music student subject, students tend to position themselves in relation to such imaginary discursive ideals. Related to the strategies of withdrawal and initiative, strategies of discursive positioning work to avoid the commandments of discourse following an interpellating call. By juxtaposing discourses, shifting them to the foreground and background, deferring and enhancing them, students are able to take up positions well within the impact area of the power/knowledge relations enabling a music student subject, but more to the side of or in close proximity to a discursive "core". Thus positioned, students may still tap into discourse as an idea and ideal constituting their legitimacy. Establishing and performing from a discursive distance enables the young people of Musikklinja to take up the position of music student with less risk, utilizing what discourse has to offer without committing to its core

concerns. Indeed, positioning oneself deliberately as 'other' in relation to an imposition (the rock music student in the classical school setting, the natural science girl in relation to lounge connoisseurship) may enable students to put the imposition to positive use with but without forsaking the otherness they are empowered by. Establishing discursive distance between music student positions – the novice and the experienced, the first year and the third year, the wrong and the right, the able and the unable, the classical and the band people – works equally to secure Musikklinja legitimacy. As the analyses of the Cafe/Rock auditions showed, the music student position, its agency and legitimacy, is *relational*, constituted by establishing, bridging and demonstrating discursive distance, forming and forging discursive alliances.

### 8.2.4 Subjectivation through subversion

> Where the uniformity of the subject is expected, where the behavioral conformity of the subject is commanded, there might be produced the refusal of the law in the form of the parodic inhabiting of conformity that subtly calls into question the legitimacy of the command, a repetition of the law into hyperbole, a rearticulation of the law against the authority of the one who delivers it. Here the performative, the call by the law which seeks to produce a lawful subject, produces a set of consequences that exceed and confound what appears to be the disciplining intention motivating the law. Interpellation thus loses its status as a simple performative, an act of discourse with the power to create that to which it refers, and creates more than it ever meant to, signifying in excess of any intended referent. (Butler, 1993, p. 122)

As understood by Butler, the *subversion* of discursive meaning entails turning the interpellating call or command of discourse against itself by the use of irony, parody, overplay and excess. A strategic possibility of performative enactment in between frictionless appropriation and active resistance, subversion makes space for what is non-normative while at the same time revealing and potentially destabilizing the hegemony of normativity. For the students of Musikklinja, *subversion*, a reworking and reiteration of the discursive message received, is indeed an available strategy. The example closest to Butler's concern with drag and transgenderism in "Gender is burning" would be Mia and Julia ironically performing "…Baby, one more time", transgressing the discursive limitations of music student connoisseurship and quality without causing serious damage, a mild protest at house concerts being "too little *fun*" following their act. Similarly, Oliver's bodily, musical and verbal *ridiculing* subverts and distorts the folk music definitions imposed on him in the folk rock ensemble and thus enable him to try them out with less risk to the discourse

of authenticity and specialization supporting him. Adrian subverts the demand of choral docility to concern personal agency, a chance of developing his metal singer skills. The subversion constitutes his withdrawn and passive attitude as belonging to the attentive and concentrated learner rather than the inexperienced, incompetent and less committed. Likewise, warding off discourses of extraordinary quality and performance with discourses of everyday ordinariness and routine could also be seen as a subversive strategy that enables students to participate on high-risk arenas like auditions and house concerts.

It is important to note than in all these cases, the students' enactments and successful transgressions are actually *enabled* by the determining, identifying call of discourse. As undesirable impositions, they trigger the subversion that enable the students to go beyond what they already know and already master to conquer new fields of possibility. Thus, in Musikklinja, the 'twist', the more or less deliberate misunderstanding of the interpellating call or command of discourse is less destabilizing than dependent upon and reconsolidating of hegemonic norms. Nevertheless, temporary subversion of discursive meaning is imperative to music student subjectivation and renders possible a range of subjectivities.

### 8.2.5 Counter-conduct and complementary discourses

The question of resistance might be addressed as a question of mobilizing a counter-discourse that rejects, or fends off, the imposition. As we have seen though, acts of revolutionary reinterpretation or disruption in Musikklinja are practically non-existent. Indeed, I have been somewhat surprised at the lack of loud protest, insubordination and dissidence. Students may feel insufficient and inadequate ("I'm not a real music student"), nevertheless, the practice of musicianship in Musikklinja is largely accepted and acknowledged for what it is rather than questioned. Subtle, creative and functional new-articulation and reiteration however seem to be intrinsic to every performative act. Slightly subverting or twisting the performative, carefully withdrawing or offering their initiative and taking up positions more or less to the side of the imposition's impact area, students enact and establish functional, meaningful relations of power/knowledge to themselves and to discourse, achieving subjective mastery within the discursively acceptable. And significantly, by mobilizing one or more complementary or parallel discourses (like Michael does to survive the

discursive crossfire of the auditorium folk rock rehearsal, section 7.3.4) students change the force and impact of an imposition without necessarily rejecting its legitimacy. Supported by a complimentary discourse – adding "feeling" to the discourse of technical craftsmanship – students accept the validity of the discursive demand even if they may be unable to redeem it. Interpellative calls for connoisseurship and/or craftsmanship can be met with the discourse of dedication and its notions of passion, motivation and work ethic. Enactments of entrepreneurship may trump competence and craft, as may quality connoisseurship.

Importantly, initiating a counter-discourse or an additional discourse to answer an interpellating call in this way is not about replacing the one for the other. The answer does not devalue or reject the imposition but is superimposed upon it, giving it another kind of validity while deflecting its impact. The counter-conduct (Foucault, 2007, see section 3.2.3 of the present thesis) of the Musikklinja music students is not directed at reconfiguring or overthrowing the game of power/knowledge that regulates their participation. Rather, counter-conduct fill the function of enabling students to play, to take up positions as legitimate subjects of power within the Musikklinja formation of musicianship. Thus, counter-conduct, even in cases of tension or outright conflict between different positions of discourse, could be said to represent a form of discursive appropriation where minor adjustments are made to master the self within the rules of an overall truth game, and where discursive variety and multiplicity open for a range of temporary, strategic reconfigurations of subjectivity as well as discursive meaning.

Nevertheless, if I were to emphasize the resistive aspect of students' overall appropriating performative actions, I would suggest that the following three forms of counter-conduct carry subversive potential. First; when students insist that teachers take up positions of teacher superiority, they actively resist and work to subvert the prominent discourse of entrepreneurship to secure their own safe subjectivation. Second, maintaining a trajectory of one's own outside what is accepted by the formation of musicianship (for example outside discourses of specialization or without acknowledging student lounge constitutions of proper connoisseurship) could be interpreted as a subversive practice that slowly and microscopically undermines Musikklinja regimes of power/knowledge. And third, withdrawing one's competence and initiative to protect it from harm can potentially destabilize the legitimacy of the practice by risking its quality and thus its relevance.

## 8.3 Musikklinja practices of power

### 8.3.1 In between fields of music

The practice of musicianship through discourses of dedication, competence, entrepreneurship, connoisseurship and specialization constitutes a discursive formation specific to Musikklinja. The written, spoken, played and otherwise enacted ideas, knowledges, norms, habits, aims and interpretations of musicianship by students and teachers – over time, across sites and events – configure a Musikklinja form of musicianship; a specific arrangement and appropriation of musicianship as practiced in the larger discursive field of events in which Musikklinja finds itself. The configuration is by no means all static. While the overlapping spheres of figure 4 may offer a model pleasing to the eye and easy to grasp, a better conceptual matrix would be a flexible and open cluster of mobile parts and connections, adjustable and tunable, twistable and turnable: a form to make and remake, shift and shape to fit the context. As the analyses have shown, when subjected to a certain configuration of Musikklinja musicianship, students tend to respond with another configuration; different, but not so different so as to be unacceptable or unrecognizable. In their enactments of the music student subject, the young people of Musikklinja work the categories and definitions they are presented with, combine and split them, let the one dominate while temporarily postponing the other.

Flexibility and adjustability notwithstanding, musicianship in Musikklinja is an identifiable formation. Moreover, it is an identi*fying* formation. We have seen how music student subjects are enabled in answers and reiterations of the identifying calls of discourse. Similarly, the specific discursive formation of musicianship that Musikklinja practices could be comprehended as an institutional answer to identifying calls of discourse produced outside Musikklinja; in practices of higher music education, in fields of musical professionalism and expertise, in and through community musicking and everyday musical consumption, and in political intensions and ambitions of providing general education for all. The practice and formation of musicianship serves to authorize and unify Musikklinja in relation to other institutions, practices and procedures representing other strategic configurations of power/knowledge. Translating and compromising between the larger field's expectations and discursive interpellations of what musicianship should be like, the upper secondary programme works out an authorized place and identity

for itself. The formation of musicianship, we could say, negotiates a position for Musikklinja in between educational trajectories of specialization and of general studies qualifications, formalized and informal musical learning practices, traditions of Western art music education and of rock and popular music, national directives and local opportunities, elite and amateur music making, students' pasts and students' futures, subject positions as presupposed in schedules and curricula, and subject positions as enacted by actual students.

It is certainly no easy position to take. Indeed, the purposes and main obligations of upper secondary programmes of music have been a pressing topic in music educational debate in recent years, often articulated together with questions of talent development and how to prepare for a musical career. Referring to only marginal differences in qualifications between Norwegian applicants with backgrounds from music studies in upper secondary and those having attended other Norwegian study programmes, the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH), in collaboration with the National Academic Council for Music, Dance, Drama posed the questions: MDD – what does it qualify *for*? And how can the MDD programmes recruit better to the higher performing arts educations?[48] Norwegian applicants are losing out to foreign, better qualified candidates, NMH warns (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2013, p. 120), and former rector Erik Birkeland suggests that more performance oriented variants of the MDD programmes should be established (see Odland, 2013). The Norwegian cellist and teacher in NMH Truls Mørk criticizes what he finds too high a demand of general studies qualifications in the Norwegian school system (see footnote 35 in section 6.1.3), and argues that young talents lack the hours of practice necessary to reach a level of musicianship enabling them to compete for places in higher music education (Odland, 2013).

Programmes of Music, Dance and Drama are "demanding and extensive, requiring much effort on the part of individual students", the Norwegian Musicians' Union maintains (Musikernes Fellesorganisasjon [MFO], 2012, my translation). In a letter to the Ministry of Education and Research concerning the Ministry's on-going evaluation of K06, MFO presents the results of a survey carried out amongst members working in MDD programmes. According to MFO's informants, since the implementation of the Knowledge Promotion in

48 The questions were posed in a national conference on MDD programmes hosted by NMH November 4, 2011, gathering teachers and administrative staff from upper secondary schools, higher music and arts educations as well as invited politicians, professional musicians and members of the Norwegian Musicians' Union.

