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CONTENT

Editorial

Fourth issue of the European Journal of Philosophy in Arts Education

Ketil Thorgersen
Editor in Chief

It's been almost a year since the last issue, but finally it is here. And what an issue! Four very interesting articles fill this issue with thought provoking and valuable insights about arts – or in fact music – education. This issue contains articles about improvisation, relational perspectives, emotionally expressive singing, and interpretation.

The article about poetry is the first article ever in EJPAE to answer the call for alternative formats in EJPAE – and is an interesting challenge to how articles usually are written in academia. **Carl Holmgren** uses different forms of poetry to tweak aspects of the research process from different angles. This article is an interesting take on an arts-based research process, that is a meta text that is both researching through poetry as well as discussing how poetry can be used for interpretation in the research process. It can also be seen as a meta-meta text in that it investigates interpretation in music through poetry as interpretation in the research process, through poetry. This multilayered text opens up for a whole new range of ways of thinking about the research process and can provoke thoughts on how we construct meaning in academia.

Following this text, **Shawn Michael Condon** presents a more empirical article about how to work with expressivity with singers at university level. Through taking different modalities into account, a model that could inform music teachers in different kinds of teaching leading up to a performance is developed. The text outlines different strategies for preparing a musical expression through a combination of skill acquisition and a development of the individual's personal wish for expression.

The last two articles are both co-written by two authors. The third article, written by **Christina Larsson** and **Johan Öhman,** discusses improvisation in education from a pragmatist transactional perspective informed by Dewey. As in the arts-based article by Holmgren, the focus here is meaning making – but here through/in improvisational events in music education. The authors suggest a practical epistemology analysis through analysing an improvisational event though the concepts *purpose*, *encounter*, *stand fast*, *gap*, *relation* and *re-actualisation* , and thereby provides teachers with an intellectual tool for thinking about how and why they do improvisation in music classrooms.

Last, but not least, in the article by **Torill Vist** and **Kari Holdhus,** present an important argument about relational aesthetics in music education. They use Bourriaud's theories on relational aesthetics to provide teachers with important questions about how methods and content in music education invite the students into dialogue. Considering art as relational construction of meaning, musical learning should invite the student into dialogue about different aspects of the musical practice in order to be relevant.

In sum these four articles shows the span of EJPAE. All articles develop theories and relate to philosophical ideas in different ways, but the forms and the scopes of the articles are very different; from arts-based poetry, via more traditional philosophical rhetoric, to a text that draws heavily on an analysis of empirical material. Since EJPAE started in 2016, we have reached out, and we can now say that

we are a respected journal where more and more articles are submitted every month. So enjoy this fantastic issue, but look out for the coming ones: Great insights are in the works.

Ketil Thorgersen

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A Philosophic Poetic Inquiry of Three Aspects of Interpretation within Music Education Research

An Autoethnodrama in Four Acts

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Abstract

This article explores three aspects of interpretation—musical interpretation of notated Western art music, hermeneutics (theoretical framework), and poetry (tool for analysis and representation)—based on ongoing music education research focusing on the learning of musical interpretation within the one-to-one context of higher music education. The broad philosophic poetic inquiry of interpretation has the form of an autoethnodrama containing both haiku and found poetry. Poetry is both used as a process of inquiry and as a means of representation. The autoethnodrama explores the author's struggle with finding his cogito for conducting arts-based research and touches upon his personal history. Through the combination of autoethnodrama and a philosophic poetic inquiry, he finds a deeper understanding of musical interpretation, usage of poetry and autoethnodrama in research, as well as of his personhood. Concluding reflections on one possible way of interpreting the autoethnodrama in relation to teaching and learning of musical interpretation within higher music education are also presented.

Keywords: Arts-based research, autoethnodrama, interpretation, musical interpretation, hermeneutics, poetry, poetic inquiry, translation, Western art music, philosophy of science, ELIZA.

A Philosophic Poetic Inquiry of Three Aspects of Interpretation within Music Education Research

An Autoethnodrama in Four Acts

Carl Holmgren[1]

PROLOGUE

Where the disposition of the autoethnodrama,[2] its dramatis personae, and some important preliminaries are presented.

SCENE 1

NARRATOR. The dramatis personae for the following autoethnodrama in four acts including prologue and epilogue, divided in scenes, consists of Carl Holmgren

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2 An ethnodrama is the written dramatic script resulting from transforming and adapting ethnographic research data (Saldaña 2008, 283). Although ethnodrama's status as research is still questioned, the commercial theatre has staged ethnodramatic works since the 1980s (Saldaña 2008, 284). In this article, autoethnodrama refers to the written script of an ethnodrama based on the author's experiences. Furthermore, the present drama is part fact and part fiction.

(henceforth abbreviated to CH), Interpretation, and some other rather self-invited characters including philosophers on the topics of hermeneutics, musical interpretation, and poetry.[3] The concept of musical interpretation is viewed as a form of "oral recitation" (seen in a widened perspective), hermeneutics as a form of developing a "reasonable explanation", and creation of poems as a form of "translation from another language".[4,5]

N.B. This script, constituting the lion's share of this article, is not primarily intended to be performed, i.e., it is a "closet drama"[6] somewhat akin to the concept of Augenmusik. Its sources are CH's own experiences of and reflections on musical interpretation and research; literature including philosophy, earlier research, and poetry; and transcripts from qualitative interviews conducted by CH with four piano teachers and six students within higher music education in the Western art music tradition in Sweden.[7]

The utterances are either in the form of prose sentences or of one of three types of poems. The prose sentences are written by CH if no reference is given. The poems are written by CH and either constructed (1) using the literary practice of found poetry,[8] (2) as a representation of interview material from the

3 Important influences and forerunners for writing this drama are presented in act IV.

4 Palmer 1972, 14

5 Within the scope of this autoethnodrama and the concluding reflections, I have—for visuo-poetic reasons—placed the references in footnotes (using the same format as would otherwise have been placed in parenthesis) analogously with the practice of APA for footnotes.

6 Saldaña 2005, 14

7 These interview transcripts also constitute the empirical material for yet another article (in review) by me (Holmgren 2018).

8 The practice of found poetry originated in the early 20th century. Found poetry is created by combining words, phrases, or entire passages from one or multiple texts and framing the resulting text as poetry in the new context (Perloff 2012, 503). Found poetry, hereafter referred to as poetic condensation (see, e.g., Öhlen 2003; Hølge-Hazelton and Krøjer 2008). In the present article, poetic condensation denotes an active analytical en-

conducted interviews,[9] or (3) as haiku formed[10] reflections about scientific inquiry and poetry in general.[11]

❊ ❊ ❊

gagement with an empirical material where the result is poetic. The term thus functions as a noun (i.e., the final condensed product) as well as a verb (i.e., the act or process of condensing). For this type of poems—constructed using a compressed selection of the participant's or participants' exact words—Langer and Furman (2004) use the term *research poems*, Prendergast (2009, 545) labels them *vox participare*, whereas other researchers use different terms. In the present article, poems of this type are constructed of text from the places that the references indicate. In the extraction of passages or words, I have adhered to these six principles: (1) capitalisation has been removed, except for proper names and personal pronouns; (2) punctuation have been removed except for listening commas, quotation marks, and (one) question mark; (3) inserted words (or phrases) are printed within square brackets: [like this]; (4) references for respective utterance is given in the footnote placed at the end of that utterance; (5) italics and orthography are as in the original sources; and (6) some passages have been merged and some material rearranged in order to make the resulting poems less redundant. In addition, typographically, the second line resulting from line breaks of long lines has been indented approximately right-aligned.

9 For the second type of poems—in this text constructed by me as an analysis and representation of material from research interviews conducted by me—Prendergast uses the term *vox autobiographia/autoethnographia*, and describes them as written using "field notes, journal entries, or reflective/creative/autobiographical/autoethnographical writing as the data source" (2009, 545). I consider this type of poems to be an analysis and representation of the material, filtered through the researcher's understanding. Langer and Furman (2004, para 0) label a similar type of poems, attempting to capture "the essence of the subject's experience", as *interpretive poems*, whereas other researchers use different terms.

10 In this text, a haiku formed poem is viewed to have the three following characteristics: (1) it loosely adheres to the tradition of using a kigo (a seasonal word or phrase) seen in a

SCENE 2

RICHARDSON

interview tape-recorded transcribed
cut pasted edited
trimmed smoothed snipped

standard conventions conceals
the handprint of the researcher[12]

CH. If I read another interview study where the approach to transcription, translation, condensation, thematising, and analysis is not dealt with in depth, I will freak out.

RICHARDSON

texts are always subject to multiple readings[13]

CH. The postmodern stance gives me no comfort, nor does it persuade me. I wish I had become a linguist, philosopher, or programmer instead.

LEE

I switch hats
visit the hat store

widened sense, i.e., something in the poem that relates to (the passing of) time; (2) it has a two-part structure—alluding to the traditional use of kireji (literary cutting characters)—that juxtaposes contrasting, explanatory, or humorous images (often themselves intended to be possible to interpret in many ways); and (3) it (mostly) adheres to the tradition of arranging the poems in three lines with five, seven, and five syllables respectively (see, e.g., Crowley 2012 , 592–4, Johnson 2012, 594–5, and Morton 2012, 751–2).

11 For the third type of poems—in this text constructed by me as free haiku formed reflections about scientific inquiry and poetry in general—Prendergast (2009, 545) uses the term *vox theoria*, and describes them as written as responses to literature or theory in a field, or about poetry or inquiry itself.

