

BRIEF

# PRIhME

## Assembly 1



Dear participants of the PRIhME stakeholder assembly,

soon the first PRIhME-assembly will take place. In this brief we have compiled some texts and videos which are meant for you as preparatory material before the assembly.

The first (and most important) document is the **expert paper** written by **Dr. Anna Bull**, a sociologist based in the United Kingdom. She has written "Class, control, and classical music", a very important book on Western Art Music where she explores how socioeconomic background and gender influence those who play, study and consume (listen to) Western Art Music in the United Kingdom. Dr. Bull has written a paper especially for you that draws on her research. In it she looks at **what power and power relations mean within Higher Music Education**. When reading her article please keep her background as a researcher in Western Art Music and Higher Music Education in the United Kingdom in mind – it influences her way of how she writes about these topics.

If you have time and want to prepare some more, we have included a selection of videos and article excerpts which we think are interesting. These are divided into different topics:

Robert Chambers video "Power – the elephant in the room" gives a brief introduction to **power** and what it means. The excerpt from "The academisation of popular music in higher music education: the case of Norway" and the video "AEC – Power Relations in Higher Music Education Institutions" discuss **power relations** from different perspectives. **Hierarchies** make up an important part of power relations and the excerpt from "Musical genius and/or nasty piece of work?" as well as from "Questioning Being" from "Living a feminist life" gives an introduction to that. Finally, **canons** are also influenced by different stakeholders who have power – something that the excerpt from the book "Gender and the musical canon" discusses.

We, the editorial board, hope you have a stimulating preparation for the first assembly, and we look forward to hearing about the results from your discussions in September!

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# Power relations and hierarchies in higher music education institutions

Dr Anna Bull (University of York)

This report introduces the concepts of *power relations and hierarchies* in higher music education institutions. It then explores how these intersect with *social inequalities* and are reproduced through *invisible practices*. Finally, it outlines *challenges and ways forward* for addressing them. Due to my research expertise, it focuses primarily on examples relating to classical music in the UK. However, these examples may be helpful for thinking about similarities and differences across genres and national contexts.

Before introducing these concepts, we will start with an example. In research with young classical musicians in England,<sup>1</sup> a few students mentioned bullying behaviour they had experienced from music teachers. These behaviours included getting angry at the student for their lack of progress, shouting at them, making them cry, and humiliating them in front of others. For example, one student, Jonathan<sup>2</sup> described his first year at a conservatoire:

I had a really tough first year actually, I had a real bastard of a teacher. He really, really broke me. But I persevered, and I do actually appreciate him breaking me down. I needed to have that humility brought to me, so I could realise this is where I am, and I have this potential to be a lot better than what I think I am, so whilst it did depress me, I persevered.

Jonathan did not label this behaviour as bullying. He describes how his teacher ‘broke’ him and ‘knocked him down’, but he says he is grateful that his ‘bastard of a teacher’ acted this way, even though he became depressed due to these experiences. In common with the other students in this research who described problematic behaviour from music teachers, Jonathan did not see this behaviour as wrong. Instead, all these students thought that their teachers were right to behave in this way because they (the students) weren’t good enough musicians, weren’t working hard enough, or weren’t mature enough.

These accounts raise questions. Why did these students think that it was normal for their teachers to behave in this way? Why did the teachers think this was acceptable? Did other staff and students – such as faculty, administrators, managers, support staff – know about and accept these behaviours? And if these behaviours were seen as normal, would worse behaviours also be accepted as normal?

This report explores the cultures that enables such behaviours to occur, starting by introducing the context in which they occur: hierarchies of value in higher music education.

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1. Bull, Anna. 2019. *Class, Control and Classical Music*. New York: Oxford University Press.

2. All names have been changed to protect anonymity.

## Hierarchies of value in higher music education.

Hierarchies within institutions and within society can take different forms. One way that hierarchies work is to create a shared understanding of who is valuable and who is less valuable within an institution or a society. In music education, hierarchies of value can be based on real or perceived differences. These differences can be examined on three levels:

### 1. *Wider social inequalities or differences* ('macro' level)

- These include gender, class, race, disability, nationality, sexuality, gender identity, age
  - An example is prestigious leadership positions such as conducting being predominantly taken up by men.

### 2. *Status and role within the institution* ('meso' level)

- These include level of study (first year, postgraduate); being given awards or prizes within the institution; status as a staff member or student, or as permanent or part-time; department; instrument and genre of music studied
  - An example is some instruments being valued more than others, for example, if piano students are given more prestigious performance opportunities than brass students.

### 3. *Inter-personal or individual differences* ('micro' level)

- These include being labelled as 'talented' by a teacher; being confident, charismatic or funny; or taking an informal leadership role.
  - An example might be the seating order of players in the orchestra (with the 'best' players being in the top positions).

These three levels are not separate from one another. For example, status within the institution is easier to achieve for some social groups than others, such as white people or men. This means that *hierarchies of musical ability – 'talent' or 'ability' – are not fully objective criteria* but are based on judgements that may be influenced by hierarchies of value.

In my research, *music students usually supported and agreed with the hierarchies within classical music education*. They thought that the system was fair and they wanted to be rewarded for their hard work. They tended to have a deep sense of trust in their teachers and thought that teachers' judgements about students' ability were accurate, for example in ranking them for orchestral places. In fact, teaching or administrative staff who tried to bring about changes sometimes found these resisted by students.<sup>3</sup>

However, these hierarchies of value can have negative effects on students who are devalued. In Perkins' study of a music conservatoire in England, she found there was *a 'star' system in which some students were valued more than others*. As a result, students were not only learning their instrument, they were also 'learning where they fit in conservatoire hierarchies'.<sup>4</sup> One student in Perkins' study, Fay, described how the sense of 'hierarchy and competition' led to her 'just feeling cast aside, and also

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3. See also Geoff Baker's account of attempts at progressive change in a music education programme in Colombia (open access book): Baker, Geoff. 2020. *Rethinking Social Action through Music: The Search for Coexistence and Citizenship in Medellín's Music Schools*. Open Book Publishing.

4. Perkins, Rosie. 2013. Hierarchies and Learning in the Conservatoire: Exploring What Students Learn through the Lens of Bourdieu. *Research Studies in Music Education* 35 (2), 197–212. p. 208. See also: Perkins, Rosie. 2011. *The Construction of "Learning Cultures": An Ethnographically-Informed Case Study of a UK Conservatoire*. Cambridge.

not helped or supported'. She thought that these hierarchies were fixed early on:

I think it's immediately decided as soon as you enter, what you're going to become. And maybe they're right, and maybe they're wrong, but there is definitely a sense that you've got your place, you've got your role.

These examples draw on classical music institutions and practices. In the UK, the hierarchy of cultural value favours classical music over other genres.<sup>5</sup> However, in jazz education in Sweden, similar patterns are visible to jazz music, in that class background affects entry into higher education as well as instrument choice.<sup>6</sup> Hierarchies of what and who is valued may vary across genres, for example, in popular music studies or traditional music.

## How social inequalities shape hierarchies

As this quote from Fay shows, hierarchies can create a culture where some students are not supported to learn and progress. These hierarchies of value may be based in part on perceived musical proficiency, but they are also based on other factors. These include *social capital*, i.e. social networks with those in positions of power, and *symbolic cultural capital* or prestige.<sup>7</sup> These hierarchies are also shaped by wider social inequalities, such as those of gender, class, race, or disability. For example, in some music education institutions, stereotypes exist about East Asian heritage classical musicians, such as myths that they are not as 'musical' as white European students.<sup>8</sup> These stereotypes are based on wider social hierarchies in which whiteness is valued over other racialized identities.

Staff/faculty are also affected by these hierarchies and inequalities. In conservatoires in the UK, positions of prestige and authority – such as conductors, music directors, or conservatoire teaching staff – are more likely to be held by men than women. Less prestigious roles – such as teaching outside of conservatoires – are more likely to be held by women.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, *the belief that talent and hard work will be rewarded is at odds with the reality that some groups are more likely to be in prestigious roles than others.*

As well as hierarchies of value relating to social inequalities, *there also exist hierarchies within, and between, musical genres.* Classical music – and the skills, knowledge, repertoire, and instruments associated with it – is often seen as more valuable than other genres. For example, in the UK, classical music is given substantially more state funding than other genres.<sup>10</sup> This can lead to skills, knowledge,

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5. Bull, Anna, & Scharff, Christina. 2017. "McDonalds" Music' Versus "Serious Music": How Production and Consumption Practices Help to Reproduce Class Inequality in the Classical Music Profession. *Cultural Sociology* 11 (3), 283–301.

6. Nylander, Erik, & Melldahl, Andreas. 2015. Playing with capital: Inherited and acquired assets in a jazz audition. *Poetics* 48, 83–106.

7. Perkins, 2013, p. 207.

8. See for example: Yang, Mina. 2007. East Meets West in the Concert Hall: Asians and Classical Music in the Century of Imperialism, Post-Colonialism, and Multiculturalism. *Asian Music* 38 (1), 1–30.

9. Scharff, Christina. 2017. *Gender, Subjectivity, and Cultural Work: The Classical Music Profession*. London: Routledge; Scharff, Christina. 2015. Equality and Diversity in the Classical Music Profession. Kings College London. <http://blogs.kcl.ac.uk/young-female-and-entrepreneurial/files/2014/02/Equality-and-Diversity-in-the-Classical-Music-Profession.pdf> (accessed: 10.08.2021). Patterns of inequalities for both staff and students across all institutions within higher music education in the UK will be addressed in the forthcoming EDIMS network research report; see further information at <https://www.edimusicstudies.com/working-groups> (accessed: 10.08.2021).

10. Bull and Scharff, 2017.

repertoire or instruments associated with other genres being less valued within institutions.

Even within a genre, there can also be hierarchies of value of instruments, or subgenres. For example, an orchestral career might be seen as more valuable than being a piano accompanist or a teacher.<sup>11</sup> These hierarchies can lead to some types of music – and some musicians – being seen as more valuable than others.

## Understanding power relations

These hierarchies and inequalities shape power relations in higher music education. It is helpful to talk about '*power relations*' rather than simply 'power'. This means that, rather than power being possessed by some people and not others, *power relations* are created through shared ideas of what is 'normal', through invisible practices (as discussed below). As a result, *power relations can make us want to do certain things rather than others*. This also means that power can have both positive and negative effects at the same time. An example of power relations can be seen in this interview with two singers talking about the conductor of their choir:

KATHERINE: I like it that he's so demanding, he pushes us. [...] He's just so good at hearing the holistic sound, the overall sound, but actually knowing what everyone's voice... *he knows* who is not quite there.

HANNAH: *He knows* what needs to be done to get the blend perfect.

KATHERINE: And *he knows* exactly who it is that isn't quite with it. And that can be quite...

HANNAH: Scary!

KATHERINE: Intimidating, at times, because you know, you know if you're tired or something, you know that he will have heard it.

In this quote, the feeling of being watched – one way in which power relations operate – makes Hannah and Katherine hyper-aware of their own errors because they think their conductor will notice. In this way, the power relations between these singers and their conductor influence their music-making in subtle but powerful ways. Hannah and Katherine describe this relation of power with their conductor as positive – he pushes them to do their best – but at the same time, as intimidating and scary. This example shows how *it is important to understand power relations not solely as repressive or negative*. Instead, they can be experienced in complex ways, including as pleasurable or exciting.<sup>12</sup>

*The relations of power in this example are shaped by inequalities* of age, gender, expertise, and institutional role. In relation to *age*, their conductor is significantly older than them and this contributes to an unequal dynamic. There is also the potential for unequal power relations based on *gender*; as noted above, men are much more likely than women to hold positions of power in music, and in wider society. On the institutional level, his *expertise* also, in this instance, forms a relation of inequality. His expertise gives him more value than the young singers. And finally, his *institutional role* confers authority on him. The institution has designated him as someone who is entitled to speak and be

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11. Bull, Anna, & Scharff, Christina. (2021). Classical music as genre: Hierarchies of value within freelance classical musicians' discourses. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 24 (3), 1–17.

12. Reitsamer, Rosa; Prokop, Rainer, & Bull, Anna. (Under review). Power Relations in Higher Music Education: Using Foucault to Theorise Teachers' and Students' Experiences of the Master-Apprentice Model.

listened to. Not only that, he is being paid to be there while Hannah and Katherine are both *paying* fees to participate in the choir. These structural and institutional inequalities are shaping the experience of power relations that Hannah and Katherine describe between themselves and their conductor.

On top of these structural and institutional factors that shape the power relations between conductor and singers in this group, there are also *interpersonal factors* that contribute to relations of power. For example, *charisma* is a form of interpersonal power. As Nisbett and Walmsley have suggested,<sup>13</sup> charismatic leadership in the arts can ‘supplant ethics, strategy and reason’ and therefore we should be wary of it. As such, while charisma can help to produce brilliant musical experiences, it can also be a form of power that leads to people accepting unethical or problematic behaviour.

*Power relations* are not just present between people, but they also *contribute to forming people’s identity and their sense of self*. In this quote, a young woman, Megan, explains how her relationship with her singing teacher shaped her sense of self:

I wouldn't be the person I [am] without my singing lessons [...] you go on such a personal journey with [your teacher] [...], they craft *you*. It feels like she crafted me around my voice in my singing lessons [...] I think I totally trusted her, trusted her judgement, trusted how she was teaching me. [...] I can't regret those lessons because I can't think of how I would be if I hadn't had them.

This quote shows how Megan’s relationship with her teacher made her into the person she is. This is an example of power relations that are positive and enable Megan to do things she would not have been able to otherwise. Overall, rather than aiming to create a culture where power does not exist, it is important to explore how it can work in positive, rather than oppressive, ways.

## Invisible practices

Rather than being clearly visible, many of the hierarchies and relations of power described above are produced through invisible practices. One way of describing these invisible practices is the ‘hidden curriculum’ of music education. The hidden curriculum is:

The *unstated norms, values and beliefs* that are transmitted to students through the underlying structure of meaning in both *the formal content* as well as *the social relations* of school and classroom life.<sup>14</sup>

The formal content refers to *what* is being taught (repertoire, knowledge). The ‘social relations’ refer to relationships between people, such as the hierarchies and inequalities described above. In the example of the choir conductor, above, the social relations reveal one aspect of the ‘hidden curriculum’: the belief that hierarchy and authority are essential for excellence in musical performance in classical music.

In order to make these invisible practices and the ‘hidden curriculum’ of music education visible, it is important to seek out the voices of people who are not usually heard within the organisation. One

<sup>13</sup>. Nisbett, Melissa, & Walmsley, Ben. 2016. The Romanticization of Charismatic Leadership in the Arts. *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 46 (1), 1–11.

<sup>14</sup>. Giroux, Henry A., & Penna, Anthony N. 1979. ‘Social Education in the Classroom: The Dynamics of the Hidden Curriculum’. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 7 (1), 21-42.

example of this can be seen in the quotes above: young women's perspectives are not usually sought, and they are likely to present a very different view of power relations and hierarchies to those in positions of power. Indeed, people in positions of power may not recognise that they are exerting power. Instead, *relations of power may only be apparent to those who are positioned as powerless within the institution* or interaction.

## Challenges and ways forward

To return to the example from the start of this report, *one reason for addressing power relations in higher music education is to prevent abuses of power such as bullying and harassment*. Professor Liz Kelly has described how some environments create a 'conductive context' where abuses of power are more likely to occur. 'Conductive contexts' tend to have 'institutionalised power and authority that creates a sense of entitlement, to which there [is], limited external challenge'<sup>15</sup>. The power and authority that can exist in higher music education institutions can contribute to creating a conducive context for abuses of power to occur. Indeed, a recent report from the Royal Academy of Music<sup>16</sup> in London described a 'culture of fear' within the institution. In this 'culture of fear', students were too scared to speak up about sexual harassment by staff members.

This culture is not an inevitable part of music education. Instead, it is produced (in part) by power relations and hierarchies. Our challenge is to first make these power relations and hierarchies visible, and then to challenge them.

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15. Kelly, Liz. 2007. A Conducive Context: Trafficking of Persons in Central Asia. In *Human Trafficking*, ed. Maggy Lee. London: Willan Publishing, 73-91.

16. Kopelman, Peter; Boylan, Maureen, & Kashti, Rebecca. 2020. *Review of Safeguarding Arrangements*. Royal Academy of Music, University of London. <https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/whitespace-ram/production/Review-of-Safeguarding-Arrangements.pdf> (accessed: 10.08.2021).



# Recommended further reading / watching / listening

## Power

(video)

**Robert Chambers: Power – the elephant in the room**

<https://vimeo.com/user13958607/review/70933318/691547376b>



## Power relations

(video)

**AEC Power Relations in Higher Music Education Institutions**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glxqNRZN3nY>



(article excerpt)

Dyndahl, Petter; Karlsen, Sidsel; Nielsen, Siw Graabræk, & Skårberg, Odd. 2017.

**The academisation of popular music in higher music education: the case of Norway.** *Music Education Research* 19 (4), 438–454.



"Nowadays, instead of mainly pursuing exploratory, if not celebratory, inquiries into the informal learnings of various kinds of popular musicians, many of the Nordic music education scholars perform critical investigations into the consequences of popular music having held an almost hegemonic position within compulsory school music education for the last few decades. Georgii-Hemming and Westvall (2010) point, among other things, to the fact that the large emphasis on popular music in Swedish compulsory school music education has limited both its repertoire, its content and its teaching methods. They also note that the practice of (mostly) taking the students' personal musical interests as a point of departure for teaching might work to further marginalise minority or socio-economically disadvantaged groups, since their access to other forms of music hence becomes sparse. Furthermore, Björck (2011), Kamsvåg (2011) and Onsrud (2013) discuss the gendered implications of school popular music in Sweden and Norway with respect to, for example, the limited access of girls to any other role than that of lead singer or dancer, the unfortunate gender stereotyping often found in (and adapted from) certain popular music styles, and the 'sexualized femininities' (Björck 2011, 183) implicated in music videos, and which can constitute a problem both for the girls per-

forming in and for the teachers being responsible for facilitating the music lessons. Other critical angles include Dyndahl and Nielsen's (2014) reflections on the shifting authenticities in Scandinavian music education, from, among other things, valuing formally acquired musical knowledge and skills to celebrating and rewarding 'students' autonomy' (109) and even considering '[the] corresponding lack of teacher control as positive criteria for the evaluation of a good result' (109; see also Zandén 2010). Kallio (2015), on the other hand, is concerned with Finnish compulsory school music teachers' popular repertoire selection processes in a school and curricular context where 'all musics' are seemingly welcomed, and where 'teachers ... are afforded considerable freedoms in selecting popular repertoire' (195). Building largely on a sociological theoretical framework, she aims to construct what she terms 'the school censorship frame (195), in other words mapping the societal forces that frame and "influence teachers" decisions to include or exclude popular musics' (197)." (p. 439)

## Hierarchies

### (article excerpt)

Strong, Catherine, & Emma Rush. 2018. **Musical genius and/or nasty piece of work? Dealing with violence and sexual assault in accounts of popular music's past.** *Continuum – Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 32 (5), 569-80.



#### ABSTRACT:

For many years, the mistreatment of women in particular has essentially been normalized in many parts of the music industry. In recent years, however, there has been an increase in women coming forward and telling their stories, and asking that men be held accountable for wrongdoing. This interdisciplinary (sociology and philosophy) paper pursues two key feminist questions prompted by recent developments.

Firstly: How has the construction of the history of popular music legitimated the continuation of this situation? 'Looking back' historically and sociologically, examples are provided of the legitimation or ignoring of violence against women (VAW) in the history of popular music to date.

Secondly: How should we [archivists, historians, heritage curators and popular music educators], from now on, construct the history of popular music in a way that doesn't legitimate VAW? Turning to 'look forward', applied ethics frameworks are used to explore different aspects of this second question.

EXCERPT:

"[W]hat should be done with the work of men who have committed these acts of violence. The appeal of removing an artist or their work from public accounts is that it equates to punishment for bad behaviour. This has two aspects: retributive justice (the artist 'gets what they deserve', which some might think is to languish in obscurity) and deterrence (others should think twice before attempting the same behaviours). Using an applied ethics approach, however, leads to different conclusions. There is, to begin with, a dishonesty in pretending that an artist and their work did not exist, and what is more, we risk losing history and creative output that there might be value in keeping. We argue that the separation between the artist and the work is extremely important, in all areas, including popular music. In philosophy, the Latin term 'ad hominem' ('against the person') refers to the fallacious practice of dismissing an argument on the basis of the person advocating it. This is a fallacious practice because the quality of an argument (or a piece of artistic work, we would argue) stands regardless of the person advocating it (or creating it, in the case of artistic work). Human beings are almost always a mix of good and bad qualities, so it is unsurprising that criminal behaviour sometimes co-exists with artistic genius. We need to 'work with' this complexity of human beings rather than deny it.

What is more, if we don't clearly separate the artist's work from their behaviour, then we end up caught between two unacceptable options:

- (1) reject the artist's work as well as their behaviour. We see this as unacceptable because we risk losing access to some important cultural heritage, which in some sense belongs to everyone – so the censorious approach seems too strong even in the case of extremely abhorrent acts.
- (2) accept the artist's behaviour as well as their work. This is also unacceptable because, as discussed above, there is no excuse for VAW.