2006 the performing aspects of music studies have been weakened, the common core subjects have become too dominant, the balance between theory and practice have been displaced and students have little time for practicing and self-development.

The identifying calls from the fields of musical expertise and higher education seem to arrive complete with a discourse of specialized craft that significantly questions the practice of musicianship as *dedication* in Musikklinja. Demanding students' absolute dedication to school practices and procedures, Musikklinja may obstruct individual talents in their progress towards expert musicianship, the underlying message seems to read. Indeed, talented students choose general studies rather than music studies to have enough time for practicing and perfecting their playing, MFO reports. It is a discourse that is rooted in Musikklinja practices themselves; MFO's informants are MDD teachers. The analyses of chapters 6 and 7 also show students and teachers voicing the opinion that in general, the quality of today's students is low compared to earlier years, that they lack the proper background and that, as Oliver says, Musikklinja is less prestigious than it used to be (section 6.2.2).

Musikklinja is expected to provide aspiring musicians auditioning for higher music education with an advantage compared to those choosing general studies or other educational trajectories. When it is argued that Musikklinja fails in this regard, the relevance of Musikklinja is, obviously, threatened. Likewise, the discursive relevance of Musikklinja may be destabilized when the programme fails to attract the 'proper' subjects. Thus, in 2013 the Ministry of Education and Research called for more research on the "quality, content and *relevance*" in programmes for music, dance and drama (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2013, p. 119, my translation, italics added).

However, I would argue, Musikklinja answers to a range of expectations of adjacent and overlapping institutions and fields of discourse, and its relevance does not rely on its relation to higher music education alone. Studying pianists at Aarhus Academy of Music, Nielsen (1998; 2006) notices how the profession aimed at is "transparent" in the activities and artefacts of the Academy learning practices. The relevance of the Academy, we might say, relies on a "lack of division between learning and applying [which] makes the goal of the education obvious" (Nielsen, 2006, p. 5). The relevance of Musikklinja, we have seen, relies on the transparency of several different fields of application in its practices. A highly important field of application for many of the students is the local musical community of ensembles and rock bands, choirs, scenes, studios, gigs

and concerts, talent shows and competitions. Additionally important is the general field of higher university and college studies for which Musikklinja also prepares and qualifies students. And as for the transparency of musical 'professionalism' in Musikklinja learning practices; while fields of musical expertise best accessed through further studies at an academy may seem to be given primacy in Musikklinja architecture and curriculum, the everyday practice of musicianship in and through discourses of the working environment and the student entrepreneur certainly gives promise of a field of professionalism accessible through more informal routes and career moves.

Musikklinja's relevance is constituted in a careful, institutional balancing act between expectations and demands that are all solidly and legitimately anchored in other educational, professional or everyday (musical) practices. I do agree that the relevance of Musikklinja is challenged if those most interested in a musical career, the most capable and the most eager, choose other educational trajectories to musical professionalism. However, if we are to establish more individually tailored, performance oriented variants of the programme, or even to excuse the talented from participating in more 'mundane' Musikklinja projects and school subjects, the relevance of Musikklinja might be put to an even greater test. The discursive practice of *dedication* is, as the analyses show, highly important in keeping Musikklinja meaningfully together as a recognizable, relevant and legitimate institution. It serves the purpose of manoeuvring all students over onto a somewhat similar path that is predictable, understandable and doable. It serves the purpose of securing Musikklinja educational and musical practices. But most significantly, without the discourse of dedication to gather all students into a Musikklinja *collective* – a supportive, friendly environment – Musikklinja loses its meaning in between the multifarious individual educational trajectories, and the various fields of discourse to which it relates. Musikklinja legitimizes itself by being 'Musikklinja', a school, an *experience* even, in its own right and with a purpose of its own. Even if the discourse of specialization strongly regulates main instrument practice in Musikklinja, giving up the discourse of dedication to serve as a lowest common denominator for students that to all intents and purposes prioritize individual trajectories of expertise over collective obligations might threaten the relevance and attraction of Musikklinja as an inclusive social environment, a pool of musicians and a ticket straight on to the concert stage.

School practices of musicianship may be regulated by national curricula, authorized through fields of professional musicianship or addressed from the viewpoint of higher music education but their relevance and legitimacy is equally constituted by students' expectations to access the 'real' action, on local stages and studios, with other Musikklinja musicians; professionals and peers. Similar to the performative subjectivation of the music student through discourses of musicianship, Musikklinja comes to subjective existence and agency by citing and reciting, practicing and performing, its own possibilities of existence. Through the enactment of musicianship, Musikklinja submits to discourse and attains discursive legitimacy. The Musikklinja formation of musicianship constitutes Musikklinja as a recognizable, reasonable and responsible actor/institution in the fields of music and education, in the eyes of itself and in the eyes of others. Dyndahl and Ellefsen (2009) explore the reciprocal relations between music education practices and the discourses regulating them by metaphorically employing the concept of 'didactic identity', a term developed from Dahlgren (1989):

> Analogous to human subjects' constructions of identity, the didactic identities of school subjects are also created and negotiated by means of, and in relation to, culture, meaning and power. Music educational practices could be said to negotiate didactic identity in much in the same way as do individuals, achieving subjective existence and agency through discursive subjugation, at the same time identifying, reiterating, challenging or even subverting the discursive categories responsible for its suppression. (Dyndahl & Ellefsen, 2009, p. 14)

Following this argument, we could say that by employing and working with the discourses of dedication, competence, entrepreneurship, connoisseurship and specialization in its practice of musicianship, Musikklinja negotiates and establishes a didactic identity in between other didactic identities of the field, while also acknowledging and working on the conditions of its possibility. Through this process of subjectivation, Musikklinja becomes an institution of itself, unified, purposeful, identifiable, a practice in its own right, legitimate by its own standards. Its practices are justified by being practiced.

As the analyses of chapters 6 and 7 have demonstrated, the practices of musicianship in Musikklinja are inextricably linked to performances of music student subjectivity. Music student subjectivity is achieved by citing prominent discourses of musicianship and individually appropriating and resignifying them to establish and sustain functional and legitimate relations of power/knowledge between self and discourse. What is produced through this performative act, this act of subjectivation, is both *subject* and *resignification.*

The discourses employed are reaffirmed and kept alive, even if altered, slightly shifted and put together in another way. Hence, the subjectivation of the individual is indeed imperative to musicianship as a Musikklinja formation, and consequently to the discursive existence and legitimacy of Musikklinja itself. Moreover, individual subjectivation, the micro-relations of power/knowledge enacted on selves by selves, in context by context, are imperative to the discursive existence and legitimacy of a larger field of discursive events in which other MDD programmes and other institutions of music, education or music educations reside.

### 8.3.2 The power technologies of Musikklinja

In section 3.2.1 I asked: where does the power to manage discourse, to lead meaning in certain directions, come from? Adopting the view of Foucault, the present study has argued that discursive power is distributed across a myriad of social and cultural micro-practices, all with the 'power' to cite, reiterate, constitute and reconstitute meaning and thereby keep discourse going in a certain direction (or turn in another one). Foucault's concept of power/knowledge however offers more than a way of speaking about signification. Power/knowledge is always also about the government of people's conduct, that is, the regulating of the actions of individuals, the leading of subjects along certain paths and the positioning of them in relation to other subjects, and the division of human beings into categories and groups that grant them discursive privileges and rights or bestow on them sentences or punishment.

Musikklinja could certainly be understood as a field or network of power/knowledge relations that govern the conduct of participants. An educational practice, the government of conduct is formalized in schedules and assessment systems, procedures and practices of learning according to established aims of competence and knowledge. Equally, the formation of musicianship in Musikklinja constitutes a certain constellation of power/knowledge relations – a particular situation of strategic relations (Foucault 2000a; 2000c) that distributes statements and positions subjects in and through discourses of dedication, competence, entrepreneurship, connoisseurship and specialization. Through the practice of musicianship, students' conduct is conducted along specific trajectories of development and across specific sites of activity. Students are positioned in relation to their commitment, craftsmanship, virtuosity, entrepreneurial efforts, work ethic, degree of responsibility shown and so on.

Musikklinja's institutional 'power' to position and to conduct thus rises from the discursive formation of musicianship ('knowledge'). But the constitution of musicianship as an area of education ('knowledge') likewise depends upon established, strategic relations of 'power' on national as well as local and micro-practice levels establishing it as an object of education, as something to learn. "There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" Foucault argues (1978/1995, p. 27). In Musikklinja, power relations between masters and experts, teachers and learners, national decision-makers and local practitioners, administration and staff, classical musicians and rock musicians, first years and third years, males and females, and so on, constitute a domain of strategic relations across which musicianship can be practiced as an area of competence and knowledge. Then again, the formation of musicianship constitutes a discursive practice in which the master and the expert, the classical musician and the rock musician, the national decision-maker and the local practitioner, the male and the female (and so on) are recognized and reconstituted. Like the sciences investigated by Foucault, music and musicianship constitute domains of knowledge in which human beings can come to an understanding of themselves. Institutionalized as a 'discipline' of education, musicianship offer ways of knowing about and improving the human subject, ways of knowing by which the subject is interpreted, categorized, positioned and handled. And even more than the disciplines of psychology or medicine or economies I would suggest, the domain of music and musicianship represents 'powerful' everyday opportunities of self-mastery and self-knowledge that thoroughly and effectively distribute discursive power/knowledge along the most capillary of relations, those between the self and the self (see below).

Thus, by the formation of musicianship, Musikklinja works as a dividing practice – distinguishing between the able and less able, the experienced and the inexperienced, the open minded and the ignorant, the active entrepreneurs and those doing what they're told, the real and the fake music student, and so on. In this, technologies of power as described by Foucault are employed. As we saw in section 7.2 the school choir is enabled by relations of power that are predominantly disciplinary. And there is indeed disciplinary character to the exercise of power in Musikklinja in more ways than vocal ensemble performance. Practices of musicianship regulate and structure, train and improve student bodies through physical adjustments at the most detailed level. To be able to assess all by the same procedures and criteria, Musikklinja

manoeuvres students over onto relatively similar trajectories and subjects them to relatively similar practices. Students are expected frequently to present themselves by performance, playing/singing for their conductor, their teachers, their peers, an in-school or an out of school audience. In rows of rehearsal cells, students exercise and discipline themselves to and through musicianship without knowing whether someone is listening in the hallway or not. Moreover, the discourses of entrepreneurship combined with dedication serve to establish an understanding of Musikklinja as something between school and 'real life', a working environment where school assessment routines and scheduled learning opportunities are intertwined with informal strategies of 'getting in positions to play' and musical networking. In this situation of strategic relations facilitated by the opposites of the formal and informal, students may not know when and whether they are being assessed. While term exams and tests remain identifiable procedurals of division and categorization, the assessment, evaluation and constitution of the music student continue across "training arenas" like house concerts, ensemble and choir rehearsals and main instrument lessons. Moreover, as have seen, the student lounge constitutes a major site of music student evaluation, the notice board and audition lists displaying your rank and your status, the sets of sofas and chairs representing places of honour available to some and not to others.