12 Richardson 2001, 878

13 Richardson 2001, 879

the sense of a hat unfolds who I want to be
I play with the hats of my life[14]

CH. I need to be more pragmatic.

LEGGO
what is this poem good for?[15]

WITTGENSTEIN
one should write
philosophy
only as one writes
a poem[16]

❊ ❊ ❊

SCENE 3

NARRATOR. As an introduction before we get started, I would like to give the word to a character (i.e., another narrator) in the novel *The Loser* by Thomas Bernhard and let it present four concepts and one person that will eventually turn out to be quite significant in this autoethnodrama. These are: piano playing, philosophical matters, the competitiveness found both within art and research, the state of not knowing or understanding, and the classical pianist Glenn Gould.

BERNHARD
I would never have been able to play as well as
Glenn
for that reason I gave up
from one moment to the next
no more piano

14 Lee 2005b, 935
15 Leggo 2012, 143
16 Wittgenstein 1998, 28

I will now devote myself to philosophical
matters
even though I didn't have the faintest idea
what these philosophical matters might be[17]

POETRY

förtviningsprocess: fortification:
inget mer pianospel no more piano playing
snart är jag hemma soon I will be home[18]

LEGGO

my poetry is often personal
autobiographical[19]

NARRATOR. Oh, one more thing. I might have forgotten to mention that during this autoethnodrama Poetry, as well as other voices, will comment here and there.

HIRSCH

poetry
a vague grouping of intrinsic genres
whose members do not share
any attribute or set of attributes
which distinguishes them from nonpoetry[20]

LEGGO

I often wonder if anybody
besides other poets
really care about poetry[21]

17 Bernhard 1991, 11

18 As a service to the reader, the haiku formed poems are presented in both their English and original Swedish version (if there is any) for the possibility of comparison. For more information on the translation process see narration in act I, scene 5.

19 Leggo 2006, 85

20 Hirsch 1967, 150

21 Leggo 2012, 143

ACT I

Where CH falls down some kind of rabbit hole through space and time, and reluctantly presents himself as an angst-ridden figure all too much reminding of a Don Quijotean–Feyerabendian–Gouldian tribrid, i.e., your ordinary (cup of) Joe.

SCENE 1

CH. Firstly, I am delighted that you accepted my invitation to participate in this interview. I am sure that this will be an interesting conversation for both of us.

INTERPRETATION (HENCEFORTH ABBREVIATED TO I). Thank you. It is nice to be here. Although, I must let you know that I am a little bit nervous. I am not used to being addressed face-to-face.

CH. How come? Due to your quick reply, I got the impression that you did not mind talking.

I. Not really. I am used to being spoken about rather than to, or with. Why that is the case, I can only speculate.

POETRY

interpretation — interpretation
att ingen talar till mig — no one ever talks to me
inte ens Hermes — not even Hermes

TEACHERS

I wonder how often I say the word
'interpretation'
probably quite seldom

NARRATOR. At this moment, I would like to add that the persons whose names are typographically approximatively centred (i.e., not left aligned) speak on verse within the internal dialogue of CH's mind. This means that the participants of the dialogue in prose spoken out loud—i.e., mainly CH and Interpretation (left aligned followed by a full stop)—hear and are influenced by the other voices but unable to engage in direct external communication with them. I would also like to remention that the empirical material for the poetic representations—presented as aggregates called Teachers respectively Students—are transcripts from the interviews conducted by CH with the piano teachers and students.[22]

LEGGO

even while I look
for interpretation
I do not trust
the interpreters[23]

CH. What do you think?

I. Sometimes it seems as if peoples' views about me are more interesting than what I am, do, or how I can be used to fulfil different humans' objectives. I find that tiring.

CH. Personally, when I first made contact, I felt somewhat uncomfortable addressing you directly. Also, it quite frankly, made me question my mental health.

I. Do you think that you should be worried about your mental health?

22 These interview transcripts also constitute the empirical material for yet another article (in review) by me (Holmgren 2018).

23 Leggo 2018, 79

LEGGO
we need a healthy inner life
this is where poetry can help[24]

CH. I do not know, but I think that question is beyond the scope of this interview.

LEE
autoethnography
an epiphany that heals
deeper understanding[25]

ROGERS
if I really understand
I might be changed
we all fear change[26]

I. It was you who brought up the question, not me.

CH. Fair enough, getting back to the subject at hand ...

I. Pardon me for interrupting you, but just to clarify: when we read your ...

CH. We?

I. Yes, we. When we read your invitation and saw the preliminary title for this article, it was evident that you had to meet us all.

CH. Exactly whom am I talking to here?

I. Us.

CH. Who are you?

I. Musical interpretation, Theoretical framework, and Tool for analysis and representation.

24 Leggo 2005, 446
25 Lee 2006, 1154
26 Rogers 1961, 18

MUSICAL INTERPRETATION. I, your old friend since the 1980s. However, strictly speaking, I am, or perhaps preferably, we are monozygotic twins: my sibling 'interpretation' (who is a noun) and myself 'to interpret' (who is a verb).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK. I, your slightly newer (at least for you) philosophical–intellectual challenge.

TOOL FOR ANALYSIS AND REPRESENTATION. I, your postmodern (or am I only modern, who knows?) menace.

DAVIDSON
theory of interpretation
the business jointly of the
linguist, psychologist, and philosopher[27]

❊ ❊ ❊

SCENE 2

NARRATOR. While stopping briefly, to let CH regain his composure, different voices within his internal dialogue will articulate their views of the three aspects of interpretation. Let the characters representing Musical interpretation start.

TEACHERS
the short answer
to make a text come to life
that I can make comprehendible
within its limits
on an instrument
and relate to
with all that implies
and that responsibility

27 Davidson 1984, 141–2

HIRSCH

the object of interpretation
no automatic given
a task that the interpreter sets
decides what he wants to actualize
and the purpose[28]

STUDENTS

interpretation is when
you work with something
trying to understand
what the dots mean

what does he really want
which character
what is it all about

one should sort out
from marks and instructions
says quite a lot
but not really much
much is between the lines

TEACHERS

can not interpret
without a lot behind you
you have to create a world
that you can operate within

eventually you acquire good taste
to relate organically

28 Hirsch 1967, 25

if you do not
music starts pulling faces

lesser geniuses as we
must try
to at least relate
to the score
and tradition

FEYERABEND

traditions
neither good nor bad
they simply are[29]

TEACHERS

I admire interpreters
like Alfred Brendel
not that I
at all
compare me to him:

"over seventy
Mozart's sonatas for piano
if I do not understand them now
I do not really know when"

BRENDEL

if I belong to any tradition
it makes the masterpiece
tell the performer what he should do
not the performer telling the piece what it
should be like

29 Feyerabend [1975] 1993, 268

or the composer what he ought to have
composed[30]

POETRY

May I present some short poems
about musical interpretation?

RICHARDSON

to re-present significant moments
the short poem
a candid photo
an episode
an epiphany[31]
sequence narrative
order implies a plot

the spaces
invite response
and interpretive work

artful openness
by which we come to know
and not to know
and then to know ourselves again
differently[32]

PRENDERGAST ET AL.

interviews the data
research method haiku

30 Kidel 2001
31 Richardson 2001, 880
32 Richardson 2001, 881

results haiku poetry
interpretation the poems[33]

haiku
excess of meanings
constrained structure[34]
free of clutter numerical obscurity
obfuscation[35]

POETRY

The first poem below is participant-voiced,
the second researcher-voiced,[36]
whereas the third is a reflective poem:

tekniskt-musikaliskt music-technical
mindre genier som vi dwarfs standing on giants' shoulders
måste förhålla oss must behave oneself

likt en Odysseus like a Ulysses
kryssar Skylla–Karybdis beats Stretto di Messina
god smak som sextant with acquired taste

tomhetens triumf the pain of wisdom
vet vad allting är utom knowing everything except
härledningen av hur how to deduce how

WITTGENSTEIN

refined taste
has *nothing* to do

33 Prendergast et al. 2009, 312
34 Prendergast et al. 2009, 312
35 Prendergast et al. 2009, 312
36 For a broad idea of how the two first poems relate to the interview transcripts, see Teachers' second statement in this scene.

with creative power[37]
taste rectifies[38]

LATIN

Quod licet Iovi, non licet bovi.

ENGLISH

What is permissible for Jove is not permissible
for a bull.

LEGGO

teachers
should learn to know themselves
as poets[39]

❊ ❊ ❊

SCENE 3

NARRATOR. After this presentation of Musical interpretation, it is time to let some voices representing Theoretical framework speak.