[...] So this all leads us to the position that the best approach is to separate the work from the behaviour, then acknowledge the artistic quality of the work and acknowledge the criminal or morally questionable aspects of the behaviour." (p. 575f)

"Throughout the history of popular music there have been numerous instances of proven and alleged VAW by musicians and industry workers, to the point that this could be considered a normalized part of popular music culture. Using an applied ethics approach, we conclude that there is a responsibility for those recording this history to ensure that these types of behaviours are not excused, minimized or left out of the record altogether." (p. 577)

(book excerpt)

Ahmed, Sara. 2017. **Living a Feminist Life**. Durham – London: Duke University Press. [Chapter 5 – *Being in Question*]



"Questions can hover around, a murmuring, an audible rising of volume that seems to accompany an arrival. Perhaps we come to expect that murmur; perhaps we too murmur; we become part of the chorus of questions; we might come to question ourselves. Do I belong here? Will I be caught out? Do I fit in here? "I am" becomes "am I?"

Perhaps any of us can feel the weight of questions that are taken on and in as one's own. We can seek to ask these questions, whatever we are asked. Education aims to throw life back up as a question, after all; these moments of suspension, before things are reassembled, are the moments of being thrown. To throw things up is to be opened up. And we can be thrown in so many ways: by what we encounter, by whom we encounter. Perhaps privilege offers some protection from being questioned or becoming questionable: a buffer zone as a zone without questions. And perhaps the modes of questioning I am describing here relate to how a body is identified in relation to a group whose residence is in question. This is how you can inherit a question, how you can become questionable before you even arrive.

If we have a body that is expected to turn up, we might be less likely to be caught by what comes up. Cultural studies as a discipline begins with the lived experiences of not residing, of not being received well by where you end up, experiences of working-class kids ending up in elite institutions, experiences of diasporic kids ending up in the same institutions. When you don't fit, you fidget. How quickly the fidgeting body appears to be not residing in the right place. Eyebrows are raised. Really; really? Are you sure?

What I am calling diversity work involves transforming questions into a catalog. A catalog does not assume each question as the same question, but it is a way of hearing continuities and resonances. It is a way of thinking of how questions accumulate; how they have a cumulative effect on those who receive them. You can be worn down by the requirement to give answers, to explain yourself. It is not a melancholic task; to catalog these questions, even if some of the questions are experienced as traumatic, difficult, or exhausting. To account for experiences of not being given residence is not only a sad political lesson, a lesson of what we have had to give up in order to keep going. After all, think of how much we know about institutional life because of these failures of residence, of how the categories in which we are immersed become explicit when you do not quite inhabit them. When we do not recede into the background, when we stand out or stand apart, we can bring the background into the front: before we can confront something we have to front up to how much depends on your background.

A questioning can become the source of political excitement and interest. Think about this: when you don't sink, when you fidget and move around, then what is in the background becomes in front of you, as a world that is gathered in a specific way. Discomfort, in other words, allows things to move. Every experience I have had of pleasure and excitement about a world opening up has begun with such ordinary feelings of discomfort, of not quite fitting in

a chair, of becoming unseated, of being left holding onto the ground. If we start with a body that does not sink into the chair, the world we describe will be quite different. Perhaps we are speaking here of the promise of reorientation." (p. 131-133)

## Canon

### (book excerpt)

Citron, Marcia J. 1993. **Gender and the Musical Canon**. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.



According to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, "canon" traces back through Middle and Old English to Latin, and to Greek "kanon," to denote "ruler, rule, model, standard." Modern meanings basically expand on these definitions. A few entail church practice, including the concepts of "dogma" and a particular type of clergyman. The meaning most pertinent here are "an authoritative list of books accepted as Holy Scripture," and, even more germane, "the authentic works of a writer; *also*: a usually specified group or a body of related works." Another definition entails "a criterion or standard of judgment." From these one can infer that canons are exemplary, act as models, instruct, represent high quality, endure, and embody at least some degree of moral and ethical force.

Secular canons have similar implications. In the sense of a specified body of works in a given field, canons exert tremendous power. By setting standards they represent what is considered worthy of inclusion. Works that do not measure up are excluded, either in the sense of deliberately omitted or ignored and hence forgotten. Canons are therefore exclusive. They represent certain sets of values or ideologies, which in turn represent certain segments of society. Canons self-perpetuate. As models to be emulated, they replicate their encoded values in subsequent exemplars. As canonic values become entrenched over time, the prescriptive and normative powers of canons become even greater. Their tenacity and authority create the ideology that they are timeless. As such it is assumed that they do not change. Yet the main aspect of canons that tends to remain constant is the ideology itself of immutability. In practice, however, the social values encoded in a given canon may change – not daily or monthly but over some larger period of time, perhaps every ten or fifteen years. This would entail overlapping modifications, not some concerted sea change. (p. 15)

[...]

As in literature, the many canons in music fall into two main categories: disciplinary and repertorial. In musicology, for instance, we can identify such disciplinary paradigms as Western art music, Schenker analysis, sketch studies, archival work, documentation, objectified language, era periodization, historical emphasis, and scholarly journals. With additional

thought we would realize that other concepts would probably not fit our list, at least easily, such as slang language, rap music, or MTV. Many of these, however, are being challenged as musicology approaches a new century. Because of the multiplicity of musical disciplines, such as the recording industry, the music-publishing industry, the music-book publishing industry, and performing-groups organizations, disciplinary canons in music as a whole are difficult to identify. If one were to compare in a systematic way the nature of disciplinary paradigms from one area to another the results would yield some fascinating insights into the sociology of music. What mainly concerns us here, however, is the discipline of musicology, although other musical areas affect the discourse of the canon formation of art music.

Repertorial and disciplinary canons might be easy to define as separate entities, but in practice they interact in flexible and fluid ways. To illustrate: without the accepted disciplinary convention of preparing musical editions, many pieces of early music, for example masses of Dufay, would not be canonic. Similarly, disciplinary paradigms are both shaped and supported by canonic repertoires. For example, sketch studies might not be considered paradigmatic if Beethoven's music were not already deemed canonic.

Repertorial canons exist in many forms. There are canons of works performed by professional groups and individuals, and each performing area has its own canon. Furthermore, there are canons for groups that inhabit a particular historical niche. Early music groups form an important type. Because of their dependence on scholarship for the production of musical scores, early music performers tend to have close ties with the musicological community and its disciplinary paradigms. The other principal type is new-music groups. In the United States these usually flourish in the university, around active composers, or in a few instances as independent groups in large cities. If the group really presents *new* music then one cannot speak of a canon, i.e. a repeating repertoire, for new, previously unperformed music is being emphasized. New compositions, however, can qualify as pre-canonic: they could become canonic at some later stage. In the sense of a disciplinary paradigm, what is "canonic" in this context is that new compositions are receiving a first hearing. If, however, the group takes a chronologically broader view of contemporary music, as a repertoire that is not confined to world premières and can include "classics" such as Boulez and Babbitt, then a repertorial canon, in various stages of formation, is in evidence.

A paradox emerges from the relationship between new music and canons. I suspect that at least some contemporary composers do not believe in the efficacy of repertorial canon. In perpetuating music of the past canons have made conditions that much more difficult for the creation and acceptance of new music. Yet composers want their music to be performed, and not just at a première. But once repeatability becomes a norm the spectre of canonicity looms as a possibility (although statistically not a very likely one) and historicism takes hold, thus reinforcing the bias against new works. Perhaps composers would wish to have their works performed many times, and perhaps they might say that the war-horses could yield to a model of diversity. That might involve significant changes in patronage, financing, function, and the general position of the composer in society. "Canonic" would not mean what it does now, and perhaps a new vocabulary would have to emerge to reflect the modified structures.

Recordings represent another type of canonic repertoire. They are an important medium for the dissemination of music to the wider public and thus possess potent cultural force. The

powerful recording industry controls the production and distribution of who, what, and by whom is recorded. For art music, only one component in the industry, recordings act as a cultural barometer and negotiator. This shows up in which compositions are issued and re-issued, how many different versions exist, and the nature of the promotion. Of course recordings reflect the membership of other repertorial canons. They particularly play off mainstream performing institutions such as symphony and opera, but can reinforce or even instigate membership in other repertorial canons, particularly those of "marginal" areas like early music and new music. Kerman has perceptively noted how the recording has replaced the live performance as the principal performing medium for many pieces of new music. As in the case of scores, this exemplifies the substitution of a tangible, physical object – the physicality of the recording itself – for the more ephemeral phenomenological realization. Another property of recordings is their ability to convert phenomenological experience into a text subject to aural analysis, upon repeated "readings" (i.e. hearings). They can also construct the paradigmatic aural version of a given work.

Another type of repertorial canon occurs in the academic teaching of music, in the classroom. Here I am referring mainly to music history pedagogy. This canon is largely material. Aural renditions occur in the form of recordings and occasional live performances, although recordings can become material upon repeated hearings. Textbooks and anthologies, as the repository of the canon, wield enormous power as determinants of canonic status. Although theoretically free to use any materials, most instructors rely heavily on published materials for repertorial examples. Textbooks, like anthologies, emphasize specific works and composers, but most provide some latitude by mentioning additional figures. The limitations posed by anthologies, however, can be formidable. Imagine: if one is teaching a survey course and finds none of the anthologies suitable, one is left to cull from hither and yon. This is not only time-consuming but raises the likelihood of copyright infringement, thus creating a legal problem. A more feasible outcome is dependence on an anthology for most of the examples and then either supplementing (somehow negotiating the copyright problems of duplication) or dispensing with scores for a few works. Whatever the compromise, it is not difficult to see how the decisions of a relatively small group of individuals – anthologizers, textbook authors, and the publishers with whom they work – can shape the behavior and tastes of a large population of listeners, performers, composers, and scholars. But we may be too quick in assigning such power to authors and publishers. Their aim, after all, is to sell copies, and that is dependent on giving the target consumers, i.e. the academic community, what they want. So the system operates in both directions. On the one hand, musicologists' tastes and musicological culture at large affect what is offered in pedagogical materials. On the other hand, musicologists' desires as individuals were molded at least in part by textbooks (and also anthologies, for the younger generations), and their current pedagogical practices are shaped by the realities of what is available. But in the past few years, publishers have been responding to fresh breezes of change in musicology, and this has resulted in the inclusion of a few female figures (...). Thus forces of the marketplace and the academy interact in the complexities of negotiating value systems for the present and the future. (p. 22-25)

# PRIhME

## Assembly 2

February 2022

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Dear participants  
of the PRIhME Stakeholder Assembly,

as we are approaching the Second PRIhME Assembly dedicated to the topic of **gender, sexuality and/in Higher Music Education**, we are happy to share with you the material meant to both introduce you to the complex topic of the Assembly and prepare you for participation in the coming discussions.

The central part of this brief brings to you the expert paper *Gender in Higher Music Education*, written by **Dr. Cecilia Ferm Almqvist** and **Dr. Ann Werner** of the Södertörn University. Both authors were invited to provide their perspectives on the complex issues at the centre of the Second Assembly and are experts in the field of music and gender studies. Their ongoing focus of research covers diverse intersections of gender, music, music education, digital media and music industries. In *Gender in Higher Music Education*, they look at various aspects of the topic, offering possible answers to questions of intersections of **gender and music/higher music education; gendering of professional roles; identities and intersectionality; issues of sexism and sexual harassment; as well as possible directions in challenging gender norms in higher music education.**

In the remainder of this brief we have prepared other material, consisting of videos, excerpts of academic papers, newspaper articles and summaries of large-scale surveys conducted within HME, music industries and/or wider music sector. In order to make it easier to navigate we have divided the material into several subthemes – **What is gender?; Gender and power; Gender, sexuality, music/music theory/music practice; Approaching the issues of gender equality in HME; Large-scale surveys on working/studying environments in music; Initiatives dealing with issues of gender in HME and music industry; and Raising awareness and addressing sexual harassment/sexual misconduct.** Whenever the material we are providing excerpts from is available for reading/watching online, we have added links so you can access it more easily.

In the hope that the Second Assembly will be as successful as the First – in terms of truly dialogical and inclusive processes of knowledge making, as well as in rich and multifaceted perspectives and recommendations you collaboratively created – we look forward to the new discussions, as well as thoughts, observations and guidance evolving through them.

**The PRIhME Editorial Board**



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[expert paper]

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# Gender in Higher Music Education

**Cecilia Ferm Almqvist**, Professor in Education, Södertörn University, Sweden

**Ann Werner**, Associate Professor in Gender Studies, Södertörn University, Sweden

This paper explains and discusses the role of **gender in higher music education**. It does so by first outlining the debates about **what 'gender' is** and how it operates through power imbalances and differences that are social and cultural. Further, we describe the main results from research about gender in higher music education institutions in Europe through three themes: **gender and music**, **gender in higher music education**, and **the gendering of professional roles**. Thereafter the paper problematizes gender as an analytical category through an **intersectional** lens and discusses the problem of **sexual harassment**, **sexism**, and other harassment in higher music education institutions. Finally, we discuss how **to challenge gender issues in higher music education**.

## What is gender?

An everyday definition of *gender* simply states that there are two genders, male and female, that are biologically different and treated differently in culture and society. During second wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970's this way of defining gender was widely challenged by feminist theorists who argued that gender roles are created in socialisation – and that the sex one is born with does not determine the social gender one inhabits in society. This feminist critique problematizes that some roles and work, such as raising children, are best done by women. Also, the oppression of women in culture and society was challenged by scholars discussing how gendered power operated, through for example the socialist feminist theory about the structure of *patriarchy*. Patriarchy was a concept introduced to explain how social systems reproduced male power when men were holding political leadership, were privileged in social settings, and owned most material assets in a society (conditions that are still in place today).

Feminist theory has since grown to be a vibrant field that focuses on how femininities and masculinities as well as gender identities outside of the binary man/women take form, are treated and politically changing in culture and society. Importantly, Judith Butler (1990) was one of the theorists that problematized the division between gender and sex arguing that there is nothing 'before gender', rather sex/gender is constructed

performatively. By seeing sex/gender as performative, she argued that sex/gender is processual, created in all speech and actions, and never a finished product. In her way of understanding gender, the construction of gender always involves the construction of *heterosexuality*. That is, for Butler a person is not fully understood as a woman if she is not heterosexual, because heterosexual relationships are central to how we understand male and female as opposites. Butler uses the concept '*norm*' to illustrate how dominating ideas about who is a woman or man have material consequences – that is affects how persons can live their lives, get work, be accepted in society etcetera.

Lately Butler has in public debate argued that gender is changing in the 2020's and that we can see a change in the category 'woman', being more inclusive for example for lesbian women and for transwomen. Also, the binary idea of society consisting of 'men and women' has been challenged by activists for intersex people and persons that are non-binary, neither men nor women. In current feminist research the importance of social and symbolic ideals for the construction of gender is widely agreed upon, still there are also many scholars that acknowledge and discuss the importance of bodies, materiality, and difference for gender in contemporary cultures.

## Gender and music

Policy documents, on international and European levels, state that music shall be accessible to all, independent of any factors that may be discriminatory or unfair. But this has not in fact been achieved. It has been stated that traditional gender structures are produced and reproduced in professional musical life (Ganetz et al., 2009) and that the music community has an over-representation of men. Popular music musicians' work is clearly segregated: the "singer" position is seen as belonging to women, while instrumentalists are male musicians. Not least the role of the electric guitarist and the music producer are male dominated (Bayton, 1998; Green, 2010; Ferm Almqvist, 2021). Singing, and especially singing in a high register, is associated with women or gay men. Depending on the cultural, historical, and musical contexts where men sing, singing can also be regarded as an act of masculine behaviour, for example in the jazz and popular music industry as well as in opera and musical comedy. Earlier research suggests that when men sing, they often obtain appreciation for their singing performances. On the other hand, when girls choose male connotated instruments, they tend to be praised for being sexy or good-looking, instead of being treated as skilled instrumentalists (Borgström-Källén, 2021; Ferm Almqvist, 2021).

In Western art music, musicians' work is also divided by gender, women are primarily employed as singers, violinists, flutists, and harpsichord players, while men work as composers, conductors, bass-players, percussionists, and brass players. French horn,

cello, clarinet, and piano on the other hand seem to be occupied by both genders. This gender division influences the make-up of teaching staff in higher music education institutions. In fact, music, what genres and styles are seen as more valuable (and mainly masculine) and less valuable (and mainly feminine) in Western art music culture has been found to be gendered (McClary, 1991; Citron, 1993). In addition, music history and music theory are themselves gendered disciplines (Maus, 1993).

## Gender in higher music education

Music education practices are to a great extent steered by norms, around gender, music genres, and other norms of society and culture. For example, whose ideas are deemed interesting, what is valued as musical skill, who can develop as a musician, and how musical knowledge should be performed are all values created in relation to norms. Research on music education and gender shows that music teaching and learning also is an arena where gender is shaped (Abeles, 2009). This is displayed in choice of instrument and genre, the possibility to claim space, power relations and subordination from gender perspective. Such norms are reproduced by musicians who teach in higher music education, and are educated within the institutions, where they have been taught by others, who have also been educated there.

Within higher music education teaching is primarily formed in the *master-apprentice tradition*, where students are expected to imitate and “become” their teachers. As Gaunt (2017, p.38) expresses it, the model of imitation is seen as contributing “detailed musical and technical expertise to be developed and refined, almost as it were by physical and mental osmosis”. Such a view can also reproduce gender, the teacher has the power to decide what to play and how it should be interpreted. It has been found that students of different genders are treated differently by their masters, and that music education promotes male students, or females who accept male influences, values, and ways of behaving in teaching situations. It has been shown that a gendered polarised view of musical genres is common in music educational settings. This affects who is “suitable” to play certain instruments or certain genres.

Also, when it comes to what students learn, studies show that male students develop musical content and expertise. Female students tend to focus on the musical whole, instead of their own parts, being concerned about practical things around musical situations, helping others, “jumping in” to complement missing parts in the whole production, to a greater extent than male students (Ferm Almqvist & Hentschel, 2019). Caring for the whole responds to gender norms, according to which women take more social responsibility. Below, we *underline the risk* that such expectations negatively impact on careers for women in higher music education. *Educational relations* in higher

music education take place in interactions between teacher and student, and in interaction between students.<sup>1</sup> It has been emphasized that gender related behaviours, agreed-upon norms, imaginations, and expectations, as well as use of language, limit music students in the educational situation. It has been shown to be important that music students get opportunities to affect how they realize their ideas and use the musical space to transgress such gender stereotypes. How can music teachers create an environment where music is created and investigated, where it is possible for *all* students to reach their full musical potential? One important task for the teacher is to approach students in a way that makes them use the space of education independent of their gender. This can break the habit where women limit themselves and all students could get the sense that musical spaces in higher music education are for everyone. In addition, all students should be encouraged by their teachers and classmates to use and develop musical abilities and visions in music educational activities.

## Gendering of professional roles

When discussing gender and higher music education, it also becomes relevant to shed light on the interplay between music education, gender, power, teaching and research positions. The number of women on all academic levels is increasing, and most undergraduate students are women. While inequality remains, it is more subtle than before. For example, men are still holding more prestige positions, a fact that cannot only be explained by age, discipline, and generation. In addition, women in academia do a lot more so-called glue-work, to keep things running at a department. However, there are some characteristics of higher arts education that differ from other academic disciplines. For example, the criteria for assessing quality, especially of artistic works, are relatively unclear, making assessments diverse (Blix et al., 2019). When it comes to promotions to higher academic positions, studies show that experts rank men with the same merits higher than women. Quality remains gendered, which underlines the need for explicit criteria of quality in the performing arts.

A recent study performed in Scandinavia (Borgström-Källén, 2021) problematizes construction of expertise and excellence within music education in relation to gender and positions with high status. The author underlines the double subordination of female professors in music education at conservatories, compared to male professors in artistic disciplines. She shows that music education is positioned as peripheral and feminine, the discipline is called into question by players from other disciplines, musical performance, and musicology for example, often by male artistic professors. The interviewees express that gender inequality is a struggle and an everyday problem. "On paper I'm a professor,

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<sup>1</sup> See Anna Bull's expert paper from Assembly 1.

but at my department I'm positioned as a woman working in pedagogy. They think research on young children is of no value, and you become positioned even more as a woman" (Borgström-Källén 2021, p. 258). The example illustrates that gender inequality exists between professors and disciplines in higher music education. And that having female professors does not solve gender inequality.

## Identities and intersectionality

When scholars have examined the importance of gender in higher music education, 'gender' has increasingly been problematized as a category that can be examined on its own. Feminist politics and feminist theory have been challenged for building on a universal idea about 'woman'. The problem of such a unified subject – unifying all women's experiences – is that focusing on what unifies 'women' obscures other social categorizations that divide them. Feminist theory and politics have been called out as promoting a 'woman' that is really pseudo-universal, mirroring interests of certain groups of women: white, middle class, ethnic majority, heterosexual and able-bodied women.

An *intersectional* theoretical understanding of gender, class and race was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (2003) around 1990 to explain how gender, class and race interact in structural oppression of black women in the US. Crenshaw, a legal scholar, argues that structural intersectionality can be used to understand how power dimensions interact, how oppressions of race, class and gender make conditions and experiences different for women from different social and racial groups. Oppression, she argues, is not 'double' but plays out differently depending on gender, class, and race. Further, political intersectionality is a strategy introduced by her that requires addressing several oppressions at the same time, for example sexism, racism, and capitalism. It is according to her not enough to challenge gender oppression if other power imbalances are not also challenged. In higher music education institutions, as in higher education in general, sexism, racism, capitalism, homophobia, and the treatment of trans\* people should be seen as interacting for example in teaching. This paper has focused on gender in higher music education but from an intersectional theoretical perspective addressing gender inequality also involves addressing race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, and other power imbalances in higher music education.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This will be one of the aspects focused on in Assembly 3.