### 8.3.3 Governmental informality

While disciplinary relations of power certainly serve to constitute the music student subject and reinforce the formation of musicianship, the situation of power/knowledge addressed as "government" or "governmentality" by Foucault (1982; 2000a; 2000c) describes even better, I would say, the government of music student conduct in Musikklinja. In relations of governmentality, populations are managed by the providing of guidance, teaching and advice, according to which the population governs itself. Prescribing and facilitating conduct (the taking of a vaccine, the doing of homework, the saying of a prayer, practice, work, reproduction…), governments or pastorates or parents – or teachers – tend to the health, the morals, the productivity and the manageability of their group. In this, the workings of governmental power rely upon the self-management of the governed to follow prescriptions and utilize the facilities offered.

Musikklinja relies upon its young population to appropriate and utilize the prescriptions and facilities enabling the music student subject; productive, manageable, moral and healthy. The emphasis on student entrepreneurship and the demand for dedication could be seen as powerful strategies of government. Facilitating a working environment that prescribes the active initiative of student entrepreneurs to sign up, get in positions to play, share and show their musical craftsmanship and connoisseurship and wholeheartedly dedicate themselves to the various sites and activities of specialization lined up for them, Musikklinja efficiently governs by governing less.

In *Subjectivity and Truth. Foucault, Education and the Culture of Self*, Besley and Peters (2007) utilize the perspectives of Foucault to address the neo-liberal entrepreneurial self of education. Under neoliberalism, they write, the economic as well as moral process of "responsibilizing the self" is concomitant with "a new tendency to 'invest' in the self at crucial points in the life cycle" (p. 165). Furthermore:

> The duty to the self – its simultaneous responsibilization as a moral agent and its construction as a calculative rational choice actor – becomes the basis for a series of investment decisions concerning one's health, education, security, employability, and retirement. (Besley & Peters 2007, pp. 165-166)

This neo-liberal revival of *homo economicus*, they argue, is based on assumptions of individuality, rationality and self-interest (ibid, p. 163). Their argument could easily be applied to Musikklinja. Across the practices of musicianship in Musikklinja, the entrepreneurial subject governs herself in relation to risk and investment, accountability and legitimacy. It is her duty and her responsibility as a moral, rational actor to make investments and take decisions that turn her into a successful – healthy, educated, secure, employable and promising – music student being. The Musikklinja binary juxtaposition of the formal or "school-like" and the informal practice of students' "own things" serves to constitute the primacy of the entrepreneur; the music student that incorporates Musikklinja formality in his own project of musicianship and thereby assumes full responsibility for his own development.

Chapter 2 of the present thesis argues that a concern with 'formal' versus 'informal' aspects of musical learning has been a major topic in Scandinavian music education discourse in recent decades. Popular music and teaching strategies acquired from informal music playing contexts have been part of compulsory music education in the Nordic countries for at least three decades (Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012), and while the findings of Green (2002, see section 2.5

of the present thesis) have led to increased enthusiasm for these, educators and researchers like Georgii-Hemming and Westvall (2010) Ericsson, Lindgren and Nilsson (2011) and Zandén (2010) also question the weight, status and consequences of informal learning strategies and approaches in Swedish lower and upper secondary music education. These researchers warn against the dominance of certain genres over others, the withdrawn and unclear role of the teacher, the lack of context-specific aesthetic criteria of quality, the re-enforcement of traditional, gendered musical subject positions and the presumptions of 'learning' by engaging in musical activities that presume that you have already learned.

Co-produced by students and teachers, Musikklinja emerges through a set of educative practices in the mix between formal and informal as well as neophyte and master aspects of musicianship, important for making the school the possible transition arena between amateur and professional musical life that it is expected to be by students, teachers and society. Indeed, Musikklinja's position in a larger discursive formation of musical and educational institutions, practices and procedures is *enabled* by the binary opposition of formal/informal. Helped by similar dichotomies of generalization/specialization and school-like/real, the binary serves to balance Musikklinja on the intersecting trajectories of general studies qualifications, higher music education and musicianship as practiced and performed outside school – the myriad of amateur and professional rock band rehearsals and ambitions, choral practices and competitions, festivals, gigs, social media acts, radio events, recordings and so on that Musikklinja teachers and students participate in on regular basis. Tensions between what might be conceived of as formally approved versus informally attained and used musical skills and knowledges, formal, teacher-led learning situations versus informal, peer-led learning situations, formal aims and goals embedded in curricula and assessment practices, and students own musical, entrepreneurial projects are not only characteristic of Musikklinja, they are constitutive of it. The "school-like" is given relevance by representing something different from, while also resembling and reciting, students "own things", and students' "own things" are given new value and legitimacy within the frames of schooling directed at professional musicianship. Governmental power runs along relations of the formal to the informal and vice versa, conducting students conduct by bearing on how and who they perceive themselves to be within an overall game of truth.

Folkestad (2006) criticizes "the sometimes implicitly normative value judgements underlying some of the literature and discussions, where *informal* is equal to good, true or authentic, while *formal* is equal to artificial, boring and bad" (Folkestad, 2006, p. 143). In a similar vein, I would criticize an assumption that interprets formal/informal as governed/non-governed. The forming and performing of student initiated and -led ensemble projects in Musikklinja are, as we have seen, governed by relations of power/knowledge that favour the lounge connoisseur, the student entrepreneur and the craftsman. In this way, Musikklinja informal practices of musicianship are thoroughly gendered as well as 'genred'. Boys playing electric instruments in the genres of rock and other popular music styles are main actors and initiators in forming, and performing with, various ensembles. They are also main actors in the lounge displays of connoisseurship, which, again, are closely linked to entrepreneurial negotiations of getting into a position to play and perform. Moreover, getting into a position to play is, supported by the weighty discourses of entrepreneurship, dedication and competence, an agency that defines music student subjectivity while also favouring the male rock guitarist over the female classical flautist. Thus, I would certainly agree with Georgii-Hemming and Westvall (2010) when they maintain that the application of informal strategies of learning within formal music educational settings tends to give primacy to certain musics and certain learning styles. Using the terminology of Folkestad (2006), Källén similarly argues that ensemble playing in the Arts Programme, when modelled on informal learning strategies in which the participants' "intentionality" is directed "towards playing" rather than "towards learning how to play", favours the musical actions of boys over those of girls. Thus, the conditions of musical learning are gendered from the outset.

With regard to the role of the teacher within 'informalized' educational practices like ensemble playing in upper secondary school, Zandén (2010) finds that his teacher informants describe school and teaching as "counter-productive to ensemble playing", and that "high musical quality is explained by lack of music teacher interventions" (p. 219). Teachers' practices have not constituted the main focus of the present study. From what I have seen, as well as from my analyses of the folk rock and "Miserere" rehearsals, I would not, however, draw the conclusion that teachers in their actual 'teaching' enact similar attitudes. They may be duly impressed by students "own stuff", enacting discourses of authenticity and originality to express their enthusiasm. They are careful to stay out of projects that they perceive as student initiated and student led. But in general, they are not afraid to teach. Rather, their considerations

go along the line of 'when and what to teach', as well as 'when and in relation to what' students would benefit from being their own teachers. The school initiated rock ensemble rehearsed mostly on their own, but when their teacher Nicholas was there, he instructed them at the same level of detail that a master violinist would when instructing her chamber ensemble – with focus on musical expression, timbre, phrasing, articulation, technique and so on. Similarly, Hannah took charge of the folk rock ensemble when in the room.

Students seem in general intent on keeping their teachers in positions of formalized superiority. Musikklinja trusts students to choose to bring their "own things" – initiatives, musics, projects, preferences – into the school setting and keep them going across hallways and lounges, scenes and sites to create the Musikklinja atmosphere of the working environment, the pool of peers and professionals and the supportive, inclusive milieu. Students, on the other hand, may trust Musikklinja, and their teachers in particular, to formally stage and support their steps *away* from their "own things", indeed, lending it to the discourse of the "school-like" to test and try out without harm coming to their legitimacy. It may be worth noting that several incidents in the empirical material of the present study could be interpreted as efforts at reinstalling risk management and responsibility at the teachers' level of discourse. Molly, we saw, works hard to make Elise take the position of teacher, thus enabling Molly herself to perform without risk within what is managed, *imposed even*, by teachers. Similar exchanges of power happen in the folk rock group, where Hannah's teaching is a source of annoyance and even embarrassment to the students, but nevertheless facilitates the discursive transgression of the flautists as well as the fiddlers.

Moreover, students may rely on Musikklinja to make their musicianship "more real", as Henry says, "more respectable" even. Performing within the still glorious architecture of traditional, Western art music education, with its practices of master-apprentice learning, ear-training, music history and appreciation, analysis, music theory, four-part choral song and so on, the pop singer, the classical flautist, the metal bass player and the aspiring jazz drummer are all empowered. And significantly; for the music student to remain an attractive position, Musikklinja needs to retain its magic. Musikklinja must be the most socially inclusive place, teachers needs to be legends and myths (the awesome and scary and highly respected boss, the desperate and frustrated conductor genius artist, the kind "mother" of Musikklinja), the concerts need to be the grand successes. From the perspective of student

performance, students need to be assured that Musikklinja will prevail no matter the outcome of their own efforts. Thus, as the analyses show, appropriations in which Musikklinja's values, truths and norms are accepted and students themselves take up positions somewhat to the side of the ideal entrepreneur who bears the responsibility for redeeming and fulfilling and upholding Musikklinja are found all across the empirical material.

### 8.3.4 The reciprocal constitutional power of selves and discourse

Throughout the process of observing and analysing the practice of musicianship and constitution of music student subjectivity in Musikklinja, I have become increasingly aware of the effort and energy that go into performing oneself as a legitimate music student. Equally, I have been struck by the force and persistency with which students constitute their Musikklinja attendance as a success and Musikklinja itself as a legitimate, desirable and rightful place to be. Working with and within the formation of musicianship as offered, the music students find ways of appropriating and reiterating discourse that constitute the legitimacy of themselves while also acknowledging the practice in which they participate – even in situations of potential conflict. Whereas the analyses of chapters 6 and 7 explore instances of negotiations for how they facilitate the successful and legitimate subjectivation of the individual, the following discussion addresses more generally the reciprocal constitution of selves and discourse in Musikklinja, and questions of self-mastery, legitimacy and success.

