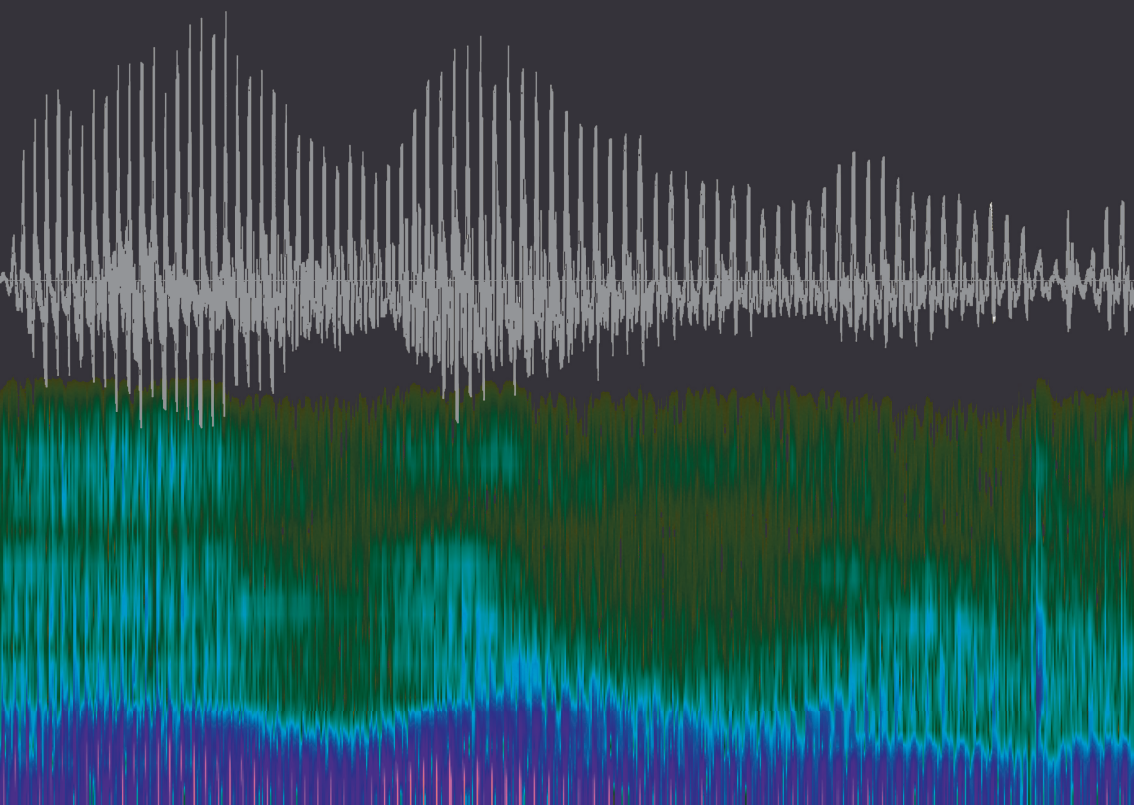


MUSIC, POWER RELATIONS,  
AND BEYOND:  
Critical Positions in Higher Music Education



  
musikene

Christa Brüstle, Lucia Di Cecca,  
Itziar Larrinaga, Mojca Piškor,  
Eva Sæther and David-Emil Wickström (eds.)

**MUSIC, POWER RELATIONS, AND BEYOND:**  
Critical Positions in Higher Music Education

**MUSIKERTUZ BILDUMA, 3**



musikene

2024

CIP. Musikene-School of Music of the Basque Country

Music, power relations, and beyond : critical positions in Higher Music Education. – Donostia : Musikene ; PRIhME Project editorial board: David-Emil Wickström, chair; Christa Brüstle, Lucia Di Cecca, Itziar Larrinaga, Mojca Piškor and Eva Saether, 2024. – XXIII, 314 p. ; 23 cm. – (Musikertuz bilduma; 3).

This book has been developed and published as a part of the European Union Funded Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships project “PRIhME: Stakeholder Assembly on Power Relations in Higher Music Education” (2020-1-IE02-KA203-00759).

Chapter authors: Itziar Larrinaga, Anna Bull, Vanessa Gardebien, Basilio Fernández-Morante, Unni Løvlid, Christa Brüstle, Cecilia Ferm Almqvist, Ann Werner, Susanna Stivali, Clara Sersale, Sophie Whybrew, Kirsten Lies-Warfield, Mojca Piškor, David-Emil Wickström, Sam de Boise, Shzr Ee Tan, Franca Ferrari, Marko Kölbl, Eva Sæther, Alexandra Kertz-Welzel, Antje Kirschning, Pär Moberg, Gerd Grupe, Julia Wieneke, Anna Houmann and Patrick Schmidt.

D.L.: 934-2024

ISBN: 978-84-128755-1-5

1. Higher Music Education. 2. Power relations. I. Larrinaga, Itziar, 1976-. II. Musikene

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This book has been developed and published as a part of the European Union Funded Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships project “PRIhME: Stakeholder Assembly on Power Relations in Higher Music Education” (2020-1-IE02-KA203-000759). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union can be held responsible for them.

Partner institutions: Royal Irish Academy of Music, Ireland; Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC), Belgium; Popakademie Baden-Württemberg, Germany; Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Graz (KUG), Austria; Musikene-Euskal Herriko Goi Mailako Musika Ikastegia/Centro Superior de Música del País Vasco, Spain; Saint Louis Music Center Srl, Italy; Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Muzička akademija, Croatia; Akademia Muzyczna im. Krzysztofa Pendereckiego w Krakowie, Poland; Musikhögskolan i Malmö, Lunds universitet, Sweden. PRIhME also collaborated with an associate partner: Kharkivskiy natsionalnyi universytet mystetstv imeni I. P. Kotliarevskoho.

Musikene-School of Music of the Basque Country expresses its gratitude to the Editorial Board of the PRIhME project and to all the authors participating in this book, and respects all their opinions and judgements, not meaning that particularly assumes any of them.



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**



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Editorial Board of the PRIhME project: David-Emil Wickström, chair; Christa Brüstle, Lucia Di Cecca, Itziar Larrinaga, Mojca Piškor and Eva Sæther.

Translations: Ronya Krieger (Antje Kirschning’s chapter), Andrew Smith (Unni Løvlid’s chapter) and Jessica Weiss (Itziar Larrinaga’s chapters). If not otherwise noted all translations into English have been done by the respective authors or the PRIhME Editorial Board.

Language editing: Miranda Mimi Harmer.

Cover picture: Sonogram of the spoken words “Power Relations” by Stefano Scarani.

Photocomposition, printing and bookbinding: Michelena artes gráficas.

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Direction of the Musikertuz collection: Miren Iñarga.

Editorial Board of the Musikertuz collection: Jon Bagüés, Patricio Goialde, Itziar Larrinaga, Pello Leifena, Margarita Lorenzo.



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Musikene-School of Music of the Basque Country

Europa Square 2, 20018 Donostia-San Sebastián [www.musikene.eus](http://www.musikene.eus)

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## Acknowledgments

*All of us in the academy and in the culture as a whole are called to renew our minds if we are to transform educational institutions and society, so that the way we live, teach, and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity, our passion for justice, and our love of freedom.*

(hooks, 1993, p. 11)

This book could be interpreted as an attempt to respond to bell hook's call. It was envisioned at the very beginning of the PRIhME—Stakeholder Assembly on Power Relations in Higher Music Education project and continuously evolved through the intricate processes of collaborative thinking and knowledge sharing among all individuals involved in the various stages of the project. We are, therefore, grateful to all the participants of PRIhME, whose discussions inspired and guided us in developing this volume. We would also like to thank Ronya Krieger for translating Antje Kirschning's chapter, Andrew Smith for translating Unni Løvlid's, and Jessica Weiss for translating Itziar Larrinaga's chapters, as well as Miranda Harmer for her dedicated, meticulous, and patient work on language editing. Furthermore, we thank Musikene for their support throughout the publishing process, which was instrumental in bringing this book to life. Above all, we would like to express our gratitude to the authors, whose invaluable contributions have substantially deepened our understanding of the intricacies of power relations in higher music education.

Christa Brüstle  
Lucia Di Cecca  
Itziar Larrinaga  
Mojca Piškor  
Eva Sæther  
David-Emil Wickström



## Contributors

**Christa Brüstle** studied musicology, German literature, and linguistics. Her PhD thesis focused on the reception history of Anton Bruckner. In 1999, she became a research fellow at the special research project “Cultures of the Performative” at the Free University of Berlin, where she completed her habilitation on aspects of performance in contemporary music in 2007. From 2008 to 2011, she was a Visiting Professor at the Berlin University of the Arts and in 2014, a Visiting Professor at Heidelberg University. Since 2011, she has worked as a Senior Scientist at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz. From 2016 to 2021, she also held the position of §99 Professor in Musicology, Women, and Gender Studies. She has headed the Centre for Gender Research and Diversity there since 2012. In 2022, she was elected president of the Austrian Society for Gender Research.

**Anna Bull** is a Senior Lecturer in Education and Social Justice at the University of York and a former professional pianist and cellist. Her book *Class, Control, and Classical Music* was published in 2019 with Oxford University Press and in 2020 was joint winner of the British Sociological Association Philip Abrams Award. She has also co-edited a volume called *Voices for Change in the Classical Music Profession: New Ideas for Tackling Inequalities and Exclusions*. Anna is a co-founder and director of The 1752 Group (<http://www.1752group.com>), a research and campaigning organisation working to address staff/faculty sexual misconduct in higher education.

**Sam de Boise** is a Senior Lecturer in Musicology at the School of Music, Theatre, and Art at Örebro University, Sweden. His research has focused on how emotions in musical experience relate to gender, questions of gender equality in music participation and engagement, as well as the use and aesthetics of music in extremist social movements. He is co-editor of *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies* and the author of *Men, Masculinity, Music and Emotions* (2015, Palgrave Macmillan).

**Lucia Di Cecca** earned a diploma with honors in piano and a degree *cum laude* in Italian literature. Her career has been multifaceted: she has actively participated in Italian and European musical and cultural life as a member of various associations and working groups. She has designed and organised numerous events, conferences, and meetings across Italy and Europe, and has published papers on topics such as internationalization, teaching, and higher education. With extensive experience in Erasmus exchanges and a commitment to bridging the gap between education and employment, she initiated the Erasmus+ “Working with Music” Consortium. She holds the position of Piano Professor at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory of Music in Rome, Italy.

**Cecilia Ferm Almqvist** works as a Professor in Education at Södertörn University and as a Professor in Music Education at the Stockholm Institute of Music Education. Since defending her PhD thesis, *Openness and Awareness: A Phenomenological Study of Music Teaching and Learning Interaction*, her empirical and philosophical research has focused on democracy, equality, inclusion, and aesthetic communication in pedagogical situations. Her research is widely disseminated and published internationally. Currently, she is involved in the research project “Conservatory Cultures,” led by Associate Professor Ann Werner.

**Basilio Fernández-Morante** holds a PhD in Psychology from the University of Valencia. He has experience as a teacher and piano accompanist and is currently a piano teacher at the Professional Conservatory of Music in Valencia. Additionally, he serves as the coordinator of the Master’s programme in Psychology and Music at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) in Madrid. His research profile includes a comprehensive study of Beethoven’s *Hammerklavier* Sonata (Notes, 2014), as well as work on the psychological development of the teacher and psychological violence in conservatories (RIEM, 2018). He is a founding member of the Spanish Association of Psychology of Music and Music Performance (AEPMIM).

**Franca Ferrari** holds a PhD in Musicology, as well as MA degrees in Classical Guitar, Philosophy, and Arts, Music, and Performance. She is a Professor of Musical Pedagogy at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory of Music in Rome. Since 1999, she has been involved in numerous evaluation research

projects funded by the Italian government to assess the role of music in various aspects of educational policies, such as laboratorial learning and inclusion. One of her recent projects, conducted with a team of colleagues, focuses on possibilities and strategies for teaching musical instruments to students with special educational needs in the Italian school system (2022).

**Vanessa Gardebien** holds a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Piano from Musikene School of Music of the Basque Country. Additionally, she holds the Diplôme d'État de Professeur de Musique (Nationwide Certification for Undergraduate Teaching) from the Pôle d'Enseignement Supérieur de Musique et de Danse in Bordeaux. She works as a piano teacher at the Conservatoire des Landes in Mont-de-Marsan, France. She is currently participating in a training program in Médecine des Arts, which will equip her to manage the postural (re)education and pathologies of musicians across all instrumental disciplines.

**Gerd Grupe** received his PhD in Comparative Musicology from the Free University of Berlin in 1990 and held a postdoctoral position there from 1991 to 1996. In 1996, he completed his habilitation (postdoctoral degree) at the Free University of Berlin, and from 1996 to 2002, he was a lecturer at various universities in Germany. From 2002 to 2021, he was a Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz (KUG) in Austria, where he served as Vice-Rector for Research, Gender, and Diversity from 2020 to 2024.

**Anna Houmann** serves as a Professor at Malmö Academy of Music. She is the director of the PhD programme in Music Education, coordinator and supervisor of degree projects, and director of Educational Sciences within the Music Education Programme. She is leading the practice-based research projects *The Digital Student: Computer as Instrument in School* and *Students Leading School Change*. Her research explores themes such as music teachers' discretionary power—possibilities and limitations, expanding the horizons of the possible in education, understanding the role of uncertainty and creative risk-taking in creative expression, creative teaching and learning, developing dynamic creative research methods, and music teacher training.

**Deborah Kelleher** is the Director of the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM), Ireland's national conservatoire for music. Since assuming this role in 2010, she has played an integral role in the strategic development of RIAM, including leading its transition to becoming an associate college of Trinity College Dublin. She also oversaw the opening of RIAM's transformed campus on Westland Row in 2023, the largest privately-funded capital project for the arts in the State's history. In 2022, she was elected President of the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC).

**Alexandra Kertz-Welzel** is a Full Professor and Dean at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and a Professor II at Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences in Hamar. From 2002 to 2005, she was a visiting scholar at the University of Washington in Seattle (USA). Her research interests include international music education, the sociology and philosophy of music education, music education policy, and community music. She has regularly presented at international conferences and is the author and editor of several books. She was co-chair of the ISME Commission on Policy (2016–2018) and chair of the International Society for the Philosophy of Music Education (ISPME) (2017–2019).

**Antje Kirschning**, a social economist and mediator, has been the Women's and Gender Equality Officer at the Hanns Eisler School of Music Berlin since 2014 and the spokesperson for the bukof Commission of Artistic Universities since 2018. In recent years, she has given lectures on everyday sexism at music academies (Weimar, Munich, Halle, Trossingen, Graz, Linz, Vienna) and has also published several papers on the constructive, professional handling of closeness and distance in artistic education.

**Marko Kölbl** is an Assistant Professor and Head of the Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. He holds a PhD in Ethnomusicology and specialises in the music and dance of minorities and migrant communities, with a focus on intersectional, queer-feminist, and postcolonial perspectives. His areas of interest include death and mourning, voice, dance, and gender, with ongoing field research with the Croatian minority in Burgenland, migrant communities in Vienna (specifically Afghans), as well as in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Iran. His teaching encompasses both academic and artistic courses. Marko Kölbl also serves as chair of the ICTMD Study Group on Music, Gender, and Sexuality and as deputy chair of his university's equal opportunity working group.

**Itziar Larrinaga** holds a PhD in Musicology from the University of Oviedo (Extraordinary Doctorate Award). She is a Professor and Coordinator of Research and Innovation at Musikene-School of Music of the Basque Country. Additionally, she has held positions as president of the Music Section of the Society for Basque Studies, director of the research journal *Musiker*, and, currently, director of Libargo's *Música Crítica* Collection. Her primary areas of research encompass the relationship between music and ideology, with a focus on the history of 20th-century music in Spain, as well as musical heritage and its mediation. She has been awarded the University of the Basque Country and Orfeón Donostiarra Prize for Musical Research.

**Kirsten Lies-Warfield**, a graduate of Lawrence and Indiana Universities, was the first woman trombonist ever hired by the United States Army Band. She worked to develop their National Solo Competition and managed it from 2009 until 2017. After retiring, she was a fellow at the Bang on a Can Summer Festival and subsequently earned a degree in audio technology from American University. She was elected to the International Trombone Association Board of Advisors in 2018 and serves on their pedagogy committee. She moved to Minneapolis in 2023 and continues to teach, perform, and compose.

**Unni Løvlid** grew up with traditional music in Hornindal, Norway. She later moved to Oslo and studied traditional singing at the Norwegian Academy of Music. After her studies, she lived as a freelancer with the whole world as her place of work. She has released several productions, including *So ro liten tull*, *VITA*, *LUX*, *HYMN*, and *UNAMNA*. For her most recent release, she, along with Ingrid Breie Nyhus and Anne Hytta, received the “Spellemannprisen” (the Norwegian Grammy). Since 2018, she has been appointed as an Associate Professor and head of the Norwegian traditional music study programme at NMH. In recent years, her research has focused on tonality.

**Pär Moberg** is a saxophone player and Senior Lecturer in Folk and World Music at the Academy of Music in Malmö, Sweden, which is part of Lund University. He is also a freelance musician, composer, and pedagogue specialising in folk and world music, with over 25 years of experience in both Swedish and Nordic traditional music as well as many music traditions from other parts of the world. For over ten years, he has been co-organising concerts of Arabic music in Malmö. Helping refugee musicians find a place on the Swedish music scene has always been a priority for him.

**Mojca Piškor** earned a PhD in Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. From 2001 to 2013, she was affiliated with the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. Since 2013, she has been permanently employed as an Assistant Professor in Ethnomusicology at the Musicology Department of the Academy of Music in Zagreb. Her research interests include issues related to the nexus of music and politics (gender, censorship, migration). In recent years, she has focused on the role of music and sound in torture regimes of political labour and concentration camps, as well as the gendered aspects of working lives and labour rights of professional musicians in Croatia. From 2020 to 2024, she participated in the research project *The European Irregularized Migration Regime in the Periphery of the EU* (ERIM).

**Patrick Schmidt** is Professor of Music and Music Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. His recent publications appear in various journals focused on education, music, and policy. He has led consulting and evaluative projects for the National YoungArts Foundation and the New World Symphony. He co-edited the *Oxford Handbook of Music Education and Social Justice* (2015), a two-volume book on *Leadership in Higher Music Education* (2020), and the *Routledge Handbook for the Sociology of Music Education* (2021). His books *Policy and the Political Life of Music Education* and *Policy as Practice: A Guide for Music Educators* were released by Oxford University Press in 2017 and 2020.

**Clara Sersale** completed her bachelor's degree in piano with full marks at the Pollini Conservatory of Padova, Italy, in 2022. Her thesis presented a historical-analytical study of J. S. Bach's *Capriccio on the Departure of the Beloved Brother*. In the summer semester of 2023, she worked as an Erasmus+ trainee at the Centre for Gender Studies and Diversity at the Kunstuniversität Graz, Austria. She holds a Bachelor's degree with honors in Political Science, International Relations, and Human Rights from the University of Padova and is currently completing her studies at the University of Bologna.

**Susanna Stivali** is a jazz singer, composer, author, and teacher who studied at Berklee College of Music on a scholarship. She has collaborated with notable artists such as Lee Konitz, Miriam Makeba, Giorgia, Chico Buarque, Jaques Morelenbaum, and Fred Hersch. Stivali performs at festivals around the world, including Umbria Jazz Winter, Auditorium Parco della Musica, More Jazz Series Mozambique, Makhanda Jazz Festival (South Africa), Blue Note São Paulo (Brazil), Le Vallette Jazz (Malta), Italian Women in Jazz (New York), and Udine Jazz. She participates in soundtracks, writes for theatre and cinema, and has penned songs for Giorgia. She has released four CDs, with another forthcoming with Trio Corrente. Stivali teaches Jazz Singing at the Conservatory of Frosinone and holds workshops in Italy and abroad. She is a Board member of the Association of Italian Jazz Musicians (MIDJ), President of the Muovileidee Association, and Artistic Director of the Diva's Jazz Festival. She is also involved with the Jazzmine Association, focusing on gender equity in jazz and improvised music.

**Eva Sæther** is Professor Emerita in Music Education at Lund University, Malmö Academy of Music (MAM), and Docent at the University of the Arts, Helsinki. She has developed a research profile focused on intercultural perspectives on musical learning and creativity(ies). She taught educational sciences at the Music Teacher Education programme and was the head of research education in music education at MAM from 2017 to 2022. Sæther has served as a board member of the International Society for

Music Education (ISME) and as a commissioner for the Music in Schools and Teacher Education Commission (MISTEC). As Professor Emerita, she supervises PhD students and is active in ongoing international research projects on the future of higher music education and gender issues. Her key research interests include cultural sensitivity, epistemology, intercultural music education, radical empiricism, resonance, and sensuous scholarship.

**Shzr Ee Tan** is a Reader and ethnomusicologist/performance studies researcher at Royal Holloway, University of London, specialising in Sinophone, Southeast Asian, and Indigenous geocultures. She is committed to decolonial work and EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) practices in sound studies and the performing arts, with interests in how race discourses intersect with new digitalities, geopolitical shifts in power, and recent debates on climate awareness, multispecies thinking, changemaking, and precarity. She is also Vice Dean of EDI for the School of Performing and Digital Arts at Royal Holloway, where she has initiated campaigns including an EDI Calendar of Activities, ongoing Safe Space Discussion Series, and workshops/training sessions on topics ranging from inter-ethnic solidarity to mental health and toxic masculinity. She is committed to mainstreaming EDI considerations within broader and systemic School workflows. As a steering committee member of the national sector group EDIMS, she also serves in several co-mentoring and community-building projects.

**Ann Werner's** research interests are in gender, power, music, and media and she has published widely on topics such as streaming and algorithmic culture, and gendered uses of music, drawing on feminist theory. Her articles include "Organizing Music, Organizing Gender: Algorithmic Culture and Spotify recommendations" (2020) and her latest book *Feminism and Gender Politics in Mediated Popular Music* (2022, Bloomsbury Academic). She is a Senior Lecturer in Musicology at Uppsala University and an Associate Professor in Gender Studies at Södertörn University, Sweden. She is currently the principal investigator of two research projects: "Conservatory Cultures" (2021–2024) examining the construction of nation and gender in European classical music higher education and "Culture of Silence" (2022–2025) examining sexual harassment and preventive measures in the Swedish performing arts in the wake of #MeToo.

**Si Sophie Pages Whybrow** (she/her, they/them) is a Senior Scientist in Gender and Diversity Studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz. They completed their dissertation on *Affective Trans Worldmaking in Contemporary Science Fiction* in 2021 at Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz. From 2020 to 2021, she was an Elisabeth-List Junior Fellow at the Coordination Centre for Gender Studies, where she worked on the research

project “Literary Negotiations of Affective and Gendered Belongings.” As part of this project, she co-edited the collection *Affective Worldmaking: Narrative Counterpublics of Gender and Sexuality*, published with transcript in 2022.

**David-Emil Wickström** studied Scandinavian studies, musicology, and ethnomusicology at the Humboldt-Universität of Berlin, the University of Bergen, and the University of Copenhagen. Currently employed as a Professor of Popular Music History at the Popakademie Baden-Württemberg he is also the Programme Director for the artistic bachelor’s degree programmes in Pop Music Design and World Music. His research areas include the revival of Norwegian traditional vocal music, post-Soviet popular music (especially Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia), and higher music education, with a focus on power relations within artistic programmes.

**Julia Wieneke** has been a Professor of Music Education for General Music Classrooms at the University Mozarteum Salzburg/Innsbruck since 2021. Her research interests span from diversity and social justice in the music classroom, teacher collaboration and professional development to innovations in school and university classrooms. She has presented and published internationally since 2018 and has successfully secured funding from Austria’s research agency, FWF. In her dissertation, she investigated contemporary music projects in collaboration with composers, musicians, and teachers in schools. Before her academic career, she worked as a classroom teacher, violin teacher, and participated in various music education projects.



## Foreword

Deborah Kelleher

**I**n 2018, the world reeled from a deluge of news reports relating to criminal acts of rape, sexual harassment, and bullying against women in the creative industries and Higher Music Education (HME). It was to spark the much publicised #MeToo movement. During this turbulent time, the Council of the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC), a European cultural and educational network with around 300 member institutions dedicated to professional music training in 57 countries, met to formulate its response. Such undeniable evidence of power abuse against women spoke of a culture that protected the powerful and corrupt, and destroyed the powerless. Our response required reflection on the circumstances that had brought about such a situation.

It became clear fairly quickly that such criminal acts were just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the norms and traditions found in HME that perpetuate inequities and injustices to disempower disadvantage our students, colleagues and friends. In that seminal AEC Council meeting, we acknowledged that we were facing a systemic and complex problem, and that calling out centuries of unhealthy norms and behaviours would require a systemic and widely adopted solution.

After some further debate, it was agreed that AEC, as the voice for HME in Europe, was best placed to utilise the forces of our sizeable membership to understand the scale of the issue with a view to addressing it. Following this decision, we had to choose a method of investigation that was as democratic

and respectful of all voices as possible. Having seen the Citizens' Assembly model work well in Ireland and the Netherlands, we chose this route of deliberative democracy.

Following a successful bid for Erasmus+ project funds in 2020, nine institutions representing AEC put forward students, administrators, and teachers to make a Stakeholder Assembly of 50 people. Power Relations in Higher Music Education (PRIhME) was born. This collective of individuals worked diligently and respectfully with each other to create sector recommendations and we owe them a great debt. Their work was made possible by the exceptional organisation of the Assembly Working Group led by Esther Nass, and by the thoughtful leadership of Assembly Chair, Gretchen Amussen.

On November 11, 2023, in my capacity as President, I presented the recommendations from the PRIhME Stakeholder Assembly to the General Assembly of AEC. We hoped those recommendations would be adopted by our members as shared guidelines for policy and practice across the HME sector, to enable us to study and work in safer and more supportive environments.

While this overarching goal is, at a high level, difficult to argue against, getting PRIhME's recommendations formally approved by a diverse group of HME institutions was by no means a given. We worried that some recommendations may have been too much in conflict with established HME norms, or that they may have been perceived as undermining artistic excellence, or quality standards. Might we face objections in the General Assembly that could destabilise the aim of PRIhME, to establish sector standards that allow creativity to flourish in a more empowering, equitable, fair, and safe environment?

In fact, the guidelines were accepted with no dissenters.

This publication marks a punctuation point in the story of PRIhME. It collects the expert reports which informed the Assembly members and builds on them, offers useful definitions of the key words that drove our inquiry, as well as reflections on the process and its outcomes. I am hugely grateful to the Editorial Board, chaired by David-Emil Wickström, who have put together this valuable publication. I extend my gratitude to Musikene, who funded this peer-reviewed publication and thereby ensured that the learnings from this project could be disseminated. I believe it will inform not only the HME sector, but also those who wish to understand power dynamics in any field, and how deliberative democracy can inspire great change.

The work of PRIhME continues in the AEC. In the coming months and years, we will use the recommendations and tools to address and overcome unhealthy power imbalances while empowering our community to live their best lives and contribute to our society as vibrant and creative people.

## Introduction

Christa Brüstle, Lucia Di Cecca, Itziar Larrinaga, Mojca Piškor,  
Eva Sæther & David-Emil Wickström

Within the field of music—encompassing different musical practices, artistic research, music education, as well as diverse academic disciplines dedicated to the scholarly study of music—the processes of knowledge building and transmission have always played a prominent role. Within these processes different musical traditions and cultures inevitably drew on different ideas and concepts. In the Central European tradition, higher music education institutions (HMEIs) have emerged as highly specialised centres of knowledge transmission, devoted to the training of aspiring professional musicians, teachers, and scholars at the final educational stage preceding the transition into professional lives. Contemporary institutions focusing on higher music education (HME) can look back at over 200 years of history, reflecting the transition of Western Art Music supported by European courts to a European music life funded by the bourgeoisie. The Conservatoire de Musique in Paris (founded in 1795; Bongrain et al., 1996)<sup>1</sup> and the Konservatorium der Musik in Leipzig (founded in 1843) have become the central models for contemporary HMEIs (Gies, 2019, 2021). Exchanging information and ideas on pedagogy has been central to the development of HME, and in this sense the central association of European HMEIs—Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)—continues to play a

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<sup>1</sup> It merged the *École royale de chant* (1784) and the *Institut national de musique* (1793).

pivotal role. For more than 70 years the AEC has been providing a single platform that enables the dialogue and exchange of different approaches to HME between educators, students, and institutional leaders coming from diverse national and regional traditions. Despite the fact that many of the approaches to HME have inevitably changed over time, the master-apprentice model of knowledge transmission has remained the predominant underlying pedagogical approach. It is an approach that has, nevertheless, been repeatedly questioned because of different shortcomings, among others also the ones connected to issues of power abuse.

The reluctance to critically and systematically address the issue of power relations in HMEIs could not be simply explained by a general lack of interest in the institutional past of HME. The history of European music education at conservatoires, music academies, and music universities has been researched in detail in both national and transnational contexts in recent years. Multi-volume works such as *Musical Education in Europe (1770–1914)* by Michael Fend and Michel Noiray (2005) and *Handbuch Konservatorien* by Freia Hoffmann (2021) bear witness to this. Moreover, historical retrospectives or commemorative publications—especially on the occasion of various anniversaries of individual HMEIs—have often been published. Self-critical representations, nevertheless, were often neither aimed at, nor welcome in this type of publications. This is even more so when it comes to the problematic internal institutional dynamics, such as those connected to the issues of power relations and abuse of power. In recent decades, however, it has become clear that these issues, as well as underlying structures enabling their reproduction, must be critically examined and persistently addressed. The fact that power relations are often deeply rooted, widely accepted as “the norm,” and as a result institutionally protected, makes the persistent critical engagement with the issues of power and power abuse in an institutional context all the more important. As the *Causa Mauser* in Germany demonstrated, there have been examples of actively pursuing those in positions of power within the HMEI structures.<sup>2</sup> This is not only about the general rejection and abolition of the abuse of power and hierarchies, but also about identifying where their negative and toxic areas lie. It is the latter that—not only, but very strongly and profoundly—has a lasting demotivating effect on teachers, students, and administrative staff. This prevents excellence and healthy sustainable artistic careers.

Bringing the topic of power relations within music education into discussions at every level is therefore an investment in the future of artistically,

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<sup>2</sup> Formerly the Director of the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München (Munich HMEI), Siegfried Mauser was charged with sexual offences while in his position. The press referred to him as the “Causa Mauser.”

pedagogically, and administratively problem-conscious, accountable, and just HMEIs. The objective of *artistic citizenship* (Gaunt et al., 2021), with which musicians also develop an awareness and responsibility for society's and nature's future, can also be promoted in this way. Traditions should not or do not have to be denied in this context, but it is worthwhile expanding and opening them up to stop deadlocked paths becoming dead ends.

## Addressing Power Relations: On the PRIhME Project

In the wake of the #MeToo movement and the Causa Mauser, the AEC and the Diversity, Identity, and Inclusiveness Working Group of the Strengthening Music in Society (SMS) project (2017–2021) decided in 2018 to focus on why HMEIs are so susceptible to misconduct and power abuse. After organising panels and workshops on misconduct, encouraging discussions on the perceived “neutrality” of artistic standards and admission procedures at AEC events in 2018 and 2019, as well as dealing with these (and other) topics in the working group's final publication (Barbera et al., 2021), three members of the AEC community, Deborah Kelleher, Esther Nass, and David-Emil Wickström, together with nine European HMEIs<sup>3</sup>—all of them members of the AEC—and the AEC, applied successfully for an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project grant in 2020 to focus on power relations and HME. The chain of events described above were the origins of the project PRIhME—Stakeholder Assembly on Power Relations in Higher Music Education (2020–2023), which this publication is an integral part of.

As the name indicates, the central feature of PRIhME was the Stakeholder Assembly, which aimed to address power relations in HME. In effect, what makes this project striking and unique is its basis in the principles of deliberative democracy. It has brought together a diverse group of participants who represent a microcosm of the European community of HME<sup>4</sup> to engage in guided learning and discussion on the project's main remit, which has been worded as questions: “How can we improve the

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<sup>3</sup> The participating institutions were the Royal Irish Academy of Music (Ireland), Popakademie Baden-Württemberg (Germany), Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Graz (KUG, Austria), Musikene-Euskal Herriko Goi Mailako Musika Ikastegia/Centro Superior de Música del País Vasco (Spain), Saint Louis Music Center Srl (Italy), Muzička akademija Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (Croatia), Akademia Muzyczna im. Krzysztofa Pendereckiego w Krakowie (Poland), Musikhögskolan i Malm, Lunds universitet (Sweden) and Kharkivskiy natsionalnyi universytet mystetstv imeni I. P. Kotliarevskoho (Ukraine).

<sup>4</sup> The project's Stakeholder Assembly gathered 50 participants: 20 students, 15 leadership and administrative staff and 15 teaching staff. Special attention was given to geographical spread, diversity of social and cultural backgrounds, and participation of people with disabilities and people who identify across a range of sexual identities.

HMEI environment by suggesting ways to deal with power relations within our institutions?” and “What standards are realistic to set to achieve a safe and supportive environment in HME?” The Stakeholder Assembly was entrusted with the task of responding to these questions by formulating recommendations for the HME sector in Europe. These recommendations, approved by the Stakeholder Assembly, were subsequently accepted by the General Assembly of the AEC in November 2023.<sup>5</sup>

The design of the Assembly meetings was based on the handbook *Enabling National Initiatives to Take Democracy Beyond Elections* (The newDemocracy Foundation, 2019). Three phases were distinguished in the process: 1) learning; 2) discussion/deliberation; and 3) deciding. The main difference between PRIhME and other citizen assemblies is that the PRIhME Stakeholder Assembly was organised around four meetings structured by these three phases. At these meetings, Assembly participants attempted to address more specific questions, namely the sub-questions of the main overarching question, which are also discussed in this book’s subsequent chapters. Esther Nass, chairperson of the Assembly Working Group responsible for the Stakeholder Assemblies, described the work process in each Assembly as such:

In practice, the first day of each assembly was built around understanding—looking at expert input, examples from the Assembly Brief, discussing personal and institutional experience through group exercises—and the second day of each assembly on the impact of the theme, also leading to suggestions to address it in the form of recommendations. In addition, there was a preparatory Zoom [session] to introduce the theme before each Assembly, and afterwards a reflective Zoom session to round up the discussions and solidify the recommendations made at the Assembly into voted upon final recommendations. The entire process was guided by a neutral chair, Gretchen Amussen. (Nass, personal communication, March 31, 2023)

In this process the participants discussed what power is, how it manifests, how to deal with discrimination based on gender, socio-economic background, and disabilities, as well as misconduct. They also deliberated on what a better institution could look like and, most importantly, developed recommendations for the AEC membership. Gretchen Amussen, the neutral chair of the Assembly, highlighted the most significant surprises during project process, as well as the power of this process within deliberative democracy:

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<sup>5</sup> The final recommendations can be found at <https://aec-music.eu/project/final-recommendations/>

It was remarkable to see how, given information, resources and the deliberative framework, participants felt able to share difficult personal or observed experiences. But perhaps most surprising was to see how the process led not only to a shared understanding but to a shared vision on how to move forward. There was a strong sense of “alignment” among participants as to relevant policies that needed to be put in place—and this was shared irrespective of geographic origin or group (students, teachers, administrative staff). If anything, this deliberative democracy process demonstrates the power of this framework and of integrating all members of an institution in certain aspects of decision-making. In the case of such a complex and important issue such as power relations, providing all the actors in an institution the opportunity to jointly learn and determine appropriate policies can only enhance the sense of belonging in an inclusive, respectful, and caring environment. (Amussen, personal communication, March 31, 2023)

Three working groups were formed to achieve the aims of the PRIhME project. The groups’ members had to deliver specific outcomes within the project. Group members came from different backgrounds which served to enrich the perspectives on the main remit of PRIhME and also its work processes. All of them have played an invaluable part in making the project work smoothly.

- The *Assembly Working Group* designed the programme of the Stakeholder Assemblies, as well as the online meetings held before and after the Assemblies. It served to energise the meetings, record the process, and compile the recommendations made by the participants.<sup>6</sup>
- The *Editorial Board* fulfilled the duties of an academic council, as well as those of an editorial committee. It created the conceptual framework for the meetings of the Assemblies by developing the main questions that had to be addressed and by preparing the information briefs for the participants. Accordingly, in its capacity as editorial committee, it compiled the information necessary for each meeting of the Stakeholder Assembly. Members of the Editorial Board are also the editors of this publication, as well as authors of several of its chapters.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Members of the Assembly Working Group were Esther Nass (chair), Ana Čorić, Jesús Echeverría, Karolina Jarosz, Megan O’Neill, Lars Härstedt Salmonson, and Constanze Wimmer.

<sup>7</sup> Members of the Editorial Board were David-Emil Wickström (chair), Christa Brüstle, Lucia Di Cecca, Itziar Larrinaga, Mojca Piškor, and Eva Sæther.

- The *Steering Committee*'s members took on the responsibility for the design, implementation, and evaluation of the project. The Steering Committee was made up of representatives of the participating institutions who served as a link with their respective HMEIs. In addition to the Steering Committee, PRIhME appointed Anka Arockiam as External Evaluator.<sup>8</sup>

The project encountered several challenges over the three-year period. One of the most important ones was internal communication, since it is a project that involved intensive collaboration of a large group of people. Face-to-face and online meetings were held continually over the course of the project. Moreover, the communication tool Slack was used for maintaining contact between different working groups. Communication between groups was not free of misunderstandings, but also led to many imaginative solutions. Together we learnt from the mistakes, giving rise to a dynamic of constant improvement. Another noteworthy challenge was the COVID-19 pandemic, which began while the project was being developed, necessitating online formats of the first Assemblies. Furthermore, the war in Ukraine which started shortly before we held the second meeting of the Assembly, struck one of our associated partners, the Kharkiv I. P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts, adding an additional challenge. Fortunately, we were able to ensure the participation of several Ukrainian members in the Assemblies; and our fellow Steering Committee member Oleksandr Priymenko joined the meetings online when the circumstances allowed.

This publication is the final output of this three-year project. The foundation of the publication was already formed in the project description, however, as the project developed during and between the Stakeholder Assemblies, our tasks as editors expanded to also include reflections on methodological approaches for participatory inquiry, such as the democracy work of the PRIhME project.

As the project progressed, the members of the Editorial Board kept moving between different roles, concurrently serving as academic advisors, “information stewards,” and active participants in democracy work that the project epitomised. As “information stewards” we helped to prepare the individual Assemblies by proposing external experts experienced in the overarching themes of the Assemblies; by providing selected readings aimed at deepening understanding of particular issues at hand; and by proposing key questions to be addressed by Assemblies. We were guided by

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<sup>8</sup> Members of the Steering Committee were Deborah Kelleher (chair), Lucia di Cecca, Ashkhen Fixova, Stefan Gies, Sabine Göritzner, Karin Johansson, Barbara Lalić, Zdzisław Łapiński, Itziar Larrinaga, Mojca Piškor, Oleksandr Priymenko, and David-Emil Wickström.



the idea of providing insight into existing debates and research, generating new knowledge, and inspiring institutional change. Our collaborative work was inevitably influenced by the diversity of our personal understandings, insights, perspectives, and experiences as both researchers and teachers working in institutions of HME. The designation of “information stewards” was neither a neutral nor fixed authoritative position. Participating in the PRIhME project has in many ways deepened our own understanding of the complex dynamics of power relations, institutional cultures, as well as both potentials and limits of deliberative democracy processes in instigating institutional change.

PRIhME cannot be defined as a research project, in the sense that it was designed according to the principles of an academic production of new knowledge. Nonetheless, it is an inquiry that can be described as a laboratory for democracy work, with a mixture of participants (by professional position, gender, age, nationality) meeting over a series of deliberative democracy-inspired Stakeholder Assemblies (Escobar, 2017). In the process, this publication itself is an attempt to conceptualise the results of a chain of intensive meetings, where stakeholders and project facilitators collaboratively strived towards an outcome directed towards change.

To operationalise the abovementioned main remit of the project, the Stakeholder Assemblies were given the following objectives:

- To create a fair, equitable, and safe forum to address the topic of power relations in the HME sector and its institutions;
- To bring power relations into everyday conversations, in other words, to reduce and potentially remove the taboo around those conversations;
- To select a representative group and move the discussion into the centre of the community in a forum in which we can examine our teaching, administrative, and leadership processes through a fresh lens;
- To test a model of deliberative democracy that can also be replicated within individual institutions or national clusters to enable constructive conversations;
- To enable cultural change that empowers people and promotes social inclusion;
- To establish a “standard” of conduct, which AEC members and the wider HME community could adopt; and
- To help our community of learning to exist in safe and supportive learning and working environments.

The four assemblies of the PRIhME project lean toward the notion of deliberative democracy, inviting participants to be “considered deliberators.” A considered deliberator is more than a participant, and is supposed to have a voice that is always influential. This point of reference finds resonance in critical education research, conducted through a participatory approach (Carr & Kemmis, 2005, Kemmis, 2006, 2008, Kemmis et al., 2014). Participatory action research (PAR) combines features from action research that affects the involved participants, with participatory research which involves the participants in the planning and conducting of the research (Timonen, 2020). These are the core principles of PAR as formulated by Wallerstein (1999):

1. Research participants should actively set the agenda;
  2. The research should benefit the community by providing tools to analyse conditions and make informed decisions on collective actions;
  3. The relationship between researchers and community members should be collaborative and based on dialogical co-learning;
  4. The process should develop the capacity of community people to appropriate and use knowledge from which they would normally be excluded;
  5. The process should be democratic, enabling the participation of a wide diversity of people; and
  6. There should be a balance between research and community goals.
- (p. 41).

The other important grounding of PAR is to work “with” not “for” or “on” people. The activities are supposed to be collaborative and based on mutual decisions. This is often time consuming, challenging, and with little promise of what the outcome might be (Timonen, 2020). In this context, the most relevant aspect of PAR is that inquiry is conceptualised as a co-learning approach, “where Outsider(s) in collaboration with Insider(s) contribute to a knowledge base that potentially leads to improved/critiqued practice” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 31).

In working with the presentation of the results from the Stakeholder Assemblies and other project activities of the PRIhME project, the epistemological foundations of PAR have provided a tool to focus on the “how,” “what,” and “why” of safe and just learning environments in HME. Despite the fact that the PRIhME project activities have not been designed in accordance with the PAR principles, the design of the Assemblies and the general aspirations of the project highlight possibilities for institutional change with collaborative and mutual efforts.

## Understanding Power Relations: On the Publication

This book is meant to be used as a handbook, aimed at diverse readers who want to gain a deeper insight into intricate dynamics of power relations in HME. Although as a whole it attempts to cover (in detail) several specific aspects contributing to the more nuanced understanding of the complexity of power relations in HME, each of its four parts has been composed so it can function as a standalone part. Each part of the book consists of four types of texts—a short introduction; an expert paper (revised and in some cases expanded version of introductory text included in the Brief participants received before each of the Stakeholder Assemblies) introducing the main theme of the respective part, as well as summarising the insights, research, and discourses related to it; three keywords offering an overview of the existing literature on the key concepts relevant to the wider understanding of the main theme of the respective part; and (personal) reflections written by stakeholders (musicians, students, activists, academics, and administrators) studying and working in HMEIs.

As its title indicates, the first part of the book—“Understanding Power in Higher Music Education”—focuses on identifying and understanding the workings of power and power relations in HMEIs. It opens with a chapter written by Anna Bull, focusing on power relations and hierarchies in these institutions. Next, we introduce the keywords *power*, *violence*, and *canon*, and examine how they shape and are shaped by the cultures of HMEIs. Each of these keywords is followed by another type of contribution. The first is by the student Vanessa Gardebien, who provides her testimony in the form of an interview describing the painful process of her training, as well as the liberating recovery of her inner strength, which she is now able to transmit to her students as a piano teacher. The second contribution consists of the reflections of Basilio Fernández Morante on the sensitive topic of a case of psychological and sexual violence that was brought before a criminal court without success. Lastly, Unni Løvlid provides us with an account of the complicated integration of traditional music into a HMEI setting and shares the values that guide her now as a professor at the same institution where she studied.

The second part—“Gender, Sexuality, and Power Relations in Higher Music Education Cultures”—is dedicated to gender issues and power relations in HME which show a close relationship. Connections between gender, gender relations, power relations, and music are addressed from different perspectives. Cecilia Ferm Almqvist and Ann Werner provide an introduction to the terminological and socio-cultural significance of gender, before expounding the fundamental connections between gender, music education, and power. The ideas and concepts developed in their chapter are further

expanded in three keywords: *gender and music*, *sexuality and music*, and *gender mainstreaming*. The contributions by Clara Sersale, Kirsten Lies-Warfield, and Susanna Stivali add reflections on their personal experiences related to gender and music. In addition, Si Sophie Whybrew's contribution provides a broader perspective on how gender, music and power intersect, which include the meaning and roles of trans and non-binary persons.

The third part—"Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Higher Music Education"—focuses on issues surrounding socio-economic background/class, race/ethnicity, and ableism/disability in the context of HME. It opens with Sam de Boise's expert paper discussing the relevance of socio-economic background on HME and its students and is followed by the three keywords: *social justice*, *ableism*, and *privilege*. The main concepts introduced by these chapters are further elaborated through reflections on neurodiversity by Franca Ferrari; a critical re-examination of the tropes of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion by Shzr Ee Tan; and Marko Kölbl's personal perspectives on power hierarchies deeply ingrained in HMEIs' cultures and the structural changes essential for subverting institutional inertia and encouraging meaningful and tangible social change.

In the fourth part—"Moving from Thinking to Acting"—the overarching questions deal with power imbalances in relation to HMEIs' aspirations to reach high artistic standards. Alexandra Kertz-Welzel's and Antje Kirschning's contributions discuss possibilities for improvement as well as the power of thinking beyond the "what is." The four personal accounts further expand on future directions, issues around cultural diversity, institutional change and pedagogical approaches. Pär Moberg presents the case of the *Baghdad Sessions*, a mutually transformative project. Gerd Grupe's account provides an interesting example of inclusive institutional change processes, where all voices are heard. Similarly, Julia Wieneke's text takes the reader on the sometimes troublesome journey of building safe spaces for students and teachers and changing the institutional culture. Finally, Anna Houmann introduces a pedagogy of the possible, in showing how music education can become a "place of belonging." The three keywords *musical thirdspace*, *policy activism*, and *institutional change* are chosen as they are central to institutions and change agents who are focussed on addressing power management.

Part four leads to the final chapter of the book—"Power Relations in Higher Music Education: Designing Ecological Policy Action to Change." Taking a critical view on the PRIhME project as such, Patrick Schmidt emphasises the importance of policy work and policy activism as daily work, with shared participation and a listening stance as key elements.

As the topics outlined in this introduction suggest, both the PRIhME project and this book deal with sensitive issues, including abuse, misconduct,

and various forms of discrimination (among others, racism, sexism, ableism, and classism), as well as, at times, traumatic personal experiences. Since these topics appear in each section, we have not included individual trigger warnings but have instead decided to place a general warning here in the introduction—so please keep this in mind when reading the book. We are also aware of the fact that writing is a balancing act. Opening our institutions to sensitive topics and providing access to underrepresented groups is inherently tied to (institutional) politics and is, therefore, deeply political. While attempting to maintain a neutral stance, writing about how to deal with power relations also means that the authors of this book are following an inherent political agenda. Given the power of these narratives and the impact that some of the occurrences described have had on the authors, some of the texts will show a clear (political) positioning in the respective author's writing.

PRIhME has demonstrated that power relations permeate all aspects of HME. It has also shown that knowledge and open discussions of these topics are essential for all stakeholders (in other words students, faculty, and administrators) involved in HME. The Stakeholder Assemblies also showed that the most vulnerable members in our institutions—the students—were keenly aware of the power imbalances deeply rooted in institutional cultures and environments. While providing training for all the stakeholders in HMEIs is imperative, it is equally important that institutional leaders not only offer workshops but also provide the necessary resources for students and faculty to participate in them. This includes granting students credits for these courses, allocating work time for faculty and administrators to participate, and funding freelance teachers' participation in the workshops. Perhaps even more importantly, it is essential to create spaces where all stakeholders—students, teachers, and administrators—can meet in same (safe) spaces and discuss these issues as equals.

Just as music continues to develop with new styles and genres constantly emerging—and at times significantly challenging the existing musical hegemony—HME and HMEIs need to strive to understand and engage with current ideas about power relations, as well as remain open to changes necessary to make HME equitable, just, and accessible to all.

**Part I**  
**Understanding Power**  
**in Higher Music Education**

Edited by: Itziar Larrinaga

# Understanding Power in Higher Music Education

Itziar Larrinaga

Defining power is a complex task. Even though it is omnipresent in higher music education institutions (HMEIs), we do not identify it clearly and precisely and are even unaware of how it works. Despite this, we all have our own intuitive understanding of what power means for us. It is not unlikely, however, that our understanding is influenced by several basic assumptions (Chambers, 2006). The first is that we usually think of power as something that can be possessed—we believe that is something that one either has or does not have—and this usually brings with it the judgement that having power is good and not having it is bad. Secondly, contrary to the previous statement, it is also possible to believe that power has negative connotations, since it is easy for us to associate it with authoritarianism, control, and even domination. Finally, it is quite likely that we are convinced that social transformation, in our case transformation of institutions, takes place from bottom to top; in other words, to change an institution, we must always work from the bottom up.

Over the course of this part of the book, we will discuss and question these basic assumptions. Our aim is to achieve a deeper understanding of how power and power relations operate in HMEIs. Specifically, the question posed at the first meeting of the Stakeholder Assembly of the PRIhME project was—What do we understand power and power relations to mean in the context of HMEIs?

The members of the PRIhME Stakeholder Assembly initially used their own intuitive understanding of what power was. As Vermeulen (2005a) indicates, “one reason that ‘power’ is a useful term is because it has a commonsense meaning rather than a difficult academic definition” (p. 11). By the same token, during the meeting of the Assembly, the participants drew upon the forms of power defined by research on development (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002; Vermeulen, 2005b) and by feminist writings on power (Rowlands, 1997), namely, “power over,” “power to,” “power with,” “power from within,” and “power to empower.” These expressions served to examine more deeply how power relations operate in the participants’ immediate institutional environments. Observing and thinking about their own institutional contexts inspired their introspection about how power relations could function in the near future.

The chapter that opens the first part of the book, entitled “Power Relations and Hierarchies in Higher Music Education Institutions,” is authored by Anna Bull and was written as a concise expert paper aimed at introducing the topic to the participants prior to the first Stakeholder Assembly. As the title indicates, the chapter offers an initial approach to power relations and hierarchies in HMEIs and explores how these intersect with social inequalities and are reproduced through invisible habits. The aim of this is to prevent abuses of power such as intimidation and harassment. Accordingly, this chapter provides examples of situations in which power relations are constructive and affirms that, “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” (Bull, in this volume).

Three of the remaining chapters explore the meaning of three keywords and their role in the context of the HMEIs in depth. The first keyword is *power*. To be sure, the term “power” can take on many meanings and is susceptible to many interpretations. The extended definition of Max Weber, which was highly influential in the political, economic, and social sciences, was taken as a starting point to proceed to consider the means of exercising power. This leads, in turn, to identifying different forms of power and types of institutions according to how the same forms of power operate. The keyword also offers a radical change of perspective by pausing to consider that the aforementioned forms of power are all forms of power “over,” in which power is exercised “over” an individual or collective subject, and that they occur in the context of a zero-sum game. It then further explores other forms of power, arriving finally to the concept of “power to empower,” which is, in the last analysis, the ultimate purpose of the PRIhME project.

The second keyword is *violence*. This chapter is based on interviews with fifteen members from European HMEIs, focusing on violence in the sector. It identifies and classifies the types of violence observed with reference to the classification provided by the World Health Organization. This identification



is an essential starting point for prevention and raising awareness in our community of improper conduct that has been tolerated in many cases under the pretext of pursuing excellence.

The third keyword is *canon*. In music, starting from the 16th century, “canon” is the name for a contrapuntal piece (Mann et al., 2001). Nevertheless, this is not the sense of the word that we refer to here. We focus instead on the meaning encompassing the main repertoire of authors and works of a discipline—in our case, music—which is considered to be of great cultural value. In effect, the canons of repertoire exercise a great power by laying out what is worthy of being included in or excluded from the canon. The central focus of the chapter is the canon of Western Art Music, which until very recently had been considered a settled matter, and which has also expanded to colonise other cultural traditions.

Three additional chapters shed more light on the topics treated above from the standpoint of personal reflection and are intertwined with them. The first one is by Vanessa Gardebien, who provides her testimony in the form of an interview. Her story makes a devastating impression, since it describes the psychological damage she suffered during her musical training, but, in the end, it allows room for hope, because it narrates her process of recovering her “power within.” She also shares with us that, as a teacher, she is now able to help other students regain their self-confidence.

In the second chapter, Basilio Fernández Morante describes an investigation of psychological and sexual violence opened in 2018 in the Music School of Oviedo using statements published subsequently in the communications media, which later resulted in a lawsuit in the Criminal Courts and in a verdict that was devastating for the survivor. Fernández Morante takes the gathered information and contextualises it with the categorisation of bullying processes in education devised by Piñuel and Cortijo (2016), and reflects on the case from the educational standpoint; speaking out against the perverse consequences of the institution’s failure to take action and considering the prestige of their teachers—and hence, of the institution itself—as a higher priority than respect for individuals.

Lastly, Unni Løvlid describes her career as a student of traditional singing at the Norwegian Academy of Music, as one of the first to undertake folk music studies there in 1996. This account underscores the importance of the hierarchy of values that she found at the Academy, and her frustration and loneliness that resulted (in part) from feeling like she had disappointed the traditional music community in which she grew up in, and that she was not truly welcome at the Academy. For purposes of contrast, she also shares the values that guide her now as Associate Professor of traditional singing at the aforementioned Academy, which significantly differ from those that she had encountered herself as a student. She now has “power to” change the situation, and she is doing so.

# Power Relations and Hierarchies in Higher Music Education Institutions

Anna Bull

This chapter introduces the concepts of power relations and hierarchies in higher music education institutions (HMEIs). 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. It focuses primarily on examples relating to classical music in the UK as this is the context in which my research has been carried out. However, these examples may be helpful for thinking about similarities and differences across genres and national contexts.

Before introducing these concepts, I will start with an example. In research with young classical musicians in England (Bull, 2019), 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>1</sup> described how, during his first year at a conservatoire, his teacher “broke” him and “knocked him down.” This impacted him severely:

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<sup>1</sup> All names have been changed to protect anonymity.

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 his teacher's behaviour as bullying, and even states that 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 even more severe behaviours also be accepted as normal?

This chapter 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 (HME).

## 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. *Interpersonal 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 perceived ideas of “talent” or “ability” are not fully objective criteria but rather 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 (Bull, 2019; see also Baker, 2020).

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” (Perkins, 2013, p. 207). One student in Perkins’ study, Fay, described how the sense of “hierarchy and competition” led to her “just feeling cast aside, and also 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. (Perkins, 2013, p. 208)

These examples draw on classical music institutions and practices. In the UK, the hierarchy of cultural value favours classical music over other genres (Bull & Scharff, 2017; Green, 2003; Spruce, 2013). 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 (Bull & Scharff, 2017). This can lead to skills, knowledge, repertoire, or instruments associated with other genres being less valued within institutions. However, in jazz education in Sweden, similar patterns are visible to classical music. Students from middle-class background are over-represented in applicants to jazz higher education programmes. There are also patterns relating to how class background affects instrument choice; students from working class and lower-middle class families were most likely to play bass and guitar (Nylander & Melldahl, 2015). Hierarchies of what and who is valued, and how these forms of value intersect, may vary across countries and between genres.

### How Social Inequalities Shape Hierarchies

As this quote from Fay shows, hierarchies can create a culture where some students feel unsupported in their learning 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 (Perkins, 2013, p. 207). 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 (Yang, 2007). These stereotypes are based on wider social hierarchies in which whiteness is valued over other racialised 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 (Scharff, 2015b, 2017). 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, as noted above. Even within a genre, there can also be hierarchies of value of instruments, or sub-genres. For example, in classical music an orchestral career tends to be seen as more valuable than being a teacher (Bull & Scharff, 2021). 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 HME. 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. By using the terms “intimidating” and “scary,” they are starting to open up a critical perspective on the techniques their conductor is using, but these are only expressed in private. This example shows how it is important to understand power relations not solely as repressive or negative. Instead, they can be experienced in contradictory ways, including as pleasurable or exciting (Bull, 2016).

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 listened to. Not only that, in this example the conductor is being paid 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 (2016) have suggested, charismatic leadership in the arts can “supplant ethics, strategy and reason” (p. 9) 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. Among conductors in my research, humour, bodily gesture, posture, tone of voice, and emotion were all carefully channelled in order to achieve certain effects from musicians. As well as these techniques, one conductor would act in emotionally unpredictable ways—what the young musicians described as “getting moody”—that kept the group in a state of fear. As a result, when the conductor made offensive sexualised remarks, no-one challenged him (Bull, 2019).

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 (Giroux & Penna, 1979, p. 22).