GADAMER

whoever has language
"has" the world[40]

LANGER AND FURMAN

language
abstraction
imperfect representation
of human experience

37 Wittgenstein 1998, 68
38 Wittgenstein 1998, 129
39 Leggo 2005, 439 & 442
40 Gadamer 2013, 469

researchers struggled
to explore and communicate
truths
imperfect tool
reducing human experience[41]

DAVIDSON

we do not know what someone means
unless we know what he believes
we do not know what one believes
unless we know what he means[42]

TEACHERS

scientific research
on interpretation
measuring milliseconds
a bit pointless

RICOEUR

reading
like the execution
of a musical score[43]

PALMER

a musical score
mere shell
the "meaning"
must be grasped
to interpret[44]

41 Langer and Furman 2004, para 1
42 Davidson 1984, 27
43 Ricoeur 1981, 121
44 Palmer 1972, 16

interpretation:
oral recitation
reasonable explanation
translation from another language[45]

RICOEUR

to read is to consider
its author already dead
the book as posthumous

the relation complete and intact
the author can no longer respond
it only remains to read
his work[46]

IRVIN

the authors
choosing the works' features
determine the interpretation[47]

PALMER

integration
the true task
of hermeneutics[48]

DAVEY

an interpretation of interpretation
what "happens" to us
when we are challenged

45 Palmer 1972, 14
46 Ricoeur 1981, 109
47 Irvin 2015, 104
48 Palmer 1972, 186

by texts and artworks
ancient and modern[49]

RICOEUR

to interpret
to explicate the type of being-in-the-world
unfolded *in front* of the text[50]

WITTGENSTEIN

different 'interpretations'
correspond to different applications[51]

STUDENTS

it is difficult to get it expressive in different
ways
when you have found one
you always focus on
recreating the same interpretation
that you did before

RIBEIRO

that recording
not the full range of possible interpretations
even a parrot
"declaim" differently each time[52]

DAVEY

inability to arrive at a final interpretation[53]
not residing in the quietness
of a single interpretation
upholds an openness

49 Davey 2006, 1
50 Ricoeur 2008, 82
51 Wittgenstein 1998, 46
52 Ribeiro 2015, 143
53 Davey 2006, xv

translation
transcendence
furtherance of understanding[54]

IRVIN

students almost never incorporate this
seem to think that the goal is to eliminate
confusion
to the extent that to feel confused
is a sign of their own incompetence[55]

BRENDEL

nothing was further from my mind
than a definitive solution
I just plunged into an adventure[56]
curator, executor, and obstetrician[57]

HIRSCH

each interpretive problem
requires its own distinct context
of relevant knowledge[58]

the only methods advocated
are those for weighing evidence[59]

the question is not
"How are we to interpret the text?"
but "Which text are we to interpret?"[60]

54 Davey 2006, xvi
55 Irvin 2015, 101
56 Brendel [1966] 2015, 15
57 Brendel [1970] 2015, 41
58 Hirsch 1967, vii
59 Hirsch 1967, x
60 Hirsch 1967, 233

SCENE 4

NARRATOR. Finally, it is time to let voices representing Tool for analysis and representation speak. However, first, a short historical exposé presenting the development of arts-based research, focusing on the use of poetry and autoethnodrama.

SINNER ET AL.

1970s
educational researchers
practices of artists and critics
arts-based forms were formulated

1990s
arts-based research
the creative arts
inform and shape
redefining
methodological vehicles[61]

PELIAS

science
looking at a tree and seeing lumber
poetry
looking at a tree and seeing a tree[62]

LEAVY

poetry
as research strategy

61 Sinner et al. 2006, 1226

62 Pelias 2004, 9

challenges
the fact–fiction dichotomy[63]

HANAUER

normalization of data into academic prose
illusion of disembodied objectified data[64]

RICHARDSON

Nobody talks in prose.[65]

PELIAS

sometimes using fiction
to tell the truth[66]

RICHARDSON

poetic representation
convey meanings
multiple and open
readings[67]

HIRSCH

distinguishing characteristic of a text
many disparate complexes of meaning can be
construed
only by ignoring this
can a theorist attempt to erect a normative
principle[68]

63 Leavy 2015, 63
64 Hanauer 2010, 91
65 Richardson 2001, 879
66 Pelias 2004, 72
67 Richardson 1992, 126
68 Hirsch 1967, 25

Leavy

snippet of human experience
in a heightened state[69]
magnifying glass
in front of reality[70]

Langer and Furman

research poems
condensed
powerful
forced to focus on
content and meaning
subject's voice as
primary transmitter[71]

Furman and Dill

only words and phrases
found in the original data[72]

interpretative poems
researcher
present themselves
fuses
the subject
and
the insights
of the researchers[73]

poetry that they believe
captures the essence
as a means of reflecting
on the relationship
between
researcher
and those being
researched[74]

Leavy

can be understood
as an extension

69 Leavy 2009, 64
70 Leavy 2009, 68
71 Langer and Furman 2004, para 15 and 19
72 Furman and Dill 2015, 46
73 Langer and Furman 2004, para 19
74 Furman and Dill 2015, 46

of what they
[qualitative researchers]
already do[75]

❊ ❊ ❊

LEGGO

poetry
act of transformation
art of transformation
minding and mining
possibilities for translating
the stories we live[76]

swinging between knowing and not knowing
writing in the air
like music
a ladder from here to there[77]

researching autobiography
asking unsettling questions
learning to dream again
to imagine other possibilities[78]

LEE AND GOUZOUASIS

autoethnographic duet
dramatic and evocative account[79]

75 Leavy 2015, 64
76 Leggo 2012, 142
77 Leggo 2012, 155
78 Leggo 2004, 35
79 Lee and Gouzouasis 2017, 316

GOUZOUASIS AND LEGGO

as we learn about music and poetry
and the complex relationships
we become more reflective
learn new meanings of "that"
which is meaningful to
poets, musicians, and arts-based researchers
we *become pedagogical*[80]

SALDAÑA

ethnodramatic representation
should be chosen
for its appropriateness[81]

analyzed and dramatized selections
interview transcripts field notes written
artifacts
characters
the research participants[82]

researcher's criteria
don't always harmonize
with an artist's
theatre's primary goal is to entertain

ethnographic performance
an entertainingly informative experience[83]

80 Gouzouasis and Leggo 2016, 462
81 Saldaña 2003, 218
82 Saldaña 2003, 218
83 Saldaña 2003, 220

dialogue
characters exchange thoughts
or an interpersonal conflict[84]
the playwright's way of showing character
interaction and interplay
not only advance the action[85]

GOUZOUASIS AND LEE

emotional dialogue
graduate supervisor and doctoral student
the importance of providing support[86]

LEGGO

read interrogate thematize expand
summarize[87]
show don't tell[88]

RIBEIRO

poems in a typographic culture
wealth of possibilities of sound
minimized in silent reading
imagine if we learned to read musical scores
perfectly
and ceased to attend concerts[89]

❊ ❊ ❊

84 Saldaña 2003, 225
85 Saldaña 2003, 226
86 Gouzouasis and Lee 2009, 173
87 Leggo 2008, 6–7
88 Leggo 2008, 11
89 Ribeiro 2015, 147

SCENE 5

CH. Well ... all right then ... Sigh. It feels good to be a researcher with more ECTS credits than street cred.

ALMA MATER. ... at Luleå University of Technology!

I. May I propose that we get started? Our mutual friend Wirkungsgeschichte has suggested that it will not be long before we are in vogue yet again. You have to excuse us old concepts and words, but occasionally we need our beauty sleep.

CH. Okay.

TRANSLATION. Psst, I think it might be important to remind you all—homaging Grosseteste, Bacon et consortes—that this conversation is a translation ...

LATIN

Omnis traductor traditor.

ENGLISH

Every translator is a traitor.

KASPAREK

Roger Bacon[:]
the translator
must know both languages
as well as the science that he is to translate
finding that few have the requisite knowledge
he wanted to do away
with translation
and translators[90]

FROST

poetry is that which is lost
in translation

90 Kasparek 1983, 85–6

any book in any but your own
language or languages
is a closed book[91]

DAVIDSON

what makes interpretation possible
is the fact that we can dismiss a priori
the chance of massive error[92]

ROBINSON

a translation and an original
aptly analogous to a young writer and
a classic[93]

FROST

for self assurance
there should always be a lingering
unhappiness
in reading translations[94]

ROBINSON

translational confidence can be sustained
human situations are analogous[95]
shared reference points[96]

that there can be no literal translation
allows fidelity and accuracy
these terms require an acknowledged gap[97]

91 Frost 1973, 159
92 Davidson 1984, 169
93 Robinson 2009, 5
94 Frost [1951] 2007, 167
95 Robinson 2009, 80
96 Robinson 2009, 92
97 Robinson 2009, 42

ontological ambiguity
are and have to be read as
the sound of one voice
pretending to be another's[98]

VENUTI

an interpretation that imitates yet varies
foreign textual features in accordance with the
translator's situation[99]
limited by its address and intended function[100]

ROBINSON

no clear distinction between a poem and a
translation[101]
what is produced is not the same
it never is with any translation[102]

if you think the losses are worse with poetry
than with the propositions of *Philosophical Investigations*
could this be because you are reading
Wittgenstein
inattentively?[103]

translations like performances of scores
always interpretive variations[104]

98 Robinson 2009, 50
99 Venuti 2008, 124
100 Venuti 2008, 14
101 Robinson 2009, 55
102 Robinson 2009, 58
103 Robinson 2009, 58
104 Robinson 2009, 68

fidelity may be evaluated and valued[105]
translations from experience are original
poems[106]

MIDGLEY

data and interpretations
shaped by weaknesses, choices, interests,
myths[107]

ROBINSON

in writing trust requires
writer, text, and reader
in translation
writer, text, reader, translator, related text,
and reader[108]

DAVIDSON

for speakers of the same language
how can it be determined
that the language is the same[109]

TRANSCRIPTION. ... in transcribed form.