A statement, Foucault holds, is an event that activates anew and puts into play the procedures and practices it comes from as well as a range of previous, similar and related events. Rather than representing, the statement mobilizes discourse. It puts forward, enunciates, the discursive field of events from which it arises (Foucault 1972/2010). Similarly, a performative (Butler, 1993; 1997a; 2007) cites and reiterates previous performance. Activated in the historicity of the moment, discursive past brings to bear on discursive present. Regardless of modality – musical, verbal, gestural – the performative, like the statement, puts into play and makes available a field of related musical, verbal or gestural acts, the traditions and practices to which they belong, the procedures by which they emerge and the positions from which they can be carried out. Thus, in answering the discursive hailing of a performative – "sign up with the best of three worlds!", "are *you* to replace Daniel?", "try to play more like a folk dance group", "please show some youthful enthusiasm" – the young people

of Musikklinja have at their disposal a range of related (but not necessarily compatible) discursive statements, supported by a field of procedures and practices. Picking up a pen and putting his name on the list, Henry acknowledges the legitimacy of the performative. It is indeed he who is hailed by discourse. He is identified and positioned in a formation of musicianship offering discourses on good and bad music, quality performance and musical craft, ownership and initiative, genres and specialization.

The performative is a subjectifying imposition. However, it is not a coercive imposition. Rather, I would suggest, the performative works by governmentality; the request to "sign up" is an action meant to govern action, an effort at "guiding the possibility of conduct" (Foucault, 1982, p. 789). The real effect of the performative depends upon the relation of self to self established by Henry in turning around, recognizing and acknowledging the performative, identifying himself and his music by the pen. In the act, he works out a relation to himself, a meaningful, reliable, functional interpretation, using what is offered him through the performative, acknowledging and strengthening its discursive force. Indeed, the establishing of a relation – a meaningful experience – of self to self seems to be at the very core of Musikklinja signifying practice.

Subjectivity, then, is a site for discourse to settle, if only temporarily. Now, to understand this, we could follow the destabilizing of the 'subject' practiced by Foucault and Butler, and see 'subjectivity' as a temporary, strategic situation rather than a synthesizing, non-discursive locus of power or a cultural vessel of discourse, gradually filled up to constitute a comprehendible subject. The performative moment, Butler argues, is condensed historicity, an effect of past and future that both constitute and escape the instance of utterance (1997a, p. 3). Its effect depends upon more than the instance. So also with subjectivity, we could argue. Subjectivity too could be seen as condensed historicity, as an effect of both past performance and future possibility. Faced with performative impositions, subjectivities are renewed, reiterated and re-established in relations to selves by selves, relations translating between past and future, confirmation and transgression, safety and change. Thus, like the statement and like the performative, subjectivity constitutes an event in a discursive field of previous and alternative subjectivity configurations (and the procedures and practices generating them), a field that is mobilized, enunciated, in the performative act; a field that supports numerous, but not unlimited, configurations of statements – subjectivities. The relation of self to self then would entail a reconfiguration in and of this field to make the fit with the

performative. Pursuing this line of thought even further, the "suture" between self and discourse referred to by Hall (1996, p. 5-6. See section 1.5 of the present thesis) could hence be understood as a suture between fabrics of condensed, discursive historicities. In the performative act, working with the performative imposition and the opportunities provided by the enunciative fields mobilized, the self establishes a meaningful relation to self as discursive history while also creating a meaningful connection to discourse.

By and through these relations of power/knowledge, the emerging music student subject intervenes in discursive materiality. Applying discursive impositions on herself, altering, shifting and citing them anew, she mobilizes and manipulates her own conditions of possibility. The formation of musicianship from which the impositions arise is twisted and turned in her reiteration, be it musical, verbal or gestural, or even silent, a reflexive relation of self to self. In this way, the individual comes to self-mastery and music student subjectivity is achieved. She has worked out an interpretation of herself and a position in discourse that is functional and that enable her to play, speak, act and think the master subject. Considering subjects' practices of self as well as the constraint under which they are carried out, Davies (2001; 2006) and Youdell (2003, 2006) find that the subject's active and creative meaning making is crucial to subjectivation (see section 2.3). The present study supports the analytical arguments of Davies and Youdell; in the Musikklinja students' reiteration of power, agency can be found, even if radically conditioned. The formation of musicianship has been reworked to enable her performance; subjectivity has been reconfigured to take a position in discourse. This form of discursive agency (Butler, 1997a, ch.4) is contextual and relational. The subject's creative appropriation of the categories assigned to her and the discourses supporting them happen in agreement with the other participants of the practice.

This in turn means that performative enactments of subjectivity work as performatives themselves – they intervene in discourse and come to constitute the conditions of possibility for the subjectivation of others. Daniel's, Molly's or Oliver's participation in house concerts mobilizes and reinforces prominent discourses constituting their legitimacy, discourses of craftsmanship, quality, authenticity and originality that may constrain or allow for the legitimate participation of other music students. Thus, conducting their own conduct, establishing relations of power/knowledge between themselves and discourse that enable them to participate in house concerts, they simultaneously

govern the actions of others. Agency is relational, collectively and discursively regulated. In processes of subjectivation, the performative enactments of your fellow choral singer, your co-drummer and your lead vocalist overlap with your own, influencing, inhibiting or expanding your scope of action. Or preventing you from participating altogether.

In section 3.3.2, I suggested that performativity is how discourse 'practices'. Having observed and analysed a range of performative events across the formation of musicianship in Musikklinja, I will reiterate this: discourses of musicianship work through the relations of the self to the self enacted in performative practice. When establishing a relation to self, in which they experience themselves as proper and understandable, music students activate, work and reconstitute discourse. The 'self' could thus be considered an on-going cultural and signifying practice by which subjects and statements emerge, a main managerial procedure of discourse. When discourse is practiced, subjectivity emerges. However, we could just as easily turn this around: when subjectivity is practiced, discourse emerges. And if we assume that subjectivity is enacted in every human meaning making practice, that interpretation and signification necessarily must involve a relation to self by self, performativity is certainly at the heart of discursive practice. The myriad of signifying practices that manage discourse is a myriad of practices that also involve subjectivation.

Discourses of musicianship in Musikklinja then are kept alive and functioning through the constitution of discursive music student subjectivities, by performativity. This again means that Musikklinja, as an institution of discourse, is sustained by and through performative practice. Discursively identified and delimited in how it practices musicianship – how it answers the interpellating calls of music, education and musicianship from the fields of discourse in which it is immersed – Musikklinja thoroughly depends upon the relations of selves to selves established in performative practice. Capillary enactments of power/knowledge along relations of self to self established in performative practice intervene in the fabric of power/knowledge relations at other levels of discourse. In the works of Butler on gender and sexuality, performative practice is considered as it plays out along the most microscopic, subconscious psychological relations to the self. Although they are hard to theorize, and even harder to investigate empirically, the myriad of gendered micro-practices of self on self are vital in sustaining the heteronormative matrix of society. In Musikklinja, power/knowledge is played out in the capillary relations of

musical performance, equally hard to theorize, equally hard to investigate empirically.

### 8.3.5 The aesthetic experience of subjectivity

The empirical material of fieldnotes and interview transcripts that support the current study may not provide a sufficient enough basis for exploring relations established between aesthetic fabrics of discourse, like music, and performing selves. A focused video material and a research strategy based on stimulated recall interviews might have facilitated investigations into the complexity of aesthetic subjectivation. Even so, I would like to offer a few thoughts on the subject.

In reflecting on the processes and conditions of possibility through which student subjectivities are constituted, Davies (2006) writes that students seek a mode of performativity "in which they can be read as accomplishing themselves as autonomous, and preferably, as the right sort of subject" (2006, p. 433). In Musikklinja, *music* certainly offers such a mode of performative action. Performing through music, by music, offers the most powerful, significant realization and experience of the self as a whole, legitimate, proper music student. Musical acts are performances in both the theatrical and the Butlerian sense – the performance and display of music, as a result of work on the self, and the performance of subjectivity, as a result of work on music.

In light of this, it is interesting to contemplate, again, what constitutes the 'aesthetic experience', a concept that teachers and didacticians, researchers, philosophers and sociologists of music keep coming back to and debate the meaning of. Holding that the "social functions" of music are inextricably linked to its "aesthetic aspects", Frith argues that the experience of music always gives us a way of "being in" and "making sense of" the world (Frith, 1996a, p. 114). Similarly, DeNora has shown how music could be a resource, a "technology" even, for the self, and that actors mobilize music for "being, doing and feeling", for "agency" and for "subjective stances and identities" (DeNora, 2000, p. 74). To me, Frith and DeNora's points of view seem to bridge what at times has been a polarized debating of the 'social' or 'functional' versus the 'aesthetic' aspects and virtues of music, music(k)ing versus aesthetic appreciation. If we, following Davies (following Butler), understand the 'aesthetic experience' as a mode of performativity in which individuals accomplish subjecthood, we can expand a bit upon their arguments.

At the heart of performative subjectivation, we have seen, is the establishment of meaningful, reliable, functional interpretations of and relations to 'self'. By appropriating and/or subverting what is discursively offered, and reconfiguring the field of 'selves' to make the match, the music students of Musikklinja constitute and experience themselves as discursively legitimate, autonomous and meaningful subjects. This also applies when interacting with and creating an aesthetic fabric like music by listening, playing or singing, composing or improvising, performing or rehearsing. Doing music, establishing a kinaesthetic, tactile, auditive, visual and reflexive experience of herself as 'being' in music, the music student 'makes sense of' her place in discourse while also making sense of discourse itself, musical or otherwise. Being unable to establish such relations, or having to establish relations constituting the self as a failure and an unaccomplished subject could indeed be traumatic, as Davies note (Davies, 2006, p. 433). Thus, students work hard to set up meaningful relations between discursively important musical matter, like the choral anthem of Knut Nystedt; "Sing and rejoice", and themselves. In what they perceive to be the difficult, contemporary, artful musical language of Nystedt, music student subjectivity can be aesthetically *experienced*, felt, heard, breathed and sung. In contrast, Oliver struggles with subverting Hannah's aesthetic impositions in the folk rock group into something he can bear. Her naively folkish "jamparira"'s and her request for high glissandos are impossible for Oliver to submit to – to play and experience himself through – as they are, and must be addressed ironically and humorously. Thus approached (and by the protection of "teacher superiority"), they can be converted into functional aesthetic structures through practicing and experimenting. "As this music happens, so do I", Tia DeNora suggests in her study of music as a technology of the self (2000, p. 158). Alternatively, we could assume; "as *this* music happens, so I absolutely refuse to". Either way, we are addressing students' experiences of themselves through physical, visual, auditive engagement with and negotiation and appropriation of an aesthetic discursive materiality.