## Sexual harassment, sexism, and other harassment

One pressing issue in higher music education, that is also a gender issue, is sexist treatment and *sexual harassment* of students and staff.<sup>3</sup> Sexual harassment in the workplace has been discussed in feminist theory and political policy for decades. Defined as unwanted sexual attention that ranges from unwanted compliments, or touching to rape, sexual harassment survivors are mostly women, and the perpetrators are mostly men. Informal power structures and institutions that build their working and teaching methods on supervision where one person holds great power over others' careers have been identified as risk factors for sexual harassment. In higher music education the one-on-one tuition teaching and the master-apprentice tradition makes it easy for sexual harassment to occur in closed rooms. It is, however, not just these situations but the larger context of a very competitive field where a small group of people hold great power over a large group's future that is breeding ground for a *culture of silence* around sexism and sexual harassment. A culture of silence is a workplace culture where people are afraid to speak up about injustices, they see related to power in fear of losing their jobs or positions. To challenge sexism and sexual harassment the gendered power patterns in higher music education must be addressed. It is the gendered education and power imbalance that underpin misconduct.

## Challenging gender norms in higher music education

Based on the above, one task for higher music education, including leaders, organizers, and teachers, is to move past gender inequality, and transform music education. To promote equal possibilities to study music on a professional level for all students independent of gender, class and race. A critique of neoliberalism<sup>4</sup> in higher education and an intersectional take on gender and power are essential to tackle gender inequalities in higher music education (de Boise 2018). To transform higher music education, we need to be aware of what space for development can be created within legal frames and have ideas about how to use it. The invisible norms and structures related to gender and power have to be made visible by the institutions in higher music education, for change to take place.

Working towards gender equality in higher music education should be done in line with legislation, policies and steering documents, as well as in conversation with faculty,

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<sup>3</sup> See also Anna Bull's expert paper from Assembly 1.

<sup>4</sup> An economic and political model which dominates the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Within higher education this is expressed in e.g. assessment practices, in quality criteria and a focus on employability, marketing and the labour market.

leadership and students. When it comes to faculty, it is important to see all disciplines, subjects, and instruments as equally important, and to have the same expectations of all professors and teachers, independent of their gender. In the teaching situation it is important to be aware about what a teacher must *relate to*, what to *take responsibility for*, and *what to do* in ways that encourage equal possibilities to learn and develop for all genders. It is important for teachers to be informed on students' experiences and holdings in relation to the teaching content, which can, as we have seen above, be connected to gender. Students' motives for choice of instrument, experiences of role models, relations to chosen genres in a context, their impetus for development, and experienced power relations all affect their learning. To get such insights demands openness and curiosity in dialogue with the students.

As a teacher, or leader, in higher music education one should take responsibility for steering teaching and educational organization towards equal possibilities to learn and develop. This includes creating safe surroundings, where it is allowed to try out things and fail, to assure musical learning for all students independent of gender, to be open for and show different ways of being and becoming a musician, and not least reflect and improve the practice of giving response. When it comes to what teachers need to do, creating space that offer possibilities for equal growth is important, as well as making all students visible. For example, women can be encouraged to study double-bass, and teachers can reflect upon norms and structures that hinder such a choice. In addition, openness for the students' motivation, ideas, musical preferences, impetus, lust, and "personality", as well as the local institution and situation should be considered. Teachers must ask students what goals they have, what they want to discover and develop, and how teachers can contribute. One prerequisite for such actions is motivation among leaders, with the power to transform music education.

Collegial discussion about gender equality in higher music education is one way to illuminate what norms a specific institution is steered by. This discussion can lead to practically grounded policies using insights and knowledge, about how students can be viewed and approached equally. It is also crucial to highlight what frames are possible to influence, how the educational environment can be improved, what gender equality goals are set for a specific activity or semester, and what consequences for gender equality specific educational approaches have. These topics can be consciously developed in discussions involving faculty, leadership, and students.



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## Recommended further reading / watching / listening

### What is gender?

(video)

**Philosophy Tube – What Is Gender?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seUVb7gbrTY>



click to play

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### Gender and power

(book excerpt)

Connell, R. W. 1987. *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Theories of gender, with hardly an exception, focus either on one-to-one relationships between people or on the society as a whole. Apart from discussions of the family, the intermediate level of social organization is skipped. Yet in some ways this is the most important level to understand. We live most of our daily lives in settings like the household, the workplace and the bus queue, rather than stretched out in a relation to society at large or bundled up in a one-to-one. The practice of sexual politics bears mostly on institutions: discriminatory hiring in companies, nonsexist curricula in schools and so on. Much of the research that is changing current views of gender is about institutions like workplaces, markets and media.

When the social sciences have made the connection, it has usually been by picking out a particular institution as the bearer of gender and sexuality. The family and kinship have usually been elected to this honour. Accordingly the structure of the family is the centre-piece of the sociological analysis of sex roles [...] The flip side of this election was that it allowed other institutions to be analysed as if gender were of no account at all. In text after text on the classic themes of social science – the state, economic policy, urbanism, migration, modernization – sex and gender fail to get a mention or are marginalized. [...] The state of play in gender relations in a given institution is its “gender regime”.

**(online article)**

Wickström, David-Emil. 2021. **"Dealing with (Institutionalized) Forms of Power Abuse"**. *Strengthening Music in Society. Tools and Resources for Higher Music Education* [online platform].

<https://sms.aec-music.eu/diversity-identity-inclusiveness/dealing-with-institutionalized-forms-of-power-abuse/>



click to read

**(article excerpt)**

Johnston, Jennifer. 2017. **"Yes, Classical Music Has a Harassment Problem – And Now's the Time for Change"**. *The Guardian*. (December 8, 2017).

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/dec/08/jennifer-johnston-comment-classical-music-cult-of-the-maestro>



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The cult of the maestro has long been endemic in classical music. A maestro is not necessarily a conductor; it can be any distinguished and authoritative figure who commands great respect, whether he – and it is almost invariably a man – be soloist, director or teacher. To a significant degree, the success of the industry depends on this cult; it encourages audiences to flock to performances to witness dazzling displays of supreme skill, ones that thrillingly plumb emotional extremes and inspire performers to reach ever greater technical and interpretative heights. Classical music, competing as it does with other art forms and music genres in an increasingly crowded market, needs the stardust of its major players.

The cult of the maestro has thrived precisely because of the uniquely difficult demands of the music: great power and privilege is sycophantically bestowed on those perceived to be geniuses, and behaviour that would be unacceptable in other contexts may be excused or swept under the carpet; different moral standards can be applied to them by virtue of their artistic brilliance.

A recent study commissioned by the Incorporated Society of Musicians reported a “high level” of discrimination and sexual harassment in the classical music sector. As a singer, I have witnessed numerous incidents of harassment, when maestros have taken advantage of their position – whether demanding late-night one-on-one “meetings” to discuss a section of a great work, or walking into a musician’s dressing room without knocking when they know the musician is changing.

Such occurrences are common throughout the industry, and younger musicians are especially vulnerable to abuse. Harassment often goes unreported by victims, for fear of the repercussions and the risk of not being employed in the future. Classical music is a precarious arena in which to sustain a career – a huge number of musicians are self-employed, relying on their reputation to bring in work, and do not earn huge sums (thereby all but ruling out the possibility of bringing legal action themselves). Musicians are at the mercy of the organisations who employ them, so everyone tries to avoid being the subject of gossip in case it affects their chance of re-employment.



## Gender, sexuality, music/music theory/music practice

### (interview excerpt)

Zarzyci, Lili. 2020. "Interview with Christine Battersby". *The Architectural Review* (March 26, 2020).

<https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/profiles-and-interviews/interview-with-christine-battersby>



click to read

There are a few different understandings of the concept of *genius* that remain current. We first come across the word genius in Latin as the divine aspect of maleness that was passed down from the ancient Roman patriarch to his sons male and heirs. The *genius* was also the spirit that watched over the lands of the male family clan – we still have remnants of this ancient understanding of genius in contemporary art theory, with *genius loci*. Whenever theorists or artists rely on such a notion, there is a tendency to link the 'spirit of place' with the traditions of male creators, who are regarded as embodying the essence of a culture, ethnicity or nation. We need to be aware of its capacity to write out of history matrilineal lines of cultural inheritance.

A second, quite different, tradition was linked to the Latin word *ingenium* – think ingenuity, talent and skill. Our current notions of genius come out of the overlap and tensions between the two different traditions.

Another tradition involves treating genius as a personality-type: often an 'outsider' who is near to madness. There is, in principle, no reason why the inspired and crazy genius figure might not be a woman, but in both popular and high culture it is rare to find a great woman artist portrayed in these terms.

*Why is it so rare to see a woman artist portrayed as a genius in that sense?*

What I argued in *Gender and Genius*<sup>5</sup> was that the typical genius was described in terms that expected him to have the body and the developmental history of a male, plus

supernormal characteristics (an excess of emotion, imagination, sensitivity and intuition) that are in our culture normally associated with women.

I should add that my argument has often been understood by those who suppose that I was putting forward a notion of genius that was based on biological essentialism, but that was never my claim. Deciding that a person is 'male' or 'female' has not always been done in an identical way in different cultures and at different points in history. We are not dealing here with straightforward biological 'givens', but instead with the categorisation of an embodied self, based on the way that that person's body is perceived. (...)

*Why are 'feminine' characteristics valued in men but not in women?*

It has to do with treating the genius as a sort of super-male, having to be both male and transcend the normal male subject position. It's really in the 18th century that things changed, and everything changed at about the same time. If you're thinking about masculinity prior to the 18th century, it was the men who wore make-up, who had wigs and breeches, whereas women were often positioned as wild or as witches. For centuries, male philosophers had described women in ways that made them inferior: as emotional, instinctive, moved by nature rather than by reason, but with the change in values brought about by industrialisation, males began to covet stock descriptions of femininity, and began to appropriate that vocabulary.

---

<sup>5</sup> Battersby, Christine. 1989. *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics*. London: Women's Press.

(article excerpt)

McClary, Susan. 1993. "Reshaping a Discipline: Musicology and Feminism in the 1990s." *Feminist Studies* 19(2):399-423.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/3178376>

The first contributions in feminist musicology dealt with individual women or with specific historic contexts, and anyone who has taught courses on women and music knows how it feels to hop among those isolated islands of information separated by gulfs of ignorance. But a series of books from the 1980s has begun piecing together more continuous accounts of women in music. Unlike the more traditional surveys that trace a succession of "masters," these new accounts tend to pay attention to many kinds of activities besides formal composition, and they also observe far more closely the social conditions within which musicians have operated. For one of the chief tenets to fall by the wayside with feminist historiography is the notion that the individual artist operates autonomously with respect to context.

[...]

As we have seen, many women and men trained within standard musicological methodologies have diverted their energies from the traditional canon to the women. Yet for the most part, their publications have continued to address the concerns of other musicologists. Although the *content* of contributions differs from the predominantly male-oriented work discipline up until now, most of them do not challenge explicitly the assumptions and methods that have

undergirded musicological research for the past generation.

But along with the rediscovery of this long-buried music comes almost inevitably a difficult set of questions. First, how do we assess the quality our discoveries? Do we admire them, simply because they were composed by women? Or should we try to find ways of dealing critically with these artists? Second, are the premises of these women composers the same as those of their male contemporaries? Or did women sometimes try to write in ways that differed from what they heard around them? Is it possible, in other words, to write music *as a woman*?

Responding to any of these fairly obvious questions takes us outside the established guidelines of the profession. For although assessing relative worth was of considerable concern to an earlier generation of musicologists who had to decide what to include or exclude, the canon has now been stable for several decades; most of us simply have internalized the hierarchy as it was given to us as students. To be sure, a musicologist will occasionally advance an argument on behalf of an artist deemed to have been undervalued. But in such instances, the criteria brought forward are usually those that already support the reputations of those labelled as "great"



## Approaching issues of gender equality in HME

(article excerpt)

de Boise, Sam. 2017. "Gender Inequalities and Higher Music Education: Comparing the UK and Sweden". *British Journal of Music Education* 35(1):23-41.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051717000134>

Gender equality in higher music education (HME) is particularly important in that, in neoliberal societies, universities are increasingly being seen as routes into professional music careers (Allsup, 2015). Who studies which music subjects will therefore impact on divisions in music professions and the music industries. Thus, inequalities in formal music education relate to and further impact on inequalities in wider music practices.

(...)

Recognizing that gender is intersectional also means being attentive to intersectionally gendered histories. For instance, as Pelligrinelli (2008) notes, an emphasis on teaching jazz's instrumental history has often been at the expense of its historic vocal traditions where women have historically been well-represented. This doubly obscures women of colour's contributions as both vocalists and instrumentalists. As such, jazz may continue to appeal predominantly more to certain kinds of instrumentalists (among whom men are already heavily-represented). Intersectional, postcolonial and decolonial understandings of gender inequalities in education are all therefore essential in challenging certain epistemological assumptions (see also Mirza & Joseph, 2010).

Crucially, as Macarthur (2008) points out, the idea of making women more 'competitive', does not represent equality. In doing so, activities where women are visible (singing for example) are framed as barriers to participation, rather than the denigration of musical activities or aesthetic traditions where women of different backgrounds are more visible (see Railton, 2001). Conversely, '50/50' approaches may actively lead to preferential treatment of men in areas where women are now better represented, despite historical exclusion...

(...)

To this end, **gender equality** must be concerned with **challenging informally discriminatory practices within certain masculinist environments** as well as **building respect for intersectionally gendered aesthetic traditions**. This also means **gender equality should involve engaging and challenging men around questions of privilege rather than encouraging women to better compete in men-dominated spaces**. Institutional support for pluralist, intersectional models, in both gendered expression and selection criteria, are therefore vital in tackling inequalities.



# Large-scale surveys on working/studying environments in music

## Ireland (2021)

Ciara L. Murphy, Brenda Donohue, And Conall, Ó Duibhir

### Speak Up: A Call for Change – Towards Creating a Safe and a Respectful Working Environment for the Arts

[https://www.irishtheatreinstitute.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ITI-Speak-Up-A-Call-for-Change-Report-Oct2021\\_Final\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.irishtheatreinstitute.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ITI-Speak-Up-A-Call-for-Change-Report-Oct2021_Final_WEB.pdf)



click to read

“It is evident from the statistical analysis carried out in this study that the Irish arts sector has a significant problem. This research, which surveyed over 1300 people on their experiences of working in Ireland’s arts sector, finds that the majority of respondents had experienced and/or witnessed some form of harmful behaviours (bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, humiliation, victimisation, assault and sexual assault) that undermine people’s right to dignity at work.

#### THE KEY FINDINGS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- There are indications that there is a culture of harmful workplace behaviours across all sectors in the arts in Ireland.
- The research found that the levels of experiencing and/or witnessing these behaviours are similarly high across all sectors of the arts.
- The majority of those surveyed have experienced (70%) and witnessed (53%) harmful behaviour.<sup>1</sup>
- The majority of these instances were reported to have taken place in the workplace.
- According to the data, the perpetrators of these behaviours were more likely to be men (67%) than women (42%).

- Those who experience these behaviours were more likely to be women than men across the majority of categories.
- Men (55%) are slightly more likely to witness harmful behaviour than women (52%) according to the data collected.
- The data found that women were more than three and a half times more likely to experience sexual harassment than male respondents, and were more than twice as likely to experience sexual assault than male respondents.
- Freelance arts workers were more likely to face harmful workplace experiences than those who are not freelance.
- According to the respondents, the majority of perpetrators were reported to hold positions of authority.
- The data indicates that there are often no consequences for those who perpetrate harm on others in the arts sector.
- Respondents reported that often supports were not available to them, and where they were available, they were insufficient.
- Most respondents who experienced and/or witnessed the harmful behaviours analysed in this report stated that they were not comfortable seeking support in a professional setting.”

## UK (2018)

Christine Payne, Deborah Annetts & Naomi Pohl

### **Dignity in Study: A Survey of Higher Education Institutions**

<https://www.ism.org/images/images/Equity-ISM-MU-Dignity-in-Study-report.pdf>



[click to read](#)

Our research has shown students currently studying within higher education institutions are at risk from levels of inappropriate behaviour, bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of gender, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race and marriage or civil partnership. Out of the 600 students who responded to the survey, over half of the respondents said they had experienced some sort of incident – many more than one type – in the course of their study.

57% of these respondents reported experiencing inappropriate behaviour (behaviour that is considered socially unacceptable), 42% experienced bullying, 36% experienced gender

discrimination and 27% experienced sexual harassment. Although the majority of students selected more than one type of perpetrator (and over 1000 examples were given as a result) ‘fellow student’ was the highest reported at 58%. However, the breakdown does suggest high levels of incidents also by members of the institution’s permanent teaching staff (e.g. teacher or academic lecturer) at 42%. Notably, 57% of respondents did not report their concerns, with 54% of these respondents stating they felt at risk of not being believed or taken seriously if they did report their concerns. This was mirrored by comments given by respondents, as shown in the results overview.”

## UK (2015)

Danijela Bogdanović

### **Gender and Equality in Music Higher Education**



[click to read](#)

The research presented here has been envisaged as exploratory, with the remit of running a number of “conversations” within Music, learning about gender equality in specific settings, and thus providing a baseline and pointers from which more definitive action can be taken.

(...)

The data gathered and presented demonstrates that the gendering of roles, disciplines, practices

and behaviours plays a big part in Music, resulting in the underrepresentation of women in many areas and particularly at management and policy making levels. Furthermore, it confirms the existence of cultural and attitudinal barriers faced by many women throughout their careers, and despite the existing employment policies, practices and procedures whose aim is to ensure equality and diversity.



## 27 countries worldwide (2021)

Gabriela di Laccio, Ann Grindley, Giulia Nakata, Julia Manzano

### Equality and Diversity in Concert Halls

[https://donne-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Equality-Diversity-in-Concert-Halls\\_2020\\_2021.pdf](https://donne-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Equality-Diversity-in-Concert-Halls_2020_2021.pdf)



click to read

This latest research by *Donne – Women in Music* has been prepared to get a better understanding of how classical music is responding to the current and very important issue of equality and diversity in concert's repertoire worldwide. It builds on previous research carried out in 2018/2019 and 2019/2020. The new results presented here were determined by in-depth analysis of composers' works scheduled for the 2020-2021 season in 100 orchestras from 27 countries.

The results show that only 11.45% of the scheduled concerts worldwide included compositions by women. 88.55% included solely compositions written by men.

There has been a small improvement on the overall inclusion of works by women in concerts compared with previous years. But, when we look closely at the numbers, it is a different matter.

Only 747 out of the 14,747 compositions scheduled by the 100 orchestras throughout the 2020-2021 season, were composed by women – a total of 5%.

One alarming fact is that only 1.11% of the pieces were composed by Black & Asian women and only 2.43% by Black & Asian men.

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## Initiatives dealing with issues of gender in HME and music industry

University of Agder (Norway), The Royal Academy of Music (Denmark), Malmö Academy of Music (Sweden)

### GENUS – Genus Toolbox

<https://www.conferencegenus.com/toolbox-v2>



click to access

*The Genus* (Gender in Scandinavian) project is a collaboration between the University of Agder (Norway), The Royal Academy of Music (Denmark) and Malmö Academy of Music (Sweden) and is organized around three conferences on gender and equality: "The overall goal of Genus project is to raise the awareness of gender and equality perspectives in music education. We want to equip students, teachers and leaders in music education

with practical tools to make the gender balance more equal in the future."

As a part of the project a toolbox with ideas on how to achieve gender diversity within higher music education institutions. The toolbox covers the structure of the organizations, (mental) health, teacher qualifications, educational content, language, role models, politics and learning environments.

## KEYCHANGE – Genus Toolbox

<https://www.keychange.eu/>



click to access

Keychange is a movement that takes action to empower talented underrepresented genders with training, mentoring and support through networks. The activities and initiatives are shared on *Facebook* and *Instagram*. At *Soundcloud* and *Spotify* you can find playlists with talents and ambassadors. The Manifesto of the movement calls for collective action in four areas:

**Acknowledgement** – addressing recruitment, remuneration, career development and sexual harassment.

**Investment** – funds for targeted programmes to empower underrepresented artists and industry professionals

**Research** – analysing and reporting on the current gender gap.

**Education** – creating a new norm, by promoting role models and career opportunities.

For more information, for example on what you as an individual can do, and how you can contribute to gender balance, click on the link above.