OLIVER, SEROVICH, AND MASON

social sciences
frequently overlook
transcription[110]

105 Robinson 2009, 73
106 Robinson 2009, 173
107 Midgley 2001, 141
108 Robinson 2009, 156
109 Davidson 1984, 125
110 Oliver, Serovich, and Mason 2005, 1275

NARRATOR. The following information should perhaps have been presented earlier. However, all interviews were carried out by CH in Swedish, although two of the participants had other mother tongues. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by him. The transcripts passed through four stages of delicate editing—to remove stutterings and repetitions, inserting punctuation and capitalisation—before the participants got to approve of and had the opportunity to make additions, which no-one did, to their transcripts. The transcripts, consisting of in total 237 pages corresponding to about 12 hours of interviews, were read multiple times, and haiku formed researcher- as well as participant-voiced poems in Swedish were created. These poems were translated to—or more appropriately re-created (in a quasi-resurrecting sense) in—English either simultaneously or afterwards;

BRENDEL

already alive
but dormant
privilege of kissing her
awake [again][111]

NARRATOR. this re-creation involved (at least) two different aspects, first a translation of the words in the poem, and second a translation into (relatively) tolerable and functional English. When the poems were created in Swedish, no concern was given the (potential) problem of later re-creating them in English. Some of the reflective poems were originally formulated in English and later re-created in Swedish. All translations were considered to be interpretive actions that affected the meaning and thereby the researcher could conceptualise anew, contributing to a new understanding of the material. The material in English is to be considered as a translation from the original Swedish, one that is written by a Swede, i.e., not in his mother tongue. The poems were checked for coherence and congruency with poetic condensations created for each transcript, and on

111 Brendel 2013, 75

aggregated levels (one for teachers, and one for students).[112] This check was simultaneously performed on the material in Swedish and English.

VENUTI
an interpretation made by the translator
not necessarily open to every reader[113]

ROBINSON
use the limitations of translationese
as a means[114]

WITTGENSTEIN
strike a coin from every mistake[115]

VENUTI
transparency conceals the translator's
interpretation[116]
inscribes the foreign text with a partial
interpretation
excluding the very differences that translation
is called on to convey[117]

CH. I think I am about to give up.

I. Please don't. I kind of like talking to you. And you seem to be willing to listen to me.

NANCY
if someone listens to music
without knowing anything about it
without being capable of interpreting it

112 For a list of approaches to coherence and congruency see, e.g., Gouzouasis 2008, 224.
113 Venuti 2008, 266
114 Robinson 2009, 13
115 Wittgenstein 1998, 129
116 Venuti 2008, 66
117 Venuti 2008, 16

is it possible that he is actually listening to it
rather than being reduced to hearing it[118]

STUDENTS

a fantastic interpretation inside the head
stays there
no one else gets to hear it

CH. It seems as if I hear too many voices or not enough. While my hubris is killing me, let's get to work.
I. What do you mean by 'work'?

❊ ❊ ❊

SCENE 6

POETRY

jag undersöker	I examine
jag upphäver omdömet	I determine in nothing
förföljd av alla	now prosecutee

MONTAIGNE

J'essaie, tu essaies ...

ARISTOTLE

not the function of the poet
to relate what has happened
but what may happen
what is possible

poetry
more philosophical
higher than history

118 Nancy 2007, 63

express the universal
history the particular[119]

STUDENTS

could play a piece
not like I really should
not like the composer
convincing the listener
it should be like this
although I am not
doing as I really should

HIRSCH

too many interpreters have sought
autobiographical meanings
where none were meant[120]

TEACHERS

some do things to appear as athwart
sometimes fantastic
sometimes causing motion sickness

original for the sake of originality
not sure that music benefits

those who stand in front of
Beethoven comes in the dark
does things
tries to over-interpret
spotlight on oneself
rather than on the material
it can sometimes make me ill

119 Aristotle 1902, 35
120 Hirsch 1967, 16

very good pianists [sometimes] disturb
rather than exposing
drowned in subjective interpretation

GOULD

never be clever for the sake of being clever
for the sake of showing off[121]

TEACHERS

objections against Glenn Gould
fantastic interpreter
I do not listen to him

BRENDEL

Glenn Gould whose talent was exceptional
whose style of dealing with his profession
I found unacceptable[122]

GADAMER

taste avoids
the unusual
the monstrous[123]

SALDAÑA

ethnotheatre
not intended as a "clever" presentation
medium[124]

121 Gould 1964
122 Brendel [2003] 2015, 429
123 Gadamer 2013, 52
124 Saldaña 2005, 2

ACT II

Where CH and Interpretation start talking,
and Interpretation turns out to be a good but
slightly annoying question asker.

SCENE 1

I. So, tell me, why have you come to talk to us?

CH. Well, you see, I am conducting music education research and want to understand more about the learning of musical interpretation within the context of one-to-one tuition in higher music education.

I. That sounds interesting. What have you found so far?

CH. It's complicated.

I. Please, if you are going to talk to me, stop answering my questions with stock Facebook relationship statuses.

CH. Okay. I have read quite a bit, interviewed students and teachers, watched piano lessons, conducted stimulated recall interviews, and of course done some thinking.

I. So?

CH. At the moment I am trying to finish an article, whereof the autoethnodrama containing this interview constitutes the lion's share.

I. What is the subject of that article?

CH. I am trying to get to know Interpretation better through an investigation of musical interpretation, hermeneutics, and poetry as a tool for analysis and representation.

I. How is that working out for you?

CH. I do not really know. I am both dazed and confused, and quite frankly feel a little bit embarrassed.

I. Why do you feel embarrassed?

CH. Well, it sometimes feels as if I am trying to live up to some academic stereotype.

I. How do you mean?

CH. [*reluctantly*] Ahem. I will rip it off like a band-aid: I am afraid that my focus on theoretical frameworks, philosophical analyses, and definitions of terminology is a waste of time. A sort of procrastination instead of doing "real research".

I. Have you learnt anything by doing this?

CH. Yes, I suppose so.

I. Good, so why worry?

CH. I do not know. However, you see, reading Plato and Aristotle feels a little bit like reinventing the wheel ...

I. Why?

CH. It takes a lot of time, and my peers are conducting research and publishing studies while I am reading these old Greek philosophers.

NARRATOR. Well, your grandfather—at least when it concerns your chosen theoretical framework—Gadamer mentions Plato on 124 pages and Aristotle on 98 pages in his bestselling 626 page long *Truth and Method* (2013). So I guess one could say that you are in good company, or try to present yourself as a thorough scholar through reinventing the square wheel.

WILSON

prevailing pragmatism
situational imperatives
"publish or perish"[125]

125 Wilson 1942, 197

NARRATOR. I find this quite meta; CH is trying to publish an article that—among other things—touches upon his fear of not publishing. In addition, this has already been done: see Redman-MacLaren's exploration including her fear of "non-production" and feelings of being an imposter,[126] the latter area is also treated by Creps.[127]

FEYERABEND
ideas are free
publication is the problem[128]

I. Don't you find Plato and Aristotle interesting?

CH. Yes of course.

WHITEHEAD
safest general characterization
European philosophical tradition
consists of a series of footnotes to Plato[129]

I. So then, what you are saying is that you feel the need to do more of less interesting things? Is that correct?

CH. I guess so.

I. Why on earth did you pursue a career in your field of research if you feel like this?

CH. I do not know.

I. Maybe you need to start studying philosophy instead?

CH. I am trying my best to conduct a systematic investigation, pursue wisdom, and cultivate my love of knowledge.

126 Redman-MacLaren 2015
127 Creps 2018
128 Jung 2000, 160
129 Whitehead [1929] 1978, 39

CAVELL
in the face of the questions posed we are
children
we do not know how to go on with them
what ground we may occupy
in this light
philosophy becomes the education
of grownups[130]

I. What are your interests, besides talking to your fictitious creations?

CH. [*rising in desperation*] Gah. I am interested in doing scholarly work and learning stuff.

I. So then, is it not proper for you to read Plato and Aristotle?

CH. [*pulling himself together in desperation*] But it feels like everyone already has read Plato and Aristotle! It seems like, ahem, done.

I. But you say that your peers do not read him. You contradict yourself. Also, by the way, who are you to judge Plato and Aristotle?

CH. I am sorry. I did not intend to judge either of them. They are of course two essential philosophers.

I. Interpretation, yes?

CH. Yes.

I. **...** well, you see. It's complicated.

CH. [s*tupent*] Sigh.

❊ ❊ ❊

130 Cavell 1999, 224

SCENE 2

POETRY

searching for science
into interpretation
neither fish nor fowl

ARISTOTLE

the poet
like any other artist
must of necessity
imitate one of three objects
thing as they
were or are
are said or thought to be
ought to be

the vehicle is language
current terms
rare words
or metaphors[131]

a command of metaphor
is the mark of genius
an eye for resemblances[132]

ROBINSON

translation, interpretation, communication,
and understanding
extendedly metaphorical[133]

131 Aristotle 1902, 97
132 Aristotle 1902, 87
133 Robinson 2009, 101

RICHARDSON

metaphor
backbone of social science
writing[134]

134 Richardson 1994, 519

ACT III

Where CH and Interpretation restart—or
possibly reboot—the conversation and end it
on a maybe slightly unexpected note.

SCENE 1

I. How do you do. Please tell me your problem.

CH. Where is this interview really going?

I. Have you asked anyone else?

CH. Have you answered any of my questions?

I. Your questions?

CH. Yes, regarding interpretation.

I. I understand.

CH. Okay, let us try it this way: I am sceptical of conducting arts-based research, but I am at the same time drawn to it.

I. Is it because you are sceptical of conducting arts-based research that you came to me?

CH. I do not know.

I. Does that trouble you?

CH. Yes, but at the same time, I am also sceptical to research in general.

I. You are sure.

CH. It makes me insecure.

I. Tell me more about that.

CH. Research is supposed to be at least sort of clear, but the more I try to find my cogito, ergo sum the more it seems that there is no firm ground.