Music students are of course *supposed* to accomplish themselves through music, by means of music, and they are *supposed* to accomplish music by means of their selves, through themselves. Beauty, mathematical skills, digital competence or sportsmanship may be important aspects of students' self esteem and social identities. However, the playing and singing of music, on stage, in classrooms, studios and hallways, is what says *music student* in the most efficient, successful or devastating way. But while the act of performance might very well include a more or less deliberate 'presentation' of a music

student identity, or the manufacturing of an "egologo" as Scheid (2009) finds in his study of the music practices of secondary school pupils, the constitution of music student subjectivity through musical performance is something more, and more profound, than promoting a proper self by flaunting the right cultural colours. Through the 'aesthetic experience' of music, subjective mastery and discursive legitimacy can be achieved. The aesthetic experience involves the constitution and experience of subjectivity; contextual, social, functional. But equally, the experience of subjectivity, of 'self' – reflexively, physically, emotionally – is established through relations forged in and by music as aesthetic discursive matter. The artificial division between what is aesthetic experience and what is social function, constituted in the heat of the music educational battle, can indeed be disposed of.

Interestingly, the intertwinement of selves with music is a discursive assumption practiced all across Musikklinja sites and activities of musicianship. Indeed, the sheer act of playing, striving to get in positions to play, and hungering to get on stage, constitute the performer as passionate about and dedicated to music, and hence as an ethical, morally responsible Musikklinja person. Discourses on work ethics and responsibility, originality, authenticity, maturity, passion, enthusiasm, dedication and so on mix and blend with discourses on musical craftsmanship and connoisseurship to constitute the suitability and appropriateness of the music student subject. The music you choose to play and listen to, the subtlety of your taste in music and *how* you play, bear witness to your character and your dispositions, your personal development along axes of musical maturity and your capacity, and thus the legitimacy and potential of your Musikklinja attendance. A displayed preference for Kirk Hammett guitar, hit music, Glee mashups or Norwegian rap certainly earn the self a range of characteristics very different from those triggered by exhibiting connoisseurship in the genres of jazz, alternative pop and progressive rock music. Even when taking up positions outside the main impact area of a discursive interpellation, most students are careful to emphasize their connection to music's constituting their selves as 'morally' acceptable; "I *have* started listening to jazz/Muse now".

Important to keep in mind when acknowledging the intertwining of the aesthetic and musical with the subjective and social is that music is a matter of power/knowledge down to the most capillary of aesthetic relations. 'Pure' sound, 'pure' feeling, music still remains a discursive, meaning making practice, intertwined in what Foucault (2000a) understands as "games of truth" in

which subjects work to understand themselves and fit in. Musical games of truth like genres, styles and performance traditions are also games of power/knowledge in which the micro practices of the self on the self are wound up with the enactment, management and sustaining of discourse at macro fields of enunciation as well as the enactment, management and sustaining of subjectivity. Music is a technology of the self, DeNora argues, emphasizing the enabling, productive capacity of music to install in the subject forms of agency and configurations of subjectivity not necessarily available without music's assistance. If so, the power/knowledge relations conveyed by music might also impose on and require of the self forms of agency and configurations of subjectivity not necessarily desired, supported or doable by the subject, thus potentially creating flawed or failed subjects. In the choir, in main instrument lessons, even in the student lounge, students have no actual choice in music and must appropriate what is offered in coming to subjective existence. As the analyses of chapters 6 and 7 suggest, students work hard to find musical ways of being in and making sense of Musikklinja and the Musikklinja discourses of musicianship without threatening what constitutes the conditions of their own possibility, including the 'proper' music.

### 8.3.6 A relation of belief

Performativity is a mode of action that establishes ontological effects, Butler says (1994), that is, effects of truth, reality and naturalness. Ontological effects of identity, subjectivity, *selves*, we might say, are the results of discourse being systematically cited, reiterated and slightly altered to signify anew but alike, installing itself as an ontological relation of self to self: a relation of "belief" (Butler, 1997c, p. 402), or of "self-knowledge" and "self-mastery" (Foucault 2000c). Through performativity, we configure and reconfigure ourselves in our own view as something we understand and believe in, and something we master. And this is what happens when the music students carefully and elaborately appropriate Musikklinja discourses of musicianship. Performatively citing and reiterating discourse to signify anew but alike, students constitute themselves as ontological selves, experiencing meaning, mastery and legitimacy. If they were to reject their conditions of possibility, if the discourses put to use were to be deemed useless and the practices of musicianship irrelevant, the music student would be unable to configure meaningful relations to the self and thus accomplish proper subjecthood.

And this might be a critical issue in Musikklinja. Musikklinja is a highly successful institution of discourse that sustains itself efficiently in between other discursive practices and instances to which it is related. It is a well-defined, well-delimited, autonomous and recognizable discursive unit. Musikklinja displays, cites and reiterates itself in concerts month after month, year after year. Its discursive history of success can be read in newspapers and folders, posters and pictures. It houses a crew of legends and characters, teachers and students alike. The discursive autonomy, authority and attraction of Musikklinja may indeed be impossible to challenge and replace for students facing their first formalization of musical subjecthood. Moreover, Musikklinja is performatively established as a practice to believe in from the outset. When accepting a position as music student, the discursive formation of musicianship instantly applies, complete with its discourses of dedication, passion and student entrepreneurship. Thus, Musikklinja is a co-production between participants that are intent on success and legitimacy. Radical resistance and change would have to be performed with care to avoid threatening the foundations of one's own subjecthood, and it would have to be enacted from an alternative position of authority and autonomy that most students seem unable to assume.

## 8.4 Looking back, looking ahead

In bringing the thesis to a close, I would like to offer a few thoughts, in retrospect, on the present study, its main contributions to the research communities and fields of practice to which it relates, and its potential implications for future research projects conducted along similar lines.

As I see it, the study belongs primarily within, and represents a contribution to, the field of music education research. By using ethnographic methods and a discourse analytical approach, research strategies that have become more and more common among music education researchers also in Scandinavia, the study addresses questions of relevance for music educational practice. However, in explicitly focusing on signifying practices, power/knowledge, subjectivity, processes of subjectivation and acts of performativity, the PhD project could also be assigned to the research tradition of cultural studies. It offers an investigation of music education as a specific site of signification, but the theories of subjectivation that the study seeks to empirically anchor are certainly of relevance to cultural sites of signification beyond those of music

education. Additionally, as the project has developed, it has leaned more and more upon a field of research specifically concerned with the deployment of Foucault's theories in studying educational settings (represented, amongst others, by Ball, 2013; Besley & Peters, 2007; Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). In combining theories of power and discourse with ideas of performative subjectivation, and applying these to educational practices concerned with music and musicianship, the study could also be taken as an argument in, and contribution to, the discussion of Foucault's relevance for educational research and analysis in general.

The study has been conducted as an in-depth investigation of a Norwegian "Musikklinje". By use of participant observation, fieldnotes and individual and group interviews, and in applying a theoretical and analytical framework based on discourse theory and poststructuralist philosophy, I have aimed at understanding how student subjectivities are constituted in and through discursive practices of musicianship in Musikklinja. To facilitate such an understanding, I have examined how discourses of musicianship are practiced within and across a range of Musikklinja sites, and how students engage in performative work to achieve legitimate positions of music studenthood within these discourses. In this examination, analyses and discussions of how relations of power/knowledge are enacted – at both micro and macro levels – have been important.

The study, I believe, offers a comprehensive and thorough description and analysis of the constitution of student subjectivity and the discursive enactment of power/knowledge in the 'case' of Musikklinja. It is however, a highly context-specific description and analysis, which bases its findings and discussions on empirical material from *one* institution of discourse only, and from a delimited period of this institution's total discursive history at that. As pointed out in section 5.1.1; wishing to investigate actual, empirical instances of subjectivation and aiming at exploring the capillary deployment of power/knowledge in practice, I decided to design the study around one case – a case I predicted would yield a rich and interesting empirical material, and thus represent a case one could learn from (Stake, 1995, p. 4). I hope the previous analyses and discussions have proved this to be so, and that the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of power/knowledge and subjectivation working in music educational practices. In analytically generalizing empirical findings to theory (Yin, 2009, ch.2, section 1, subsection 4), I hope to equip other

researchers with analytical tools and theoretical insights that may be used to investigate similar, and perhaps not so similar, cases.

The results of the study are presented on three levels: 1) the empirical analyses themselves, which address and describe instances of subjectivation by analysing the performative work of students, set in specific situations of power/knowledge; 2) summaries of the discourses at play, the strategies of negotiation deployed and the power/knowledge relations enacted; and 3) a recapitulation and categorizing of the study's findings, re-presented as a 'discursive formation of musicianship' and 'performative strategies of negotiation'. Recapitulating the analyses of chapters 6 and 7, I described in chapter 8 the discursive practice of musicianship in Musikklinja as a formation constituted by discourses of dedication, entrepreneurship, competence, specialization and connoisseurship (figure 4). It is by these discourses, I have suggested, that the young people of Musikklinja are socially and institutionally identified and addressed as music students. And it is by understanding themselves in relation to these discourses that the students achieve music student legitimacy. Moreover, trying to understand the strategies of negotiation through which discourses are put to performative use, I offered an outline of students' various ways of adapting – and adapting to – discourse. Indeed, I have proposed that a main characteristic in the constitution of music student subjectivity in Musikklinja is the appropriation of discourse, even where resistance can be noted. Thus, the negotiation of discursive meaning intrinsic to performative subjectivation – in the present study, the negotiation of musicianship – could, in the case of Musikklinja, be understood as the appropriation of discursive meaning; the appropriation of musicianship. However, within the overall strategy of accepting and appropriating Musikklinja discourse, students subtly negotiate, twist and turn discursive meanings by enacting counter- or complementary discourses, subverting performative interpellations, alternating between taking the initiative and withdrawing, and positioning themselves more or less at the periphery (or at the core) of discourse. Enacting the music student subject, students avoid some impositions by replacing them with others. They appropriate – adapt, shift, juggle, subvert – the available discourses in ways that enable and empower their discursive legitimacy as music students.