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 example of this can be seen in the quotes above: young women’s perspectives are not usually sought, but if given a safe space and invited to share critical perspectives, they may present a different view of power relations and hierarchies to those in positions of power (Bull, 2019). 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 chapter, one reason for addressing power relations in HME is to prevent abuses of power such as bullying and harassment. Liz Kelly has described how some environments create a “conducive context” where abuses of power are more likely to occur. “Conducive contexts” tend to have “institutionalised power and authority that creates a sense of entitlement, to which there [is], limited external challenge” (Kelly, 2016). The power and authority that can exist in HMEIs can contribute to creating a conducive context for abuses of power to occur (Bull, 2024). Within such relationships, it can be difficult for students to label their experiences as harassment or abuse, particularly when this harassment takes the form of “grooming” or “boundary-blurring” behaviours. Boundary-blurring behaviours can be defined as “those that transgress (often tacit) professional



boundaries” while grooming refers to “a pattern of these behaviours over time between people in positions of unequal power that may lead to an abuse of power” (Bull & Page, 2021, p. 12). Power imbalances can also make it difficult to speak up when harassment occurs; a report from the Royal Academy of Music in London described a “widespread culture among conservatoire students of the fear of ‘speaking out’” about harassment within the institution (Kopelman et al., 2020, p. 1). Not only that, but there is evidence that higher education institutions are struggling to adequately handle reports of staff sexual misconduct (Bull, 2022; Bull & Page, 2022).

Nevertheless, by implementing key principles such as transparency, accountability, and empowerment (Bull et al., 2019), institutions can start to create a climate where students and staff will feel safer to speak out about abuses of power. Overall, it is crucial to remember that this fear of speaking out is not an inevitable part of music education but instead is produced (in part) by power relations and hierarchies. Our challenge is to first make these power relations and hierarchies visible, and then—where necessary—to challenge them.

## Keyword: Power

Itziar Larrinaga

*Changing power requires understanding power.*

(Vermeulen, 2005a, p. 11)

There are disparate takes on power, which draw on widely differing contexts and operate at different levels of abstraction. The literature on power is so extensive that writing a chapter on this topic is particularly challenging. Therefore, this text will focus on highlighting certain specific features of power that might be useful in the current context of higher music education (HME).

The term “power” is derived from the Anglo-French “poër, pouair, püeir,” which in turn derives from the Old French “poeir, pöer, pouvoir,” the nominalization of the infinitive “to be able,” derived in turn from the Vulgar Latin “potere” (be powerful, be able) and from the Latin “potis” (powerful) (Chambers Harrap, 2004, p. 826).

Max Weber’s definition of power is one of the most influential definitions in the fields of political sciences, economics, and social sciences. For Weber, “power [*Macht*]<sup>1</sup> is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless

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<sup>1</sup> In German there are three terms related to “power”: “Macht,” “Herrschaft,” and “Gewalt” (Klinger, 2004).

of the basis on which this probability rests” (Weber, 1978, p. 53). In other words, power is the likelihood that A is able to make B do what A wants, independently of whether B wants to do so or not, and it exists in the context of an asymmetrical social relationship with a unidirectional component—one party gives orders and the other party obeys them.

Along the same lines as Weber, Amitai Etzioni (1971) defines power as: “an actor’s ability to induce or influence another actor to carry out his directives or any other norms he supports” (pp. 4–5; see also Cartwright, 1959; Dahl, 1957; Easton, 1963; Goldhamer & Shils, 1939; Lasswell & Kaplan, 1950; Parsons, 1951). Accordingly, Etzioni specifies three means of exercising power, each of which corresponds to one of three forms of power<sup>2</sup> (1971, pp. 5–6): *coercive power*—A has tools of force or coercive tools to make B do what A wishes; *remunerative power*—A has something that B wants, and B does what A wishes in order to get it; and *normative power*—A persuades/manipulates/influences B so that B does what A wishes. For Etzioni, the last form of power could be called persuasive, manipulative, or suggestive, but he rejects these terms due to their negative connotations and opts for the expression “normative power” in the sense that B internalises and confers legitimacy on the principles or rules of A and, as a result, does what A wishes.

Within organisations and institutions, power manifests both at the internal and external level, and it operates both in the vertical (top-down and bottom-up within the existing hierarchy) and horizontal direction (among equals). In his book *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations* (1971), Etzioni distinguishes among three types of organisations according to the manner that the three forms of power mentioned above operate within them. This taxonomy is useful for this article, insofar as it is related to the forms of power and control within organisations. He uses “the nature of compliance in the organization as the basis for classification” (p. xv) and understands “compliance” as “a relationship consisting of the power employed by superiors to control subordinates and the orientation of the subordinators to this power” (p. xv). In other words, his approach to classifying and comparing the organisations entails considering how power operates in the vertical direction, from top to bottom.

The first type of organisation that Etzioni (1971) distinguishes is the *coercive organization*. In it, “coercion is the major means of control over lower participants, and high alienation characterizes the orientation of most lower participants to the organization” (p. 27). Although Etzioni establishes two main types of coercive organisations—prisons and custodial mental

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<sup>2</sup> Different authors have given other names to these forms of power. See, for example, Galbraith (2013).

hospitals—we must note that any organisation, including higher music education institutions (HMEIs), may exhibit coercive patterns. For example, in the event that any type of violence (physical, sexual, psychological, or through deprivation) occurs within them, whenever the organisation aims to enforce compliance among its members through penalties, threat of penalties, or censorship. For instance, in the case of HMEIs, unidirectional teaching (sometimes associated with the master-apprentice model) can at times present coercive patterns (see Keyword: Violence, in this volume).

The second type is the *utilitarian organization* (Etzioni, 1971). Here we see a type of organisation in which “remuneration is the major means of control over lower participants and calculative involvement (i.e., mild alienation to mild commitment) characterizes the orientation of the large majority of lower participants” (p. 31). In other words, they obey due to the incentives. Although Etzioni distinguishes between two main types of utilitarian organisations (blue-collar and the white-collar industries), any HMEI can also exhibit utilitarian patterns. For example, wages for teaching and administrative staff, or passing a specific course, or being recommended for certain grants, competitions, concerts, or publications for students, become the main tools for obtaining compliance. Additionally, compliance may be sought by offering rewards or additional resources to either workers or students.

The third type that Etzioni (1971) distinguishes is the *normative organization*. Here, “normative power is the major source of control over most lower participants, whose orientation to the organization is characterized by high commitment” (p. 40). Compliance in these organisations “rests principally on internalization of directives accepted as legitimate” and “leadership, rituals, manipulation of social and prestige symbols are the more important techniques of control used” (p. 40). Etzioni distinguishes nine types of normative organisations,<sup>3</sup> although he indicates that some of them exhibit coercive or utilitarian secondary patterns. For him, HMEIs would be normative organisations. But, in what sense?

In order to understand how normative power operates in our institutions, we can provide some examples: the expert and referent authority of the main instrument teachers leadership; the authority of the great composers of the past (all of them men) and that of their works in the institutions or departments focused on Western Art Music, embodied in scores that the performer must follow faithfully; or also the authority of certain reference recording by male artists in Popular Music and Jazz departments. We could also consider

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<sup>3</sup> Etzioni (1971) lists religious organizations, political organizations, general hospitals, colleges and universities, social unions, voluntary associations, schools, therapeutic mental hospitals, and professional organizations.

the main symbol of prestige at our institutions, namely, talent, about which, as Kingsbury (1988) argued, there is no objective consensus: “there can be no escaping the fact that both the manifesting and the assessing of musical talent are to a great extent matters of social power and authority” (p. 77; see also Keyword: Privilege, in this volume; and Gardebien & Larrinaga, in this volume). This explains, to a large extent, the primacy of performance studies in our institutions and, to a lesser extent, of studies of musical composition, compared to those of pedagogy or musicology, due to the social value attributed to talent in the former disciplines. Bruno Nettl (1995) expressed it thus: “Those who can, do; others teach—or write books” (p. 56). Lastly, we could examine how power is held by composers of the past through the sacrosanct way that their works are revered and treated in Western Art Music-focused departments—both in classes, rehearsals, and concerts: the composer is at the top of the hierarchy, the performer in the middle, and the audience at the bottom (Cook, 2000). Nettl (1995) even compared music schools with a religious system, another typical normative organisation: “it makes sense to think of the music school, therefore, as a society ruled by deities with sacred texts, rituals, ceremonial numbers, and a priesthood” (p. 5). The members of these organisations, he explains, “don’t necessarily approach their music in a religious spirit, but often say they are working in the service of music, an abstraction that exists without human intervention. One may say that music itself is the deity” (p. 15).

We do observe, in general, a high degree of identification of the members of HMEIs with the mission and values of their institution and, as a result, a high degree of dedication to their organisation, which forms the basis for compliance. In effect, the members of these institutions share certain interpretations of reality, which they consider valid. For example, the interpretations of reality described above. As Vázquez Gutiérrez (2022) states, referring to what Bourdieu called symbolic power, “the production of these mechanisms for defining reality is an expression of the power relations at work in the material organization of societies. Nevertheless, its origin is unclear and, in general, not known to the people involved” (p. 13). In brief, the normative power in organisations operates in a much more subtle and disguised manner than other types of power, which is important to keep in mind, since it makes it “institutionalized and often hard to recognize” (Vermeulen, 2005a, p. 12).<sup>4</sup>

The forms of power described up to now—coercive power, remunerative power and normative power—are forms of *power over*. In other words, they act upon a subject, whether an individual or a group, and they correspond

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<sup>4</sup> Vermeulen uses the term “conditioned power,” which in Galbraith’s terminology corresponds to “normative power.”

to a traditional model of domination “characterized by control, instrumentalism, and self-interests” (Berger, 2009, p. 6). They can be described as a *zero-sum* or *win-lose* game. That is to say, the more power A has over B, the less power B has, or, in other words, if B gains power, then B takes power away from A. This aspect is crucial, since it makes empowerment seem like something threatening (Rowlands, 1997). For example, if we apply this concept of power, any of the members taking part in HMEIs would believe that empowering some would entail the loss of power by others. In specific, the teaching staff would understand that if the students were empowered, then there would be a change in the power structure resulting in the teaching staff losing power. Hence, the teachers’ fear of losing control, in this case, would constitute an obstacle to empowering the students. Let us consider from this perspective power relations among different players in the field of HME: leadership, teaching staff, administrators, and students; composers, conductors, and performers; performers, artistic researchers and scholars. And within the group of performers, performers of Western Art and popular music; singers and instrumentalists; strings and woodwinds, etc. For that matter, power relations are also at work among departments, degree programmes, instruments, repertoires, genres, etc. We will look in more detail at the question of how empowerment of some would entail the loss of power for others, in accordance with this form of understanding power.

How can we go beyond this concept of power as a zero-sum or win-lose matter? Another concept of power is needed, and in this respect the writings on power by women such as Mary Parker Follett (1940), Dorothy Emett (1953), Hannah Arendt (1970), Hanna Pitkin (1972), and Beatrice Carrol (1972) have blazed the trail. Although, except for Arendt, their work is marginalised among theories of social-political power, they do argue “against the understanding of power as dominance or domination,” “attempt to point to other meanings of the term more associated with ability, capacity, and competence” (Hartsock, 1985, p. 225) and “stress those aspects of power related to energy, capacity and potential” (p. 210). Their writings have influenced feminist literature on power, as well as research on development, and from this point on they have served to establish “other ways of understanding and conceptualizing power, which focus on ‘processes’. When power is defined as ‘power to’, ‘power with’, and ‘power from within’, this entails very different meanings for empowerment” (Rowlands, 1997, p. 12).<sup>5</sup> We must take a closer look at these new ways of understanding power.

The expression *power to* refers to “generative or productive power ... which creates new possibilities and actions without domination” (Rowlands, 1997,

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<sup>5</sup> See also these expressions of power in Chambers, 2006; Gaventa, 2006; Hunjan & Keophilavong, 2010; Mathie et. al., 2017; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002; Vermeulen, 2005b.

p. 13). It is also called “agency, meaning effective choice, the capability to decide on actions and do them” (Chambers, 2006, p. 100). An example of its exercise may be that of a student who is receiving humiliating treatment in an institution, can report it and, in effect, reports it; another is that of a leadership who has power to establish a protocol in case of harassment, and, in fact, establishes it; or that of a teacher who can change the course syllabus and, in effect, changes it and makes it, for instance, more inclusive.

Foucault’s view of power is linked, in part, with the expression “power to” to the extent that he accords importance to individual agency. For Foucault (1982), power is relational and “exists only when it is put into action” (p. 788). Moreover, in his view, the exercise of power “is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective.” It is a “mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future” (p. 789). Therefore, if power is defined as a manner of action on the actions of others, then a very important element is included—freedom. According to Foucault, “power is only exercised over free subjects and only to the extent that they are free” (p. 790). In other words, to the extent that they are “individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments, may be realized” (p. 790). For Foucault, freedom “may well appear as the condition for the exercise of power—at the same time its precondition, since freedom must exist for power to be exerted, and also its permanent support, since without the possibility of recalcitrance, power would be equivalent to a physical determination” (p. 790). Namely, if freedom were completely withdrawn from the power that is exercised on it, then power would disappear and would be replaced by the pure and simple coercion of violence.

*Power with* means collective power. It is “a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together” (Williams et al., 1994, p. 233). This is the power of solidarity, which “can be mobilized both within and across differences, including those that are found in extended family groupings, and across class, caste, ethnic, gender and age differences” (Mathie et al., 2017, p. 58). The prevailing motto of *power with* is “union is strength.” Indeed, unions of workers and students, or different groups formed within an institution to defend common interests are good examples of *power with*.

By the same token, the expression *power within* refers to power with its origin in self-esteem. It is “the spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each one of us and makes us truly human. Its basis is self-acceptance and self-respect which extend, in turn, to respect for and acceptance of others as equals” (Williams et al., 1994, p. 233). In HMEIs, any student, teacher,

administrator, or manager with self-esteem has power from within (see Gardebien & Larrinaga, in this volume).

These ways of understanding power are closely interrelated. We will consider an example: if a student has greater confidence in expressing their opinions (power within), then they can participate more actively in the life of a HMEI (power to), and, by interacting with other members of the community, they can inspire joint action (power with) while at the same time creating a “circular ‘feedback’ effect in that the acquisition of new skills [that] reinforces the development of self-confidence and self-esteem” (Rowlands, 1997, p. 122). From this perspective, “empowerment is concerned with the processes by which people become aware of their own interests and how those relate to the interests of others, in order both to participate from a position of greater strength in decision-making and actually to influence such decisions,” which means that, “empowerment is thus more than participation in decision-making: *it must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make the decisions*” (Rowlands, 1997, p. 14, emphasis in original).

Over the course of this keyword, we have referred to four major expressions of power: *power over* (in the forms of coercive power, remunerative power and normative power), *power to*, *power with* and *power within*. Robert Chambers has referred to a fifth expression of power, which is *power to empower*: “if you have ‘power over’ and ‘power to,’ you also have ‘power to empower’ ... The question is, do we recognize that? Do we use it enough? Do we make power to empower central to our definition of our roles, of our behaviours and of our attitudes?” (Chambers, n.d.). In his article “Transforming Power: From Zero-Sum to Win-Win?” Chambers makes the case for a “pedagogy for the powerful,” proposing that *power over* be used to facilitate processes of empowerment, something that “points towards what appears a largely overlooked frontier in development thinking and practice” (Chambers, 2006, pp. 107–108).

The PRIhME project, of which this publication is part, shares precisely this way of thinking, according to which *power over* is used in order to empower. How has *power over* been utilised in this project? To convene students, teachers, administrative personnel, and leadership “from nine European partner institutions—especial attention has been given to institutional roles, geographic spread, social and cultural backgrounds, expertise in social inclusion, and civic engagement” (PRIhME, n.d.) to “conduct their own analysis” on power relations in HME, “to come to their own conclusions and to decide on their own action and to follow up on that” (Chambers, n.d.) in their own institutions. Following the principles of nonviolent action “the aim is not to maximize the power and authority of oneself over others but rather to create the conditions whereby power can be shared” (Bruyn & Rayman, 1979,



p. 21). In other words, “the purpose is to create the conditions in which each individual’s opportunity to exercise power is maximized in the context of the larger community” (p. 21).

Indeed, the members of the PRIhME project are agents of change in their own institutions. They have experienced working methods of deliberative democracy and can transfer them to their immediate context to favour a healthy and sustainable learning-teaching environment. Hence, it paves the way for power relations in which all parties come out ahead—win-win solutions.

## **The Art of Giving Confidence: Facilitating Power from Within**

Vanessa Gardebien & Itziar Larrinaga

Vanessa Gardebien was born in Toulouse in 1979. She was a student of Bachelor and Master Studies in Music Performance at Musikene-School of Music of the Basque Country, specialising in classical piano. She was also a member of the PRIhME Stakeholder Assembly, which brought together representatives of students, teachers, and administrative personnel from nine European partner institutions. Furthermore, she took part in the 2022–2023 academic year in the *PRIhMElab* Itziar Larrinaga organised within the framework of the Art and Society class for the official Master's degree programmes at Musikene. Larrinaga introduced the topic of power relations into the existing course curriculum and thus created a safe space for the students, including Vanessa, to share reflections on their experiences of power relations in higher music education.

Vanessa was invited to tell her story in this open-ended interview with Itziar, as it offers a direct insight into an internal process of empowerment. The intention is to present it as unmediated evidence for readers to interpret for themselves. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitation of this approach, including the potential for biased reader interpretations due to the absence of a specific contextualization.

*Vanessa, when and where did you begin your musical training?*

I am from Toulouse, the capital of the region of Occitania, in southeastern France. I began to study piano at the age of nine in the Conservatoire of Toulouse. My piano teacher was wonderful but my solfège teacher, who found that I had certain special abilities for music, told my parents about the schools which share the scheduling with the conservatoires. These are special schools for students who want to pursue their studies in the music school more seriously, and who attend fewer hours of classes in order to make general studies compatible with musical studies. At that time, this college was one of the best in Toulouse. When I started to study there, everything changed.

*What do you mean by “everything changed”?*

I had a new piano teacher at the Conservatoire who gradually destroyed me. I studied with her for six years. She used to say horrible things to me that had a great influence on my piano technique and my view of music. I began to play the piano because I really wanted to, but it turned into a source of suffering for me. It was no longer a pleasure. I started to live in fear. I was struggling to get by. In almost all my classes she would repeat to me again and again that I had an adequate technique but that I wasn't a musician, that the music that I performed was not really music. She told me that because I was pretty, I was not going to pass the exam. It was terrible, I studied with her from the age of ten to the age of sixteen. It was time for me to develop my performance technique, and all of this caused me many problems. Even though I would pass the exam each year, I was still sure that my way of playing my instrument was horrible.

*What did you do next?*

At the age of 17, I switched teachers. At first it was great—later I will tell you what happened afterwards. He helped me make lots of progress. But for family reasons, I continued my studies at the Conservatoire of Montpellier and then at the Conservatoire of Bayonne, where I also taught elementary piano lessons. I coincided there with two violin teachers, who said the same thing to me separately: “Vanessa, you will never be a professional pianist; you are not capable of earning the Diplôme d'Études Musicales (Undergraduate Professional Degree); you will not be able to continue studying music.” My spirit was definitively destroyed.

*What were the piano classes like?*

In contrast with my previous experience, the classes were fine. From the musical standpoint, the teacher showed me many things. In spite of this, he

was not able to help me feel confident in myself at the piano. At the age of 23, I obtained my *Diplôme d'Études Musicales*.

*What path did you choose afterwards?*

I continued working with my former professor from Toulouse as a private student in Paris for three years. In fact, I decided to study with him again—as a private student, as I have already said—in the last year that I spent at the Conservatoire of Bayonne. But one day he said that he would not continue to teach me: “you are not talented, and you cannot become a professional pianist; you have to make a change in your professional life,” he concluded. I cried for a long time.

*How did you turn the situation around?*

I was at a Summer Academy with my best friend. I wanted to leave and give up everything. But she said to me resolutely: “Vanessa, listen to me. You paid for the Academy. You have a class in the afternoon with a different teacher. If he tells you that you are useless for the piano, then take walks outside and enjoy the location. But you should go to the next class.”

I followed her advice and went to class. The new professor listened to me play and said to me: “you should be a professional pianist.” I thought he was making a joke. A completely different opinion in the morning and in the afternoon. “You have the necessary skills, although there are still aspects that you need to improve,” he told me. I worked with him in Belgium for two years. He had been the teacher of my favorite pianist, Christian Zimmermann. When I attended my first class in Belgium, I saw the photos; I didn’t know about it. He is a Polish teacher, and, before he became a teacher at the Royal Conservatoire of Liège, he was a teacher at the Conservatoire of Warsaw. Thanks to him, I did not stop playing the piano. Otherwise, I think I would have given it up.

*What sort of experience did you have with the piano in that period?*

I felt useless. I felt that I was not able to play well. There was a ghost inside me that would repeat the voice of my former teachers: “You cannot achieve this,” “you cannot do it.” Whenever I would perform in public, I had almost no confidence in myself. I would forget my technical and musical resources. Playing in public was a nightmare, every time. “There will be no next time,” I used to think. “I am useless.”

*What motivated you to continue?*

I think that my passion for music and for the piano were even stronger, and that is why I continued. Moreover, I had positive opinions to contrast with

the devastating judgments. I would win piano competitions and, as I have already mentioned, there were teachers who could see in me certain qualities with which I could continue my musical career.

When I passed the test to gain admission to Pôle d'Enseignement Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Bordeaux so that I could obtain the Diplôme d'État de Professeur de Musique (Nationwide Certification for Undergraduate Teaching), I was very surprised. My own impression was that I would not be able to achieve this. I remember, after many years, that when I had to take the final exam in pedagogy, my whole body would break out in eczema, especially my face and neck, because I was sure that it was not going to work out, that I could not do it. But I proved that it was possible. And then I thought: "Vanessa, it would be great to make your dream come true." My dream was to study for an advanced degree in music, but in another country.

*And this dream brought you to Musikene?*

Yes, I decided on Musikene. I wanted to study piano and learn about Basque culture and Spanish culture, learn another language. At the beginning I also wanted to learn the Basque language (Euskera), but in the end it was not possible due to scheduling: I couldn't fit it in. But my dream was also to speak Euskera.

I was certain that I was not going to pass the exam for admission. In my head, I heard the words of my former professors who had said that I was not able to return again and again. But I was very surprised to be admitted and live out this adventure. In Musikene I have found the teacher who has helped me the most to improve my piano technique, to give shape to a musical phrase. But, above all, he is the teacher who was really able to make me feel confident. As of last year, I no longer feel stressed when I perform in public! It is unbelievable. I feel good. It is a great joy to perform. And I feel liberated. I feel confident that I can play the piano very well, that it is legitimate. And I feel validated.

*What sets this teacher apart from the other teachers that you have studied with?*

Gustavo is a teacher who provides a framework, and within this framework I have the opportunity to say whether I agree or not. I can really say what I want. This freedom enables me to be myself. And another very important matter: he has never said negative things to me. He corrects objective aspects, but with kindness. *He does not make judgments.*

*Could you give us an example?*

I have gone through very complicated times with this teacher. I used to combine my studies in San Sebastián with my work as a piano teacher in France. In the second year, I got divorced, and this affected my studies of the piano considerably. The teacher understood the situation, and he demonstrated that he was there to help with whatever I might need. He never said anything that could make me feel guilty in this context. In fact, that year, when I only received a grade of 5 out of 10 in my piano exam, he said to me: “Vanessa, don’t forget what sort of a year you have had; your grade does not reflect your progress.” That gave me confidence.

In the fourth year, I had surgery on one of my feet, and I was on medical leave for several months. I had a very hard time preparing for the final recital. And just as before, he said to me: “It’s not a problem, don’t worry. We have enough time to prepare for the final recital. Take care of yourself, let your foot recover.”

Another significant detail is that I did not think I was able to perform Ravel’s Piano Concerto in G major. “Calm down”—he said—“You will play it when the time comes. For now, keep working.” In the fourth year, I played the Concerto in G major. He really helped me a lot both technically and musically, and he was extremely patient with me.

*Vanessa, you mentioned that you are also a piano teacher...*

Yes, in parallel to my musical studies, I taught the piano. I began at the age of 15, giving private lessons. At the age of 17, I started teaching in a music school, and at 19 I started to teach at the Conservatoire of Bayonne. Afterwards, I taught at different music schools and conservatoires. I completed the Diplôme d’État de Professeur de Musique for piano teaching in France at the age of 34. And for the last seven years I have been teaching at the Mont-de-Marsan premises of the Conservatoire of The Landes. And I also teach at another music school, near my home.

I really enjoy teaching. I cannot limit myself to only performing or to only teaching. I really enjoy communicating in the two different ways. With my students, I am very aware of the importance of words —words can be very important, in a positive way or in a negative way—. I explain to my students, and to their parents also, that it is essential for me to clarify things; that it is possible to make a mistake; and that if there is a problem, there is a solution; that, if any student has a problem, then it is necessary to discuss it. I show with my attitude that it is possible to communicate with me, that I’m able to listen, that I can hear what they have to say. I have come to understand that if there is trust in the classroom between the teacher and the student, it

is much easier for the student to make progress. Of course, the student could have other problems, but in general I have come to understand, as a student and as a teacher, that trust between the teacher and the student is very important when it comes to making progress.

*Have you heard about any cases similar to yours during your work as a teacher?*

I had a student with a problem like mine. Last year, she was taking classes from one of the other teachers, and she was not able to earn her advanced secondary degree. That teacher transferred to another center of the same music school, and the student has been attending my classes since last September. I did not hear her in the exam, but I saw that her grade was low, 8 points out of 20. She was very disappointed. When she came to class with me, I realized that her confidence had been eroded. I also saw her love of the piano, but that it was also a source of suffering for. I asked her to perform a piece, so that we could set goals for progress afterwards. When she performed, I said to her: 1) "We have to work on your self-confidence"; 2) "We also have to work on aspects of your piano technique." I also explained to her that I was not sure that everything would work out for April [the month of her exam]. But I said to her: "Don't worry, we are going to work, and we are going to improve, even if we need two years to prepare for the exam." And she replied "OK." She studied very hard; we worked on many aspects to improve her technique. In December, I told her that she had improved a great deal and that we were going to plan tentatively to take the exam on the 8th of April. Of course, the first time that she performed in public, she felt terrible. But we worked on it: she performed in public again and again. Little by little, she started to feel more confident. On the day of the exam, her grade was 14.5 out of 20. She had such a big smile! She was so excited! The ability to instill confidence in others is what the professor taught me, and so now I can do it myself.

## Keyword: Violence

Itziar Larrinaga

The term “violence” is borrowed from Anglo-French and Old French “violence,” from the Latin “violentia” (Chambers Harrap, 2004, p. 1205). It is the quality of being “violentus” (violent). “Violentus,” in turn, comes from the Latin verb “vis,” which means “force,” and from the suffix “-olentus,” which means “abundance.” Therefore, in the etymological sense, a “violent” individual is “one who acts with abundant force,” and violence is the characteristic of this individual.

Although *violence* can be defined in many different ways, for practical purposes, we will begin this discussion with the definition provided by the World Health Organization, and, consequently, also by the United Nations, which states that violence is:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation. (World Health Organization, 1996a)

There are various aspects of this definition that interest us here. On the one hand, it refers to the intentional use of physical force or power. This means that an act of violence requires a determination of intent. On the other hand, the term power is introduced, which expands on the conventional



understanding of violence, namely the “intentional use of physical force” that causes injury, disability, or death. As a result, the definition includes acts derived from abusive exercise of power, such as threats, intimidation, neglect, and intentional omissions, which result in psychological damage, disorders of physical, psychological, or social development and deprivation of basic needs (Krug et al., 2002). It is essential to understand that the abuse of power can lead to domination relations in which the dominated consents to the coercion exerted by the dominator. This phenomenon, termed *symbolic violence* by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, operates subtly and pervasively, making it difficult to identify as it is concealed under the guise of being natural. As Bourdieu (2000) explains:

Symbolic violence is the coercion which is set up only through the consent that the dominated cannot fail to give to the dominator (and therefore to the domination) when their understanding of the situation and relation can only use instruments of knowledge that they have in common with the dominator, which, being merely the incorporated form of the structure of the relation of domination, make this relation appear as natural... (p. 170)

The cover nature of symbolic violence does not make it any less harmful. On the contrary, it can have severe psychological consequences for those subjected to it, as, among other issues, it restricts their freedom and leads them to question their own worth.

In 1996, the World Health Organization declared that violence is a “leading worldwide public health problem” and that preventing violence is a “public health priority” (World Health Organization, 1996b). In 2002, the World Health Organization published the *World Report on Violence and Health*, which included a classification of types of violence (Krug et al., 2002) that is helpful for specifying the nature of the violence and of the victim-aggressor relationship. This report explains that violent acts can be of a) physical nature; b) sexual nature; c) psychological nature; or d) based on deprivation or neglect. Moreover, the report distinguishes between three main types of violence according to the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, which had already been determined in the previous definition of violence. Violence can be committed: a) against oneself (self-directed violence), in which case the perpetrator and the victim are the same person; b) against another individual (interpersonal violence), which, according to the context where it occurs, can be family and intimate-partner violence, or community violence, which may occur among people who know each other or among strangers; or c) against a group or community (collective violence), which is committed by one group of people against another, and which can entail social, political or economic violence.

Different studies have underscored that instances of violence can be found in higher music education institutions (HMEIs) (Bull, 2022; Fernández-Morante, 2018; Herold, 2006; Payne et al., 2018; Reynoso et al., 2023; Schoop & Ptatscheck, 2022). Furthermore, we acknowledge that these institutions exhibit unique features that could facilitate use of violence (Burwell, 2023; Wickström, 2021, 2023):

- Classes with a 1/1 ratio, where the student is alone with the teacher. For the sake of completeness, at a higher level the student chooses this teacher to the extent possible, chooses a specific center of studies to receive individual classes from this teacher, whom the student considers a significant artist;
- Teaching/learning of an art closely related to the body, the emotions, and the identity of the individual;
- Pursuit of excellence, with the subsequent high level of commitment; and
- The absence of psycho-pedagogical training among teachers—something widespread in higher music education—which encourages reenactment of spontaneous types of teaching/learning, often handed down from teachers to students, and which, as we will see, can sometimes be destructive under the premise of pursuit of excellence.

But does the end really justify the means? To address the delicate topic of violence, we have conducted fifteen interviews with students and staff from European HMEIs, focusing on violence in this sector. The aim of collecting these testimonies has been to shed light on the keyword, allowing the interviewees' experiences to highlight the importance and urgency of the issue. An analysis of each interview was not sought. The personal and sensitive nature of the shared experiences not only makes it difficult to obtain information but also often confronts victims with the fear of being identified, which has been deliberately avoided. This fear is understandable and reflects the need to create safe and trustworthy spaces so that these testimonies can be expressed without the risk of reprisals or stigmatisation.

Moving into the discussion and returning to the typology of violence mentioned above, we can establish that the acts of violence detected in HMEIs are mainly of an interpersonal nature. It is a type of violence that occurs in a teaching or learning community—also in a workplace—mainly among people who know each other, occasionally among strangers. Nevertheless, as we will see, in a more covert manner, there are cases of self-directed violence in our institutions, and behaviours approaching institutional or organisational violence can be detected. Furthermore, it is appropriate to stress that during the implementation of the PRIhME Project, and afterwards, our associate

partner in Ukraine, Kharkiv I. P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts, as well as other educational institutions in the country suffered collective violence as a result of a devastating war.

Regarding the nature of violent acts at our institutions, we will start by focusing on *physical violence*, which entails intentional use of force by the perpetrator and causes an observable harm to the victim or to property. The testimonies gathered refer to cases of physical aggression of different types committed by teachers against students, including:

- Direct physical attacks
  - using the perpetrator’s own body (e.g., blows to different parts of the victim’s body, such as neck, stomach, back, buttocks, thighs, or pushing the student while they play the instrument);
  - using an object (e.g., blows with the bow of a stringed instrument);
- Indirect physical attacks: on objects belonging to the student or to the classroom—for instance, scribbling on or even poking holes in the student’s score with a pen, breaking a small object, such as a pencil, or a larger object, such as the piano bench, or throwing objects from a distance; or
- Auditory attacks, which are especially upsetting, such as stopping the student by shouting constantly, or marking the beat in an irritating manner, sometimes off beat, while the student plays, etc.

While we will give more attention to the issues of *sexual violence* in Part II, below we will refer to cases of *violence by deprivation* that have been identified. This doesn’t involve depriving individuals of their basic needs, but rather a symbolic form of deprivation. This could include visibly placing some students in a disadvantaged position compared to others, and in more severe instances, depriving them of their freedom. The testimonies compiled describe psychological contracts between teachers and students, aimed at ensuring the loyalty of the student to the teacher, and that could be characterised as dangerous. One stereotype is that of the teacher who regards themselves as a sort of “guru” or “master” within their own musical field. As the keeper of the “only” proper technique, they believe that they can “save” the student from deficient training and they wind up making essential decisions for the student, depriving the student of their freedom or autonomy as a result. For example, the teacher might prohibit the student to take classes with other teachers; or determine unilaterally which courses the student should choose (if there was a possibility of choosing); when the student may take a test or perform an internal or external audition for which the student has prepared adequately; which tests or competitions the student is allowed to take part in; what repertoire or topic the student may develop

in their bachelor's or master's final project or dissertation. The teacher may even intervene in the student's private life. All these examples may involve psychological violence, even when the teacher's control or domination over the student is assumed by the latter to be natural, due to lacking the tools to contemplate the relationship with the teacher beyond the structure of the relation of domination. This brings us back to what Bourdieu defined as symbolic violence.

Students are malleable to the influence of professors, "since they know that they can damage or even destroy their career" and, on the contrary, also favour them (Wickström, 2021). Indeed, "to assume that it is a simple matter to 'choose not to accept' dominating behaviour is to overlook the dynamics of power relations" (Burwell, 2023, p. 7).

*Psychological violence* is more difficult to describe in objective terms than physical or sexual violence, since it does not entail perceptible physical harm. Its repercussions may be even more severe, however, since its aftermath can last for a long time or latent harm comes to the surface only later. It is important to point out that physical and sexual violence also entail psychological harm. Different studies using an ethnographic approach, as well as case studies, biographical analysis, or analysis from the organisational perspective have raised awareness of the existence of psychological abuse in HMEIs (Burwell, 2023; Fernández-Morante, 2018; Kingsbury, 1988; Musumeci, 2005, 2008; Netti, 1995; Quigg, 2011; Smilde, 2009a, 2009b), especially between teachers and students. The testimonies collected indicate that in our institutions there are instances of psychological abuse that, in addition to the above-mentioned relations of domination, include:

- Defamation and disparagement: "you are heartless," "you are fingerless, you can't play fast enough," "you are not good enough," and even "you are worthless," "you do not deserve to be here," "no one would pay to listen to you";
- Slandering, insulting or ridiculing the student's way of playing an instrument, singing, composing; shaming the student based on gender, race, religion, psychological weakness, left-handedness, etc.;
- Unfair and negative comparison: "you are not/you do not have ... while the other person is/does have";
- Gestures of disrespect—dirty looks, vulgar gestures; and
- Not allowing the victim to speak, insisting that they be silent, discrediting them, or ignoring them on purpose, refusing to look at or speak to the victim, and aggravating the situation by being very attentive to any bystanders.

All these forms of psychological mistreatment involve misconduct on the part of the perpetrator. Bull and Rye (2018) advocate for the use of the term misconduct “to signal that such conduct is a matter of professional behavior in the workplace, and to ensure that the focus remains on the responsibility of the staff member for maintaining professional conduct in their dealings with students” (p. 9).

If psychological mistreatment is prolonged, we can speak of psychological abuse or, according to Hirigoyen, “moral harassment,” since it demoralises the individual, stripping them of their own identity. An individual, argues Hirigoyen, “can shatter another person by moral harassment or psychological abuse,” while “relentless attacks can even lead to a state of authentic psychological devastation” (Hirigoyen, 1999, p. 11). Established musicians, such as Martha Argerich, acknowledge having suffered psychological abuse during their musical training. Specifically, her teacher Vincenzo Scaramuzza, who is probably the source of Argerich’s conflict-ridden relationship with the piano—as she herself recognizes (“Martha rompe el silencio”, 1997)—used to consider his students to be like swords: “Some break as soon as they are bent, and others fold over themselves before returning to their original shape” (Bellamy, 2010, p. 24). Scaramuzza indicated that he preferred students of the former sort and strived to break them as soon as possible. Argerich belonged to the second sort, and as a girl she had to endure repeated psychological abuse. Another case that we can adduce for comparison is that of Georg Solti. In his memoirs (Solti, 1997) he describes his chamber music classes with Leo Weiner as follows: “We were devastated. That sort of psychological attack is very hard to cope with” (p. 20). While the author takes a resilient view of the treatment received—“but if you’re strong enough to accept it as a challenge, it can prove useful” (p. 20)—it is clear that such attacks should never be perpetrated.

The response of those surrounding the student in cases of prolonged psychological abuse is crucial (Hirigoyen, 1999). If those around them fail to react, due to ignorance—the victims’ difficulties in identifying, understanding, and sharing what is happening to them are enormous, as the predator uses different strategies to paralyze and isolate them— or because they tolerate and permit the abuse, the damage is multiplied and can become devastating (Hirigoyen, 1999). The testimonies we gathered reveal that psychological abuse also occurs in the presence of third parties. In group classes, for example, students may witness the attacks and remain silent, or in other situations, side with the aggressor, laughing at their “jokes.” Returning to Martha Argerich’s testimony, it was surprising to learn that her mother was present in her classes with Scaramuzza. This underpins the fact that a victim of psychological abuse can not only accept unacceptable treatment, but also endure it in an attempt for success.

If people in the victim's environment demonstrate a permissive attitude towards violence, then the aggression becomes much more intense, that of the perpetrator and that of the silent witnesses or accomplices. If the institution minimises, tolerates, or permits violence, then violence begins to seem normal, and the institution becomes coercive" (see Keyword: Power, in this volume). Fernández-Morante (2018), following Quigg (2011), has written about *institutional bullying* in conservatoires, namely, when bullying becomes ingrained and accepted as part of an institution's culture: "There is reason to consider conservatoires as having a culture, which, due to the mindset described and to a great extent due to the lack of resources to tackle this problem, could tend to approximate to institutional bullying" (p. 20).

It is worth noting that one of the contributing factors to the silence of educational institutions when confronted with serious problems of this nature is the preservation of their reputation, as Pace (2013) has pointed out. This reputation often rests on the prestige of "great musicians" who engage in abusive pedagogical practices (p. 2). The excellence of an institution, however, is not based on minimisation, silencing, or denial of violence, but rather on the creation of a healthy teaching and learning environments for the entire educational community that can prevent any use of violence.

Prolonged psychological abuse leads to psychiatric disorders in victims (Hirigoyen, 1998), sometimes associated with *self-mutilations* (Nader & Boehme, 2003). These are maladaptive regulation strategies where individuals intentionally cause harm to themselves to relieve intense pain (cathartic self-mutilation) or to regain self-awareness after moments of severe emotional numbness or dissociation (reintegrative self-mutilation) (Nader & Boehme, 2003). We have gathered accounts of cases of self-harming behavior in musicians, mainly cutting of the arms, fingers, and legs—a more public case is once again that of Martha Argerich, who acknowledged cutting her own finger to avoid performing in public (Gachot, 2002); as well as eating disorders (Kabsetaki & Easmon, 2019), which are sometimes related to self-harming behavior. Suicidal thinking have been documented, as well as, in the most extreme case, actual suicide. The victim believes that there is no escape from their pain except death. Perhaps it is necessary to remind ourselves here of what we had indicated above, music is an art closely connected to the body, the emotions, and the identity of the individual. As a result, there is an association between music and the individual as a whole, which tends to mean that feeling incapable in music could lead to feeling incapable as an individual, and ultimately, in life itself.

Specific cases of violence in this chapter name and identify instances of violence committed in HMEIs. These cases not only indicate the reality of violence in our institutions, but also have the potential for raising awareness within the educational communities about the importance of creating safe

and trustworthy spaces for testimonies to be expressed, and about the urgency of eradicating misconducts. Acknowledging this reality within our institutions is the starting point for prevention and for us to abandon deep-rooted tolerance of violence based on the unacceptable premise of the pursuit of excellence. This awareness is essential to cultivate an institutional culture in which such conducts are recognised as unacceptable, and where the safety and well-being of all community members are a priority. There is hope.

## Violence in Higher Music Education Today: Reprehensible but not Condemnable?

Basilio Fernández-Morante

One of the biggest taboos surrounding formal music teaching is the intentional use of psychological violence in the classroom, especially in the higher music education (HME) sector. Despite this, references to violence in music education have reached the mass media, both in TV series such as *Mozart in the Jungle* (Timbers et al., 2014–2018) and in films from *Orchestra Rehearsal* (Fellini, 1979) to *Tár* (Field, 2022), as evidence of the (bad) reputation of music education. In fact, the formative context of orchestras has also been the subject of criticism in relation to the permissiveness of violent behaviour in the Venezuelan “El Sistema” (Baker, 2014; Baker & Frega, 2018) in contrast to more inclusive approaches in Colombia, Brazil (Baker, 2018, 2021), or Sweden (Bergman et al., 2016).

Recently, several cases of violence between teachers and students in higher music education institutions (HMEIs) have appeared in press, like the case of Hans-Jürgen von Bose, music professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München, acquitted of the crime of raping a student’s sister on multiple occasions (“Trial against von Bose”, 2021), or Jérôme Pernoo, violoncello teacher at Conservatoire national Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris, who was fired following allegations of harassment by former students (Emerlaud & Garnier, 2022). There have also been protests from the students about the inadequate response in cases of sexual misconduct, as in the case of Berklee College of Music in Boston (Quinlan, 2017).



The case of violence exercised within the field of music has its own characteristics. It is essential to first understand the particularities of music teaching compared to other disciplines. This chapter deals with instrumental teaching in one-to-one settings.

First of all, it is necessary to take into account the institutional context in which music teaching takes place. Most music institutions share a common origin, which research tends to define as the guidelines that emerged from the founding of the Paris Conservatoire at the end of the 18th century. From there, a powerful musical-pedagogical tradition arose that spread to a large part of Western culture, continuing through to the present day in such essential matters as the one-to-one lesson. Certainly, that mainstream tradition has diversified over time, from a tradition of conservatories in a European environment focusing mainly on instrumental teaching, to that of American music schools (universities) as Nordic HMEIs too, with a much broader approach (Jørgensen, 2014). Within this complex network of HMEIs there is a wide variety of models, ranging from very narrow ones to centres in which music is integrated with dance and drama so that the generalisation of any judgment or result would be uninformative without delimiting the framework of the study. In any case, it is possible to affirm that, as surprising as it may seem, certain roots of those instructional pedagogical principles from more than 200 years ago persist, in a more or less manifest way, in music education institutions of the 21st century: transmissive teaching methods based on authoritarian and unidirectional relationships, which together with the obsession for error, easily link musical learning with fear (Pozo et al., 2020).

Secondly, let us focus on the emblem of these teachings: the apprenticeship of musical instruments. The predominant teacher-student relationship in instrumental education has been described as a master-apprentice relationship, in which the master is often seen as a role model and a source of identity for the apprentice (Jørgensen, 2000). The one-to-one musical lesson is an astonishing and striking feature, which has only been kept in the case of music education, despite the economic investment necessary, while in other areas of knowledge, such as science and the arts, group-class teaching has long been the norm. This individual class has unquestionable virtues since the teacher's focus is entirely on a single pupil. Here it must be noted that the training profile of music teachers has only recently begun to recognise the need for psychology as an aspect of their teaching where the subject of study, music, implicates the emotions. There have also been calls to move away from a reliance on one-to-one teaching and to include group lessons (Carlsen, 2019, Creech & Gaunt, 2012; Mitchell, 2020a; 2020b; Wickström, 2023). Teaching staff without specific training in psychology overall, to deal with students and particularly to treat and handle emotions, increases the risks involved in a one-to-one setting: "the physical and

social isolation of the studio, leaves too much scope for the abuse of power” (Burwell, 2023, p. 7).

Bullying in the school environment occurs between peers, or with a member of the teaching staff. Teacher violence towards students, whether in the form of physical or psychological abuse, is under-researched, as its mere examination seems to hold teachers responsible for problems at school (Fernández-Villanueva et al., 2015).

Research on violence in music education is scarce, but this does not imply that it is a thing of the past. The studies carried out from different methodological approaches and among populations from diverse geographical regions show how, unfortunately, this problem is still present (Fernández-Morante, 2018): from ethnography (Kingsbury, 1988; Nettle, 1995) to case studies that speak of “academic violence” (Musumeci, 2005, 2008), biographical analyses that present teachers as objects of veneration (Smilde, 2009a, 2009b), as well as a more organisational point of view highlighting the psychological contract between teacher and disciple and a mentality about art and genius that legitimises unacceptable behaviours (Quigg, 2011). All these gather testimonies of students who suffered psychological violence during their musical training and certain references to cases of sexual harassment, described as the “dirty little secret of music education” (Gould, 2009, p. 66). Scharff (2015a), in her research conducted with women at the beginning of their musical career, found that 10 out of 64 participants reported relevant incidents, including sexual harassment by teachers or peers in orchestras and ensembles.

Bull (2019) discusses a mode of authority exhibited by the male conductor, known as the “cult of personality.” This authority is based on the tradition of male charisma, emphasising a hierarchical order. She highlights the conductor’s technique of “getting in a bad mood” to make the choir comply and maintain a state of fear within the group. This occurs in a sexualised culture where innuendo and humour serve as a form of emotional manipulation.

In summary, the research points to a tradition of music teaching in which a master-apprentice hierarchy, within a framework of accepted elitism and excellence, demands loyalty and obedience as part of a way of teaching as an exercise of power. The predominant mentality is that of serving art with metaphysical and spiritual connotations, which may entail attitudes, gestures, and violent behaviours, normalised as a sometimes necessary means towards the highest artistic end.

These and many other clues lead us to think about “structural violence” or “systemic violence” (Fernández-Villanueva et al., 2015) in a way that certain educational institutions could be, more or less directly, allowing, despising, encouraging and/or silencing the issue of different types of violence in their teaching. We know that the most widespread attitude has been silence or

denial (“this does not happen in our institution”) (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 110), in many cases to preserve the reputation of the institutions (Pace, 2013). This has created a “culture of fear,” where students are too scared to speak up about sexual harassment by staff members (Bull, in this volume).

Having presented this framework, I will describe a recent case that appeared in the Spanish press to try to establish possible links between the characteristics of this situation and the most common patterns of school violence in four phases: initial triggering events; harassment and stigmatisation; creation of a scapegoat and expulsion or self-exclusion of the victim from school and social life; and chronification of the damages (Piñuel & Cortijo, 2016). What is most relevant is not the isolated details, not even the outcome of the trial itself, but the concurrence of various factors that should be, on the one hand, the object of vigilance not only by the justice system but also by the educational institution itself, which is responsible for ensuring the safety of the school community, and on the other hand, the object of reflection by students and teachers, who should understand the complexity of this problem to the maximum to be able to prevent and confront it.

At the end of May 2018, after three years of learning with her principal study teacher, a 20-year-old violin student at the Conservatorio Superior de Música Eduardo Martínez Torner filed a complaint. In the centre, the 78-year-old professor was known for being “authoritarian, demanding and despotic” (Arce, 2022) with his teaching, despite being one of the most in-demand options to study with, even in other regions, due to the prestige in professional circles and the “excellent results” (Arce, 2022) gained by being his student.

According to the Public Prosecutor’s Office, the teacher insulted the girl using expressions such as “you are an idiot, you are worthless, you are stupid, cretinous, mentally retarded, you are shit as a person,” “taking advantage of the authority he imposed on his students as a violin teacher.” The student reported that her teacher allegedly used all kinds of insults and humiliations against her. In addition, the septuagenarian would have given her “slaps on the head” and hit her fingers while playing the violin with a bow and “a large gold ring,” as well as “strong pushes with the intention of throwing her to the ground” (Arce, 2022). Under the pretext of correcting her posture when playing the violin:

The teacher had started to touch her for no reason. Without asking for any kind of permission, he touched her upper chest. Then he grabbed her waist from behind. He would also hit her lower belly, or her back, near her buttocks. He always kept a very close distance for no apparent reason. He would also tell her “inappropriate” jokes in which he kept uttering the word “fuck” and laughing. Then he would stop to watch the girl’s reac-

tion ... He would also stand in front of her and start hugging her very tightly. The teacher would lean his forehead against his pupil's, bring his face close to hers and "even kiss her on the lips." (Cedeira, 2020)

In her second year (2016), the young woman underwent psychiatric treatment and had to stop attending classes. She submitted all her medical reports to the school principal.

The medical condition of the victim came to the knowledge of the accused, who, from that moment on, the prosecution continues, "told other students in the corridor of the school about the victim's medical condition while laughing and calling her crazy, boasting that she had to take pills". It was business as usual the following year. He continued to reveal to other students that the girl needed medication. In a mocking tone, according to the report, he even told the girl that "if she took drugs, she could tell him because he already knew she was crazy." (Cedeira, 2020)

In 2018, the young woman gave up the violin. She even had to move to a different region of the country to avoid any kind of contact with the accused and has been under psychological and psychiatric treatment since then.

According to journalistic sources in 2020, two years after the complaint, after dozens of enquiries and investigations, the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Principality of Asturias agreed with the young woman, requesting a five-year prison sentence, a restraining order, probation and disqualification to prohibit the teacher from teaching violin and other instruments. The prosecutors gave an account of a crime that they said had devastating effects also arguing that over three years, the accused, "taking advantage of the authority he had over his students as a violin teacher," allegedly sexually abused her on multiple occasions. He even "went so far as to humiliate her" (Cedeira, 2020).

The judge absolved the violin teacher of the crimes of continuous sexual abuse and degrading treatment that the 20-year-old student accused him of, despite acknowledging that he sought excellence in training through "obsolete" techniques such as hitting the fingers with the bow of the instrument or slapping the buttocks of a student who "did not do well" ("Absuelto un profesor de violín", 2022). It is "striking," according to the judge, that the students, and among them, the complainant, "freely" chose to attend his classes, despite the fact that the alleged abuse and degrading treatment had already taken place during the first lessons; "striking," she reiterates, as is the fact that the young woman waited three years to complain, stating that "it does not seem to respond to a logical action" (Arce, 2022), and being one of the main reasons given by the judge for his acquittal.

The ruling also takes into account the testimony of other students who reported similar situations to the one described by the complainant without feeling humiliated, vexed or abused. These witnesses stressed in the trial that the accused's touching was always carried out spontaneously without the prior consent of the student, involving the manipulation of the chest, lower back and waist, and even stated that sometimes the teacher hugged them and gave them a kiss on the cheek "by way of congratulations, in a natural and proper context of the happiness shared by both" ("Absuelto un profesor de violín", 2022). The principal of the conservatoire supported these statements, acknowledging that the teacher had a reputation for being "hard and demanding" ("Absuelto un profesor de violín", 2022), despite his pedagogical techniques, with the students choosing the teacher at the beginning of each academic year.

The judge determined the "lack of certain accreditation" of the facts denounced. She argued that, in any case, the teacher could only be reprehended—not condemned—for the use of "obsolete" teaching methods, sometimes close to physical punishment, despite "seeking excellence in the results from training his students" and "given in equal circumstances to all students" (Arce, 2022).

Regarding the alleged sexual abuse, the judge described it as "strange" that the young woman had not shared the situation with her psychiatrist or with the professionals in the centre, despite having noticed signs of abuse since 2015, according to the student herself. The judge considered that the complaint did not respond to the "logical" actions of someone who considers herself humiliated, vexed and a victim of sexual abuse by continuing to study with the same teacher for three years, and then giving an "ambiguous, vague and confusing" statement ("Absuelto un profesor de violín", 2022). On the contrary, the judge understands that the complaint is related to the fact that the student had not obtained a single pass in her performance exams and was not selected by the accused for a public performance because of her continuous absence from class. Even her academic record was deemed as bad. Furthermore, the experts highlighted in their report that the student presented a "divergence from reality." The complainant had been diagnosed with anxiety which, according to the magistrate, was related to "academic failure" and the "pressure" to which she was subjected by the fear of "disappointing her parents," and not because of her relationship with the teacher in question (Arce, 2022).

The acquittal brought to an end a trial that began as a result of student protests in 2018, the year in which students at the school denounced cases of psychological harassment that "were well known" but which no one had dared to bring to trial. As one student explains:

The situation has been allowed to deteriorate for decades but “they can’t cover it up any more, they have been allowing it to go on for thirty years. But they are not going to stop it because everyone knows about it”. ... “There are teachers who [are] said to have an unbreakable contract and that they could not be fired, that they could teach until they wanted to”, she explained. Because the fear of retaliation in the grades among the students of the centre exists, as they consider denouncing this type of conduct. (Abad, 2018)

From here on, we will contrast this “logic of events” from a judicial standpoint, without taking into account the particular characteristics of the more traditional HME, exposed to a large extent in the case’s scientific investigation, and the “logic” coming from the evidence provided on harassment and violence as well.

Indeed, it does not seem easy to understand, at first sight, that it might take three years for a student to report such serious events as sexual harassment. On the one hand, victims of violence often take a long time to report—if they report at all, taking in account all the existing barriers (Bull & Rye, 2018). On the other hand, the judge is forced to contextualise the seriousness of the facts based on the testimonies of the director and fellow students, who in no way seem to deny that the events themselves took place, although according to them, the events did not involve humiliation or vexation. This is important to underline as it points to a worrying normalisation of violence in music education. The students maintained significant protests denouncing the difficult situation that many were going through at the institution, but during the trial, the classmates did not claim to have suffered abuse, which could point to a fear of repercussions. On the other hand, everything points to a notorious lack of support for the victim: it seems she was not given any protection, nor did she receive any kind of support. On the contrary, the case seems to summarise quite accurately the development of a case of violence full of wrong decisions leading to a false resolution.

The fact that for three years the victim suffered degrading treatment without coming forward confirms the existing difficulties in reporting: when there are no easy and accessible ways to do so, reality shows that, despite the seriousness of the facts, victims do not report, out of fear, weakness, retaliation, or many other reasons, as has been demonstrated for so many decades in the case of gender-based violence. On the other hand, not changing teachers may seem strange to an outside perspective. The truth is that although such a real possibility exists, in practice it is not entirely feasible, since students may be exposed to a stigmatisation they would, in most cases, not want to face at any cost. In this context, the victim progressively experienced a pronounced lack of support, which led her to transition from phase 1 (initial triggering events) to phase 2 (harassment and stigmatisation) (Piñuel & Cortijo, 2016)

during the first year. This was done specifically to avert the stigma associated with changing teachers, ultimately leading her to seek an escape route, yet only to encounter further difficulties. This attitude is sometimes hard to understand from an outside perspective but requires empathy and knowledge of the research about the dynamics of bullying and violence in HME mentioned before.

Following a common sequence in cases of bullying in educational environments and given the school failure and family pressure, the victim was unable to accept the obsolete teaching techniques, which were close to physical punishment, unlike the rest of her classmates. This is an example of school stigmatisation, where the victim is seen as guilty and a “prosecutorial unanimity” is formed between classmates and school authorities. This is what is known as the “basic attribution error” (Piñuel & Cortijo, 2016), a systemic reaction that is repeated in cases of bullying: counsellors, teachers and other adults, without being overly conscious, tend to attribute responsibility to the student victim of bullying. The basic attribution error tends to make the victim a pseudo culprit, facing a whole presumption of guilt, or accusations of mental imbalance or behavioural or psychological deficits. In contrast to the commonly held myth that the victim of bullying is weak or has a personality issue, it is important to remember research data underlining that the victim of bullying does not have a deficit in social skills, low self-esteem, or a lack of assertiveness prior to the process (Piñuel & Cortijo, 2016). To underestimate the psychological and social violence that precedes physical violence in all cases is to ignore the seriousness of the consequences that contempt and humiliation may have on the victim.

Instead of assessing the situation and remedying the violence and bullying, a process of secondary victimisation takes place, a stigma meaning that the case ends up being instructed “against” the victim through the assessment of what that victim supposedly is and not through verifying signs of bullying and violent behaviour in the environment (Piñuel & Cortijo, 2016). Due to the lack of trust in these accounts, attempts are often made to test the victim to discover the lie, contradictions, exaggeration, or even the malicious intent or psychological imbalance of the child who reports these situations.<sup>1</sup> The victim has to face the incomprehension and indolence of adults (teachers, tutors, directors, inspectors, etc.), who tend to deny the facts or downplay them, which, together in a context that does not favour the victim, creates a “prosecutorial unanimity.” Prosecutorial unanimity “is one of the most frequent characteristics misleading those who have to investigate bullying cases,

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<sup>1</sup> On the other side the reputation of the teacher is at stake if the accusations turn out to be fabricated or false, which makes misconduct charges such a touchy subject for the leadership in HMEIs.

whether they are specialists or judges” (Piñuel & Cortijo, 2016, p. 37). Aside from this, social stigmatisation can lead to isolation in the neighbourhood, family, or the immediate school environment.

As for the existence of the anxiety symptoms or “divergence from reality” which the judge referred to according to news reports, there is no information on when they are supposed to have appeared. In any case, they seem perfectly compatible with the situation of harassment experienced. Therefore, the confusion between the diagnosis as cause or consequence would be an indicator of phase 3 (appearance of serious psychological and psychosomatic manifestations). The time that a victim of bullying takes from the start of the abuse until the appearance of significant psychological damage is variable, from several months to years, depending on individual factors and, above all, on the support they receive from their environment. By the time people in the environment finally recognise the existence of a problem it is often too late, and “the probability of confusing the diagnosis of psychological harm caused by bullying with a previous illness or mental disorder of the child is very high” (Piñuel & Cortijo, 2016, p. 39), as could have occurred in the case in question.

In any way, a history of “school failure” could be due to the deterioration of the work atmosphere, leading victims of bullying to focus their concern on managing the conflict and thus neglect other tasks (Hirigoyen, 1998). In any case, a poor academic record might, in principle, seem more of an aggravating factor towards the teacher since he is not aware of this and could have damaged the student’s health in doing so. There is no evidence of any effort in this regard. Realistically—with the existing information—is the lack of attendance surprising?