I. That is interesting. Please continue.

CH. I have so many questions and fear that I might be starting to think like a sophist.

I. That's quite interesting.

GOUZOUASIS
I hear the skepticism in their voices
and that's a good thing.[135]

ELIZA. Dear Interpretation, with all due respect I think that you have copied my interpretation of the DOCTOR script, and I want it back!

STUDENTS
before you have gotten
any knowledge of interpretation
you have to get different ways
as long as you do not copy others'
interpretations
or you could do it

if you mimic it straight off
you entirely pass up your own interpretation

TEACHERS
incredibly important
not to [consciously] construct interpretations

not be a teacher
who says
do like this
putting interpretations in the students' hand

135 Gouzouasis 2008, 222

SHAW
honest and natural slum dialect
more tolerable than the attempt to imitate
the dialect of the golf club

imitation will only make them ridiculous[136]

TEACHERS
have an opinion
I can tell you why it is not so good
and you can argue the opposite
about the person's interpretation
not how I
or one should play this piece
it is the student's way of saying I did not
understand that

BASIC INTERPRETER. ?SYNTAX ERROR

FEYERABEND
education
often consists in the teaching
of some basic myth
available in various versions
more advanced versions may be taught by
initiation rites
knowing the myth
the grown-up can explain almost everything
the myth guides his understanding[137]

136 Shaw 2003, 7
137 Feyerabend 1981, 163

I. Goodbye. It was nice talking to you. P.S. I am your father, i.e., I am you.

HIGGINS
if I decide to teach you
I'll be worse than two fathers[138]

CH. I think that I am at a loss for words.

GOUZOUASIS AND LEE
Our dialogue sought coherence,
verisimilitude,
and interest.[139]

SALDAÑA
I find myself offering each writer the same
piece of advice:
"Stop thinking like a social scientist
and start thinking like an artist."[140]

❊ ❊ ❊

SCENE 2

VAN FRAASSEN AND SIGMAN
science
interpretation at two levels
theory represents phenomena
that representation itself
subject to interpretation

138 Shaw 2003, 28
139 Gouzouasis and Lee 2002, 126
140 Saldaña 2005, 33

as in art
persons often unconscious
of their interpretations
and their responses as readers

the texts of science too
are open texts[141]

HANAUER
but assumes the convention of
trying to provide ease of access
to its meanings[142]

VAN FRAASSEN AND SIGMAN
to enhance the understanding of science
is not to resolve such ambiguity
but to find out in how many different ways
it could be resolved

every interpretation
throw new light
on the theory
showing
how the world could be

tensions created by ambiguity
may well be the crucial clues
to creative development[143]

ARISTOTLE
a probable impossibility

141 van Fraassen and Sigman 1993, 84
142 Hanauer 2010, 91
143 van Fraassen and Sigman 1993, 92–3

preferred to a thing improbable
and yet possible[144]

POETRY

I have a haiku about Boccaccio somewhere.
Just give me a minute ...

Boccaccio tog	Boccaccio took
alla geniala ord –	all the ingenious words—
jag är bestulen	I have been robbed

144 Aristotle 1902, 107

ACT IV

Where CH has a brief conversation with the Critic that—having read the article—has a couple of questions and opinions of his own.

SCENE

CRITIC (HENCEFORTH ABBREVIATED TO C). Firstly, I am delighted that you accepted my invitation to participate in this interview and talk about some of my questions concerning your article. I am sure that this will be an interesting conversation for both of us.

CH. Thank you. It is nice to be here. Although, I must let you know that I am a little bit nervous. I am not used to being addressed face-to-face by critics.

C. How come? Due to your quick reply, I got the impression that you did not mind answering questions or handling critique.

CH. Not really. I am used to writing about things rather than speaking to, or with people. Why that is the case, I can only speculate.

NARRATOR. [*suspiciously*] I hope that this autoethnodrama is not stuck on replay, because I have other research to narrate.

C. Getting to des Pudels Kern, why did you write this elaborated autoethnodrama, created these poems, incorporated so many—what perhaps might be described as—learned quotes and so on?

GOUZOUASIS
narrative intended to teach
potential wonders and powers of arts
in research
hermeneutic process in composing ABR

ways we can be inspired and changed
by the processes
how collaboration between musician and
poet opens up possibilities
for scholarly inquiry[145]

HORACE

poetry
both instruction and pleasure
combine the *utile* with the *dulce*[146]

SHAW

great art can never be anything else
[than didactic][147]

CH. My intention with this article was, in addition to trying to answer its aim and research questions, to experiment with the relationship between form and content in order to both understand different aspects of the subject as well as my relation to it.[148]

RICHARDSON

can/should only the tenured
write experimental[149]

C. With regards to your style of writing, why are you trying to be funny?

SALDAÑA

for the audience
the central criterion

145 Gouzouasis 2018, 235
146 Horace [1926] 1929, 447
147 Shaw 2003, 7
148 see, e.g., Richardson 1994, 516
149 Richardson 1994, 523

do I care what these characters have to say?
the ultimate sin of theatre is to bore[150]
theatre's primary goal is to entertain[151]

CH. I think that it is a sign of good health if you can view your privileged position as a researcher with some distance. Moreover, in the genre of autoethnodrama, amusing the audience can be a priority.

C. Okey, and what about you trying to be witty?

LEGGO
if you are going to be witty
be prepared with a boy scout ethic
to be misunderstood
misinterpreted
misrepresented
(and not missed at all)[152]

CH. I currently aim to write like authors of good children's literature do, i.e., produce text that is possible to interpret on many different levels.

RIVERA
Write in layers.[153]

C. And what about your use of irony?

LEGGO
poetry thrives on irony, on juxtaposition,
incongruity
teaches us to trust and distrust

150 Saldaña 2003, 227
151 Saldaña 2003, 220
152 Leggo 2018, 89
153 Rivera 2003, 23

a Trickster-inspired hermeneutic that takes
nothing for granted
an agnostic's devotion to questions[154]

CH. As a hermeneut, aspiring to the state of being a divine trickster (in a limited sense) comes with the package.

C. Hm. And what about your storyboard, or should I say stories in stories?

LEGGO
like Ukrainian stacking dolls or Chinese boxes
a story inside a story
inside a story[155]

CH. I had not beforehand planned to place interviews and poetry inside an autoethnodrama. It happened quite organically during this inquiry as I became aware that the studied subject was rich, multifaceted, and contained different layers that had to be dealt with intertwined.

C. Why did you create an autoethnodrama to explore your topic?

SALDAÑA
qualitative methods theatre has been telling
storytelling for more than 2,500 years
writing and reporting and, more often than
not, representing[156]

CH. In the end, autoethnodrama seemed to fit the investigation conducted (as well as being a part of that investigation).

C. Okay. So, what have you found?

154 Leggo 2018, 81
155 Leggo 2008, 13
156 Saldaña 2003, 230–1

CH. That interpretation differs, albeit being constant; namely, any single interpretation—seen as a temporary solution to a particular problem at a specific time and place (with a specific audience in mind)—is never final or complete, and neither is knowledge about interpretation. More specific, the interpreter is seldom conducting Kuhnian puzzle-solving[157] or searching for Ariadne's thread. On second thought, that might not be the case; if we define the paradigm where the puzzle-solver is trying to solve the puzzle as the domain of the current artwork, the analogy might work.

C. Fair enough, although not new knowledge for the knowledgeable. Moreover, what about that thing you in this research context call poetry, you seem to have been quite free (or should I perhaps better describe it as quasi-frivolous)?

CH. That is correct. In the beginning, I was not comfortable in the use of poems or autoethnography. While creating the participant-voiced poems, however, it suddenly felt as everything was possible, and at the same time, I was not sure that I liked to have that freedom—or felt mature enough for the task. However, after a while, that fear seemed to be a cul-de-sac. The question at hand is instead if this freedom (if it is a freedom) can be used for good purposes, with clearly stated intentions, transparency, and scientific rigour.

C. What might your answers be to the questions that you have raised here?

CH. Well, when it during the poetical condensation became possible to see the words for all the sentences, the meaning(s) of the text started to appear more clearly. At the same time, I nevertheless felt some similarity between my actions and those conducted by a particular Swedish politician who was suspected (however, freed in court) for having handed in manipulated representational receipts.

157 see, e.g., Kuhn 2012, 65–78

POETRY

I have a poem about this:

orden stirrar likt	lonesome words staring
höststorkarnas klapprande	like the last storks in autumn
är du Marjasin?	are you Marjasin?

GADAMER	RICHARDSON
one can often doubt	A line
whether the division	break
of lines still has	does not
a true justification[158]	a poem make.[159]

C. So you felt a bit of unease, but so what? Do not all of us feel like that at times?

CH. That might be the case, but I felt a special obligation as I was supposed to be conducting research.

C. So? I thought you were all this Feyerabendian fellow?

CH. It turns out that it is one thing what you think in theory, but another is how you feel when you conduct your business. I like freedom in theory, but in practice, I tend to find truth and method—wherever that is to be found—more assuring.

GOETHE. May I suggest that you read something from my life instead, e.g., *Truth and Poetry*?

POETRY

I have a poem about this:

158 Gadamer 1992, 74

159 Richardson 2001, 882

självbestämmande	my empowerment
skall det vara roligt att	is it supposed to be fun
utföra forskning	to do science

KANT

happiness
not from inclination
but from duty[160]

C. I am not sure that I entirely understand where you are going with all this. Did you like it—both the process and the results—or not?