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## Raising awareness and addressing sexual harassment / sexual misconduct

### (article excerpt)

Page, Tiffany, Anna Bull & Emma Chapman. 2019. "**Making Power Visible: 'Slow Activism' to Address Staff Sexual Misconduct in Higher Education**". *Violence Against Women* 25(11):1309-1330.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801219844606>

In this article, we have argued that activism around staff sexual misconduct should aim to make this issue visible. We have outlined some of the ways in which it is made invisible: a lack of research on the prevalence and impacts of staff sexual misconduct on students, the difficulties students and staff face in reporting these abuses of power, and requirements for confidentiality around the ways in which individual cases are investigated within institutions. We have described three ways in which forms of what we have referred to as slow

activism are currently occurring in the sector, through our own work and that of others: participating in institutional complaints processes, survivors naming their own experiences, and discipline-led and sector-wide activism that is demonstrating ways forward for the sector as a whole.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that using institutional complaints processes and naming experiences, perpetrators, and institutions are short-term solutions that are not preventive, are

often unsustainable, and do not necessarily lead to positive change. This is in part because of the ways in which institutional structures and processes both silence and exhaust individuals who speak out, take action, and make complaints. As with other sectors, individuals calling attention to abuses of power in higher education often remain or are increasingly vulnerable to those power relations, as either students or staff in precarious positions of employment. Addressing these issues

requires activism both within and outside of institutions, across multiple levels of engagement: lobbying members of parliament and sector bodies, preparing formal responses to national consultations, reviewing university policies and procedures and conducting training within universities, speaking at events both within and outside of academia, and advising students on direct action and strategic approaches to invoke change locally within their own institution.

### (annotated bibliography)

Floch, Yohann, Marie Le Sourd, Marta Keil, Ása Richardsdóttir, Carolyn Auclair. 2021. ***Gender and Power-Relations: Annotated Bibliography with Focus on Sexual Harrasment and Power Abuse in the Culture and Creative Sector***. Brussels: SHIFT Culture.

[https://shift-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SHIFT\\_Annotated-Bibliography\\_Gender-And-Power-Relations.pdf](https://shift-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SHIFT_Annotated-Bibliography_Gender-And-Power-Relations.pdf)



click to read

This publication is part of the gender and power-relations package which encompasses a lot of complex issues, both in society and more specifically in the cultural sector, hence the common decision to focus on sexual harassment in the culture and creative sectors. The global movement of #METOO, which started in 2017, increased awareness and empowered employees and professionals across the globe to report sexual harassment and other inequalities in the workplace. #METOO brought to the surface the vulnerability and a lack of effective protection mechanisms of anyone facing power abuse, regardless of age, class and gender.

(...)

A large number of resources exist on the issue even if they can be unequal in terms of contents, accessibility and number depending on the covered countries, sub-sectors and languages in focus. This annotated bibliography does not claim to be fully comprehensive on the subject but tries to introduce on specific entries (policies, campaigns, codes of conduct etc.) accessible online resources that can help end-users to find documents, tools, inspiration, etc. and to design further their own ways to act on the subject depending on their needs and the context they are evolving.

**(article excerpt)**

Hill, Rosemary Lucy. 2021. "Is Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Rife in the Music Industry?" *The Conversation*. (September 16, 2021).

<https://theconversation.com/is-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-rife-in-the-music-industry-167852>



click to read

The popular music industry has a problem – men are sexually assaulting women. Male producers, record company execs and musicians are exploiting and abusing women musicians, women working in the industry and female fans. Male fans are doing it too. It's not new. Phil Spector's treatment of Ronnie Spector and Ike's of Tina Turner has long been known.

(...)

That more women are willing to talk about what's happening to them is a good sign. (...) But the fact remains that harassment, abuse and violence take place at all levels of the industry – from grassroots DIY scenarios to corporate setups. Even those scenes that claim to be egalitarian – such as punk – have problems with abuse. And many people who experience sexual abuse don't feel able to speak up – 85% of Musicians' Union respondents

who had experienced sexual harassment did not report it for fear of losing work. This highlights the vulnerability of musicians, especially young women, who rely on others (often powerful men) to make a living and so are at risk of exploitation.

Without regulation of industry working practices or formal support for musicians' incomes, the music industry remains a risky business for women. That's not to say women shouldn't follow a musical career path – emphatically they should – but rather that change needs to happen to support women. There's no single solution to the problem, but an increase in women in powerful roles, in women-focused music organisations and collectives, along with good support networks for women entering and remaining in the industry are all needed.

**(video)**

**BBC News – Rape and Abuse: The Music Industry's Dark Side**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seUVb7gbrTY>



click to play



February 2022

# PRIhME

## Assembly 3

June 2022

### editorial board:

Christa Brüstle  
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Dear participants  
of the PRIhME Stakeholder Assembly,

as we are approaching the Third PRIhME Assembly related to the **importance of socio-economic background and special needs of students, teachers as well as staff in Higher Music Education** (HME), we are happy to share with you the material meant to introduce you to the overarching topics of the Assembly and prepare you for participation in the coming discussions.

The central part of this brief brings to you the expert paper *Socio-Economic Background and Today's HMEIs* by [Sam de Boise](#), a Senior Lecturer and Docent in Musicology at the School of Music, Theatre and Art at Örebro University (Sweden). Sam's paper provides a rich and informative insight into recent studies on the impact of socio-economic background on experiences of studying and institutional culture of contemporary Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEI), with special focus on Britain and Sweden. He discusses the influence of social class on potential students both in regard to the parental home as well as based on admission data to HMEIs. In addition, he discusses whether certain degree programs are chosen according to class background and what the consequences are. Finally, Sam outlines developments aimed at reaching broader social strata at HMEIs.

The reminder of the brief provides you with additional material covering **diversity** and its individual categories such as **race/ethnicity**, **ableism /disability** and **socio-economic background/class**.

Whenever the material we are providing excerpts from (videos, graphs, academic papers and books, newspaper articles) is available for reading/watching online, we have added links so that you can access it more easily.

Diversity is a broad category, and we are aware that you will only be able to touch upon some of its dimensions during the Third Assembly. We are, however, sure that your discussions will be interesting and that you will learn from each other and gain a greater understanding of how power relations are influenced by these different categories, especially socio-economic background.

We are looking forward to your results since these have very often challenged and stimulated our thought processes and discussions within the Editorial Board.

**The PRIhME Editorial Board**

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[expert paper]

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**Sam de Boise**, School of Music, Theatre and Art, Örebro University, Sweden

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# Socio-Economic Background and Today's HMEIs

**Sam de Boise**, Associate Professor in Musicology  
School of Music, Theatre and Arts, Örebro University, Sweden

## Introduction

Children from very wealthy (privileged) backgrounds are overrepresented at Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs) in Britain: in 2022, applicants from the most economically deprived group<sup>1</sup> only made up 6% of applications to HMEIs. The most wealthy (and thus least deprived) group<sup>2</sup> constituted 28% of all applications<sup>3</sup>. This division has remained stable over time (see also Born and Devine 2015). Scharff (2015: 8) indicates that some 25% of those attending traditional HMEIs in Britain come from fee-paying private schools, whilst, on average, only 7% of children nationally attend fee-paying private schools. Measures of deprivation as well economic inequalities vary across Europe, but there is evidence that class divides are present in other countries' HMEIs as well (Bull et al. Forthcoming).

As with higher education (HE) generally, the academisation of HMEIs has led to a quantitative increase in the number of students and a proliferation of courses and programs. Despite this, there is clear evidence that socio-economic status (SES) continues to be a significant factor determining which students choose to study at HMEIs. The purpose of this paper is to discuss how SES or class can impact attendance at HMEIs. It explores issues of exclusion and SES in higher music education (HME), focusing on both cultural and material aspects. These contribute at different stages of the process towards excluding both prospective students as well as those who to study at HMEIs.

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<sup>1</sup> POLAR quintile 5. POLAR, which stands for "the participation of local areas" is the UK's measure of measuring different forms of deprivation according to the index of multiple deprivation (IMD). These take into account postcodes in order to ascertain the likelihood that students come from more or less privileged socio-economic backgrounds. There are five groups ranging from the least deprived (1) to the most deprived (5).

<sup>2</sup> POLAR quintile 1.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/ucas-conservatoires-releases/2022-cycle-applicant-figures-1-october-deadline>



## The Path to Higher Music Education

There is conflicting evidence about how music is valued in secondary education amongst those from different SES backgrounds and therefore the relative likelihood of different groups applying to HMEIs (see also Albert 2006). In a study from Australia, McPherson et al. (2015) note that high-school pupils from lower SES backgrounds were actually *more likely* to value learning an instrument than students from higher SES backgrounds as they progressed through school. This did not, however, mean that these pupils were more likely to be formally trained nor to go on to study music in HE. However, in a study of dedicated extracurricular music services by one local authority in the UK, Purves (2017: 358-359) found that SES was *the* main factor influencing uptake of services. An increase in fees associated with these services led to a decline in their uptake amongst children from lower income backgrounds.

Parental influence is of great importance in a child's decision to study an instrument, though again, how this relates to class is less clear. In a cross-national study of 19 primary schools from seven towns in Serbia, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, Biro et al. (2020) demonstrate that students whose parents have higher levels of formal education are statistically more likely to play an instrument. In a study from Germany, Krupp-Schleußner and Lehmann-Wermser (2016) conducted a multi-factor analysis of a project (*Jeden Kind Ein Instrument* or „Every Child An Instrument“) designed to increase participation of economically disadvantaged children who continued playing music from ages 11-13 (Grades 5-7). Their study suggests that prioritising instruments at home was *the* biggest factor influencing whether a child continues to play an instrument later in life, rather than parents' socio-economic class<sup>4</sup>. They subsequently note that a migrant background<sup>5</sup> was also a major factor.

Krupp-Schleußner and Lehmann-Wermser's study has also been supported by Jeppson and Lindgren (2018), who looked at SES in extracurricular „*kulturskolor*“ (municipal arts schools) in Sweden, often considered a precursor to the „*folkhögskolor*“ (folk high schools), and later to HMEI attendance. Their study showed that having a parent who played an instrument was the single biggest factor in explaining attendance at the municipal arts schools. Whilst Lindgren and Jeppson claim that these schools favour middle class parents, their study does not necessarily show a statistical link between SES and attendance at the schools. Previous research conducted in the 1990s made the link between the class and municipal art school attendance in Sweden more explicit

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<sup>4</sup> Though they estimated class and parents' educational in a slightly idiosyncratic way. They asked children to estimate the number of books on their parents' bookshelves and if they had certain household possessions.

<sup>5</sup> Whether or not one has a first or second-generation "migrant background" is often synonymous with class in Germany and Sweden, where there is an ongoing discussion on the racialisation of poverty and class.

(Brandstrom and Wiklund 1996; Brändström 1999). Hall (2018) similarly observes that the role of mothers of choirboys in Australia – and in particular the time they dedicated to their children’s music lessons – proved vital in determining continued study by these choirboys. In this case, parental dedication is not simply a matter of „culture“ (of attitudinal willingness) but also a matter of how material factors influence time constraints. Parents from lower income backgrounds who work multiple jobs are less able to dedicate time and resources to their children’s musicianship.

Finally, studies indicate that teachers treat students from poorer backgrounds, and specifically ethnic and racial minorities less favourably (Starck et al. 2020; van den Bergh et al. 2010), which impacts on grade attainment. Low grade attainment is one of the main reasons for the comparatively low number of students from lower-income backgrounds who apply to HE generally – especially in Britain (Chowdry et al. 2013). This means, in essence, that there are both *cultural* and *material reasons* why children from lower SES backgrounds do not continue to pursue a formal music education, although children from lower SES backgrounds are generally just as interested in playing music.

## Admission to Higher Music Education Institutions

Whilst conservatoire participation among different social groups has obviously increased since the 1700s<sup>6</sup>, a substantial barrier for those from working class backgrounds are the costs associated with a three or even five-year performing arts program. The instrumentalization (pun not intended) of higher education generally has played a role in this. There is some evidence that student loans deter students from lower SES backgrounds from making the choice to apply to university (Callender and Mason 2017) and influence what they choose to study (Velez et al. 2019). However the differences between middle and working class students is less pronounced (Marginson 2018) than those between upper and middle class students. HE tuition fees shape students choices, with students from economically marginalised backgrounds more likely to choose subjects offering a more secure future career pathway (Baker 2020; Hillmert and Jacob 2003: 31; Lehmann 2009; Ma 2009: 223).

Entrance exams also constitute one of the most significant factors affecting conservatoire attendance. We already know that auditions have been historically biased against women (Goldin and Rouse 2000). Gender plays a large role in instrumental preferences (Abeles

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<sup>6</sup> According to Attali (1985) the Paris Conservatory (formerly the National Institute of Music) was the first to be founded in the world in the wake of the French Revolution in 1794. Though the Swedish Royal Conservatory was established twenty-three years prior to this in 1771. Despite the prominence of German-speaking composers from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards in canonical music histories, the Leipzig Conservatory began in 1843.

2009; Wych 2012) and in orientation of conservatoire studies (Casula 2019; de Boise 2018). Class bias may therefore also play a role in auditions where students do not display an attitude which is „appropriate“ to the institution to which they are applying. Economic factors play an additional, more direct role, in student preparation for entrance exams. In Baker’s (2020: 773) study, she cites the experiences of two prospective British students from lower SES backgrounds who had to travel overnight rather than stay in hotels before their drama school auditions. These prospective students were at a distinct disadvantage in terms of tiredness during the audition because they were unable to pay for a hotel the night before and had to travel through the night to attend the auditions.

Repertoires and music theory tests vary by country, institution, and study-orientation, but there is generally a focus on reading notation developed in Euroclassical<sup>7</sup> traditions. Pupils and students who learn to read music at a young age and are familiar with Euroclassical traditions therefore have an advantage. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984) already demonstrated a relationship between social class and music preferences in 1960s-70s France; Göran Nylöf (1977) made the same case in Sweden at roughly the same time. Findings from 1960s France or Sweden cannot be generalised today to all of Europe and the global North. Current middle- and upper-class people in the global north do not still listen predominantly to Western art music and HMEIs have expanded the repertoires they offer. Though, even if repertoires are „updated“, distinctions between „high“ and „low“ exemplars in a particular genre are still shaped by cultural distinction as much as musical proficiency. There is still a relationship between music preference and SES even if the styles of music considered „highbrow“ have changed (Savage 2006; Savage et al. 2015).

Passing HMEIs entrance exams also requires playing instruments to a particularly high standard, which requires tuition as well as time and space to practice. Private tuition, on average in the UK costs £40 an hour in London and £30 an hour outside of London<sup>8</sup>. The average median weekly wage in the UK, in 2020 however was £553 (outside of London) meaning that private music lessons for one child per week accounted for 5% of average weekly income (see ONS 2021) but 10% of the median household income for those in the bottom quartile. For parents with multiple children desiring private tuition, this figure doubles or triples. The UK has seen large cuts to public funding for extra-curricular music activities over the past 10 years (de Boise 2017). Private tuition generally provides a significant advantage to access to HE (Henderson et al. 2020). By contrast, Swedish *kulturskolor* are built on systems in which students (though more likely parents) pay

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<sup>7</sup> Following Philip Tagg I use the term Euroclassical to denote that there are classical traditions in other parts of the world which are not taught in Western HMEIs.

<sup>8</sup> These prices are similar in other Western European countries. In Germany the average cost per hour at the *Musikschulen* was higher than other countries at €113 in 2016 (<http://kostenkiste.de/was-kostet-musikunterricht/>) whereas the costs were 375 SEK (c. €35) for private tuition in Stockholm in Sweden and 300 SEK (c.€30) outside of Stockholm, for private piano lessons, in 2019.

nominal fees so students can access tuition relatively cheaply<sup>9</sup>. In addition, there are fee waivers available for those who cannot pay. However, parents pay per child, and the level of tuition required to pass entrance exams requires extra training.

Finally, time, access and the physical home environment play a role in whether or not pupils can dedicate the practice time needed to pass entrance exams. Children or adolescents living in smaller homes are less likely to have the space to practice instruments without disturbing others. Similarly, children and adolescents caring for sick or disabled parents or siblings, in situations where parents work multiple jobs or night shifts, are less likely to have the time, space, or inclination to dedicate to musical practice outside their formal education. These children almost always tend to be economically disadvantaged. The cost of instruments is also a factor. While the costs of basic guitars and basses, woodwind and string instruments have decreased substantially thanks to transnational corporations producing instruments cheaply (often in East Asia), brass and larger percussion instruments are still relatively expensive to purchase. Purves' (2017: 358-360) study found an almost direct relationship between income, consumption, uptake and duration of uptake of local authority music services<sup>10</sup>. These structural factors all contribute to the likelihood that those from working class backgrounds able to access education will play certain instruments and therefore certain types of music.

## The Role of SES in HMEI Experiences

In Britain especially, there are clear class divides in those who attend universities which were founded in education reforms after 1992, those which were founded in the 1800s („Redbrick universities”) and elite universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. The same is true of those who attend Harvard and Yale in the US (Jerrim et al. 2015; Ro et al. 2018). Reay et. al. (2005) demonstrated that despite the removal of economic barriers to UK HE in the form of tuition fees<sup>11</sup>, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds often felt as if they did not fit at universities and were less likely to attend as well as far more likely to leave. Reay et al. (2005) drew on Bourdieu's work to explain why working class students attended high-prestige universities in lower numbers and why their drop-out rates were higher when they attended high prestige institutions. They explained that those who feel entitled to study or at ease in environments where the majority are middle or upper class,

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<sup>9</sup> In Sweden, a term costs c. 300 SEK per pupil with a maximum of 500 SEK per family.

<sup>10</sup> These "Music Hubs" are extra-curricular music activities provided by volunteers, local councils or arts organisations which are funded by the Department of Education. Music Hubs apply for funding on an annual basis with "90% of the funding is distributed based on each local authority's share of the total number of pupils registered on roll and the remaining 10% is distributed based on their share of the numbers of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)" (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-1>).

<sup>11</sup> Which were reinstated at £1100 pounds per year from 2001 and are now a maximum of £9250 per year.

like them, are more likely to feel at „home“ because these reflect similar codes and implicit rules to the environments they grew up in. Essentially, feelings of comfort or discomfort, are dependent on whether one has a tacit „feel for the game“ which is an effect of social class (Bourdieu 1990: 52).

While Bourdieu never studied HMEIs, others have applied his work to students' HMEIs experiences to investigate whether institutions have an implicit class bias. Dibben's (2006) study found in a qualitative study among students who have been admitted to a HMEIs in the UK that students from lower SES backgrounds did not report *feeling* excluded or marginalised. However, in a quantitative study at a Turkish conservatoire, Kömürçü and Mohan Kömürçü (2021) note that socio-economic background appears to play *the* most significant role in student perceptions of comfort, discomfort, and performance anxiety in particular. Dibben's study did indicate an overrepresentation of students from higher socio-economic groups in one particular HMEIs (which is characteristic of HME in the UK). Students with a supplementary job achieved statistically significant lower grades than those who received higher parental contributions to their living costs. Put bluntly, students who must work to support themselves have less time to dedicate to their studies. This means that, once again, those from lower SES backgrounds are often at a material as well as cultural disadvantage.

Scharff (2015), and Bull and Scharff (2017; 2021) have suggested that the Western Art music profession is a distinctly middle class one. The middle class institution of the HMEI contributes to this through the implicit emphasis on class-based hierarchies of value. Bull and Scharff (2017) note, for instance, that Western Art Music practitioners often grow up listening to Euroclassical music, thereby making it seem more natural for them. Interviewees emphasised the complexity and „emotional depth“ of Euroclassical, in contrast to other music forms. They implicitly suggest these cannot be grasped by those growing up listening to other genres. The idea that music's complexity and its separation from everyday life, should be the measure of music's value, has been important in sustaining the authority of Euroclassical music more generally (Goehr 1992). The *implicit* attitudes of those who attend HMEIs therefore contribute to a general sense that HMEIs are arbiters of taste and thus middle-class values.

There is also evidence of a class divide in the types of courses and programs chosen by students at HMEIs. Born and Devine (2015) identify a clear class divide between music technology programs (MT) and what they call „traditional“ music (TM) degrees<sup>12</sup>. MT degrees are undertaken more often by those from more deprived backgrounds whilst TM degrees are taken from those from more privileged backgrounds<sup>13</sup>. They cite the relative prestige attached to newer music technology courses, perceived as more vocational and

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<sup>12</sup> By this they mean music performance and musicology degree programs rather than folk or traditional music.

<sup>13</sup> As measured by the POLAR index (see Footnote 1).

tied to industrial scale songwriting or technical work, as opposed music performance and musicology degrees which are not construed to be primarily career oriented. Born and Devine also note an overwhelming gender divide in these programs, with men making up c. 75% of music technology course students as opposed to c.50% of TM programs.

As noted above, students from lower SES backgrounds are generally more likely to choose HE programs and courses which are explicitly linked to a vocation (Baker 2020; Hillmert and Jacob 2003: 31; Lehmann 2009; Ma 2009: 223). Higher SES students choose to study the arts and humanities generally in larger numbers. Though medicine and law are still heavily stratified by class across countries (Codioli McMaster 2019; Van de Werfhorst et al. 2003). These trends are more obvious in countries where tuition fees are high. In a world where there are few jobs as professional musicians and a huge number of aspiring musicians, the impact of future career planning and debt-levels undoubtedly influence the decision to study music as well as which music degrees to study.

## Attempts to Change Conservatoire Cultures

Widening participation programs have focused on training pupils who would not otherwise be familiar with Euroclassical music repertoires. In the UK, widening participation programs have been established to support the inclusion of those from economically and racially marginalised backgrounds, particularly in Western Art music (BCU 2021; HEPI 2019; Orchestras Live 2021; RCM 2019). There have also been attempts to (quantitatively) „democratise“ access to HME in almost all countries which have HMEIs by expanding degree programs on offer. Krupp-Schleußner and Lehmann-Wermser (2016) note that in Germany, having a „migrant background“ or not appeared to impact the likelihood of pupils continuing formal music lessons. When they factored in music activities which have not historically been taught in HMEIs (such as rapping, music production or beat making), they found that pupils who had migrant backgrounds were more likely than other pupils to engage in these activities. A focus on inclusion into „traditional“ types of music making only may miss a range of active music makers whose talents are not covered by HMEIs curricula. This suggests a need for HMEIs to expand their curricular/program scope.