The judge’s ruling accredits the teacher’s pursuit of excellence with “proven” results. Do these results refer to qualifications obtained by his students? To their professional future? To the prestige gained from studying with him? To the fact that he is the preferred choice by the students? These are at least disturbing questions for an educational institution, and even more so for a public system.

How could the victim complain? Does the teacher’s age play a role? Would the case be different with a younger teacher? Are schools really safeguarding their prestige when they expose themselves to newsworthy penalties? What does the school have to say about its teacher’s obsolete methods? Does it prefer notoriety and the guarantee of full enrolment regardless of the teacher’s treatment of the pupils? I ask the reader to process slowly, with as much empathy as possible, the abovementioned events which occurred in an instrumental class: touching without consent and in particularly erogenous zones, hitting, pushing, slapping, all amidst all kinds of insults and vexations. From a mistaken approach in dealing with bullying (ineffectiveness



and denial or trivialisation on the part of adults who should provide protection, support and anonymity), an atmosphere of impunity for the bullies and defencelessness for the victims spreads, resulting in a fourth and final phase—a false resolution of the problem, which usually consists of self-exclusion from the educational institution. The victim decides to change schools or is kindly invited to do so. The damage becomes chronic and long-term victimisation takes place if psychological intervention is not provided to help the victim regain assertiveness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and emotional stability.

In conclusion, it is apparent that there is an insufficient amount of pertinent information available to obtain the necessary legal evidence required to accurately determine what took place in this particular case. Nonetheless, the aim of this chapter is not to determine the sentence's degree of success or justice. The judge, within her range of competence, determined that the teacher's attitude is reprehensible but not condemnable. However, let's see how this reflects at an educational level. The principal himself and the student witnesses acknowledge the teacher's "obsolete" methods, and in no case did they apparently call into question what the victim reported. Although for the victim's environment the events seem to have taken place, the consequences were neither humiliating nor reportable. In other words, to them it seems violence has become normal. Does that mean that it is not reprehensible? On the one hand, only the opinion of sources from the Department of Education has come to light, stating that the accusations made by the students in the protests "seem to be acts which, if they exist, cannot be condoned" and that "inaction on this issue cannot exist," with a visit by the inspectorate "which could end in the opening of a case or nothing at all"; and on the other hand, the unease of the teaching staff at what they believe to be "vague and generic" accusations made by the students, which call into question the professionalism and prestige of the staff (Abad, 2018).

Regardless of the specific verdict in this case, it is worth asking to what extent in these types of HMEIs the reputation of the teacher, treated as an international attraction is yet more important than the certainty of "reprehensible" treatment of students. This is a very serious statement which, as we have seen, is supported by scientific studies in this context, from the first ethnographic study by Henry Kingsbury more than 30 years ago to the current claims by Ian Pace, Anna Bull and Christina Scharff, fitting perfectly with the musical tradition in conservatoires since their origins. This being said, given the particularities of music teaching (individual lessons about an essentially emotional subject given by teachers without effective emotional management tools) in a context where violence is normalised, the prestige of the teacher and the institution is seen above the treatment of the students, and the difficulties faced by victims to denounce, music education in conservatoires has a problem.

It is very likely that some readers will find this an exaggeration. I would like to invite them to ask their students, in a climate of trust and in a safe space, if they know of any such cases close to them. Moreover, I would like to encourage them to ask their students if they feel safe within the institution. Ask them how they would react if they were to be involved in such a situation. Would they tell anyone or remain silent? I'm afraid the answers might be shocking. Excellence and prestige perhaps should not be assigned to the name of a teacher using obsolete techniques. Today, excellence should perhaps involve developing and implementing effective protocols in cases of violence and bullying, as a trademark of a 21st-century educational institution. To this end, it is essential to understand the urgent need for psychology in music schools, both at the curricular level and in the existence of guidance teams, counsellors, social workers, psychologists, that will, no matter the formula, ensure mediation between the directive office and the students. This will make it easier not only to deal with the problem of violence but also provide the support and advice that teachers and pupils need, as well as artistic and emotional development.

As we speak, using 18th-century learning and teaching methods and techniques, together with teachers trained in the 20th century, and students from the 21st century, create glaring safety issues in HME, which some institutions are reluctant to question in order not to "tarnish" their image, without realising that the consequences of this silence are far worse. In an educational establishment that strives for excellence, violence should be prevented and confronted, reprovved and condemned, and never silenced. Reproving and condemning at the educational level has consequences. If anyone wonders, at the time of writing this chapter, the acquitted professor is still teaching as if nothing happened.

## Keyword: Canon

Itziar Larrinaga

The term “canon” comes through Old English, late Latin, and classical Latin, from the Greek word “kanon” (κανών). It originally meant “(straight) rod” which, since it was used for measurement, came to signify “ruler,” “rule,” “model,” “standard” (Merriam-Webster, 1991, p. 202). It is important to note that the Latin word “canon” was adopted in ecclesiastical use to refer to the decrees of the church, and that it was also used to designate the books of the Bible accepted by the Christian Church—the biblical canon. This usage is of special interest to us here, since in the 18th century it was extended to include secular literary authors and works considered as examples of excellence, starting with the publication of *Historia critica oratorum Graecorum* of David Rhunken in 1768 (Pfeiffer, 1968, p. 207). The success of this *catechesis*, i.e., this use of the term to designate something that did not have a specific name, was because the word “canon” was more precise than “selection.” Nevertheless, inherent in the former term were the concepts of norms and authority, and, consequently, of power: “not surprisingly, the normative sense of the term has clung alongside its elective sense: selections suggest norms and norms suggest an appeal to some sort of authority” (Harris, 1991, p. 110). Furthermore, “some connotative values” associated with the ecclesiastical derivation, “notably claims for ethical qualities and a universal status, occasionally cling to the term in its aesthetic applications” (Samson, 2001).

In brief, in light of the etymology of the word, “canon” refers to the set of rules, models, composers and works—that sometimes adopts the normative

power of a “decree”—considered as the basis or the standard in a specific field, in our case, music. This leads us to distinguish, as a point of departure, the *canons of a discipline* from the *canon of repertoire*. The canons of a discipline are the norms and paradigms specific to the practice of a discipline, while the canons of repertoire, as the name itself indicates, relate to the main repertoire of composers and works in a specific field. Since musical disciplines are many and varied—in the higher music education (HME) they include creation, performance, direction, teaching, musicology, sonology, and music production and management—the canons of a discipline are difficult to identify (Citron, 1993), and are therefore difficult to discuss in this brief article. For this reason, we will focus on the canons of repertoire.

It could be asserted that “each society has a musical repertory” (Nettl, 1995, p. 112) and that “certain differentiations and hierarchies are common to the musical cultures of virtually all social communities” (Samson, 2001). However, although “most cultures and cultural contexts reflect the presence of a canon” (Beard & Goag, 2005, p. 32), each society has its own principles and values for recognising and characterising this central part of the repertoire (Nettl, 1995). In the Western European music tradition, specifically, within the Art Music tradition, “one obvious approach leads to the work of the great masters” of the past (Nettl, 1995, p. 114), almost all of whom were white European men who flourished between roughly 1720 and 1930. It is above all within this tradition that “a sense of the canonic has been built centrally and formally into an unfolding history of music” (Samson, 2001). For this reason, within the canons of repertoire, we will focus here on examining the musical canon in this cultural tradition, which has also expanded to colonise other cultural traditions.

To start with, the taxonomy of canons of Alastair Fowler (1979) can shed some light on our present endeavour. This taxonomy is accepted by many in literary studies and importing it into the field of music yields interesting and useful results. Fowler distinguishes among six types of canons:

1. The *official canon* is what we usually understand as canon, in other words a list of composers and works that are considered to have high cultural value and grandeur, promoted and “institutionalized through education, patronage, and journalism” (p. 98). In the case of music, it would also be appropriate to add promotion and institutionalisation through public performance, such as concerts, staging of operas, and through the music industry. For Fowler, the official canon “implies a collection of works that enjoy an exclusive completeness (at least for a time)” (p. 98). It is worth noting that not only has the official canon been promoted and institutionalised through musical education, but it also continues to be present in an almost universal manner in the daily work of the institutions of music education, including the higher music education institutions (HMEIs), as we will see below.

2. Although the official canon qualifies our understanding of music, each of us has our own *personal canon*, that is the list of composers and works that we are familiar with and value. For Fowler, “these two sets have no simple inclusive relation,” in other words, not all the works in the personal canon are recognised in the official canon, and the opposite is also true: “most of us fail to respond to some official classics; on the other hand, through superior judgment or benefit of learning, we may be able to extend the socially determined canon usefully” (p. 98). In effect, each of us can abandon the sphere of influence—and also the comfort zone—of the official canon and explore the value of composers and works that occupy a secondary position or that have even been passed over “unseen.”
3. To do so, we must consider the *potential canon*, which comprises the entire corpus of music that has been written and recorded, together with all surviving oral music. Unfortunately, part of this potential canon is largely inaccessible. Due to its specificity or unusual characteristics, it may remain “hidden” in archives and libraries (manuscripts, early editions, and recordings), or it may be kept alive in societies that are difficult to approach.
4. This leads us to the *accessible canon*, which is the portion of the potential canon available at a given time and place.
5. This accessible canon is subject to priorities, which, when applied, give us the *selective canons* (Fowler, 1979). Harold Bloom defends the applicability of these priorities strictly on a pragmatic basis in his controversial book *The Western Canon* (1994): “We are mortal and also rather belated. There is only so much time, and time must have a stop, while there is more to read than there ever was before” (p. 30), and, in the case of music, we must add to play, listen to, teach, do research on. For Fowler “the selective canons with most institutional force are formal curricula, whose influence has long been recognized” (1979, p. 99). In spite of this, he stresses that it is possible to react against the official curricula by creating “alternative” curricula that are just as strict but less thoroughly explored. In effect, a selective canon can include works that are not part of the official canon and, more importantly, can serve to expand the frontiers of the official canon. This is revealing because it reminds us of an essential fact: the members of the HMEIs take part actively in moulding the official canon, as do others, and do not merely feed passively on it.
6. For Fowler this type of selections of an alternative nature largely reflects the *critical canon*, which is ultimately the scholars’ canon or the specialists’ canon. This canon is “surprisingly narrow,” since the composers and

works that these scholars refer to “is not that listed in bibliographies, but the far more limited areas of interest ... from this canon, countless considerable authors are excluded” (1979, p. 99).<sup>1</sup>

Canons wield great power (Citron, 1993): they establish the norms of what is considered worthy of inclusion and, likewise, what deserves to be ignored or excluded; they represent the “values or ideologies” of the subgroups of society who construct them; they tend to perpetuate themselves—to the extent that they serve as models that replicate these values in subsequent works—and they give rise to an “ideology that they are timeless” and “immutable,” although in reality they are not: “all in all, the dynamics of change in canons underscore their social constructedness and their powers of reconstruction” (Citron, 1993, pp. 15–16).

This idea of timelessness and immutability has clung to the Western European Art Music canon, and until quite recently it was even considered a settled question—in some contexts it is still considered a settled question (see Keyword: Power, in this volume). Musicologists took a long time to recognise “the problem of musical canon because it is so embedded in their assumptions about music and controls so much of what they do” (Weber, 1999, pp. 336–337). Carl Dahlhaus acknowledged in *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte*, that “music history requires a pre-existent canon passed down by tradition if it is to be music history at all, i.e., a structured account of the past” (Dahlhaus, 1983, p. 98). He qualified these remarks, however, by stating that “yet the fact that music history is by nature dependent on tradition does not mean that we must blindly accept what tradition has handed down to us by way of a musical canon” (p. 98). “On the contrary,” he added, “historiography and the canon it has inherited, partly as a precondition, partly as an object of study, exist in what might be described as a dialectical relation” (p. 98).

In 1983, Joseph Kerman takes a different approach to the topic of the musical canon in his article “Few Canonic Variations” published in the journal *Critical Inquiry*, as part of a special issue dedicated to the canon in literature and the arts. In the opening paragraph, he explains that musicians tend

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<sup>1</sup> Wendel Harris (1991) supplements Fowler’s taxonomy with four other types which we consider to be subtypes of the official canon and the selective canon: namely, the *closed canon*: authoritative body of texts such as the Bible; the *diachronic canon*: central canon, i.e., that made up of composers and works that have had special recognition in successive selections for decades or centuries; the *nonce canon*: the contemporary composers and works that are currently fashionable, of which only a few will go on to be included in the diachronic canon; and the *pedagogical canon*. Edward Komara (2007) has applied Harris’ taxonomy to music. Nevertheless, his text, although it offers very suggestive ideas, is somewhat unclear on this matter, as he follows Harris, and Harris does not seem to have correctly understood Fowler.

to speak of “the repertory, or repertoires, but not of the canon,” which manifests a distinction between repertoire and canon: “a [repertoire] is a program of action,” while “canon is an idea” (Kerman, 1994, p. 33); later, he stressed on two occasions that “repertoires are determined by performers; canons by critics” (p. 37, 40). Although we might not agree with Kerman on the last matter—the construction of a canon is a complex phenomenon in which it is not only critics who play an active part, as we have indicated—he undoubtedly opened the discussion of the canon in the field of musicology. Later, the works of William Weber (1989, 1994, 1997, 1999), Katherine Bergeron and Philip Bohlman (1992), Lydia Goehr (1992, 2002), as well as Marcia Citron (1993, 2007), would arrive, citing the most fundamental and relevant works in the field. This deepening critique of canon is not limited to Western Art Music. Simon Obert (2009) discusses and criticises historiography by examining the link between canonisation and mythologisation based on the Rolling Stones.

But when and how did the Western European canon arise? And how was it consolidated? To shed light on this complicated matter, we must first pose the question of when the music of the past began to be performed regularly, and next, how did certain composers and works become models, “for musical taste critically and aesthetically” (Weber, 1989, p. 6), in other words, how did a certain repertoire become established as canon.

The idea that before the 19th century musicians studied and performed only works composed in their own era has been given an exaggerated importance (Lawson & Stowell, 2004). The reality is that much music from the past remained in circulation once it was composed. One significant example is Gregorian chant. The so-called liturgist popes of the 4th to 6th centuries—including St. Gregory—codified the structure of the Mass and the Office. After Charlemagne ascended to the throne in the year 800, there was a new unifying impulse, decisive in the dissemination of the Roman repertoire enriched with contributions from the Gallican liturgy. The vocation of this strategy was universalist, and although it by no means extended throughout Christendom during that period—the Hispanic liturgy resisted until the 11th century—it is nonetheless a representative example of an official canon.

A millennium later, the movement to restore Gregorian chant according to the oldest preserved codices led to the establishment, in the 19th century of a new canon, known in many sources as “new Gregorian Chant.” This work had its main supporters within the Abbey of Solesmes and would be endorsed by Pope Pius X at the beginning of the 20th century. Those who opposed this movement deemed the reform impossible and undesirable. On the other hand, it led to the abandonment or imposed exclusion of traditional plainchant, whose manuscripts or prints were tangible evidence of its presence and evolution over time. A specific typology of plainchant, such as the

so-called *cantus fractus* (*canto mixto* in Spanish; *canto fratto* in Italian) took the worst part, as it disappeared from official liturgical books after having been used from the 14th to the 19th century, and even beyond. Despite its eradication from the official canon, it managed to survive to this day in some repertoires of popular religiosity.

Brown (1988) stresses that the manuscripts of the troubadours were copied sometime after the works were composed, and that the *Squarcialupi Codex* was prepared in the 15th century as a historical document of the Florentine musicians of the Trecento (p. 30). In effect, as Brown indicates, “*Trecento* polyphony and troubadour songs appear for the most part to have circulated among musicians orally, a possibility that suggests we need, too, to revise and refine our distinctions between written and unwritten repertoires” (pp. 30–31). We could continue to cite examples of how the music of Josquin des Prés was performed in the 16th century at the court of the Dukes of Bavaria or how the music of Cristóbal de Morales, Francisco Guerrero, and Tomás Luis de Victoria was performed in the Spanish Royal Chapel and in the New World until the 18th century or even later. Nevertheless, as Brown indicates, these examples reveal “not so much an attempt to revive earlier music that had been forgotten” but “a continuing involvement with music that had never been dropped from the active repertory” (p. 31).

The mindset of “reviving” early music that Brown mentions and performing it regularly begins, according to Weber (1999), in the 18th century, in England and in France independently “based upon repertoires given authority in both musical and ideological terms, but with still fairly limited critical definition in published form” (p. 341). Weber situates between 1800 and 1870 “the rise of an integrated international canon that established a much stronger authority in aesthetic and critical terms, and that moved to the center of musical life c. 1870” (p. 341) and indicates that the German Romantic movement had a vital importance in its consolidation. In fact, “it was above all in Germany that it became associated with a dominant national culture, perceived as both specifically German and at the same time representative of universal values” (Samson, 2001). A symbolic example of this is the large-scale reevaluation of J. S. Bach’s works—already recognised in erudite circles—with the emblematic performance of the *St. Matthew Passion* by Felix Mendelssohn in Leipzig in 1829, which led to Bach being considered a genius.

In effect, “the canon became a dominant cultural formation when music became autonomous, historical, and disciplined in tandem with the rise of the work’s concept and absolute music” (Goehr, 2002, p. 307). This is the era of the “start of the bourgeois age of public concert halls and commissioned works, with new roles defined for composers, performers, audiences, and critics” (p. 307). In this process, too, a decisive part is played by “dominance of Romanticism and Idealism in Germany around 1800 and with how secular



forms of cultural authority displayed the canonic aspirations and anxieties of earlier forms of religious authority” (p. 307).

To be sure, in parallel to the development of the Romantic idea of genius, came the idea that the works created by these “demi-gods” could not die along with them, but that they must be conserved throughout time and continue to be performed. As a result, the trend of thought toward loyalty to the work of the genius by the performer was established, as E. T. A. Hoffmann indicates in his influential article, “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music,” published in *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in 1810 and later compiled in *Kreisleriana*:

The true artist lives only in the work that he conceives and then performs as the composer intended it. He disdains to let his own personality intervene in the way; all his endeavors are spent in quickening to vivid life, in a thousand shining colors, all the sublime effects and images the composer’s magical authority enclosed within his work, so that they encircle us in bright rings of light, inflaming our imaginings, our innermost soul, and bear us speeding on the wings into the far-off-spirit realm of music. (Hoffmann, 1989, p. 103)

This ideal of *Werktreue*—loyalty to the work—“emerged to capture the new relation between work and performance as well as that between performer and composer. Performances and their performers were respectively subservient to works and their composers” (Goehr, 1992, p. 231). This made it necessary to have a score that reflected in detail the intentions of the composer: “Thus, the effective synonymity in the musical world of *Werktreue* and *Texttreue*: to be true to a work is to be true to its score” (p. 231). In the process of “‘inventing’ tradition and creating a fetishism of the great work which is still with us today,” which is highly entrenched in the HMEIs, it is worth underscoring, in addition to the importance of public concerts, the importance of the work carried out “by taste-creating institutions such as journals and publishing houses” (Samson, 2001).

It should also be noted the construction of the Western European musical canon is related to the foundation of the “great public collections of antiquities, paintings, decorative arts, and ethnographic objects” (Cook, 2000, p. 30), i.e., the national museums (emblematic examples being the opening to the public of the British Museum in 1759 and of the Louvre Museum in 1793). As Cook (2000) indicates:

Such collections, available for the enjoyment or edification of the populace at large, aimed to bring together the finest works of all times and places. The objects in them were abstracted from their original conditions of use and valorization, and were instead to be judged on a single, uni-

versal criterion of intrinsic beauty. ... And all this forms the backdrop for the formation of what Lydia Goehr has called “the imaginary museum of musical works,” in which the music of the past was to be displayed as a permanent, if invisible, collection. (p. 30)

Although this museum of musical works “did not actually exist—that it was imaginary in no way detracts from its significance; it provided the conceptual framework within which music took its place in the cultural heritage” (Cook, 2001, p. 30). What we have been referring to as canon is “the music that was selected for inclusion in the musical museum” (p. 30).

Accordingly, the phenomenon of consolidation of the canon that we have mentioned is contemporary with the creation of the HMEIs in the main European capitals—the first to be founded was the Paris Conservatoire (1895), which became an influential model for musical education throughout the world. As we have already mentioned, education plays an active part in promoting and institutionalising the official canon, hence it is not surprising that the conservatories contributed, together with other agents, in this consolidation or that the canon is therefore present in the musical *Werktreue* (*Werktreue*) and to the composer, and hence to the score (*Texttreue*). The name “Conservatoire” itself—that many of the HMEIs bear—comes from the Latin verb “conservare” (to conserve) and hence at the etymological level it means “place where things are conserved.” The weight of the Italian/French/German koiné in this canon is remarkable, and especially its use in organising the History of Music, which has long been assumed to be the “Universal” History of Music. This has contributed to the persistent presence of central European music in these centres as mainstream.

In 1950, Elizabeth E. Kaho analysed the study of music literature in a group of 168 HMEIs in the USA. She concluded that “the music literature recommended and taught in American colleges agrees, in the percentage of distribution as to periods and categories, with the distribution of the 207 compositions compiled from books widely used in college teaching”; and that, “the emphasis in this original list and in the data obtained from the colleges themselves is placed consistently on the period of the Nineteenth Century and on the category of Orchestral Music” (1950, pp. 55–56). It is striking that the list of 51 pieces that received the highest ratings are the work of European male composers, mainly Germans.

Four decades later, Bruno Nettel argued in *Heartland Excursions* (1995) that there was a *central repertoire* or canon in the Conservatories. He explained that “one way to comprehend the taxonomy and relative value of musics” in these centres was as concentric circles: “the center is classical Western music (almost exclusively European Music) between 1720 and 1930 (p. 84). The author affirms that “we have considered a view of the world as a group of

separate musics, a view modeled in part on the Western conception of society more pronounced in the past than in the late twentieth century” (pp. 96–97). “*Good music and the rest*,” as the author indicated by confirming that the HMEIs “are clearly not devoted to the study, and certainly not the advocacy, of all music” (p. 82, emphasis in original):

Outside the central repertory, special designations are needed because there are courses on “jazz,” “folk music,” “popular music,” and “ethnic music.” The terms *early music* and *contemporary music* are used to separate the “normal” music from others in the art music sphere. It is implied that “normal music” (even in North America) means European music, whereas other kinds of music, both in the college and the library catalogs, are labeled by nation or area ... There is also a group of specialties whose style is in the realm of “real” music but are treated as somewhat outside its scope: women’s music (by female composers but perhaps also for functions associated with women). (Nettl, 1995, p. 84, emphasis in original)

Since the decade in which Nettl wrote those lines, the canon has been “under fire” (MacMillan, 1992; Natvig, 2002). The challenges to the canon have arisen mainly from Marxist, feminist and post-colonial approaches to art, with the argument that class, gender and race have been factors in the inclusion of some composers and the marginalisation of others (Samson, 2001). As a result, “recent writing on the topic has emphasized this negative dimension of the canon and posited alternatives, often focusing on ‘marginalized’ types of music and counter-canonical strategies” (Samson, 2001). It has also brought to the foreground an ethical discussion about canon (Strong & Rush, 2018), based on how it has ignored or even legitimised violence against women, and how we should proceed so that music history does not condone such violence. Do we want to feature abusive men in the canon? In response to this question, Strong and Rush (2018) consider it unacceptable to both reject the artist’s work as well as their behaviour (since that way we risk losing access to some important cultural heritage) and to accept it (since there is no excuse for violence against women). They advocate “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. 576).

Certain lines of research have shed light on what Hisama refers to as “Life Outside the Canon? A Walk on the Wild Side” (2000). Some teachers of the HMEIs have created alternative curricula, just as serious as the normal curricula, that seek to expand the horizons of the official canon. Mary Natvig, Susan Cook, Ralph Locke, and Michael Pisani, “directly challenge[d] the traditional canon” in the book *Teaching Music History* “by including music in their classes that was never remotely connected to the

traditional music school repertory: American music, ethnic music, women's music, and film music" (Natvig, 2002, p. xi). The question is, does this really solve the underlying problem? Walker (2020) indicates, from the standpoint of post-colonial studies: "I nevertheless continue to wonder whether decolonizing existing university music history courses is even possible or whether the only way to decolonize is to decenter the Western art music canon so radically as to rewrite music history entirely" (p. 4). According to Shifres and Rosabal-Coto (2017), the solution starts by recognising the contribution that music education as a whole "can provide to the processes of detachment from the global thought, and to the vindication of truly 'pluriversal' perspectives" (p. 87). All this "beyond a superficial approach to repertoires that confine the diverse to the exotic, and a multiculturalism that accepts differences, as long as they do not uncover the asymmetries of power that make them subaltern" (p. 87).

On the other hand, many of the types of music that were at the periphery of the concentric circles mentioned by Nettl already occupy a significant space in the HMEIs, a space that they have had to struggle for years to occupy. In spite of this, paradoxically, these types of music are not immune to "canonical pressures and tendencies. For example, in the context of popular music ... the emphasis in its history on 'classic' popular music such as the Beatles and Bob Dylan reflects this situation" (Samson, 2001). In other words, in the field of popular music—and also jazz—we also observe trends toward identifying "masterpieces, master musicians/performers, cultural gems, influential musical moments, tradition-changing events, innovative trends, as well as exceptional cases within their prospective domains" (Washburne & Deco, 2004, p. 3); and towards classifying music as "high-quality," which is fit to be included in the canon, and as "low-quality," which must be excluded. In brief, we continue to construct segments of music and musicians that are valued and others that are considered "valueless," and "unworthy," regardless of whether it is loved, despised, ignored, and consumed by multitudes serving as the soundtrack of our daily lives" (Washburne & Deco, 2004, p. 3).

Since we have come this far, is essential to return to the initial taxonomy and consider the "potential canon" in its entire breadth and also the "accessible canon," which is the part of the potential canon to which we have access. At the same time, it is fundamental to become aware of the part that we as individuals play in the construction of our "personal canon," as well as the power that we have as members of our HMEIs to mold the "selective canons"—for example, our curricula—the "critical canon," and the "official canon."

In short, in a disruptive era, in which algorithms, programmed by humans with their own biases (Goldschmitt & Seaver, 2019) shape tastes, the role

played by HME is essential in forcing us to pose certain questions to ourselves: What values motivate me in my life and how are they reflected in the music that I perform, that I listen to, that I compose, teach or do research on? The top priority is to define the purpose that we choose for our lives and to be aware of our “power to” pursue this purpose (see Keyword: Power, in this volume), so that we do not live as beings trapped on a ceaseless wheel that devours us.

## “What Is a Traditional Musician Doing Here?”

Unni Løvlid

Year 2000, my very first interpretation lesson on the master’s programme at the Norwegian Academy of Music. A fellow student had just played a piece by Geirr Tveitt. I raised my hand, thanked my colleague for the music, and suggested listening to the Hardanger fiddle version of the traditional tune on which the piece was based. There were eight of us sitting spread out in the largest concert hall at the Academy, named after one of Norway’s most renowned traditional music collectors. The professor turned slowly towards us saying “What is a traditional musician doing here?” and turned slowly back again, continuing the lecture.

“Unni, no matter what you do, you’re just a traditional singer.”

This was the conclusion of a fellow student following a conversation we had in which I expressed my frustration regarding the institution, society, outsider-ness, and everything. My friend went back inside to practice. I lingered outside the practice rooms and thought about that last sentence, and what it meant. I knew my fellow student well and knew that the final comment had been offered out of kindness. I made up my mind to straighten my back and continue just being a traditional singer and have the confidence that it was enough.

In 1996 I became the first student at the Norwegian Academy of Music to study traditional singing as a main instrument. Ever since I was a child I had dreamt of being a teacher, and so music education was the programme

I wanted to apply for. The transmission of repertoire is inherent to the nature of traditional music: we administer a living tradition. Those who receive the music and the culture form it in their own style, and then pass it on as best they can in a great diversity of artistic disciplines. That is the principle behind living cultural heritage. Something of it is forgotten, something lives on, and something new is added. The following text deals with experiences and reflections relating to my studies at the Academy, and my work today as a member of staff at the same institution.

Traditional music enjoys a high status in Norway compared with other European countries. Norway has living local traditions performed with a high level of artistry, and there is variety within each individual tradition. The music is passed down primarily by ear within small communities, and through voluntary work; musical gatherings exist across generations where abundant variations within the traditions are learnt over time. This is the kind of learning environment I grew up in: music where little was entrusted to notation, nobody had a music degree, and nobody was researching teaching methods. At the Norwegian Academy of Music in the 1990s, I encountered a very different teaching culture. Written knowledge had precedence over oral. There was a tendency to seek artistically unique answers which is contrary to what I had grown up with, where a multitude of answers resulting from being part of a living tradition was more interesting. It might be compared to sitting round a table with people you have known for some time. Somebody asks you to tell a particular story, then somebody else says do you remember that time when such-and-such told that story? Everybody knows the story, how it ends, yet everybody wants to hear it again. It is the different versions and the togetherness that gives it purpose. Nobody knows how the story will be told from one time to the next; it is the sum of the different versions that enriches and develops the tradition. Each narrator tells the story in their unique way, passing it on, and some of these performances set a standard that the rest of us strive to emulate.

From the 1970s a gradual change in the teaching of Norwegian traditional music began to take place. While the music was initially passed on at home or in very local groups, this transmission was increasingly taken over by municipal cultural schools, university colleges and other learning arenas. Programmes in traditional music were established at high school level, as well as at institutions for higher education. Young traditional musicians applied for these programmes just like other prospective students, and new courses were added. This is still a process in its early phases that has barely been researched. I consider it to be a huge cultural experiment that none of us know the consequences of.

As a student at the Norwegian Academy of Music, I experienced a hierarchy of values that nobody questioned: the ultimate dream was to become

a solo performer in the Western Art Music tradition, followed by being an orchestral musician, followed by what the rest of us would become. This was evident among the students in the practice room area, in written material issued by the institution, in its outward artistic profile, syllabuses, in the way the teaching was organised, in its methods of evaluation, in conversations. I would constantly hear that what was taught held universal truth, or that it was genre neutral. But to me it was not always the case: somebody had decided which topics were to be given priority, which truths would be taught. This was a hierarchy that was impossible to change, and a hierarchy that I personally found difficult to live with. Among the students, music education had a lower status than a performance degree, and perhaps also among the staff. In addition to this, I was the only traditional singer on the programme I had chosen. The other students and staff had their background in rhythm-based music<sup>1</sup> and Western Art Music traditions. Musicians and teachers were at a very high level and the courses were excellent: I learnt about sonata form, 7–13 chords, Piaget, Maslow, the diaphragm and the larynx. But we did not discuss themes such as the harmonic seventh, what it is, how to notate it, how to connect the written interval with your inner ear and vice versa, or how to teach it. Or the way in which Dutch Baroque had inspired Norwegian traditional music and art. We didn’t learn about how broadside ballads and songs travelled across Europe, or enquire to understand whether we have traditions with an even wider geographical reach? What are the most important things I should be learning about traditional Norwegian music? I recall one of my music education teachers saying to me “You are quite right. We don’t have that expertise here yet—you will have to help establish the curriculum and build an academic environment for it.”

On other occasions, certain properties were ascribed to me that I did not possess. One teacher said that I inhabited a spiritual dimension and that I had been a witch in a previous life. All I had done was read the room and teach a few traditional songs by ear in accordance with my practical training. It was the teacher who inhabited a spiritual dimension; I was immersed in my discipline, following a scientific approach, posing the questions “what,” “why,” and “how.” The experience of being regarded as “exotic” was difficult to handle. I’m sorry, I don’t see auras, and I didn’t receive this music from wood spirits. I have practiced just like all the other students—I am simply a traditional singer, an educator, and a fellow human being.

While a bachelor student, I was once asked to sing at a masterclass for a renowned singing teacher. The room was filled with singers, both professional and students, representing various styles within the Western Art Music

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<sup>1</sup> Popular music & jazz.



tradition. I listened, absorbing the music, reflecting, learning. And when my turn came, I sang a traditional song from my own tradition. The teacher said “This is perfect, listen to her. You should all learn from her.” I recall half the assembly cheering, while the other half was furious. I was in a turmoil. I had come there with the hope of finally being given some advice on jaw tension, my diaphragm, everything. To me this appreciation was yet further confirmation that I was not being taken seriously, that I could not be helped. That I did not belong. What hurt the most that day was a comment from one of my teachers at the Academy who said: “And then there’s you, Unni, who doesn’t even need to practice.” The teacher in question repeated this amusing story some 10–15 years later when we met in the staff room of another music institution. The other teachers laughed. I was there to give a masterclass.

When I felt at my lowest as a student, I would contact some of my former teachers who were working as professional traditional singers. They could offer me a little comfort, saying: “It’s like that for all of us. You have to get back up.” Just knowing that somebody understood, knew my context, was a help. I made up my mind to seek out as much knowledge as possible on my own and do as well as I could. I began to attend a concert every day, anything, in order to broaden my horizons and learn from those around me. I decided to familiarise myself with the musical language of others, discuss music on other people’s terms, and take on the long-term battle to achieve equal status. I decided to belong, so that it would come true.

In order to add more traditional music to my curriculum, I took a number of voluntary subjects in addition to the compulsory ones. These would not appear on my degree certificate, but I followed the attendance and study requirements in each of the subjects. These were subjects that were taught at bachelor and master level by the Academy’s first professor of traditional music. These lessons were a lifeline. I learnt traditional music history, transcription, various local traditions, Hardanger fiddle playing by ear—I found security. However, these lessons were usually given from the perspective of a violinist or Hardanger fiddle player. This professor had my back when the traditional music community expressed their dislike of my taking an academic education. I was accused of running the risk of becoming a classical singer, becoming too professional, learning too many different traditions, undermining our own tradition. Certain individuals were not afraid to express their scepticism, and it was we students who were in the firing line. And this professor was there for me, vouched for me, assuring them that I was still a traditional musician. When I became a student, I felt I was somehow letting down the community in which I had grown up, and at the same time I did not feel welcomed by a new one. Having a teacher who actively stood up for me was very important. He gave me the confidence to battle on through the chaos in which I found myself.

One dark day as a bachelor student, I met somebody on my way home from the Academy. A professor at the art academy, a surrealist and Hardanger fiddle player. “Hi, I’m a traditional singer from Hornindal, you play Hardanger fiddle and come from Jølster.” “Great, let’s go to Valken pub,” so we went to Valken (a well-known pub in Oslo without background music). From that day on, I spoke with him and his students almost daily. It was like returning to normality, an oasis of childlike surrealism with emphasis on our profession, in a tolerant and unprejudiced atmosphere. Our focus was not on things that were wrong or different, but on everything that had potential. This helped shape my life thereafter, and I believe he is the best teacher I have ever met. Do not seek affirmation, remain in touch with your artistic inclination, stand on your own two feet. In many ways this was an attitude I had learnt from my older teachers as I grew up. I do not remember ever having received a verbal compliment. The affirmation I received was being allowed to return, that the door was always open to me.

I was alone in my discipline and privileged. I was involved in projects few other students had the chance to experience, especially those studying music education. I sang solo with the contemporary music ensemble, with the chamber choir, I even sang for the King. I travelled to Setesdal for singing lessons and practical training. My student years were complete chaos where I tried to learn everything I had access to, in case it might be useful one day. I was not able to decide whether what I learnt was relevant or not. It felt as though I was feeling my way in the dark, searching for something I occasionally glimpsed the outline of. I missed having a unifying teacher or community where I could talk shop, as it were. I missed having an environment where I would be understood, be challenged, gain focus, or create order in the chaos. I missed having somebody who could help me connect the knowledge I had as a traditional musician with what I was being taught.

## **Associate Professor of Traditional Singing**

Throughout my masters studies and later on, I earned my living as a freelance traditional singer as well as teaching—these two professions often exist side by side in traditional music. When a position for a part-time traditional singing teacher at the Norwegian Academy of Music was advertised, I applied. Nine months passed before I was offered the post and during those months I had time to reflect on my student days, my years as a freelance musician, and the fundamental values I wanted to take with me to the Academy. Today those reflections are good to have. I am now in position to change things. I am at the core of this great cultural experiment, for better or for worse. The challenge is how to develop academic teaching competence and studies in Norwegian traditional music on the music’s own terms, while at the same

maintaining a symbiosis or flow of knowledge with other musical disciplines, other academic traditions at the Academy, local traditional music traditions around the country, and cultural life in general. What competencies do we expect students to take with them into their professional careers?

Being a pioneer has its price, that is certain. We have to endure being at the very start of something, accept change, develop the new in small increments, step by step, within the institution and society; collaborate. Today we are no longer at the start, and there are things I am not willing to accept anymore. In the 1990s, it was unthinkable to teach at an institution for higher education in music without a solid foundation in Western Art Music, and I would argue that it is still very much the case. But not all music comes from notated sources, has an even pulse, or is based on equal temperament. The Norwegian Academy of Music has a number of students who perform music that did not develop from Western traditions but belongs to other cultural contexts. During admissions for the academic year 2023 we received applications from traditional musicians to the music performance programme, music education, conducting, composition, FRIKA (individual focus), and music therapy courses. There is an increasing number of applications to the various master's programmes, and applications for the PhD programmes in artistic research and performance practice.

Today there is one aural training teacher with a traditional music background, and I have several colleagues in the traditional music department who are in part time positions. This has been a major development for us. And so, we continue, enduring adversities, rising to the challenge, trying out new solutions. The subjects we teach are still under development, and our work is long term, nurturing new educators who will eventually take over. We need more students involved in artistic research. Our society needs traditional musicians in many roles: music therapists, cultural school administrators, educators, performers in a wide variety of artistic disciplines, and cultural politicians. We need more collaboration between the sector and music education. And most of all, we need to remain in touch with our local traditional music conventions, so that we do not lose ourselves throughout these processes.

As an educator, my teaching is based on artistic development with the goal of reinforcing the students' own reflections on their artistic standpoint and context. The content of one-to-one lessons is adapted specifically for each individual student. I rarely teach in the way I was taught as an apprentice growing up, although I might do so at the beginning of a bachelor programme to build a solid foundation of knowledge, repertoire, reflection, and just to get the student off to a good start. Or perhaps if a student genuinely wishes to learn my tradition. I prioritise spending time on creating safe, inclusive environments for students and colleagues. At the beginning of each

academic year we implement the Critical Response Process<sup>2</sup> method in interpretation classes to build a positive culture of the value of diversity, and we train our ability to enter each other’s world of ideas. We respect our duty of confidentiality and take care of each other on an artistic and on a human level, so that we can focus on diving into the music as deeply as possible. This, I believe, is the reason why today’s traditional music students develop artistically in such diverse directions and achieve such a high artistic standard. They don’t need to waste time defining their choices to a community, to individuals, or music: they belong, they are curious, seeking knowledge, have the means to express themselves with their artistic inclination and its changing status, and they have the support of the institution on their journey into the music. The students frequently initiate collaborations across artistic disciplines, thus breaking down divisions between the subjects and genres by which the Academy is organised. This in turn gives us new competence, and a deeper knowledge of each other within the group.

Throughout the year of having this job, students have asked: “Am I allowed to sing these songs with my skin colour?”, “Can I do traditional music if I grew up in the city?”, “Am I allowed to play or sing this music if I’m a classical musician?” Indeed, musical changes will happen if you are not familiar with the dialect of the music, if you come from a different musical tradition, or if you transfer the music from one instrument to another. These are concrete adaptations; the music and the tradition is changed when you encounter it, when you work with it, and something new is added. That is the way it has always been—you become a new branch. When we look at the musical material we have, it is almost possible to read how people have met across country boundaries, cultures and villages. Broadside ballads, traditional songs, hymns, children’s songs, and dances have travelled huge geographical distances, merging with already existing traditions. One of my early teachers went on a pensioners’ trip to Valdres<sup>3</sup> in the 1980s. The songs she learnt there are today an integral part of the traditional song tradition in Hornindal where my teacher and I are from. “La Folia,” a song you can find in Hornindal, is often described as the most widespread traditional song in Europe. But I would hazard a guess that in other circles it is described as being the tune that the greatest number of Western Art Music composers have used in their compositions. Traditional music belongs to whoever wants to live it. Permission is yours.

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<sup>2</sup> Liz Lerman’s *Critical Response Process* is a method for giving and receiving feedback on work in progress. It is designed to make the receiver question their creative processes and leave the receiver of the response eager and motivated to get back to work.

<sup>3</sup> The journey from Hornindal to Valdres takes around five hours by bus.

The Norwegian Academy of Music has recently launched a new educational further training programme for musicians from minority backgrounds—cultural diversity in music education. This programme does not result in a degree but is awarded 30 credits. In Norway we do not offer a bachelor's in performance for world traditional music and non-Western classical traditions. Yet this is music that is part of our society, our music education, and the professional scene. There are young, talented musicians who have grown up in Norway, gone through higher education, but belong to a different musical tradition. They are still to this day excluded from academia. This means that they, who should be among my closest colleagues at the Academy, have not yet been given the chance to develop and take on that role. Until that day comes, I have chosen to involve myself in building a European academic environment for traditional music. And perhaps that is the answer. Our institutions are small and cannot cater for everybody. But if we collaborate, we can find colleagues, or a study programme that meets specific needs. The European Association of Conservatoires is considering establishing a new platform for traditional music under the working title “Traditional, Global and Folk Working Group.”

I am Unni Løvlid, Associate Professor and Head of the Traditional Music Programme at the Norwegian Academy of Music. I compete as a traditional singer in the elite category in Norway, I have learnt my craft from the older generation of local traditional singers in Hornindal, I have an academic background in education, performance and research in Norwegian traditional singing. I have been a full-time musician and toured extensively around the world. I operate within a broad spectrum of music, contemporary music in particular, but always with Norwegian traditional music at the core. I feel privileged to be able to work as a traditional musician at an institution such as the Norwegian Academy of Music. I am still just a traditional singer, and that is sufficient for me. This is my fifth year as Head of Traditional Music at the Academy, and they have been fantastic and intense ones. I am proud to follow the progress of the students I have worked with, in the same way that my early teachers were proud to see the opportunities I was given. My goal is to raise the bar for “normal,” to contribute to making diverse music a valued resource where there is mutual discussion, curiosity, exchange of knowledge. I want to eradicate outsidership.

**Part II**  
**Gender, Sexuality, and Power Relations**  
**in Higher Music Education Cultures**

Edited by: Christa Brüstle

# Gender, Sexuality, and Power Relations in Higher Music Education Cultures

Christa Brüstle

Gender relations are always related to social positions and roles as well as to social spaces of action and their culturally determined evaluations. Thus, they are very often linked to power and power relations, which have been discussed in the first part of the book. However, the fact that a powerful position and role was associated exclusively with its occupation by a male person is a development of the late 18th and 19th centuries in the European and North American context. Research on gender relations in the early modern period has shown, for example, that “in the German territorial states of the 16th to 18th centuries ... [female] regents and governors knew how to govern and rule as well—or badly—as their fathers, brothers, or sons” (Wunder, 1992, p. 206). The changes in the 18th and 19th centuries were mainly due to the fact that with the emergence of sovereign states and the bourgeoisie, with the Industrial Revolution and with the development of modern natural sciences, gender relations and values related to them were given new foundations. The (evolutionary) biological, scientific justification and substantiation of the differences between men and women—even if they were highly speculative—certainly formed one of the central new foundations, some of which continue to have an impact today. Although the rights of women and the legal status of female citizens remained an issue in the new states and political debates, these discourses were massively overshadowed by the supposedly “natural” difference between the sexes and its consequences. As R. W. Connell (1987) put it: “Radical doctrines of equal rights could easily coexist with highly conven-

tional views about ‘true womanhood’, about the proper work of women and men and about their heterosexual destiny” (p. 26).

In bourgeois society, this differentiation meant the idealisation of the housewife and mother, as opposed to the man, who occupied powerful key positions in public life, in the state, in administration, and industry. It also meant a dependence and subordination of the wife, who could even be chastised on the basis of legal regulations in the event of public and private “rule violations.” Power and supremacy in all its forms, as well as the management of resources and capital, were linked to the man, and this was also true in working class families, where women could not stay at home, and had to contribute to the families’ income. In this case the intersectionality of gender with social status and income is to underline. Further aspects of intersectionality will be discussed in the following part of the book.

The above-mentioned structures of the bourgeois society have also had an impact on musical life and practice. It is therefore not surprising that, for example, the function and role of orchestral conductors, who became firmly established in the 19th century, was filled only with men and had a clear and exclusive masculine connotation. Elias Canetti (1960) therefore described the conductor as a “man of power”:

There is no more obvious expression of power than the performance of a conductor. Every detail of his public behaviour throws light on the nature of power. Someone who knew nothing about power could discover all its attributes, one after another, by careful observation of a conductor. (p. 394)

In this book’s second part, these and other connections between gender, gender relations, power relations, and music are addressed from different perspectives. The expert paper by Cecilia Ferm Almqvist and Ann Werner entitled “Gender in Higher Music Education” first provides an introduction to the terminological and socio-cultural significance of gender, before expounding the fundamental connections between gender, music education, and power. The latter is already inherent in private and institutionally prescribed individual music lessons and in the specific relationships between teachers and students, which often include a great deal of closeness and/or dependency. Gender performances by teachers and students cannot be avoided, which can bring with them different ethical problems that have received a lot of attention in recent years. Most often it is powerful (male) teachers, instrumentalists, conductors, or other musicians who overstep their boundaries for years, abuse power, and are not held accountable, as we have seen, for example, in the chapter “Violence in Higher Music Education Today” by Basilio Fernández-Morante in the first part of this book. The victims are mostly very young girls and women, sometimes boys.



Some young students even assume that their careers will be boosted in this way. Highly competitive pressure among students often promotes misogynistic and discriminatory behaviour or bullying. In recent decades, and in some cases still today, music education institutions and their employees have been reluctant to critically reflect on their hierarchical structures and cultures and to increase their gender and diversity skills through further training.

Following the expert paper, these aspects are described and discussed in more detail in the keyword section. Here, the relationship between gender and music is addressed in more detail, the aspects of sexuality, music, and sexual harassment are discussed, and the understanding of gender mainstreaming in HMEIs is explained.

As Clara Sersale's contribution shows, her entire piano studies were dominated by playing the repertoire of male composers. From her report it is understandable that the canon of Western Art Music completely permeates the curricula of HME. The teachers are still guided by the "old masters" and pass on certain values that male composers prefer. This does not open up any knowledge and repertoire extensions in the field of women's compositions for students. These structures lead to the fact that, to this day, pieces of music by women are underrepresented in musical life.

Kirsten Lies-Warfield's contribution documents the direct connections between power, gender, and music. As the first trombonist of the prominent United States Army Band "Pershing's Own" she was dismissed because her advocacy against sexual harassment and unethical behaviour in the Army Band was considered inadmissible insubordination.

In jazz too, unequal gender relations are associated with the occupation of certain positions by men only (e.g., band leaders, percussionists, bass players), as the jazz singer Susanna Stivali explains in her chapter. In this genre, again we find the interweaving of gender, music, and power, which has an effect in the classroom. In addition, the author provides information about initiatives in Italy that have been formed to promote women in jazz and to make visible and change the imbalance of gender relations in jazz, which creates a link to the fourth part of this book.

While Susanna Stivali demonstrates that understanding of the complex intersections of gender, music, and power requires more than just careful consideration of heteronormative gender relations, Si Sophie Whybrew's contribution introduces a broader perspective on how gender, music, and power intersect, which includes the meaning and roles of trans and non-binary persons. Above all, the situation of students who locate themselves beyond cisnormativity and have to fight for recognition and fairness in their individuality at HMEIs is discussed. Further aspects of diversity and inclusion will be the focus of the third part of this book.

# Gender in Higher Music Education

Cecilia Ferm Almqvist & Ann Werner

**T**his chapter explains and discusses the role of gender in higher music education (HME). It does so by first outlining the debates about what “gender” is, and how it operates through power imbalances and differences that are both social and cultural. Furthermore, the chapter describes the main results from research about gender in higher music education institutions (HMEIs) in Europe through three themes: gender and music, gender in HME, and the gendering of professional roles. Thereafter the chapter problematises gender as an analytical category through an intersectional lens, and discusses the problem of sexual harassment, sexism, and other harassment in HMEIs. Finally, the chapter discusses how to challenge/address gender issues in HME.

## What Is Gender?

An everyday definition of “gender” simply states that there are two genders—male and female—that are biologically different and treated as such in culture and society. During second-wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s 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 problematises 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 prevalent today). Feminist theory has since grown to be a vibrant field that, among other things, investigates how femininities and masculinities as well as gender identities outside of the binary man/woman take form, are treated and politically changing in culture and society. Importantly Judith Butler (1990) was one of the theorists that problematised the division between sex and gender, 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 understanding of 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 the 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 they affect how people can live their lives, get work, be accepted in society, etc. In recent public debate, Butler has argued that gender is changing in the 2020s and that we can see a change in the category “woman,” being more inclusive for example for lesbian women and for trans women. Also, the binary concept of society consisting solely of “men and women” has been challenged by activists for intersex people and persons that are non-binary (identifying as 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 overrepresentation of men. Popular music musicians’ work is clearly segregated: the “singer” position is seen as belonging to women, while instrumentalists are male. Not least the role of the electric guitarist and the music producer are male dominated (Bayton, 1998; Ferm Almqvist, 2021; Green, 2010). 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, men’s singing can also be regarded as an act of masculine behav-

our, 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 performances. On the other hand, when girls choose male associated 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, flautists, and harpsichord players, while men work as composers, conductors, bassists, percussionists, and brass players. The French horn, cello, clarinet, and piano on the other hand seem to be occupied by both genders. This gender division influences the makeup of teaching staff in HMEIs. In fact, genres and styles are found to be gendered in Western Art Music culture: they have been divided into those that are perceived to be more valuable (and mainly masculine), and those considered less valuable (and mainly feminine) (Citron, 1993; McClary, 1991). In addition, music history and music theory are themselves gendered disciplines, as they are historically dominated by male composers (Maus, 1993).

## **Gender in Higher Music Education**

Music education practices have, in research, been found to be steered by norms around gender and 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 is decided in relation to norms. Research on music education and gender shows that music teaching and learning is an arena where gender is shaped (Abeles, 2009). This is displayed in the choice of instrument and genre, the possibility to claim space, power relations and subordination in teaching and learning. These gender norms are reproduced by musicians who teach in HME, often educated within the institutions where they were taught by others, who were also educated there; creating a cycle.

Within HME, teaching is primarily formed in the master-apprentice tradition, where students are expected to imitate and “become” their teachers. The model of imitation is seen as contributing with musical and technical expertise to be developed and refined without reflecting and questioning (Gaunt, 2017). Such a view can also reproduce gender norms, regarding views of performance and interpretation. Zhukov (2012) has found that students of different genders are treated differently by their masters (teachers), and Ferm Almqvist (2019) that music education promotes male students, or females who accept male influences, values, and ways of behaving in teaching situations. It has been shown by Borgström-Källén (2013) that a gendered polarised view of musical genres is common in music educational settings.

This affects who is/will be seen as “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 music as a whole, are concerned about practical things around musical situations, more inclined to help others—“pitching 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, where women take more social responsibility. Below, we underline the risk that such expectations negatively impact on careers for women in HME. Educational relations in HME take place in interactions between teacher and student, and in interactions between students (Bull, in this volume). It has been emphasised that gender-related behaviours, agreed upon norms, imaginations, and expectations, as well as use of language, limit music students due to their gender in an educational setting. It has been shown to be important that music students get opportunities to affect how they realise their ideas and use the creative space to transgress gender stereotypes. How can music teachers in HME create environments where music is created and investigated, and where it is possible for all students to reach their full musical potential? One important task for the teacher is to approach students in ways that make them use the space of education independent of their gender. This can break the habit where women limit themselves, men dominate, and other genders are invisible. All students could get the sense that there are creative spaces in HME for everyone. In addition, all students should be encouraged by their teachers and peers to use and develop musical abilities and visions in educational activities.

## **Gendering of Professional Roles**

When discussing gender and HME, it also becomes relevant to shed light on the interplay between music education, gender, power, teaching, and research. The number of women at all academic levels is increasing, and most undergraduate students are women. While gender inequality remains, it is more subtle than before. Men for example, are still holding more prestigious positions, a fact that cannot only be explained or surmised by age, discipline, and generation. In addition, women in academia do a lot more so-called “glue work” to keep the department running. Blix et al. (2019) have noticed that the specific characteristics of higher arts education differ from other academic disciplines: they take the criteria for assessing the quality of artistic works as an example of relatively unclear criteria, which they state make assessments diverse. A concrete example is the promotion to higher academic positions, where studies have revealed that men are ranked higher than women,

although they share the same merits (Blix et al., 2019). This raises the risk around quality culture: if institutions remain gendered, researchers have to underline the need for explicit criteria to ensure quality in performing arts. A recent study performed in Scandinavia (Borgström-Källén, 2021) problematises the construction of expertise and excellence within music education in relation to gender and status positions. The author underlines the double subordination of female professors in music education at conservatories, compared to male professors in music performance. She shows that the discipline of music education is positioned as peripheral and feminine, called into question by professors from other disciplines (musical performance and musicology, for example), which are often made up of male professors. The interviewees in her study express that gender inequality is a struggle and an everyday problem: “On paper I’m a professor, but at my department I’m positioned as a woman working in pedagogy. They think research on young children is of no value” (Borgström-Källén, 2021, p. 258). The example illustrates that gender inequality exists between professors and disciplines in HME. And that having female professors does not imply gender equality is achieved.

### **Identities and Intersectionality**

When scholars have examined the importance of gender in HME, “gender” has increasingly been problematised 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 “the woman.” The problem of such a unified subject—unifying all women’s experiences—is that focusing on what unifies “women” obscures other social categorisations that divide them. Feminist theory and politics have been called out as promoting a “woman” that is pseudo-universal, mirroring interests of certain groups of women: white, middle-class, ethnic majority, heterosexual, and able-bodied. 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 the 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. Furthermore, political intersectionality is a strategy introduced by her that requires addressing several oppressions simultaneously, for example sexism, racism, and capitalism. It is, according to Crenshaw, not enough to challenge gender oppression if other power imbalances are not also addressed. In HMEIs, sexism, racism, capitalism, homophobia, and the treatment of trans people should be seen as intersecting in teaching, for example. This chapter has focused on gender in HME,

but from an intersectional theoretical perspective addressing gender inequality also involves addressing race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, and other power imbalances in HME.<sup>1</sup>

### **Sexual Harassment, Sexism, and Other Harassment**

One pressing issue in HME that also concerns gender, is the sexist treatment and sexual harassment of students and staff.<sup>2</sup> Sexual harassment in the workplace has been discussed in feminist theory and political policy for decades. Defined by law 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 environments for sexual harassment. In HME the one-on-one tuition model and the master-apprentice tradition makes it easy for sexual harassment to occur behind closed doors. The culture of silence surrounding sexism and sexual harassment, however, is not unique to the teaching environment. The music profession is a very competitive field where a small group often holds great power over a large group's future. A culture of silence is a workplace custom where people are afraid to speak up about injustices related to power in fear of losing their jobs or positions. To challenge sexism and sexual harassment, gendered power in HME must be addressed. It is the gendered education and power imbalances that underpin misconduct.

### **Challenging Gender Norms in Higher Music Education**

Based on the above, one task for HME, including leaders, administrators, and teachers, is to move past gender inequality and transform music education. In other words, the challenge is to promote equal possibilities to study music on a professional level for all students, and for all teachers to be welcomed in HME independent of gender, class, and race. A critique of neoliberalism in higher education and an intersectional take on gender and power are essential to tackle the gender inequalities in HME (de Boise, 2018). Neoliberalism is an economic and political model which dominates the 21st century. Within higher education this is expressed in, for example, assessment practices, in quality criteria, and in the focus on employability, marketing, and the labour market. To transform HME, we need to be aware of what space can be created within legal frameworks for the development of gender equality and

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<sup>1</sup> This will be one of the aspects addressed in Part III.

<sup>2</sup> See also Bull, in this volume.

work out how to use these frameworks. For concrete change to take place, the invisible norms and structures related to gender and power must be made visible by HMEIs.

Working towards gender equality in HME should be done in line with legislation, policies, and steering documents, as well as in conversation with faculty, 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 a teaching situation, it is important for all stakeholders to be aware of teacher's responsibilities and mechanisms can be implemented to encourage equal learning and development opportunities for all genders. It is important for teachers to be informed about students' experiences and attitudes 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 HME, one should take responsibility for steering teaching and educational organisation towards equal possibilities to learn and develop. This includes creating safe surroundings, where it is allowed to experiment 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 spaces 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, interest, 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 to the students' attainment. One prerequisite for such actions is motivation among leaders, with the power to transform music education.

Collegial discussion about gender equality in HME 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.



## Keyword: Gender and Music

Christa Brüstle

Music as a culturally and socially influenced art is permeated by gender-related behaviours, values, discourses, and ideas in its various facets and genres. In connection with this, there are language conventions, differentiations, spaces of action, rituals and festivals, or objects of use in music which are gender-connoted. All areas of musical activity, teaching, speaking, and thinking thus imply historically and socio-culturally changeable gender-influenced structures, schemes, and ideas. The dualistic gender concept of “man/woman” or “male/female” was and still is in the foreground, although this simple dichotomy has been increasingly questioned in the last three decades. Criticism of this is based on the one hand on the fact that *women* and *men* can no longer be understood as homogeneous groups, and on the other hand by the fact that some people do not feel that they clearly belong to either of these groups, or do not want to be categorised as person or part of either of these groups by others.