RIVERA

Strive to be mysterious, not confusing.[161]

CH. To be honest, I think that it was my longing for scientific rigour that made me uneasy. Moreover, that might be due to me being drawn to positivistic beliefs. It is like a never-ending bad romance.

POETRY

As you might have guessed,
I have a poem about it:

vetenskaplighet	scholarly method
somnar som älskarinna	woos you to sleep in her lap
vaknar som tyrann	leaves you philistine

C. You seem to be quite open about your thoughts at least. So, tell me, is this so-called poetry of yours indeed poetry?

160 Kant 2002, 15
161 Rivera 2003, 23

CH. I think that is a wrongly formulated question. The right question is instead if the poetry—and consequently the poet—makes something visible that otherwise would have been hidden.

LEGGO
what is this poem good for?[162]

WITTGENSTEIN
teaching to appreciate poetry
can be part of an explanation
of what music is[163]

C. Do you think that?

CH. Yes, reluctantly so, but yes.

GADAMER
the question is not whether the poets are
silent
but whether our ear is acute enough to hear[164]

POETRY
I have some final poems about this:[165]

försöker skriva	trying to write
något som liknar poesi	something resembling poetry
lurar jag någon?	could I have fooled you?

162 Leggo 2012, 143

163 Wittgenstein 1998, 81

164 Gadamer 1992, 78

165 See, e.g., Faulkner 2007 and 2009, Owton 2017, and Lafrenière and Cox 2012 for discussion of what constitutes (good enough) poetry in a research context.

upprört ropar man	shouting with outrage
detta är ingen haiku	this is not a haiku
Magritte-poesi	Magritte poetry

C. I think that our time is running out. However, finally, who do you expect to read, understand, and have some kind of use for this article? Present company excluded, of course.

GOUZOUASIS

even the most seemingly abstract narrative
form of research
such as this composition
possesses an underlying structure
many readers have difficulties
interpreting the form[166]

CH. Except for myself, I write for eternity. No, seriously, I think that those interested in embarking on a similar journey might find it interesting and useful in some quasi-Deweyan way. Others can perhaps find the presented, developed understanding of (musical) interpretation valuable.

RIVERA

In all your plays, be sure to write at least one
impossible thing.
And don't let your director talk you
out of it.[167]

C. Has this type of writing not been done before?

CH. Autoethnodrama, poetic inquiry, arts-based research, as well as haiku and found poetry have most surely been used before. However, not intensively within

166 Gouzouasis 2007, 38

167 Rivera 2003, 23

music education research, and even less frequent within research focusing on the learning of musical interpretation.

C. Okay. Who would you say are your inspirations within your field of research?

CH. In the process of reading and writing, I got carried away and for a moment believed that the year was 1492 and that I had found America, i.e., I had not done enough reading. So, in hindsight, I found that I have some affinity with the works of Leggo,[168] Lee,[169] Gouzouasis,[170] Prendergast,[171] and Furman[172] among others. Some specific concepts that others have inspired me to use are: (1) the use of poetry as literature review,[173] (2) adapting the point of view of a theoretical framework;[174] and (3) different aspects that were combined in the moulding of the autoethnodrama as a dialogue: interviewing an artwork,[175] conducting self-interviews,[176] and using the form of a dialogue[177] including the Socratic method used in the dialogues of Plato.

LEGGO
do not stand on the shoulders of giants

168 Leggo 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2012, and 2018

169 Lee 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2010, and Lee and Gouzouasis 2017.

170 Gouzouasis and Lee 2002, Gouzouasis 2007 (interfolding theoretical analysis of a sonata form movement with dialogue, and including poetry on page 42), Gouzouasis 2008, Gouzouasis and Lee 2009, Gouzouasis and Leggo 2016, and Gouzouasis 2018

171 Prendergast 2004, 2006, 2009, and Prendergast et al. 2009

172 Langer and Furman 2004; Furman, Lietz, and Langer 2006; and Furman and Dill 2015

173 Prendergast 2006 and Owton 2017, 85–102

174 Sword 2012, 97

175 Plagens 1986

176 Gould [1972] 1990, [1974] 1990, and Vist 2006

177 Gouzouasis and Lee 2002, Gouzouasis and Leggo 2016, Gouzouasis 2008, Gouzouasis and Lee 2009, Lee and Gouzouasis 2017, Prendergast and Leggo 2007, and Gould's polyphonic radio documentaries *The Idea of North, The Latecomers*, and *The Quiet in the Land* (2007)

stand on the earth where they stood
know they are still present[178]

C. In what way?

LEGGO

an anarchic author
heretic hermeneut
jovial juggler
narcissistic narrator
playful pedagogue
textual tease[179]

CH. I take pride in trying to question (at least almost) everything constructively. Also, sometimes applying a trickster-mentality, i.e., disobeying conventional rules, behaviours, and praxises could be beneficial to—and perhaps even necessary for—the production of new insights, meaning, and knowledge. Thus, I am only a disobeyer insofar as when I say what I believe to be true it is disobedient.

C. Hm. Your last sentence rings like a Post-it-worthy "directive from that Peterson guy"[180] ...

RIVERA

Strive to be your own genre.[181]

C. ... so how do you expect the readers to understand your work?

CH. As an honest exercise in attempting to find a cogito for conducting arts-based research as well as to integrate different aspects of my personal history. However, different readers will find—and already have found—different interpretations.

178 Leggo 2018, 82
179 Leggo 2005, 453–4
180 Hurwitz 2016, 107
181 Rivera 2003, 23

TEACHERS
interpretation
what does it really say
return and scrutinise

ROBINSON
it isn't possible to play the poem's notes
exactly[182]

HIRSCH
textual meaning is not a naked given like a
physical object[183]

WITTGENSTEIN
if you interpret in a shallow way
the difficulty just remains[184]

C. Finally, I must ask a question that has bothered me all the time. Who are Interpretation and the Critic actually?

CH. All of me, of course.

DUNN
a person who believes
there's value in being overheard
clarifying things
for himself[185]

POETRY. I think that you might be getting bored, but this is the last time—at least for now—that I am telling you that I have a poem about this or that:

182 Robinson 2009, 97
183 Hirsch 1967, 210
184 Wittgenstein 1998, 55
185 Dunn 1993, ix

skriver min poesi	writing poetry
som ett försök att lura	as an attempt to deceive
livet och döden	life and death

CH. Feci quod potui, faciant meliora potentes.

ENGLISH

I have done what I could;
let those who can do more.

C. I agree, our work here is done. Mensch, jetzt machen wir doch endlich Feierabend!

FEYERABEND. My name is spelt "Feyerabend"!

GADAMER

interpretation is completed
when the interpreter disappears
only what one has interpreted is there
an ideal
always only achievable
in approximation[186]

RIVERA

Theatre is closer to poetry and music than it is to the novel.[187]

BECKETT

ever tried		ever failed
	no matter	
try again	fail again	fail better[188]

❊ ❊ ❊

186 Gadamer 1992, 76
187 Rivera 2003, 22
188 Beckett 1989, 101

Concluding reflections

WEIZENBAUM
it is said that to explain is to explain away
wondrous ways
sufficient to dazzle
even the most experienced

once unmasked
its inner workings explained
in language sufficiently plain
to induce understanding
its magic crumbles away
revealed as a collection of procedures
each quite comprehensible

the observer says to himself
"I could have written that"
with that thought he moves [explanandum]
from the shelf marked "intelligent"
to that reserved for curios
fit to be discussed
only with people
less enlightened than he[189]

The poetic condensation above centres on the explication of explanans and the potential consequences thereof for the appreciation of explanandum. However, Weizenbaum was neither a poet nor an arts-based researcher in music education—but a

189 Weizenbaum 1966, 36

computer scientist, often seen as one of the early pioneers (and leading critics) within the field of artificial intelligence.[190] In the following concluding section, I will reflect on the autoethnodrama in this article from the starting point of the poetic condensation above and its function as a potential clavis to unlock at least one of the possible interpretations of the drama. However, first, some background information about ELIZA, the computer program that the poetic condensation above dealt with, will follow.

In 1966 Weizenbaum wrote the computer program ELIZA at MIT. The program performed natural language processing and was driven by a script named DOCTOR.[191] ELIZA got its name after the working-class Cockney flower girl Eliza Doolittle, ingénue in Bernard Shaw's 1912 play *Pygmalion* (based on Ovid's narrative poem *Metamorphoses*, where the sculptor Pygmalion falls in love with a statue he had carved). In *Pygmalion*, Eliza asks Professor Henry Higgins for elocution lessons, i.e., the study of formal speaking in pronunciation, grammar, style, and tone. The gentleman Colonel Pickering makes a bet with Higgins and says that he will pay for the lessons if Higgins succeeds. Higgins, a character inspired by several professors of phonetics, is so sure of his abilities that he takes it upon himself to transform Eliza into someone who can pass for a cultured member of the society. Weizenbaum created the DOCTOR script to enable ELIZA to play—or with his own words "I should really say parody"[192]—a psychotherapist with a conversational style modelled after the American psychologist Carl Rogers's practice of using open-ended questions to improve patients communication with therapists. ELIZA applied pattern matching rules to the inputted statements to construct its replies, i.e., the practice now con-

190 O'Reagan 2013, 263
191 Weizenbaum 1966, 36
192 Weizenbaum 1976, 3

ducted by so-called chatbots.[193] I propose that the above-mentioned aspects of ELIZA (including its theatrical ancestry) can be of use for understanding teaching and learning of musical interpretation, formulated as the following four metaphors on the topic of music education (research), which I will elaborate below:

1. the relation Eliza–Higgins as a metaphor for the relationship between student and teacher in one-to-one teaching within higher music education,
2. the relation ELIZA–DOCTOR as a metaphor for the teaching and learning of musical interpretation within higher music education,
3. the translation of the DOCTOR script from one language to another as a metaphor for the translation of pattern matching rules from one context to another,
4. the saying "it is said that to explain is to explain away"[194] as a metaphor for the institutional practices within higher music education.