There have been attempts to introduce historically newer genres like hip hop and electronic dance music into HME curricula in Sweden, Germany, the U.S., and the UK. Here too, however, there is a need for caution. Music preferences, are not *determined* by class. The idea that class relates directly to music tastes fails to explain why white middle class kids love hip hop or why jazz is taught in German, Dutch, Swedish or UK HMEIs, almost exclusively staffed by white teachers. The expansion of programs and repertoires on offer in HMEIs has undoubtedly led to a wider variety of students engaging



with HME curricula, but this does not necessarily lead to more socio-economically diverse institutions. For example, jazz became considered a „high-art“ form during in the 1960s, leading to its institutionalisation in the 1980s and 1990s (Lopes 2000) as jazz fans and practitioners became conservatoire teachers. Through its institutionalization, jazz has adopted many of the same elitist connotations once reserved for the Euroclassical traditions. Since the 1960s, Sweden has adopted a popular music curriculum in schools (Georgii-Hemming and Westvall 2010), but this has not necessarily resulted in more socio-economically diverse HMEIs. The inclusion of hip hop in HMEIs curricula may appear to be a significant development, but if it is not supported financially and culturally beforehand to counteract inherent conservatoire tendencies, it will follow the same trend as jazz.

## Conclusion

Those from lower SES backgrounds are significantly less likely to attend HMEIs. The reasons for this are material and cultural, but they interconnect with each other in various ways. There are, however, also hierarchies of prestige between institutions and between music degrees which mean that high-prestige institutions and music-performance programs are more segregated by SES. The evidence also indicates that there is not an inherent class preference for making music in secondary education even if music interests of lower SES groups are perhaps less well-represented in HMEIs. Class does not determine music preferences and participation but cultural and material factors does heavily influence both.

There are similarities across countries. However, to date, there is no quantitative data on the percentages of students who attend conservatoires from different socio-economic backgrounds, and no comparative cross-cultural comparisons broken down by country. Such data would indicate the extent to which national factors influence admissions and applications. This would help to ascertain the extent to which subsidised state-funded music or art schools have an impact at the national level. To date, there is also no solid evidence on the relationship between socio-economic factors and performance in music theory exams. Though, clearly, a grounding in music theory, and familiarity with the repertoires used is a clear benefit. Cultural changes in institutional cultures are necessary. Nevertheless, without economic and financial support earlier on in students' lives, these changes are unlikely to be sufficient.

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# Recommended further reading / watching / listening

## Diversity

- **What does diversity do?**

**(book excerpt)**

Ahmed, Sara. 2012. *On Being Included. Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham – London: Duke University Press.

What does diversity do? What are we doing when we use the language of diversity? ... These questions can be asked as open questions only if we proceed with a sense of uncertainty about what diversity is doing and what we are doing with diversity. Strong critiques have been made of the uses of diversity by institutions and of how the arrival of the term "diversity" involves the departure of other (perhaps more critical) terms,

including "equality", "equal opportunities" and "social justice". A genealogy of the term "diversity" allows us to think about the appeal of the term as an institutional appeal. We might want to be cautious about the appealing nature of diversity and ask whether the ease of its incorporation by institutions is a sign of the loss of its critical edge. (1)

- **Attempts at representing key concepts visually**

**(online resource)**

**Equity vs. Equality – What's the Difference?**

<https://onlinepublichealth.gwu.edu/resources/equity-vs-equality/>



[click to access](https://onlinepublichealth.gwu.edu/resources/equity-vs-equality/)

**(online resource)**

**Gardenswartz and Rowe – Four Layers of Diversity-model**

<https://www.gardenswartzrowe.com/why-g-r>



[click to access](https://www.gardenswartzrowe.com/why-g-r)

## • Addressing Privilege

(video)

***Any Other Questions*** (University of Art and Design Linz, 2020)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDrYULUZ5mU>



click to play

(article excerpt)

Preston Leonard, Kendra. 2017. **Music Privilege Walk Statements.**

<https://kendraprestonleonard.hcommons.org/2017/04/01/music-privilege-walk-statements/>

Many of you are familiar with the idea of the [Privilege Walk](#), in which a mediator reads statements relating to privilege and asks participants to step forward or backwards to indicate their relative positions in society as defined through those privileges. [...]

I've been creating and asking for sample statements related to music (mostly reflecting US music experiences and the privileges that may be present in people's formative years in regard to music-learning and music-making); in specific, statements that allow music professors to understand their own privilege or lack thereof and that of their students. (...) Here are the collected statements from the Privilege Walk I led as a session on Privilege at the 2017 Spring meeting of the AMS-Southwest chapter at Sam Houston State University.

- If your parents/guardians could pay for your instrument or you had use of a free school instrument, step forward.
- If you had access to a professional quality instrument before age 18, step forward.
- If you experienced physical and/or psychological/emotional abuse by a music teacher, step backwards.
- If you experienced sexual harassment by a music colleague, step backwards.
- If you could afford to travel more than 4 hours for post-secondary school auditions, step forward.
- If your parents/guardians could afford the time off to drive you to auditions, step forward.
- If you went to summer music programs, step forward.
- If you owned a metronome, tuner, music stand, instrument cleaning supplies, and method books (in your language), step forward.
- If the language spoken in your high school music rehearsals was your first language, step forward.
- If you had a reliably quiet place to practice, step forward.
- If your high school offered Music Theory AP, step forward. [...]
- If you had a reliably safe space to store your instrument when not playing it, step forward.
- If your parents/guardians attended your concerts, step forward (some have to miss for work or other things).
- If you had a piano or keyboard in your house growing up, step forward.
- If your musical instructions conflicted with other extra-curriculars, like sports or scouting, step backwards.
- If the music that is your passion is written down, step forward.
- If the music that is your passion is communicated primarily through an oral tradition, step backwards. [...]
- If your religion/culture prevented you from singing/playing (certain instruments or all), step backwards.
- If you could afford to buy new music (not copy it from library, etc.), step forward. [...]
- If you did not own a tux/black concert wear and/or had to borrow it because you couldn't afford it, take a step backwards.
- If you could read more than one clef before entering college, step forward.
- If one of your family members played an instrument while you were growing up, step forward.
- If you have a hearing impairment, take a step back. [...]
- If you grew up in a house with more than 25 recordings, take a step forward.
- If assigned an instrument because it corresponded to outdated ideas about your gender, step back.

## • Diversity / Difference in Music Scholarship

### (book excerpt)

Bloechl, Olivia, Melanie Lowe and Jeffrey Kallberg, eds. 2015. *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Difference is a broadly relevant concept, so what do we mean when we invoke it in thinking about music? In the humanities and social sciences, the most common critical usage refers to differences among and within groups, and the cultural meanings and values that attach to these differences. A basic musicological proposition is that differentiation affects musical dispositions and capacities as well as choices and actions, such as creation, listening, or judgment. [...]

Viewing identity via a critical concept of difference involves conceiving it temporally and contingently, as a particular understanding of a self, another person, or a group that is formulated relative to others. This bare definition needs development in order to be meaningful, but we are already far from theories of identity as stable essences (although we are not yet speaking of them as constructs). The **contingency of identity** may be **linguistic** (designation as “this, not that”), **psychological** (emotional identification with or against others), **social** (identification as like or unlike others), or **historical** (identification with or against a particular past or ancestry). These and other domains have been important sites for humanistic and social scientific reflection on identity, but most contemporary discussion has focused on social identification on the basis of religion, gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, and so forth, as well as on the cultures particular to some identity groups. [...]

One predominant strand of American critical musicology has posited a close relationship between identity and musicality and has advocated sympathetic, authentic understanding of plural musicalities – and, thus, of difference – as an ethical good. Witness Philip Brett’s cautious recommendation in 1994 that musicologists

cultivate a queer “sense of difference” as “**valuing, exploring, and trying to understand different things, people, and ideas, in terms that are closer to the way in which they perceive themselves.**” This pluralist musicological ethics is typically joined to a political claim – sometimes explicit, more often not – that **institutionalized exclusion, devaluation, and neglect of certain differentiated musical subjects or objects are forms of injustice.** [...]

Generally speaking, difference-focused musicological critique has been driven by efforts to remedy misrecognition in music history, historiography, and to a lesser extent professional life, although it has also sometimes addressed maldistribution or malrepresentation. One example of misrecognition, familiar in the wake of US multiculturalism, is the tacit expectation by many scholars that musicologists who are visible racial minorities will study “their own” musics (e.g., musics racialized as brown, black, Native, or just non-white) rather than musics attributed to white European and Euro-settler groups.

As has often been pointed out, this expectation is non-reciprocal: scholars who are visible majorities are generally licensed to study whatever musics they like and face little sanction for crossing racialized genre boundaries. Misrecognition, in this case, involves a racialized “description,” based partly on a perception of physicality that “makes a difference in the way its bearer is treated”: specifically, that denies respect for intellectual autonomy, typically lowers status (especially if “white” genres carry greater prestige), restricts disciplinary participation, and thus limits agency and freedom. (4-9)



# Disability

To think of disability not as a physical condition but as a way of interacting with a world that is frequently inhospitable is to think of disability in performative terms – as something one *does* rather than something one *is*.

(Sandahl and Auslander 2005:10)

(video)

Judith Butler & Sunaura Taylor – *Examined Life*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0HZaPkF6qE>



click to play

(video)

Evelyn Glennie – *How to Truly Listen*

[https://www.ted.com/talks/evelyn\\_glennie\\_how\\_to\\_truly\\_listen/](https://www.ted.com/talks/evelyn_glennie_how_to_truly_listen/)



click to play

- **Conceptualizing Disability (in Music)**

(article excerpt)

Howe, Blake at al. 2016. "Introduction". In *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*. Blake Howe et al., eds. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 1-11.

The word *disability* forges a binary between what one can do (ability) and what one cannot do (disability). Indeed, disability throughout history has often emerged as an antithesis to some other desirable standard. Before the nineteenth century, this standard was often imagined as an idealized body: the body of God, Adam before the Fall, the King, the cosmos, or some other perfection, from which all human bodies were poorly fractioned and morally compromised. This is **the moral or religious model of disability**, in which bodily differences are stigmatized as deviant from some elusive ideal. Beginning in the nineteenth century, this "ideal body" was usurped by the "normal body." Normalcy, a concept popularized by the rise of statistics, imagines human morphology on a bell-shaped curve: most people are of average height, while some are too tall, and others are too short. This is **the medical model of disability**, in which disabled people are cast as outliers,

requiring either rehabilitation by medical science or elimination by eugenics.

More recently, **the social model of disability**, advocated in politics by the disability rights movement and in scholarship by Disability Studies, has argued for the value of bodily difference. Under this model, disability is not a fixed, medical condition; rather, it emerges from a society that chooses to accommodate some bodies and exclude others. As Davis 2002 explains, "An impairment involves a loss or diminution of sight, hearing, mobility, mental ability, and so on. But an impairment only becomes a disability when the ambient society creates environments with barriers" (41). Indeed, Strauss 2006 defines disability as "any culturally stigmatized bodily difference" (119): bodies themselves are neutrally defined, accruing their stigma only through cultural reception. A wheelchair user is disabled by curbs,

but not by sloped curbs. A deaf person is disabled by oral language, but not by sign language. Noting the ubiquity of accommodation that all bodies (disabled or nondisabled) receive, some scholars have recently sought to reconceive bodily

### (interview excerpt)

Necula, Maria-Cristina. 2021. "Joseph Straus: Disability in Music – Rethinking the Standard". *Classical Singer*.

#### How does disability impact a listeners' relationship with music?

Everybody in the world makes sense of their world essentially through their bodies. You understand the things that you see and experience because you have some prior bodily understanding of the experience. Music listening is not a passive, neutral thing where one brain is communicating directly with another brain: there's no such thing as pure listening. It's an embodied experience. Even when you're sitting in a concert hall, you're moving, you're feeling it, things are happening in your body as part of the listening experience. So, if the body plays a central role in the listening experience, as it does with any kind of experience, then the configuration and nature of your body are going to have an impact. Exactly what the impact is varies a lot from individual to individual. [...]

#### Do you think that enough is being done in schools to further the understanding that performers, listeners, and composers with disabilities can engender new ways of making sense of music?

That's a really hard, interesting question. In many ways, the present moment is a kind of golden age for disability in general; at least for many disability conditions, the stigma has started to relax a bit. It's an age where the segregation that so much characterized disability conditions in the past has begun to break down. Children now are legally entitled to an appropriate education in the least restrictive possible setting. As a result, people with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, are able to lead full and fulfilling lives outside of institutions in a way that would have been inconceivable 20 or 30 years ago. What I would like

difference without hierarchy. For example, Davis 2013 seeks "a new category [of identity] based on the partial, incomplete subject, whose realization is not autonomy and independence, but dependency and interdependence" (275). (1-2)

to see, in a more utopian way, is an acknowledgement that disability is not a deficit. Rather, it's a difference that should be valued and celebrated on its own terms – not seen as medical pathologies that reside inside the individual bodies and are a tragedy for them and their families. Instead, it's an opportunity, an opening, an aspect of biodiversity. Disability is a central aspect of what it means to be human. Everybody has a body, and everybody's body deviates from standards of perfection – just as everybody's mind deviates in some way. We should learn to celebrate those differences and not to draw hard lines between people who are not living with a disability and those who are.

#### Where do these standards actually come from?

Such a great question! These are the cultural stories that we tell ourselves and each other – stories that are enshrined in our literature, movies, media – and that get rehearsed generation after generation and century after century until we think it's all perfectly natural and scientific and not worth discussing. So, the goal of scholars like me is to say, "This is not natural, this is a human creation: these distinctions between disability and nondisability, distinctions between black and white, between men and women, between cisgendered people and gay people – all of these things are fictions, constructions." The beauty of thinking that way is that once something has been constructed, it can be reconstructed. It's not permanent, and we don't have to think about disability in a stigmatizing way, just as we don't have to think about queerness in a stigmatizing way. **The standards can be rethought, retaught, and relearned.**



- **Normal(izing) Performance Body**

**(article excerpt)**

Howe, Blake et al. 2016. "**Disabling Music Performance**". In *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*. Blake Howe et al., eds. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 191-209.

Just as curbs and stairways permit the movements of some bodies while disabling those of others, so do **certain conventions of music performance have the power to include and exclude**. These conventions, constituting a "constructed normalcy" of music performance, may audibly disable performers whose bodies do not conform. For example, musical instruments and scores – plus performance practice, or the cultural expectation that they should be performed in a particular way – work together to imply the bodily shape of their intended performer. This normal performance body usually possesses all limbs, with above-average hand and finger size, lung capacity, and strength, among other qualities. Most violin designs imply a two-handed, two-armed, and multifingered performer with a flexible neck. Brass instruments similarly imply a one- or two-handed, multifingered performer, whose mouth is capable of forming a strong, airtight embouchure; tubists must also have the strength to lift their heavy instrument. The length of a vocal phrase in an aria implies the lung capacity of its intended singer, and a wide chord implies the hand size of its pianist. A conductor's baton implies the sightedness of its followers. All of these features constitute the **normal performance body, which, like all forms of constructed normalcy, establishes a template that real human bodies must strive to match**. Performers who do not conform to this normal performance body (for instance, those with fewer hands, fewer fingers, weaker muscles, smaller lungs, or less vision than their instruments and scores require) have performance impairments.

Without adequate accommodation, these impairments may musically disable a performer.

In such circumstances, the performances of disability and music are intertwined so as to become indistinguishable – indeed, **music performance can amplify or even generate a disability that otherwise would have remained inaudible or unrealized**. Many performance impairments are functionally neutral bodily features in most life activities. Amusia – a newly formed diagnostic category describing an inability to distinguish between pitches (i.e., tone deafness), acquired congenitally or from brain trauma – is a specifically musical disorder; it is profoundly disabling for some musicians but otherwise mostly irrelevant to a life outside of music. Similarly, focal dystonia – resulting in the loss of fine motor skills in a specific part of the body, often a finger – may affect the highly coordinated motions associated with piano performance but not with those associated with more mundane tasks, like opening a door. More broadly, small hands or fingers – usually unremarkable bodily features – may severely limit and even exclude participation in certain instrumental repertoires. Standardized piano keys, plus piano compositions with parallel octaves, plus cultural performance practices that require adherence to a score's demands, imply the span of a large hand; many hands, inevitably, will be too small. Notably, **the normal performance body is much more regulated than other social forms of constructed normalcy: even the tiniest deviations** – a sore knuckle, a swollen lip, mild sinus congestion, a shortened pinky – **can audibly impair a body during music performance**.

- **Challenging ableism – from theory to practice**

**(online article)**

Baptiste Grandgirard et al. 2020. "**Spotlight on: Inclusiveness**". In *How are diverse cultures integrated in the education of musicians across Europe?*[online resource].



[click to read](#)

**(online article)**

Baptiste Grandgirard et al. 2020. "**Spotlight on: Accessibility**". *How are diverse cultures integrated in the education of musicians across Europe?*[online resource].



[click to read](#)

**(online article)**

Hannie van Veldhoven and David-Emil Wickström. 2021. "**The Inclusion of seeing-impaired staff and students at HKU Utrecht and Popakademie Baden-Wurttemberg**". *How are diverse cultures integrated in the education of musicians across Europe?*[online resource].



[click to read](#)

**(online article)**

Breslin, Brendan. 2021. "**The Le Chéile Project and the Open Youth Orchestra of Ireland: the first national youth orchestra for musicians with disabilities (Royal Irish Academy of Music)**". In *Artistic Plurality and Inclusive Institutional Culture in HME*. Clara Barbera et al., Brussels: AEC, 62-66.



[click to read](#)

**(online article)**

Thomson, Katja. 2020. "**Musicians with disabilities teaching on the music pedagogy course at the Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki**". *How are diverse cultures integrated in the education of musicians across Europe?*[online resource].



[click to read](#)





# Socio-Economic Background

## (article excerpt)

Bull, Anna and Christina Scharff. 2017. **“McDonalds’ Music’ Versus ‘Serious Music’: How Production and Consumption Practices Help to Reproduce Class Inequality in the Classical Music Profession”**. *Cultural Sociology*. 11(3): 283-301.

This article has focused on class inequalities in contemporary classical music practice. By drawing on empirical data from two separate research projects, it has linked inequalities in production and consumption in three ways. First, we explored the **role of family socialisation in classical music production and consumption**. For middle-class research participants, classical music was practiced and consumed at home. Engagement with classical music was perceived as ‘natural’, suggesting that classical music was valued, and that the attribution of value was uncontested. By contrast, research participants from working-class or lower-middle-class backgrounds reported that classical music was unfamiliar; it was not listened to at home and research participants struggled to garner their parents’ support. [...]

As the second empirical section showed, **class inequalities also come to the fore in practices of performing and listening to classical music**. Feeling comfortable and confident in grand spaces, as well as wearing appropriate dress, is not something that seems to be equally available to musicians from different class backgrounds. There is continuity between middle-class culture, the spaces that classical music tends to be performed in, and the dress code, especially for women. This also highlights the role of cultural institutions as spaces where inequalities of production and consumption may influence each other and be reinforced. Thus, class inequalities also manifest themselves in the consumption of classical music. [...]

The research participants’ value-judgements, which we discussed in the third empirical section, revealed hierarchies where classical music was, through non-explicit mechanisms, situated at the

top. ...However, this hierarchy of value often remained invisible. Arguably, this hierarchy is so taken for granted that individuals do not name it explicitly. In discussing our empirical data, we foregrounded the **unspoken and uncontested value of classical music and how this seems to map onto middle-class culture, albeit in non-direct and complex ways**. Classical music was ‘naturally’ practiced and listened to in middle-class homes where the status of classical music remained uncontested, even if it was not pursued professionally. The attribution of depth to classical music gestured at a seriousness and importance that differed from other genres. The unspoken value of classical music was highlighted in listening practices, where classical music was not consumed for fun or for embodied leisure practices such as jogging, but was associated with people’s identities and sense of self. ... Based on these examples, we argue that the uncontested status of classical music plays a key role in the ways in which class inequalities manifest themselves in its production and consumption.

... for the purposes of concluding this article, we continue with the theme of the uncontested status of classical music and broaden it out to classical music funding. **Historically and today, classical music has received disproportionate levels of state funding compared to other genres of music** (Hodgkins, 2013; Laing and York, 2000; Monk, 2014). [...] The question about the beneficiaries of public funding relates back to our concern with inequalities and the communities who are being served and excluded through cultural policies. If the value of classical music remains uncontested, existing inequalities in classical music production and consumption may become even greater.

### (article excerpt)

Banks, Mark. 2017. *Creative Justice – Cultural Industries, Work and Inequality*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.