The dualistic concept of gender is firmly anchored in the European, Western Art Music discourse, however. According to Treitler (1993): “From early on music history has been guided by gender duality in its description, evaluation, and narrative form” (p. 23). Female connoted descriptions, such as “graceful,” “soft,” “sensitive” were juxtaposed with male connotations, such as “hard,” “strong,” “powerful,” “rational.” As Treitler noted, however, it does not remain with neutral descriptions, but with this dualism evaluations are linked: the attribution of female characteristics was usually associated with a

devaluation. In this respect, the dualistic concept always meant at the same time an execution of demarcation processes and the possibility of upgrading what one identifies positively with. This dualism is even evident, for example, when Beethoven's symphonies ("the monumental," masculine) are compared with Schumann's symphonies ("the lyrical," feminine) (Dahlhaus, 1989, p. 132). Attributions and connotations of masculinity and femininity are associated with the critique and evaluation of male and female persons, although an attribution of femininity can also apply to a man, as indicated in the case of Schumann. In the context of how 19th century music history was presented, Schumann is thus belittled from Beethoven, whereby Schumann's validity as Beethoven's epigone was to be underlined.

For a long time, music history and historiography consisted of male composers. The corresponding music-theoretical, academic, and music-aesthetic discourses have therefore been developed throughout their works (Maus, 1993). Female composers did not play a role until the 20th century, although it was known that there were also women composing before this time. The "musical geniuses," on the other hand, were men who were given a special status because, as musical creators in the romantic understanding, they would both master male construction techniques and express female emotional areas, as Christine Battersby (1989) explained:

On the one hand ... the driving force of genius was described in terms of *male* sexual energies. On the other hand, the genius was supposed to be *like a woman*: in tune with his emotions, sensitive, inspired—guided by instinctual forces that welled up from beyond the limits of rational consciousness. (p. 103, emphasis in original)

There was no place for female composers in this way of thinking. Only with the feminist movements of the 20th century an awareness was created that there had to be room for female composers as well. They were gradually presented in encyclopaedias and other publications, their music was discovered, performed, and distributed on music media from the 1980s (this was not only the case of female composers in Western Art Music but also in popular music and jazz). Their significance in the history of music has not yet been clarified, however. They remain at best accepted, interesting, exotic. Their works are far from being considered core to the canon of concert repertoire. The question of their specificity is also difficult—do they have feminine characteristics (and which ones?) or are they just like their male colleagues, who can display a variety of characteristics across the gender spectrum? If one understands music as socio-culturally influenced art, then of course there are differences that are related to the social spheres of action for women and men. If in the 18th century it was possible for a woman to compose, perform, and publish her works, it was mostly because her status as a person in a

court context and as a public figure allowed this, as for example in the case of Maria Antonia Walpurgis (1724–1780), Electress of Saxony (Fischer, 2007).

In the 19th century the role of women was mostly limited to the family and private sphere, so a female composer was more likely to produce songs and piano music. But some women also composed works for orchestra as, for example, Louise Farrenc (1804–1875) and Emilie Mayer (1812–1883), which only in recent years has been fully recognized. Another aspect is the question of compositional training, which was only possible for women at a professional level if their family could afford private lessons. Only since the beginning of the 20th century has it been possible for women to pursue professional studies in composition at a conservatory (Babbe & Timmermann, 2021; Fend & Noiray, 2005; Hoffmann, 2021).

In any case, at the beginning of women's studies, the question arose as to whether woman/femininity can only be thought of as a function of man/masculinity, or whether the diversity of women does not rather have its own identity-forming, independent *écriture*, culture, and aesthetics (difference feminism). Conversely, it was argued that it could not be a question of reinforcing the differences between man/woman, masculinity/femininity, but of advocating that the real disadvantages of women are eliminated and that both sexes have equal rights and equal opportunities (egalitarianism) (Echols, 1983; Galster, 2010). The latter was also lacking for women in art for a long time, however. They often received no reasonable education, they could not perform or print their works, and they were not included in the histories. This happened even when a woman composed music that was performed and recognized during her own lifetime (Cusick, 2009; Fischer, 2007).

Moving on to women singers and instrumentalists, again, biological and social gender provided differentiations that followed gender dualism, although there was an overlay with other categories that could upset this dualism, as, for example, the categories of age, race, and social status. Thus, it is clear today that in Baroque operas, men's roles were often associated with high voices in a socially superior position, where the role could be embodied by a man or a woman. The practice of cross-sexual casting has shaped the history of opera since its beginnings, but it has been dependent on social conditions and on the casting of certain types of roles. Old female figures, for example, could also be embodied by men with deep voices (Knaus, 2011). In contrast, there were very clear gender-specific divisions in the case of instruments: wind and percussion instruments were played almost exclusively by men until the 20th century, while women were assigned the piano and the harp for a long time (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Hoffmann, 1991). These gender-specific divisions continue to this day in popular music, where gender parity can only be found in singing. The instruments in popular music, whether drums, piano, or electric guitar, are still largely played by men (Waksman, 2001).

The dualistic concept of gender not only permeated the practice and composition of music, but also inner-musical structures and the hermeneutics of music, as came into discussion in the late 1980s and 1990s, especially through the writings of Susan McClary. McClary (1991) writes about “musical constructions of gender and sexuality”:

This is probably the most obvious aspect of feminist music criticism. In most dramatic music, there are both female and male characters, and usually (though not always) the musical utterances of characters are inflected on the basis of gender. Beginning with the rise of opera in the seventeenth century, composers worked painstakingly to develop a musical semiotics of gender: a set of conventions for constructing “masculinity” or “femininity” in music. The codes marking gender difference in music are informed by the prevalent attitudes of their time. But they also themselves participate in social formation, inasmuch as individuals learn how to be gendered beings through their interactions with cultural discourses such as music. Moreover, music does not just passively reflect society; it also serves as a public forum within which various models of gender organization (along with many other aspects of social life) are asserted, adopted, contested, and negotiated. (pp. 7–8)

McClary, however, refers not only to operas, but also to instrumental music, in which the sonata form provides a framework for thematic and harmonic drama. Here, the confrontation between the main and second theme or the “male” and “female” theme in the reprise often results in an overwhelming adaptation of the second theme to the main key, so that the “male” theme means dominance and the “female” theme subordination, as McClary claimed. The compositional treatment of the two themes could thus have a gender- and sexually-connoted meaning (McClary, 2000). With this thesis, McClary triggered many controversies in musicology.

McClary’s writings, however, were also taken up positively, for example, in an increasing critical reflection on music historiography and music discourses that were traditionally very patriarchal, as Ian Biddle (2011) put it:

On the whole, musicology has remained stubbornly patrilineal, stubbornly white, heteronormative and privileged, and is modelled on a system of male patronage that is still largely intact even when the gender balance of academic staff seems at last to be shifting painfully slowly towards a more equitable gender distribution. (p. 12)

Gradually, therefore, it was critically questioned to what extent a male-authoritative historiography of music has shaped music knowledge. In addition, concepts of masculinity were put up for discussion in the western musical practice (Biddle & Gibson, 2009). This also critically reflected the

dualistic gender concept, as well as the heterosexual matrix in music discourses. The question arose as to what approaches to music the homosexual matrix brings. The view of the so-called “new gay and lesbian musicology” that “musicality” is to be equated with “gay identity” was provocatively presented (Brett et al., 2006). One of the arguments discussed in this context was that the preoccupation with music has always been a sign of deviance, especially for men, as Brett (2006) wrote:

Though it is not proscribed in the same way as homosexuality, music has often been considered a dangerous substance, an agent of moral ambiguity always in danger of bestowing deviant status upon its practitioners. ... Lurking beneath the objections against music, the ethical question surrounding it, is the long tradition of feeling that it is different, irrational, unaccountable. (p. 11)

While the music discourses with reference to the heterosexual and homosexual matrix were at that time based around rather essentialist ideas, the philosopher and literary scholar Judith Butler had at the same time already designed a model of thought, which brought the term “gender” as a social and performative category to the fore. She drew on the distinction between “sex” and “gender,” which was already common in the English-speaking world (Butler 1990; Rubin 1975). The differentiation between “sex” and “gender” meant the distinction between biological sex or body and the different socio-cultural gender roles. However, the two areas are also interrelated because the definition of the body or the idea of human biology are also permeated by social, cultural, and linguistic conventions and rules.

For music, differences and similarities between “sex” and “gender” (or gender criteria) play a central role. Similar to dance, for example, bodies in music are elementary media for the practice of this art. Bodies are not neutral objects, however, but are determined by their age, skin colour, gender, or physical and mental abilities. In addition, bodies are usually staged, they are expressed in their appearance on the public and private stage, where a clear representation of masculinity or femininity can be undermined. The avoidance of unambiguity—however it is produced—has become known under the label “queer.” As Stewart (2017) put it: “In terms of gender, queer revisits and revises the categories of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as fixed, essential single identities” (p. 62). The play with ambiguous, non-binary gender roles has been observed in recent years mainly in popular music and musical theatre (Maus & Whiteley, 2022). In popular music, at least since Little Richard in the 1950s and David Bowie’s alter ego Ziggy Stardust in the early 1970s, artistic identities have been presented as “gender bending” (Auslander, 2006; Steptoe, 2018). In modern opera productions and in contemporary music theatre, gender roles are also ambiguously created, doubled, or neutralised,

not to mention cross-dressing in opera. In addition, “gender bending” is also used in vocal production, either in contemporary music or in popular music, both with and without electronic devices (Geffen, 2021; Novak, 2015). In any case, it is clear that the social and artistic construction of gender is by no means limited to the conformity of biological sex with a clear gender role. Gender is an open concept that implies many differentiations and enables different forms of staging of a subject in society. Since music is also anchored in cultures, different gender concepts and gender understandings also influence the practice and theory of music. It should, therefore, be self-evident today that music and gender have a close interrelationship.

## **Jazz and Gender Balance in Italy: A Point of View**

Susanna Stivali

**A**s a jazz singer, composer, and professor of Vocal Jazz at the Licinio Refice Conservatory of Music in Frosinone, Italy, in this text I will try to offer reflections on gender equality within the field of jazz based on my professional experience as an active musician, educator, activist, and queer woman working and teaching in Italy. In terms of interaction between different musical influences and languages jazz is, in my opinion, the most inter-sectional genre. It is, however, not the same in terms of awareness of equal opportunities, the fight against existing imbalances, respect for sexual orientation, or representation of a multifaceted reality. In the following text I will discuss the reasons for this and what can and should be done to achieve gender equality.

I think that in my country, Italy, we are still very attached to the clichés that link jazz to prominent heterosexual male power figures, both in the professional and higher music education (HME) context. Most directors of conservatories—as well as heads of jazz departments and jazz instrumental teachers—are men. The only exceptions, in the jazz teaching field, are voice teachers, who are instead almost exclusively women. Most composers and musicians who studied in higher music education institutions (HMEIs) are men, while the history of women in jazz is hardly known and jazz history books rarely talk about female jazz musicians, again besides a handful of female jazz vocalists. Artistic directors at jazz festivals are mostly male, and festival programmes have a minimal percentage of female musicians, either as band leaders or session musicians.

Collecting data on gender in jazz is the objective of *Contiamoci*, the first survey on gender balance in the Italian jazz scene launched in 2020 and aimed at investigating professional careers, job opportunities, the number of bands each musician has been part of, the number of women in bands, the number of women in leadership roles, etc. *Contiamoci* is one of the most important initiatives launched by *Jazzmine*, a cultural association founded by the Italian drummer, composer, and activist Cecilia Sanchietti. The organisation gathers musicians and activists interested in gender equality issues in jazz and improvisational arts. I have been actively involved in the initiative as a member of the artistic committee of *Jazzmine*. We are currently looking for a collaboration between Italian and European foundations and universities, as well as with researchers, to secure more funding, widen the scope of research, get more data, and consequently achieve a stronger impact.

Another very important initiative launched by *Jazzmine*, in collaboration with *Midj* (the National Association of Italian Jazz Musicians)<sup>1</sup> and individual activists, is *Dij-ita*, a platform of Italian women in jazz designed for musicians and event organisers.<sup>2</sup> This organisation provides information about activities and projects of women within the improvised arts sector and is aimed at facilitating their inclusion in concert programmes to guarantee an egalitarian and meritocratic representation of the Italian jazz scene.

Based on my experience we should, in my opinion, work for changes in at least three different directions, which are interconnected:

- *Advocacy*, in terms of support in the working environment, through listening to women's stories (colleagues and students) about possible difficulties or incidents related to discriminating acts (within the studying and working environments); seeking out ways to invite institutions and festivals to recruit female musicians; increasing the number and visibility of female musicians; mentoring and sponsoring women in our field; finding alternative strategies;
- *Awareness* raising activities inside schools, HMEIs, and in professional contexts, with a specific focus on roles and models; bringing female musicians, teachers, performers, composers in schools and HMEIs and let them meet and work with young students, becoming models to be followed; organising workshops on compositions by female composers (using, for example, the *New Standards* project created within the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice<sup>3</sup>);

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<sup>1</sup> <https://musicisti-jazz.it/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eform.cloud/machform/view.php?id=14370>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.berklee.edu/berklee-now/news/berklee-institute-of-jazz-and-gender-justice-introduces-new-standards-to-the-world>



- *Research and training* in terms of education, mentoring, and sponsoring female musicians; creating spaces for discussion and confrontation among teachers and organisations from all around the world.

Starting from here, from these points, my commitment as an activist, educator, and female artist has moved through various activities and collaborations, first of all within *Jazzmine* for the *Contiamoci* survey and the *Dij-ita* platform, as was already mentioned above. I am a member of the board of *Midj*. This board of the association is formed by five women and four men. We are very concerned about these issues both in the world of professional music and in the world of education. Within *Midj* we created a Gender Equity Working Group which I am a member of. Concerning our project and activities in particular, we create connections and reports, bringing together the many realities of individual female musicians and associations that are active in addressing the issue of gender imbalance in the field of music in Italy and in Europe. In the last few years, various initiatives about gender equity were developed, but we realised that they often do not enter a dialogue with each other, leading to an unproductive segmentation.

With *Midj*, we have created a project to bring a female role model into Italian schools and HMEIs. They will run educational workshops with a comprehensive history of jazz music, with a focus on female musicians that have been too often and inexplicably excluded from the mainstream dominant narrative. We are also organising workshops for students which will be held by professional female musicians and meetings with HMEIs' staff, to solicit the creation of working groups for adopting gender equality plans, which are infrequent in Italian HMEIs.

The problem is often that we do not have teachers who are equipped to address gender equity issues, and so we have to start educating the educators. We also think that taking action in higher education programmes is a main concern, but it is late: the percentage of female teachers and students across Italian jazz departments in HMEIs is still very low in specific instrument groups traditionally considered more "masculine" (such as bass, guitar, drums, saxophone, trumpet, trombone). This is why it is so important to create activities for younger groups, to help create a new generation of professionals and listeners, more sensitive to these issues; reflecting a richer and more varied reality.

We created the Italian *Gender Equality Prize* together with *Jazzmine* in collaboration with *I-Jazz* (the Association of Italian Jazz Festivals) and the *National Federation of Italian Jazz* (that brings together the biggest jazz industry's representative associations in Italy). This prize is aimed at rewarding the festival with the programme that has the best gender representation; it is designed not only for the award mechanism in itself, but as an awareness and advocacy action aimed at drawing the attention of artistic directors and

practitioners in the field of jazz, to the equitable gender representation in the festivals they run. The prize is awarded during one of the most impressive Italian jazz festivals *Il jazz per le terre dell'Aquila* (a festival created to help the areas affected by the 2009 earthquake in central Italy).

The *Gender Equality Prize* is in its second edition, and we are working to make sure that it will become an important and inspiring award for Italian festivals that hopefully will increasingly focus on programming with more attention to gender balance. We are going to create a programme of different *playlists* for streaming and for teaching purposes as well, dedicated to female Italian jazz composers and musicians and disseminate them.

I am also President of *Muovileidee*, a Cultural Association that works in the fields of arts and music with special attention to gender equity topics, and member of the *APS Casa Internazionale delle Donne* (International House of Women) in Rome.<sup>4</sup> The *Casa Internazionale delle Donne* is a project, created thanks to the Municipality of Rome, in charge of enhancing women's politics and offering services and advice. Priority themes include self-determination for women, listening to the new demands of society, countering sexism and racism, welcoming and supporting women in difficulty and/or victims of violence, legal issues concerning mafia and organised crime, environmental justice, international cooperation, and attention and support for women's artistic production.

With *Muovileidee* we created *Diva's Jazz Festival*, a festival born within the *Casa Internazionale delle Donne*, specifically dedicated to female jazz musicians and composers, and I am the Artistic Director of this festival.<sup>5</sup> There are also other important festivals in Italy that are dedicated to female musicians (for example, *Lucca Jazz Donna*) and doing a great job. We think that despite the theme of the gender quota, which in Italy is called "rose quotas," it is always problematic and difficult to achieve a true equality, and we believe that it is important to have festivals in Italy specifically dedicated to female musicians, performers, and composers—we need them!

In conclusion, I think that it is very important to do all these activities first of all with the help of the younger generation. We have to listen to their needs, take their perspectives into consideration and, most of all, we absolutely need to work with professional figures consisting equally of men and women. Too often we realised that the people that act for or care about issues of gender equity and sexual orientation are only women, and it often happens that male professional figures, teachers or musicians are not

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.casainternazionaledelledonne.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/DivaSJazz/>

comfortable and have difficulties in dealing with these issues. We need to create a new language, a new perspective on power relations and identities, not only through statements but creating events and exchange opportunities, facilitating a growth through the real and practical exchange that music shared and played together offers us.

## **The Power of Canon in Higher Music Education: A Piano Student's Perspective**

Clara Sersale

**I**n my experience as a piano student both in a private music school and at a bachelor's degree programme in an Italian conservatory, the power of canon has been the most evident example of gender inequality in the form of women's underrepresentation. Canon may be defined as a "standard repertoire," whose authors are deemed to be the best and therefore more deserving of reiteration in performance, scholarship, and teaching (Citron, 1990), thus basically "a collection of pieces that you have to know if you want to belong to the subject or if you want to be successful in the musical field" (Heesch & Lebenlos, 2012). Musicologists have investigated the social conditions that prevented women in the past from building a professional career in music—a prerequisite to be able to challenge the canon—and that hampered the reception of their works: difficulty of access to a proper composition education, limited chances of having their pieces published and performed, lack of influence that the music clubs and organisations female artists had access to (if any), and gender-linked judgements by the critics (Citron, 1990; Wood, 1980). Another element that should not be overlooked is the denigration and trivialisation of the small form, whereby small forms hold less value than the large ones within the hierarchy of music genres. Established by the end of the 19th century, this assumption was mainly grounded on the fact that while the larger genres were conceived to be played in public, the smaller forms were often intended for private performance. The fact that, by and

large, women's place of education, socialisation and fulfilment was indeed the private sphere, as opposed to the public one, contributed to women's socialisation into small musical genres. This social background increasingly led to the common association "women/small form," which, regardless of the actual quality of the music in question, implied a lower status to be attributed to the musical product, being it regarded as the result of unprofessional work. At the same time, such gender/genre correlation reinforced the denigration of the small form in the light of the alleged inferiority of the composer's gender. As a result, the automatic trivialization of women's music works made it nearly impossible for women to find a place in the music canon (Citron, 1990). Against this backdrop, the phenomenon of artistic underestimation of women's works went on to reinforce a "pervasive philosophical bias against women as creators" (Citron, 1990, p. 110) that was also fostered by well-rooted religious beliefs (Rosen, 1973).

The acknowledgement of these social conditions ought to persuade us to avoid the assumption that if pieces by female composers were not included in performance practice in the past, they are not worth of consideration for performance and study. Therefore, decades after the findings I mentioned above, I believe that curricula and examination programmes of instrumental studies, instrument literature, analysis and history in higher music education as well as the list of pieces recommended for admission exams should have been updated consequently.

Unfortunately, women are still underrepresented in the Western Art Music canon and in academic environments, at least in the one where I received my music education (Italy) and in the one that I have recently come to know (Austria), from two different but interrelated standpoints: the repertoire performed by students and the composers studied in theoretical subjects.

During my studies at the conservatory in Italy, I had the opportunity to perform pieces by many different composers. None of them was composed by a woman, though. If I ask myself why, I must acknowledge that I was not myself aware of the number of pieces by female composers that were at least hypothetically available to me. However, if I think about how I would decide on my repertoire every year, I can understand the reason: my guidelines were mostly the obligatory pieces listed in my piano curriculum, what my professors suggested, what my colleagues did, as well as the repertoire I discovered in theoretical classes. My textbooks did not mention works by Francesca Caccini, Clémentine de Bourges, Ethel Smyth, or Ruth Crawford Seeger. For pianists, they only briefly named Clara Wieck and Fanny Mendelssohn—and mainly regarding their performance career. Moreover, I somehow feared other people's judgement, and this influenced and ultimately limited my possibilities of choice to the well-known repertoire.

The fact that I did not even come up with the idea of playing a piece by a female composer also relies, as mentioned above, on the existence of mandatory pieces and explicitly suggested repertoire. This does not apply only to the institution in which I studied.

By considering the published syllabi of the biggest Italian conservatories and in particular those of the bachelor's programmes in piano, we can see that they provide lists of composers that students can perform in their exams (including admission examinations), for each music period or style. These lists are sometimes exhaustive, but more often they end with words like "or other composers of equal difficulty." However, none of them include a woman's name.

With regard to the accepted études, works by Carl Czerny, Johann Baptist Cramer, Muzio Clementi, Ignaz Moscheles, Felix Mendelssohn, Joseph Christoph Kessler, Fryderyk Chopin, Franz Liszt, Aleksandr Skryabin, Claude Debussy, Serge Rachmaninoff, and Sergey Prokofiev are usually mentioned, and some conservatories also name Adolf Jensen, Ettore Pozzoli, Anton Rubinstein, Sigismond Thalberg, and Robert Schumann. I find no reason not to mention, for example, an étude by Louise Farrenc or an exercise by Maria Szymanowska.

Many higher music education institutions provide a similar list of authors also as to the romantic and modern repertoire allowed for those exams. The list usually includes "important compositions" by Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Fryderyk Chopin, Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, Johannes Brahms, César Franck, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Aleksandr Skryabin, Serge Rachmaninoff, and Sergey Prokofiev. Some institutions limit it only to Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Mendelssohn and Brahms for the romantic period and other add Carl Maria von Weber. The Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory of Turin provides the longest list of romantic and modern composers which counts 33 men, but there is no mention of a woman in any of the lists I analysed, despite works by Clara Wieck, Fanny Mendelssohn, and Cécile Chaminade certainly providing excellent examples of composition technique.

In the seven universities of music in Austria that offer bachelor's degree programmes in art music piano, the detailed listing of mandatory and suggested pieces (or authors) is widespread when it comes to Western Art Music composers, but as to the Romantic and modern part it is in general less common in admission examination calls. Nevertheless, there is only one woman among the composers mentioned—Karen Tanaka.

It could be objected that such lists are often non-exclusive, as they leave the door open to other pieces of equal level of difficulty. However, even when it is formally permitted to perform authors that do not belong to the canon

of classical piano music, in my experience students tend to refrain from suggesting other composers, including women, because they fear that this choice might be considered by other people (including sometimes the jury of their final-year exams) as a way to avoid the “challenge” of the well-established repertoire, or that the repertoire would not be appreciated because the composer may be considered as a “minor” one.

Notwithstanding, nowadays there are more and more students and professors who value less known repertoire, including works by female composers. I have also experienced some initiatives which try to shed light on women’s pieces, like concerts, diploma exams, and lectures entirely focused on female composers. They are definitely worthy, but in order to render the performing and study of women’s works widespread and accepted, I believe that assimilation within standard repertoire could be in general more useful than adhering to the so-called “separatist model” (Citron, 2007), as the ultimate goal should not be separation but the enrichment of the musical canon by female composers’ works. A first step in this direction could be that of allowing students to perform pieces by composers that have not been incorporated in the above lists so far. Where this already takes place, it would be useful to explicitly mention “outside” authors, thus including women too.

Moreover, an additional criterion for deciding whether to include a certain work in instrument literature, music analysis, and history curricula—besides the standard of “excellence”—could be the one suggested by Citron (1990), one of choosing pieces that provide examples of diverse styles, genres, backgrounds, and aesthetic sensibilities, just in the same way as works written by men that are not considered to be “masterpieces,” but rather symptoms of social phenomena or changes in the aesthetic climate, are regarded as worth mentioning.

## Keyword: Sexuality and Music

Christa Brüstle

Sexuality, eroticism, and music are not often brought together, although love and desire, or love and suffering have always been explicitly expressed in music, especially in vocal music and in opera: Giuseppe Verdi's *Macbeth*, Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, Franz Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* can be remembered here. When approaching the topic, it should be said in advance that not only the history of music, but also the history and contexts of sexuality must be included in order to work out possible connections between them. This is already clear when one recalls the differences between ecclesiastical or religious and secular conceptions of (physical) love through the centuries and considers that "sexuality" is a term that only becomes known around 1800 (Eder 2021; Fisher & Toulalan, 2012). According to Eder (2021), in the modern sense it includes "desire/craving, discourses, practice, experience, communication, emotions, actions, body, and instinct" (p. 16).

The changing relationship to the body, which is directly involved in music production and especially in singing, also plays a major role here (Bekker, 1922). It is precisely through the voice that the relationship between music, sexuality, and eroticism becomes clear, because the voice stands for immediate expression, it can become (representative of a body) an object of desire, or it can be understood as penetration of the listeners. The voice can thus create a physical closeness to the music that no other musical instrument is able to create in this form (Geffen, 2021; Koestenbaum, 1993; Smart, 2000). This effect can hardly be surpassed, for example, in the song "Je t'aime" by



Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin, released in 1969, in which the voices not least announce the act of love itself. The explicit nature of this track can be attributed in part to the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s and the celebration and propagation of female sexual pleasure (Stratton, 2014). Another consideration, which isn't immediately obvious, is the technical development of electronic microphones which made such vocal intimacy possible in the first place (Lockheart, 2003). On the other hand, the voice can also deceive and thus leave the body indeterminate: children's voices, high male voices, and deep female voices form an "androgynous" vocal intersection that is open to heterosexual and homosexual, but partly also paedophile desire.

Whether instrumental compositions implement or sedate processes that can be compared to sexual processes is another, very controversial question. For Susan McClary (1991), the answer to this question is related to whether harmonic, thematic motivic, and formal compositional conceptions are regarded as "purely musical" factors or as historically and socio-culturally charged elements that bear meaning. Using the example of the sonata form, she explains how formal development is combined with the meanings of (sexualised) gender relations:

The first theme establishes the tonic key and sets the affective tone of the movement: it is in essence the protagonist of the movement, and it used to be referred to quite commonly (in the days preceding feminist consciousness) as the "masculine" theme. Indeed, its character is usually somewhat aggressive; it is frequently described as having "thrust"; and it is often concerned with closure. Midway through the exposition of the movement, it encounters another theme, the so-called feminine theme, usually a more lyrical tune that presents a new key, incompatible with the first. Given that a tonal, sonata-based movement is concerned with matters of maintaining identity, both thematic and tonal, the second area poses a threat to the opening materials. Yet this antagonism is essential to the furthering of the plot, for within this model of identity construction and preservation, the self cannot truly be a self unless it acts: it must leave the cozy nest of its tonic, risk this confrontation, and finally triumph over its Other. ... Finally, at the recapitulation, the piece returns to reestablish both the original tonic key and the original theme. The materials of the exposition are now repeated, with this difference: the secondary theme must now conform to the protagonist's tonic key area. It is absorbed, its threat to the opening key's identity neutralized. (pp. 68–69)

According to McClary, it is "the triumph of the 'masculine' over the 'feminine' principle" (p. 69), which can also be associated with violence. Even if this interpretation is only regarded as metaphorical or fictional, or rejected as an essentialist aesthetic of content, it is nevertheless based on hermeneutic, music-interpreting language conventions from the 19th century (Treitler,

1993). In this context, reference is often made to the music theorist Adolf Bernhard Marx, who in his *Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition* (1845) made the distinction between “male” and “female” theme in sonata form:

The main and second theme are two opposites to each other, which intimately unite in a comprehensive whole to form a higher unity. ... [the main theme is] that which is determined first, i.e., in the first freshness and energy, i.e., that which is energetic, pithy, absolutely designed ... that which dominates and determines. The second theme, on the other hand, is that which has been recreated after the first energetic opening, which serves as an opposite, which is conditioned and determined by that which has preceded it, and therefore in its essence is necessarily the milder, more supple than the pithily structured, the feminine, as it were, to every preceding masculine. It is precisely in this sense that each of the two themes is different, and only with each other they build a higher, more perfect unit. (p. 282)

The synthesis is formed by the listeners, however, so the harmonic formal processes concern not only the thematic debates within a sonata form, but also the relationship between music and audience. The audience is also “filled” or “overwhelmed” by music in the listening reproduction and in its emotional involvement, not least by triumphant apotheoses in the main key.

The exciting effect of rhythmic, pulsating music or the amplification of emotions and arousal through sonic effects are further clues for the connection between music, sexuality, and eroticism (Bekker, 1922; Elster, 1925). One can recall here not only the example of the increasing repetitions in Maurice Ravel’s *Bolero*, but also numerous love films in which the music accompanies the story and fate of a couple. The “pulsating ‘telos’ of repetition” (Sofer, 2022, p. xxi) with climax formation or violin sounds are often used in these contexts in a clichéd way. In principle, however, all music and different sounds can be associated with sexuality and eroticism on an individual level, provided they have been linked by personal experience or memory.

A very direct connection exists in musical works in which sexual arousal, or acts are depicted or implied, such as in Erwin Schulhoff’s *Sonata Erotica*. According to Danielle Sofer (2022), a continuation of this can be found later in the 20th century in “electrosexual music,” defined by her as “sex acts as they have been represented in electronic music” (p. xv). The recording and representation of female voices play a central role in these contexts, whether in French *musique concrète* pieces from the 1950s, in disco tracks of the 1970s, or in electronic dance music of the 1990s. In every case, the use of female voices causes a broad discussion with which intentions composers use the voices, and which audience responds to them, quite apart from the role of actual interpreters. Gender, race, and sexuality must be considered, because it

makes a difference. For example, if a white or black woman, lesbian, or queer person composes or performs “electrosexual music,” the relationship between the “subject” and the white, black, lesbian or queer audience will differ significantly in each constellation. This is particularly the case in popular music, where, according to Sofer, one can find stereotypes such as: “Sex and music and in music is most commonly associated with black women” (Sofer, 2022, p. 99). This cliché shows that the intersectional link between gender and race plays a major role in the connection between music and sexuality. However, there are also power constellations that have long had such an effect in a predominantly male-dominated popular music sector that black women and their music were treated as (sex) objects. Female musicians in popular music were in a subordinate position, but since the 1980s they have been able to increasingly assert themselves, if you think for example of icons like Madonna, Whitney Houston, and Tina Turner (Whiteley, 2000). In addition, one should mention the tradition of girl bands, the Riot Grrrl movement and, more recently, the impact of #BlackLivesMatter on music.

On the other hand, many genres of popular music were and still are extremely male dominated, especially rock ‘n’ roll, cock rock, heavy metal (Walser, 1993), punk, hip hop, and techno/house. It is not only about the male actors and their masculine images and performances, but also about male gendered instruments such as drums and electric guitar (Waksman, 2001) and about lyrics in which male sexuality and masculine fantasies, including misogyny, are expressed (Whiteley, 1997). In addition, there are corresponding visual media such as video clips and the distribution of music and images on social media which reinforce the sexualised content and contexts of popular music. The offensively sexualised staging of female pop stars, which has increased sharply in recent decades, is therefore not only to be seen as empowerment, but also as the development of quite problematic role models for young women. As a result, they often find themselves in danger zones, without often wanting or intending to, because they are read as compliant objects. In cases of abuse, this becomes glaring, for example, when the young girls or boys are blamed by the perpetrators.

As we have seen, there are many indications of a close connection between music, sexuality, and eroticism, although the cases of sexual harassment and coercion in the practical field of music or in musicology are on a completely different page. They must be considered in the context of the history of “sexual violence” (D’Cruze, 2016). The reference to the emotional and exciting effect of music here forms nothing but a relief strategy for dishonourable or criminal behaviour. In the context of the #MeToo debate at the beginning of 2017 and the indictment and conviction of former film producer Harvey Weinstein, several musicians from the classical concert business have also been prosecuted for sexual harassment or coercion in recent years. One may

wonder why this area of all places—perhaps most closely parallel to dance and acting—was and is apparently susceptible to such behaviour. The explanations go in different directions. On the one hand, they concern conventional forms of education, in which a significant psychological, emotional, and at times physical relationship between teachers and students prevails. On the other hand, they also concern the self-portrait of artists as ingenious and potent autocrats and irresistible personalities who have never been limited (Hoffmann, 2006; Kirschning, 2017/18; Pinar, 2007). Only the #MeToo debate promoted awareness raising in this direction, and some criminal prosecutions of celebrities have become known (Floch et al., 2021). In the field of music in Germany, it is certainly the case of the (former) rector, pianist and musicologist Siegfried Mauser (Bartsch et al., 2019; Knobbe & Möller, 2018), who caused a scandal not least because the artist, who has since been imprisoned, was honoured, among other things, by a commemorative publication in the year of his conviction (Borchmeyer et al., 2019), to which supportive male and female friends and colleagues contributed. In addition, the composer Hans-Jürgen von Bose, who was associated with Mauser, had been indicted. Other publicly raised cases of sexual harassment or sexual abuse, such as the examples of Plácido Domingo, James Levine, or cellist Jérôme Pernoo (“Le violoncelliste Jérôme Pernoo”, 2023) have been discussed internationally, but the problem transcends beyond Western Art Music, and is commonplace in the field of popular music and the overall music sector (Hill, 2021). Here, too, the public addressing of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape is central to initiating change.

In music education, various other measures are proposed to improve the situation for students and teachers. Addressing power relations must be reflected at all levels, and measures put in place to raise awareness, including implementing (mandatory) training sessions for teachers. Highlighting practical music lessons in particular, close bonds between a student and an individual teacher should be discouraged. It is, furthermore, important to avoid physical contact in class without consent, as Antje Kirschning emphasises in her contribution to the fourth part of this book. The focus should be on demanding clear rules of conduct in music education institutions (also for students), and imposing sanctions in the event of non-compliance with the rules. This includes setting up open discussion forums within the institution and at the same time implementing a good and transparent complaint system (Page et al., 2019; Wickström, 2021).

## **Transitions in Tonality: Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion in Higher Music Education**

Sophie Whybrew (she/her; they/them)

**T**rans(gender) and non-binary students have often been an afterthought in discussions on power relations and gender in higher (music) education—if they were considered at all. However, as Susan Stryker (2007) points out, “Gender as a form of social control is not limited to the control of bodies defined as ‘women’s bodies’ ... gender also functions as a mechanism of control when some loss of gender status is threatened, or when claims of membership in a gender are denied” (p. 61). Indeed, trans and non-binary students face many challenges that are invisible to cis(gender) people and that most of their cis counterparts do not have to contend with.

Generally, trans and transgender describe individuals “who move away from the gender they were assigned at birth, people who cross over (*trans-*) the boundaries constructed by their culture to define and contain that gender” (Stryker, 2008, p. 1). Both are used as umbrella terms that cover trans women, trans men, and non-binary people. Non-binary (also: enby) refers to individuals whose identities do not align with binary notions of gender. In other words, people who do not (or not only) identify as women or men. Cisgender or cis describe individuals who identify with their assigned gender. The latter terms counter the privileged unmarkedness of “the terms man and woman” that “reinforc[es] the unstated ‘naturalness’ of being cisgender” (Aultman, 2014, p. 61).

Institutions of higher music education (HME) and music education more broadly are permeated and structured around traditional, cisnormative notions of gender. Cisnormativity describes the dominant societal notion that everyone will identify with the gender to which they were assigned at birth. It “disallows the possibility of trans existence or trans visibility” and shapes “the policies and practices of individuals and institutions, and the organization of the broader social world” (Bauer et al., 2009, p. 356). For example, this cisnormativity finds its expression in administrative procedures, learning environments, artistic standards, and expectations, and built environments (Almqvist & Werner, in this volume; Bull, in this volume). At the same time, as my experience as a trans diversity worker at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz has shown, many administrators and educators still feel insecure in their interactions with trans and non-binary students and colleagues. Although these insecurities are understandable, they often result in taxing, hurtful, and discriminatory experiences for trans and non-binary people, which can negatively affect their learning outcomes and mental health.

This connection between a lack of familiarity with trans issues and trans individuals’ negative experiences within HME is also noted by Jason M. Silveira, who argues for the need for: “non-trans faculty and staff [to] educate themselves about challenges faced by transgender students ... especially since transgender students are more likely to perceive hostile campus environments than their straight and LGB counterparts” (2019, pp. 430–431). As he points out, this can have dramatic consequences for trans students’ learning outcomes: “Many transgender students encounter teachers who do not make an effort to educate themselves regarding transgender rights and supportive practices, and these students face a disproportionately high drop-out rate” (2019, p. 444). Smith et al. (2022) corroborate this negative impact on academic success and point out that having to navigate such cisnormative educational environments can have detrimental effects on trans and non-binary students’ physical and mental health. E. N. Pitcher (2017) echoes these conclusions in their analysis of trans academics’ experiences with microaggressions such as misgendering. They conclude: “First and foremost, there is a need for self-reflection about one’s deeply held beliefs about gender and cisgender privilege. Related, cisgender academics and institutional leaders need to engage in self-education about trans individuals’ experiences” (Pitcher, 2017, p. 700). As for the negative mental health impact of misgendering, Jacobsen et al. (2023) note that these “forms of invalidation and non-affirmation can trigger dysphoria, rumination, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and body dissatisfaction” and that “these experiences can lead to depression, hypervigilance, impaired social functioning, suicidality, and disordered eating” (p. 2). Consequently, Pitcher identifies misgendering as a form of “(mis)recognition” and a “minoritized stressor” (2017, p. 696) that

exacts a “toll” on the affected individuals that is both “mental and physical, resulting in exhaustion and adverse mental health consequences (2017, p. 699).

Therefore, we must work towards creating more equitable, diverse, and safe learning environments for trans and non-binary students at our institutions. As Anna Bull observes: “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” (Bull, in this volume). In this spirit, I will use this chapter to give an overview of recommendations for institutional policies and educational practices that can help us achieve the goal of “promot[ing] equal possibilities to study music on a professional level for all students independent of gender, class and race” (Almqvist & Werner, in this volume).

### **Creating a Climate of Acceptance: Institutional Policies**

Institutional policies are essential for creating equitable and welcoming learning and working environments for trans and non-binary students.<sup>1</sup> These policies will help to create awareness among staff members and assist them in meeting the needs of trans and non-binary individuals. Moreover, they can also signal to trans students and staff members that their needs matter to your institution and that they are “a valuable and important part of the school community” (Garrett & Palkki, 2021, pp. 133–134). Importantly, these policies can also make seemingly invisible cisnormative power relations, hierarchies, and practices visible and thus allow us to challenge and address them (Bull, in this volume). Indeed, based on these institutional policies, educators and administrators can question and expand longstanding practices and work towards creating more equitable environments “within and beyond classroom spaces” (Garrett & Palkki, 2021, p. 128). Additionally, these policies can help educate all stakeholders at your institution on issues of trans and non-binary inclusion and its importance for ensuring students’ success and wellbeing.

A crucial aspect that these policies should address is gender-inclusive communication and pronoun usage. Indeed, while it might seem innocuous for most cis people to classify persons as “women” and “men” based on their outward appearance, voice, name, or gender marker in the university’s IT systems, this seemingly harmless routine represents a significant source of anxiety for many trans and non-binary people and often puts them in

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion on the negative impact of insufficient policies see Bonner-Thompson et al., 2021.

discriminatory situations where their identities are invalidated (Eder et al., 2019). Therefore, any policy on trans and non-binary inclusion should start by acknowledging that we cannot assume a person's gender based on these attributes or sources of information. Instead, teachers and administrators should be encouraged to introduce themselves with their names and pronouns and ask students and other employees how they would like to be addressed and which pronouns they use. If this is not possible, gendered terms of address should be avoided (Eder et al., 2019). Moreover, employees at your institution should use gender-neutral language in the classroom, at events, and in university publications and communications, and discourage and counter anti-trans rhetoric or any other form of hate speech.

As it is often still difficult or even impossible for trans and non-binary students to change their name(s) and gender marker on official documents in many parts of the world, your institution should also implement supportive policies for changing this information in the university's "official school records, including class rosters and student directories" and provide provisions that allow students to be listed with their proper name, gender, and pronouns in these systems (Garrett & Palkki, 2021, p. 107). If necessary, their legal name and gender can be retained in a locked system. As Garrett and Palkki (2021) point out, "if school record systems have the capability of indicating students' proper name and pronouns, then teachers and other employees are less likely to make errors in addressing students and honoring their wishes" (p. 145).

In written communication, employees should be encouraged to use gender-neutral forms of address and provide their pronouns and honorifics in their email signature and videoconferencing display name. Both practices signal solidarity, openness, and affirmation towards trans and non-binary students and coworkers and enable more seamless communication (Garrett & Palkki, 2021). On the other hand, employees should be discouraged from asking students and co-workers if they are trans or non-binary or about their gender identity rather than their pronouns, as this puts the affected person in a position where they need to explain themselves thereby "othering" them. Indeed, it is paramount (and in some regions legally required) that your institution's policies ensure trans and non-binary students and employees' privacy.

Ideally, these communication policies should become part of the corporate design manual and be modelled by your institution's leadership. Furthermore, these policies should be accompanied by trans- and non-binary-led workshops for teaching and administrative staff on the impacts of cisnormativity, affirming communication policies, gender-inclusive didactics and language, and on how to create welcoming environments for trans and non-binary students and colleagues (Bartolome & Stanford, 2018; Silveira,



2019). Trans and non-binary people or organisations should also be consulted when developing these policies (Garrett & Palkki, 2021).

Finally, universities should implement measures that guarantee all students access to safe and appropriate restrooms and changing rooms across campus. These measures should include the creation of all-gender bathrooms and changing rooms and ensure that every student can use the facilities that align with their gender without having to fear harassment or confrontation. Likewise, your institution should work towards creating gender neutral or choice-based dress codes and gender-inclusive concert, event, travel, and housing policies. Such policies might include name and pronoun tags at events, the option to list a nickname or stage name and include pronouns in event programs, etc. (Aguirre, 2018; Garrett & Palkki, 2021; Silveira, 2019).<sup>2</sup>

### **New Classroom Harmonies: Towards a Shared Language of Appreciation**

In addition to the institutional policies outlined above, educators should take measures to create more welcoming and safe teaching and learning environments for trans, non-binary, and cis students to ensure that they can “use the space of education independent of their gender” (Almqvist & Werner, in this volume). To accomplish this, teachers must start by “actively challeng[ing] assumptions, biases, and blind spots,” and adapt their teaching practices accordingly (Silveira, 2019, p. 444).

Instructors should introduce themselves with their pronouns and ask students which names and pronouns they want to use in the classroom. To avoid outing students, teachers can specifically ask how they would like to be addressed in the context of the classroom and offer students the opportunity to contact the instructor if they would like to use a different name or pronouns in other settings. Indeed, as Garrett and Palkki (2021) note, “it is important that you provide students with the option to privately identify their name and pronouns at the beginning of each term” (p. 103). For larger groups of students, this process can start with an email at the beginning of the semester in which instructors ask their students under which name they want to appear on the attendance list (Silveira, 2019). Alternatively, instructors can also pass around a list that only includes students’ last names and allow them to fill in their first name(s) themselves (Eder et al., 2019; Silveira, 2019). Additionally, teachers can include reference to pronoun

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on institutional policies, see “Empowering TGE Students with Inclusive Policies” in Garrett and Palkki’s *Honoring Trans and Gender-Expansive Students in Music Education* (2021, pp. 127–154).

policies and their own pronouns in class materials such as syllabi and hand-outs as active signals of support and affirmation (Garrett & Palkki, 2021).

Teachers can also use gender neutral language when addressing students and avoid expressions like “women and men,” “ladies and gentlemen,” and “boys and girls.” Instead, they can use terms like “musicians” and “composers” or focus on instrument, voice, and other music or activity base terms (Garrett & Palkki, 2021; Palkki, 2017; Queen & Prosini, 2022).

At the same time, they should remember that learning new pronouns and adapting gender neutral language will take time and requires effort, repetition, practice, and that mistakes can and will happen (Garrett & Palkki, 2021). Simply acknowledge them, correct yourself, and keep trying (Garrett & Palkki). In this way, teachers can also “model mistakes as learning experiences, fix them, and move on. It’s the effort that counts” (Garrett & Palkki, 2021, p. 111). Overall, teachers can work towards “establish[ing] and maintain[ing] safe spaces through practical, reiterative processes, including written and nonverbal communication” (Garrett & Palkki, 2021, p. 99).

### **Giving Voice(s) to Trans and Non-Binary Musicians**

Another vital aspect is the choice of curricular materials and song choices, and how these can affirm students’ identities and promote their learning outcomes (Garrett & Palkki, 2021; Palkki, 2017). Here, educators should “consider adopting gender neutral song choices” (Aguirre, 2018, p. 39) but also support trans and non-binary students by highlighting trans and non-binary composers and musicians as “an important part of the music community” (Silveira, 2019, p. 444). Teachers should also address topics related to gender, cisnormativity, and gender identity as part of the curriculum (Palkki, 2017).

Finally, teachers should consider the challenges that trans and non-binary musicians face because of the gendered expectations in HME, particularly when describing or discussing vocal ranges, as many cis, trans, and non-binary people feel a strong connection between a person’s voice and their gender identity. Here, it is vital to remember that “voices are what they are,” and that “it is we as listeners who impose gendered connotations onto the sounds that we hear” (Garrett & Palkki, 2021, p. 159). Hence, rather than assigning gender to voice parts, educators should try to avoid gendering individuals based on their vocal ranges (Aguirre, 2018). Instead, educators can focus on vocal abilities and use musical terminology (Garrett & Palkki, 2021). However, terms such as soprano, alto, tenor, and bass also carry gendered connotations for many people and can therefore cause dysphoria for

some trans and non-binary people. Consequently, teachers might have to be creative and work with their students to find terminology and an approach that works for their respective students (Garrett & Palkki, 2021). In general, it is important to remember that “trans people are not monolithic,” and educators should work with their students to determine what works for them (Palkki, 2017, p. 25).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed discussion of good practices in trans and non-binary voice education, see “Celebrating TGE Singers in Choral Classrooms” in Garrett and Palkki’s *Honoring Trans and Gender-Expansive Students in Music Education* (2021, pp. 98–126).

## Keyword: Gender Mainstreaming

Christa Brüstle

“Gender mainstreaming” is a political strategy that has been discussed internationally since the 1990s and formulated as a goal. In Europe, this strategy has been programmatically incorporated into the foundations of the European Union, and so all European states are obliged to implement it. The declaration of the Commission of the European Communities of 21 February 1996 titled “Incorporating Equal Opportunities for Women and Men into All Community Policies and Activities” set out what the strategy is about:

... it is necessary to promote equality between women and men in all activities and policies at all levels. This is the principle of “mainstreaming”, a policy adopted by the Community... This involves not restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situations of men and women (gender perspective). This means systematically examining measures and policies and taking into account such possible effects when defining and implementing them: thus, development policies, the organisation of work, choices relating to transport or the fixing of school hours, etc. may have significant differential impacts on the situation of women and men which must therefore be duly taken into consideration in order to further promote equality between women and men.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The integral text of the declaration can be found at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:51996DC0067>.

In its current *Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025* (2020) the European Union has formulated the strategy in simple terms as follows (p. 15):

Gender mainstreaming ensures that policies and programmes maximise the potential of all—women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity. The aim is to redistribute power, influence and resources in a fair and gender-equal way, tackling inequality, promoting fairness, and creating opportunity. (p. 15)<sup>2</sup>

This strategy also applies to the entire field of education and training as well as research and teaching, whereby the interests of higher education are regulated at national level. Thus, the education ministries of European countries are responsible for the implementation of gender mainstreaming at universities. In addition, research at European level (The European Research Council) pursues a comprehensive gender equality strategy through the ERC Working Group on Gender and Diversity Issues.<sup>3</sup> Even though the aims of this strategy seem to cover fundamental objectives and although the category of diversity is underlined, the gender dualism of women and men, girls and boys, shows the traditional cisnormative notion of gender which was related to in the previous section.

What does the implementation of gender mainstreaming (including trans and non-binary inclusion) at music education institutions mean? One of the objectives of the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) is to create gender balance in all areas and at all hierarchical levels of national scientific and research areas and institutions in the EU (vertical and horizontal segregation) (*ERAC Opinion on the European Research Area Roadmap 2015–2020*, 2015). This equality-related goal was briefly summarized as “fix the numbers.” It mainly refers to eliminating the under-representation of people or groups of people in certain areas, whereby for a long time the main aim was to reduce the under-representation of women through measures to promote women. In the meantime, as part of the development of gender mainstreaming and diversity management, an expansion has taken place in which on the one hand, a focus is placed on equal opportunities for all persons, on the other hand responsibilities are increasingly transferred to (institutional) communities (Cordes, 2010). One can mention here, for example, the *Keychange Movement*, which was initiated in 2015 as a global network of partners in the music sector aiming to support talented but under-represented artists and to encourage organisations to take a pledge for gender

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<sup>2</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en).

<sup>3</sup> <https://erc.europa.eu/thematic-working-groups/working-group-gender-and-diversity-issues>.

equality.<sup>4</sup> A similar initiative has existed since 2016 in the smaller community of contemporary art music in German-speaking countries called *GRiNM* (Gender Relations in New Music), where an activist group of people deal with gender and diversity at festivals of new music (Farnsworth & Lovell, 2020).

For a college or university, “fix the numbers” means first to install regular, constant data collection on the composition of staff and students, because the underrepresentation of women, non-binary persons and other minorities can first be made very visible through empirical data and statistical reports. Secondly, such data collections suggest determining the reasons for the numerical ratios. Third, statistical reports can launch initiatives and measures to change the data. Quota or parity arrangements are such measures, but they are not without controversy (Cordes, 1996). Figuring out the reasons for certain numerical ratios and then changing their origins is a far more complex and difficult matter. This also requires not only focusing on the “numbers,” but also bringing about a structural and cultural change to support under-represented groups of people within institutions (“fix the institution”), as well as increasing and strengthening general gender knowledge and intersectional gender competences in different areas (“fix the knowledge”) to maximise quality and innovation in research and teaching (Schiebinger, 2011). Only in the complex interplay of these three factors is a meaningful gender equality policy possible, which also includes diversity categories such as religion, ethnic origin, social status, age, and sexual orientation.

Educational institutions such as music academies, conservatoires and universities are institutionalised social organisations in which mainly music practice and music knowledge or discourses are taught. However, they are also employers and companies, which is why the implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender equality measures affects not only teaching and research but also the area of personnel in teaching and administration, infrastructure and public relations or the *Third Mission*, i.e., the external impact and the perception of social responsibility of the institution. Another area of cultural change through gender mainstreaming concerns the power relations at an educational institution i.e., the understanding of personnel management, the relationship between teachers and students as well as the participatory development of short-term and long-term, organisational strategic and entrepreneurial goals. Therefore, according to Bauer (2010) gender mainstreaming is associated with at least three priorities: “Gender Mainstreaming als Arbeitsinstrument” [gender mainstreaming as a working instrument], “Gender Mainstreaming als Querschnittsaufgabe” [gender mainstreaming

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<sup>4</sup> [www.keychange.eu](http://www.keychange.eu).

as a cross-sectional task], “Gender Mainstreaming als Organisations- und Potenzialentwicklung” [gender mainstreaming as organisational and potential development] (p. 201). According to de Boise (2018), gender mainstreaming should therefore also be a part of the quality management of a music academy, conservatory, or music university.

“Gender mainstreaming as a working instrument” indicates that there are also certain departments or individuals in music education institutions who are decidedly active in gender equality policy, such as women’s representatives, gender representatives, institutes or centres for equality, or equality and diversity committees. For them, gender mainstreaming is a fundamental concept for developing gender equality policy strategies and measures, such as women’s advancement programmes, further training events on gender- and diversity-sensitive teaching or guidelines for gender-appropriate language.

“Gender mainstreaming as a cross-sectional task” in a music education institution means that an awareness of the relevance of gender is created in all institutional bodies and representations, at all hierarchical levels and in all institutes and departments, in teaching and research, which includes the promotion of equality.

“Gender mainstreaming as organisational and potential development” means the institution should recognise and achieve optimisations and innovations in all areas by taking gender and gender equality policy into account. Meanwhile, gender is usually expanded by including other diversity categories such as religion, ethnic origin, social status, age, sexual orientation, and philosophy of life, which creates further intersections. Gender equality policy is also increasingly being implemented within the framework of institutional diversity management.

## Join the Army: Women Allowed

Kirsten Lies-Warfield

**M**y resume is a source of conflict for me. The headline is my 20-year career in the United States Army Band, “Pershing’s Own,” a career that contains the height of my achievement and also my greatest failure as I was forced to retire after I reported sexual misconduct and have since been barred from the building.<sup>1</sup> I joined the band in 1999 and was the first female trombonist ever hired by “Pershing’s Own.” I am often congratulated for that accomplishment, but I think a more appropriate response would be to ask “Why?” Why did it take until the dawn of the 21st century for a woman to hold a position with this instrument in this organisation, and why did I face such resistance to the point of being forced out? To answer these questions, we will look at the history of women musicians in the army and then focus on my career specifically, using concepts from social psychology to understand the power dynamics of that environment.

The U.S. military historically has used women as a last resort when running out of able-bodied men. Women’s entry into the armed forces has been attended by a slew of caveats and restrictions. Consider for example the

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<sup>1</sup> I had asked for a man in my section not to flick the testicles of the junior soldier who had just arrived. The army band promoted that man and forced me to retire. After retirement, I attended the American Trombone Workshop, an annual event hosted by the army band that I had been deeply involved with my entire career. After that visit, I was barred from entering the army band building indefinitely.



Women's Army Corps, created in response to the crisis of WWII when the need for labor was so great that the army had to consider women at least marginally competent to do some of the men's jobs. What kind of work, under what conditions, and for what benefits was hashed out during a series of congressional hearings, and in 1942 the parameters allowing women to serve were set. This first iteration was not a regular military, but rather an auxiliary corps. The women did not receive pay equal to the men they replaced, did not receive hazard pay, a pension, healthcare for duty-related injuries, access to government life insurance or protections of international agreements should they become prisoners of war. The separate but unequal system proved to be unwieldy, and in 1943 the "Auxiliary" title was dropped, and the organisation became the Women's Army Corps (WAC). While these women were converted to regular military, they were handicapped with rank and command restrictions that disallowed them to command men until 1972. Having a family was also grounds for summary discharge for women (but not for men) at various points in WAC history. Furthermore, smear campaigns subjected them to ridicule, rumour and innuendo about their moral character or lack thereof (Morden, 1989). All of these inequities have been addressed through regulations, giving a win to women service members, even though cultural resistance to respecting women's service remains in areas to this day.

Rather than pat ourselves on the back for "making progress" in women's rights, I want to make it clear that these battles were won because they served men's interests. In times of war, women have been needed to supply labor so that the fighting force can expand, and the military, run by men, allows them in. Once war is over and there is less demand for labor, restrictions rise again as they did between WWII and the Korean War (Morden, 1989). The establishment of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973 also made room for women to replace men who were no longer being drafted. We were allowed to enter, but men set the parameters, being sure to safeguard male hegemony. In fact, the military had a cap of 2% for female participants from 1948–1967 (King & DiNitto, 2019). When I joined the army band in 1999, the military was 14% female (Stachowitsch, 2012). This number seems low, but it is a vast increase over the less than 2% female participation in 1972 when most military specialties were opened to women. This sizable power imbalance, combined with the unprecedented growth from 1972–1999, created a landscape primed for backlash from insecure men, threatened, while still holding considerable power to keep women in their place.

My timeline of historical context starts with the establishment of the Women's Army Corps not because it was the first time women served in the U.S. military, but because that organisation created an all-female cognate to The United States Army Band (TUSAB). The 14th Army Band (also known as the WAC Band) was established in 1948 and came to rival the

premier military bands. My WAC counterparts did largely the same jobs I performed, although they did it in skirts and heels, including marching in parades. Clearly women trombonists of quality were willing and able to serve in the military for decades before I joined. The army presented these women on a national stage because they represented the army at the highest standards in the hottest media spotlights, but when the band applied for special status in 1972 (a status that would give them all the resources and benefits of a premier band), that request was denied. Instead, in 1974 the band's status was downgraded which necessitated a downsizing of personnel. In 1975, the band was found in violation of Equal Employment Opportunity principles in its exclusion of men. Men joined and the WAC title was removed from the band (Kerbey, 2015). Is it coincidence that when the WAC Band applied for special status to come to parity with the premier bands that it was not only denied but downgraded and ultimately ceased to exist, or is it possible that this was a reaction to the perceived threat the band posed to the power and status of the mostly male premier bands?

What happened to the many accomplished musicians who made up the WAC Band? "Pershing's Own" made an effort to recruit women upon the removal of restrictions in 1972, but the focus was on female vocalists—and many of these first recruits were wives of TUSAB men. There were significant logistical obstacles to integrating women into TUSAB, foremost being the physical infrastructure of the buildings, the band used. Building T-71 was a condemned building with the sole rehearsal/performance hall and no female latrine. Brucker Hall, the current home of TUSAB, was built in 1977 and was a major improvement (Weiss, 2004). It had men's and women's locker rooms with the men's locker room being roughly four times the size of the women's. Through the design of this building, we can see both the progress of women being allowed entry but also the future vision of women remaining as a clear minority in the organisation.