An overall aim and ambition has been to bring discourse theory and poststructuralist philosophy to bear on Musikklinja. Musikklinja constitutes an important educational stepping stone to higher music education and to professional musicianship in Norway. In applying the theoretical and

analytical perspectives of Foucault and Butler, I have wanted to make possible understandings of how Musikklinja, as an institution of discourse, enables, enacts and manages thoughts, actions, objects and subjects of musicianship. At the same time, I have also tried to show how Musikklinja works by relations of power/knowledge that include the relations students establish to understand themselves, and make themselves understandable, within and across certain cultural contexts. Moreover, investigating how relations of power/knowledge play out in actual situations and events where students are subjectivated in and through discourses of musicianship, I have attempted to contribute to a more empirically anchored theorization of the relations between subject and discourse, agency and subjectivation, knowledge and power.

Perhaps these are bold aims and ambitions for a single doctoral project. Taken together, they have called for a design and an analytical approach that could handle and also utilize a seemingly insolvable ontological paradox – that we, human beings, music students, teachers, researchers, are constitutive of the discourses constituting us. Building the theoretical foundation for this approach, I have worked with the sometimes very complicated philosophical perspectives of Foucault and Butler; perspectives that also shift, radically even, across their works. In establishing a functional analytical toolkit and operationalizing these tools on actual empirical material, I may have shifted their perspectives even further. With regard to the ambition of anchoring theories of subjectivation in empirical research however, this could be considered not only unavoidable, but also potentially validating.

The aims and research questions of the study have required analytical attentiveness to be directed at micro and macro levels of discourse simultaneously. On the micro scale, I have taken as my point of departure the performative acts in which subjects make themselves, and are made, subjects. On the macro scale, I have tried to see how these acts play out within certain strategic situation of power/knowledge, and by discourses available therein. I imagine that by delimiting the study to one side of the equation only – aiming at mapping and describing the discourses that regulate practices of musicianship in Musikklinja, and the subject positions on offer – I would have steered clear of some of the analytical self-contradictions and epistemological pitfalls that have made the present project so difficult, and perhaps even produced a more coherent and to-the-point report. However, in focusing on the paradox of submission/mastery itself, investigating empirically the performative acts of meaning making through which student subjectivities and discursive meanings

are established, I think that a more in-depth understanding is facilitated, in several respects. The study identifies and maps discourses as initiated by participants' actions, as materialized in architecture, objects and schedules and as regulative of Musikklinja practices. But the study also shows how discourses are taken up, twisted, turned and put to (new) use in participants' various acts of self-interpretation and self-mastery. Understanding this appropriation of discourse, the citing and reiterating of meaning that happen in and through the performative, subjectivating act, seems to me to be of crucial importance if we are to understand either side of the equation – structure or agency, discourse or personhood. This is, as Foucault says, the point where "[power] installs itself and produces its real effects" (Foucault, 1980, p. 97).

With respect to the analytical approach aiming at in-depth understanding of performative acts, the project might of course have benefitted from concentrating on a few selected practices or a few selected students rather than attempting to observe everyday life in Musikklinja. Again, however, one could argue that in-depth understanding of instances of subjectivation relies on an awareness and understanding of the networks of power/knowledge relations through which they are made possible. Moreover, music student subjectivity, I find, is constituted across as well as within Musikklinja sites of musicianship. Thus, while analyses of how someone performs the 'choral singer' mainly require an empirical material drawn from observations of and interviews about choral singing, analyses of how music student subjectivities are achieved must necessarily be founded on more extensive observations (which may also include performances of the 'choral singer').

Arguably, considering that the present study is the first PhD or other advanced research project to be carried out on the Norwegian Programme for Music, Dance and Drama, it may represent an important contribution to knowledge of, and thus perhaps also the future development of, the "Musikklinja" option in upper secondary education. Such knowledge has been called for by, amongst others, the Ministry of Education and Research in a white paper addressing the "quality and diversity" in the comprehensive school (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2013, my translation). Recognizing that little research is available on "quality, content and relevance" (p. 119, my translation) in programmes for music, dance and drama, the Ministry identifies a need to "strengthen the platform of knowledge" in these regards before considering changes in structure, school subjects and curricula (p. 120, my translation).

The aims and ambitions of the present project have not been, however, to investigate and estimate the quality, content and relevance of Musikklinja as such. Indeed, from a poststructuralist point of view, the question would rather be how ideas of quality, content and relevance are established and maintained in and through the discursive practices of daily Musikklinja life. I agree with the Ministry, and with other actors in the field of music education, who state that more research is needed on MDD programmes. I would argue, however, that research into the quality, content and relevance of the programmes should implement in its theoretical and methodological design the stance that music educational practices are always also signifying practices, and thus always also take part in determining what quality, content and relevance is all about. Moreover, I would argue that understanding how relations of power/knowledge are enacted, at micro and macro levels, to maintain the quality, content and relevance of the various programmes, would be of the utmost significance.

Subjecting the case of Musikklinja to analyses based on a poststructuralist and discourse theoretical framework, the present study has contributed to the building of a "platform of knowledge" in at least three respects. For one thing, the study identifies and describes discourses of musicianship as practiced in Musikklinja, and how they make possible various enactments of the music student subject. Secondly, the study offers descriptions and understandings of Musikklinja as a situation of strategic power/knowledge relations. Thirdly, the study offers insights into how musical learning is intertwined with self-interpretation and self-mastery, and, subsequently, how these processes are crucial in maintaining Musikklinja as a well-functional institution of discourse. To continue the work began by the present project, a fruitful approach would be to conduct a multiple case study encompassing four or five Musikklinja programmes and aiming for variation in the selection as to geographical location, size and discursive history. One might find significant differences pertaining to the discourses and power/knowledge relations at play, the forms of music student subjectivity facilitated, and the strategies of negotiation/appropriation enacted.

Reflecting on my study in retrospect, I would also like to address a question of research ethics, more specifically, the ethical aspects of re-presenting a social and cultural human practice in a discourse analytical frame and language. Research inspired by cultural theory, poststructuralist philosophy and discourse analysis may very well be founded on intentions of giving voice to marginalized 'others', raising questions of what is naturalized and consequently invisible in

human signifying practices and showing how relations of power and knowledge regulate human agency and meaning making. In this way, the present study may be considered as belonging to a 'democratic' research practice that emphasizes discursive complexity and diversity, and aims at highlighting the perspectives of a multiplicity of participants. However, discourse analysis may also be seen as undemocratic, even unethical, research practice. Addressing the ethics of interviewing for discourse analysis, Hammersley (2013) argues that there is, and even must be, a discrepancy between what participants believe to be their role and function in the research project, and how discourse researchers treat their participants' statements in the analyses. Whereas participants may see themselves as well-placed informants that provide the researcher with pieces of evidence, the researcher has invited them to "perform discursively so that their performance can be analysed" (Hammersley, 2013, p. 4), treating their performances as "samples" of discursive practice perhaps without disclosing that this is the intention. Indeed, duly informing participants of one's discourse analytical intentions may make interviewing all the more difficult. For one thing, Hammersley writes, informants would probably become unsure about how to 'take' the questions being asked, and thus how to answer them. Moreover, it might not be easy to provide an explanation that eliminates the discrepancy between the naturalist perspective that participants take in their daily doings, and the constructionist perspective of a poststructurally influenced discourse analytical stance holding that social phenomena "gain their existence and character only in and through discursive practices – that they are, if you like, talked into existence" (Hammersley, 2013, p. 5). Although my letters of information tell participants that I am interested in "how the students work their way into and become part of the learning and music culture that the music programme represents, while simultaneously being part of shaping the same culture", the constructionist analytical implications of this may not be evident to most participants.

The ethical ambiguity is all the more acute because of the analytical toolkit employed. The theoretically complex, critical terminology of both Foucault and Butler is designed to enable alternative views on discursively established social practice, and in this way, it mobilizes unusual, and sometimes perhaps even disturbing, terms, metaphors and arguments. And even researchers well acquainted with these traditions may have difficulty in keeping up the poststructuralist, discourse analytical stance. Presenting my study at a venue in which the room was full of social constructionist researchers, the discussion following my presentation still treated power as a suppressive more than an

enabling force, as something to avoid rather than a productive, unavoidable mechanism of discourse and performative subjectivation. Having included an analysis of the disciplinary relations of choral practice, I was criticized for picturing the conductor as some kind of dominant tyrant, and gently reminded that every upper secondary choir does not work by such harsh deployment of power.

Thus, a cause of concern for me is that the discursive analytical approach of the present study should be interpreted as an attempt at uncovering the 'suppressive' mechanisms of Musikklinja, and the Musikklinja teachers and students positioned accordingly. In analysing participants statements and writing up the present thesis, I am using tools that are somewhat sharp, technically specific, difficult to manage and even capable of inflicting injury if handled carelessly. It is my hope that the theory chapters of this dissertation together with the empirical analyses treat participants as respectfully and carefully as possible even while addressing how they are enabled within the games of truth regulating Musikklinja. Stepping out of my researcher's role for a paragraph, I would like to emphasize that I have found Musikklinja to be an overall well-functioning, interesting, productive and supportive educational practice. All schools are discursively regulated, and all schools run by their own fuel of power/knowledge. What I do find to be highly important though, is at all times to have a discussion going within the field of music education research, as well as within the institutions of music education themselves, about how power/knowledge is deployed, what discourses follow from this and how they enable the constitution of music student subjectivity in various ways.

In poststructuralist research, one acknowledges that the questions posed, the analyses made and the outcome presented are, in a way, reciprocally constituted. Thus, the 'findings' of a research project cannot be isolated from the theoretical presumptions enabling it. This is a challenge for researchers within the fields of education who, in addition to contributing to the theoretical and empirical understanding of a chosen research topic are also, in some sense, ethically obliged to contribute to developing educational practice. Poststructuralist philosophy demands a good deal of translation on the part of the researcher to be operationalized in empirical research, Søndergaard argues (2000). And, I would add, research outcomes influenced by the poststructuralist philosophy demand further translation and adaptation to be put into educational service.