... in this chapter, I want to make two arguments. The first is precursory, outlining the position that while people are capable subjects, with their own objective capacities, **the idea of creative talent is as much social as it is personal or innate**. By this I mean that a 'natural aptitude' might exist, but it is extremely difficult to separate it from the social context in which it appears, to the extent that it is perhaps impossible to isolate its discrete influence in the making of creative persons. Secondly, and more substantively, **even if we accept that ordinary people may possess their own creative talents** (regardless of whether we believe these to be innate or socially learnt, or some combination of the two), **there is no guarantee that such attributes will be recognised and rewarded because established patterns of social inequality tend not to permit it**. More simply, we might say that the socially disadvantaged are less likely to be regarded as 'talent' because they lack the resources necessary to compete in markets for prestige and recognition. (67)

The formalised and ritual demands of the [admission] process served to strongly define the parameters of what constitutes a demonstrably talented student. And having the dispositional confidence and ease, as well as the schooled ability, to demonstrate one's apparently innate skills, immediately puts such candidates at an advantage relative to those others (local working-class and ethnic minority students in the case of this study) who often lack such dispositions and

abilities, and so tend to look more awkward, and perform less confidently at audition — and so are less likely to be selected. (81)

... we observe how, **in arts education, the capacity to express talent is not straightforwardly linked to an ability to sing, dance or play a musical instrument, but rests on routine demonstration of a preferred history of socialisation and training, an appropriate set of cultured dispositions and a resourcefulness and commitment borne largely from the possession of an established social and economic advantage**. (82)

In this respect, talent can never be reduced to an innate skill or aptitude, or a concrete capacity to do something (though, as I've suggested, such qualities might objectively exist) but must also be recognised as a set of social dispositions, partly defined and constructed in the performative contexts of their expression and evaluation. When, as happens in creative arts education, selectors rely less on traditional academic qualifications as evidence of merit, and more so on combinations of aesthetic judgements, as well as implicit (or explicit) homophilic and dispositional prejudices, then pedagogic authority becomes irresistible, and symbolic violence is enhanced. **When selectors insist on the right to their own 'implicit, diffuse criteria'** (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p. 162) **then the objective basis of selection becomes almost impossible to isolate, and so the basis of rejection becomes more difficult to oppose**. (85)

### (video)

Dyson, Jane, Craig Jeffrey, Gyorgy Scrinis – *Student Hunger: A Silent Crisis*  
<https://vimeo.com/675691841>



click to play



# Race

**A specter lurks in the house of music, and it goes by the name of race. For most observers, it hovers and haunts barely noticed, so well hidden is it beneath the rigors of the scholarly apparatus.**

(Radano and Bohlman, 2000:1)

## (video)

Nate Holder – *If I were a racist...* (2020)

<https://www.nateholdermusic.com/post/if-i-were-a-racist>



click to play

## (video)

Juliet Hess – *Problematizing “Diversity”, “Inclusion” and “Access” in Music Education* (2018)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ytxe9YTyR8>



click to play

## (book chapter excerpt)

Radano, Ronald and Philip V. Bohlman. 2000. **“Introduction: Music and Race, Their Past, Their Presence”**. In *Music and the Racial Imagination*. Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohlman, eds. Chicago – London: The University of Chicago Press, 1-53.

A specter lurks in the house of music, and it goes by the name of race. For most observers, it hovers and haunts barely noticed, so well hidden is it beneath the rigors of the scholarly apparatus. The racial specter, nonetheless, has an enormously powerful, nearly palpable effect: welling up from the depths of the discipline of musical scholarship, it casts a shadow across this putatively “objective” enterprise. The specter of race is not the edifice of “black music” to which the musical disciplines, when acknowledging the racial, reflexively turn. It is, rather, the ideological supposition that informs this reflex. The specter of race is neither the root cause of the music historian’s enduring commitment to the sameness of European studies nor the reason for the ethnographer’s preoccupation with the performance of difference. It is, rather, the commonsense opinion that what distinguishes the musically racial from the not-

racial is as simple as telling the difference between black and white. (1). [...]

In the New Europe at the end of the twentieth century, there may be no better evidence that music is more intensely present than ever in the European racial imagination than the tendency to look beyond the borders of Europe for race and racism. Just as history – and music history – provide a rhetoric of displacement, they also have the power to identify the rupture that displacement leaves. Historically, Europe has been implicated as no other place in the ways music has been employed to construct race and to undergird racism. **Music and race interact far too often in the history of Europe and in the history of Western art music to sustain attempts to deny race and to silence the ways in which music calls attention to racism.** (27-28) [...]

Why music?... Is race embedded in music and related expressive practices, such as dance, in particularly powerful ways? Does music mark race? Or does music reproduce the traces of race, thereby perpetuating the racial imagination itself? For many it may seem that making a case for music's culpability in the reproduction of racial stereotypes is empirically unsound because music is music, not race. Music is, one might argue, no more than a non-signifying, free-floating, essentialized object. But the question "why music?"

is particularly unsettling precisely because of its banality. **To dismiss music as non-signifying is possible only when one ignores the power that accrues to musical practice.** Music acquires power because it can be used to attribute and ascribe multivalent meanings. The moment when it seems not to signify, music becomes most significant; music acquires its very powerlessness as an object. (43)

### (article excerpt)

Amaechi, John. 2020. "What is white privilege?".  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zrvkbqt>



[click to read](#)

We've been engaged in a global conversation about race and racism. You've probably had discussions at home, at school or at work, and in those conversations, you've probably heard the term white privilege. You maybe even had this term used in a way that felt like an insult or an accusation. Others will have told you that it's all just made up to make white people feel bad... and none of this is right.

Privilege is a hard concept for people to understand, because normally when we talk of privilege, we imagine immediate unearned riches and tangible benefits for anyone who has it. But white privilege and indeed all privilege is actually more about the absence of inconvenience, the absence of an impediment or challenge, and as such when you have it, you really don't notice it, but when it's absent, it affects everything you do.

There are lots of types of privilege out there, the privilege of being born into a wealthy family versus a poor family is kind of obvious, but then there's the privilege of being able-bodied versus having or acquiring a disability that most of us take for granted. I have two very close friends who are wheelchair users and I'll be honest, when I first met them I was completely ignorant about the everyday ways their lives are made harder through no fault of their own. Some of these ways are simply

thoughtless, but some of them are just the way we live, just the way we build infrastructure, just the way everything works that just makes their life harder than mine. That's just one of the ways that I am privileged and understanding that, embracing that, doesn't make me a bad person, but ignoring it raises the chance that my friends will be excluded in ways that are not obvious to me and as their friend I can't allow that.

There's a good chance, as a white person watching this, your life is already hard. Every day you have to overcome some difficulty or challenge just to get by, but you can still have white privilege. White privilege doesn't mean you haven't worked hard or you don't deserve the success you've had. It doesn't mean that your life isn't hard or that you've never suffered. It simply means that your skin colour has not been the cause of your hardship or suffering.

There is nothing but a benefit to understanding our own privileges, white and otherwise. It brings us closer to those who are different. It helps us be vigilant about the ways we treat others different than us. It helps us make a society that is fairer and more equal. Having white privilege doesn't make your life easy, but understanding it can help you realise why some people's lives are harder than they should be.

## Further reading

Huxtable, Jason. 2021. "Pragmatic White Allyship for Higher Education Popular Music Academics". *IASPM Journal* 11(1): 94-99.

[http://dx.doi.org/10.5429/2079-3871\(2021\)v11i1.10en](http://dx.doi.org/10.5429/2079-3871(2021)v11i1.10en)

Bradley, Deborah. 2007. "The Sounds of Silence: Talking Race in Music Education." *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. 6(4): 132-62.

[http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Bradley6\\_4.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Bradley6_4.pdf)





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**PRIhME**  
stakeholder assembly

June 2022

# PRIhME

## Assembly 4

February 2023

We cannot always perceive the weakening of structures until they collapse. When structures begin to collapse, the impact of past efforts becomes tangible.

(Sara Ahmed)

### paper tiger (noun):

one that is outwardly powerful or dangerous but inwardly weak or ineffectual"

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/paper%20tiger>

### editorial board:

Christa Brüstle

Eva Sæther

Itziar Larrinaga

Lucia Di Cecca

Mojca Piškor

David-Emil Wickström

### Dear participants

### of the PRIhME Stakeholder Assembly,

PRIhME is slowly coming to an end – the fourth and final assembly is around the corner. In addition to discussing **what the possible blueprint for the conservatory of the future is**, this final assembly will also discuss **recommendations for the AEC on how to deal with power relations within Higher Music Education (HME)**.

Since utopias can express an idealized future and PRIhME to some extent is a utopian project, we have included a short expert paper written by **Alexandra Kertz-Welzel** discussing **utopian thinking within HME**. A central question here is what alternative view of HME can we imagine? While some ideas can be, excuse our pun, utopian, there are, as Kertz-Welzel writes, also real utopias with changes that can be implemented realistically. Our hope here is that you take this as an inspiration to reflect upon how our future within higher music education can be imagined and enacted - we hope, in other words, that the project will not be remembered as a paper tiger...

The second expert paper offers a personal account of issues encountered by **Antje Kirschning** who works as a woman's representative at a German HMEI. Fitting for the final assembly Kirschning brings up some themes from past assemblies. Her paper concludes by **looking beyond the borders of music education for ideas on how to deal with power relations and misconduct**.

**Assembly 4** is also about providing recommendations for the HME Sector in dealing with power relations, as well as ideas for complaint procedures. Power is multidimensional and intersectionality thus plays an essential role in how we are perceived and how misconduct and abuse is shaped by various factors in interplay. This is reflected in the additional material. The material also shows that complaint procedures, following Sarah Ahmed, should take into account those who normally are not heard.

The process of citizen democracy which is the foundation of **PRIhME** also means that we as individuals must be aware of our civic duty in raising issues and making sure that these changes are implemented. Otherwise, the rules and recommendations that our institutions adopt remain paper tigers – "outwardly powerful or dangerous, but inwardly weak or ineffectual". As a reminder of your duty, we encourage you to fold your own paper tiger and to keep it as a reminder close to where you work [you will find the folding instructions on **page 15**].

We as the editorial board look forward to hearing or reading about the outcomes from the final assembly. We wish you a good stay in Rome and many fruitful, but also controversial discussions!

The PRIhME Editorial Board

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[expert paper]

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# Utopian Thinking in Higher Music Education

**Alexandra Kertz-Welzel**, Institute of Music Education  
School of Arts, The Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany

... caring for today and tomorrow are intertwined. To build this future, we must envision it first. Even as we strategize for the realities of today, we must picture where we are headed and summon the hope to continue moving.<sup>1</sup>

## The Significance of Utopian Thinking

Utopian visions have played an important role in the history of societal and institutional transformation, and constitute a significant aspect of the politics of change. They offer something to aim for. This impact of utopian thinking might surprise, given the fact that we often use the term "utopia" to characterize unrealistic ideas. Utopia is, however, a multifaceted concept. In philosophy and politics, it has been a powerful driver of change by offering alternatives to the status quo.<sup>2</sup> In sociology, utopia is used as a method for societal transformations.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the arts have always been utopian, providing new perspectives in sounds, colors, or stories.<sup>4</sup> Education also includes significant utopian elements in terms of preparing the next generation for an unknown future.<sup>5</sup> It seems that utopia and utopian thinking are ubiquitous and powerful. Utopia offers opportunities for sustainable changes in various fields, including higher education.

This text discusses utopia and utopian thinking as viable tools for institutional changes. It presents concepts of utopia and utopian thinking which can be utilized for transformational processes within academia, thereby contributing to reimagining and transforming power relations within higher music education.

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<sup>1</sup> Brodsky, A. & Nalebuff, R. K. (Eds.) (2015). *The feminist utopia project*. Feminist Press at the City University of New York, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Goodwin, B., & Taylor, K. (2009). *The politics of utopia*. Peter Lang.

<sup>3</sup> Levitas, R. (2013). *Utopia as method*. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>4</sup> Kertz-Welzel, A. (2022). *Rethinking music education and social change*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Roberts, P., & Freeman-Moir, J. (Eds.) (2013). *Better worlds. Education, art, and utopia*. Lexington Books.

## What Is Utopia?

Quite literally, utopia is both a good place and a place which does not exist.<sup>6</sup> It is a place for dreams, but also for strategically imagining sustainable change. It is future-oriented, and is also connected to past and present. Utopia is an ambivalent concept which can lead to significant improvement or devastating damage. Utopian ideas can be found in political programs or works of art, in personal dreams or institutional visions. Thus, "as we strategize for the realities of today, we must picture where we are headed."<sup>7</sup>

The sociologist Levitas<sup>8</sup> describes utopia as a critical and imaginative method. Utopia embodies a desire for a better way of being and living but can also represent a dangerous fantasy in respect to ideologies or totalitarianism. Socially, utopia can suggest an alternative way of living or a model for a better society. Utopia can function in a variety of ways: it can critique a situation, function as a catalyst for change, or even become a compensation. Despite these ambiguities, "if we abandon utopian impulses in personal or political thinking, we imprison ourselves within the world as it is."<sup>9</sup>

How can utopia help us to move beyond the status quo? Levitas proposes using utopia as a method for the imaginary reconstitution of society – or the imaginary reconstitution of whatever field we would like to see improved.<sup>10</sup> Thus, utopia can function as a hermeneutic method for unearthing visions of alternative realities we already hold. Likewise, it can be an exploratory tool for elaborating how a different reality in various parts of our lives might appear. It can also concern real utopias as the implementation of our visions. To further explain how this is possible, Levitas presents three modes of utopian thinking. The *archaeological mode* is about uncovering hidden notions of alternative realities as for example in political programs, curricula, research, or in the arts. The *ontological mode* further elaborates the ideas developed in the first stage by specifying a better reality. The *architectural mode* fleshes out the ideas presented before to explain how the proposed concept would look like in reality, including its consequences – prior to returning to the archaeological mode. These three modes of utopian thinking can be applied to any number of fields, including higher education.

Certainly, utopia and utopian thinking are problematic and might "express much of the best and some of the worst in us."<sup>11</sup> This notwithstanding, such concerns do not diminish

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<sup>6</sup> Claeys, G. (2013). The five languages of utopia: Their respective advantages and deficiencies with a plea for prioritising social realism. *Cercles*, 30, 9-16.

<sup>7</sup> Brodsky, A. & Nalebuff, R. K. (Eds.) (2015). *The feminist utopia project*. Feminist Press at the City University of New York, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Levitas, R. (2013). *Utopia as method*. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>9</sup> Ozan, E. (2022). Introduction. In E. D. Ozan (Ed.), *Rethinking utopia*. Lexington Books, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Levitas, R. (2013). *Utopia as method*. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>11</sup> Sargent, L.T. (2007). Choosing utopia: utopianism as an essential element in political thought and action. In T. Moylan & R. Baccolini (Eds.), *Utopia method vision. The use value of social dreaming*. Peter Lang, p. 310.

the usefulness of utopia and utopian thinking in politics and transformational processes – as utopia's relation to politics and political thinking indicates.

## Utopia and Politics

There is a close connection between utopia and politics. Utopia provides a "critical analysis of socio-political reality as much as its ideal vision."<sup>12</sup> It helps to explain the shortcomings of the current situation, and facilitates developing alternatives, as "utopias are statements of alternative organizations."<sup>13</sup> Utopian ideas can be found in the ecological movement, feminism, or socialism. Many groundbreaking ideas which now seem common were first developed as utopian visions. Women's rights, universal health care or unemployment benefits would not have been possible without having been first imagined in utopian thinking.<sup>14</sup>

This raises the issue of how realistic utopias should be.<sup>15</sup> There might, on the one hand, be completely unrealistic notions which are important as the first stages of developing alternatives. But on the other hand, there might also be notions with a strong connection to reality. The concept of real utopia offers a realistic approach to utopian thinking which is informed by scientific knowledge.<sup>16</sup> Real utopias are "utopian destinations that have accessible waystations, [and] utopian designs of institutions... can inform our practical tasks of navigating a world of imperfect conditions for social change."<sup>17</sup> Real utopias are focused on changes that can be implemented. Wright refers to a participatory city budget where neighborhoods gather for a "participatory budget assembly," or worker-owned cooperatives. *The Real Utopia Project* develops alternatives which can be implemented:

The idea of "real utopias" embraces this tension between dreams and practice. It is grounded in the belief that what is pragmatically possible is not fixed independently of our imagination, but is itself shaped by our visions ... Nurturing clear-sighted understandings of what it would take to create social institutions free of oppression is part of creating a political will for radical social change to reduce oppression. A vital belief in a utopian ideal may be necessary to motivate people to set off on the journey from the status quo in the first place, even though the likely actual destination may fall short of the utopian ideal.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Goodwin, B., & Taylor, K. (2009). *The politics of utopia*. Peter Lang, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Parker, M. (2002). Utopia and the organizational imagination: outopia. In M. Parker (Ed.), *Utopia and organization*. Blackwell Publishing, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Neville-Sington, P., & Sington, D. (1993). *Paradise dreamed. How utopian thinkers have changed the modern world*. Bloomsbury.

<sup>15</sup> Friedman, Y. (1975). *Utopies réalisable*, <http://www.lyber-eclat.net/lyber/friedman/utopies.html>

<sup>16</sup> Wright, E. O. (2010). *Envisioning real utopias*. Verso.

<sup>17</sup> Wright, E. O. (2010). *Envisioning real utopias*. Verso, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Wright, E. O. (2010). *Envisioning real utopias*. Verso, p. 6.

Real utopias are inspired by the tension between dream and reality, between what could be and what is possible. They represent a pragmatic approach which is driven by utopian ideals uniting people in the transition from the current to a future state.

For Wright, real utopias are part of the "emancipatory social science." Their goal is to generate "scientific knowledge relevant to the collective project challenging various forms of human oppression."<sup>19</sup> This follows a three-step procedure. First, it suggests a diagnosis and critique to identify institutional power structures which systematically harm people. This phase should be guided by considerations as to social or political justice and institutions' connection to the overall goal of enhancing human development. The second stage creates alternatives to the current situation, addressing desirability, viability, and achievability, thus connecting utopia with reality. The final step develops a concept of social transformation, transitioning from the status quo to a better future, including strategies for collective action and overcoming problems linked to transformational processes.

The third stage suggests that transformations are not easy to accomplish. There are various challenges involved. The field of change management addresses these issues in different contexts, among which is higher education.<sup>20</sup> Approaches used in change management can prove particularly powerful when being combined with utopian thinking.

## Utopian Thinking in Higher Music Education

Utopian thinking can certainly facilitate changes in higher music education. Developing clear visions of how schools of music could be different, following Levitas' three modes of utopian thinking or Wright's concept of real utopia, can be a starting point for sustainable transformations.

One of the challenges of (higher) music education might be to find a balance between its artistic-aesthetic and its societal mission. Today, it cannot only be about art for its own sake anymore and a sole focus on music's autonomy. We have a responsibility for society. In international music education, however, there has been a tendency to exaggerate the societal mission and marginalize the aesthetic since social change has been proclaimed to be the main goal of music education.<sup>21</sup> It is time to find a more balanced concept, reuniting both dimensions, for instance in terms of politically and socially responsive

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<sup>19</sup> Wright, E. O. (2010). *Envisioning real utopias*. Verso, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> For more information see: Tagg, J. (2019). *The instruction myth*. Rutgers University Press; Buller, J. L. (2015). *Change leadership in higher education*. Jossey-Bass.

<sup>21</sup> See for instance: Hess, J. (2019). *Music education for social change*. Routledge.

music education and aesthetic music education.<sup>22</sup> Both are deeply rooted in the utopian potential of music and education.

These two aspects of music (education) might correspond with dimensions of higher music education. For transforming power relations, it can be useful to take a closer look at the balance between artistic-aesthetic and societal aspects of music as they shape how academies are organized and work. In view of the current crises worldwide and the need to rethink the mission of culture and cultural institutions, utopian thinking can play an important role in rebalancing and refining the mission of music and also power relations in higher music education.

## Future Perspectives

Utopian thinking can play a part in sustainably transforming power relations in higher education. It facilitates developing shared visions of an alternative future. Sustainable changes in higher education are a complex matter since "it takes courage and ingenuity to make the compromises needed to survive, let alone improve, the current world."<sup>23</sup> In view of current worldwide challenges, positive as well as realistic visions are much needed. Utopian thinking can offer such perspectives and can certainly constitute an "antidote to the learned helplessness of the present day."<sup>24</sup> This is true for power relations in higher music education as well as in many other fields.

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<sup>22</sup> Kertz-Welzel, A. (2022). *Rethinking music education and social change*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>23</sup> Brodsky, A. & Nalebuff, R. K. (Eds.) (2015). *The feminist utopia project*. Feminist Press at the City University of New York, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Ozan, E. D. (2022). Introduction. In E. D. Ozan (Ed.), *Rethinking utopia*. Lexington Books, p. 2.

# Institutions of Higher Music Education as Power-Sensitive Places of Learning

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University structures and everyday contact favor the transgression of boundaries, discrimination, and misconduct of power. These can include use of exaggerated pressure to perform or fear-mongering as didactic tools, lack of evaluation criteria, non-transparent selection procedures, sexist beauty standards, lack of an existing normative framework with commonly agreed basic values, lack of pedagogical pre-service and in-service training for teachers and professors, or the blocking of access and networks. This article reflects upon these issues related to power by drawing on the author's experience as a women's representative [*Frauenbeauftragte*] at a German higher music education institution (HMEI). The text begins with childhood musical experiences, when talents are discovered, and discusses specific aspects of musical socialization. These include touching while making music, discussing opera texts and the feelings they or the music trigger, and teaching in private rooms (in other words, mainly non-institutional spaces). The author illustrates how trusting closeness and appropriate boundaries, which form the basis for students developing free from anxiety, must always be balanced sensitively by teachers and professors. The constant shifting from the role of stage artist to that of teacher or professor at a HMEI is a demanding task for which very few artists are trained. The author argues for making professional support systems, such as personal training and supervision for teachers and empowerment seminars for students, widely available; she supports establishing institutional codes of values and designation of intimacy coordinators. Effective prevention requires open avenues of communication in which agreement as to appropriate boundaries can be reached and artistic alternatives for action can be developed in a mutually caring way.