With the historical background of the organisation filled in, we shift to my career and how the power structures affected me. The psychosocial theory of Status Construction attempts to explain how status beliefs are created, disseminated, and sustained in a group, who's in and who's out, collectively forming "universal truths." TUSAB was once exclusively male which means the organisation, structures, policies, culture, and practices all originated with men. While women were now allowed in, we have to navigate male-created structures and accept a lower status to be less threatening to male hegemony. The collectively agreed upon assignment of status often requires the capitulation of those assigned lower status to avoid disrupting the local culture (Bagilhole, 2002; Horgan, 2015; Ridgeway, 2001). This was explicit in the army regulation barring WAC officers from commanding men. While that regulation of women's power disappeared on paper, the historical power

structure is still highly influential in the perceptual assignment of low status to women, particularly when it comes to leadership, by the military community. I felt I was invisible to those who selected individuals for leadership positions at TUSAB.

Women in non-traditional occupations find themselves in a double bind, needing to act like men to be seen as professionally competent, but needing to *be* women and not threaten male superiority. Women give up their femininity to be accepted, further ceding power and status to men. In addition, women who accept the male culture are desensitised to what is actual sexual harassment: the rude jokes, the ogling, the stereotyping (Bagilhole, 2002). I experienced plenty of this in the army band and, in fact, joined in. I thought I was going along to get along and felt it was a compliment to be considered “one of the boys.” In fact, I was undermining my own sex and earned no status for the betrayal.

Those forced to accept a low status assignment in their workplaces have justifiable fear of repercussion should they challenge the hierarchy. In the military, with its transparent hierarchy of rank, such a challenge is called “insubordination.” At the end of my career, any disagreement I had with superiors was subject to the insubordination label. When I reported sexual misconduct, no one corroborated my story and my truthful account turned into insubordination.

Army Equal Opportunity and Whistleblower programmes purport to offer protections. In my case, they failed to protect me and instead provided cover for the organisation’s actions against me. When I made a complaint of gender bias in the assignment of brass quintet work, my case was found to be unsubstantiated as I could not prove gender bias. Gender discrimination, however, often stems from implicit bias, that is a bias or prejudice that is present but not consciously held or recognised (Reskin, 2000). In all workplaces, implicit bias can be seen when women are not considered for leadership positions or have their leadership qualities viewed less favorably than the same leadership qualities held by men (Godsil et al., 2016). Implicit bias was first analysed through a study of “blind” symphony orchestra auditions in the 1970s and 1980s. The findings showed that using a screen to conceal the candidate’s identity from the jury significantly increased the chances that female musicians would be selected (UNODC). As a woman, I did not “fit” into the army brass quintet and only went on a tour with them once the leader, bemoaning the fact that he could not find an available trombonist, had a female colleague point out that he had not yet asked me. And yet, I could not “prove” any of this was gender bias.

Implicit bias is insidious and unavoidable, and it does real damage to women’s careers, especially those working in non-traditional fields, and yet

it is largely absent from the army's anti-discrimination training. When formalised training only recognises explicit bias, implicit bias is delegitimised. I knew something was wrong, but I could not point to any explicit words or actions that were taken against me because of my gender. Organisational denial of implicit bias and its absence from anti-discrimination training gives cover to organisational gaslighting.

Sexism is also more nuanced than the army acknowledges in training. Army training focuses on explicitly sexist statements that lead directly to gender discrimination (statements such as "women are incapable of effective leadership" or "playing the trombone is unladylike"). In my case, however, no one ever told me that I was not capable of a leadership position, they just did not promote me with my male peers. The theory of Ambivalent Sexism parses sexism into hostile and benevolent varieties that, when added together, create an ambivalent sexist. Hostile sexism involves antipathy and stereotypical beliefs that women are incompetent, overly emotional, and sexually manipulative. Hostile sexists believe men should be more powerful than women and fear that women will try to take power from men. In contrast, benevolent sexism involves overall positive views of women, as long as they occupy traditionally feminine roles. Benevolent sexism characterises women as weak and needing protection, support, and adoration. Ambivalent sexists are hostile toward women who, they believe, are trying to steal men's power (e.g., feminists, professionals who show competence), and act benevolently toward traditional women who reinforce conventional gender relations and who serve men (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015).

With this understanding of sexism, I can label many interactions at my former workplace as sexist. I was told I was intimidating, read that as "trying to steal men's power" by being competent and a feminist, and I was clearly not a traditional woman. My evaluators for my first seventeen years told me to "keep doing what you're doing," which sounds positive, but it was actually harmful as it did not offer me any challenges that would help my prospects for promotion. This scenario is reflected in the literature: men give women positive feedback to shield them from harsh criticism, all the while knowingly or unknowingly undermining their prospects for promotion (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015).

Is it any wonder then that women face major obstacles in finding effective mentorship, especially in male-dominated professions? There is legitimate fear of gossip and gender norms dictate that women should not be so assertive to ask for mentorship (Ragins & Cotton, 1991). If a woman should find or be assigned a male mentor who keeps his distance for safety, she learns less and might conclude that her mentor just does not care (Clawson & Kram, 1984). This is demoralising and ineffective, an example of bad mentoring being worse than no mentoring at all.

Finally, let us return to my core question. “Why, in 1999, after 27 years of females being allowed in the army band, was I the first female trombonist in the unit and why was I forced to retire?” Historical context matters. It is the basis of the culture, policies and practices that carry on and influence the status assigned to individuals. Status assignment is invisible, yet it is strongly felt, with those of high status knowing their entitlement and those of low status knowing they have no power to challenge. In the military, eventually that status is ingrained in rank. Once that happens, there is no room for disagreement between low-status people and high-status people. I will close with quotes from my evaluation reports at the inflection point of my career.

2015–2016 evaluation: “This Soldier’s performance as a musician in The United States Army Band is highly regarded. She is an excellent mentor to the Staff Sergeants in the band and is constantly looking for ways to improve the unit. She has potential for more responsibility in the Ceremonial Band. Promote ahead of peers.”

2016–2017 evaluation: “Based on this evaluation period, SFC Lies-Warfield has no potential for promotion. She lacks loyalty and respect for the Army, this unit, its mission and her superiors. In addition to refusing repeated mentorship and guidance, this senior leader’s behavior and attitude are detrimental to a positive, productive work environment at TUSAB.”

I retired on Jan 27, 2019.

The reason for this drastic change? I reported the sexual misconduct detailed in footnote 1 to my chain of command. They told me that it was “not a big deal” and I should not worry about it. That did not seem right, so I publicly asked the question on Facebook. It was then that I learned that they were required to report an incident such as this. Now all of their jobs were in jeopardy, so they circled the wagons, everyone denied what I reported and I was cast as maliciously insubordinate. What happened in the course of that one year distracts from the larger story of the prior decade of marginalisation where the historical power structures nurtured a concerted effort to limit my power and voice. The 2015–2016 evaluation recommends that I be promoted ahead of peers, a meaningless recommendation as all my peers had already been promoted. My 2014–2015 evaluation had read “promote now” and I still was not selected for promotion.

Why was I the first? We cannot investigate what might have happened “if only.” We can, however, look at the history of the organisation to understand the power dynamics that I stepped into and how they influenced the course of my career.

**Part III**  
**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**  
**in Higher Music Education**

Edited by: Mojca Piškor & David-Emil Wickström

## Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Higher Music Education

Mojca Piškor & David-Emil Wickström

Within the American higher education system, the question around affirmative action and accessibility of underprivileged groups to higher education—especially under the category of race and ethnicity—has been a contested issue. The US Supreme Court ruling on June 29, 2023 (*Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, 2023) struck a blow against the provisions of race and ethnicity within affirmative action. This means that these two categories cannot be used when considering which students to accept. Criticising the ruling in an open letter, the former First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, outlined how socio-economic privilege is also a form of affirmative action since having financial resources also enables easier access to higher education:

So often, we just accept that money, power, and privilege are perfectly justifiable forms of affirmative action, while kids growing up like I did are expected to compete when the ground is anything but level. (Obama, 2023)

The question of socio-economic privilege and how it intersects with power relations in higher music education (HME) is also the focus of this part of the book. The following pages outline why it is important to consider socio-economic background and the special needs of students, teachers, and staff in HME when thinking about how to open our institutions. Hence the

overarching question during the Assembly being: How does a student's socio-economic or geographical background, as well as special needs, affect their access to, and experience of, conservatoires? The Assembly's remit was: How can we raise awareness to exclusion and inclusion practices based on socio-economic background, race, and disabilities within higher music education institutions (HMEIs)? What steps need to be taken to make our institutions move away from tokenism to being more inclusive?

This chapter starts with Sam de Boise's expert paper "Socio-Economic Background and Today's Higher Music Education Institutions." Here de Boise looks at how socio-economic background impacts individual study experiences and the institutional culture of contemporary HMEIs with a particular focus on Britain and Sweden. He discusses the influence of social class on potential students based on the parental home, as well as on HMEIs' admission data. In addition, he discusses whether students choose certain degree programmes according to class background, and what the consequences of this choice are. Finally, de Boise outlines developments aimed at reaching broader social strata at HMEIs.

In the keyword section we focus on what we deem "central terms," which give a better understanding of complex issues nowadays usually subsumed under the overarching label of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). The first one is *social justice* and how it relates to the broader term of EDI which is often used within higher education, as well as how different intra and extra institutional forces complicate the work for social justice. The second one, *ableism*, looks at how discrimination based on body functionality excludes people from HME, and how ableism intersects with other forms of structural discrimination. It also focuses on how music has also been shaped by disabilities and the challenges faced by HMEIs in being inclusive. The final keyword is *privilege* and how notions of privilege are informed by the Bourdieusian terms "capital" and "habitus" as well as talent, meritocracy, and how this intersects with neoliberal ideas.

Focussing on neurodiversity Franca Ferrari describes the interdisciplinary project *Acoustic Bodies* based around workshops which resulted in a performance organised by Conservatorio Santa Cecilia in Rome and the cultural association Fuori Contesto. In the project, neurodiverse and neurotypical students from music, theatre, and dance worked together in creating and then staging a musical performance. In her contribution Shzr Ee Tan reflects on EDI issues by critically re-examining the positions and work by actors from the Global North. Based on five provocations she stresses that individuals from the Global South have different positions and interests. The final reflection is by Marko Kölbl in which he reflects on power within HMEIs and how his studies both shaped and challenged his views on Western Art Music. A central aspect is how the HMEI setting disciplines one's body and shapes



one's habitus by enforcing specific ideals related to class, race, and ethnic background.

These articles and their respective examples underline the message that diversity touches upon many categories, which includes thinking about students and staff with disabilities, and to challenge and constantly question our ideas around equality and inclusion. The articles also stress that it is essential to rethink our approaches and to consider these categories within HME. It remains central to our collective missions to continuously reconsider our admission policies and curricula, as well as to challenge ourselves on our understanding of race/ethnicity, ableism/disability, and socio-economic background/class, and the often hidden roles they play in HME.

# Socio-Economic Background and Today's Higher Music Education Institutions

Sam de Boise

## 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 (Born & Devine, 2015). Scharff (2015b) 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

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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>

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., 2023).

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 programmes. 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 study at HMEIs.

## 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 (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) found that SES was *the* main factor influencing an 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, Bíró 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 is also 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, however, does not show a direct statistical link between SES and attendance at the schools. Though previous research conducted in the 1990s made a more explicit link between SES and municipal art school attendance in Sweden (Brändström, 1999; Brändström & Wiklund, 1996). Research conducted in the 1990s made the link between the class and municipal art school attendance in Sweden more explicit (Brändström, 1999; Brändström & Wiklund, 1996). Hall (2018) similarly observes that the role choirboys' mothers in Australia—and in particular the time they dedicated to their children's music lessons—proved vital in determining the choirboys' continued study. 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, for instance, 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 in HE generally. Low grade attainment is one of the main reasons for the comparatively low number of students from lower-income backgrounds who apply to HE more broadly—especially in Britain (Chowdry et al., 2013). This means, in essence, that there are both *cultural* and *economic 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.

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<sup>4</sup> Though they estimated class and parents' education 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.

## 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 programme. The instrumentalisation 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 & Mason, 2017) and influence what they choose to study (Velez et al., 2019). However, the differences between middle- and working-class students are 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 & Jacob, 2003; Lehmann, 2009; Ma, 2009).

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 & Rouse, 2000). Gender plays a large role in instrumental preferences (Abeles, 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) 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 traditions.<sup>7</sup> 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

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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 23 years prior to this in 1771. Despite the prominence of German-speaking composers from the second half of the 18th Century onwards in canonical music histories, the Leipzig Conservatory was founded in 1843.

<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.

relationship between social class and music preferences in 1960s–70s France, with Göran Nylöf (1977) finding similar trends 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. 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 practise. 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 (Office for National Statistics, 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 extracurricular music activities over the past ten 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 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 practise instruments without disturbing others, owing to

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<sup>8</sup> These prices are similar in other Western European countries. In Germany the average cost per hour at the *Musikschulen* was estimated at an average of 84 euros per month for 4 x 45 minutes a month in 2016 (<https://www.musikunterricht.de/finanzen/was-kostet-musikunterricht>). However, this is an average which includes public and private *Musikschulen* and the costs can vary significantly between regions. 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.

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

the construction and planning of houses in economically marginalised areas. 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 and string instruments are still relatively expensive to purchase and difficult to transport (parental support is therefore necessary for children who want to learn percussion, double bass, or cello). Purves' (2017) 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 Experiences of HMEI**

In Britain especially, there are clear class divides in those who attend universities which were founded in education reforms after 1992 ("post '92s"), those which were founded in the 1800s ("Redbrick Universities") like Leeds and Birmingham and historically 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, prior to 2001,<sup>11</sup> students from lower socio-economic backgrounds often felt as if they did not fit at higher prestige "Redbrick" 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 prestigious universities in lower numbers, and why their drop out rates were higher when they attended institutions with high prestige. They explained that those who feel entitled to study or at ease in environments where the majority are middle or upper class, like them, are more likely to feel at "home" because these

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<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.

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, p. 52).

While Bourdieu never studied HMEIs in France, others have applied his work to students’ HMEIs experiences to investigate whether institutions have an implicit class bias. Dibben’s (2006) qualitative study among students who had been admitted to a HMEIs in the UK, found 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 however also indicated an overrepresentation of students from higher socio-economic groups in one particular HMEI (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 (2015b), and Bull and Scharff (2017, 2021) have suggested that the Western Art Music (WAM) 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 WAM 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 programmes chosen by students at HMEIs. Born and Devine (2015) identify a clear class divide between music technology programmes (MT) and what they call “traditional” music (TM) degrees.<sup>12</sup> MT degrees are undertaken more

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



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 tied to industrial scale songwriting or technical work, as opposed to 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 programmes, with men making up c. 75% of music technology course students as opposed to c. 50% of TM programmes.

As noted above, students from lower SES backgrounds are generally more likely to choose HE programmes and courses which are explicitly linked to a vocation (Baker, 2020; Hillmert & Jacob, 2003; Lehmann, 2009; Ma, 2009). 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 programmes have focused on training pupils who would not otherwise be familiar with Euroclassical music repertoires. In the UK, widening participation programmes have been established to support the inclusion of those from economically and racially marginalised backgrounds, particularly in WAM (Birmingham City University, 2021; Higher Education Policy Institute, 2019; Orchestras Live, 2021; Royal College of Music, 2019). There have also been attempts to (quantitatively) “democratise” access to HME in almost all countries which have HMEIs by expanding degree programmes 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 high school 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 sug-

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<sup>13</sup> As measured by the POLAR index.

gests a need for HMEIs to expand their curricular/programme scope beyond what they are already offering.

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 to listen to and make hip hop or why jazz is taught in German, Dutch, Swedish, or UK HMEIs, largely staffed by white music teachers. The expansion of programmes 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 the 1960s, leading to its institutionalisation in the 1980s and 1990s (Lopes, 2000) as jazz fans and practitioners became HMEI teachers. Through its institutionalisation, 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 & 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 HMEI tendencies, it will follow the same trend as jazz. Though studies from the UK have confirmed that students generally who achieve the highest grades at state schools are more likely to do better at university than the equivalent students at private schools (Vidal Rodeiro & Zanini, 2015).

## 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 prestigious institutions and music performance programmes 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 do influence both heavily.

There are similarities across countries. However, to date, there is very little 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.

## Keyword: Social Justice

Mojca Piškori

*Love music and love people.  
If ever in doubt—or if forced to choose—choose people.*

(Cheng, 2019, p. 5)

Many of the discussions, critical reflections, and initiatives taking place within the institutions of higher music education (HME) today navigate through complex and contested terrains of the seemingly universal idea(l) of social justice. By engaging in concerted efforts at redressing historical patterns of exclusion of people, musics, and musical knowledges; encouraging critical conversations around routinely obscured but effectively perpetuated systems of discrimination; and drawing attention to both ingrained regimes of inequality and patterns of their tacit acceptance, these initiatives openly challenge the *status quo* and structural injustices specific to the field. Such initiatives sometimes markedly differ in scope, emphases, positions, overarching goals, and strategies employed in achieving them. All of them, nevertheless, share fundamental reliance on the dedicated labour of individuals and communities determined to engage in uncertain, often prolonged, and at times exhausting struggles for more inclusive, equitable, and socially just HME and institutional environments in which it takes place.

When used in everyday conversations the meaning behind the concept of social justice is seldom questioned, appearing instead as self-evident, singular, and almost universally applicable. More attentive reading of broad literature dedicated to different aspects of social justice—in HME and

beyond—nevertheless, reveals the multiplicity of intersecting approaches to the concept. Three chapters included in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education* (Benedict et al., 2015a) might be used here as an indicative case-in-point. In the chapter offering an insight into music education history through social justice prism McCarthy (2015) draws on three forms of social justice used in educational contexts—*distributive justice* referring to “morally equitable distribution of goods in education”; *cultural justice* alluding to the “absence of both cultural domination and marginalisation of cultural groups”; and *emancipatory justice* seeking “to free people from oppression and grant them the full participation in decisions that affect their lives”—arguing that in order to bring about social change all three forms of justice “must work in tandem” (pp. 32–33). Cohen and Duncan (2015), on the other hand, base their analysis of two case studies of music education in carceral environments on the intersection of further two forms of social justice. They introduce the concepts of *restorative justice* aimed at cultivating outcomes that “develop healing, reparation, and responsibility for all” (p. 555) and *transformative justice* focusing “on the potential to address deeper, ingrained issues associated with the causes and circumstances surrounding harmful behaviours” (p. 555). The multiplicity of potential lenses through which social justice could be approached in music education is further expanded in Jorgensen’s chapter (2015) arguing for a multifaceted view of social justice by addition of forms of *commutative*, *contributive*, *procedural*, *retributive*, *poetic*, *instrumental*, *legal*, and *divine justice*. One of the challenges of describing social justice, concludes Jorgensen, evidently stems from the sheer volume of forms and overlapping, mutually resonating, and at times conflicting ways in which it can be construed.

It should therefore not come as a surprise that in the introductory chapter of the same volume its editors (Benedict et al., 2015b) characterise social justice as a term often used in the educational literature “as a catch-all expression and a political call to action for those seeking the amelioration of any number of social problems relating to, for example, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, and cultural identity” (p. xi). They further emphasise that, in practice, its pursuit implies “more than just recognition of difference and allowing for greater diversity and inclusivity in the classroom and other educational spaces” (p. xi) and oftentimes evolves into “complicated endeavor involving ... adjudication of conflicting values and interests, political action, and a concern for the welfare of the public, but especially of those who have been marginalized and oppressed” (p. xi). Beyond exemplifying the difficulty of arriving at simple definitions of social justice, this characterisation at the same time points to the fact that all attempts at achieving social justice are inherently embedded in broader social and political contexts extending beyond the confines of HME and thus draws attention to deeply contextualised nature of its understandings and uses. Drawing on Sara Ahmed (2012),

it could be argued that although the significance of social justice could be described as international, how it will manifest itself will always be local.

In contemporary academic institutions the work of different networks, institutional bodies, and (in)formal initiatives involved in issues of social justice are routinely subsumed under the heading of Equ(al)ity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Borrowing from The University of York *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2017–2022* (n.d.) the underlining key concepts could be defined as follows:

Equality—A fundamental part of a fair society in which everyone can have the best possible chance to succeed in life.

Diversity—Recognising that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways, and that those differences are to be recognised, respected and valued.

Inclusion—The active creation of a learning, working and social environment that is welcoming, which recognises and celebrates difference and is reflected in structures, practices and attitudes. (p. 6)

Although these concepts align with core ideas behind social justice in many ways, according to Ahmed (2012), strong critiques have been made of the ways institutions use them, and of how the arrival of the term “diversity” in particular “involves departure of other (perhaps more critical terms)” (p. 1), including social justice. Part of the problem, she argues, stems from the fact that diversity is not a “scary word” (p. 66) which in a way detaches it from scary issues, such as power and inequality, making it more appealing and easier to incorporate by institutions. In a similar vein the editors of *The Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education* warn about the fact that “the social justice ideal is itself sometimes appropriated by hegemonic groups as a rhetorical device, and unfortunately can be used to mask the perpetuation of social injustice and inequality” (Benedict et al., 2015b, p. xii).

Actively engaging in struggles for social justice in HME, nevertheless, primarily involves working within, with, and at times in opposition to, institutions, its cultures, discourses, practices, and value systems. Driven by interest in creating and/or fostering fair, equitable, and inclusive working and learning environments for all that inhabit them, these struggles presuppose incessant “questioning or otherwise challenging the authority of *status quo*” (Woodford, 2015, p. 3). Oftentimes this also means actively confronting the lack of institutional will to change. “Institutional inertia” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 26) or what Väkevä et al. (2017) term “organisational silo effect”—that is, mechanisms through which the “institutional system blindly pursues its purpose and social reproduction, favoring some and excluding others, and in this way reproduces

social injustice” (p. 130)—remains one of the more persistent obstacles in pursuit of social justice within institutions of HME.

Institutional inertia very often successfully masks social patterns of preference and value, invisibilising them in the process and thus effectively turning them into a sort of a “given” that appears not to be there to be challenged (Wright, 2015). This is at the same time one of the ways for institutions to effectively naturalise and maintain unequal distribution of power, established hierarchies, deeply ingrained and petrified value systems, and associated tacit knowledge needed to “successfully” navigate them. In a thought-provoking discussion (Väkevä et al., 2022) shedding light on the gap existing between “the benevolent democratic professional discourse based on meritocracy” (p. 418) and “concrete educational reality in which some are considered to be entitled to benefit more than others” (p. 418), Väkevä et al. underline ways in which “elitist structures and places, the elite-defined quality of art, and the mechanism of students selection constitute a dynamic core system that not only continuously produces inequality but also increases the power of the mechanism” (p. 426). In this way the replicated discourses of free-choice argument, education-based meritocracy, and hidden elitism become founding bricks in a wall fortifying and maintaining boundaries of existing social and institutional systems. To fully understand the potential scope of institutional inertia and destructive force of wilful misunderstandings (Tan, 2022), political disinterestedness (Hess, 2017), and terminal naivety (Vaugeois, 2013) in maintaining and reproducing regimes of injustice within the field of HME, one does not need to go far. One, in fact does not need to think further than recurring and presumably disarming questions—such as: What does it all have to do with music? With artistic excellence? High professional standards?—that (too) often threaten to interrupt meaningful and constructive discussions of equity, diversity, and inclusion in institutional contexts.

Nevertheless, initiatives advocating change do happen and persist within institutions of HME. Alongside impassioned collaborative work of individuals—students, faculty members, administrators, and staff—dedicated to the idea of potential for social change within environments in which they work and study, institutional level engagement with EDI issues is at times heavily influenced by pressure placed on institutions by outside forces, such as accrediting bodies (Kajikawa, 2019). Top-down imposed mainstreaming of these issues within institutional frameworks of higher education might be seen as a powerful and important push toward meaningful discussions, concrete action, and palpable transformation. Imposed from above, however, insistence on measurable outcomes and paper trails of institutional commitment might easily backfire. As Rivas (2021) warns us, it can also easily lead to institutional approach to EDI as just one more “checkbox for profile-stacking in the context of wider institutional competition” or public

demonstration of commitment that “feeds well into marketing campaigns for the lucrative and increasingly expanding international student market” (p. 67). Such a tokenistic approach might also mean that “microaggressions remain unchecked,” different voices “ignored or ghettoised into designated ‘multicultural’ marginalised spaces with the widest and highest platforms reserved fully for those born into class-normative privilege and elite networks” (p. 67).

Outcomes of initiatives around social justice within HME are further complicated by the contextual nature of understandings and uses of the concept of social justice. While all may generally ascribe to the value of social justice, what one individual or institution perceives as just and right, might for other individual or institution represent just the opposite. Moreover, argues Jorgenson (2015), “while there may be widespread general agreement about the proposition of justice as a basis for humane and civil society, the closer one comes to the ground of music educational practice, the more fraught the problem of what is meant by justice and how it can be achieved practically” (p. 9). The simple fact that individuals enter and inhabit institutions with different experiences and exposures to social justice issues (Fick, 2022), as well as that “individuals who strongly believe in meritocracy are likely to devalue programmes designed to provide differential opportunities to discriminated people” (Väkevä et al., 2022, p. 421) remain key points to bear in mind in every attempt at reconciling differences, allowing for and facilitating challenging, difficult, and at times uncomfortable discussions around issues of privilege, (dis)advantage, bias, patterns of in/exclusion engrained in the business-as-usual of institutions, especially in times of acute need of far-reaching social change.

Institutional, cultural, and social change take time. Reflecting on the experiences of activist work with the first UK-based research and lobby organisation focused on addressing staff-student sexual misconduct (The 1752 Group) Page et al. (2019) stress that different forms of activism operate within and across different temporalities. According to them, some actions “involve lobbying for rapid change, while others require the development of solutions and changes to culture and practices over time” (p. 1316). The 1752 Group, therefore, labels its approach “slow activism” in order to encompass “the varying levels of speed required (and the ensuing frustration at the slow pace at which change occurs) when attempting to work at different levels of the sector to enact change” (pp. 1316–1317).

Addressing and working against injustices, according to Vaugeois (2007), means “engaging with the political, locating ourselves historically and coming to term with our implicatedness in injustice” (p. 163), as well as “looking critically at assumptions of neutrality in our musical and social projects” (p. 164), all the way minding the gap between ideals of equality and the realities of oppression. Since there are no panaceas or simple and formulaic programmes



and pedagogies that easily translate and move between different educational and social contexts (Benedict et al. 2015b), pursuits of social justice in HME inevitably entail continuous negotiation, repositioning, (self)reflexivity, care, and “critical questioning of institutional structures, powers, oppressions and their symbolic and bricks-and-mortar representations” (Tan, 2021, p. 16). Persistence required in this process is always in necessary relation to the resistance encountered. “The more you persist, the more the signs of this resistance. The more resistance, the more persistence required” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 26). Reaching the idea(l) of social justice above all requires of us commitment and readiness to keep looking beyond the field of HME and “engage in the far messier world of social and political conflicts—the realm where battles for social justice inevitably take place” (Vaugeois, 2013, p. 190).

All of the addressed obstacles to achieving social justice within institutions of HME notwithstanding, it is still worth bearing in mind that what makes a crucial difference between just (mere) and just (fair, equitable, inclusive) institutions sometimes comes down to how good we are at listening (Rivas, 2021), especially when it comes to listening to the voices of those who have to fight to be heard (Vaugeois, 2007).

## **Five Tropes about EDI (Specifically, Race) in Higher Music Education**

Shzr Ee Tan

### **The “Right” Thing to Do? The “Trendy” Thing to Do? *Yet Another Thing to Do?***

EDI, DEI—whether you put Equality first before Diversity and *then* Inclusion, or Diversity as the easier “pill” to swallow before Equality and Inclusion—is a three-word acronym that has in recent years been making the rounds of higher education in universities which consciously style themselves as “progressive.” To the still-hopeful or freshly-awakened, EDI campaigns are an institutional call to action following the traumatic tipping point of #BlackLivesMatter in 2020. To the harried and exhausted, EDI is “yet-another-thing-to-do” as extra labour turned-red-tape. To the cynical, EDI is the latest bandwagon operating on the brink of disingenuous corporate branding.

Indeed, universities across the Global North are scrambling to buy up EDI staff workshop packages (many no doubt provided by hastily-rebooted corporate trainers riding this new wave). Hitherto uncatalogued job posts of Vice Dean of EDI (including one I fully disclose as having just been appointed to) are popping up today like once-ubiquitous Vice President roles in 1990s multinational conglomerates. EDI “key performance indicators” and EDI task forces/collectives are now structured into academic workflows in addition to curriculum and research.

How does one make sense of this new (or really, not so new) wave—particularly in the field of music studies? How do we look at intersections of race and class divides—alongside increasing “leaky pipeline” or “funneling” concerns, whereby talent is progressively and unfairly lost in education pathways when minoritised persons through no fault of their academic or musical merit fail to pass through consecutive levels of gatekeeping structures (exams, entrance auditions, degree acquisition, postgraduate qualifications)? Is the practice of EDI—alongside the 2020s trend of decolonisation—here to stay, beyond concept and terminology, in an era fast spiralling towards post-critique (Anker & Felski, 2017) and post-wokeness (Ahmari 2020)? Are some people simply sitting time out quietly—as they have done with #BlackLivesMatter and decolonial bandwagons—waiting for things to pass, until they are able to return to a “new-but-actually just-old-normal”?

The five reflections below—written in the form of impetuous observations and instinctive recoils and shared with (or garnered from the experiences of) friends deploying pandemic-originated networks of “secret WhatsApp ranting groups” populated by People of Colour/minoritised persons—capture a moment in this time of flux, anxiety, anger, fear, hope, and disillusionment. As provocations around emerging tropes on social justice, these reflections are not meant to be taken as aspirations towards any hypothetical “gold standard” of EDI practice, such is the changing nature of the world where new marginalities continue to emerge alongside dramatically shifting global politics. And surely, too, the concept of EDI itself will soon be replaced by yet another, soon-to-be-current term—I suspect in a matter of years rather than decades.

For now, I present the five reflections below in quick headline tropes (rife with disclaimers in supporting brackets), in specific relation to intersectional race issues. Written deliberately in a conversational and colloquial style with minimalised academic referencing, I intend them as springboards for self-reckonings, and also as safe-space-turned-brave-space debates held in and beyond academic platforms and university classrooms—where critical change, I feel, can be achieved. I present provocations rather than solutions; questions rather than answers; rants rather than eloquent arguments.

### **Reflection 1—EDI, “Wokeness,” and Global South Discourses**

Never mind intergenerational or right-wing neoliberal pushback, but what about the (lack of) understanding of EDI outside the Global North? I raise this point having recently spoken at a seminar<sup>1</sup> on whether decolonisation has

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<sup>1</sup> “Decolonisation, New Intersectionalities, Bad Faith, and Wilful Misunderstandings” by Shzr Ee Tan. Lecture, NUS Department of Malay Studies, February 15, 2023. <https://fass.nus.edu.sg/mls/events/decolonisation-new-intersectionalities-bad-faith-and-wilful-misunderstandings-by-dr-shzr-ee-tan-15-february-2023/>

traction and local buy-in (sadly, not really, no) in context to neoliberal higher education institutions in the decidedly *not*-West metropolis of my hometown, Singapore, coming away feeling both dejected as well as enlightened: in many parts of the (very diverse) Global South, categories such as the “political left” vs. the “political right,” or “progressive” vs. “conservative” do not hold as much water as mainstream academic discourses might imply.

To be clear, this is not an attack on the active practice of EDI in any way, nor is it a denial that inequality exists in separately contained territories within the unevenly-repressed (or not) Global South. (Even here, I baulk a little at the implication of a North-South binary). Rather, it is about the danger of EDI falling into the trap of being seen as “over-woke white people’s activist agenda” as a result of focus on everyday stakes in (face it) narrowly-determined bourgeois lives that would be viewed as too-small in vastly different economic playing fields.

For a Southeast Asian poverty-bound migrant (and, for the sake of argument, aspiring poet and part-time musician) earning 400 USD a month as a domestic worker in Hong Kong or Singapore, why should anybody care about pronouns or debate-podium eloquence, when one is constantly battling bigger crises of potential employer abuse, visa precarity, and spousal over-reliance on family income provision? By the same token on the flip side, from the perspective of a wealthy student from China (though there are certainly many *not*-wealthy students, the territory being one of the world’s most populous and class-diverse nations): why should one choose to be personally embroiled in specific race debates historically located in American/European colonial slavery and its longer-term impact and trauma imposed on diasporic experiences? Indeed, the (until now) much-ignored global majority make very uneasy alliances with the minoritised of the so-called West or North. Here, I quote an anonymous acquaintance from China who recently abandoned a PhD programme in Music in the United States, explaining: “I’m tired of your academic politics, where my research needs to be located in some inflexible frame where I’m either a downtrodden model minority, or I have to be an angry, successful activist fighting for the right of representation *blah blah blah*. But I’m chilled! I’m smart, I’m rich, I’m beautiful, I’m happy. I’m nobody’s victim back in Asia where I do as I please, say what I like, and where I have agency—that word you love so much.”<sup>2</sup>

And yet—we persist; we must continue to explain—more importantly relocate and recalibrate EDI discussions especially beyond the Global North and especially outside mainstream academia (as it stands now, anyway). The Southeast Asian migrant’s labour feeds directly—and very unequally—into

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<sup>2</sup> Personal communication, February 2023, via WeChat dialogue.

the complex economies of inter-Asian/intersectional privilege which makes cities like Singapore and Hong Kong (for example) aspirationally cosmopolitan enough to support state-of-the-art cultural centres, branding themselves as examples of recentred globalisation and new international soft power; the ex-PhD-student-turned-Instagram-intellectual in China is operating in real and virtual worlds where East Asian-sustained anti-Blackness is still a problematic, unaddressed issue. Even the idea of EDI as a “Western” idea originating only from the Global North is an erroneous one, as any cursory examination of global philosophies and major world religions endorsing justice and equality in the face of systemic hierarchies and repressions will show.

Where might this leave *us*, then—a community of academics (wearing multiple hats *beyond* academia) in, specifically, music studies? The next provocation considers further tropes...

## **Reflection 2—What’s Music Got to Do with It? Class, Pipelines, and More Class**

First—at face value, an EDI response to the “problem” above of music-particular impacts could be presented in terms of how (to continue with specific examples already raised) the very disenfranchised Southeast Asian migrant worker’s life—in musical or sounded terms—can offer valuable insights and calls to action via deep-diving into structurations of acoustic regimes and therapies of labour (disclaimer: this the focus of one of my own ongoing research projects).<sup>3</sup> Similarly, or maybe not so similarly, the cheerfully ambivalent stance of the (former) music student from China-in-the-US needs to be understood strategically against the backdrop of massive recruitment of (revenue generating) East Asian international students in US and European institutes of higher learning (including, particularly, music departments). Today, academics, students, and other professional staff (the last especially providing key ancillary services in neoliberal education “packages” comprising pastoral care, heightened campus security, administration, etc.) are now dealing with grossly-unlevelled intersubjectivities. Issues of disjunctures in languages of communication (and academic assessment), in turn rooted in privilege-fomented assumptions of cultural/disciplinary knowledge and decontextualised/disoriented socialisations, erupt into regularly-stalling classroom interactions and misunderstood/latent/racial microaggressions.

Specific to music in higher education, a second, equally important intersectional issue is also one of how race often operates within and without niched

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<sup>3</sup> “Sounds of Precarious Labour” collaborative research and narratives blog. <https://soundsofprecariouslabour.wordpress.com/>

structurations of class issues. To be sure, any self-respecting Admissions Tutor of a music department in the US or Europe will admit to overwhelmingly large percentages of their applicants coming from economically privileged backgrounds. This is often demonstrated by the preponderance of privately educated students in music programmes around the world, or students from high-income families who would have resources to pay for one-to-one instrumental and vocal tuition (Bull & Scharff, 2021; Green, 2017). In many public spheres, a music degree is often thought of as a “luxury” qualification for the offspring of wealthy elites, where the economic pressures of immediately finding a job in “safe and stable” professions such as accountancy, engineering or medicine are less insistent. This is especially true of traditional minority diaspora communities—in complement with newer waves of temporary migrants from more wealthy “international-student communities,” who may view a music degree as a gateway towards increasing social capital and building of socio-economic networks with fellow temporary migrants in an aspirationally cosmopolitan class.

Or, is this necessarily the case? If one were to follow (or blame) the “pipeline” by tracking and pointing out generationally-replicated class hierarchies as inevitably vested in the paradoxes of broader cultural economics and arts patronage, then the issue becomes not one of *how* music (and by extension music studies) has come to be an elitist provision, than one of how *particular genres* of music have emerged as elitist genres and scenes.

Here, I do not wish to specifically single out the would-be elephant in the room of Western Art Music (WAM), which is implicated not just on class terms, but also postcolonially, neocolonially, and *decolonially* practised/embraced by many in the so-called Global South, first as a vehicle for achieving socio-economic/international capital, but secondly—and critically—as a valuable, crucible space of emotional refuge and spiritual/philosophical cultivation. Instead, I point out that far more preponderant genres—of Anglo-American (and also non-Anglo-American) commercial pop, rock, folk, dance, game, etc. music around the world (never mind global musics as parsed by ethnomusicologists)—should surely merit scrutiny in the academy if only for the huge impacts they have in the lives of massive (unevenly globalised) communities across multiple (unevenly decolonised) territories.

The thing is, music programmes in “progressive” departments today (to be fair, largely in the Global North) are also rapidly embracing diversity. Many offer not only modules in pop and politics, screen/game music, and global music genres (K-pop being a current favourite), but also modules in music and climate awareness, music and Artificial Intelligence, and music and mental health—if only because newer, younger generations of Gen Z and Gen Alpha students want to see their own lived experiences reflected in the content of their university classrooms. There is now a real business case for EDI (plus, of course, corporate branding riding on bandwagonism). However,

that is not to say that there isn't a crucial demographic of (ironically, Global Majority) folk who might also want the "traditional WAM canon" in its "authentic classic" form taught by old (ahem), white males (preferably with beard). This much is true, going by a different set of lived experiences in, for example, the crowd of "international students" from first-tier East Asian cities brought up on neocolonial musical diets/post-Cultural Revolution backlash/WWII trauma-turned-rapid neoliberalisation mindsets, who would be wealthy enough to fork out high overseas fees.

What, then, makes for a good EDI balance in terms of repertoire and curricular provision—one might ask? Can we have it *all* in terms of putting diversity first before equity in music studies? Does something have to give?

### **Reflection 3—New Marginalities, Selective Nostalgia, Whataboutisms, Weaponising EDI**

A pessimist (or optimist—depending on how one looks at things) might point out that even as EDI might be riding the higher education wave for now, this trope of a moment is very much also in passing. This is because newer, competing and ever mushrooming marginalities—some of them important intergenerational ones pertaining to impending climate crises, economic precarity, digital uncertainty, and mental health—are complicating *as well as* diluting the rhetoric and usefulness of EDI practice, putting it in danger of becoming an #AllLivesMatter campaign.

While I do not wish to belittle the newer concerns of younger and emerging Gen Z and Gen Alpha custodians of our new workplaces, living spaces, communities, and physical and virtual environments, I would also like to see these debates understood in continuing intersection with older, soon-to-be-surely-untrendy *but still ongoing* EDI concerns of race, gender, class, and dis/ability. Here, selective nostalgia deployed alongside flippant Whataboutism and careerist weaponising of EDI can dramatically undermine EDI initiatives' very power to effect meaningful social change. Far too often, I have seen people—not least music students, academics, and professionals (a higher proportion of which identify as neurodiverse or suffering from anxiety issues)—often jump into a defensive drill of "but I have ADHD, *I'm* minoritised too" in a bid to counteract concerns raised around race and gender. (To this I gently point out that many members of Black & Global Majority folk—including those like myself, even with Chinese economic privilege—*also* have ADHD). Still, more often than not, I have observed members of younger "post-woke" generations—by virtue of sporting they/them pronouns as a matter of default "good practice"—erroneously assume that the battles for gender equality, race equality, and class equality have already been fought and won in the recent, hazy past.

So, what can we all—as concerned academics and music practitioners—do, but repeat what we have been saying for years and decades, again and again, even if these tropes (about gender, about race) have now become clichés? Indeed, one must remember that it is only human nature to minimise clichés (by definition of their becoming such things in the first place), because it is far easier to wilfully misunderstand facts and figures, or to stake bad faith interpretations of “older” minoritised positionalities, out of the simple fear of losing one’s privileges (which—I would like point out, is quite different from defending one’s rights).

The problem, however, of not having enough time (or in contemporary parlance, money) to do it all, and to address everything at once, now, remains unsolvable. As government cuts continue to besiege the higher education sector in neoliberalised sectors, university jobs (especially in the performing arts and humanities) are fast becoming unrenewed or simply phased out; departments are closing one after another; staff are overloaded with extra-curricular and pastoral labour. To return to the headline used earlier—EDI becomes *yet another* thing to *do*, falling down the bottom of lists even as empty speeches about “living the credo” fold facetiously into hypocritical public image campaigns.

For some, the crushing reality lies in having to consider EDI as a zero-sum-game in the world of limited budgets, restricted logistics, and not enough time, or care. One is forced to choose, and prioritise—but is this responsibility equally shared? In a keynote speech given in 2019,<sup>4</sup> British conductor Chi-Chi Nwanoku encapsulated things perfectly by asking of her allies: “What are you prepared to give up?” The issue, as always, is intersectional: what does one give up *first*?

Five years on, I continue to muse on Nwanoku’s call, remembering Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1990) work on intersectionality, which has demonstrated consistently that race gaps are significantly larger than gender or class gaps. Recent research in the UK by Kalwant Bhopal (2018, 2020) also shows that EDI legislative campaigns have benefited white women as a single category more than any other group. And yet, the idealistic—perhaps naïve—part of me would like to think that there is a different way of looking at and structuring scenarios. Rather than provoking allies and intersectionally-privileged people (like myself) into agonising over “giving specific things up,” I would like to put forward the provocation of “what are *we* prepared to *offer*?” I suggest this in context to the idea and practice of *sharing* as part of a process of nourishment—of our-communities, and in so doing, also of ourselves.

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<sup>4</sup> “Changing Perceptions: A glimpse of tomorrow’s orchestras” by Chi-Chi Nwanoku. Lecture, City, University of London, May 28, 2019. <https://www.city.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2019/06/chineke-founder-gives-powerful-lecture-on-diversity-in-music>



### **Reflection 4—Making Community: Different Motivations, Different Stakes, Same End?**

Don't get me wrong: communities—and especially musical and artistic ones, in which valuations of individual creativity and boldness of voice inevitably lead to the making of large egos—aren't always all about group-hugs, communal kitchens, and sunset-to-sunrise jam sessions. I speak of this having participated in and observed intentional communities/networks in London where democracy was practised to its utmost capacity in every layer of decision-making, from what brand of cat food to boycott, to whether one should install a Christmas tree within a 20-member household. These were some of the most wonderful experiences in learning to live with a range of people in alternative settings. But often, the democratic process would fall eventually into abuse via uncalibrated “I Don't See Colour” justifications where the most ebullient majority voices would prevail over a quiet minority. The problem, here, was that everyone would be “treated the same” (which is not the same as given equal opportunity) via (in)discriminate allocation of exactly-the-same-amount of airtime, no matter the loudness of specific individuals' voices or pre-established presence/history in the room. Such flattening of granular intersectional politics ultimately led to the replication of heavily biased voting trends, leading to decisions that unfairly reflected societal statistics favouring white-majority/centric experiences (with the added strain of enactment via excruciatingly slow-moving bureaucracies).

Elsewhere, I have also witnessed one-too-many white saviours purport to be champions of EDI, imposing themselves unto communities “in need of help” while entering these spaces unprepared, ignorant, arrogant, and entitled. Many had professed their readiness to enact social change with grand public statements through paradoxically centring themselves as heroes/heroines in imperialistic and missionising styles of “know-it-all, no-nonsense do-gooders.” These are the same people who have convened all-white panels in symposia strategically themed on diversity/decolonial agenda, or who have regularly assumed ethnic minorities to be “eternal graduate students” (something I am constantly mistaken for in musicology spaces). These are the same group of white individuals making careers out of researching “on” and speaking “over” (as opposed to researching “with”) the very people they pledge to protect (were these minoritized folk asked in the first place whether they desired this protection?). One must not forget that diversity and equality are not enough; inclusion is almost as important. Everyone may get tickets to the same concert and get to listen to the same programme. But not all seats in the concert site are the same, and not everyone gets a backstage pass, or indeed cocktail after-party invite.

In spite of all this, it must also be said that I have often encountered many (white, and intersectionally privileged/non-privileged) allies who have

consciously given up and shared much of their time, resources, knowledge, power, and connections for EDI causes. Some of these individuals have exercised great patience, entering spaces first to listen before acting, and in so doing also picked up sustained knowledge and grounded networks within a community in which they have real stakes (no harm of cultural appropriation or need for lane policing here!). On a personal level, some of these people are friends who have listened to my angry rants and faithfully played “punching bag” in the course of my airing of grievances. Others—in safe-spaces-turned-brave spaces—have also not shied away from pointing out with gentle humour, empathy, and care that I, too, as an angry woman with Chinese/economic/academic privilege, have been equally guilty (in the not-so-distant past) of committing some of the very offences I name above.

The thing is: everyone has an EDI learning curve. Conversation entry points are never equal on account of different lived experiences and structural/environmental constraints, even as shifting global politics mean that current marginalities and minoritisations need to be constantly recalibrated. EDI, thus, is an eternal goal and can never be fully achieved; it needs to be flexible, responsive, and adaptable. On a day-to-day basis, one could think of personal EDI practice in simplified terms of drawing and redrawing boundaries every day (in relation to what is personally or institutionally achievable/effective), as part of cyclical and iterative lessons in humility, curiosity, and openness to learning/change. On a longer-term basis, EDI is also about making tough decisions in relation to prioritisations (of resources, professional relations, friendships, trusted spaces, networks), and about losing smaller battles for the sake of winning bigger wars (and sadly, making unholy alliances that may well lead to marginally less collateral damage). It could also involve consciously removing oneself/a friend from unsafe situations and planning for project end-dates (I argue that sustainability is sometimes overrated) out of the need for self-care or regrowth elsewhere/regrowth conducted by a different party via refreshing of leadership.

Indeed, one must remember that the opportunity cost of practising EDI is different for everyone, and that we come with different motivations, different agencies, and different investments. Potentially, we may aspire towards the same end, but in terms of live and changing stakes, the ground is very uneven. That much is true of the recent hard lessons I have learnt via my work with Southeast Asian migrant workers and their sounded worlds. The academic gains which I had naively sought to extend to these new colleagues/consultants via my own approach to collaborative research (for example, fully-funded co-appearances in joint conference presentations in academic spaces), really, meant significantly little in their real-life terms, where time spent at a “high-class faraway white-people’s event” would mean time spent away from paid work, or from loved ones (never mind visa restrictions and

hidden costs). And yet my field consultants have continued to participate in our joint projects in many other ways, on their own, realistically chosen terms (if, still, ultimately executed on sadly unequal scales) for a range of similar as well as different motivations: platforms for representation, free meals, solidarity among womenfolk, change from repetitive work routines, cultural curiosity, community-making.

### **Reflection 5—Failing Meaningfully, Learning and Co-Mentoring Together, Holding One Another to Account**

To return to a question I have asked earlier: where does this leave us in terms of next steps, or overarching lessons in would-be good practice? I could muse further on the need to prioritise: I could write about focusing on intentions as opposed to outcomes, or deploying specific methodologies or organisational approaches, or championing core values in the abstract alongside making public commitments/credos, or enacting “big change” in opposition to/tandem with “small, sustained drips”; or building and consolidating co-mentoring networks, or zooming in on target statistics (such as awarding and pay gaps, curricular representation), or spearheading EDI training programmes (on anti-harassment or race awareness), etc., etc.

But if there has been one major lesson to be learnt it is that for every two steps taken forward, one must also take one step backwards—or at the very least, sideways. With EDI, the real task lies in learning and planning to fail—and to fail meaningfully at that, having individually and communally committed to making specific interventions in good faith. How, then, might one define failure—and meaningful failure at that? The crux lies not only in constant self-assessment of one’s goals and the making of new, adaptive goals, but also in seeking accountability *within* community—academic, non-academic, musical, and ancillary. Fundamentally, we must embrace the reality that we are all learning together in our different ways, falling down, and getting up alternately but moving forwards with empathy, intersubjectivity, kindness, forgiveness, and silliness; keeping a conversation alive in spite or because of our different motivations, stakes, and—necessarily—biases.

## Keyword: Ableism

Mojca Piškori

*Not when our bodies fail, but rather when our fellow citizens perceive us as disqualified by disability, when we cannot effectively use the world as it is built, when we are denied access to equal opportunities, then we become disabled.*

(Garland Thomson, 2017, p. xvii)

Although there are different definitions of ableism, as well as numerous interpretations and applications of the term, they are all predicated on the premise that ableism is founded on prejudice, discrimination, and oppression toward individuals with disabilities. At the individual, institutional, and cultural level, the underlying mechanisms of ableism effectively contribute to the reproduction and persistence of patterns of inclusion that privilege able-bodied people and disadvantage those with disabilities. As Ostiguy et al. (2016) argue,

... ableism is not solely about the experiences of people with disabilities as targets of discrimination, but rather about the interaction of institutional structures, cultural norms, and individual beliefs and behaviors that together function to maintain the status quo and exclude people with disabilities from many areas of society. (p. 401)

From an unquestioned ableist perspective all “human variations we think of as disabilities” (Garland Thomson, 2019, p. 33) may easily be discursively wrapped and construed in terms of lack, loss, deviance, inadequacy,

and inferiority. Although awareness of and decades-long concerted struggle against various forms of ableism have had a considerable impact on the transformation of the legal, built, and social environments, some forms of ableism—both covert and overt—remain palpably present in a variety of social contexts. In other words, the societies and worlds we live in remain fundamentally ableist—predominately designed for those who do not have disabilities, all the while normalising and positively valuing able-bodiedness and able-mindedness (Dolmage, 2017, p. 7). On many levels, the field of higher music education (HME) is no exception.

In the educational contexts, according to Darrow (2015), ableism occurs “when physical, attitudinal, social or education barriers are posed that prevent students with disabilities from successful inclusion” (p. 210). Beside acknowledging that academic segregation “is an important part of the history of oppression experienced by many students with disability” (p. 205), we should also be aware that in contemporary higher education ableism is still omnipresent, which makes all of those inhabiting higher education institutions “responsible for looking for it, recognizing our roles in its circulation and seeking change” (Dolmage, 2017, p. 31). Some of the recent discussions in the field of music education advocate moving “*beyond* inclusiveness, as it is understood in terms of improving teachers’ attitudes and tolerance towards students with special needs, to become more politically engaged and anti-ableist” (Laes & Westerlund, 2017, p. 3). This move seems to be even more significant if we acknowledge that, similar to other social conventions, many of the conventions of music performance “have the power to include and exclude” (Howe, 2016, p. 196), as well as “frame certain actions, behaviors and appearances as disabling” (p. 191). An increasing body of literature on music and disability encourages us to (re)consider music as “a medium through which disability has been and continues to be constructed” (Howe et al., 2016, p. 8), and continue examining the role that inaccessible institutional environments, practices, cultures, and pedagogies play in disabling students, faculty, and staff within HME.

Many of the contemporary struggles against inequities and injustices obstructing true inclusion of people with disabilities in a wide range of social and institutional context are rooted in guiding principles and strategies emerging from the long history of disability rights movements as well as the theoretical foundations of the interdisciplinary field of Disability Studies. Dedicated to the critical exploration of the social, political and cultural meanings of disability, the academic field of Disability Studies is founded on the shared assumption that, “although it may have concrete, somatic basis, disability is endowed with meaning by elaborative interpretive networks that emerge within particular societies and cultures” (Howe et al., 2016, p. 1). This understanding is directly related to a semantic distinction

between the concepts of bodily impairment and socially and culturally constructed disability, as well as to the basic distinction between medical and social models of disability. According to the medical model, disability is primarily understood as a medical condition, residing in an individual's body othered through its deviation from the "neutral," "average," able-bodied norm, and requiring medical intervention, rehabilitation, or cure. Under the social model, on the other hand, disability is seen as emerging "from a society which chooses to include and accommodate some bodies and exclude others" (Howe et al., 2016, p. 2). In words of one of the leading authors in Disability Studies, Rosmarie Garland Thomson (2017), it is therefore important to use the constructionist argument "to assert that disability is not bodily insufficiency, but instead arises from the interaction of physical differences with an environment" (p. 23), while at the same time also acknowledging that "the particular historical existence of the disabled body demands both accommodation and recognition" (p. 23). This requires fundamental understanding that disability is "simultaneously real, tangible, and physical, and also an imaginative construct whose purpose is to make sense of the diversity of human morphology, capability, and behavior" (Howe et al., 2016, p. 1).

Attaching labels of "inability," "lack," and "loss" to people living with disabilities, argues Bakan (2019), "has historically underscored a systemic fetishization of difference—bodily, cognitive, intellectual, and otherwise—usually achieved at the expense of actually listening to and taking seriously what disabled people have to say on their own behalves about who they are, what matters to them, and what they want and need" (p. 245). Both disability rights movements and Disability Studies have made a difference in this regard by securing space for people with disabilities to participate in and directly impact the political and academic discussions of disability. One of the long-lasting slogans of disability rights activism—"Nothing about us without us"—powerfully disrupts the idea that "disabled people should be defined primarily through their disabilities by others, retaining instead the right for disabled people to define their own relationship with disability" (Dolmage, 2017, p. 5).

The multiple ways in which individuals and communities choose to define their relationship with disabilities and negotiate their identities are, among other things, also mirrored in the different preferences regarding use of person-first (*person with disability*) or identity-first (*disabled person*) language appearing in both Disability Studies and activism (Marschall, 2023). As Garland Thomson (2017) argues, people with different kinds of disabilities have little in common somatically. The impairments that render someone disabled are "almost never absolute or static; they are dynamic, contingent conditions affected by many external factors and usually fluctuating over

time” (p. 13). Individual experiences and needs are therefore vastly different and context dependent. What, nevertheless, creates a sort of a common ground are the shared experiences of stigmatisation and exclusion and ongoing individual and collective struggles against different forms of ableism.

When thinking of ableism, in both HME and wider society, we should be aware that, as Dolmage (2017) puts it, ableism is never alone with itself. Ableism, therefore, “can and should often be seen as an intersecting force as well—not more than, nor in place of, but always in a layered and complicated relationship with other forms of structural discrimination” (p. 39). Recognising and confronting different forms of ableism persisting in the field of HME and its institutional environments necessitates critical intersectional thinking (Bell, Dasent & Tshuma, 2022) and awareness of different ways in which music, musical performance conventions (Howe, 2016), and performativity-oriented education (Laes & Westerlund, 2017) participate in and contribute to perpetuation of injustices and inequalities regarding disability.

Many of the insights of Disability Studies have, since the mid-2000s, been successfully applied in studies of music (Lerner & Straus, 2006; McKay, 2009; Lubet, 2010; Straus, 2011). The growing literature on music and disability, encompassing a wide range of musical traditions, genres, historical periods and forms of disability, has challenged the way we understand both music and disability, and equipped us with knowledge invaluable in confronting and dismantling the ableisms persisting in music and HME. Tracing the short history of the subfield of music and disability studies, the editors of *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies* (Howe et al., 2016) identify four overarching topics in which main theoretical frameworks of Disability Studies have proven particularly useful for considering various intersections of disability and music:

- (1) “disability has been shown to be a core feature of the musical identity of music makers (especially composers and performers), often an identity that is affirmatively *claimed* in the face of widespread stigma” (p. 4);
- (2) “disability has inflected reception of the lives and work of composers and performers” (p. 4);
- (3) “although music is a famously nonrepresentational art form, scholars have shown that musical works represent disability in various ways” (p. 4);
- (4) “music has proven a fertile ground for exploring the contention within Disability Studies that disability (like gender) can be understood as a performance: something you do rather than something you are” (p. 5).

Focus on music, sound, hearing, listening, and musical performance has enabled scholars to identify different ways in which music is both shaping and being shaped by disabilities, as well as the ways in which disabilities might or might not signify through sound (Howe, 2016). In that way, beside contributing to the broadening of critical perspectives and methodologies of different subdisciplines making the field of music studies, they have also contributed to the diversity of approaches to disability already existing in the field of Disability Studies.

Many of the conventions of music performance are both shaped by and reproduced through (higher) music education. Some of these features—such as, for example, conventional instrument designs, length of vocal phrases, wide piano chords, or relying on visual cues in conducting—argues Howe (2016), contribute to the construction of an ideal performance body and might in turn (musically, audibly, visibly) disable performers whose bodies do not conform to the constructed norm. Departing from Joseph Straus' argument that disabled musical performers are faced with a dual task of performing music and performing disability, and drawing on examples from performance practice, Howe successfully demonstrates how different performance conventions work together to produce a sort of a bodily template—or in Howe's terms "normal performance body"—that real human bodies aspire to achieve. Such body, among other qualities, usually "possesses all limbs, with above-average hand and finger size, lung capacity and strength" (p. 196). Similarly to athletic performance, musical performance often displays extraordinary, superhuman bodies—"supremely able-bodied bodies, with prodigious capabilities beyond those of most audience members" (p. 200), and challenges these bodies to "feats of strength (or dexterity, coordination, musicality, finesse)" (p. 200). A deviation of a performer's body with thus normal(ised) performance body—that Howe terms "performance impairment"—may, "without adequate accommodation" musically disable a performer" (p. 197).