First, the relation Eliza–Higgins as a metaphor for the relationship between student and teacher in one-to-one teaching within higher music education: there is a distinct hierarchy concerning power and knowledge between student and teacher as well as between Eliza and Higgins. The hierarchy revolves around the wager formulated by Pickering (i.e., the public funding of higher music institutions, an analogy at least applicable in the Nordic countries) where he promises to pay for the lessons if Higgins succeeds. Higgins is so sure on his capacity to transform Eliza that he accepts. How-

193 For an authentic example of a conversation with ELIZA see the beginning of act III, scene 1. The dialogue is between I (i.e., ELIZA interpreting the DOCTOR script) and CH until the (fictional) character named ELIZA interrupts and wants her interpretation back.

194 Weizenbaum 1966, 36

ever, Weizenbaum noted that it was not clear whether ELIZA, as well as Eliza, became smarter or not through the tuition.[195] Weizenbaum's description of ELIZA as an actress who commands "a set of techniques but who had nothing of her own to say" might also be food for thought.[196]

The line of thought that I want to emphasise here is that public funding may give the false conception that higher education does not cost anything and that there might also be a job given to the student at the end (of the rainbow). In addition, this metaphor also highlights ethical aspects including the potential negative consequences if the relationship between student and teacher develops beyond their professional interests as in the play, as well as the question of how teachers view their former students' level of competence and agency.[197]

Second, the relation ELIZA–DOCTOR as a metaphor for the teaching and learning of musical interpretation within higher music education: ELIZA, driven by the DOCTOR script, converses in a style akin to a Rogerian therapist and thus asks open-ended questions. However, the program is designed to conceal its lack of understanding. Weizenbaum writes:

> But to encourage its conversational partner to offer inputs from which it can select remedial information, it must reveal its misunderstanding. A switch of objectives from the concealment to the revelation of misunderstanding is seen

195 Weizenbaum 1976, 188

196 Weizenbaum 1976, 188

197 In *Pygmalion*, Higgins laughs at Liza when she says that she will teach what he taught her (Shaw 2003, 104). See also Shaw's elaboration of this passage in the section titled sequel (2003, 112–3).

> as a precondition to making an ELIZA-like program the basis for an effective natural language and man-machine communication system.[198]

The proposed movement from concealment to the revelation of misunderstandings resonates with Gadamer[199] for whom the interpreter's horizon is determinative and seen "as an opinion and a possibility that one brings into play and puts at risk, and that helps one truly to make one's own what the text says". This prerequisite is important for what Gadamer[200] describes as the fusion of horizons, which "takes place in conversation, in which something is expressed that is not only mine or my author's, but common". This line of thought could be of interest for music education (research) focusing on the teaching and learning of interpretation as it highlights the importance of honest and real dialogues where both the student and the teacher are open and feel secure enough to put something at risk.[201] In the form of a Petersonesque catchphrase: "to learn is to die voluntarily and be born again, in great ways and small",[202] i.e., to intentionally take the heroic path (in an archetypal sense).[203] Thus, ELIZA–DOCTOR as a metaphor for the way musical interpretation is—or could be—taught and learned within higher music education is to mean that there is a potential for development if the script is developed. With this analogy, I do not mean to imply that the behaviour of teachers within higher music education is as non-refined as a computer program from the 1960s but to emphasise the importance of pedagogy within higher music education. (At this point, it might also be fruitful to revisit Rogers' outline of six necessary and sufficient conditions for therapeutic personality change to occur. The second of these is the client's "state of incongru-

198 Weizenbaum 1966, 43
199 Gadamer 2013, 390
200 Gadamer 2013, 390
201 See also Rogers' statement in act I, scene 1.
202 Peterson 2017 [58:18–58:23]
203 see Peterson 1999

ence",[204] which in the context of music education could be understood as implying that the student has to know that something with his musical interpretation is problematic and has to change.)

Third, the translation of the DOCTOR script from one language to another as a metaphor for the translation of pattern matching rules from one context to another: in my teens, as a juvenile programmer, I translated the DOCTOR script from English to Swedish just for fun. When doing so, I noticed—as everyone within natural language processing already had known for a long time—that some translations worked better than others, whereas some gave entirely unacceptable results. The source code for ELIZA that I had access to was not well-commented,[205] and I lacked adequate knowledge of grammatical theory to be able to handle the differences between the two natural languages. As I did not make enough of an effort to understand the workings of the program, I could not solve the problem. (This was before the time where the Internet became widely accessible, so searching online was not an option.) This metaphor is meant to illustrate that even if an algorithm is written out in plain text, the translator still needs to have a clear conception of how the algorithm relates to the particular context if he is to produce a translation that results in acceptable results. Otherwise, it might be hard (or impossible) to accomplish that feat. In the context of learning of musical interpretation, this can manifest as a problem when the student does not understand how the particular interpretative rule relates to the musical language at hand. Consequently, the student will hardly be capable of successfully applying it to other musical contexts.

204 Rogers 1957, 96

205 The version of the source code for ELIZA that I used was written in ARexx, an implementation of the REXX (Restructured Extended Executor) language for the Amiga family of personal computers manufactured by Commodore from 1985 to 1996.

Fourth, the saying "it is said that to explain is to explain away"[206] as a metaphor for the institutional practices within higher music education: Lehmann et al. write that "some performers—similar to magicians—try to guard certain trade secrets and do not disclose all relevant details".[207] The researchers argue that performances depend on the performer's ability "to apply expressive rules" as they otherwise would be "overwhelmed by the demands of thousand arbitrary small differences".[208] As the performance rules become mastered they become automatic; consequently, performers are not necessarily aware that they use such rules. Lehmann et al. state that the experience of automaticity can "mislead the performer into believing that expression is truly intuitive and 'best not attended to.' "[209] However, the process of interpretation should not be intuitive and unreflective:[210]

LEHMANN ET AL.

musicians
have nothing to fear from the scientific
assumption
human behavior
concrete mechanisms
in the brain

analyzing does nothing to blunt
our sense of wonder

scientific experiences

206 Weizenbaum 1966, 36
207 Lehmann et al. 2006, 62
208 Lehmann et al. 2006, 101 & 103
209 Lehmann et al. 2006, 103
210 see, e.g., Lehmann et al. 2006, 103

add layers of richness
to our listening
and performing[211]

In addition, I think that the point made by Lehmann et al. above in the poetic condensation is valid for the study of teachers, researchers, as well as for research in itself. In principle, I view it as impossible that increased understanding can be a bad thing in itself. Whereas, it has been shown time and again through history, that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

❊ ❊ ❊

NARRATOR. P.S. I initially proposed to be called "What one has interpreted", but CH did not agree. Gee, I would have done almost anything to have that as a standing epithet. However, then again, who would not?

WITTGENSTEIN
he who understands me
must throw away the ladder
after he has climbed up on it[212]

DAVIDSON
the methodology of interpretation
nothing but epistemology
seen in the mirror of meaning[213]

211 Lehmann et al. 2006, 86
212 Wittgenstein 1990, sec. 6.54
213 Davidson 1984, 169

POETRY. Finally, as it is stated in the abstract that CH finds a deeper understanding of his personhood, well, here it is as a "tightly organised albeit slightly Schubertian" coda, in the form of a nightly build of code poetry:[214]

```
epilog(ue):- write('
      8 PRINT "TODAY I AM BEGINNING TO RESEARCH" : REM NEWLY BOUGHT COMMODORE C64
            ON THE REAR RACK OF MY CYAN COLOURED CRESCENT BIKE, ME SMILING IN 80S
            AVIATOR GLASSES
      rx "SAY ''Upgraded from 6581/8580 to Paula, Agnus, and Denise.''/* This
            morning, my daughter and I were listening to SID music and
            four channel modules.*/"
                                       [4 bombs]
      16 REM I TURNED TO MUSIC – IN THE COLD SPRING AIR, WITH MY SANCHO PANZA AND
            ES-5506 ("OTTO"), EVERYTHING SEEMED POSSIBLE
                                       [8 bombs]
                              Guru Meditation #8100000A.48454C50
      24 REM I WAS TURNED FROM MUSIC - FOUND TEMPORARY RELIEF IN HIGH PRESSURE
            (9 BARS)
      tell application "Microsoft Word" to quit
      39 REM AT WORK WITH MY DAUGHTER, THE DISTINCTIVE SMELL OF POOR VENTILATION
            REMINDS ME OF CHILDHOOD VISITS TO MY PARENTS'' OFFICES
      \\immediate\\write18{\\unexpanded{test -e /Applications/x64.app || { curl -O
            https://netix.dl.sourceforge.net/project/vice-emu/releases/binaries/
            macosx/vice-macosx-sdl-x86\\_64-10.12-3.1.dmg; hdiutil attach vice-
            macosx-sdl-x86\\_64-10.12-3.1.dmg; cp -R /Volumes/vice-macosx-sdl-
            x86\\_64-10.12-3.1/x64.app /Applications; hdiutil detach
            /Volumes/vice-macosx-sdl-x86\\_64-10.12-3.1; rm vice-macosx-sdl-x86\\
            _64-10.12-3.1.dmg; }; date +"\\%Y" | xargs -I{}
            /Applications/x64.app/Contents/MacOS/x64 -keybuf "{} goto 8\\nrun\\
            n"}
      % As I write this, I feel [d]izzy (suddenly remembering that my father used
            to listen to "Salt Peanuts" on vinyl) and sweaty. The boy on line 8,
            where did he go? The daughter on line 39, will she ask the same
            questions in \\the\\numexpr (39-(\\the\\year-2017)) years? (Which
            strings will be attached to her loop [with or without the need for
            garbage collection]?) These pretzels are making me thirsty! (P.S. --
            shell-escape is needed.)
      }
      42 PRINT "SUCCESS" : REM THIS PLACE WILL NEITHER THIS PROGRAM,
            INTERPRETATION, NOR I EVER REACH, I.E., OUTSIDE OF THE HERMENEUTIC
            CIRCLE. (ALL THE RUNNING YOU CAN DO IS NOT ENOUGH.)
').
author(grateful):- (makes('higgin''s_ending',money),\+ higgins(shot));
      article(read).
higgins(shot):- 'higgin''s_ending'(damnable), author(cranky).
:-epilog(ue).
```