Taking as a premise the inexistence of a power-free space, power relations within individual and group teaching must be reflected upon, analyzed, and models of needs-oriented communication and respectful leadership need to be discussed "at eye level" within HMEIs.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Olejniczak JH (2021) Eine Frage der Haltung – Machtvolles Musizieren durch gewaltfreie Führung und bedürfnisorientierte Kommunikation. *üben & musizieren* 1:16 – 19.

The specific characteristics of HMEIs shape many music students from childhood on. The artistic career path is often set then, ideally due to outstanding talent and a passion for making music. In other cases, this can be the result of music teachers' or parents' ambitions. At specialized schools or boarding schools, musically gifted young people receive intensive support and instruction from their professors. This so-called master-apprentice model dates to when children received private lessons from a master teacher, usually a man. As with training of outstanding craftsmen, there is an emulation of the master's playing, practice techniques, repertoire, as well as a standard of moral conduct. This "spiritual-artistic leadership" can create dependencies which can potentially lead to abuses of power.<sup>2</sup>

### The Transition from Disrespect to Sexualized Misconduct and Violence is Fluid

Some students recall childhood music lessons as exclusively positive and respectful experiences. Others, on the other hand, were forced to endure these, accompanied at times by the threat of punishment or even physical violence, as was the case for the pianist Lang Lang. To date, there has been no study of mistreatment and the transition to sexualized misconduct and violence against children and teenagers in the field of music, as has been the case in the field of competitive sports. HMEIs can rightly assume that some of their students have been exposed to misconduct at a young age and consequently must offer adequate counseling and effective help. Many music students have learned at an early stage to subordinate themselves by putting aside their own needs. Numerous musicians experience a high degree of heteronomy [foreign determination] and may accept forms of discipline that would be unacceptable to their peers. They must practice many hours each day and compete directly with their fellow students. As a result, they often engage less in academic self-governance, as opposed to students in academic universities.

### Distinguishing the Real vs. Perceived Influence of Teachers and Professors

Universities hold very demanding entrance exams and the influence of teachers and professors on students' artistic careers is considerable. Even today, some students apply to study with an artist-pedagogue to master his or her distinctive style, hoping to make a career as a student of this idol. Student dependency on professors can be enormous, all

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<sup>2</sup> Hölscher F (2022) Meister, Guru – und Täter? Zwischen Lehrverständnis und Übergriff. In: Fulda E (Ed.) *Begegnung. Nähe. Grenzen. Ein Handbuch für den Hochschulalltag*. Präsident der Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Frankfurt (HfMDK), p. 20-31.

the more so as teachers/professors in turn have the power to recommend students within their networks in the music and culture business – or not.<sup>3</sup> Changing one's place of study or professor due to dissatisfaction can have significant consequences on an artistic career. Students must be encouraged to question the influence of their idols, as this may exist or appear to be so. Only fear and the feeling of powerlessness offer perpetrators such power. In addition to nourishing their artistic talent, students' resilience and self-reflection should be supported and strengthened sustainably.

## Proximity and Trust Are Prerequisites for Good Music Education

Making music is an intensively physical and indeed sensual act; in singing, the body itself becomes the instrument. Lessons often take place in private settings, sometimes in private rooms which are located in non-institutional spaces and over long periods of time. This close cooperation, often in a friendly atmosphere, creates confidentiality. The physical and emotional distances between participants are often negotiated non-verbally. Closeness in lessons and in music making ranges from routine procedures (about which there is an unspoken agreement) to inspiring intimacy. This requires the teacher/professor to constantly balance between desirable closeness and a necessary distance. "Proximity without entanglement" promotes openness, dedication to an (artistic) belief, the courage to be oneself, a willingness to take risks in a protected setting, equality within the encounter, and a capacity to establish one's own artistic profile. Most teachers act conscientiously and treat their students respectfully. However, temporary professional closeness in private must never become too important.<sup>4</sup> The nature and intensity of the teaching encounter must be delineated by clear rules.

## Music Triggers Feelings and These Should Be Addressed

Jazz and popular music often convey strong emotions, which in turn generate emotions among performers. This can in turn lead to the performer feeling touched and too psychologically close for comfort. Similarly, operas contain intimate, erotic, and violent scenes with strong feelings such as joy, love, sadness, and hate. Teachers/Professors

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<sup>3</sup> See: Eggert M (2015) Macht und Missbrauch. *Neue Musikzeitung* [[link](#)]; and Kirschning A (2022) Sexismus – Übergriffe – Machtmissbrauch überwinden. Vom mühsamen Kulturwandel an Kunst- und Musikhochschulen. In: *Netzwerk Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung NRW*, Mense L, Mauer H, Herrmann J (Hrsg.) Handreichung Sexualisierter Belästigung, Gewalt und Machtmissbrauch an Hochschulen entgegenwirken. Essen, p. 43–46 [[link](#)].

<sup>4</sup> Köhler S (2022) Kommunikation und Körperausdruck im Einzelunterricht. In: Fulda E (Ed.) *Begegnung. Nähe. Grenzen. Handbuch HfMDK*, p. 32-53.



should ask students how this makes them feel and what the music, plot, and texts trigger inside them. Students need to learn to "turn on" these respective emotions during a rehearsal or concert and then "turn them off" again. In addition, fear, self-doubt, anger, and other feelings can be released during practice and performances.<sup>5</sup> These personal moods, which cannot be ignored but might influence the lessons, should be addressed. At the same time, teachers / professors must respect students when they do not wish to discuss them. This is a difficult balancing act that requires discernment and care.

## Agreeing on Appropriate Touch

At the beginning of every teaching relationship, teachers/professors should discuss whether students may be touched and, if so, when where and how. This sounds obvious and banal. However, it is rarely done, because many teachers are uncertain about the topic of touching, though such an exchange could help find solutions whilst clarifying uncertainties. Touching during music lessons, insofar as it is necessary for correcting posture, for example, should be pertinent, announced, justified, and limited to what is necessary. Teachers must always ask in advance whether they may touch students. This question is not simply a rhetorical phrase, and teachers also must be able to explain their request in a different way if the answer is "no". While teaching, teachers/professors must repeatedly encourage students to address changes and discomfort, since consent is only valid for the moment. A handbook issued by the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts presents four examples of such concrete inquiries and discusses how they can be built into the daily teaching routine at the university (Köhler 2022). Since the global pandemic, when attention often had to be paid to keeping a safe distance, it has become more important to learn how to talk about the need for more spatial and emotional closeness, to express corresponding wishes, and negotiate until everyone present feels comfortable (e.g., with the help of the method of systemic consensus building).

In the name of art, countless interpersonal misunderstandings take place every day. These can include persons in positions of power crossing boundaries under the pretext of artistry and non-verbal or verbal misconduct. At first glance, these situations can appear harmless, however their accumulation may lead to discomfort and strain the teaching relationship through a spiral of silence. Their great dependency on instructors respected for their artistry leads students to avoid certain situations, inconspicuously evade them, or express their displeasure through their body language. It is not the

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<sup>5</sup> Schmidt T (2022) Macht und Verantwortung. In: Fulda E (Ed.) *Begegnung. Nähe. Grenzen. Handbuch HfMDK*, p. 54-59.

student's responsibility to clarify or even contest such situations, and in this hierarchical relationship it is hardly possible to counter them.

## Teaching in Locations Outside the University

Initially, a HMEI is a neutral place. Teachers/ Professors and students are all guests of the institution, even if some teachers have taught for decades and have their own furnished studio fitted to their taste and needs. Students, on the other hand, only stay for a few semesters, and at best have a locker. Among the many people who populate the building, students also meet familiar faces, ranging from fellow students, other teachers or administrative staff.<sup>6</sup>

Teaching in locations outside the HMEI, such as in the teachers' private rooms, increases the existing imbalance, exacerbating the asymmetry of the power relationship. Teachers hold an active role and the students a passive one, reinforced by the nature of the space. Teaching in private rooms is like a "home game": the students learn (unintentionally) in which neighborhood or district and in what kind of house (e.g., with or without a garden) and with whom the teachers live, how the apartment is furnished, etc. This information provides significant insights, allowing for conscious and unconscious interpretations.

The teachers/professors take on the role of the host: they may offer a drink, even if it is just a glass of water. They may even offer the students something to eat. The teacher is highly familiar with his entire (living) space, while the students only get to experience those rooms that are shown to them. This might sound obvious, but using a restroom, for example, is an intimate act in a place where personal items are often kept, e.g., for personal hygiene. Many students have only recently moved out of their parental home and live quite modestly, either alone, in a shared apartment, or dormitory. Now they experience another home, usually long established.

This social imbalance adds to the psychological-emotional imbalance. The fine line between a friendly teaching relationship and a friendship is much more likely to be blurred under these more intimate psychological conditions.

Private rooms may also offer advantages, however, as they are often technically and acoustically well designed and equipped and offer greater flexibility timewise. Given the shortage of space at universities it is worth considering whether such exceptions should be made, with prior approval of the university management. Here, as with home office workspaces, certain standards should be met and regularly reviewed. Nevertheless, private spaces can facilitate encroachment or create an atmosphere in which students

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<sup>6</sup> Linsmeier F (2022) *Das ist privat* [[link](#)].

feel uncomfortable and at the mercy of others. It is known from experience reports that some teachers display obscene art or "as if by chance" leave books with ambiguous titles lying around that embarrass their students. A professor at Munich's Music Conservatory who was under criminal investigation received students in his bedroom and put them in compromising situations. If some form of misconduct occurs, be it unintentional or planned, it is much more difficult for students to escape, and there is no direct person to contact to offer help and advice.

Teachers/professors hold higher status and thus more control over spatial positioning. They are allowed to move freely and determine the distance between those present and the pieces of music. In contrast, students are expected to follow instructions and to be cooperative.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, even a slight moving away of one's chair to create a comfortable distance can appear impossible to students. Often, those affected only become aware of the discomfort afterwards, as they are unable to perceive their own need for distance within the situation itself. By repeatedly being asked, those affected learn to pause and reflect on such situations.

## Professional Training for Teachers and Professors

In appointment procedures, HMEI seek "outstanding artistic personalities with an international reputation." Professors see themselves first and foremost as excellent artists and far too rarely as experienced pedagogues. Usually, they have no additional didactic or psychological training. However, as soon as they accept a professorship, they regularly switch roles: as an artist on stage, they are the center of interest, whereas as a teacher and instructor they should serve the students.<sup>8</sup> Professional accompaniment allowing for reflection on their teaching and development of a learning biography are advisable for teachers lacking specific pedagogical training. Suitable reflection formats include collegial consultation, supervision,<sup>9</sup> or team teaching.<sup>10</sup> Power imbalances and competition also exist within boards and commissions. Further mandatory training for teachers and professors can facilitate respectful interactions and a mindful university culture.

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<sup>7</sup> Lindmaier H (2021) Balancieren zwischen Nähe und Distanz – Drei Perspektiven auf machtsensibles Verhalten im Instrumentalunterricht. *üben & musizieren* 1:21-24.

<sup>8</sup> Wissenschaftsrat (2021) *Empfehlungen zur postgradualen Qualifikationsphase an Kunst- und Musikhochschulen*, Köln [[link](#)].

<sup>9</sup> Heiss IS, Scharnick E (2022) Was passiert eigentlich in dieser sogenannten Grauzone? – Nähe und Distanz im instrumental und gesangspädagogischen Alltag. *Musikpädagogik* 93(1):51-60.

<sup>10</sup> bukof (Bundeskongferenz der Frauen- und Gleichstellungsbeauftragten an Hochschulen e.V.) (2016) *Handlungsempfehlungen der bukof zum Umgang mit sexualisierter Diskriminierung und Gewalt an künstlerischen Hochschulen* [[link](#)].

## Student Seminars

Students at HMEI need to learn how to best perceive and communicate their own physical and emotional boundaries. This includes recognizing and respecting the needs of the other person, addressing boundary transgressions, and finding mutually agreeable solutions. Non-verbal and verbal methods must be developed jointly and be simple to implement in everyday life so that all can agree and be reassured that agreement has indeed been reached. The ideal solution here would be to offer ungraded seminars to all students which discuss these issues and take the international composition of the student body into account. As there are many different culturally influenced customs, an international student body would enable a discussion which takes the different views into account.

## Code of Values: How Do We Want to Treat Each Other?

In conclusion, here are some reflections as to identifying, training, applying sanctions, or if need be, removing teachers/professors who disregard boundaries and engage in abusive behaviors. Preventive measures must prevent hierarchical situations from being exploited or misconduct towards those in lesser situations of power.

One preventive measure is to establish a specific code of values, including rules of conduct to ensure respectful interactions in everyday teaching and rehearsals. Such codes already exist, for example at the German Stage Association, on the freelance scene, and at individual art colleges.<sup>11</sup> They should be developed in a participatory manner to address a broad range of questions. These could include use of first-name or last-name terms with and by whom; who is allowed to touch who and under what conditions; ways to portray and rehearse hate, violence, love or eroticism, and ways to prevent outdated gender roles or sexist stereotypes from being reproduced. Until now, objections from students could be dismissed with the argument "we've always done it this way." A code of values makes it easier for students to address those often-taboo issues and to stand up for their own rights. For the code to be effective, it must be simply formulated, easy to understand and available in many languages.

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<sup>11</sup> Kirschning A (2018 b) #MeToo an den Musikhochschulen – Ein Wertekodex als Meilenstein auf dem Weg zu professionellem Umgang mit Nähe und Distanz. *üben & musizieren* 4:44-46.

## The Cornerstone of Consensus:

### "Only When a No Has Been Established, Can a Yes Be Trusted"

The Berlin Schauspielhochschule (Theater Conservatory) Ernst Busch offers another possible way forward. It started a professional training course for an "Intimacy Coordinator" at the beginning of 2023. The course was initiated by Barbara Rohm.<sup>12</sup> The training curriculum was developed in cooperation with the Bundesverband Schauspiel e.V. (BFFS) (German Federal Association of Drama Acting) and intends to create new standards. This is essential, since professionalizing the entire work process is long overdue in acting, film, opera in relation to scripts, casting, repeatable choreography, work on stage or on set, and the full line of production and marketing. The goal is to be able to directly address individual boundaries when depicting intimate scenes or nudity and to make a "no" the impetus for a creative process.<sup>13</sup> Intimacy should look truthful and none of the participants should feel pushed or blindsided during the process. The key is consensus among all participants. Intimacy coordinators do not limit creativity. On the contrary, they support performers in perceiving and naming their own physical and mental limits without worry and help them in recognizing and respecting these for others. Only when performers feel comfortable and safe in intimate scenes can they focus completely on the role and their scene partner.

Intimacy Directors International established the so-called **5 Cs** as principles for safe intimacy:

- **Context:** an understanding of the production context is clarified between the production developers and actors, so that intimacy always serves the story.
- **Communication:** ongoing communication is ensured among all participants, with opportunities for discussion, and reporting of discomfort and/or transgressive behaviors.
- **Consent:** Individual limits are established for each participant, including actions and forms of touch they find acceptable within a production or parts of a production.
- **Choreography:** Based on the agreed upon consent, a safe choreography is created and implemented in the shoot. This may not be deviated from without prior consultation. An unprepared action or touch may not be performed spontaneously on an actor without that person's prior consent.
- **Closure:** After the production as well as parts of a production have been performed, a closing moment such as a small ritual should mark the end of the intimacy, thus drawing a line between the personal and the professional.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ms. Rohm is the former long-time chairwoman of *Pro Quote Film*, co-founder of the *Themis* trust center against sexual harassment and violence in the culture and media industry as well as the founder of the culture change hub. A second Intimacy Coordinating training course in Germany started in January 2023, [\[link\]](#).

<sup>13</sup> Bundesverband Schauspiel e.V. (BFFS), Berlin 2022: *Erfahrungen von Schauspieler\*innen mit Nacktheit und simuliertem Sex*. Part 1 of the survey on the portrayal of intimacy, nudity, and sexualized violence among actors of the Bundesverband Schauspiel e.V. (BFFS). In cooperation with the Institut für Medienforschung Universität Rostock and the *culture change hub*, Barbara Rohm [\[link\]](#).

<sup>14</sup> Erica Morey. 2018. The 5 Cs of Intimacy: In Conversation with Siobhan Richardson. *Theatre Art Life* [\[link\]](#).

Instead of reproducing clichés of intimacy, breathtaking results are achieved based on respect and informed consent by all. Intimacy Coordination integrating clear and well-defined parameters for interaction achieved in a respectful and open context can serve as a model for other professions. In some countries, intimacy coordinators are now obligatory for television broadcasts (since 2021 at the BBC).

Despite the #Metoo debate and the Times Up movement, too little is still known about the background and mechanisms of misconduct at HMEIs. Anyone intending to support those affected in enabling them to break their silence must understand the dynamics inherent in the cultural workplace. Those who want to create effective prevention measures must ensure open avenues of communication in which boundaries, a culture of consent, and alternative courses of action can be discussed and defined.

# Recommended further reading / listening / folding

## Folding Your Paper Tiger



click to access



click to play



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## Performance Norms and Creativity

(podcast)

Leech-Wilkinson, Daniel. 2020. **Challenging Performance Podcast: Episode 1.**



click to listen

(e-book excerpt)

Leech-Wilkinson, Daniel. 2020. **Challenging Performance: Classical Music Performance Norms and How to Escape Them.**

[https://challengingperformance.com/the-book/..](https://challengingperformance.com/the-book/)



click to read

### Preface

This is an eBook, a website, and a set of podcasts. It's addressed to performers of western classical music and it's about freeing performance from unnecessary rules and constraints and from much of the anxiety that comes with classical training and

practice. The aim is to encourage performers to find many more ways (old and new) in which classical scores can make musical sense.

If you're a passionate believer in the status quo you may hate it. But it might still be worth reading because the questions it asks are reasonable ones and need much better answers. Having someone

ask them may enable you (rather than me) to see what those better answers might be, enabling you to place normative performance practice on a more reasoned footing. There's also the possibility that you'll end up agreeing with much that's in here, but in either case a world of new possibilities for performing your repertoire may open up.

Be aware that this is a polemical piece rather than a scholarly tome. It's expressed strongly. It may

annoy and unsettle, though I hope it will also reward.

I've written it and published it online, and it's free to use, because I want to reach performers, especially young professionals and conservatoire students. And also because it's good to be able to improve the text in response to reader suggestions and as better ways of thinking become clear.

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## 1. Empowering Performers

Much of this book is concerned with how to refuse to be policed, and about the benefits that could result for musicians and audiences if that kind of oppression were to be thrown off. It goes without saying that in many quarters this will not be popular. Many jobs in classical music are conceived and practised as faithfully ensuring that the imagined composer's imagined wishes are performed as brilliantly and as persuasively as possible within the boundaries that define obedience. A lot of belief and self-belief is tied up in that process. Nothing threatens that as powerfully as a brilliant and persuasive performance of an alternative musical reading of a well-loved score, as Glenn Gould found with Bach, and Patricia Kopatchinskaja is finding at the time of writing with Tchaikovsky. The more powerful the alternative, the more hideously it threatens and the angrier the response.

This book aims to show the flaws in this kind of normative thinking, and to offer young professional musicians a way out of the straightjacket that norms attempt to impose, licensing much more varied performance in theory and offering models of how it can be achieved in practice. At the same time I shall argue that a more creative approach to playing canonical (and non-canonical) scores will bring benefits for musicians in well-being, prosperity and public esteem, and for

audiences in fascination, revelation and pleasure. Most importantly, the book aims to empower performers and music lovers sufficiently for them to overcome the inevitable appalled hostility of gatekeepers to the profession (teachers, examiners, adjudicators, critics, managers, and the rest) who will have to face their demons at last, before sheer economic self-interest leads them to see classical music in a fresh light.

The consequences may well be hair-raising. Some of them were already set out quite a few years ago by Richard Taruskin in an essay that (perhaps not surprisingly) has been little cited thus far. His 2009 collection of essays, *The Danger of Music*, is perfect for dipping into, and that will have to do as my excuse for having reached its final essay only after several years of thinking and giving talks about the ideas set out now in this book. Taruskin argues there are no limits of principle that can be placed on the musical interpretation of a score, and that the worth of what a performer does with a score can only be judged by the listener. This may seem an insanely anarchic view to hold about classical music. But I hope as we work through the arguments that construct the case I make here, I may gradually persuade you that this is the only criterion that really counts. Or at any rate, if I fail at that, you may at least take away a more liberal view of what musicians are entitled to do when they use scores as a starting-point to make art with sound.



## 7.4 Conservatoire and creativity: Juniper Hill's *Becoming Creative*

Some attempts are now being made at the next stage of musical education, in conservatoire, to deal with the problem of classical music as the obedient performance of 'proper' behaviour. By this time it is already very late, since such tight reins have already been placed for so many years on the child musician's delight in creative self-expression. Moreover, conservatoire's overriding task is to fit its students for work where, as things stand, there is rarely any room for individuality beyond those tiny differences between soloists that the culture celebrates (and often, in its claims, exaggerates) for want of any other distinguishing characteristics.