Howe further points to the fluid boundary existing between concepts of musical inabilities and disabilities stemming from performance impairments. While musical inabilities (he names as an example the inability of tenor to sing bass-baritone) are in practice "contained within communities of performers already supported by comfortable instruments and appropriate repertoire and friendly social audiences," musical disabilities "entail a more profound exclusion from communities of performance" (p. 198). The fact that some performance impairments are easily accommodated (for instance, through instrument design or repertoire) while others are not, for Howe serves as evidence of the constructed nature of disability in music. Although some of the variations of a performer's body, instrument design and many of the assistive technologies have long been tolerated in music



practice,<sup>1</sup> strict norms and normalising mechanisms of performance practice still play a crucial role in determining a seemingly firm and impenetrable boundary separating accepted and forbidden musical accommodation. As with distinctions between musical inability and disability, Howe concludes, the rigid separation of acceptable and unacceptable musical accommodations is utterly artificial and culturally determined. By demonstrating how musical performance can accentuate or at times also generate a disability that in other (non-musical) contexts might have remained invisible, inaudible or unrealised, Howe also opens a space for reflection on cultural malleability of disability within musical contexts.

This reflection becomes particularly relevant when considering the ableism embedded in HME institutional environments, communities, and cultures. The ethic of higher education, argues Dolmage (2017), still encourages students and teachers “to accentuate ability, valorize perfection, and stigmatize anything that hints at intellectual (or physical) weakness” (p. 3). He believes that the manner in which higher education “strongly promotes able-bodiedness, able-mindedness, as well as other types of social and communicative hyperability,” is best described as “academic ableism” (p. 7). Different forms of ableism are often deeply ingrained in institutions and thus effectively invisibilised and normalised, which in practice makes them harder to recognise and at times more difficult to challenge.

The fact that disabilities appear in many different forms—visible and invisible, audible and inaudible, immediately apparent and hidden—as well as the fact that the stigma associated with disability varies across disability types (Darrow, 2015) and significantly influences exclusion, further complicates the effort of securing fully inclusive institutional environments for all. Students, faculty, and staff with disabilities inhabiting HME institutions, especially those with disabilities that are not immediately apparent, therefore often engage in a difficult process of careful considering of pros and cons of disclosing their disability. As Garland Thomson (2017) writes, “an invisible disability ... always presents the dilemma of whether or when to come out or to pass” (p. 14). The fact that, when it comes to musicians, many performance impairments are functionally neutral bodily features in most daily activities, and may only become apparent during performance (such as, for example, focal dystonia, smaller hands or fingers, or amusia), further complicates the disclosure decision. Within HME some disabilities are considered less stigmatising and more readily accommodated than others. On the level of individual institutions this difference in approach, acceptance, and inclusion

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<sup>1</sup> As examples of those long accepted and tolerated assistive technologies Howe mentions “piano benches with adjustable height, shoulder pads for violinists and violists, shortened stop lengths on a cello” (Howe, 2016, p. 200).

significantly depends on the nature of disability, broader legal frameworks, and willingness to commit to the changes that could substantially alter existing built, legal, and social environments. In institutions in which inclusion of people with disabilities is an issue to be addressed on an as-needed basis, an individual's decision to disclose is often, above other things, significantly dependent on the personal feelings of vulnerability or position of privilege they temporarily occupy.

According to Darrow (2015), music educators often address diversity, including disabilities, by after-the-fact modifications and adaptations of an existing curriculum. A considerable body of research, on the other hand, indicates that “inclusive practices are beneficial to both students with and without disabilities, and that the types of adaptations a music teacher makes for a student with disability will ultimately benefit other students as well” (p. 214). One of the instructional approaches that has been increasingly employed in attempts at accommodating wide variety of learners is Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL operates on the premise that “the planning and delivery of instruction, as well as the evaluation of student learning, can incorporate inclusive attributes that accommodate students with the widest range of learning characteristics” (Darrow, 2015, p. 215). Engaging in devising music curricula on the premises of UDL might therefore eliminate the wide-spread practice of making slight ad-hoc changes to an otherwise inaccessible curriculum to allow access for specific individuals that might need them. This could also fundamentally contribute to the substantial transformation of exclusionary and potentially disabling music teaching practices.

As the editors of *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies* explain, many able-bodied people cling to an ideology of autonomy based on the assumption that every person is (or should be) independent and self-supporting (Howe et al. 2016). People with disabilities, they write, “generally know better than that, and understand the networks of mutual dependence, care, and assistance that bind us all together” (p. 8). Instead of uncritically accepting the misleading idea that able-bodied people are fundamentally self-sufficient and independent, we could all benefit from acknowledging that, as Judith Butler argues, “there are so many things we are dependent on in order to exercise what we call our autonomy” (Butler & Taylor, 2009, p. 210). That might also be a good place to start working against ableism inherent in both HME and wider societies we live and try to thrive in. Refusing to interrogate or failing to challenge exclusionary institutional and pedagogical practices that privilege only particular bodies and minds, might mean helping ableism disguise itself, as well as disguising it to ourselves and our students (Dolmage, 2017).

Although, as Laes and Westerlund (2017) argue, students with disabilities “are less likely to be included in music education practices as equal to

their peers—let alone considered as future professionals in the field of music” (p. 36), examples from performance practice, past and present, discussed in the field of Music and Disability Studies demonstrate that in music “disability is everywhere when you start looking for it” (Howe et al., 2016, p. 6). When it comes to confronting unexamined ableism and opening space for wider and fuller inclusion of people with disabilities in music, it is worth keeping in mind that institutions of HME do have a crucial role to play. Broadening our institutions’ understanding of the potentials of carefully examining existing institutional structures and practices, individual beliefs and behaviors, as well as cultural norms and built environments, may be the first step toward challenging the *status quo* that imperceptibly perpetuates the exclusion of people with disabilities (Ostiguy et al., 2016). The successful careers of musicians with disabilities, as well as roles they have played in both music scenes and wider societies clearly demonstrate that music is one of the fields of human creativity able to embrace all human variations we think of as disabilities (Garland Thomson, 2019). Initiatives and programmes already existing within institutions of HME (see, for example, Breslin, 2021; Thomson, 2021a; van Veldhoven & Wickström, 2021) might serve as pathways to change, potentially extending beyond the field of HME.

# Acoustic Bodies: Working Out Excellence with Neurodivergent and Neurotypical Young Musicians

Franca Ferrari

*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. ... 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... the normal performance body ... like all forms of constructed normalcy, establishes a template that real human bodies must strive to match. ... indeed, music performance can amplify or even generate a disability that otherwise would have remained inaudible or unrealized.*

(Howe, 2016, pp. 196–197)

Since 1977 the Italian national school system has chosen full inclusion: we do not have any special school for primary and secondary instruction levels. In their place, special teachers and tutors work in primary or secondary school groups that include children with special needs. To enter the specialisation curriculum a previous master's degree certificate is requested and it is a commonly held opinion that special teachers perform their school job with more successful results when they come from a professional background in music. Inclusion, also in this frame, is always a challenge.

Only since the beginning of the 21st century has inclusion policy been introduced to universities and, even later, to music conservatories. Financial resources from the government aimed towards inclusion projects in upper-level educational institutions are becoming nearly regular; dedicated tutors can support artistically gifted young adults with special needs in their post graduate curriculum.

Nevertheless, in higher instruction levels, even more than in lower ones, real and effective peer interaction is always a big challenge. Does a musical talent turn out to be a real compensative tool in creating social interactions? What happens when a neurodivergent person on the autistic spectrum is involved? Would long periods of isolation (e.g. playing alone for hours a day), create a bigger social barrier?

Over the last thirty years, I have been personally involved in evaluation surveys aimed to observe both the social and artistic results of musical inclusion projects in Italian schools and academic institutions. In this role, I examined inclusive groups based on socially well set up musical contexts, such as a drum ensemble, a traditional dance group, as well as a symphonic orchestra.<sup>1</sup>

I accepted to write this short essay because I wished to present a project that I found perhaps the most effective of them all and which ended in an amazing performance in the Academic Hall of Conservatorio Santa Cecilia in November 2022.<sup>2</sup>

The performance was the final goal of a music/theatre/dance workshop named *Acoustic Bodies*. The project won the public tender Solidal Communities 2020, funded by Regione Lazio with EU resources. The application was submitted by Fuori Contesto—a cultural association that has been producing integrated theatre and dance performances with professional disabled and non-disabled artists since 2005—in partnership with Conservatorio Santa Cecilia. This is the first important point: special expertise coming from a private association included within conservatory curricula. In fact, neurotypical master's degree students who were involved in the project were initially interested in just collecting credits for a couple of their modules (namely Body Techniques and Pedagogy of Music) before the end of the year.

A high-quality artistic performance exhibiting neurotypical and neurodivergent young artists was exactly the main goal of the project. To score this goal, an extensive list of activities was scheduled.

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<sup>1</sup> More information on the *Esagramma* model can be found at [www.esagramma.net](http://www.esagramma.net)

<sup>2</sup> Trailers announcing the performance can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/fuori.contesto/videos/960980411974891> and <https://www.facebook.com/fuori.contesto/videos/2694431430688497>

- During the Spring of 2022, 12 neurodivergent students on the autistic spectrum were invited to eurhythmics and instrumental group music classes, to meet and interact with other students. All neurodivergent students came with a DSM5 diagnosis (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) and had already been enrolled in some of Rome Conservatory's courses (instrumental, violin making, or piano tuning classes).
- From September to November 2022, 15 neurotypical students responded to a call and were enrolled in a three-month workshop aimed at creating and setting on stage an original musical theatre performance. The students came mainly from different courses within the Rome Conservatory, but also from other Rome art academies' master courses, bringing extremely heterogeneous artistic experiences with them, such as Western Art Music instrumental performances, jazz voice and guitar, and dance.
- Then, for three months, 27 young adults split in two mixed groups and worked together once a week. The two groups joined together just on a few weekends and in the last three weeks.
- Although several Conservatory professors were involved in guiding some of the musical settings, they were not directly involved in the performance, since the performance was primarily envisioned as a peer-group artistic expression.
- A videographer and a digital scene artist entered the very last phase of the project, to make recordings on and off stage and to frame the final digital stage setting.
- During the three-month workshop, Emilia Martinelli, a director with a specific expertise in dance ability and integrated theatre, chosen by Fuori Contesto, slowly gave an artistic shape to the group of 27 young adults, each one with their own instrument, their own voice, their own acting body: *acoustic bodies*.

A few words should be written about the methodology that led to the final structure of the play, where every gesture and word told the inner essence of each player and, at the same time, mirrored the peer group itself.

The first part of the workshop was aimed to merge and mix the participants: eurhythmic games with live vocal and instrumental sounds helped them to explore and fix collective postures and movements and search for what looked and sounded interesting and beautiful. The first ideas about a plot and a possible storyboard came from a problem solving. We have a violin, but it's impossible to get any sound out of it. Why? What happened? What can we do, as we urgently need the music of this violin? One of the

students, who worked as an assistant director for this specific task, wrote down all the ideas—quite often jokes—expressed as possible solutions to the problem solving, and presented them to the group as a full script.

Considering the barriers to communication and deafening silences that occur in everyday life, the group discovered a need to take time and listen to each other. In this way, resources to go over and solve the problem could be found: the violin's soul—that was the group's soul itself—was threaded across and music eventually came out. The very topic of a narrative idea to solve the initial question came from one of the neurodivergent students, who literally threw himself into the play, as a singer (he is a singer), but also as a dancer, an actor, and a concept-creator, and led all the others towards the final results. Every member of the group, reading the script together after nearly a month of movement and vocal music work together, had the possibility to recognise their own jokes and to appreciate their interweaving with others. Nevertheless, it was clear that this sort of project needed a director who can listen, select, and weave in a plot, as well as a conductor, who takes the responsibility of composing pieces in a complex layout and bringing them back to the group at a certain point.

Active and concentrated listening to the students' musical resources and to their free proposals as different musical answers to a group problem solving—Which live music would be proper for this scene? Have you got anything to offer?—was another area of focus in this project's methodology. In fact, live music that was included in the final performance was selected from the repertoire of the students themselves, arranged and performed with guidance—when necessary—from conservatoire teachers. So, the live soundtrack of the performance was extremely vibrant and heterogenous: a couple of sections from the piano version of Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* had a prominent role, but they were threaded with Chopin's B minor Scherzo, Piazzolla's *Libertango* arranged for piano four hands, and Piazzolla's *Oblivion* arranged for the oboe, clarinet, and piano. In the last scene of the play, the initially mute violin's voice eventually melted and gathered all the group voices, as Clara, a neurodivergent violin player, collected all of them with the melody of Pachelbel's *Canon*. Then all this changed and everybody, also in the audience, was transported to a hard rock dance. In general, all scenes were crossed by many vocal sounds, strictly connected to eurhythmic group movements and choreographies that underlaid the climax points of the plot.

So, the workshop methodology pushed for integrated languages: movement, dance, vocal and instrumental live music, acting. Music, dance, and theatre were all involved and integrated so that each participant could find their own way of self-expression and, eventually, even change it. In the performance, very good instrumentalists performed as actors and dancers, while actors made music. In this sort of role reversal, each one had a comfortable

starting point in what they practiced regularly but learned to know each other and had the possibility to make a jump and experiment with something new.

The director, Emilia Martinelli, pointed out that proactive encouragement of different musical resources would push creative boundaries and ensure that the greatest possible range of voices was reflected in the work created. She did not give or ask for any predefined ideas about the final performance, certain that the group itself would have provided these ideas. The most fundamental action, she said, is listening—listening through your skin, body, ears, head, heart, and letting yourself be crossed by stories, lives, and sensibilities of people in the group.

The director's expertise then consists of framing and selecting what she has listened to, setting up all the resources in a performance. The director draws, chooses, and selects materials that can be used in the performance, but she also regularly steps back and listens/looks for moments of beauty, of grace, and grace coming out of the group and finds a way to set them to stage.

As Teresa Chirico, supervisor of the project for Conservatorio Santa Cecilia, pointed out, a conservatoire is an appropriate place for learning to listen, and a workshop like this provides young musicians with the necessary skill of listening. Ancient Greeks called it *sym-pathia*—an ability to feel and perceive what other people can and wish to tell us. One of our neurodivergent students explained this with these words: “I do hope that many people, coming and watching the performance of *Acoustic Bodies*, will realize the importance of silence, that enables us to catch something that eventually we will not perceive through our ears.”

Finally, I would like to underline some artistically valuable points, that I recognise as very high-level educational achievements:

- The extremely fine quality—both on a technical and communicative level—of quite a few group members. We would have never expected it—in one extraordinary neurodivergent, as well as in neurotypical students—and it could emerge just thanks to the context of integrated theatre that I have described.
- The artful combination of the various components of the performance, such that the dances, songs, and dialogue appear fluid and continuous.
- A subtle and highly professional plasticity that all neurotypical and most neurodivergent participants developed in turning from players to dancers, or from singers to actors, in a flash of a second. I was amazed, because I know very well that performance anxiety usually paralyses them, and they struggle with their public performances. In this case, a strong group context and an equally strong shared concept attracted and guided all the best performing energies.



As a conclusion, I truly believe that we cannot cancel power differences, particularly when they stem from a physiological difference. Rather, we can surely harmonise them in a specially conceived contextual framework. The right word for this task is *concertare* which we learned from Monteverdi and Vivaldi. The first one had some beautiful singers employed at the Gonzaga Court in Mantua, as he composed *Orfeo*, but *Orfeo*'s brass instruments' tuning (because of the specificities of the 1609 brass instruments' technology) surely suffered from being in the most humid of Italian regions. This helps to understand—I think—the incredible one chord harmony of the beginning Toccata. Monteverdi used the same trick to tune a gigantic ensemble when he had his first important commission in Venice, in the Introitus of the *Vespers for the Blessed Virgin*: a good frame to harmonise power differences among very different musical abilities.

With this project we re-discovered that musical theatre—when organised as I described—is a powerful space for creating community. Namely, the *Acoustic Bodies* experience strongly connected students to each other and developed inclusive attitudes that will be carried for life.

## Keyword: Privilege

David-Emil Wickström

Privilege has, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.), its roots in the Latin word *privilegium* (from *privus* private + *leg-*, *lex* law) and, among other meanings, refers to a special right and/or advantage that a certain person or group has. The term is relative since it implies a certain world view and a value judgement based on this view. It not only depends on the perspective of the person or the position of the observer using the word, but also how the group or person referred to sees themselves. This is especially relevant when the antonym “underprivileged” is applied since the group referred to does not necessarily share this value judgement or world view. The needs of those considered “underprivileged” can also be different since they may have to temper their wishes to what they can afford due to economic challenges. They may also have different ideas of what success means such as aspiring for a secure job with a good income (like an engineer, doctor, tenured teacher, etc.) and not a (more insecure) life as a freelance musician with a patchwork of different income streams.

When referring to privilege it can mean that a person comes from a well-off economic background and has therefore had access to good schools, living quarters, private tuition, etc., but has also had access to an intellectual background by being exposed to certain forms of cultural goods considered high value in their society (such as books, visits to concerts and museums, music lessons, etc.). These two factors also intersect, since a privileged background can enable a parent to stay home and spend time with their offspring

and thus nurture their intellectual background or, if the parents work, have other people come in and take care of the children's upbringing. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986) has labelled this form of financial and intellectual advantage *economic* respectively *cultural capital*. Alongside socio-economic factors, other aspects play a role either individually or in relation to each other. These include gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, and physical abilities (see Keyword: Ableism, in this volume).

This interplay of different factors is referred to as *intersectionality* (which has its roots in critical race theory, Crenshaw et al., 1995), and highlights that not one factor alone determines how a person is perceived in society. This also complicates how we read people from, for example, other ethnic groups. Can we grasp their cultural and/or economic capital (thus their socio-economic background) based on our own socialisation and value system? This includes such notions as what is and what is not considered music<sup>1</sup> and how, for example, music and religious practice differentiate: Can the psalms in Jewish liturgy sung at certain frequencies (or notes in Western musical terminology) or the *nefes* accompanied by bağlama within Alevi communities be considered music, and be performed outside of the synagogue services and *cem* ceremonies? Or are they prayers which are governed by other aesthetic parameters (even though they for an uninitiated ear sound like music)? Linked to this is also the question of repertoire we teach and assess. If the programmes in our higher music education institutions (HMEIs) only focus on Western Art Music (WAM), Jazz, Popular Music and national music traditions then we exclude musical traditions of the (often very big) minorities in our societies.

Bourdieu (1986) sees capital as “accumulated labor” (p. 241), something that a person acquires over a longer period of time. He distinguishes between three forms of cultural capital.<sup>2</sup> The first, *embodied state*, is acquired by the person over a long time period and manifests itself in “long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243), hence embodied—becoming part of one's body. Within music this includes practising and playing an instrument from an early age and thus acquiring a proficiency in not only technical mastery of the instrument, but also knowledge of the relevant repertoire and modes of expected behaviour in specific situations such as recitals, concerts, and other (public) events. This includes hereditary musicians like West African griots, but also children of professional musicians

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<sup>1</sup> Drawing on John Blacking (1977) and Christopher Small (1998) music is here understood as humanly organized sound with a beginning and an end (a process with a temporal progression).

<sup>2</sup> For more on capital see Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, and Broady, 1997. For more on the application of the concept in the field of music see Apeland, 2004 and Perkins, 2013.

within the WAM tradition, who grow up seeing their parents play and are, from an early age, incorporated in the family music making. A 2023 survey conducted by the German Music Council among professional musicians in Germany showed that 56% of the respondents' parents also played music. The percentage was the highest among the respondents who completed a degree at a HMEI (63%) or pursued a vocational training in music (65%) (Deutscher Musikrat et al., 2023, p. 13).

The second form is the *objectified state* which refers to forms of cultural goods (Bourdieu, 1986)—within music, specific musical instruments, special sheet music editions (e.g., “Urtext” and other complete editions with an editor’s comments), etc. The third form is the *institutionalised state* where cultural capital “may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243), in other words through, for example, studying at a prestigious school where the degree bestowed by the school (or the country of where the institution is located—e.g., Austria and Germany for WAM) gives the graduate a certain status through the acquired cultural capital.

Furthermore, economic capital also plays an important role in being able to pay for tuition, for example. While economic capital is more or less directly convertible to money, cultural capital can under certain conditions be converted to economic capital. Here a specific degree or diploma (such as Complete Vocal Technique Certificate) or the institution itself can play an important role.

While capital refers to the advantages a person has collected over time, Bourdieu labels the person’s disposition (the impact of the various forms of capital as well as a person’s social position) and how it influences both how they act and are perceived by others *habitus*: “Habitus thus implies a ‘sense of one’s place’ but also a ‘sense of the place of others’” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 19). This is also heavily influenced by the embodied state of cultural capital. A person’s habitus plays a central role when we “read” a person at a concert, but also when a jury assesses an unknown candidate at an admission’s exam (Sandberg-Jurström et al., 2022; Zimdars et al., 2009). This person’s habitus can lead to biases in how we judge that person. Institutions and professional orchestras have tried to limit this visual bias through blind auditions—by not seeing the person, but only hearing what they play (Fasang, 2006; Goldin & Rouse, 2000).

Privilege touches on many aspects of higher music education (HME), and a person’s cultural and economic capital as well as their habitus are central factors for a successful application and career. A precondition within a HME context is access to music education (cultural capital) and high-quality instruments (objectified state of cultural capital and economic capital) from an early

age on, and parents (or tutors) who help their offspring practice and progress within their musical education. These preconditions also shape the applicant's habitus giving them the tools to navigate the musical world they are in.

When attempting to enter a HMEI one of the first barriers is the admission exam. These exams are organised around specific rules and procedures which formally guarantee equal access to all applicants who fulfil the application requirements. This can also convey an idea of meritocracy that an individual is responsible for themselves as well as the notion that through hard, persistent work (probably) anybody can pass. The underlying notion is that admission exams provide a fair (and highly competitive) way to identify and support the most talented and promising applicants who demonstrate a "high artistic standard." "Talent" (or "aptitude") is, for example, the specific term used in Baden-Württemberg when describing the admission exam in the state higher education law in §58 (3):

... the exam [a passed talent/aptitude exam in a qualifying artistic degree programme] according to Paragraph 2 Number 7 supplies the proof of an exceptional artistic talent/aptitude [Nachweis einer besonderen künstlerischen Begabung] and the for the studies necessary general knowledge. (*Gesetz über die Hochschulen in Baden-Württemberg*, 2005)

As previous research has shown (Banks, 2017; Burke & McManus, 2011; Nylander, 2014; Prokop & Reitsamer, 2023; Rothmüller, 2012; Sandberg-Jurström et al., 2021, 2022; Zimdars et al., 2009), these exams are not meritocratic, in that they cannot measure intrinsic worth and talent alone. Applicants coming from a privileged socio-economic background not only tend to have access to better instruments, but also profit from their social context (Banks, 2017, pp. 67–68ff) and have therefore acquired cultural capital. The applicants are usually supported by their parents to learn and practise an instrument at a young age and have access to social networks that can help realise their educational and professional careers. Bourdieu (1986) argues that "ability or talent is itself the product of an investment of time and cultural capital" (p. 244). Writing about the arts, Banks elaborates and argues that the:

... capacity to express talent ... rests on routine demonstration of a preferred history of socialization 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. (Banks, 2017, p. 82)

Furthermore, the examiners in the entrance exams are not free from biases and their own interests. Two empirical studies published in 2021 and 2022

(Sandberg-Jurström et al., 2021, 2022) show the limits of admission exams within Swedish music teacher programmes. This is, in part, due to a lack of clearly defined and/or applied criteria when assessing the applicants, and because the assessors also focus on person-related criteria (how the applicant presents themselves and perform), therefore focussing on whether the applicant will succeed in the job as a teacher. This unfairly limits access for potential applicants due to personal biases within teacher education (and also artistic programmes if the admission exams are similarly structured). As Banks (2017) argues, admission exams and thus “higher education in the creative arts is revealed to be much less guilty of elevating the naturally talented, than of reproducing established patterns of social advantage” (p. 68).

In addition, cuts in government funding (Clark’s first stream source of funding) and the restructuring of higher education institutions to “entrepreneurial universities” (Clark, 1998; Clark, 2005; Taylor, 2012; see also Allsup, 2015 in regard to HME) have, among other aspects, changed the ways how HMEIs are structured, governed, funded, and recruit students. These changes have affected student recruitment and admission practices, as well as the curriculum of HMEIs by making the institutions focus on alternative sources of funding, namely second-stream (e.g., grants from research councils) and third-stream sources (e.g., tuition fees, alumni funds, industrial firms, royalties from intellectual property); aligning the curriculum more with specific needs of the job market and having funding linked to measurable outcomes (such as student retention data, graduate employment rates, and faculty research outputs). Here economic and cultural capital intersect again, since cultural capital by itself is not sufficient if prospective students in addition to the cost of living during their studies cannot afford the tuition fees, necessary textbooks, sheet music and/or recordings, or even the travel costs to the admission’s exam.

As Bull (2019) points out in her study of middle-class musicians within WAM, there are also exclusion mechanisms at play where people from other socio-economic backgrounds, who bring different values and dispositions than that of a professional middle class playing WAM, are excluded. Bull (2019) argues that there are four connections between WAM tradition/practices and middle class where cultural capital plays a central role:

- The repertoire requires formal modes of social organisation;
- The modes of embodiment which reproduce classed values (e.g., female respectability);
- Imaginative dimension of bourgeois selfhood which is embedded within WAM practice; and
- Aesthetic detail which required long term investment and is therefore more possible for middle-/upper-class families. (p. xv)

Taking these points into consideration, what can be done to deal with these issues of inequality within HME? One way forward is to reassess the admission procedures by not only taking an applicant's socio-economic background into account when considering the candidates, but also to question the HMEI's requirements and the artistic standards they assess, and how these might be coloured by a background with high cultural and economic capital. Are mandatory music theory and ear training exams needed (which often is an indicator of many years of formal music training)? If yes, does it have to be a separate written or oral exam, or can the skills be tested within a context closer to the musical reality of the applicants such as in a band or ensemble setting?<sup>3</sup> Should the admission exam only focus on musical and academic abilities or can other factors indicating an applicant's low socio-economic status (parent's professional background and annual income, area where applicant lives, schools visited and educational biography, etc.) be considered when an applicant shows potential but due to their lack of economic or cultural capital has not achieved a similar musical proficiency as other applicants?<sup>4</sup> If the repertoire presented at the admission exam is technically not as complex as that required by the HMEI can a short lesson within the admission exam between the main instrument teacher and the applicant be used instead to identify the applicant's artistic potential?

For students with low socio-economic backgrounds accepted and studying at HMEIs it is important to be conscious of continuing economic inequalities. By providing (economic) aid in forms of stipends, but also access to high-quality instruments, textbooks, and equipment (such as computers, audio-interfaces, microphones, etc.) institutions can provide necessary tools for the student to pursue their studies. Institutions should also regularly reassess the curriculum both in terms of making it more inclusive, but also in terms of explaining as well as questioning certain rituals and codes that are particular to the musics studied. This also includes looking at class schedules and credit requirements to provide alternative pathways for students who have to work to support themselves and therefore cannot dedicate their time outside classes to practicing and performing.

Related to this, reviewing the curriculum provides opportunity, and gives students the opportunity or necessary skills to reach out to those not represented in HME. One aspect is to rethink how and where music is presented to the general audience and what alternative formats can be applied. Another area to address these inequalities lies in the curriculum for music teacher education, with particular focus on primary and secondary school teaching.

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<sup>3</sup> See Wedin, 2021 for an alternative approach within popular music.

<sup>4</sup> See Dickson, 2021 for an example from Scotland.

Teachers should be empowered with the necessary skills and techniques to teach music to those from non-privileged backgrounds (such as learning an instrument or singing), as well the ability and agency to include musical genres beyond WAM in their training. Here, one of the leading questions should be how HMEIs can bring children from other socio-economic and cultural backgrounds into general music education. That means not only focusing on pathways to teach music to children whose parents lack the capital, but also to open music education to the musics of the minorities living in the respective countries and thus to provide them too with a path to HME. Here HMEIs can play a central role by initiating projects in the degree programmes focusing on outreach to non-privileged groups of societies where students develop teaching concepts which they then have to implement in schools as well as in extra-curricular settings.

This leads to the final recommendation, that government action and thus funding is needed in order to focus on music education in kindergartens, schools and extracurricular settings for those currently not included. The focus should also be based on the needs those groups see, not only what the decision makers think is needed, and not necessarily following aesthetic standards defined by WAM and existing HME ideals.



## Power Hierarchies in Higher Music Education: Personal Reflections from Vienna

Marko Kölbl

The European university model—exported all over the world during colonial aspirations while devaluing existing models of knowledge transmission through epistemological violence—is based on hierarchies of power and sharply distinguishes between levels of status and expertise. Although often framed as spaces of artistic freedom and creativity, music universities, music academies, music colleges, and conservatoires are no exception. On the contrary, the way power structures condition campus life in those institutions is particular and delicate.

I have spent nearly two decades of my life in higher music education (HME): as a student, as a teacher, and as an equal opportunity worker. My personal reflection on power structures in HME thus encompasses manifold points of view. First, that of a classical piano education student, heavily invested with piano pieces written by white, male, European, Christian, bourgeoisie composers while barely being exposed to intellectual stimuli that would allow for a critical reconsideration of this canonical repertoire—until I expanded my musical thoughts within the university through ethnomusicology. Accordingly, the second point of view is that of an ethnomusicologist, teaching and researching traditional musics, especially those of marginalised communities, in a university internationally renowned for its greatly emphasized *Viennese* classical music education. And lastly, my thoughts are shaped through the perspective of an equal opportunity

worker, accompanying hiring processes or final exams, and supporting and helping students and staff that experience discrimination, power abuse, or sexual violence.

Above these roles within the university, this piece of writing is shaped by my own standpoint positionality. I got acquainted with classical music and the corresponding habitual codes in my early childhood and am white, male passing, majority-Austrian passing, and middle-class socialized. Less visible, but all the more relevant to my (musical) identity, I am a member of the Burgenland-Croatian minority with whose musical traditions I grew up with. I further defy preconceived notions of gender and sexuality and my life does not correspond to heteronormative expectations on gender identity and sexual desire. All of these social markers condition my experiences in navigating through HME and definitely initiated my wish to focus on experiences of marginalised individuals and groups and to combat discrimination and inequalities within the institution—to scrutinise power relations within the university.

I studied and work at the mdw—University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. Vienna—proclaimed city of music—defines itself as the hub of Western Art Music (WAM) and the mdw is the hub’s central music education institution. The mdw holds pride in being one of the oldest of its kind in Europe. It is also considered to be one of the biggest and is consistently ranked as one of the leading higher music education institutions (HMEIs) in the world. Many internationally renowned composers, conductors, musicians, singers, and actors studied at mdw. Accordingly, the self-perception of the institution is fuelled with the notion of “excellence.” Excellence is not unique to the mdw, it is a defining factor of not only music universities, but also the (classical) music industry at large. Excellence, however, automatically excludes the non-excellent and creates hierarchies of expertise. Power relations, thus precede and constitute excellence.

The relation between the evocation of excellence and power hierarchies deserves a closer look. Striving for excellence—in individual musical performances as well as in one’s musical training on a larger scale—is bound to a master figure who represents the excellence to be achieved. These masters enjoy unquestioned authority. Their special status is bound to their own excellence, which is often already taken for granted solely with the title of professor. But indeed, professors of instrumental or vocal performance have gone through a multi-level process of appropriating excellence, starting with their own HME, often followed by selection via competitions and the concert market and crowned by achieving master status as a convenor of masterclasses and after successfully mastering hiring procedures in HMEIs. Those achievements render these teachers to larger-than-life figures, who

have proven their excellence and are now personified representations of the art itself—an art form considered the epitome of sounding culture: WAM. Since most students absolutely obey to this art and seldom question the ways that WAM achieved its unquestioned status as a universal, highly “developed” complex, and artistic art practice, it becomes hard to question the figures representing it, even if they behave in ways that range from ethically questionable up to highly abusive and violent.

In these settings, power abuse comes in various dosages. During my own years as a piano student, I have witnessed how the unquestioned authority of teachers and the dependency of students on their master’s goodwill have led to subtle forms of exerting power. Professors would monitor their students’ diets, their bodily appearance, their fashion choices (especially at concerts), their love life, their social life, their relations to family members, their relations to their colleagues, their leisure time activities, etc. Professors often are not controlling with a purpose to control; rather they act within the frame of a master-apprentice relation—a model that was handed down over generations, where above-mentioned aspects of students’ private life become important components of teaching music without being significant to the transmission of artistic knowledge. They rather gain significance due to the close master-apprentice relationship, idealised and legitimised not least because of its historical endurance.

One of the central characteristics of WAM education serves as the central nutrient for power abuse: one-to-one teaching. Generally, professor, student, and the instrument (or voice) are alone in a teaching room (or sometimes, although explicitly forbidden, even in the teacher’s home, maybe even bedroom). This space may allow for a highly individualised and student-centred teaching environment—it may also, however, enable a transgression of appropriate ways of treating students. The one-to-one setting is inextricably linked to the building of private relationships between professor and student, which again can provide the ground for both personal and direct transmission of musical knowledge, but also forms of abuse and violence.

The sad extreme of power abuse in HME is sexualised violence. Since instrumental and vocal education involves the body, but especially because the disciplined body becomes the very centre of classical music performance, the sexualisation of the performing body is common. Not only on the stage but also in the classroom, these performing bodies are highly gendered in performance attire, body movements, and even instruments or repertoire. As highly gendered bodies they are also subjected to sexualisation. Generally, students are (considerably) younger than teachers, falling into an age group that corresponds to societal ideals of sexual attractiveness. While these are noteworthy preconditions, it is important to stress that sexualised

violence does not simply happen, because of favourable conditions—sexual misconduct, sexual abuse, and sexual violence are conscious actions that a perpetrator chooses to set.

The reasons why sexual violence stays within classrooms or bedrooms are all too well known. Professors—because of their status representing excellence—are powerful not only within HME. They are gatekeepers of the student's field of study, sitting on competition juries or orchestra hiring committees and have powerful networks. Clarinet professors, for example, are connected to other influential clarinetists, not only nationally but internationally, backed up by their ensembles, orchestras, and institutions. As an infamous example that happened in our university proves, sexual violence may be unchallenged for several years of a student's life and even for several generations of students. Though evidence was apparent in this particular case, several lawsuits and support from one of the most prestigious bodies of classical music practice in Austria proved that coming forward does not guarantee justice. Although #MeToo cases pop up in classical music regularly, they do not create a wider wave of solidarity as in the initial meaning of "me too." A vehement denial of #MeToo cases in WAM, propagated through influential figures like Anna Netrebko, does not help the case.<sup>1</sup>

The disciplining of the body, as analysed by Anna Bull (2019), is one of the principles of classical music education. As Bull suggests, classical music education serves the production of a classed body that presents bodily virtuosity and simultaneously transgresses the body, catering to the narrative of a transcendental, nearly holy art form. As a piano student, I was totally unaware of the manifold ways of disciplining the body that took place. Fellow students and I most likely were able to classify the very bodily training as a form of disciplining: the expectation of practising for several hours a day and thus cultivating bodily practices that are seen as indispensable for excellence. Other, more subtle forms of disciplining bodies were not visible to me. Only later, after finishing my piano studies, when I began to critically question the system I had spent seven years in, I realised how I cultivated an appearance that was aligned with the classed expectations in WAM. I obliged to dress codes, forms of moving my body in space, ways of talking, holding conversations, that were catering to the expectations of instrumental or voice professors, concert audiences, as well as other stakeholders that aligned with a streamlined bourgeois habitus, for example, professors

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<sup>1</sup> After allegations against successful conductors, like James Levine and Charles Dutoit, sparked what could have become a broader #MeToo discourse in WAM in 2018, Anna Netrebko suggested that victims of sexual assault are responsible for the sexualized violence they experience: "... if you don't want, nobody will ever force you to do anything, never. If you did it, it means that you allowed that" (Netrebko 2018).

in historical musicology or music theory.<sup>2</sup> Class asserted power over me. I omitted identity expressions that were non-normative, queer, or other, because I had learned that the habitus is inextricably linked to the musical style I was also identifying with. To perform adequately on the piano, I had to perform a class position as well.

Class is one of the major defining factors of the student body at our university. Unlike other (scholarly) universities with diverse fields of study, mdw has an exceptionally high rate of students with at least one parent holding an academic degree (depending on the degree programmes between 60% and 75%, as internal data collection in mdw showed in 2022). I have benefited from my parents' cultural and social capital, since the skills I needed to demonstrate at the entrance exam require an early socialisation with WAM. As others have shown, success in HME in general is not detachable from a privileged class position (Bull, 2019, Prokop & Reitsamer, 2023). Class, however, is the category of difference that asserts power already before entering a HMEI. Exclusion from HME begins on the day you are born, way before the entrance exam. As Rosa Reitsamer and Rainer Prokop (2018) have shown, not only navigating through HME spaces requires habitual knowledge—also the practices of assessing students' performances are subject to scrutinising the habitus appearance of students. Assessments of musical performance—in class, at exams—are often made before the students even begin to perform.

Common portrayal of WAM as universal and unmarked contradicts its unquestionable whiteness. Ethnicised and racialised imaginations hover over WAM and its practitioners. Experiences of racism that students and staff bring forward to the university's equal opportunity working group mirror racist dynamics I have witnessed with my colleagues as a student. Passing as genuinely Viennese, I encountered different attributions to my interpretation competence on the piano than colleagues from, for example, Kazakhstan, Korea, or Bulgaria. The mdw is upholding specifically a musical local-ness, an idolisation of Viennese traditions of WAM (Viennese

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<sup>2</sup> A classical style of bourgeois fashion is obligatory in concert situations, as students are expected to be dressed "appropriately" when presenting WAM on stage. In the Viennese context I observed that a majority of students dress in black or black and white when performing, which I also attribute to the aim of drawing attention to the art work rather than the performer. In contrast, vocal performance students, are obliged to dress opulently—especially female students often wear evening gowns, jewellery, and corresponding hair and make-up when performing (for more details see study *Tired Attire—Undoing the Dresscode* (Ingrisch, 2021)). Not only in fashion there is little room to express non-conforming attire. Body movements are supposed to be correct—I often witnessed how students would receive feedback on the way they walked on the stage or bowed after performing. Language is another realm of habitual disciplining, with bourgeois notions of intellect constituting the norm.

classic, Viennese sound style, and Viennese performance style). The different ways of asserting interpretation competence to students based on their origin was and is striking. The authorities of excellence—the teachers—pair ethnicity and language competence with concepts like national mentality or local spirit, as becomes evident in the much-proclaimed relation between language competence and competence in musical interpretation relating to the composers' first language. In a theoretical course, for example, I learned that language competence is a precondition for proper interpretation of musical pieces in WAM, since grammar structures or even dialectical particularities are the basis for compositional figures. Following this logic, students who grew up speaking the Viennese dialect would be better equipped to play compositions by Franz Schubert, as his music is supposed to reflect linguistic markers of Viennese German. Oddly, this seems to apply more to non-Austrians playing Schubert than, for example, to Austrians playing Debussy.

During my studies, the obvious ethnicised and racialised imaginations of competence in musical interpretation were normalised and internalised not only by majority students but especially by those subjected to racialisation and Othering. Not least due to the fact that racist narratives were changing, overt racism was conceptually and linguistically concealed. Prevailing stereotypes on East-Asian musicians, for example, changed from negative descriptions as “robots” to appraisals of “technique,” from characterisations as “soulless” or “musically weak” to acclaiming how “they” are “eager to learn” and try hard to “culturally adapt.” What has not changed is the characterisation of the East-Asian music education system as “disciplined,” since it corresponds to the narrative of excellence. Also still prevalent is the generalisation of East-Asian students that completely fails to grasp the differences between, for example, Korean and Chinese, or Japanese and Taiwanese students, their cultural identities, the music education systems, and the significance of WAM in their countries.

Racist stereotypes do also pertain to other groups. The racialised framing for Eastern and Southeastern European musicians for example commonly includes narratives of Eastern European drill, references to the “Russian school,” simultaneously condemned as stylistically inaccurate and admired for technical mastery. Students from Eastern and Southeastern Europe face characterisations as emotionally expressive and unbridled. Their willingness to obtain excellence is framed as “sacrificing,” invoking the cliché of economically disadvantaged kids from Europe's margins that find a way out of their misery through talent. This especially holds true for Roma from regions of former Yugoslavia, who make up a considerable number of students in Vienna's HMEIs.

I close my personal reflections with an ethnomusicological point of view. Having started these lines referencing the colonial expansion of the

European university model, I want to again turn to its expansion's epistemological violence that becomes particularly evident when mapping European conservatory-style HMEIs all over the world: Classical Art Music from Europe is indeed the central musical style in most HME globally. Such mapping does not only point out how "deeper structural oppressions" were "brought about by imperialist campaigns and colonisations via pianos, not only guns," ultimately legitimising oppression through culture (Kawabata & Tan, 2019, p. 1). The world-wide system of HMEIs in WAM also implies that diverse musical traditions over the world—from folk musics, to art musics, to popular musics—were replaced, modified, or abolished in the name of WAM.

Most music and dance traditions, practiced today all over the world, play a marginal role in HMEIs. This *de facto* applies to all musical styles that are not WAM. Even though universities have included popular music, jazz, and traditional music, WAM still holds the predominant share. All the other musics, especially musics that are not part of a capitalist distribution system, musics that exist offside the music business, are neglected. These traditions might actually point out possible alternative modes of music transmission that do not rely on disciplining bodies or on notions of excellence and the figure of the master, especially if they are participatory, relevant to communities, related to cultural identities, and handed down in non-exclusive settings.

To bring about social change in HMEIs, I propose three structural changes. Classical music curricula must include class-sensitive, gender-reflective, and critical race perspectives on WAM. The teaching staff, especially full-time professors in music performance, must diversify. This starts with rethinking outdated descriptions of skills/qualifications in job advertisements. Finally, HME must work towards a diversification of musical styles and create extensions to the rigid WAM canon. Western Art Musical education undoubtedly remains in place, it is not in danger. It should, however, end its domination of HME and allow for the coexistence of other musical styles to better depict the cultural diversity surrounding the walls of HMEIs.

**Part IV**  
**Moving from Thinking to Acting**

Edited by: Eva Sæther



## Moving from Thinking to Acting

Eva Sæther

As the fourth and final Stakeholder Assembly of the PRIhME project was informed by discussions and conclusions from earlier phases in the process, it naturally covered more than the actual main theme, which was artistic standards. At this point it is time to address power through a hopefully shared understanding of norms and traditions. Therefore, in the preparatory work for the final Assembly, we<sup>1</sup> looked for discussion questions and statements organised to find answers to the troubling questions of the Assembly:

How can conservatoires balance the need to aspire to high artistic standards with overcoming power imbalances?

What is the blueprint for the conservatoire of the future?

These are wide questions that need to be handled with input from many perspectives. What do we, for example, mean with artistic standards? Or excellency? What kind of change management will be needed for institutions of higher music education (HME) to be able to inspire engaged students and respond to societal needs—all in a healthy and sustainable sector?

The invited experts to the final assembly provide two major perspectives when dealing with power imbalances and finding a direction for the future. Alexandra Kertz-Welzel points towards the power of thinking beyond “what is,” in favour of “what if.” In “Utopian Thinking in Higher Music Education”

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<sup>1</sup> In this text, “we,” is used for referring to the Editorial Board of PRIhME.

she starts from the premise that utopia is a space for dreams, a future-oriented concept that includes critical thinking and imaginative methods. Based on research she argues that utopian thinking has an important role to play in transforming power relations in higher education. Antje Kirschning, in her text “Institutions of Higher Music Education as Power-Sensitive Places of Learning,” presents a rich flora of possibilities for improvement, including professional training for teachers and professors, student seminars, and hiring a “women’s and equal opportunity officer,” or in other ways making the hierarchical structure transparent and facilitating actions to prevent and counteract harassment or misconduct.

In addition to the above-mentioned areas that need further attention, power-sensitive places of learning, and utopian thinking, we pinpoint three key words that play a central role for institutions and change agents acting on power management and the future: *musical thirdspace*, *policy activism*, and *institutional change*.

Thinking with *musical thirdspace* offers a way forward to act towards structures that enhance intercultural learning and teaching. Even if the development so far has been very slow, there are interesting examples to learn from, for example the collaborative ensemble of newly arrived refugees in Finland and music education students from UniArts, Helsinki. This unique initiative shows that there are possibilities for higher music education institutions (HMEIs) to share artistic spaces and invite newcomers as legitimate members. Furthermore, with shared spaces for musical collaboration, the floor is opened for negotiations on entrance tests, and to recognise through experience the plurality of artistic paradigms that are available in societies characterised by diversity, that is the most common normal state of European countries.

Pär Moberg’s contribution “‘Yalla Yaboui!’ Power Relations in the Baghdad Sessions Concert Series” discusses how collaborations between migrant musicians and a teacher from Malmö Academy of Music has led to not only forming a new band, but also created a well-established concert series playing for mixed audiences. The initiative has obvious power structures, but in spite of conflicting interests and different levels of agency, the project has provided an opportunity for Arab speaking musicians to engage with HME.

*Policy activism* as a concept, captures a fresh way of dealing with policy not as something reserved for experts or others, but as something that invites students and educators to act from within, as “policy savvy” members of HME. With policy work and policy thinking as interwoven in research and education, it is possible to inspire all staff to participate in, and influence, strategic work on quality matters. However, with greater policy participation and

democratisation comes a necessity for those with privileges and positions to critically review who is considered “worthy” in decision making.

With a case study from Austria, Gerd Grupe illustrates how implementing a broad and extensive participative process in drafting the University’s future led to a period of lively and engaged discussions and eventually a development plan with a potential to be more than a paper tiger. The key here lies in making sure that all different groups and interests have been involved, creating a broader acceptance for the final document, eventually even future changes.

Decentring authorities is a crucial ingredient for *institutional change*. Recent research shows a tendency for institutions to “accessorise” with institutional change, leaving words from policy documents on the paper. Normative pressure to change higher education seems to make both students and teachers confused, as they find themselves trapped in contradictory demands and internal tensions. Research also shows that both students and teachers from all types of programmes (Western Art Music, as well as genre independent) strive for a balance between tradition and creating new models for content. The institutions, however, seem to react on suggested recommendations, such as those from the assemblies of PRIhME with “de-coupling,” that is stating one thing in strategic documents and doing other things in practice. For institutions to actively shape their own future, it is suggested that HME maintain (!) a resistance toward change, to instil a process leaning on nuance and balance—a process that is not the result of external pressure, but rather of collaborative efforts from all participants of HMEIs.

Following the keyword *institutional change*, Julia Wieneke presents how a series of interwoven incidents and actions have contributed to an institutional culture that includes an openness and vulnerability, open and attentive to all, in her article “Changing the Culture of a HMEI Department from the Inside through Collaboration, Team Development and Open Communication.” These paradigmatic subtle but steady shifts are supported both from students, teachers and from the leadership. Further elaborating on institutional change Anna Houmann’s chapter “The Power of Belonging: Setting the Stage for the Possible” highlights the importance of collaborative work towards “what is to come” and the benefits of leaving “the impossible behind.” In suggesting eight emergent themes within pedagogies of the possible, Houmann provides a roadmap for constructing organisations that embrace uncertainty, dialogue, and responsibility and that develop student’s capacity for utopian thinking.

In conclusion, Part IV presents reflections on how teachers can contribute to a wider set up of quality criteria for widened participation, and on how HME can set the stage for belonging—belonging to HMEIs, and to a society where full participation is for everyone.

# Utopian Thinking in Higher Music Education

Alexandra Kertz-Welzel

*... 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.*

(Brodsky & Nalebuff, 2015, p. 8)

## The Significance of Utopian Thinking

Utopian visions have played an important role in the history of societal and institutional transformations. They offer something to aim for. This impact of utopian thinking might surprise some, given the fact that we often use the term *utopia* to characterise unrealistic ideas. Utopia is, however, a multifaceted concept. In philosophy and politics, it has been a powerful driver of changes by offering alternatives to the status quo (Goodwin & Taylor, 2009). In sociology, utopia is used as a method for societal transformations (Levitas, 2013). Likewise, the arts have always been utopian, providing new perspectives in sounds, colours, or stories (Kertz-Welzel, 2022). Education also includes significant utopian elements in terms of preparing the next generation for an unknown future (Roberts & Freeman-Moir, 2013). It seems that utopia and utopian thinking are ubiquitous and powerful—since utopia offers opportunities for sustainable changes in various fields, including higher education.

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

## What is Utopia?

Quite literally, utopia is both a good place and a place which does not exist (Claeys, 2013). It is a space for dreams, but also for strategically imagining sustainable changes. It is future-oriented, but also connected to the past and present. Utopia is an ambivalent concept which can lead to significant improvement or devastating damage. Utopian ideas can be found in political programmes 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” (Brodsky & Nalebuff, 2015, p. 8).

The sociologist Ruth Levitas (2013) 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 concerning ideologies or totalitarianism. It 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” (Ozan, 2022, p. 1).

How can utopia help us to move beyond the status quo? Levitas (2013) 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. 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 an implementation of our visions. To further explain how this is possible, Levitas (2013) presents three modes of utopian thinking: The *archaeological mode* is about uncovering hidden notions of alternative realities as for example in political programmes, 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. But utopian thinking is certainly no easy endeavour.

## How to Learn Utopian Thinking?

Recent research indicates (Viig et al., 2023) that utopian thinking is something we have to learn, if we want to use its true potential. While we are familiar with utopian elements in our daily lives, for example, daydreaming, utopian thinking means more. It goes beyond the immediately possible and is concerned with something difficult to implement, although not completely out of reach.

But how is it possible to learn utopian thinking? One starting point could certainly be imagining alternative futures, individually or collectively, concerning ourselves, professions, or institutions. Another possibility might be studying utopias, for example, feminist utopias (Brodsky & Nalebuff, 2015). Additionally, Levitas' (2013) three modes of utopian thinking can be a promising way, identifying utopias in various fields, for instance in documents such as mission statements of institutions. This could also include recognising education and the arts as utopian fields in terms of being concerned with the future and possible transformations (Brooks, 2016). Eventually, this could lead to developing individual or collective utopian visions, such as how the power relations in institutions could be transformed.

Learning utopian thinking is very much, as is art in general, about “releasing the imagination” (Greene, 1995). It has, at least in its early phases—when it is a kind of playing around with ideas—the advantage of not being bound to probabilities. Later phases might lead more towards real utopias and a connection to implementation, at least in some aspects.

However, even though utopias offer many opportunities, they are not unproblematic and might “express much of the best and some of the worst in us” (Sargent, 2007, p. 310). They can easily turn into an ideology to which other people have to submit. One person's utopia can be the dystopia of other people. But this danger does not diminish the usefulness of utopias and utopian thinking for transformational processes, particularly in relation to politics.

## 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” (Goodwin & Taylor, 2009, p. 5). It helps to explain the shortcomings of the current situation, and facilitates developing alternatives, as “utopias are statements of alternative organizations” (Parker, 2002, p. 2). 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 (Neville-Sington & Sington, 1993).

This raises the issue of how realistic utopias should be (Friedman, 1975). There might, on the one hand, be completely unrealistic notions which are important as the first stages of developing alternatives to the current state of affairs. 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 (Wright, 2010). 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” (Wright, 2010, p. 6). Real utopias are focussed on changes that can be implemented. Wright (2010) refers to a participatory city budget where neighbourhoods gather for a participatory budget assembly, or worker-owned cooperatives. *The Real Utopias 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. (Wright, 2010, 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 (2010), real utopias are part of the “emancipatory social science” (p. 6). Their goal is to generate “scientific knowledge relevant to the collective project challenging various forms of human oppression” (p. 10). 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 (Buller, 2015; Tagg, 2019). Approaches used in change management can prove particularly powerful when being combined with utopian thinking.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Change management is “a systematic approach to dealing with the transition or transformation of an organization’s goals, processes and technologies.” Its purpose is “to implement strategies for effecting and controlling change and helping people to adapt to change” (Hanna et al., 2024).

## Utopian Thinking in Higher Music Education

Utopian thinking can certainly facilitate changes in HME. It supports developing alternative visions of how the future could look like, while considering the specific profile and mission of a respective higher music education institution (HMEI). For developing these alternatives, a team—consisting of people from various stakeholder groups such as professors, administrators, and students, but also from outside the university—could function as a think tank, in dialogue with those who are not part of this group. While it is crucial that the members of the group become acquainted with utopian thinking as a method, it might be a good first step to start with free imaginations, to move beyond any kind of restrictions people might have regarding visions of the future. To support imagining alternatives, respective examples such as feminist utopias can function as an inspiration. After this initial stage of free imagination, learning more about utopian thinking as a method and practising it, for instance following Levitas' (2013) three modes of utopian thinking, would be a promising way to go. This can include analysing official documents of respective institutions to identify utopian elements, maybe to utilise and further develop them in the group's own visions. Likewise, the concepts of real utopia (Wright, 2010) should be introduced to the members of the group to use its three steps method to uncover unhealthy power relations and to develop promising alternatives. The notion of everyday utopia (Cooper, 2014) could also be used, trying to implement a specific vision for a certain amount of time. Utopian visions could concern rethinking gender balance, classical music, or the power relations between students and teachers in HME—three aspects which are closely intertwined. Experimenting with alternative concepts is important before making final decisions about transformations to see how ideas would look in the real world.<sup>2</sup>

However, one of the general challenges of music education and HME might be to find a balance between the artistic-aesthetic and the societal mission. Today, it cannot only be about art for its own sake anymore and a sole focus on music's autonomy. HMEIs have a responsibility for society. In international music education, there has been a tendency to exaggerate

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<sup>2</sup> However, the main intention of utopian thinking as foundation for changes in HME might not be to have a revolution, but rather to have a process of sustainable transformations which includes many different voices and visions trying out various scenarios. It is always much easier to criticise the current state of affairs than to develop alternatives. Thus, utopian thinking goes beyond mere complaining, and helps transform destructive energy into positive visions—while being well aware of the challenges of utopias, and the complexity of transformations in higher education. Studies in change management indeed indicate how complicated sustainable transformations are and the significance of people supporting such processes (Buller, 2015; Tagg, 2019).



the societal mission and marginalise the aesthetic one since social change has been proclaimed to be the main goal of music education (Elliott et al., 2016; Hess, 2019; Regelski, 2015). It is time to find a more balanced concept, reuniting both dimensions. Thus, two approaches which supplement each other might offer useful new perspectives in terms of politically and socially responsive music education and esthetic music education (Kertz-Welzel, 2022).<sup>3</sup> Both represent the societal and the aesthetic dimensions of music which are deeply intertwined, united by utopian thinking—and these two dimensions also concern HMEIs regarding their mission. Politically and socially responsive music education values the societal and transformative power of music and music education, but without overextending it regarding activism. It is a careful way of exploring music's relation to the social and the responsibility of music and music education in society. It acknowledges music as utopian art aiming at facilitating better societies. It is interested in helping people to realise their responsibility as citizens. This could for instance concern closer connections between academies of music and the community, such as, workshops in the community where everyone can participate, special projects for refugees, opening concert spaces for projects of the community, and various kinds of cooperation. HMEIs have many opportunities for societal engagement, in accordance with their respective profile, location, and mission.

Esthetic music education, on the other hand, is focused on the artistic and aesthetic dimensions of music and music education, on its freedom concerning being a space far away from any other kind of purpose—in terms of music for its own sake. It is about intense experiences of music, about the power and joy of music, also its transformative potential. While the term *esthetic* might indicate a Eurocentric approach, the notion of a free space, implementing the autonomy of the arts, is also a significant aspect in non-European traditions such as Chinese philosophy of music education regarding the notion of nothingness (Lu & Tan, 2021). Esthetic music education underlines the autonomy of music and that music education—and also schools of music—should in some regards only be about music. It emphasises that music for its own sake is important, and that HMEIs' missions are about more than societal engagement. It is about the power of music, which is transformative in itself, as can happen in improvising, composing, dancing, or performing—done without any intention regarding societal transformation, just for its own sake.

It might be useful to openly acknowledge and discuss these two dimensions of music and music education in HME, to refine the profile and

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<sup>3</sup> The spelling *esthetic* (without an *a*) indicates that this approach is different from *aesthetic education* (*aesthetic* with an *a*) which has been intensely criticized in Anglo-American and international music education. For more information see Elliott & Silverman (2015).

mission of respective institutions. For transforming power relations, taking a closer look at the balance between artistic-aesthetic and societal aspects of music as they shape how academies are organised and work, might be a promising way to go. In view of the current crises worldwide and the need to rethink the mission of culture and cultural institutions, utopian thinking can be important in rebalancing and refining the mission of music and also power relations in HME.

## **Future Perspectives**

Utopian thinking can play a significant role in sustainably transforming power relations in higher education. It facilitates developing individual and shared visions of alternative futures. 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” (Brodsky & Nalebuff, 2015, p. 8). Thus, the reality of often demanding pragmatic solutions should not scare, but rather inspire us. All of us have a utopian mission, particularly artists. But to be successful and implement sustainable changes, we need to be pragmatic and critical, questioning what we do to improve it. Moylan (2007) might be right:

The utopian vocation—pursued by activists, artists, and scholars, not to mention each of us in our everyday lives—must include an apprehension of its own internal and external limitations and challenges. (p. 227)

This should indeed not discourage but help us refining our mission as utopian thinkers. In view of current challenges worldwide, positive as well as realistic and critical visions are much needed. Utopian thinking can offer such perspectives and certainly be an “antidote to the learned helplessness of the present day” (Ozan, 2022, p. 2). This can concern power relations in HME as well as many other fields or issues. Sustainable transformations have often been guided by people who were utopian thinkers, if they knew it or not. Let’s be these critical and visionary people who implement a better future in HME!