Nevertheless, in concluding the thesis, I would like to emphasize how an awareness and understanding of the power/knowledge relations at play and the discourses employed in music education are crucial not only to researchers of music educational practices but also to teachers. During my weeks of fieldwork in Musikklinja, nothing was more noticeable about the students than the huge amount of energy and effort spent realizing themselves as appropriate, legitimate and belonging within the Musikklinja culture and community. This seemed to entail more than exhibiting a proper identity by displaying the appropriate cultural colours, as it were, and in and through the analyses of chapters 6 and 7, and the subsequent discussion, I have come to understand the students' efforts as processes of submission and mastery in which failure – being judged incompetent or inappropriate – can be traumatic (Davies, 2006, p. 433). Considering this in conjunction with the main Musikklinja discourse of dedication, and the main performative strategy of appropriation, I find reason to emphasize the responsibility of teachers, school leaders and school politicians alike to, at all times, be aware of and reflect on the specific formations of discourse that they manage, and their own positions therein. I agree with Foucault when he argues that no society can exist without power relations; the "strategies by which individuals try to direct and control the conduct of others" (2000a, p. 298). The problem, Foucault writes, is not to try to *dissolve* relations of power/knowledge to achieve a society of transparent communication, but to "acquire the rules of law, the management techniques, and also the morality, the ēthos, the practice of the self, that will allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible" (ibid). He says:

> I see nothing wrong in the practice of a person who, knowing more than others in a specific game of truth, tells those others what to do, teaches them and transmits knowledge and techniques to them. The problem in such practices where power – which is not in itself a bad thing – must inevitably come into play is knowing how to avoid the kind of domination effects where a kid is subjected to the arbitrary and unnecessary authority of a teacher, or a student is put under the thumb of a professor who abuses his authority. I believe this problem must be framed in terms of rules of law, rational techniques of government and ē*thos*, practices of the self and of freedom. (Foucault, 2000a, p. 298-299)

For the music students, Musikklinja represents a plausible, attractive "game of truth" that they want to play to the best of their abilities, with their teachers as experienced co-players. The relevance of the game is enforced by the fact that it builds heavily upon, and includes in its formal rules, moves of informality. Thus, it has the power to raise the value and the legitimacy of what many students

already know and do; to re-interpret it within authorized and professional discourses of musicianship. To be players however, students must accept the overall rules of the game, even if they have the possibility of interpreting and appropriating them to make their playing possible. They must take up positions available to them, even if that entails submitting to a form of power/knowledge that "categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him" (Foucault, 1982, p. 781).

My point is: it lies with music teachers, school leaders and school politicians to be sensitive to, and perhaps also give legitimacy to, thoughts, actions, objects and subjectivities not immediately recognizable within the truth game of a specific music educational practice. In our teaching, and in the way we organize educational practices of musicianship, we may facilitate the discursive transgression of students; that is, their overstepping of the discursive limits set up for them in and by the practices in which they take part, which, of course, also include informal learning practices and/or student-led practices. Governing students across and between discourses, teachers may indeed facilitate new learning and new interpretation and practice of self by the student. And quite the opposite, without the teacher's awareness of and sensitivity for the difficulties involved in performatively taking up and acting out new relations of power/knowledge upon oneself, even when expected to do so as part of ones education, students may miss out on opportunities of learning and personal development. In exploring and analysing how Musikklinja practices of musicianship work as *subjectivizing* practices, I hope to have contributed to the understanding of how musical learners are constituted as they learn, in and through relations of power that are also, always, relations of knowledge, and that are also, always, relations to self. Furthermore, I hope to have shown the importance for music educators and researchers alike to strive to understand the conditions of possibility under which music student subjectivities are constituted, the "truth games" our music educational practices represent, and the thoughts, actions, objects and subjectivities they facilitate.

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# Appendixes

Appendix 1: Letter of approval from NSD

Appendix 2: Interview guide, group interviews

Appendix 3: Letter of information, xxx Upper Secondary

Appendix 4: Letter of information and declaration of consent, for teachers

Appendix 5: Letter of information, for students

Appendix 6: Declaration of consent, students

# Appendix 1: Letter of approval from NSD

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

NSD

Live Weider Ellefsen
Avdeling for lærerutdanning og naturvitenskap
Høgskolen i Hedmark
Lærerskolealléen 1
2418 ELVERUM

Vår dato: [redacted] Vår ref: 24954 / 3 / JSL Deres dato: Deres ref:

## KVITTERING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt [redacted]. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

| | |
|---|---|
| *24954* | *Students Negotiations of Power, Truths and Selves in Music Education* |
| *Behandlingsansvarlig* | *Høgskolen i Hedmark, ved institusjonens øverste leder* |
| *Daglig ansvarlig* | *Live Weider Ellefsen* |

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, [redacted], rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen
Bjørn Henrichsen

Juni Skjold Lexau

Kontaktperson:Juni Skjold Lexau tlf: 55 58 26 35
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

## Appendix 2: Interview guide, group interviews

[English translation]

| Entrance questions: | Possible follow-up questions: |
|---|---|
| **Topic: Previous expectations and school milieu** | |
| *You have been in Musikklinja for a while now – but could you tell me of your expectations before starting here?* | - What did you imagine it would be like?<br>- What did you know of Musikklinja from before?<br>- Why did you choose Musikklinja?<br>- How has Musikklinja met your expectations?<br>- What is different than you expected? |
| *Could you tell me about your very first day at school?*<br>*- And how were your first weeks?* | - How did you feel?<br>- Who did you notice in particular?<br>- How did you find the school and the class atmosphere?<br>- Is anything different now, and if so, what? |
| *How do you find the school- and class milieu and atmosphere (now)?* | How do the music students get on with one another?<br>- And with the teachers?<br>- And with the students of the other programmes? |
| *What do you disagree about, and when do you get frustrated?* | - Who disagrees (and over what)?<br>- If you disagree, or get frustrated, what do you do? Do you try to change things? |
| **Topic: Musical preferences and the musics of Musikklinja** | |
| *Could you tell me about a musical experience you had in Musikklinja?* | - A particularly good experience? Why?<br>- A particularly frustrating experience? Why? |
| *Could you tell me about the music you like?*<br>*- to listen to?*<br>*- to play/perform?* | - Do people change their taste in music when they are here? How? Did you?<br>- Did you ever refrain from voicing your opinion on music, or telling people of your musical preferences?<br>- Why?<br>-What kinds of music do you avoid, if any? |
| *I'm interested in the 'music culture' of Musikklinja – could you describe it for me? (What music do you learn/listen to/ play in Musikklinja?)* | - Are there many types of music?<br>- Do you find that there are 'rules' for what music you are supposed to listen to, or, learn, or play, in Musikklinja?<br>- What is the 'Musikklinja music', if there is such a thing? |
| *How is your musical life outside Musikklinja?* | - Did it change after starting Musikklinja?<br>- Do you bring your 'personal' music into Musikklinja? |

| Entrance questions: | Possible follow-up questions: |
|---|---|
| **Topic: The 'music student', and the 'music teacher'** | |
| *Could you tell me of the 'typical' Musikklinja student? Is there such a person?* | - What should you 'be' like in Musikklinja?<br>- Did people change since starting Musikklinja? How?<br>- What about yourself, how did you change?<br>- Who do you look up to? Why? Do some students have a higher 'status' than others? For what reasons?<br>- How should you avoid being? What kind of student gets left out? Why? |
| *What about the Musikklinja teachers?* | - What teachers do you like, and why? (And who are you less comfortable with?)<br>- What should a Musikklinja teacher be like, do you think? |
| **Topic: Musikklinja learning practices** | |
| *How do you like the different music subjects in Musikklinja? (Ask also about specific subjects and events!)* | - Which school subjects do you personally find the most rewarding?<br>- What subjects are more important to your status or credibility? (In what subjects is it important to excel?)<br>- What about the less rewarding subjects?<br>- Did it change during your time in Musikklinja? |
| *It seems to me like a lot of learning in Musikklinja happens without any teachers present. In ensembles, for example. Could you tell me how this works?* | - How do ensembles form?<br>- How do you work in the ensembles?<br>- How do you learn from each other? |
| *Playing for others seems important too. How do you find performing at forums and house concerts?* | - How do you feel about getting feedback from the others? |
| *Musikklinja gives a lot of concerts during a school year –what do they mean to you?* | - How important are the concerts?<br>- Which concerts do you like the most?<br>- How do you decide upon the concert topics?<br>- Who gets to play at the concerts? How?<br>- What do you think of the auditions? |

| Entrance questions: | Possible follow-up questions: |
|---|---|
| **Topic: Musical learning and musical competence** | |
| *What do you think one should learn in Musikklinja? How come?* | - Do you learn these things in Musikklinja?<br>- What would you like to learn/do instead/more of/less of?<br>- When and how do you feel you learn best?<br>- Do you offer your opinions on how and what to learn? |
| *Tell me about what it means to be musically 'competent' in Musikklinja* | - What qualities do you have, if you are a competent music student?<br>- Those that you find to be musically competent, what are they like? |
| *Could you also tell me about the demands made on you by Musikklinja and its teachers? Feel free to provide some examples.* | - How do you feel about these demands? Do you ever get frustrated?<br>- What is needed to fulfil them?<br>- What do you have to do to get good grades? |
| | |
| *Is there anything you would like to tell me, that I didn't ask you about?* | - Is there anything you wonder why I didn't ask you? |

## Appendix 3: Letter of information, xxx Upper Secondary

[English translation]

Live Weider Ellefsen
PhD Candidate
Hedmark University College, Faculty of Education and natural Sciences
Phone: 930 60 097
Email: live.ellefsen@hihm.no

Hamar, xx xx xxxx

Headmaster at xxx Upper Secondary School

**Request for participation in research project**

My name is Live Weider Ellefsen. I am a musician, music teacher and researcher. As part of my PhD I am conducting a research project which seeks to investigate truths, values and norms of school culture as experienced by music students

(MDD) in upper secondary education. The purpose of this study is to describe how the students work their way into and become part of the learning and music culture that the music programme represents, while simultaneously being part of shaping the same culture.

I have been in touch with the Head of the MDD Department xxx and the Head of the Music Section xxx for preliminary talks about the possibility of conducting part of the research at the Music Department at xxx Upper Secondary School during the academic year xxx/xxx. Xxx and xxx are in principle positive to this project, and we have discussed how this can be effectuated and on what conditions. In consultation with them I have reached the conclusion that the students in class x at the music programme will prove valuable informants for the project.

This letter is a **formal request to the headmaster at xxx Upper Secondary School** to be a partner in this research project.

The way the research project is designed, data will be collected through observation of the students in various teaching situations, concerts and performances, auditions, meetings, etc. in addition to interviews with students in class x. Students will be interviewed individually and in groups. I will be using recording equipment to take notes during these interviews. The questions will concentrate on the musical background of the students, as well as their relationship to music, music education, school and the learning environment.