Creativity in conservatoire is thus difficult and can easily be perceived in some quarters as unhelpful. We get a sense of this from Juniper Hill's recent studies of musical creativity. Comparing attitudes in different musical traditions, and on different continents, Hill (2018)<sup>1</sup> emphasises how strange WCM is in its fear of creativity and hostility to improvisation, and also how damaging that can be to classical musicians.

Hill sees six ingredients in creativity: "(1) generativity, (2) agency, (3) interaction, (4) nonconformity, (5) recycling, and (6) flow." She notes that "realizing pre-existing works should only be considered creative when the process also involves other components of creativity" (Hill 2018, 4). Yet several of these ingredients are perceived as dangerous for WC musicians: above all "it is the component of nonconformity that threatens to make creativity socially undesirable. Powerful social mechanisms encourage conformity and work as adverse motivators against individuals' intrinsic desire to be creative" (Hill 2018, 12).

Hill identifies "Four mechanisms for enforcing conformity to sociocultural norms [which]

emerged as significant in this study: (1) direct punishment, (2) socially induced emotions, (3) anticipation of judgment from others, and (4) internalization of norms as values" (Hill 2018, 12). "Feeling that they are being watched, individuals anticipate the judgement of others and thus modify or censor their own behaviour accordingly" (13).

Direct punishment takes the form of strong criticism by teachers and other gatekeepers of non-normative performance, leading readily to being thought unsuitable for work and thus to ingrained fear of transgression. [...]

It's all too easy to see how this kind of treatment generates the socially-induced emotion of shame as a habitual response to any kind of mistake or overstepping of lines (Hill 2018, 114–6). Thus self-esteem and courage are vital for creativity (13), fortifying one against criticism and against attempts to shame one for challenging normative practice. (...) As Hill points out, "One of the main factors inhibiting improvisation in today's classical music communities is an underlying attitude that the creative potential of performers is somehow inferior. To encourage the incorporation of more improvisation into western art music is inherently to advocate for performers to be allowed—and to allow themselves—to exercise greater authority in the creative process" (Hill 2017, 223).<sup>2</sup> [...]

On the *moral* level ... the promotion of diverse musical expressions may help musicians realize that their previously internalized value judgments are relative, situational, and socio-culturally constructed. Challenging their community's aesthetic judgement system may in turn help them feel less compelled to conform to socio-idiomatic boundaries and give them more inner resources for coping with negative feedback. On the *social* level, seeking and building supportive social relationships may help to provide a relatively judgment-free space in which musicians

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<sup>1</sup> Hill, Juniper. 2018. *Becoming Creative: Insights from Musicians in a Diverse World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Hill, Juniper. 2017. Incorporating Improvisation into Classical Music Performance. In ed. Rink, John, Helena Gaunt and Aaron Williamson, *Musicians in the Making: Pathways to Creative Performance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 222–240.

experience less fear and anxiety about receiving negative feedback and thus feel freer to explore, experiment, develop new ideas, and take creative risks. On the *psychological* level, increasing self-esteem and improving perception of one's own

potential are important for motivation, ... developing ... inner resources..., and for developing the self-confidence and courage to take risks in one's own creative work.



## Intricacies of Assessment

### (article excerpt)

Wickström, David-Emil. [forthcoming]. **Entering Hurdles – Admission Policies, Artistic Standards, and Music Theory.**

The underlying notion of admission exams at HMEI is that they provide a fair and highly competitive way to identify the most talented and promising candidates who demonstrate “high artistic standards”. As such, admission exams convey the idea of meritocracy that emphasize individual responsibility and the notion that anyone can pass the admission exam through hard, persistent work (Banks 2017). As previous research... has shown, meritocracy does not reflect reality as admission exams contribute to the reproduction of social inequalities by favoring candidates with privileged socio-economic backgrounds. Drawing upon these findings, I argue that the artistic standards employed at admission exams to identify and select the most “talented” candidates should be made more inclusive. I suggest that a way to make admission exams more meritocratic is to consider if and how music theory exams should be integrated into the admission process because these exams disadvantage certain candidates. [...]

While “access” has become an important buzzword in the discourse on widening participation in HME, another phrase I often encountered in discussion on this topic refers to the need to maintain “high artistic standards” which has become a means for these institutions in neoliberal times to maintain differences in respect to artistic training. The assumption underlying this phrase is that widening participation to students underrepresented or not

yet represented at HMEI entails both a lowering of the unique artistic standards as well as a reluctance to risk giving a place to an applicant with a non-standard musical training. [...]

Hiding under the guise of universality, “high artistic standards” are discursively constructed (...) and defined by individuals and groups differently. They are based on a set of measurable skills in which a performance is compared with a reference (e.g. recording, sheet music) and a set of skills where a reference is less obvious or the spectrum of possibilities is very broad (e.g. interpretation, personal sound). [...]

Notions of artistic standards not only differ between traditions, but also within a musical tradition. Different national or regional education traditions as well as different institutions have different ideas on what constitutes high artistic standards. This includes e.g. the repertoire a candidate has to prepare for their main instrument, possibly also repertoire for a second instrument (if this is required) and theory. If yes, what skills does this theory test assess? Is there also an essay requirement examining the cognitive skills? These different parts of the admission exam not only make up the artistic standards, but also reflect (ideally) the competencies needed to complete the degree program and should thus be

linked to the program's overarching learning outcomes.

Finally, are these the only relevant components that will guarantee the (prospective) students a long-term artistic career within the music business? What about "non-artistic" skills like the ability to reflect on music's role in society or, more mundane, being able to survive as freelance artist and e.g. navigate the tax system – in other words, a cognitive / intellectual skill set – or being able to fulfill the academic components (e.g. writing a term paper) of the degree program. Ideally, the admission exam is linked to all the learning outcomes of the degree programs and also assesses these skills. [...]

Regularly questioning and adjusting the artistic standards on which the admission criteria within HME are based and aligning them not only with the learning outcomes of the degree program, but also with current practice, is not only essential to remain current, but also as a tool to reflect on what prospective students the HMEIs want to have. This not only includes reassessing the artistic

requirements for the admission exams and e.g. opening the repertoire lists to more composers who are female and people of color, but also aligning the admissions exams with the current reality of the applicants as well as the needs of the market place. As the examples from RMC, the School of Music in Piteå and Popakademie have shown, a critical reassessment of the admission procedures based on musical tradition needs (and not unreflectedly continuing HME-traditions) and thus aligning the musical criteria with the practice in the respective traditions as well as questioning the musical skills so far required can help in opening up e.g. popular music programs to those with different musical and educational paths and thus making the admission exams more meritocratic. Furthermore, exploring what skills besides the musical ones are needed is one step towards changing and opening up HME. This means that artistic standards should be thought holistically and also include non-musical skills like entrepreneurship and cognitive skills!

### (handbook excerpt)

Cox, Jeremy. 2010. *Admissions and Assessment in Higher Music Education. AEC Publications 2010 – Handbook*. Utrecht: AEC – Association Européenne des Conservatoires Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen.



[click to access](#)

**1.8** [...] Assessment [...] inherently favours simplification, categorisation and a systematic and progression-based view of students' development (although competence-based assessments, referred to above, at least attempt to acknowledge the way that skills occur in interactive complexes, rather than discretely). The result is that assessment methodologies tend to focus upon those elements which are most easily measured and categorised; but they can therefore sometimes feel as though, in the process, they miss the most important parts of the learning they supposedly measure.

**1.9** In formulating an assessment task, the hope is that everyone – student, student's teacher,

examiners, outside world/profession – will share the same understanding of what is being assessed, how it is being assessed and against which benchmarks. This depends both upon the quality of the words used to describe the assessment and the capacities of the individuals involved to read, understand and enact them. The texts have to be sufficiently detailed to minimise loopholes but not so unwieldy as to alienate those required to read them. All-in-all, it is asking a great deal to balance this array of requirements within verbal formulations - added to which, in music one is dealing with an art-form part of whose fundamental value is its capacity to convey things which words cannot encompass.

**1.10** Even assuming that everyone enters the assessment event with a good shared understanding, there is still the question of whether the way a student performs on a given day is truly representative of his or her wider abilities. In this context, the fact that much assessment in Higher Music Education addresses not just a student's 'performance' in the generic sense, but specifically his or her achievement as a musical performer, only serves to heighten the danger that the performance that is assessed may be an unrepresentative one. It could be argued that consistency is one of the many desirable attributes of a musician and that a performance in an assessment that departs radically from the student's normal standard is symptomatic of a weakness in his or her armoury as a performer for which it is right that they should be penalised. This view is rarely of much consolation either to the student who has fared uncharacteristically badly, or to their teacher.

**1.11** In recital-style practical assessments, another problem is that such events are neither purely artistic events nor out-and-out assessments within an educational framework. As hybrids, they sit somewhat uncomfortably between the two. This is especially true if there is only a small audience other than the jury – or, worse still, none at all. The normal dynamic that operates between performer and audience is distorted in a myriad of subtle ways that may be more disconcerting to the highly-attuned performer than to his or her more thick-skinned, technically-oriented counterpart. An assessment regime that favours technically secure, predictable performances over inspiring ones is distorting the very nature of the event which it claims to be measuring – and in a direction that most musicians would probably regard as unfortunate.

**1.12** For assessments undertaken during a programme of study, the dangers of the uncharacteristically bad performance can be lessened by an overall assessment regime that ranges over a number of events. This may still place greatest emphasis upon a final recital but with other events contributing to the student's overall profile of achievement according to some pattern of weightings. Even so, if all the events are of the hybrid recital-examination type, the more subtle

problems discussed above still remain. The lure of 'playing the assessment game' can discourage the very risk-taking from which musical creativity draws its vitality.

**1.13** Of all the assessment types [...], the entrance audition is the most prone to the danger of an uncharacteristic performance leading to an anomalous result. There is often little or no prior knowledge of the applicant among the panel (and any such knowledge, insofar as it may represent a vested interest, should be declared by the panel member concerned). Just as the applicant is unfamiliar to the panel, the panel, the audition room, indeed, almost everything about the occasion is unfamiliar to the applicant. The task facing audition panels is therefore one of the most complex and subtle of all assessments, requiring them to reach beneath the surface of the occasion and try to divine the real qualities – including potential for further growth – possessed by the applicant. Despite this, admissions can be one of the areas of Higher Music Education practice least subject to quality assurance scrutiny.

[...]

**1.15** As has already been discussed, music is an art-form whose strengths lie where those of words do not, and vice versa. In addition, music touches us all in highly individual ways, such that it is very difficult to say with certainty that any two individuals hear a piece of music in precisely the same way. This subjective aspect of how music is apprehended poses a particular problem for assessment, with its requirement for objectivity, consistency and repeatability. In practice, experienced musicians trained in the same broad traditions – classical, jazz, etc – show high degrees of consensus about most performances. Where they do disagree widely, it is often over an idiosyncratic interpretation which may actually contain more ingredients that are musically stimulating, whether positively or negatively, than any number of more routinely proficient performances. Once again, the musical 'risk-taker' may fall foul of assessment processes that work best when dealing with the predictable.

**1.16** Most forms of musical assessment seek to balance out individual subjectivity, usually by having at least three individuals involved and by

promoting modes of operation that neutralise extremes, whether by a literal averaging of panel members' marks or through a more discursive journey towards a mark that finds consensus among the panel as a whole. What is being sought is an 'inter-subjectivity' which, although it has some of the characteristics of objectivity, is not the same thing and should not be confused with it.

[...]

**6.3** Criteria can relate to some kind of fixed standard, they can be applied to the range of performance within a group of students or they can compare an individual student's performance with that which he or she achieved previously. The technical terms for these types are, respectively, criterion-referenced, norm-referenced and

ipsative. In the examples of formative assessment given in the last chapter, assessments representing each of these types were referred to. An assessment to place students in groups of comparable ability level will be norm-referenced. If all the students in a particular year are unusually strong or weak, this makes no difference; they simply need to be placed in groups where they are compatible with one another. An interim assessment giving feedback on progress may be ipsative, concentrating on how much the student has improved, rather than how their previous or new achievement level corresponds to an external, fixed standard. Finally, an assessment which acts as a dry-run for a summative assessment will need to be criterion-referenced against the criteria for that assessment.

### (article excerpt)

Sandberg-Jurström, Ragnhild, Monika Lindgren, & Olle Zandén. 2022. **Musical skills, or attitude and dress style? Meaning-making when assessing admission tests for Swedish specialist music teacher education.** *Research Studies in Music Education* 44(1), 70-85.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X20981774>

Referring to earlier research on admission tests, the authors point to the need for improved transparency: "These previous findings raise questions about the credibility and validity of admission tests, especially given the observed lack of transparency of assessment procedures. Also, with non-auditory aspects and unarticulated perceptions of knowledge and quality, there is a risk that the reliability of the assessments may be weakened" (p.71).

The study reveals two assessment cultures, the music-centered and the person-centered: "Even though it is possible to recognise some overlaps within and between the assessment cultures, there is a great discrepancy between the constructions assessing musical skills and assessing person-related skills. A similar discrepancy is found between assessing the applicant's musical ability to cope with the education and profession and how well the applicant's personality and suitability to be

a teacher fit the same. Here, the applicants' abilities to do and know something can be set in opposition to being and behaving in a particular way, which can be seen as striking in tests intended to assess instrumental skills. Although the criteria communicated to both assessors and applicants via institutional channels regarding primary instrument tests only recommend assessing technical competence and artistic performance connected to the music played, person-centred traits are nevertheless assessed in these tests", (p. 82).

The article concludes: "In order for the tests to be more reliable and fair as selection tools, we consider it important that those designing and implementing the criteria and standards must strive for transparency, and that the measures are based on the applicants' musical knowledge and skills rather than on their personalities" (p. 83).

(article excerpt)

Sandberg-Jurström, Ragnhild, Lindgren, Monica and Zandén, Olle. 2021. **A Mozart Concert or Three Simple Chords? Limits for Approval in Admission Tests for Swedish Specialist Music Teacher Education.** In E. Angelo, Knigge, J. & Waagen, W. (Eds.) *Higher Education as Context for Music Pedagogy Research*, edited (pp. 19-40). Cappelen Damm Akademisk.

“In Sweden, as in many other western countries, universities must strive for strengthened societal democracy by promoting broadened recruitment. From this perspective, it is important to review various selection methods, not least given the lack of positive results in a recent Swedish experimental study of aptitude testing and assessment procedures for access to teacher education (Universitets- och högskolerådet, 2018). Hence, the interest in this article, which is part of a larger project about assessment of entrance auditions to Swedish specialist music teacher education financed by the Swedish Research Council, is what is considered decisive for approval on main instrument in entrance auditions. The purpose is accordingly to *critically examine jurors’ views of the limit for approval in main instrument auditions to Swedish specialist music teacher programmes, and to problematise these with regard to issues of transparency and broadened recruitment*” (pp. 20-21).

“There is a striking difference between the views of how jurors define and argue for limits for approval when assessing applicant’s musical performances on main instruments. What is considered to be the requirement for approval differs markedly from the highest level with very high requirements, such

as a Mozart concert, to the lowest level with acceptance of major deficiencies, by way of singing and playing three simple chords. The jurors also judge the applicants on the basis of premises other than the criteria and standards communicated to both evaluators and applicants through the institutions’ information channels. The applicants’ potential for musical development, their capacity to meet the educational and professional requirements and their ability to adapt to teachers and fellow students as well as future students, school and society is presented as essential by the jurors. Person-related evaluations of applicants’ knowledge representations are also voiced, and it does not seem uncommon that the level for pass is adapted to the ratio of the number of applicants to the available places” (pp. 36-37)

The authors provide alternative scenarios to change the selection methods, and conclude with a concerned voice: “Regardless of which scenario is realised, however, criteria and standards for the approved level, as well as criteria for ranking approved applicants, must strive for transparency in order for the tests to be considered reliable and fair as a selection tool for music teacher education in Sweden” (p.38).





## Policy Matters (!)

### (book chapter excerpt)

Schmidt, Patrick and Richard Colwell. 2017. Introduction. In Patrick Schmidt & Richard Colwell (Eds.) *Policy and the Political Life of Music Education*. Oxford University Press, 1-8.

In near simplistic terms, policy can be defined as "what we do, why we do it, and what difference does it make" (Dye, 1976, p. 1). But as the reader will see throughout this book, policy is also much more. Policy can be formal or informal, obvious or subtle, soft or hard, implicit or explicit and is "revealed through texts, practices, symbols and discourses that define and deliver values including goods and services, regulation, income and status" (Schneider & Ingram, 1997, p. 2). Policy can consist of rules and regulations, legitimized because of custom or historical precedent, but it can also consist of ideas, whose adoption and implementation can lead to profound outcomes and thus could be said to be "the mechanisms through which values are authoritatively allocated for society" (p. 3).

**Policy then is not simply about problem solving, but about *problem grappling*.** Policy practice aims to convene opinion and establish debate and directives. Policy thinking helps us understand how to possibly enact proposed ideas and follow up on the outcomes of implementation. As a field of action, policy is a key pathway through which varied and often divergent educational ideas become established in practice. In other words, **policy is the realm in which educational vision is actualized.** We take the statements above as a sign of the importance of professional knowledge about policy and suggest that interest, need, and specialization in policy will grow among educators, including music educators.

[...]

... policy thought can be a **constructive force in music education decision making**—a force needed at a time when many teachers don't understand why and how to have a role in policy practice. We teachers are key stakeholders in educational policy and our voice is essential to its process and progress. Policy impacts the lives of educators and the quality of their work. It influences the nature of our programs. And it weighs on the educational decisions we make for our students. Consequently, understanding the world of policy and how it can impact the music education field—from legislation to classroom instruction—is an essential capacity to be developed by music educators at all levels. The central idea here is simple and the primary reason we wrote this book: **Policy matters!**

We hope that some of the ideas in the following chapters might strike a chord with you, the reader, impacting how you see the music education field and how you will act on it. Our most important hope is that after reading this book you feel compelled to know more about policy and to see yourself as **an active participant, and not a bystander**. Only one thing is as valuable as understanding the impact that policy can have, and that is the realization that **policy without participation is the basis for an undemocratic environment**. So, join in!



## On Complaint

If power is tricky, complaints are sticky. (Sara Ahmed)

(article excerpt)

Andrzejewski, Alicia. 2022. **When Students Harass Professors: Women and People of Color Are Most at Risk. Colleges Must Do More to Protect Them.**

*The Chronicle of Higher Education*. (August 8, 2022).



[click to access](#)

If you look up the verb "to harass" in The Oxford English Dictionary, you'll find that it involves a process of "using up and wearing out." To harass is to tire, to exhaust through repeated attacks. One of the lesser-known definitions of harass is "to scrape," suggesting small, repeated acts of violence that add up to deeper wounds. Everyone I interviewed for this piece described this process, no matter the severity of the harassment they had faced. A kind of wearing away.

That sort of abuse most often targets women, people of color, younger instructors, and those with less experience or fewer credentials. Research also suggests that Black women in positions of authority are at particular risk of being sexually harassed by students due to "intertwined expectations regarding sexuality and servitude." As the legal scholar Angela Onwuachi-Willig puts it, female faculty of color are "never presumed competent." Some students have difficulty acknowledging authority when it appears in the form of a woman, a person of color, or a faculty member whom they perceive as inexperienced. Often harassment is an attempt to assert dominance.

[...]

As the feminist scholar Sara Ahmed notes in *Complaint!*, her 2021 book on harassment and bullying in higher education, "making a complaint is never completed by a single action: It often requires you do more and more work. It is exhausting, especially given that what you complain about is already exhausting."

[...]

What can be done? There are obvious problems with removing students from classrooms at will; "any behavior that makes an instructor feel unsafe" is a standard far too subjective and problematic,

especially for students of color, Black men in particular. But some behavior does warrant removing a student, paying customer or not. Colleges must articulate where that line is, and enforce it. In the case of severe offenses, we need ways to hold students accountable for violence or aggression beyond simply handing them off to other faculty members.

In *Complaint!*, Ahmed writes that to "hear with a feminist ear is to hear who is not heard, how we are not heard." I, and every person I interviewed, needed those feminist ears to be present at each step of a clear complaint process.

We also need, collectively, to get better at thinking about how power works. Power is not a single, unitary attribute, a treasure that professors have and students lack. Rather, as Kimberlé Crenshaw teaches us, it accrues along multiple axes, many of which have little to do with one's job title or official position. It is no coincidence that so many of the stories in this piece concern female faculty of color abused by white male students — or that both of the students who sexually harassed me were older than I was.

Those of us committed to feminist theory and pedagogy work to make power and privilege visible to our students so that we may, then, attempt to reorganize the hierarchies we have inherited. This includes our own authority as instructors. Feminist scholars often prize democratic classrooms that affirm students' agency. We tend to be cognizant of our own power, and wary of misusing it. Those are good instincts — but taken to an extreme, they can obscure how we are still vulnerable, our positions and credentials notwithstanding. Four years ago, *The Chronicle* reported on the experience of Jody Greene, a tenured literature professor at the University of California at Santa Cruz who had been



stalked by a student. Greene, a feminist scholar, told the reporter: "My worry about my power made me less able to see that I was in danger."

I do not dream of being able to swiftly remove students from my classroom. I dream about an academy where I can teach authentically and

without fear. An academy where complaints from disempowered members of our community, whether instructors or students, are freely spoken. And an academy where all of us — not just those being scraped away — are invested in hearing, and addressing, these complaints.





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