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

Antje Kirschning

**I**n Germany, all public universities have women's and/or equal opportunity officers to guarantee and actively establish the equality of women and men as guaranteed in the constitution. The 16 federal states have their own separate higher education laws regulating their tasks and corresponding resources and have joined forces during the Federal Conference of Women's and Equal Opportunity Officers at Universities (BuKoF). The field of overall 51 artistic state universities, of which 24 belong to higher music education institutions (HMEIs) and 21 are focused primarily on the fine arts, is vastly different. The institutions differ significantly in size, range of subjects, artistic focus, and higher education policy framework. They are also embedded in a non-academic cultural sector, predominantly funded publicly, which is an unusual situation by international comparison. In addition, there are other HMEIs with private and church sponsorship, as well as art departments or individual subjects with body-orientated content, such as dance, at universities. These also differ considerably in terms of gender equality activities and are organised in their own network. In 2016, the BuKoF Commission for Artistic Universities (KüHo) presented the specifics of artistic education in its "Recommendations for Actions Dealing with Sexualised Discrimination and Violence at Artistic Universities" (BuKoF, 2016) and called on administrations at institutions of higher education to take preventive measures to protect their members. In the meantime, all HMEIs have issued their guidelines, handouts, and flyers on how to deal with sexualised discrimination.

I have been the spokesperson for this commission since 2018, together with various other colleagues and I was first elected Women's Affairs Officer at the Hanns Eisler University of Music Berlin in 2014 and was confirmed in this position four years later. The Berlin Higher Education Act regulates my duties, rights, and obligations. As I am not bound by instructions, I may attend every meeting at the university with speaking rights and may inspect various documents. My mission to shape this elective office and to set content-related priorities is limited by a part-time position (20 hours/week). The most important tasks are appointment and staffing procedures, advising female as well as non-binary members of the university, creating an equal opportunity concept, working in various committees, providing input to the university management, as well as prevention of sexualised discrimination, violence, and abuse of power. This topic still carries a shameful connotation, even though it has been de-tabooed by the worldwide #MeToo debate. I am aware of many transgressions in everyday university life and have observed that the more prominent an assaulting educator is, the better the spiral of silence works. A change of educators can be arranged under a certain pretext, but by doing this there are long-time educators who have never undergone didactic and/or pedagogical training and are therefore not educated about their unacceptable behaviour. Since 2018, the independent nationwide Themis Advice Centre for Sexual Harassment and Violence has been advising those affected in the cultural and media industries. Their services are free, include anonymous (upon request) psychological and legal counselling with an open-ended approach, and at the same time their high industry-specific competence has made their women's and equal opportunity officers well-known at the universities. The BuKoF Commission for Artistic Universities demands to officially join forces with Themis to complement the internal complaints offices: therefore, students could be advised via this nationwide hotline, without having to fear that their complaint could become known at their own university and damage their career. And vice versa, Themis would be strengthened in the long term, if the universities were to join. In the future, they could provide advice in several languages. This would be a service that individual HMEIs cannot afford, but that would make sense due to the international student body.

This chapter is the result of my work as a women's officer. Above all, it reflects on power relations at HMEIs. In this context, it is necessary to begin as early as childhood, when talents are discovered. Special features of musical socialisation, such as touching while making music, talking about opera texts, and the feelings they or the music trigger, as well as lessons in private rooms will be highlighted. It shall be made clear that a trusting closeness and appropriate boundaries, which form the basis for the fear-free development of students, must always be sensitively balanced 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 very few artists are trained for. I argue for providing professional support systems, such as personal training and supervision for teachers and empowerment seminars for students, widely available; I support establishing institutional codes of values and designation of intimacy coordinators. Effective prevention requires open channels of communication in which appropriate boundaries can be agreed upon and artistic alternatives for action can be developed mutually. Taking as a premise the inexistence of a power-free space, power relations within individual and group teaching must be reflected upon, analysed, and models of needs-oriented communication and respectful leadership need to be discussed “at eye level” within HMEIs (Olejniczak, 2021, p. 18). 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 specialised schools or boarding schools, musically gifted young people are intensively supported and taught by instruction from their professors. This so-called master-apprentice model goes back to the time 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 (Hölscher, 2022). This “spiritual-artistic leadership” (p. 25) can create dependencies which can potentially lead to abuses of power.

### **The Transition from Disrespect to Sexualised Misconduct and Violence Is Fluid**

Some students recall childhood music lessons as exclusively positive and respectful experiences. Others 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 sexualised 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 counselling 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 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 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 their distinctive style, hoping to make a career as a student of this idol. Student dependency on professors can be enormous, and teachers/professors in turn have the power to recommend students within their networks in the music and culture business—or not (Eggert, 2015; Kirschning, 2022). A change of study location 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 exist. Only fear and the feeling of powerlessness offer perpetrators such power (Schmidt, 2022). 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. (Köhler, 2022). 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 evoke emotions among performers. This in turn can lead to performers becoming too psychologically close for comfort (Köhler, 2022). Similarly, operas contain intimate, erotic, and violent scenes with strong feelings such as joy, love,

sadness, and hate. Teachers/professors 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 (Schmidt, 2022). 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 (Kirschning, 2023).

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

## 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 (Linsmeier 2022).

Teaching in locations outside the HMEIs, 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 neighbourhood 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 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 (Lindmaier, 2021). 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 (Lindmaier, 2021).

### **Professional Training for Teachers and Professors**

In appointment procedures, HMEIs 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 artists on stage they are the centre of interest, but as teachers and instructors they should serve the students (Wissenschaftsrat, 2021). Professional support and guidance 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, or team teaching (BuKoF, 2016; Heiss & Scharnick, 2022). 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.

### **Student Seminars**

Students at HMEIs need to learn how to best perceive and communicate their own physical and emotional boundaries. This includes recognising 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, I would like to introduce some thoughts on how teachers/professors who disregard boundaries and behave abusively can be identified, trained, sanctioned and, if necessary, removed. Preventive measures must prevent hierarchical situations from being exploited or misconducted towards those in lower positions 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 (Kirschning, 2018, 2022). They should be developed in a participatory manner to address a broad range of questions. This could include use of first name or surnames with whom and by whom; who is allowed to touch whom and under which 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 these taboo subjects and 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.

## The Cornerstone of Consensus: “Only when a No has been established, can a Yes be trusted”

The Berlin 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>1</sup> The training curriculum was developed in cooperation with the German Federal Association of Drama Acting (BFFS) and intends to create new standards. This is essential, since professionalising 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 (BFFS, 2022). Intimacy should look truthful and none of the participants should feel pushed or blindsided during the process. The key

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Rohm is the former long-time chairwoman of Pro Quote Film, co-founder of the Themis Advice Centre for Sexual Harassment and Violence in the culture and media industry, as well as the founder of the culture change hub. A second Intimacy Coordinator Training Course in Germany started in January 2023. See more at <https://culture-change-hub.de/weiterbildung-intimacy-coordinator/>

is consent 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 recognising 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 behaviours;
- *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. (Morey, 2018)

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 in the UK).

Despite the #MeToo debate and the Time's 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.

## Keyword: Musical Thirdspace

Eva Sæther

A *musical thirdspace*, as coined by Thomson (2021b), is a both real and imagined place for musicians to collaboratively explore artistic and social aspirations. It invites all kinds of musical knowledge and serves as a catalyst for educational activities that invite all, despite gender, class and ethnicity. In this keyword the concept is used to elaborate on how music contributes to building citizenship, and how musical thirdspaces relate to the significance of music education.

Music as an artform is crucial for human communication and human sociability, therefore through history music has served as a useful tool for creating sustainable societies (Dunsby, 2001). Music is, according to Dissanayake (2017), a precondition for the survival of our species: our ability to socialise further determines how capable we are of interacting in a way that makes a society healthy, diverse, and democratic (Carrithers, 1992). Music cannot travel or have meaning without connections between people (Blacking, 1973). As a consequence, music is closely tied to how we live together and how we cope with differences.

However, diversity, or *super-diversity*<sup>1</sup> (Vertovec, 2007) also creates challenges which are related to the interplay of variables that are involved, as the

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<sup>1</sup> The British sociologist Steven Vertovec coined the term “super-diversity” to refer to the growing levels and types of diversity in Britain. The term has reached global attention and is often used to alert policy makers to develop approaches to meet increased diversity between immigrant and ethnic minority groups, as well as to highlight the dynamic interplay of factors involved in dealing with diversity.

migration movement demands practical solutions to the ideas of integration and inclusion. In the fields of music and music education the critical questions are abundant and disturbing: Who can play whose song? Whose children have access to music education? How are musical identities related to societal identity politics? How is music from different cultures related to the categories of genre within higher music education (HME)? What is the role of a musician in society? And what is the role of HME, when music from all genres enters the stage, played by musicians with alternative competencies to orchestral musicians?

The concept *musical thirdspace* is introduced as a way of dealing with troubling questions like the ones above. It has found a place in the current discourse on HME, as it offers a way to reach beyond the idea of multiculturalism and deepen the elaborations on *intercultural* music education, a concept that appears in various contexts. The most evident variations and contextual frames are:

- Discussions on educational programmes that enhance music teachers' and musicians' intercultural competence, thereby enhancing the understanding of cultural differences and finding ways to communicate across traditions (Hebert & Sæther, 2014).
- Suggestions on how institutions need to change in order to build structures that enhance intercultural learning and teaching (Schippers & Campbell, 2012; Miettinen et al., 2018). Schippers and Campbell (2012) are concerned about the slow pace in which intercultural music education is implemented, and present three possible explanations for this. Firstly, preconceptions and power structures in culturally diverse societies hinder action. Secondly, the common static approaches towards authenticity, tradition, and context are problematic. Finally, there is a limited understanding of teacher-learner interaction across cultures.
- Critical reflections on the use of the concept. Kertz-Welzel (2018) argues for a culturally sensitive internationalisation, informed by research from the field of intercultural education. She builds her critique on how internationalisation has been carried out within higher education on a new framework for conceptualising global music education. Some of the components of this framework are educational transfer, global knowledge production, and finally a global mindset where "international" is understood as an intercultural encounter. Along this line of thought, Westerlund and Karlsen (2017) suggest that a focus on knowledge production is a fruitful way forward to avoid simplified and ethnocentric notions of interculturality.

As the paragraphs above illustrate, intercultural as a concept is elusive. In this chapter, the notion of interculturality is linked to the notion of

thirdspace, by leaning towards a definition that “foregrounds what could most inclusively be referred to as diversity and encounters” (Risager & Dervin, 2015, p. 9). In this definition the “inter” of intercultural is emphasised, avoiding essentialist notions of culture “by a more flexible, unstable and critical meaning” (Risager & Dervin, 2015, p. 10).

One concrete example of how the concept of thirdspace can serve in reimagining the role of musicianship and artistic practices is Thomson’s (2021b) study on collaborative music making. The study involves refugees in Finland and students in HME, and it argues that “by creating musical thirdspaces through social innovations higher music education can prepare future musicians and educators to navigate the intersections of artistic, educational, and social dimensions of music and music education, reimagining socially responsible artistic practices” (p. ii).

Thirdspace is a theoretical tool to explain and understand mutual integration, connected to problem solving when dealing with social (in)justice. Thomson constructs thirdspace as a lived space, where the musicians’ existing musical knowledge, competencies, and aspirations have a place—a place that makes room for activities that are both mutual and future-driven. In practice, this was elaborated by a long term, open-access ensemble project placed in a cultural center, involving musicians who had recently arrived from the Middle East and Europe together with students from the Sibelius Academy.

The origins of the concept musical thirdspace can be traced to political geographer Edward Soja (thirdspace) and postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha (third space). As indicated by the different spellings, there is a slight difference between the two. To Soja (1996, 2010) the interest was directed by people’s right to space. As he claims, social processes influence spaces, while at the same time the spatiality of life also shapes social processes. To Thomson (2021b), the spatial dimension introduces a “strong connection between music and the resettlement of refugees” (p. 50). In Soja’s theoretical work, the *firstspace* focuses on the real material and built environment, while *secondspace* highlights imagined representations of space. Thirdspace is seen as dissolving the dichotomy of firstspace and secondspace. In this line of thinking with thirdspace, Thomson (2021b) approaches the mixed ensemble as a both real and imagined space. The musical collaboration that takes place in firstspace gives new meanings to the place where the music making happens (in this instance, the cultural centre). In this environment, the musicians are invited to “find unknown artistic, educational and social possibilities together” (Thomson, 2021b, p. 50).

Working with this mixed ensemble helped Thomson understand what activities and musical meetings are made possible by the spaces and their locations. Higher music education institutions (HMEIs) play a central role, as:

... the ones indicating who has the right to inhabit the space, and how and when, as a legitimate member of the society. Sharing artistic spaces is a concrete act that symbolizes citizenship, valuing the newcomers who have not previously inhabited those spaces. (Thomson, 2021b, p. 51)

The focus on spatial justice in and through music is closely linked to negotiations on difference and identity, important aspects of intercultural music making. This embeddedness leads to Bhabha's (2004) way of understanding "third space." He introduces the concept as a metaphorical way to underline that there is a need for a space for engaging with differences. Only when differences are genuinely recognised, everyone involved is challenged. Bhabha's postcolonial critique points to the tendency within majority cultures to only accept the "other" if they stay within the rules and regulations stipulated by the host society, both explicit and implicit. As Thomson (2021b) points out, this is noticeable in music and music education, for example presenting different types of music under the banner of "world music." Another area is entrance examinations: "Within higher music education institutions, negotiation may refer to developing new programmes and entrance criteria that recognize the varied artistic paradigms available" (Thomson, 2021b, p. 55). With such new programmes, musicians and music teachers could for example be prepared to be "boundary workers" (Miettinen, 2019) in a setting or a society characterised by super-diversity.

Working with collaborative music making in a mixed ensemble, Thomson (2021b) combines both the spatial (thirdspace) and the postcolonial (third space) conceptualisations when introducing musical thirdspace as a way of thinking about future developments within HME. She concludes that the ensemble collaboration embodied "a musical thirdspace" (Thomson, 2021b, p. 263). The activities took place both within the cultural centre and at the Sibelius Academy, and together the participants produced new musical meaning and a sense of an "us," being together. In this work it became evident that leadership in intercultural thirdspaces is crucial, circling back to the role of musicians, music educators and HMEIs.

HME takes place within the academic tradition. The trade of an academic is, according to Said (1999), connected to certain duties. These are, for example, the epistemological duties that consist of presenting counter-powers towards dominating ideas about what a "we" implies. According to Said, academics—in our case musicians—have the dramatical duty: a duty to perform in special arenas, to dramatise urgent questions, and make them visible. He clarifies:

... I think that's what education is all about—to instill a critical sense, a kind of nasty, demanding, questioning attitude to everything that's put before you. But that by no means exempts you in the end from making

judgements, from deciding what is good versus what is better, what is excellent, what is lousy... So in the end it's not the categories that are open, it's the possibilities of political and intellectual work that are relatively open, if one knows how to take advantage of them. (Said et al., 1993, p. 30)

When studying the pacifist Venda population, British ethnomusicologist and social anthropologist John Blacking met a society where music is considered necessary for human beings to survive as humans. By learning Venda music with the children, he managed to extract a definition of music with relevance on the PRIhME project. He points towards both the importance of learning from the other, and the significance of how music education is organised. Furthermore, he discussed both the individual and collective aspects of music and music making:

Music is a synthesis of cognitive processes which are present in culture and in the human body: the forms it takes, and the effects it has on people, are generated by the social experiences of human bodies in different cultural environments. Because music is humanly organized sound, it expresses aspects of the experience of individuals in society. (Blacking, 1973, p. 89)

In Blacking's definition of music as necessary for humans to learn from the other, he paves the way for theoretical and concrete continued efforts to think and act with musical thirdsaces. Furthermore, as if Blacking could foresee the marginalization of music and other aesthetic subjects in schools and higher education, he humbly wonders if the Western world could learn something from the way music is taught by the Venda people in South Africa:

If my guess about the biological and social origins of music is correct, or even only partly correct, it could affect assessments of musicality and patterns of music education. Above all, it might generate some new ideas about the role of music in education, and its role in societies... (Blacking, 1973, p. xi)

Many researchers have continued the pioneering work of Blacking. Interdisciplinary research involving anthropology, neurobiology, development psychology and the theory of evolution has shown music's fundamental importance for learning (Dissanayake, 2017; Mithen, 2005). Another research direction points towards aspects that are connected to the visionary goal of music education development through *policy activism* and *change strategies* (see Keyword: Policy Activism; and Keyword: Institutional Change, in this volume).



## **“Yalla Yaboui!” Power Relations in the *Baghdad* Sessions Concert Series**

Pär Moberg

**M**y saxophones and I are sitting alone in the airport of Baghdad. Suddenly I hear a deep, rumbling sound that makes the whole building shake so that the windowpanes rattle. I look around to try to figure out what it was that caused this. But none of the other people in the (seemingly predominantly Arabic) crowd around me appear to take any notice of it. Shaking my head, I go back to eating, not paying any more attention to the event.

It's only when I get home to Sweden that I, some days later, learn from our travel guide Ram what had happened. In a nearby residential area, a whole truckload of explosives had gone off in a terrorist attack. Fortunately (for me), this is as close as I got to experiencing any real violence during my weeklong visit in the capital of Iraq to perform. Where otherwise heavily armed guards were standard procedure.

I am a saxophone player, a part time senior lecturer in Folk and World Music at the Academy of Music in Malmö, Faculty of Arts, Lund University, and a course director of the Folk and World Music programmes. I am also a freelance musician, composer, pedagogue, and event producer, mostly also within the same genre. My “home tradition” would be the traditional music of Sweden, and more specifically, of the region Skåne where I live. But I have always also had a deep curiosity of and love for traditional music from many other parts of the world. I have probably earned the most money playing Klezmer and Balkan music. And if I look at the last ten years and think

about what tradition I have spent the most time learning and performing, it would definitely be Arabic music. And it all took off for real during that crazy trip to Baghdad.

I have 25+ years of experience with a very practical, hands-on attitude towards playing and teaching music in general, and more specifically in multicultural music making. It is based on this experience that I have been asked to share some of my thoughts on the issues of power relations and multicultural music making, using the concert series *Baghdad Sessions* (that I have been involved in running for ten years) as a practical example.

### **The Origins of *Baghdad Sessions***

Back in 2005, my colleague Allan Skrobe and I were asked by the World Mix Festival, a regional folk and world music festival arranged in Skåne, to put together an in-house festival band, consisting of some great musicians with different cultural backgrounds that were living in the region. The band ended up having eight members from four different continents and seven different countries. We played some gigs at the festival and remained active for several years after this. Initially with some support from the Regional Music Board, later also from the National Arts Council: doing everything from concerts at Sweden's National Day to school concerts.

Around 2009, something else important happened. Hussein El-alawi, a photographer of Iraqi origin who worked at the local newspaper, had done a story on a very famous Iraqi composer, Jafar Alkhaffaff, who was now living a very incognito life in a suburb of Malmö, unknown not only to the general Swedish public, but also largely to the (by then) quite substantial Iraqi community that was living in Malmö. Hussein was considering if there was anything he could do to help Jafar find a place on the Swedish music scene. And since he knew about me, he asked if he could introduce Jafar to me. A few days later, I was taken in Hussein's car to one of the many residential block of flats areas of Malmö, where I met Jafar in his little flat.

The visit with Jafar was a very clear demonstration of how power relations can be turned upside down when a musician and a music culture must migrate to a new environment. In Iraq, Jafar was an extremely popular and influential composer from the 1980s and onwards. All the great artists sang his songs, and he was also hired to work with musicians and orchestras in other Arab countries. Especially one of his compositions—"Ben El Asor El Maghreb"—is a song that is in the standard repertoire of most musicians all over the Arab speaking world (though few may know who wrote it). In this region, with hundreds of millions of inhabitants, he was an icon—a revered master with an immense social and cultural capital. Yet here he was, as a refugee in Sweden, struggling to learn Swedish, living on social welfare. And

with no keys to how to find himself a place as an artist again in this new, strange country.

In came I, a person who hardly anyone outside of the quite narrow traditional music nerd environment in Sweden knew about, and with a very vague understanding of Arabic music. But I had quite deep skills in how the Swedish music industry and cultural bureaucracy works, as I have been both living in it and teaching about it at the Academy. I had the keys to the Swedish arts scene.

I managed to get funding from the Swedish Arts Council so Jafar could write and arrange music for World Mix Orchestra. We were also able to put on a concert where we played Jafar's music together with him at a big concert in a prestigious concert venue in Malmö. Within two years, we had also done a collaboration with the Malmö Opera Orchestra for a big event.

The process of working in an ensemble (especially a multi-cultural one) with Jafar was not always easy. He had quite specific ideas about how the music should be, based on his vast experience of working with musicians across the Arab speaking world who were very deeply knowledgeable about Arabic music. As a celebrated master composer, he was also used to leading and managing the process. In addition, he worked in the Arab tradition of composing and arranging, where usually, the sheet music in the ensemble is the same for everyone: a one-system melody line with the main melody and some sketched instrumental "comments," that each musician is supposed to interpret according to a pre-recognition of the rules of the style. No chords, no bass line, no second voices.

World Mix Orchestra was a very different crowd. None of us spoke Arabic, so it was hard for Jafar, who spoke only very rudimentary Swedish and English, to instruct us. To us, who mostly were used to music based on chords and harmonies, the music looked quite rudimentary. And not only did we not know the rules of how to play it—our whole concept as a band was based on that coming from different traditions, each one of us should have a quite large influence on how the music should be interpreted, and our own role in it. It took time, but we gradually found models that we thought worked.

A bit later, events took a new turn. In 2013, the situation in Iraq had calmed down a bit, and it was again possible for Jafar to travel back without risking his life. He was invited by the Iraqi Ministry of Culture to bring with him a group of musicians from Sweden to perform in Iraq. He wanted the World Mix Orchestra to join since we had already played his music together. But Iraq was still quite a dangerous country to travel to. Not all the musicians in the band dared to go. Therefore, a new band, with some World Mix Orchestra members plus one additional Swedish musician, was formed for

the occasion. And we also got to know Ram Alnashmi, an Iraqi friend of Jafar's who came to be the co-producer of the tour.

The tour was a cultural shock for us Swedes in many ways. But it was also transformative: the new band worked really well together socially and musically. And being met with roaring cheers from the large audience, I realised that me playing Arabic music was something that I not only enjoyed a lot, but which also an Arabic audience could appreciate. It was also in Baghdad that I fully came to appreciate the greatness of Jafar. It was impossible for us to move in the old city of Baghdad without him being stopped in the street by people who he knew or fans who greeted him.

Therefore, when we came back to Sweden, we decided to continue working with Jafar and this new band. The band was named Mazguf Ensemble, after a fish dish that we were constantly offered during our visit in Baghdad. However, it became evident it was not as easy to sell the band in Sweden as we had hoped. With only one Arabic musician in the band, we were not considered "authentic" enough to attract the Swedish world music audience. Yet, we were neither the kind of band who could play Arabic weddings and parties—we did not have that repertoire. How were we to find a stage for us?

The solution was to arrange it ourselves. The idea came up from Ram Alnashmi to continue to do a concert series with Mazguf Ensemble as the in-house band. For this, he suggested a partnership with the newly formed Arabic Swedish Cultural Center, where he was the chairman, as this made it possible for us to also apply for funding as a concert arranger, and not just a band. Paying tribute to our origins in Baghdad, the name of the series became *Baghdad Sessions*.

With the help of the Culture Center, it was also easier for us to reach Arabic-speaking audience, as they could target their members. Still, we struggled to find the form of the concert series. Though the original members of Mazguf Ensemble were still the core of the ensemble that performed, we realised we could not perform the same concert programme repeatedly with the same musicians. It didn't attract the audience, and it also didn't work with the funders. Therefore, we started inviting new guest musicians every time, to perform with us and expand the repertoire. And thus, the "bank" of musicians that could take part in Mazguf Ensemble concerts gradually grew, and we became a kind of collective of musicians rather than a fixed band. A good thing we also did was to collaborate with Moriska's *After Work* event on Fridays for a period of time, since this brought an audience that would never have paid to hear Arabic music but came for the beer and hangout, and got to hear us as part of the bargain. This gave us a lot of new audience.

Today, the concert series has been running for ten years, and is now "institutionalised" in the city, where we draw a decent crowd every time without

help from *After Work*. We also benefited from the large influx of Syrian listeners and musicians during the 2015–2016 refugee wave. Since the goal of the concert series is to get new audience groups to listen to and appreciate Arabic music, our concerts are nearly always free. Although we now and then invite more established Arabic musicians from abroad, the stated goal of the concert series is that it should be a platform for Arabic musicians in the Skåne region and across Sweden to find an audience and a network. Therefore, we mainly hire local musicians.

Here, the series also draws on the fact that we have Folk and World Music programmes at the Academy which I run, where we have had quite a few musicians of Arabic origin studying in the last few years. This has in many ways been a challenge both for these students and for the Academy, but that is a different story. Many of those students have also had the chance to test their wings in a more professional music context on our stage.

One of the goals for the *Baghdad Sessions* is also that we want to try and bring people who do and who do not speak Arabic together, both in the audience and on stage. So normally, there are both Arabic and Swedish speaking musicians on stage. And our audience is also usually quite mixed, though with an Arabic speaking majority.

### **Power Structures in *Baghdad Sessions***

It's not easy to objectively analyse something that you are a part of yourself. But I will try my best. I would say that there is a “triangle of power” within the project:

- I am one of the corners of that triangle. Originally, mainly because of my business network and knowledge of the Swedish arts scene. I am the one responsible for writing the applications and reports that make the project possible. But I also have a vast network of musicians that I have played with or know about, and therefore I often put the performing act together. As I am usually also involved as a musician on stage, I have, through time, become more and more skilled in performing Arabic music. In many of our concerts, I act as the band leader. A weakness for me here, however, is that I do not speak Arabic, so I am not always able to communicate very well with all participants on stage.
- A second corner in the triangle is the Swedish Arabic Cultural Center, which formally applies for the funding and is responsible for the concert series. And especially Ram Alnashmi, who is the one in the organisation with the most experience and skills in event organising. The organisation is in many ways our anchor in the Arabic

speaking population in the region, and Ram has a sense for what would bring out the local Arabic speaking crowd to attend our events. Quite often, suggestions of artists to schedule come from them. A weakness they have, however, is that none of the members in the board are really musicians themselves. That means we sometimes differ in opinions on what “high quality” music is.

- This points towards the third corner in the power triangle, which is the skilled Arabic master musicians that we have in our region. The most influential here was originally Jafar Alkhaffaff. In time, we have come to rely more heavily on Nabil Kassis, who is originally from Syria. His reputation precedes him: he is one of only three or four professional performers of the qanun (Arabic zither) in Scandinavia, and before he had to leave Syria, he was perhaps the most respected qanun maker in the world, whose instruments were sold everywhere. He was also a very highly respected musician in Syria. Frequently, he is one of the musicians on our stage. The knowledge he, and other great Arabic musicians we collaborate with have, on how to play Arabic music (repertoire, style, arrangements, etc.), is of course crucial to our artistic credibility, especially for the Arabic audience.

You could therefore say that the artistic and practical choices made in *Baghdad Sessions* happen in a dialogue (that sometimes leans more towards a struggle) between these three “corners of power.” Without me, there would most likely be no public funding, and possibly much fewer non-Arabic speaking persons both on stage and in the audience. I am the link to the Swedish arts world. There would also definitely be fewer women on stage. Without the Swedish Arabic Cultural Center, there would be much less Arabic-speaking audience, and in the eyes of the funders, much less “intercultural credibility” in the arranging group. And without Arabic master musicians like Jafar and Nabil, we would not be able to reach the level of playing Arabic music that we do, and we would be much more limited in repertoire.

## Purposes

What’s the purpose of a project like the *Baghdad Sessions*, and how does it relate to the goal of having a folk and world music education at our Academy?

If I, having my concert producer hat on, were to list the goals of *Baghdad Sessions*, it would be something like this:

- Sweden is a very segregated country in many ways, and therefore we want to use music as a tool to bring people together, regardless of language barriers, both on stage and in the audience.

- We also want to be a part of the process for Arabic musicians with an immigrant background to find a new audience and build a career in Sweden.
- For the many people whose origin is in an Arabic speaking country, Arabic music (in all its diversity) has a very strong link to their cultural heritage. To get the chance to experience “authentic,” high quality Arabic music on stage, here in Sweden, is very important and dear to them. And it’s an important signal to them that “you are welcome here” when public arts funding is used for this purpose.
- But, happening in a Swedish context, our concerts cannot, and in my opinion should not, merely be an attempt to recreate an arts scene from Syria or Iraq here. New developments can and should happen to this music in this new environment, as it always happens when music travels. *Baghdad Sessions* should therefore also be a kind of laboratory for cross-cultural performance, even though it usually has Arabic music as its starting point. And it should be a way for the Arabic speaking audience to get acquainted with new types of repertoire, or new interpretations of classic Arabic repertoire.
- For me, I also cannot go into this project and ignore the fact that there are too few professional female performers on stage. Giving female Arabic instrumentalists the opportunity to perform (which there is unfortunately a great lack of) is a priority to me.

Of course, it’s not always easy to fulfil all these goals. For instance, I’ve had the opportunity to meet and play with several of the few female Arabic instrumentalists and singers who are active in Europe today, by inviting them to perform at *Baghdad Sessions*. One thing I’ve noticed then, and which one of them also said outright, is that many of them actively chose to not perform very much in “classical Arabic” contexts where there is a standard repertoire of well-known pieces, and a kind of canon on how you should play them if you are skilled. Instead, many of them have chosen to work more with their own compositions and repertoire, and many of them also mainly perform with Western musicians, in Western contexts.

Classical Arabic music is a very sophisticated art form, where there is often a quite high focus on instrumental and theoretical skills that you should “show off” when performing the music. And because of how Arabic societies traditionally work, few female musicians have been given the chance by society to reach that level of skill in performing that kind of repertoire. Equally important, I often find that, no matter what genre they are active in, female musicians are seldom interested in showing off theoretical and technical skills as an important part of their artistic trademark. They have other goals with their music. When these two approaches collide on stage, it is not always

friction free. In a way, this makes me sad. However, it's important to remember that when I talk to my female jazz musician friends, I hear of exactly the same problems, though (at least in Sweden) there is perhaps a greater awareness of them, and more attempts to actively do something about it.

So many conflict situations relating to hierarchy and power are not different in the Arabic music diaspora in Sweden than in other musical contexts here. What *is* different however is how drastic changes in power and hierarchy can happen to musicians when they must leave their home country, which is also usually their "power base," and settle in a new country. This is true for many refugees (not only musicians, of course), but perhaps especially to those who have had a quite elevated status in their home country. Being treated as a nobody by Swedish authorities and being seen as part of a "migration problem" rather than as a part of the country's intangible cultural heritage, can be a very shocking blow. Especially if they do not speak the language with which they can make themselves understood and respected here. Then, if you have really been "Somebody," and your new country considers you a "Nobody," that sphere where you are still Somebody becomes very important for you, to retain a feeling of worth and status. And this can make it sensitive if this authority is also challenged.

### ***Baghdad Sessions and the Academy***

As stated above, we've had quite a few Arabic speaking students in our academy in the last six or seven years. Most (though not all) of them have mainly been playing Arabic music of different kinds. In most cases, this has been made possible due to exceptions being made in the formal entrance criteria. Usually in requirements for standard university eligibility, mostly concerning language skills (this is not unique to Arabic students, however). For every one of them their studies have been a challenge, both to themselves and to the Academy, for a variety of reasons. Some because of barriers with language skills. Some because of problems financing their studies and residence permits. Some because they've struggled to learn (what we consider) basic Western music theory. Some because of their family situations. But we have learnt a lot and grown as an institution by having them, and we also believe they've learnt a lot from us.

So how do the *Baghdad Sessions* and its goals relate to the Academy, if I wear my other "hat" as the course director of two academic Folk and World Music programmes? Whether the influx of Arabic students we have had to the Academy in the last years is connected to *Baghdad Sessions* is hard to say. But I would say it has had a connection, because it makes Malmö a more attractive place to study for Arabic musicians. It is not really possible for an Academy to constitute a full musical environment for professional music



students. They also need inspiring concerts to attend, venues to try their projects professionally, and musicians that are not their fellow students they can play with. For our Arabic students, the *Baghdad Sessions* can be a part of that. I can also use its concerts and social media channels to market our study programmes. There are, therefore, benefits from having this pretty unique concert series in Malmö.

For those Arabic (and for that matter other immigrant) musicians who have succeeded in reestablishing themselves and finding a new career in music in Sweden, two factors have in my experience been very crucial:

- Language skills—either speaking English or having the ability and mental energy to learn Swedish fairly quickly.
- Perhaps the most critical one: gate openers. A (usually native) person or organisation who has realised the potential of the immigrant musician, and helped them find keys to re-establishment, in the form of education, performance opportunities, connections with Swedish musical networks, etc.

And here the *Baghdad Sessions* and the Academy are connected. For some, the concert series has been a gate opener into formal studies in music at the Academy. For others, their studies have been a gate to reach a level where they can perform professionally (for instance at *Baghdad Sessions*). Also, both in the *Baghdad Sessions* and especially at the Academy, you must also work with musicians that do not speak Arabic. This has helped Arabic musicians train and improve their language skills, so that they become more independent in the Swedish musical life.

I would say that both the *Baghdad Sessions* and the Folk and World Music programmes at the Academy have helped musicians coming to Sweden as refugees to get access to these two factors. To me, that is one of the things in life that I'm most proud of.

However, in this context where we are talking about power relations, it's important to be aware that the position of gate opener comes with a very strong power, that some may be tempted to instead use for gate keeping. Having both the role of artistic director of the *Baghdad Sessions* and of course director of the Folk and World Music programmes gives me a lot of power over the Arabic music scene in Skåne. And I try to be aware of this so I do not misuse that power. But on the other hand, the situation was very much the same but the other way around, when we visited Baghdad in 2013. Without gate openers like Jafar and Ram, us Swedes would have been totally lost.

## Keyword: Policy Activism

Eva Sæther

Within current music education research, the last decade has seen a growing body of studies under the label of *policy activism* (Schmidt, 2015, 2017). The focus is primarily on the democratic aspects of music education, and the aim is to use policy theory to find new structures for leadership and new models for the organisation of education. Schmidt (2015) encourages policy activism as an approach that enables teachers to act with agency and autonomy in relation to policy processes. Typically, the policy activism approach involves all stakeholders in the educational ecosystem, not only teachers. Drawing parallels with music, education policy includes teamwork, and interplay.

Schmidt (2017) underlines the potential impact of policy, and he is concerned about educators being poorly prepared to think and act with “a policy frame of mind” (p. 12). His take on policy is that it is not something reserved for the experts, or pure legislation:

Policies exemplify and direct ways to engage with others, with contexts, and with needs, all the while inciting particular kinds of thinking and action. To know what policy is then, we need to be active in it. (p. 12)

To be active in policy implies a stance where activity is at the core, where analysis takes place, and where processes lead to outcomes. This position contrasts with viewing policy as unidirectional, as a top-down process to “codify dominant values and convert influence into privilege” (Schmidt, 2017, p. 15).

Regardless of which view permeates the institution, policy matters impact the lives of all staff, as well as the quality of their work. Schmidt (2017) foresees that policy work and policy thinking will become an important and growing part of professional development for educators. He argues that engagement in policy is necessary for a more systematic enactment of “just commitments” to the field of music and music education. Critical questions in this work are: “Whose visions for musical and educational development are articulated? And what are the resulting implications for practice?” (Schmidt, 2017, p. 16).

One of the challenges within policy activism is the tendency for policy work to be conceived as overwhelming, causing reactions, such as “Who am I to take this responsibility? My voice is too insignificant to have an influence.” One way forward to counteract policy as something for the experts, would be to “support policy thinking as a scholastic pathway in graduate music programs” (Schmidt, 2017, p. 17). With a stronger link between policy research and policy activities on the ground, policy questions might be useful when constructing new curricula or cultivating pedagogical development. Introducing the “policy savvy” music teacher or musician, Schmidt (2017) expands the idea of policy as unidirectional to include contributions from all involved to influence strategic organisational change. In a sense, the outcomes and recommendations from the PRIhME Stakeholder Assemblies are examples of such multidirectional policy work.<sup>1</sup>

Closely related to the question of active participation in a process that is in need of constant adjustments, is the question of who is included in the loop of reflection, activity and change: “If we want greater policy participation and voice, we must address the expansion of who is considered ‘worthy’ of engaging in decision making and how our community may help them with policy learning” (Laes & Schmidt, 2016, p. 21). However, asking this question about democratisation also demands an interest for critical review of one’s own privileges and position, and, as Laes and Schmidt (2016) suggest, a disposition towards bafflement, that is a willingness to be surprised and curiously reconsider power relations where the own position has not yet been reviewed.

In her study on policy processes and discourses of inclusion of all children in Sweden’s Art and Music School, Di Lorenzo Tillborg (2021) introduces *multicentric policy practice* as an effort to avoid limiting understandings of inclusion; where the implicit understanding is that some groups form a dominant center in which all other groups should be included. With a multicentric approach, policy practices are “enacted by multiple actors in different contexts” (Di Lorenzo Tillborg & Schmidt, 2024).

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<sup>1</sup> Final recommendations of the PRIhME project could be accessed at <https://aec-music.eu/project/final-recommendations/>

Yet another challenge within policy activism is the simplistic discourse on the power of music, hoping for music to change the world for the better, when everything else seems to fail. “There is no guarantee that music education for social change will always be positive and will support visions of social justice, as intended in most research” (Kertz-Welzel, 2022, p. 8).

While Kertz-Welzel (2022) points towards the risk of falling into “the trap of too enthusiastically believing in the transformative power of music” (p. 12), she paves the way forward for “a sensitivity for social and political matters, but without overextending music education’s mission” (p. 141). Leaning towards sociologist Ruth Levita’s understanding of utopia as a method for thinking anew and as a desire for a better way of living, Kerz-Welzel suggests updated goals for music education. These include:

- Enabling students to realise different political and social dimensions of music;
- Promoting student’s agency as members of a society; and
- Experimenting with music and music education both as a mirror of society and as a means for change.

Employing utopian thinking invites both aesthetic music education and socially responsive music education. Through aesthetic music education, imagination and transformative musical experiences are promoted, while encountering societal dimensions in music can develop a sense of agency. Intense music experiences “is both a way of getting away from everyday life and a way to be more intensely engaged in it” (Kertz-Welzel, 2022, p. 19).

To illustrate practical implementations of policy activism and utopian thinking, the two projects ArtsEqual (2015–2021) and Global Visions (2015–2020), both conducted at the UniArts Helsinki, are chosen as examples of possible best practice. The ArtsEqual project was carried out together with ministries, municipalities and NGO’s in Finland, with the purpose of reinterpreting the position of the arts by regarding them as a basic service that should be equally available to all. By the end of the project, it had produced a range of policy recommendations to support decision-making and consolidate arts and arts education. Most relevant in the context of the PRIhME project are the policy briefs “Advancing Equity Through Reasonable Accommodation in Music Education” (Kivijärvi & Rautiainen, 2000) and “Cultural Outreach Work Promotes the Cultural Participation of Children and Young People” (Turpeinen et al., 2019).

The ArtsEqual project’s starting point explains that there is abundant research showing the positive effects cultural participation generally has. However, even if it is a fundamental right for everyone to participate in the arts and in arts activities, there are many hindrances. Therefore, ArtsEqual

focused on identifying the factors that prevent democratic participation and suggested visionary, or utopian, alternatives. The overarching question was: “What if equality was adopted as the basis of all publicly-funded arts and arts education services in Finland?” (Ilmola-Sheppard et al., 2021, p. 8). The research team identified inequality mechanisms that are internal to the arts system, as well as external factors hindering the participation. The three mechanisms that emerged as impairing the arts system are distancing,<sup>2</sup> exclusion, and hierarchisation. Distancing appears as a result of selection processes that dictate who will be accepted by the arts education model, or the artistic field. As a consequence, professionals in music and music education tend to be detached from contemporary conceptions of the arts, and “unable to recognize the problems in the realization of people’s cultural rights” (Ilmola-Sheppard et al., 2021, p. 18). Exclusion refers to the mechanisms that exclude disabled people, older people, and those with special needs based on the ideas of the capacities of “normal” people. Hierarchisation becomes a preventing factor as the current meritocratic funding system does not pay attention to questions of accessibility and democracy. In the selection of who and what gets funded or is made accessible, the choices are often made to maintain what is regarded as “high artistic standards,” as approved and conceptualised by experts. Consequently, one of the project’s recommendations was changes to the vocational and higher education system that prepares music and other art professionals for collaboration with professionals from other sectors, to meet the emerging needs both from the internal art system and the surrounding society (Ilmola-Sheppard et al., 2021).

The Global Visions project was born out of a need to mobilise networks of institutions and researchers interested in envisioning and developing programmes that prepare musicians and music educators for work in diverse environments. The key institutions involved were the Nepal Music Center in Kathmandu, the Levinsky College of Education in Tel Aviv, and the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. Their collective enquiry consisted of two questions: “What if music teacher education could be developed across borders, through global interaction, by institutions joining each other in mobilising networks to learn from each other? What then would become the visions for intercultural music teacher education?” (Global Visions, n.d.).

The answers to these questions are presented in seven books and 39 peer reviewed articles (Global Visions, n.d.). During the project duration,

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<sup>2</sup> A concept with both spatial and emotional dimensions, in which for individuals in modern society there is increasingly less connection between psychological distance or closeness and physical distance or proximity in regular social relations. This is in part related to the affordances of modern media of interpersonal communication, which can help to sustain what might otherwise be weak ties. It is also a feature of disembedding (Oxford Reference, n.d.).

three PhD studies were conducted, covering studies on co-constructing global music education (Timonen, 2020), visionary work through networks (Miettinen, 2019), and imagining possibilities (Treacy, 2020). One of the edited books specifically contributes to a critical analysis of politics of diversity in the field of music and music education. The politics of diversity here is defined as “the everyday processes by which we all exercise agency, negotiate power and identity, and assign meaning to difference” (Kallio et al., 2021, p. 2). The outcome of the book is that more attention needs to be directed towards how negotiations on diversity can play out in practice. Altogether, the chapters of the book questions Eurocentric knowledge production, and asks the troubling question: “How can we engage ethically with the politics of diversity when we ourselves are complicit in existing inequities and injustices?” (Kallio et al., 2021, p. 5). This is indeed a moral question with practical implications. The four sections of the book each delve deeper into possibilities for better understanding of differences and power negotiations.

The first section of *The Politics of Diversity in Music Education* (Kallio et al., 2021) invites the reader to reflect on the processes that are involved as we build our own identity and understand “the other.” It refers foremost to how researchers construct the research questions, and on what theoretical premises the analyses and results are produced in music education research. The second section offers more practical input, as it builds on how teachers in four different contexts engage in social and political change. The teachers do so by questioning political frames and dominating notions of the nation state. In the third section, questions that are often overlooked when dealing with diversity are given special attention: What quality of difference do we talk about? Whose difference is implied? Who decides what is considered relevant in diversity matters? The fourth and final section turns to leadership in higher music education. It captures the demands on institutions to respond to the current societal and demographic changes, growing inequality, climate change, instability regarding the economy, and technological innovations.

To summarise, many of the challenges of policy work and different levels of activism discussed under the heading “policy activism,” relate to how agents within higher music education approach power relations, and how students, teachers, and leaders position themselves when their institutions undergo change. In the final keyword of this part of the book the change mechanisms and strategies are further guided by questions such as “What are the reasons for institutional change?” and “What are the reasons for resistance toward renewal?” (see Keyword: Institutional Change, in this volume).

# How to Develop a University's Central Strategic Document: A Case Study from Austria

Gerd Grupe

The governance of Austrian universities is characterised by three interacting governing bodies. The Rectorate (*Rektorat*), consisting of a full-time Rector and several part-time vice-rectors with specific portfolios constitutes the main leading and executive body of any Austrian university. The University Council (*Universitätsrat*) acts as a supervisory board. Half of its members are nominated by the Federal Government, the other half are elected by the university's Senate (*Senat*) representing faculty, staff, and students. The Rectorate holds a central and executive position. One of its many obligations, according to the Austrian Universities Act (2002), is the task of creating the university's main strategic document, the Development Plan (*Entwicklungsplan*).

The development plan states the focal points of the university's future work and the direction in which it should develop. It lists the professorships and chairs that need to be filled, and contains an outline of the university's human resources strategy for the upcoming years. It also describes measures to be taken to support the careers of young artists and researchers. This includes determining the number of postdoctoral researchers with whom the university will conclude a qualification agreement, eventually leading to a permanent associate professor position. Furthermore, new study programmes or existing programmes that are going to be terminated will be listed in the development plan. Finally, it forms the basis for the budget negotiations and performance agreements between the Rectorate and the Federal Government.

The Universities Act decrees that the development plan, which is updated every three years, is drafted by the Rectorate and needs to be approved by the Council, while the Senate may only comment on it. Thus, wider stakeholders in the university do not need to be consulted in the process of creating this plan—not even their representatives, i.e., the Senate. But since this document is of central strategic relevance to everyone working or studying at the university, the Rector at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz (Austria) suggested implementing a broad and extensive participation process. This was not a legal requirement, but the rector chose to involve all members of the university who were interested in contributing to the draft of the next version of this document, providing an opportunity to discuss the university's future development, aims, and challenges. The Rectorate immediately approved of this idea and both the Council and the Senate were informed about this decision. The Senate was also invited to nominate delegates who, along with the members of the Rectorate, formed a steering committee to organise and monitor the process.

The first step was selecting the topics and proposing a timeframe, instigated by the Rectorate. These were then discussed by the steering committee, adjusted, and disseminated to the wider university, with an accompanying invitation to participate in the process. In this invitation, all recipients were invited to suggest additional topics not yet included in the roadmap draft. Approximately ten rounds of discussions were agreed upon. They were split into two different criteria: some addressed specific interest groups or communities, and others addressed particular issues, with contributions from various perspectives. On the one hand, dedicated meetings were held for faculty members, staff, and students, where they discussed contributions on how to evolve the university based on their lived experiences. Here, since differing opinions on pertinent topics were to be expected, the focus had been on an exchange of inside views among members of these three groups, although anybody else who was interested was welcome to participate, too.

However, general issues with contributions by all three groups were the object of further meetings. These included the organisation and administration of study programmes, potential new job profiles for graduates, the future development of research within the university's portfolio, the implementation of sustainability and diversity as general challenges and requirements in all areas of the university, the role of power relations, and an agreement on what to select as the main focus areas of the university's activities. Although some of these topics would not seem equally relevant to all participants in the first place, it nevertheless often turned out to be quite fruitful looking at a problem from different angles and discussing potential paths and solutions suggested by people with contrasting backgrounds and experiences.



The main results from these discussions were documented and formed an input to the draft of the development plan, which—as stated above—must be formulated by the Rectorate. Its structure needed to comply with prerequisites put forth by the Government. It was the Rectorate's responsibility to fit all input from discussions into this framework and prepare the final shape of the document. All members of the university then had an opportunity to give feedback before it was submitted to the Senate for its comments, and finally to the Council for its approval. Thus, although the procedure provided for by the law represents a top-down model, this approach could be balanced to some extent by establishing the bottom-up consultation process described here. To be sure, the ultimate responsibility for the content and the wording lay with the Rectorate. But the aim was to make sure that a wider range of views, perspectives, and ideas could be included and that the final document would meet with a broader acceptance and support by the members of the university as they had been actively involved in its creation.

## Keyword: Institutional Change

Eva Sæther

Designing and implementing a project on music and power relations inevitably touches the question on how—and if—institutional change is possible. This section introduces scholarly work that corroborates the possibilities for change and suggests strategies for the complicated task of dealing with well-established and firmly rooted institutional hierarchies.

One of the most relevant studies in this context is a Norwegian PhD project, that aims at exploring how teachers and students in higher music education (HME) experience processes of change. Building on data from a comparative study on power mechanisms at the Norwegian Academy of Music and the Utrechts Conservatorium, Veronica Ski-Berg (2023) demonstrates how calls for institutional change conflict with institutional hierarchies that are embedded in HME. Her study argues that there is a “*normative* pressure to change higher music education” (p. 8, emphasis in original) and that “leadership may ‘accessorise’ with institutional change” (p. 8) by, for example, innovative strategic plans not being implemented in action. This lack of implementation leads to disturbing questions: Are music students merely reflections of HME, or does HME reflect its students? As an answer, three categories emerged in the study: 1) the pitfalls of decentering authorities; 2) experiences with institutional change; and 3) institutional power and leadership (Ski-Berg, 2023).

Within the category of decentering authorities, the study shows that power relations exist in student-centred environments (also in teacher-centred), and

that in such cases students might be unfairly expected to safeguard necessary change dynamics. Furthermore, the shift towards student-centeredness leads to new disciplinary practices and the subject positions of students and professors together constitute a “contradictory discursive landscape” within higher music education institutions (HMEIs). Together these pitfalls show that there is a need to apply critical thinking if new practices are supposed to lead to more general shifts. Both students and teachers may need support, as the contradictory demands and practices might cause internal tensions and conflicts.

The second category is experiences with institutional change. The study demonstrated that music students often perceive career courses as outdated. It also describes how both students and professors are involved in the institutional work and decision-making processes for change. There seems to be a shared desire for both students and professors in Western Art music as well as genre independent programmes to strive for a balance between conservation and creation of new content and methods.

In the third category, on institutional power and leadership, the results point towards “decoupling”—the tendency for leadership in HMEIs to state one thing in strategic plans but do another. The study also recognises the heavy load of institutional pressures, such as mimicking other organisations and coercions. There is a normative pressure to radically change HME (as expressed in the PRiHME project), which the studied organisations respond to, in chasing legitimacy.

Interestingly, Ski-Berg (2023) recommends institutional resistance to change. The reason for such resistance is that there is a need for more “nuance and balance during processes of institutional change” (p. 68). Accordingly, more research on the processes of change in HME is needed, for institutional resistance to be relevant. The study points towards a tendency for institutions to be involved in change processes primarily as a response to external pressure, rather than a desire to shape their own future.

The informants of the study comprised of students and teachers. They were concerned about the education offered within the institutions. Pinpointed areas include: problems with combining new teaching styles with students’ individual needs, difficulty recruiting teachers with relevant skills, new assessment criteria, the possibility for collaboration surrounding musical identity formation, processes for repertoire choices, and a lack of knowledge on the music sector. Additionally, fear is involved: “Even though the field of higher music education is always in flux due to social negotiations, members tend to find institutional change destabilizing” (Ski-Berg, 2023, p. 83).

When the curriculum is changed or sensitive topics (diversity, gender, equity) are raised, there can be a fear of instability. One way of dealing with

this is to develop strategies for organisational change. Curriculum innovations can, for example, be employed through a balance between exploitation and exploration, where exploitation is “the refinement and extension of existing competencies, technologies, and paradigms” and exploration stands for “experimentation with new alternatives” (Danowitz et al., 2009, p. 592). When staff and students are involved in the process, a strategic balance between exploitation and exploration might result in higher chances of anticipating sources of resistance and support within the organisation. In their study on curriculum change within a leading European business university, Danowitz et al. (2009) conclude that it is crucial to balance interests and challenges within the institution when change processes are introduced. A key aspect is budget; initial external funding minimises conflicts on the use of scarce resources. Additionally, the issue of employability can be used to strengthen the case for new directions. Quality management including faculty development and evaluation, alongside course development, seems to be one important ingredient. By recognising that curriculum development is always embedded in power structures, it follows that topics such as diversity, gender, genre, and democracy will likely generate resistance or backlash:

Thus, it follows that exploring the potential for change to incorporate diversity by exploiting structural spaces needs explicit and implicit strategies. Strategy building with its necessary steps (such as environmental analysis, coalition and trust building, and financial calculations) is a potentially important part of curriculum change. (Danowitz et al., 2009, p. 601)

The tensions and contradictions involved in HME, as institutional change inevitably takes place, could be understood as an instrument to inspire critical thinking among all members of the institutions. Another constructive way of dealing with obstacles and different perspectives on change is found in the concept of musicians as *makers in society*: a concept that captures new ways of defining musicians as both artists and members of society. By combining artistic and social values, HME could be organised to both respond to societal needs and continue to engage in the crafts of musical traditions (Gaunt et al., 2021).

While institutional change is demanded by, for example, the *United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*,<sup>1</sup> it is complicated for institutions to deal with the risk of simplifying music’s capacity to contribute to a better world. One of the complicating factors may be silence. There are “at times unspoken

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<sup>1</sup> *The Agenda 2030* highlights that education should be in line with goals for sustainable development and respond to diversity.

assumptions about who musical performance is for “ (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 4). These silent values also guide how HMEIs attend to different people with different cultural backgrounds, and how different levels of musical experience are invited to participate, or how the roles of professional musicians and music teachers are envisioned. Do musicians play a role in society, and if so, how?

The spectrum of different possibilities or hindrances that lie in the answers to questions on change within HME seem to place themselves along a dialectical opposition between values of social interaction and values of artistic integrity. One way of opening the dichotomy to a more dynamic ground for open reflections and discussions is the idea of “partnering values” (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 6). The idea of “partnering values” enables different positions to coexist and contributes to a widened understanding of, for example, multiple dimensions of quality. The paradigm shift suggested by Gaunt et al. (2021) moves from a dialectic conflict towards a trialectic and more dynamic flow of positions and outspoken values (Figure 1).

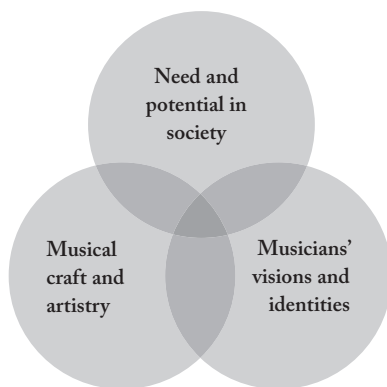


Figure 1—The new conceptual paradigm for HME (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 12) introduces three essential domains that work towards developing educational designs and new directions within curriculum and pedagogy.

A change based on the understanding of musicians as “maker[s] in society,” and “partnering of values” can be described as “strategic optimism” (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 16). Nevertheless, it asks for collective efforts to reflect and act. It also implies the need to include voices of practitioners and students in different disciplines to carry on an engaged development for sustainable professional musical practices.

The possible resistance towards institutional change might be interpreted as a counter-voice towards “strategic optimism.” As stated in the The Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC) book *Strengthening Music in Society: Artistic Plurality and Inclusive Institutional Culture* (Barbera et al., 2021), it is for most HMEIs “a challenge to catch up in terms of openness to diversity” (Gies, 2021, p. 149). For example, one obstacle to opening up to gender equality and widened recruitment is the “conservatoire mindset” or the “classical mindset” that still permeates HME. Institutional change is slow, illustrated by the fact that Mendelssohn’s ideas on music education from 1840 still play an important role. This is only slightly challenged by demands that came with academisation and the Bologna Declaration in 1999. When new genres eventually found their way into HME, it did not necessarily lead to new approaches towards teaching styles, professionalism, or social engagement:

On the contrary, whenever representatives of a non-classical musical genre knocked on the door of a HMEI, the message they received from the guardians of the tradition was very clear: If you want to become part of our community, you have to accept our rules. (Gies, 2021, p. 152)

The DAPHME project<sup>2</sup> on the effects of academisation reveals “a deep-seated uncertainty and fear of change” (Gies, 2021, p. 154), since many key players within HME feel that they are under pressure to change. In fact, there is reason to experience pressure, since digital learning, peer and collaborative learning, and informal learning options have outdated the legacy from Mendelssohn,<sup>3</sup> and there is now a greater emphasis on the idea of a comprehensive curriculum that provides all you need to know to build a career as musician or music educator. The AEC initiatives to open up the “conservatoire mindset” show that there are still a lot of challenges waiting for action. For example, the sector needs to break up with the “seemingly self-evident” (Gies, 2021, p. 158), including approaches towards quality, success, ideals of communication, and assessment.

The three keywords of Part IV—*musical thirdspace*, *policy activism* and *institutional change*—are all, to some degree, overlapping, as they relate to democratic aspects of music making and music education. Musical thirdspace as a theoretical tool enables us to understand spatial aspects of music education

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<sup>2</sup> The acronym stands for Discourses of Academization and the Music Profession in Higher Music Education

<sup>3</sup> The first European music conservatory was founded by composer and conductor Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

and postcolonial approaches to difference. It raises questions as to where music education takes place physically (in a room for the selected, or in a public space). It also asks us to consider difference as a concept that concerns everyone, for diversity to mean more than just words, all involved need to be prepared for negotiations on power. Policy activism reminds us that policy is not necessarily a top-down phenomenon. With the buy-in of “policy savvy” teachers, musicians and leaders could together strive for more inclusive and democratic institutions and adjust curricula to current and relevant societal challenges. Institutional change suggests that a lack of diversity and resistance towards change is a systemic problem that needs a lot of attention and time. The PRIhME project activities however, specifically the design of the assemblies and the general aspirations of the project, highlight possibilities for institutional change with collaborative and mutual efforts.

# **Changing the Culture of a Higher Music Education Institution Department from the Inside Through Collaboration, Team Development, and Open Communication**

**Julia Wieneke**

**T**his article is not the typical presentation of empirical or theoretical research that I usually submit, which might be partly the reason for it taking much longer to think through and write. I feel far more insecure about the appropriate way to reflect and relay my ideas and am acutely aware that my perception of the changes happening in my institution and particularly my department might not completely mirror those of my peers or superiors. This is “uncharted territory” in a way, a personal account of some of the ways the ideas of diversity, inclusion, and power relations in higher music education institutions (HMEIs) have infiltrated my own thinking, my teaching, my actions as a representative and professor in general music education over the course of the last two years. In a way, this text might also serve as a good example for the changing paradigms in academia and arts institutions. I hope it contributes to opening and softening up for more individual perspectives, for more holistic approaches towards education and arts, maybe even for more vulnerability and honesty amidst all the competition for greatness that surrounds us so ubiquitously.

When attending the workshop “Higher Music Education Through the Lens of Diversity and Inclusion” at the European Association of Conserv-



atoires' Annual Congress in Lyon in 2022, I had already spent quite some months thinking about the institutions of higher music education, of the ways they foster creativity, artistic freedom and personal development, but also of the ways they can cripple self-awareness and self-esteem, the ways they naturally seem to enable unjust and unequitable environments, for instance by favouring students from higher socio-economic backgrounds, specific nationalities, or other identity categories.