Observations and interviews will take place during the period xxxx – xxxx. The project follows an ethnographic approach, i.e. insofar as allowed by staff and students it is hoped to gain an insight into the school culture by spending time with music students and teachers in informal situations during the same period. I guarantee, of course, that all information provided by the participants will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

The research will culminate in a doctoral dissertation to be completed by xx xx xxxx. For the dissertation and all reporting pertaining to the study, fictitious names will be used for students, teachers and the school. Moreover, no information will be disclosed about the time period during which observations were made and interviews took place, nor which year the students are in. Nevertheless, there is a slight possibility that participants in the project may be recognised by fellow students and teachers, as references made to instruments, gender and music genres may prove sufficient for identification by those who know the school community really well, and those who are aware

of the fact that the school has participated in the project. As such, a complete anonymisation is difficult to secure, although it will be pursued.

In order to obtain an overview of the students and plan observations and interviews it is necessary to have access to class lists with information about names, instruments played and main and assistant music tutor. Information about gender and age will also be registered. The students can choose not to be on this list. The list containing names of participants will be stored separately from the rest of the data.

As a researcher, I follow the ethical principles drawn up by the Norwegian National Committees for Research Ethics. The project has also been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research.

Participation in the study is voluntary. Students and parents in class x will receive a letter requesting their consent to participating. The music teachers will receive a similar letter. The letters will inform that participants can at any point withdraw without giving reason for doing so. Recipients will also be informed that if they are not interested in taking part in the project, or that they discover at a later stage that they wish to withdraw, it will not affect the participants' relationship to the school or its teachers. No personal information about those not wishing to take part in the survey will be registered. All information will be treated with the strictest of confidence, and all recorded material will be deleted once the thesis has been published, by xx xx xxxx at the latest.

It is my conviction that teachers, students and school management in the field of music education all need to consider how music education is an arena where battles over truths and values, identities and scopes of action are constantly being fought. If we are to develop relevant, good and democratic music education, an awareness of these issues is essential. Earlier research has tended to focus on how musical values are mediated by teachers and reflected in curricula. I therefore find it important to emphasise students' own experiences and testimonies. I hope that xxx Upper Secondary School will be a partner in this project.

Should you need more information about the study, you are welcome to contact me on the phone or via email.

With kind regards
Live Weider Ellefsen
PhD Candidate in Music Education at Hedmark University College

## Appendix 4: Letter of information and declaration of consent, for teachers

[English translation]

Live Weider Ellefsen
PhD Candidate
Hedmark University College, Faculty of Education and natural Sciences
Phone: 930 60 097
Email: live.ellefsen@hihm.no

Hamar, xx xx xxxx

To teachers of music students at xxx Upper Secondary School

**Information about research project**

My name is Live Weider Ellefsen. I am a musician, music teacher and researcher. As part of my PhD I am conducting a research project at xxx Upper Secondary School. The project seeks to investigate truths, values and norms of school culture as experienced by music students. The purpose of this study is to describe how the students work their way into and become part of the learning and music culture that the music programme represents, while simultaneously being part of shaping the same culture. A prerequisite for the project is to see this in the context of identity work, with students trying to understand the school culture while also understanding themselves within the cultural framework constituted by the school. In consultation with Head of Department xxx and Head of Section xxx I have reached the conclusion that the students in class x at the music programme will prove valuable informants for the project. Headmaster xxx has given permission for the project to be conducted at xxx Upper Secondary School.

The way the research project is designed, data will be collected through observation of the students in various teaching situations, concerts and performances, auditions, meetings, etc. Given that in many of these practices you as a teacher will be actively participating, it is only natural to include you in the project. At the end of this letter is a reply slip. I ask you to tick the box for whether your consent is given to observe the students during your teaching. I would appreciate if you could sign and return the slip to the Head of Section by xx xx xxxx.

The research will culminate in a doctoral dissertation to be completed by xx xx xxxx. For the dissertation and all reporting pertaining to the study, fictitious names will be used for students, teachers and the school. Moreover, no information will be disclosed about the time period during which observations were made and interviews took place, nor which year the students are in. Nevertheless, there is a slight possibility that participants in the project may be recognised by fellow students and teachers, as references made to instruments, gender and music genres may prove sufficient for identification by those who know the school community really well, as well as those who are aware of the fact that the school has participated in the project. As such, a complete anonymisation is difficult to secure, although it will be pursued.

As a researcher, I follow the ethical principles drawn up by the Norwegian National Committees for Research Ethics. The project has also been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research.

Participation in the study is voluntary, and everyone involved can at any point withdraw without giving reason for doing so. If you are not interested in taking part in the project, or you discover at a later stage that you wish to withdraw, it will not affect your relationship to the school or the headmaster. All information will be treated confidentially, and all recorded material will be deleted once the thesis has been published, by xx xx xxxx at the latest. No personal information about those not wishing to take part in the survey will be registered.

It is my conviction that teachers, students and school management in the field of music education all need to consider how music education is an arena where battles over truths and values, identities and scopes of action are constantly being fought. If we are to develop relevant, good and democratic music education, an awareness of these issues is essential. Earlier research has tended to focus on how musical values are mediated by teachers and reflected in curricula. I therefore find it important to emphasise students' own experiences and testimonies. I hope that you will give your consent to allowing your classes to be part of this project.

Should you need more information about the study, you are welcome to contact me on the phone or via email.

With kind regards
Live Weider Ellefsen
PhD Candidate in Music Education at Hedmark University College

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☐ I give my content to my classes being used in the study.

_____

signature

## Appendix 5: Letter of information, for students

[English translation]

Live Weider Ellefsen
PhD Candidate
Hedmark University College, Faculty of Education and natural Sciences
Phone: 930 60 097
Email: live.ellefsen@hihm.no

Hamar, xx xx xxxx

To students and parents in class x at xxx Upper Secondary School

Information about research project

My name is Live Weider Ellefsen. I am a musician, music teacher and researcher. As part of my PhD I am conducting a research project at xxx Upper Secondary School. The project seeks to investigate truths, values and norms of school culture as experienced by music students. The purpose of this study is to describe how the students work their way into and become part of the learning and music culture that the music programme represents, while simultaneously being part of shaping the same culture. A prerequisite for the project is to see this in the context of identity work, with students trying to understand the school culture while also understanding themselves within the cultural framework constituted by the school.

In order to determine this I wish to observe various teaching situations, concerts and performances, auditions, meetings, etc. during the academic year xxxx/xxxx. Observations will focus on how the students participate in the respective learning practices (e.g. musically or verbally), how they relate to music at play, and how they interact with other participants in the practices.

Students will be interviewed individually and in groups. The questions will concentrate on the musical background of the students, as well as their relationship to music, music education, school and the learning environment. I will be using recording equipment to take notes during these interviews.

The research will culminate in a doctoral dissertation to be completed by xx xx xxxx. For the dissertation and all reporting pertaining to the study, fictitious names will be used for students, teachers and the school. Moreover, no information will be disclosed about the time period during which observations were made and interviews took place, nor which year the students are in. Nevertheless, there remains a possibility that participants in the project may be recognised by fellow students and teachers, as references made to instruments, gender and music genres may prove sufficient for identification by those who know the school community really well, as well as those who are aware of the fact that the school has participated in the project. As such, a complete anonymisation is difficult to secure, although it will be pursued.

In order to obtain an overview of the students and plan observations and interviews it is necessary to have access to class lists with information about names, instruments played and main and assistant music tutor. Information about gender and age will also be registered. The students can choose not to be on this list. The list containing names of participants will be stored separately from the rest of the data.

As a researcher, I follow the ethical principles drawn up by the Norwegian National Committees for Research Ethics. The project has also been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research.

Participation in the study is voluntary, and the student can at any point withdraw without giving reason for doing so. If the student is not interested in taking part in the project, or he/she discovers at a later stage that he/she wishes to withdraw, it will not affect his/her relationship to the school or any of its teachers. All information will be treated confidentially, and all recorded material will be deleted once the thesis has been published, by xx xx xxxx at the latest. The implementation of the study at xxx Upper Secondary School has been cleared with and approved by the headmaster, head of department, head of section and class teacher.

The project has been presented to the students in class. A reply slip was distributed for the students to indicate whether they agree to participate in my

research. No personal information about those not wishing to take part in the survey will be registered.

It is my conviction that teachers, students and school management in the field of music education all need to consider how music education is an arena where battles over truths and values, identities and scopes of action are constantly being fought. If we are to develop relevant, good and democratic music education, an awareness of these issues is essential. Earlier research has tended to focus on how musical values are mediated by teachers and reflected in curricula. I therefore find it important to emphasise students' own experiences and testimonies.

Should you need more information about the study, you are welcome to contact me on the phone or via email.

With kind regards
Live Weider Ellefsen
PhD Candidate in Music Education at Hedmark University College

Appendix 6: Declaration of consent, students

[English translation]

Declaration of consent

I have received information about participating in the study of how music students at xxx upper secondary experience the learning- and music-culture at Musikklinja.

I agree to participate in the study.

_____

Signature

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In this ethnographic case-study of a Norwegian upper secondary music programme – "Musikklinja" – Live Weider Ellefsen addresses questions of subjectivity, musical learning and discursive power in music educational practices. Applying a conceptual framework based on Foucault's discourse theory and Butler's theory of (gender) performativity, she examines how the young people of Musikklinja achieve legitimate positions of music student-hood in and through Musikklinja practices of musicianship, across a range of sites and activities. In the analyses, Ellefsen shows how musical learners are constituted as they learn, subjecting themselves to and performing themselves along relations of power and knowledge that also work as means of self-understanding and discursive mastery.

The study's findings suggest that dedication, entrepreneurship, competence, specialization and connoisseurship are prominent discourses at play in Musikklinja. It is by these discourses that the students are socially and institutionally identified and addressed as music students, and it is by understanding themselves in relation to these discourses that they come to be music student subjects. The findings also propose that a main characteristic in the constitution of music student subjectivity in Musikklinja is the appropriation of discourse, even where resistance can be noted. However, within the overall strategy of accepting and appropriating discourses of musicianship, students subtly negotiate – adapt, shift, subvert – the available discourses in ways that enable and empower their discursive legitimacy.

Musikklinja constitutes an important educational stepping stone to higher music education and to professional musicianship in Norway. In applying discourse theory and poststructuralist notions of subjectivity, this study makes possible understandings of how Musikklinja, as an institution of discourse, enables and manages thoughts, actions, objects and subjects of musicianship. Furthermore, in examining how relations of power and knowledge play out in actual situations and events where students are subjectivized in and through discourses of musicianship, the study also contributes to an empirically anchored theorization of the relations between subject and discourse, musical learning, knowledge and power.

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