As a professor in music education for secondary schools, I have come to accept the fact that my students come from very specific, mostly (upper) middle-class backgrounds and upbringings and fit perfectly into the atmosphere and functioning of a HMEI. As a downside, they have rarely been exposed to the personal, educational and (non-)artistic reality many children and youth in our culture face today, and I see it as my responsibility to help them realise the self-referential character and structure of the institutions they are studying in. I aim to achieve this by providing them with the opportunity to teach and observe students in a very "normal" inner city secondary school, with a culturally diverse student population from a lower socio-economic background, throughout one semester. Students plan, observe, teach, and reflect together with me, and these hours provide an invaluable possibility to talk about student identity, about student-teacher relationships, about the possible reasons for student behaviour and strategies to navigate them. In one of those sessions, I noticed the discussion turning from empathetic actions to take as a teacher if a teenager declines any participation in dancing and movement to deliberating possible reasons for not feeling safe enough in the body or the situation to express oneself through bodily movement. During this reflection, I suddenly became aware of students discussing a well-known local schoolteacher and their<sup>1</sup> potentially boundary-violating behaviour. I was flabbergasted by the disheartened manner they concluded this could not be stopped, since it had been going on for decades, more or less in plain sight. I was even more surprised to hear how some (female) students tried to justify the teacher's behaviour, pointing out the perceived innocence of some offers, and the fact that personal and potentially intimate relationships between the teacher and their students only happened after students' graduation. This was the moment I realised it needed follow-up conversations and required spaces for students to speak openly about their experiences, about their frameworks and ideas of teacher-student relationships, of healthy boundaries, of appropriate connection between music teachers and their music-loving (teenage) school students. At this point, I was so concerned that I spoke to the department head about the episode and remember telling her that I was very sure

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<sup>1</sup> I will refer to this person with the more gender neutral they/them pronouns for purpose of anonymity.

it would only be a matter of time before these types of violations of personal boundaries would be discussed and reported inside our institution, too. Over the course of the next weeks, I spent some time researching literature, looking out for the procedures and people in charge within our institution in case someone was to speak up. And, sure enough, this did happen mere weeks after this incident. I believe it was partly because we professors had been talking about it, thinking about the best ways to handle complaints, and preparing for a student (or students) to knock on our door, that this specific case got handled quickly, consequently and in the most professional manner. All with the goal in mind to provide students with the best and safest learning environment possible, free from fear and repression.

This experience served as a sort of catalyst in many directions. We are in a very specific situation in our department because we cater to a complete curriculum in a whole region of the country. Therefore, we operate in a way as an independent small institution within a bigger one, providing all courses necessary to complete the music curriculum within music teacher and instrumental teacher BA and MA degrees. To achieve this, our department is closely intertwined with collaborating institutions (for instance in one-to-one instrument/voice teaching, where we collaborate with the local conservatory).<sup>2</sup> This meant the repercussions of the abovementioned case did not stop at our own doorstep, but rather made a closer exchange among teachers in both institutions advisable if not inevitable. The massive insecurities not only amongst students, but also amongst all the teaching staff led to a short-noticed organisation of workshops surrounding the topic of boundaries for both students and teachers separately. This was not an easy task, because we wanted to find workshop leaders who were not only psychologically trained but also knowledgeable in the specific environment of HMEIs. Due to the longer-term nature of university budgets, budget had to be acquired first. When we finally held the workshops, students emerged from the session laughing and high-spirited, and we teachers had open discussions about the nature of different forms of violence, boundaries, how to navigate touch in one-to-one lessons and much more. What shocked and impressed me deeply during this workshop was one teacher reporting they have reverted to touching students with a pen only when correcting posture. This decision was influenced by their experiences while working at a different HMEI, where leadership at some point instructed all teaching staff to

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<sup>2</sup> A conservatory in this specific context is a state-funded institution as opposed to the music university that is funded by the federal government. The conservatory provides instrumental/voice lessons for more advanced older youth as an extension to regular music schools. The conservatory does provide the option to study in third cycle programmes such as artistic BAs or instrumental education studies if they are in collaboration with a federal institution, as is the case here in our collaboration.

refrain from touching students during one-to-one lessons and use an object as a mediator instead. I could not help but ask myself: Is this really the level of attentiveness bordering on fear that we need to have in our instrumental lessons? Or is there a more nuanced approach, one where each person can speak their mind and needs openly each day and each lesson without being judged or frowned upon? The discussion is ongoing and leaves great space for negotiating personal definitions of teacher-student relationships, for pointing out boundaries, and for the autonomy of each person in the teaching-learning dyad. I am very curious to see and find out where we will be in this respect in a couple of years. The teacher workshop was prioritised by the department leadership: half a day was freed from all lessons, and it was open and free of cost to anyone from both institutions interested. When we heard that the partner institution organised a follow-up workshop some months later, it was clear that this would not be a unique event.

Since then, we also worked on aligning employment/interviewing processes for artistic staff, with members of both institutions taking part in the complete selection process from choosing applicants to invite, to interviews and teaching, up to deliberating after the hearings. This gave us the opportunity to discuss the parameters of great and inspiring teaching, of thinking about criteria for artistic and pedagogical excellence in the application and interview process. Additionally, this has led to the joint reflection of performance criteria for final exams throughout all instrument sections and a list of criteria to adhere to. There are other examples of exciting collaborations that have come to life since then, partly within our teaching staff, partly with the conservatory teachers. In several instrumental group classes, methods were rearranged to allow more flexibility between classical and jazz students and between different parts of the curriculum for students to have more differentiated input catered toward their strong points and profiles. Some instrumental and voice teachers have started different innovative ways of opening their classes: they have swapped students between Western Art Music and jazz/pop teaching/playing, where all students, instead of having their Western Art Music lesson with their regular teacher, had a lesson with another teacher for one lesson per week. Some teachers have started team-teaching with a colleague or inviting someone to observe (even across competency fields), and reflect beforehand on specifically agreed upon criteria. In music theory, two staff have started working closely together, planning and exchanging ideas about their classes, assessment, content, etc. Class recitals have been opened and combined in one instrument group so that any student of any teacher has an opportunity to play for a small audience each week. This even trickles down into the entrance exams where all staff seem more open to evaluate and work in completely mixed panels with staff from all the different instruments and voice, so that staff from the jazz and Western Art Music traditions are part of one panel. We are talking about completely voluntary

measures and not something that is promoted through university leadership, just in case you are wondering. These projects have partly been taking place out in the open and in plain view for everyone across the whole university to see, whereas some of the initiatives were quietly organised by motivated staff without even informing anyone about their endeavours. At this point, we will make sure to collect all those big and small initiatives and document our development as a department.

Maybe this story can serve as an example of how an environment of truly listening to students' stories and trying to empower them to seek help and speak up can work its way into the "hearts and bones" of an HMEI and even their partners? Maybe our story is more one of a department with a high interest in team development—and everything else leads to paradigm changes as dominoes falling over respectively? In my mind, our story also shows how powerful it can be if the local leadership truly believes in open doors, in taking actions when needed, in being just and respectful toward every member of the institution, teachers, staff, and students alike. This needs a leadership with a lot of courage, someone not afraid to take a stance, to strive for justice and to end any type of boundary-violations and/or violence. When students witness an actual and not only promoted willingness for uncomfortable discussions, when they realise they are being listened to and taken seriously with their concerns, this helps immensely in building trust and creating an atmosphere of more safety, something that the Stakeholder Assemblies of PRIhME have also suggested.

Since this first case and intervention, there have been other instances of students speaking up about unfair treatment, about power relations being used as a lever against students' own wishes and their own plans and ideas about their education. In my mind, this does not mean we are a failing department, riddled with problems, perhaps even on the verge of catastrophe to better be hidden away from sight. The idea of having to hide complaints out of sight to avoid shame, of keeping silent in fears of casting a bad light on the institution is still pervasive in our artistic and academic culture—but things have changed, not least with the #MeToo movement. Rather, our ongoing dialogues with teachers, staff and students might show that we are becoming a "safe enough" space for everyone to speak their mind, to point out previously unresolved or unnoticed problems or weak points that are inherent in the very unique learning environments of HMEIs.

It is no coincidence to me that we are able to think and act in this way, but rather is inherently connected to the leadership of the university. Subtle and not so subtle changes have been made, and a paradigm shift towards a more inclusive, more diverse, more just environment and an attunement to current world affairs (including politics) is visible and perceptible for anyone open and attentive. Our institution's leadership is taking a stance on several topics, positions itself morally and ethically. Let me give some examples of

these kinds of actions. I am sure there are more examples than those I am listing here, but those are the ones I have noticed prominently. For instance, a code of conduct was developed with the help of the Institute for Gender and Equality (IGGS) and the legal team over the last years, and it will be part of the contract for any newly hired staff. We were invited to discuss a safety plan for all the departments and are collecting data for the status quo in each department and all the buildings respectively. The professional development programme includes offers for workshops on diversity in teaching, partly organised in collaboration with the IGGS; there are workshops by experienced workshop leaders on topics such as different types and forms of violence and boundary-violating behaviour in order to raise awareness, gather examples, and find possible solutions together. There are concert programmes centred around social justice, round table discussions, academic and artistic presentations by staff and students calling attention to specific areas of social justice both in our local communities and in broader contexts. The newest development is a weekly online-Café led by the rector of the university itself, where anyone can join, voice their concerns, raise questions, or point to sensitive areas of the institution. Sometimes it is necessary to remind others during these types of events or meetings to include our department in their thinking and actions. Since we are geographically set apart from all the other departments by roughly two hours by train or car, the administration (and others) sometimes forget about us. It is great that there is a trained external psychologist available for mediation or support close to the main buildings of the university—but this *per se* is less helpful or applicable for our department, tucked two hours away. Folders and flyers pointing to the available contacts for students or staff in need of help need to include feasible options in our city and with respect to our own student leadership, etc.

I observe all of these changes as a more holistic principle, showing itself in many ways: teachers have started to open up about their teaching strategies, exchanging ideas and principles without fear of judgement. Some have opened their doors (literally, too) for others to have a look inside, showing their work with pride and humility at the same time. Students speak out more openly about their mental and physical struggles and seek help more willingly, they take an active role in the content and delivery of their classes, they start discussing previously quietly accepted actions by staff and/or teachers and challenge each other's perspectives. The atmosphere in our department has always been very friendly because of the small size and the close-knit connections. But we have tried to set examples of honest interest in students' needs and opinions, be it about curriculum, about teaching structure and content, or about the ways the department functions between administrative and artistic staff. A lot has happened and has started to change during the last years, which is an inspiring development. In my mind, some of it might have potentially been initiated by this first unfortunate report of

boundary-violation, other parts come across seemingly unrelated. But I am more and more convinced that our case might be a good example of a team which is slowly but surely developing new educational/artistic paradigms that fit our individual and joint educational principles. This change has mainly come from within and is sustained and supported by a growing portion of the staff. We are on our way to become a more just and equitable learning and teaching environment, with a balanced and careful approach toward the inevitable power relations of a HMEI.

## **The Power of Belonging: Setting the Stage for the Possible**

Anna Houmann

**H**ello! I'm so glad you're here.

Belonging begins when we acknowledge each other as people (Wise, 2022). Typed words on a page may feel distant, but I wrote this chapter for you. And for us! Because when we work together, we can make the promise of belonging a reality. We can transform our courses, programmes, higher music education institutions (HMEIs), communities, and the world, into a stronger and more connected place. My hope is that you find a sense of belonging and power in these pages.

Since we are meeting for the first time, I will let you know that I am a cisgendered, white woman, currently not living with a disability. I am positioned in our culture as a recipient of white privilege. I am doing this work as an anti-racist ally, education activist, equity designer, endeavouring to move the field of higher music education (HME) forward using tools inspired by cross disciplinary actions to redesign teacher training by setting the stage for belonging (Houmann & Andersson, 2024). This chapter is about HME from a perspective on teaching and learning, where teachers and students belong and are all learners. I am hopeful that you will join me to make change happen.

John Dewey (1916) said that to be educated meant becoming different—reaching towards others in a public space, achieving a community that is

forever incomplete. The arts have the power to move the young to see what they have never seen, to view unexpected possibilities. In his mind they are always there on the margins to refuse the indecent, the unjust, to awaken the critical, and committed to visions of things being otherwise. According to Maxine Greene (2010) neither imagination nor intention is sufficient. There must be a transmutation of good will, of what she calls *wide-awakeness* into action. Wide-awakeness is an aspect of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1964) view of "the highest level of consciousness" and Paolo Freire's (2005) conceptions of "conscientization." The latter is the process by which one develops the ability to think critically about issues of power in relation to privilege and oppression in different spheres of influence (local, national, international, etc.). In other words, this refers to the development of understanding an awareness of one's position in social, political, economic, cultural, and historical contexts, with a particular emphasis on a critical understanding of one's position in power, privilege, and oppression. In short, the ways in which individuals and communities (for example actors within HMEIs) develop a critical understanding of their social reality through reflection and action (Ledwith, 2016).

Greene (2010) states that wide-awakeness demands reflection and practice, which are inseparable from each other. It entails not only imagining things as if they could be otherwise, but moving people to begin from their own initiatives, to begin to make them so. "In what we choose to imagine as a democratic school, there must be restlessness in the face of the given, a reaching beyond the taken for granted" (Greene, 2010, p. 1).

There is much to learn from this pedagogical principle, including in contemporary classrooms. In a day and age in which we struggle to respond to racism, sexism, and xenophobia embedded deeply within society, educators around the world have the responsibility to advance equity and social justice and the first step in this long process can be guided by Freire's conscientization. Twenty-first century HME reckons with these and a broad matrix of problems, including the climate emergency and the realities of a (post) pandemic world. These combined challenges call for a new, radical rethinking of pedagogy, one that recognises oppression as well as possibility. A HME that continues its transformation from passing on knowledge and skills, as part of the banking model, to developing creative, ethical, and engaged citizens. The current context shows us the value of moving past the world "as is" and towards the world "as it becomes" and as it "could be" (Glăveanu, 2022). There is no denying the fact that the students of today will face a different landscape of problems and solutions in the years to come. Gearing HME towards the present, even while acknowledging this present as dynamic, is not enough. What we need is a multiplicity of pedagogies matching a multiplicity of known and unknown possible futures (Bruner, 2009).



What would it mean to take on board our own assumptions about the world, for example, that it is complex, multifaceted, open-ended, unpredictable, ambiguous, continuously changing, and infuse it into educational experiences found inside and outside the classroom? How can we move our focus from actuality to possibility in a way that does not lose track of “what is” but considers it through the lenses of “what is not,” “what is to come,” and “what can be brought about?” Could we envision new forms of pedagogy that let go of past certainties and the need to plan every single music educational experience and become infused, instead, with uncertainty, wonder, liminality, hope, and possibility? What if we set the stage for the possible?

### **Belonging and Othering**

Powell and Menendian (2016) support the idea that full belonging means having the right to make demands. You can ask for what you need *and* influence the system. This freedom is a profound measure of belonging: “belonging means more than just being seen. Belonging entails having a meaningful voice and the opportunity to participate in the design of social and cultural structures. Belonging means having the right to contribute to and make demands on society and political institutions” (Powell & Menendian, 2016, p. 10). I know I belong when I can advocate for myself and for others. Othering, by contrast, is treating people from another group as essentially different from, and generally inferior to, the group you belong to. Once these terms enter our frame of reference, we will find that belonging and othering show up everywhere. You can not *not* see them (double negative intended).

Buitendijk et al. (2019) state that improved equality, diversity and inclusion (hereafter referred to as EDI) in universities and other academic institutions will build community by improving the sense of belonging for *everyone* who comes to them for work or study, which in turn is likely to enhance their commitment and performance. “Furthermore, by fully embracing and valuing diversity, universities can ensure their long-term relevance in a fast-changing world and increase their already considerable global impact” (p. 3). Buitendijk et al. point out gaps in the disjointed approaches and initiatives to promote EDI at universities. Besides the tendency to waste precious resources and goodwill, they risk marginalising the impact and credibility of universities in an increasingly diverse world. They also constitute missed opportunities for important sustainable positive change: for universities to maintain their relevance they need to realise that catering to a diverse population of staff and students and to changing local and global communities requires innovating research and teaching and adapting the institutional culture (Wise, 2022).

HME operates in a world that is diverse. The continued relevance of research and teaching in HME can be enhanced and secured by a

diversity of perspectives, which generates more ideas and a greater range of approaches to problem-solving in research, in teaching, and in community engagement. This will be most effective if we foster a culture that is willing to listen to all voices, even if they are dissenting. Creativity and scientific innovations come from engaging in frank dialogue between different perspectives, where ideas and critique can flow freely. In contrast, academia's concepts of excellence and success are constrained to a certain extent by the highly competitive culture of performance- and research-intensive universities. The practice of managing and assessing research and teaching through metrics and rankings tends to homogenise universities by narrowing the scope of what constitutes success, which is usually weighted towards research funding and publications (Curry, 2019). These systems of evaluation tend to exclude the less tangible but no less important ways in which universities positively impact the world, such as in the transfer of knowledge and skills through research-led teaching.

By paying greater attention to equality, diversity and inclusion, HME can create a more engaging environment for work and study, one where all individuals feel valued. In turn this should increase their sense of belonging and power, their day-to-day satisfaction, their performance and their capacity of innovation. To encourage full participation, you need to support people's identities, abilities, and values, and plan to be responsive to emergent needs. That's a tall order, to be sure, yet it is a big part of what we are endeavouring to do when we set the stage for belonging and explore the pedagogies of the possible.

## Possibility and Difference

Pedagogies of the possible are eminently plural and this is due to the nature of the possible itself. But what exactly is the possible? Centuries of reflection in philosophy, literary studies, and, more recently, psychology, has left us with a better understanding of what the possible is *not*, rather than what it is (Glâveanu, 2022). Two common dichotomies dominate this field of inquiry: possible|actual and possible|impossible. Both of these oppositions are problematic.

The first places the category of the possible into the realm of illusion and irreality. What is possible is never fully real given that the moment it materialises, one way or another, it passes from possibility into actuality. This understanding effectively separates being from becoming and fails to grasp the fact that possibilities are shaped and, in turn, come to shape "what is."

The second dichotomy assumes that the impossible closes all possibility; and yet, imagining impossible things has long been at the heart of human existence—as reflected in utopian thinking—and, thus, served as a driver of action, not the insurmountable obstacle it is often assumed to be.

For HME, these debates are important because they lead to two main approaches to possibility, both of them limited: rejection on the basis that schooling should focus on what is real and not teach students about illusory things, or adoption inasmuch as the possible is reserved for what is likely to happen rather than what can never happen. In either case, we are left with an impoverished curriculum that sends students back to what is fixed, actual, known, likely and, most of the time, what took place in the past. In order to develop pedagogies that invite students to explore the unknown, the uncertain, the hypothetical, the future, and even the impossible, we need a shift in perspective and a redefinition of possibility itself. In particular, this approach considers possibility as emerging out of difference and, as a consequence, demanding the existence of multiple ways of thinking, acting, and being.

For possibilities to be sensed, anticipated, and enacted, we require an understanding of how they differ from “what is,” as well as from each other. Differences of perspective are particularly fertile for the possible, as they present the person with a multitude of positions in the world and their associated points of view. And what happens with this multitude is key for how we notice and make the most of existing possibilities (or not).

Educational settings are, by definition, the seat of difference and possibility. There is intrinsic diversity within any group of people, for as homogeneous as their members might seem from a given standpoint. What amplifies this diversity is the fact that all the actors in HME interact with each other, exchanging, adopting, challenging, and proposing new perspectives, from “what is” to “what if?” These dialogues of perspective substantiate the possible in each classroom, if and when there is genuine openness to the points of view and experiences of other people (Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2017).

### **Pedagogies of Sameness**

The precondition of possibility is often difficult to satisfy as classrooms usually follow, what could be called, pedagogies of sameness rather than embracing difference and possibility. This includes providing identical feedback, resources, support, tests, and career paths. However, it is through experiencing radical differences that we can challenge our perspectives and open ourselves to new possibilities. These moments of disbalance could be described as creative experiences in HME. While creativity is not the sole aspect of possibility, it aligns with embracing difference, uncertainty, and the future. The assumption that schooling hinders creativity has prompted efforts to foster creativity in the classroom. Progress has been made towards personalised education, lifelong learning, and emphasising creative expression over memorisation. Distinctions have been drawn between “teaching creativity,” “teaching for creativity,” and “teaching creatively” (Beghetto, 2017b).

However, creativity is more than a cognitive skill; it's a flexible, nonlinear approach to life. While cultivating creative abilities is a priority in education, there remains a belief that creativity should be limited to specific times and places, serving predetermined learning goals. This restrictive mindset stems from the dominance of pedagogies of sameness, which hinder creative expression and exploration of new possibilities. Even when creativity is included in the curriculum, the focus tends to be on assessing creative outcomes rather than fostering creative processes and the transformative relationships it enables with ourselves, others, and the world.

Glăveanu and Beghetto (2020) introduced the concept of creative experience, defined as novel encounters characterised by open-endedness, non-linearity, pluri-perspectives, and future-orientation. In creative HME, open-endedness encourages exploration of unfamiliar topics and learning from each other. Embracing unknown questions and accepting uncertainty as productive states are essential. Nonlinearity acknowledges that teaching and learning processes don't follow predetermined paths, allowing room for serendipitous encounters. Pedagogies of the possible further amplify this approach. Pluri-perspectivism recognises the potential for emergence and novelty when individuals share diverse perspectives, emphasising active listening and respect for different viewpoints. It is because each person holds a multitude of perspectives and shares at least some of them with others that there is the potential for emergence and novelty. Being able to listen to the point of views of others and respect it as a perspective in its own right (even without agreeing to it), is a necessary (not sufficient) condition of creative experience. Lastly, pedagogies of the possible focus on the future rather than solely transmitting past knowledge, aiming to transform knowledge for open-ended and unknown futures.

## **Old and New Themes Within Pedagogies of the Possible**

The pedagogies of the possible are themselves an emergent category, one that captures a polyphony of voices and perspectives. Within them, it is not only the pedagogies that are plural, but also the possibilities. Eight possibilities for educators in HME are: not knowing, failure, uncertainty, movement, anticipation, dialogue, care, and responsibility. The first four represent phenomena that are typically less encouraged in the classroom, while the second four capture emerging points of focus in educational theory and practice.

### **The Possibility of Not Knowing**

Typically, education focuses on increasing knowledge and understanding. However, this emphasis on the known neglects the possibilities that arise from "not knowing." Drawing on theories of wonder (Glăveanu 2020b;

Schinkel 2020), I propose embracing the unknown to tap into creative potential and challenge familiar perspectives; “dwelling in the unknown” (Heidegger, 1962) and “sitting with uncertainty” (Beghetto, 2016). By questioning and defamiliarising the known, teachers and students can engage in constructive doubt and inquiry. This approach, rooted in historical practices like Socratic questioning, has the potential to transform HME in the twenty-first century by revealing new horizons and uncertain futures. Guzmán (2022) states that curiosity requires us to acknowledge that we don’t know. To be able to be truly curious about others we must believe that they can offer us something to learn, at any level. There must be a gap, there must be something to learn, to understand. You need to cultivate your curiosity by creatively leaping through knowledge, relying on your imagination. Zurn and Basset (2022) refer to this archetype of practising curiosity as the “dancer” thinking across and beyond established frames of knowledge.

### **The Possibility of Failure**

Failure is often discouraged or limited to small exercises in education, hindering risk-taking and creative exploration. This approach prevents students from learning from their experiences (Dewey, 1934) and perceiving failure as a source of new possibilities. By exploring and sharing narratives of failures, we can open up new opportunities for learning and personal growth (Beghetto, 2021). This exploration of possibilities through failure is crucial for self-understanding and expanding educators’ methods. It requires courage and a creative approach to teaching and learning.

### **Possibilities of Anticipation**

Education is often said to prepare students for the unknown challenges of the future. However, the current educational system prioritises past knowledge transmission over present and future needs. To address this, we must explore new possibilities in HME by harnessing our capacity for anticipation (Poli, 2017). Instead of relying on predictable forecasts rooted in the past, we should cultivate the ability to imagine complex and nonlinear futures through the process of foresight (Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2020). This approach enables us to build multiple, open futures that go beyond mere likelihoods.

### **Possibilities of Dialogue**

Dialogue plays a crucial role in HME, involving interactions between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves. Traditionally, the focus has been on designing dialogues that facilitate the transmission and reproduction of knowledge.

However, dialogue offers more than just reaching a shared understanding. From a dialogical perspective, the true potential of dialogue lies in the element of new, surprising, and unpredictable insights that emerge from these exchanges (Bakhtin, 1984; Matusov, 2020). Additionally, dialogue relies on perspective-taking and our innate ability to understand others' minds.

To fully explore the power of dialogue in education, we must delve into how dialogues of perspective create spaces of emergence and possibility. These spaces resonate with broader societal dialogues, including both alignment and clashes, which shape and define them (Glăveanu, 2020a). We can start a dialogue with or without intention, on a large or a small scale. Or start where we already meet, in HME (Houmann, 2022).

### **Possibilities of Care**

In education, there is a growing focus on the role of emotions, known as the “affective turn” (Dernikos et al., 2020). While discussions on emotions and self-esteem have long existed, we now recognise the importance of cultivating empathy, compassion, and emotional engagement in students. The concept of care, as discussed by Heidegger (1962), emphasises the need to be present and open to others' experiences as part of our own existence.

This requires embracing vulnerability, which enables teachers and students to seize momentary “creative openings” in education (Beghetto, 2017b).

### **Possibilities of Uncertainty**

Uncertainty is often unwelcome in the classroom, unlike the value placed on “not knowing.” HME tends to prioritise replacing uncertainties with certainties, driven by the teacher's position of power and control. However, this approach overlooks a valuable space of possibility where certainties can be questioned, and uncertainties confidently explored (Beghetto, 2020).

Recently, educators have proposed practical tools to expand these spaces without completely abandoning structure (Houmann, 2022). Techniques such as lesson un-planning and structured uncertainty allow for the cultivation of possibilities within planned lessons (Beghetto, 2017a, 2019). These approaches aim to fully explore the potential for learning, creativity, and development.

### **Possibilities of Movement**

Many possibilities discussed in this chapter require physical or symbolic/psychological movement. Repositioning and exchanging positions play a vital role in mobility (Gillespie & Martin, 2014). By temporarily occupying the

other's position, we gain a deeper understanding of their perspective, contributing to dialogues of perspective and the discovery of new possibilities (Glăveanu, 2020c). To enhance these dialogues, we must incorporate a new embodied dimension by focusing on the movements that underlie them.

According to the new mobilities paradigm (Urry, 2016), movement is inseparable from human existence and action, including education. Therefore, we should closely examine how movements can both open and limit possibilities, preventing us from becoming trapped in singular positions and perspectives on the world. Coleman (2021) highlights intention as the most important factor for balanced and nuanced conversations when understanding one another. How we approach and open up a conversation is crucial for setting the stage for belonging (Cohen, 2022).

### **Possibilities of Responsibility**

Pedagogies of the possible extend beyond the classroom, connecting HME to societal power dynamics that impact different groups. In the twenty-first century, it is crucial to address ethical questions and promote a social and environmental agenda, preparing students to be engaged citizens (Glăveanu, 2015, 2017). The possibilities of responsibility involve understanding marginalised communities' struggles to reimagine society.

Developing students' capacity for utopian thinking and hope is essential for social transformation that starts with HME (Houmann, 2020). Pedagogies of the possible both enable and are enabled by "societies of the possible" (Glăveanu, 2020a) embracing plurality, alterity, and an open future. Implementing new pedagogies and projects beyond school walls comes with the responsibility of anticipating and monitoring potential unintended consequences.

### **Higher Music Education of the Possible**

Pedagogies of the possible foster responsibility and engagement in young people as creative citizens, extending beyond the self and the classroom. It requires monitoring and considering the unintended consequences of actions (Ambrose, 2009; Merton, 1936; Sternberg, 2021). These pedagogies emphasise diverse perspectives and avoid diminishing or marginalising communities (Glăveanu, 2020a).

Pedagogies of the possible are guided by the themes discussed above and the aspiration to create a just, inclusive, and sustainable HME. They address social injustices, colonial legacies, climate concerns, and the challenges of the (post) pandemic era. These pedagogies focus on the possible as an emancipatory and participatory concept. Engaging with the possible is essential to

human existence and society. Pedagogies of the possible seek to embrace moments of uncertainty and not knowing, cultivating their potential in classrooms globally for the benefit of all learners.

Christine Wong Yap (2019), a social practice artist, explores belonging as an aspect of psychological wellbeing by asking people to identify where they experience belonging, the kind that lets you be brave, try new things, and work through your rough patches. Through the data she gathered, she constructed a view of some of the overlapping qualities of belonging. Wellbeing is the quality that is most commonly correlated with belonging, and safety, authenticity, familiarity, connectedness, access, and growth are part of it too. In community workshops, Yap creates space for people to reflect on the places where they feel belonging. She asks each person to articulate what belonging is for them, and then, if they choose, to create a declaration. She then turns the declarations into beautifully calligraphed posters and delivers them to the places where the belonging occurred—a school, for sure, but also the apartment where someone’s art practice emerged. When it’s possible, the person and the organisation turn the presentation into an event, offering gratitude and celebrating belonging. The following exercise is inspired by Yap’s work and will end this chapter.

- Create a “place of belonging” certificate to give to a space or organisation where you feel a deep sense of belonging.
- In your declaration, you might share what makes the place special, such as a specific memory, or simply extend an expression of gratitude for being a place of belonging for you and your tribe.
- You could make a beautiful piece of art or music.
- If a certificate does not feel appropriate, consider a letter or phone call; sharing gratitude is good for all and builds belonging in and of itself.
- Acceptance, self-worth, and confidence might all emerge when you think about a place where you feel you belong.

Yap (2019) encourages us to engage with our feelings and to create from them—to activate a kind of flywheel of continually reflecting, noticing, a wide-awakening, and knowing our feelings in order to honour the contexts that offered space for them to emerge. And for us to make HME a place of belonging.



**Power Relations in Higher Music Education:  
Designing Ecological Policy Action  
to Change**

Patrick Schmidt

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## Introduction

The longest standing question regarding the relationship between power, institutional politics and policy is the question, who benefits? While somewhat cynical and at times reductionist, the ancient *Cui Bono* is an acknowledgement that policy and politics—and thus the functioning of institutions, which are guided by both—are enmeshed in and by power relations. This, of course, is not to say one is restricted to act and think in limited ways about them. The classical definition of policy by Dye (1976), as “what we do, why we do it, and what difference does it make” (p. 1) highlights the pragmatic, procedural, moral, and argumentative challenges embedded in *who benefits*, while enriching it, and pointing to agency and ethics. For Schneider and Ingram (1997), policies are “the mechanisms through which values are authoritatively allocated for society” revealed through “texts, practices, symbols and discourses that define and deliver values” (p. 2). Thought generously then, policy is the formal or informal, obvious or subtle, soft or hard, implicit or explicit ways in which we negotiate social and institutional life, and as such policy practice should not be simply about problem solving, but invites one think of it, of its practice, as problem grappling (Schmidt & Colwell, 2017).

In more ways than one I see the PRIhME project as an exercise in problem grappling. The project is a concrete way of relating to the challenge of

whether and how “institutional innovation [is] capable of linking the subject in a creative relationship with an institutional environment” (Hay & Wincott, 1998, p. 953). In other words, its participants and designers understand from the start the complexity of the issue and the futility of a structure that merely attempts to “solve” the multifaceted enterprise of power relations within institutions of higher learning.

As I see it, the promise this project makes is clear and feasible—for its participants but also as a model for future work in higher music education (HME)—is that policy pathways are necessary to transform micro-level efforts and rhetorical change into implementable macro-level imperatives. Further, the process and structure of the project, in its assembly format and deliberative nature, foregrounds how much effort, care, and energy goes into enacting a kind of *systemness* premised less on the canonic, hierarchical, and historical, and more adept at enacting the equitable, adaptable, diverse, and socially attuned.

While challenges remain, I see PRIhME’s design, questions, and process as reason for enthusiasm. As the project asks: How can we improve the HME environment by suggesting ways to deal with power relations within our institutions? What standards are realistic to set to achieve a safer and more supportive environment in HME?<sup>1</sup> My reaction is that the framing—that is, the conceptualisation, processes and procedures—of these future pursuits are just as significant and will determine the quality and sustainability of its outcomes. Efforts that want to go beyond political spectacle or the performative, require capacious process and contextualisation, for any policy practice worth its time is bound by an understanding that both power relations and policies—the latter being often representative of the first—are: a) multidimensional, b) value laden, c) intricately tied to other policies and institutions upholding them, d) never straightforward in their implementation, and e) rife with intended and unintended consequences (Taylor et al., 1997).

In what follows then, I borrow the ecology metaphor used by Weaver-Hightower (2008) to organise this short chapter, as well as to suggest a guiding vision principle to those involved, now and in the future. My aim, as an outsider looking in, is an invitation to consider ecology, but not “thinly,” as “synonymous for environment or surroundings” (Weaver-Hightower, 2008, p. 154). Rather, focusing on interdependence as a central characteristic of sustainable, change-oriented processes where personal activism can function in a healthy relation to the meaningful repositioning of institutions of HME and their cultures.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://aec-music.eu/project/prihme-2020-2023-erasmus-strategic-partnership/the-stakeholder-assembly-description-and-principles/>

## Don't Think of an Elephant: Policy Ecology Anew

Aking to Lakoff's discussion around framing and the impossibility of *not* thinking of an elephant once the proposition is made, to think differently about policy, and more significantly, to one's perceptions of and experiences with policy, is difficult. Elsewhere, I have argued that "a pivotal challenge in bringing educators and policy thinking together is the false perception that policy is unidirectional," for when policy is indeed understood unidirectionally "it more easily stifles participation and distributive decision making" (Schmidt, 2017, p. 15). Of course, I am not alone here, as progressive policy thinkers in public policy, political science, and education, such as Aaron Wildavsky, John Kingdon, Deborah Stone, John Forester, and Stephen Ball, have worked hard to demonstrate how policy is both an outcome and a process; addressing how it is located in rules and guiding documents, but also embodied by people; or how policy happens in all kinds of spaces, from the solemn to the daily and mundane. Indeed, sociological views on policy have gained purchase, establishing policy practice as a social fact, an embedded process with a certain *everydayness* to it. Policy practice comprises of the processes and spaces where "programs are 'pitched,' stories are told, commitments (some of them financial) are made, and new arrangements and relationships established" (Ball, 2016, p. 550). So, not thinking of that elephant, one may say that in ways more than one policy are not texts, but practices; they are not rules, but articulated interdependence.

Given that HME institutions and their environs are marked by interdependent relations—from curriculum, to hiring, to entry assessments, to institutional culture, to branding—it seems to me it makes sense to consider policy and its practices as "an extremely complex, often contradictory process that defies the commonly held image of singular purpose and open, effective planning" (Weaver-Hightower, 2008, p. 153). This may be significant given that the traditional unidirectional approach to doing and conceiving policy, not only misrepresents the complexity and resilience of power relations—and thus misdiagnoses how to proceed. It also "grossly misjudges the complexity and grittiness, the false starts, and the crashing failures of some policy formation and implementation" (p. 153). An ecological metaphor helps us "not think of the elephant" and may allow a new process to be framed, one that closely acknowledges the challenging intersections between power relations, politics, and policy and how each is co-constitutive of the other.

While there is no space for a full accounting of all that a policy ecology framing entails—I have dealt with this on and off for over a decade (Schmidt, 2009, 2020)—what I do want to offer here is a reiteration of the importance of seeing policy ecology as a basis for engagement. Ecology then "consists of the policy itself along with all of the texts, histories,

people, places, groups, traditions, economic and political conditions, institutions, and relationships that affect it or that it affects” (Weaver-Hightower, 2008, p. 155). Beyond the general framing, all the literature on ecological approaches shows practice around four categories, namely: *actors, relationships, environments and structures, and processes*. There is much to reflect here. For instance, how actors can often be in relation to others, and how such relations usually function around relations of competition, cooperation, predation, and/or symbiosis. Consider also that environs and structures have boundaries, and those carry with them extant conditions—at times difficult to challenge or even to imagine away given training, experience, or personal history. Policy lenses address how structures contend with inputs—funding, information, or other resources—and pressures that change according to inputs and levels of consumption and communication. Analysts attend to how established processes can be distinct in nature and feel different for those of us living it. Listen to how Weaver-Hightower (2008) describes some of them, it is worth citing at length here:

In the process known as *emergence*, ecologies create and are created by other ecologies... *Entropy*, the opposite pole on a continuum with emergence, occurs when an ecology breaks down and becomes disordered. ... One response to entropy is *adaptation*, a change in the ecology or in the pressures on it that returns the system to equilibrium. ... *Conversion* is an extreme instance of adaptation; it occurs when the most basic properties of the ecology change. Examples of conversion are the establishment of new rules for public comment in an otherwise closed policy system... In a catastrophic process that ecologists call *succession*, an entire institution may be wiped out and another installed in its place. ... Several processes can mitigate or avoid ecological entropy. One is *conservation*: Members of a system may explicitly work to conserve resources and thus stop breakdown. (pp. 156–157, emphasis in original)

We see here the richness of the ecology metaphor, and for anyone who studies and works in HME, I would bet they recognise such patterns or categories. The purpose, however, is not merely to say, *let us account for the multiple dynamics that surround any given issue*. I suggest that awareness of these, matched by the development of analytical and procedural capacities that account for and make use of such heuristics, make individuals and their institutional milieus more capacious, more open, and more aligned with the challenges of addressing the multiple forces at play in institutional power relations.

Such focus on the integrative, intersectional, and the ecological ways of considering policy practice seem to align with and be attuned to the dispositions that generated the PRIhME project. I believe that ongoing efforts that seriously grapple with and through such frames may continue to aid in the

project's mission and its expansion. While I understand that traditional policy practice aims to break problems into manageable parts, fixing each separately, in today's environ and with complex settings, it is also necessary to consider how and when such a view misses the fact that "getting rid of what is not wanted does not give you what is desired" (Banathy, 1998, p. 82). Echoing Weaver-Hightower (2008) one last time, the reader and those of us in similar institutional spaces may consider that "conceptualizing policy as an interdependent ecology resists such fragmented strategy" (p. 162) and that may be essential for the reorientation of HME.

## Power Relations as Ground Zero

It is now important to further highlight the consonance and the alignment I see between such an ecological vision and the PRIhME project. One of the strengths of the project is the structural decision to formulate leadership and decision-making through *stakeholder assemblies*, designed to function within deliberative democracy models, operating according to five principles, namely: openness, fairness, equality, efficiency, and collegiality.

Significantly, the project seems to begin from the premise and the acknowledgement that "systemic inequalities in power relations are embedded in most higher music education institutions." Naming such a reality as factual, historical and existing, creates the credence and the legitimacy to demonstrate—through documented analysis and expert opinion—how "the traditions and norms we perpetuate create power inequities." The complexity of the data and reach of the multiple discourse rationales documented throughout the PRIhME project underlines the historical and ever present (although at times hidden) nature of power in its multiple configurations.

Such critical discursive steps are essential to policy practice in that an agreed upon "vocabulary" is central to "the creation of [policies] conditions of acceptance and enactment" (Ball, 2009, p. 5). Establishing the extent, pervasiveness, and systemic nature of the challenge, strengthens the aim of building "organizational cooperation and networking around the issues of power relations to promote healthier and more sustainable careers for both the HME stakeholders and their alumni."<sup>2</sup> It is not simply that words matter, but that words are the conduit to establish process, deliberation, viable consensus, and new policy strategies, texts and enactment. In different terms, they establish ecological relations necessary for problem grappling.

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://aec-music.eu/project/prihme-2020-2023-erasmus-strategic-partnership/about-prihme/>

Here I am reminded that the problem critical, emancipatory, participative and decolonial efforts place upon higher education stems from a history of “highly skeptical half-measures, watered down policies, and other approaches that downplayed the need for major shifts” (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 219). To change this requires sustained engagement and criticality that is not only vigilant but based on coordination, reiteration, and grassroots sustainability. Policy may be a needed consideration here; one I argue has not been fully articulated in and by past efforts.

### **The Briefs as Discursive Spaces**

The four brief documents offer a wide-ranging articulation of the challenges presented by ontological, epistemic, and institutional patterns of thought and practice that have and continue to shape HME. They are a consequential way of setting an agenda, framing conversation and dialogue, and documenting the potential pathways for future policy efforts. In the first brief, Anna Bull frames power in terms of relations, which are not “solely repressive or negative,” but exert significant influence—in overt or covert ways. As a result, she argues, “power relations can make us want to do certain things rather than others.” The brief offers various ways of understanding hierarchy, belonging, and HME relations of power through the canonic.<sup>3</sup> The second brief painstakingly articulates the pervasive and ongoing challenges of gender inequality, sexual harassment, and sexism, while presenting some considerations on challenging gender norms in the field. Here I find Almqvist and Werner’s expert paper particularly compelling when reaffirming the “glue-work” that women in academia do, even in face of “double subordination” and intersectional status realities. This brief offers videos and articles written for non-academic readerships—which is most compelling—balancing multiple voices with the indelible impact of large survey data showing staggering numbers regarding “harmful and/or inappropriate behavior” and the ongoing lack of gender equity and diversity. The need for further consideration on activism and what it may look like in this milieu is also raised—an issue I will return to later.<sup>4</sup> I find the brief for third Assembly to under-report on the complexity of socio-economic background in music and music education, and only introductorily present the multiplicity of questions related to race and ethnicity and their significance in music education today. My position writing from the Americas might have something to do with this estimation. The topics are also monumental and while intersectional, require greater depth of con-

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://aec-music.eu/media/2021/09/PRHME-1st-Assembly-Brief.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://aec-music.eu/media/2022/03/2nd-Assembly-Brief.pdf>

sideration to become meaningful; particularly when policy is concerned.<sup>5</sup> The last and fourth brief manages, in my view, to regain the focusing capacity and strength of the first two; particularly on teacher-student power relations articulated by Kirschning, as well as on the pragmatics of procedural institutional life, including policy.

My aim of course is not to simply critique content and process; particularly as I see them in very positive terms. Most significant is to articulate that even with all the positive stage-setting that is done within the briefs and the assemblies, the negotiation of the *ongoing-ness* of what was first established here and how impactful it will be, functions at another sphere of practice. Such beginnings are substantial and necessary, but unfortunately often insufficient. The cautionary is that, in policy, even well-conceived aims and processes can, and often do, run afoul in the contextual realities of implementation (Wildavsky, 1979).

Of course, that is not a rationale for inaction, but rather for understanding. Understanding that policy itself is “an ‘economy of power,’ a set of technologies and practices,” representing both what is intended as well as what is enacted (Ball, 1994, p. 10). To me, this is significant in two ways. First, because this economy of power functions across multiple arenas, establishing paradigmatic constructions regarding authority, compliance, and rights of contestation. And second, because technologies of power give preference to established practice—a central challenge in HME globally—and thus to stability and to concentration of power; not just upon any individuals, but those who are seen as representatives of the normative. And so, two critical questions for such projects become: 1) how to anticipate, understand, and mitigate challenges of enactment, in the diverse contexts upon which institutions of HME operate? and 2) how to account for resistance and policy deflation that inevitably emerges? (Moynson et al., 2017).

### **From Assemblies to Implementations: Seeing Work Through**

I am interested in the possible exploration of the impact of an embedded sense of policy practice (Sutton & Levinson, 2001) onto the perceived value of personal policy action by music leadership actors (both with official and informal roles), and how those may be amplified or dampened in environs where acknowledged need for change is evident—such as the one established by the participants in the PRIhME project. As I was not a direct participant in the project, I can only conjecture on the pressures and constructive spaces fomented by the process. What I can imagine, however, and what policy lit-

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://acc-music.eu/media/2022/08/Assembly-3-Brief.pdf>



erature informs us of, is that moving from the assembly of vision and policy is difficult enough, but implementing it, that is, bringing the collective vision work to fruition within a larger constituency, over time, with its various contexts, often offers even greater challenges.

While the project was not directly or even primarily concerned with policy change, an analysis of the available four briefs (a normative policy-oriented communicative tool), the website and program plan descriptions, as well as the multiple expert-drawn insights, suggests that a way of looking at the complex issue of power relations in HME in ecological terms is feasible and already, if partially, manifested here in thoughtful manner. As I have argued, I see great potential for further exploration as well—as a critical model (if lengthy and demanding of time and resources) that would be most appropriate to sustainably tackling change in the field. At the centre is the conviction that atomistic efforts will fail in the absence of systemic action, and that systemness is built as much from the ground up as from the top down.

My small contribution then is to point how a policy literature, framing and re-imagined practice (Schmidt, 2020) might aid in further considerations regarding not uncommon struggles with implementation (Moysen et al., 2017). As the literature (and the briefs) shows us, the difficulties are many, from contested consensus and legitimacy, turf protection and “siloeing,” to veiled decision-making. Another challenge to consider as projects move from assembly to enactment is potential fractioning of institutions and its members, particularly those not fully embedded in the vision and policy planning part of the project (Ellis & Wright, 1998). Fragmentation through factions is the ostensible, albeit not always easily perceptible, isolation of groups and/or practices (Bobic, 2019) and it can easily emerge when grappling with contentious issues such as power relations. On one hand, it can amplify a sense of lack of active participation and accountability, which leads to perceptions of diminished professional status. On the other, the lack of autonomy can lead to increased dependency and diminished accountability, and thus further siloeing and fractioning.

Such issues impact both micro and macro practice and can generate policy congruence challenges (Mintrom & Norman, 2009), which may lead vision to be distorted, implementation to be unequal or diminished, resistance to emerge, and performativity to rise, to name a few. Developing a sense of professional practice that is better attuned to addressing these as policy practice issues might be helpful and fruitful, then. Literature may help too. For instance, manifestations of discursive policy and leadership action around “signaling change” and delaying or foregoing actual enactment are well articulated by Riveros (2015). Cobb (2013) provides insight of *narrative compression*—the condition in which a dominant narrative consolidates and closes itself off to challenges through routines that thwart the development

of alternative storylines—and how those can be deleterious to appropriate implementation. Applying this to the project, I wonder, if or how competing and contradictory policy narratives may emerge within each of the nine participating institutions? Or how external institutions/others may respond to the outcomes of the PRIhME project? Or what unintended consequences may arise?

What is known is that in contentious, interconnected, and multidimensional arenas—such as HME—implementation is dependent on the closeness of the relations between people, places, and policy efforts themselves; which even when in consonance, do not guarantee that effective enactment is realised (Honig, 2006). For example, research shows that individual's stances or stake regarding particular policies significantly impact resource and personal mobilisation; a form of activism (Stone, 1998). And we know, from the research in the briefs, that faculty members' own ideologies, personal histories, and professional formation shape their discursive constructions and practical openness to the complexity of power relations in labour spaces. This arena alone raises challenging implementation questions: What levels of “buy in” are necessary for implementation congruence? What preparatory work is necessary? What institutional signalling and accountability setup is required? What processes for evaluation, revision and re-engagement will aptly support sustainability of outcomes?

All this is to say that implementation, the enactment of policy that aims to be sustainable, even consensual, or democratic—as the briefs suggest—are akin to culture change, requiring short- and long-term strategies and attention, facilitated by ongoing dialogue, but also effective policy leadership, tools and processes.

### **Sustainable Futures: Thoughts on Action and Reflection to Come**

From my restrictive vantage point, PRIhME grapples well with the challenges at hand, knowing that solutions are elusive. That alone is a significant accomplishment. If policy practices and one's interactions with and through them generate specific and practical regimes of truth, as Ball (2009) has argued. Then, the ways in which policies “are spoken and spoken about, their vocabularies, are part of the creation of their conditions of acceptance and enactment” (p. 5). This matters in projects such as this, as they clarify the ways in which norms and traditions, informal and formal, textual, and inter-subjective—that is, all that goes on in the complex environment of HME, with all its histories and local expressions—have a way of “constructing the inevitable and the necessary” (p. 5). And they do so for each participant, institution, and the field at large. Such an ecology requires time, interaction, thoughtful planning, and capacious processes in efforts to facilitate the

emergence of new vocabularies, renewed values, and priorities, and foster an emerging social contract where a *hegemony of equity* is given space to be enacted, replacing the still dominant *hegemony of hierarchy*.

As hegemonies are not absolute but contested, it might be helpful to remind the reader—perhaps as one instinctively knows, but research reaffirms—that “actors are not passive” making “choices in the interpretations of the meanings put forth” (Dacin et al., 2002). Just as significantly though, “actors perceive the meaning of institutions and infuse their actions with meaning based upon these perceptions” (p. 47). The interdependence discussed above is a recurrent theme in institutional change and reconfiguration of power relations, where people, places and policy are in unending negotiation.

To this end one recommendation for further thought and action might be to consider future work in the project (or extensions of it, locally) through a *policy ethnography framework* (Castagno & McCarthy, 2017), which aims to better understand when and how personal and collective policy development intersect. The focus might be, for example, to uncover whether and in what ways the actualisation of personal and collective decision-making becomes a facilitator of “policy congruence” within these various HME environs. As articulated above, complex issues such as power relations require micro and macro alignment. Exploring the role of individuals as leaders/activists working within and through systemic institutional re-positioning might offer very important contributions to the field at large.

Maarten Hajer’s (1995) work on the influence of “story-lines” in policy discussions might also be fruitful for further exploration. Hajer and Wagenaar (2003) detail how the formation of or focusing on selected story-lines can function as tools of “argumentative struggles” toward winning policy debates; including by way of purposeful “mobilization of bias” (p. 55). Such framings can be helpful in considering the “successes” and setbacks experienced by this project and others, as the work reverts back to actual institutional change. In other words, what happens when the outcome and recommendations of the assembly are implemented in specific institutions of HME. There is also help here from institutional theory (Scott, 2001) which has provided ways to connect the layers between formal policy and individual actors. Zilber (2002), for example, draws attention to the “interplay between actors, actions, and meanings” in understanding the “micropolitics” of institutional change, highlighting the importance of the “dialectical interplay between ... actions (practices and structures), meanings, and actors” (p. 235).

Readers and participants may also consider that while the educational leadership literature shows us how we can use policy as tactics, employing ideas such as managing meeting agendas and decision-making processes.

Alternatively, there is significant literature that addresses other ways of engaging in policy tactics focusing on buffering, listening, diplomacy, humour, and strategic application of data (Blase & Blase, 2002). I am interested in an even broader view, Bolman and Deal (2008) call it “mapping the political terrain” (p. 216), whereby policy practice is considered in relation to influence, facilitating spaces for coalition work, framing and strategically organising change, and developing the capacity to read political environs. Establishing our policy thinking and action then requires that we come to see the morphology of policy, that is, that we understand the complexity of policy and how we might benefit from engaging strategically with its potential (Schmidt, 2020). I see PRIhME as aligned with such principles.

## **A Last Word**

All which I attempted to articulate in this brief chapter is aimed at an understanding that, on one hand, greater policy consciousness means that we know how to approximate concrete strategic ideas to careful conceptual development. And on the other, policy practice—embedded in the vision of projects such as PRIhME—has the chance to do its best work when “the trustworthiness of social structures allows for the proliferation of obligations and expectations” (Coleman, 1988, p. 107), that is, that we can do more for ourselves and for others if we understand and credibly—and fully—participate in the social structures around us.

Projects such as PRIhME seem to provide a representation of the need for individuals and organisations to act on two fronts: (1) promote flexible accountability where autonomy can play its part fostering innovation and asserting diversity, and (2) nurture autonomy that can critically construct accounts of one’s work, that is, generating accountability that address how, to whose benefit, and toward what ends chosen models operate.

In the end, this offers a vision of activism not as revolutionary, but daily, embedded in a sense of distributive participation that foregrounds adaptability, criticality, but also a capacious listening stance. Activist—a perhaps overburdened notion—in policy parlance could be understood in more modest but still very capacious terms: as planners. Activist planners “scan a political environment as much as they locate facts, and they are involved with constructing senses of value even as they identify costs and benefits” (Fischer & Forester, 2009, p. 2). PRIhME’s own activist planners seem to be doing just that. And I look forward to seeing what comes next.

## Outlook

Christa Brüstle, Lucia Di Cecca, Itziar Larrinaga, Mojca Piškor,  
Eva Sæther & David-Emil Wickström

On November 11, 2023, the AEC General Assembly adopted the PRI-hME Policy Recommendations as guidelines for its member institutions to implement and follow.<sup>1</sup> One of the central objectives of the PRIhME project was thus—on an official level, at least—successfully realised. What lies ahead now, however, is the main work: reminding the AEC member institutions (as well as others) about the recommendations and their implementation and, more broadly, committing to the persistent involvement necessary to improve HMEIs by making stakeholders more conscious of existing power relations, hierarchies, and misconduct in their immediate institutional environments. Here the hardest part is on the institutional level—while senior management and the leaders might have a general idea of what issues should be tackled, the main task lies in creating an awareness among all stakeholders, as well as dealing with institutional and individual resistance. While institutional resistance and turnover among all stakeholder groups are general challenges, various stakeholder groups present particular challenges in this process. Many teachers work part-time and have, in addition to their work at the HMEI, obligations as freelance musicians, industry entrepreneurs, and possibly also as teachers at other institutions. They might not be paid to do extra work and therefore lack the necessary resources and commitment to discuss and

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<sup>1</sup> The recommendations can be found at <https://aec-music.eu/project/final-recommendations/>

change power dynamics. While students are easier to grasp as a group, there is a higher turnover affecting the institution annually. With both groups, a constant briefing is essential to inform and sensitise them to the relevant issues of power relations. At the same time, both groups are very important when bringing about change due to their connections to the world outside the institution. Therefore, they are important agents of change who can bring an awareness of power relations to a broader audience and thus contribute to change in both HME and the wider music sphere. We should not forget that management and leadership positions may also rotate periodically, so institutional policies and protocols need to be established to ensure the implementation of the recommendations and their development over time. Among the steps to be taken is the inclusion of awareness and reflection on power relations in subjects within curricula and courses.

By bringing together the theoretical discussions on different aspects of power and the individual reflections on personal experiences from institutions of HME across Europe, we hope that this book—together with the two online publications produced during the project, the *Power Relations Toolkit*<sup>2</sup> and, in particular, the *PRIhME Exercises*<sup>3</sup>—will make a difference and play a role in the processes inciting institutional change, encouraging open discussions, and deepening understanding of power relations for individuals and different communities of those studying and working in HME. As mentioned in the Introduction, this book can be read in a linear fashion, however, by grouping the book into four sections mirroring the process of the Stakeholder Assemblies, our intention as editors was to use the book as a handbook, a textbook, or a reference tool. By combining different perspectives, each section can be used not only within teaching and academic research but also to contextualise faculty and staff discussions, thus influencing policy decisions within the institutions as well as within professional associations nationally and internationally. The different perspectives are reflected in the diverse academic genres and writing styles brought together in this book. The expert papers and keywords act as academic reference texts bringing together current research on the issues discussed, while the different perspectives on power, gender, sexuality, equality, diversity, inclusion, and moving from thinking to acting serve as reflections from a personal, institutional, or societal level on how to deal with power relations. By bringing together a diverse range of voices from Europe and beyond, our aim was to show that these issues are not limited to a certain part of HME or a certain national or academic tradition.

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<sup>2</sup> The toolkit can be found at <https://aec-music.eu/project/power-relations-toolkit/>

<sup>3</sup> The exercises can be found at <https://aec-music.eu/project/prihme-exercises/>

Although we are conscious of its inherent European bias due to the project structure, location of its implementation, and our academic backgrounds, we, nevertheless, hope that this book has the potential to influence discussions beyond the borders of Europe since many of the power dynamics discussed in it exist in similar forms around the world. HME has been part of the colonial projects with European conservatory models having been exported to the (now former) colonies. The processes of decolonisation have changed HME around the world (Marín, 2021; McConnachie, 2021), and power-focused critical perspectives on the HME institutions and their degree programmes embedded in this book could potentially contribute to uncovering more of the colonial legacies still present in our institutions.

While PRIhME as a project ends with the publication of this book, the AEC has picked up the baton. In a 2021 revision of its strategic plan running from 2016 to 2023, the AEC added “Empowering Higher Music Education Institutions to deal with power relation issues” as part of its third pillar “Promoting Participation, Inclusiveness and Diversity” (AEC, 2021). In other words, dealing with power relations has become one of the central goals of the Association’s work. We hope that you, the reader, are also empowered to take action and start the change.

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In recent decades, it has become evident that power relations in higher music education institutions must be critically examined and persistently addressed. Although institutions strive to empower students to succeed in their musical careers, power can also easily be misused, potentially ruining careers. As several high-profile cases of power abuse in the field of higher music education have demonstrated, there have been instances of actively pursuing individuals in positions of power within institutional structures. Uncovering such cases is not only about rejecting and abolishing the abuse of power and institutional hierarchies but also about identifying where the toxic and negative areas lie. Power relations in higher music education are often deeply rooted, widely accepted as “the norm,” and consequently, institutionally protected. This makes the ongoing critical engagement with issues of power and power abuse all the more important.

This book explores different aspects of power and how it intersects with factors such as gender, socio-economic background, and ableism. It also brings together enriching reflections from students, teachers, and administrators that have the potential to inspire institutional change. By bringing the topic of power relations in music education into discussions at every level—as the book proposes—we are making an investment in the future of artistically, pedagogically, and administratively responsible, accountable, and just higher music education institutions. This book is intended to encourage these discussions and empower all stakeholders to critically reflect on and engage with power issues in the institutions they work and study in.

(PRIhME Project Editorial Board)

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