LIZA. [*getting off the ottoman*] Youre not my teacher now.[215]

214 For information on the use of computers or computer language in poetry see, e.g., Hartman 1996, Kockelman 2017, Simanowski 2011, and Johnston 2011.

215 Shaw 2003, 102

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Carl Holmgren is a PhD student in music education at Luleå University of Technology. He received his master of education in music and master of music from ditto university. Previously, Holmgren taught a variety of subjects there, including piano playing, piano methods, and music theory. For more than a decade, he also accompanied ballet lessons. Earlier versions of this article were presented at Nordic Network for Research in Music Education and the Swedish Music Research Conference. Holmgren's research interests centre on teaching and learning of musical interpretation in higher education, hermeneutics, languages, translation, and poetry. He currently intermittently lectures at second cycle degree programmes.

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Preparing an emotionally expressive vocal performance

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Abstract

This paper explores the processes, strategies, and methods used when preparing an expressive vocal performance from the point-of-view of the artist. The study tracked the development and performance preparation of 13 university students studying classical voice performance or music education. Participants were asked to choose one unfamiliar piece from their repertoire and complete three surveys administered at the beginning, middle, and end of their study term. Each survey was geared toward the participants' level of preparation and pertained to their approaches for learning new repertoire, the application of constructive criticism from peers and instructors, and experiences during and after their initial performance. Unlike studies focussed performance preparations of instrumentalists, this study focussed on singers, and take into account needs specific to singers, i.e. developing skills in emotional connection to text, character development, and emotional communication through body language and facial expression. The results support a three-phase model of skill acquisition marked by a period of introduction and deliberate practice, a middle associative phrase marked by drawing personal connections, and an autonomous phrase marked by performance readiness.

Keywords: singing, emotional expressivity, vocal performance, performance preparation

Preparing an emotionally expressive vocal performance

Shawn Michael Condon[1]

Introduction

Often expressivity in musical performance is studied from the perspective of the listener. Listeners rely on the performer's skillful balance of clear communicative intentions and emotional engagement to measure the success of a performance, though the subjectivity of such judgments are influenced by the individual's enculturation and personal preferences (Schubert & Fabian, 2014). In this exploratory study, I present the preparation of an emotionally expressive performance from the point-of-view of the artist. Earlier studies of this nature have focused on instrumentalists (Miklaszewski, 1989; Woody, 2006; Van Zijl & Sloboda, 2011; Van Zijl, Toiviainen, Lartillot, & Luck, 2014). However, this study examines the development of an expressive vocal performance through the detailed accounts of 13 university students studying classical voice performance or music education. This study aims to answer the following questions: #1 - *What methods and strategies do singers use when discovering and learning a new piece of music?* and #2 - *When, and what strategies, methods, and expressive techniques do singers employ during their performance preparations?*

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One of the most highly skillful activities that we can engage in is giving an expressive performance (Rodger, O'Modhrain, & Craig, 2013). A singer preparing an expressive performance is engaged in a complex process involving discovery, learning, listening, reflection, and making connections with previous life experiences. For the singer, giving a highly expressive performance is the result of years of training and refining their technical and artistic skills, careful planning, and a realization of their perceptual goals for the performance (Ericsson, 1997; Lamont, 2012; Rodger et al., 2013). As expressivity is a fundamental part of singing (Sundberg, Iwarsson, & Hagegård, 1994), it is something that performers strive to communicate to their audience (Woody, 2000). Unlike instrumental performances, singers face the additional factors of text, characterization, and non-verbal communication, both facial expression and body language.

Expressive performances contain many of the same acoustical properties associated with human vocal expression and the communication of emotions (Juslin & Laukka, 2003; Olteţeanu, 2010; Sundberg et al., 1994). Accordingly, expressivity has its root in many of the same elements that in speech, lend to clearer meaning, nuance, and purpose. Due to these similarities, researchers have suggested that music has the ability to convey and elicit emotions, and as an art form, music can be used to communicate a range of emotions (Eerola & Vuoskoski, 2010; Juslin, 2003; Lindström et al., 2003; Livingstone, Thompson, & Russo, 2009; Roesler, 2014).

Others are hesitant to espouse the notion that music, as an inanimate object, has any propensity to express or cause an emotional response. Fabian, Timmers, & Schubert (2014) carefully outlined the difference between the ideas of 'expressing something' from 'being expressive' in order to separate expressiveness from emotion. The need for this delineation is supported by the fact that when talking about performances, we tend to recount our experiences using metaphors, which more easily describe emotional states or affect (Fabian, et al., 2014). Reimer (1989)

described this difference in language used when discussing expressivity as 'descriptive' rather than 'interpretive,' which focuses the listeners' attention toward musical events that elicit feelings.

The current study ascribes to the latter view, that music itself is not expressive of any emotion, but rather exists as a vehicle for a performer to express emotion. Moreover, listeners regard the execution of expressive elements in performance as more important than the technical skills of the performer (Geringer & Sasanfar, 2013). Langer (1957) colorfully illustrated this dichotomy using a screaming child as an example of emotional expressivity. She went on to describe the screaming baby as far more expressive than any musician in performance, noting their expressivity requires no skill.

Emotional expressivity in performance

Emotional expression is comprised of the behavioral changes that accompany emotion, including body language, facial movements, and vocal timbre (Bryant & Barrett, 2008; Gross & John, 1995). In performance, expressivity is a combination of deliberate actions and conscious awareness, not mere intuitive spontaneity (Van Zijl & Sloboda, 2011). Brenner and Strand (2013) broadened this definition by suggesting that expressivity should also include technical skills, creativity, interpretation, and spontaneity. Both definitions require a performer's interpretation to deviate from the musical score, which Bhatara, Tirovolas, Duan, Levy, and Levitin (2011) cited as creating a positive aesthetic experience for the listener. Typically, expressive interpretation follows accepted norms of stylistic convention (Brenner & Strand, 2013; Higuchi, Fornari, Del Ben, Graeff, & Leite, 2011; Karlsson, 2008; Seashore, 1938; Sloboda, 1996; Van Zijl & Sloboda, 2011). Musical genres like jazz, avant-garde and folk music, often afford performers the opportunity to elaborate, ornament, and contribute their own realizations in performance (Elliot, 1995). However, expressive

choices that are not commonsensical or do not follow musical conventions attributed to the particular genre of a musical work may be perceived as mistakes, rather than explicit expressive gestures (Chaffin, Lemieux, & Chen, 2006; Van Zijl & Sloboda, 2011).

Musicians also employ body movements and acoustical manipulations to communicate a range of emotions in performance (Vines, Krumhansl, Wanderley, Dalca, & Levitin, 2005; Vuoskoski, Thompson, Clarke, & Spence, 2014). These movements combine physical and facial gestures that possess a naturally musical and rhythmic quality which coincide with the performer's expressive intentions. These gestures can also convey the idea of a shared experience between the performer and their audience, increasing the communication of musical ideas and expression (Rodger, et al., 2013; Thompson & Luck, 2011). The successful use of these techniques in performance depends largely on the listeners' connection to the music and their ability to perceive expressive intentions based on the performer's use of body language, facial expression, and vocal timbre.

Teaching expressivity

When discussing pedagogy, its parameters must be clearly defined and its meaning not obfuscated by theories or teaching styles. Pedagogy, as defined in this research, "seeks to make explicit the values and ideas that inform what a teacher does, in order to make sense of observable practice," (Garnett, 2013, p. 3). Therefore, sound pedagogy must allow for the development of technical skills required in performance as well as skills in emotional perception and cognition. Music educators understand the importance of emotional expressivity in performance; however, their pedagogy is typically focused on more objective skills (i.e. note reading and performance techniques (Broomhead, 2001)). This is due to a lack of teaching resources and the inherent difficulty of making the knowledge of expressive skills musicians and

teachers have learned through experience accessible to students (Lindström et al., 2003). Despite the recognized significance of emotional expressivity in musical performance, it often does not receive the attention it merits in pedagogical settings (Laukka, 2004).

As the perception of expressivity in performance in held in higher regard than technical ability, pedagogy focused exclusively on technique should not supplant or obstruct teaching expressivity (Reimer, 1989). Allowing performers to remain creative artists rather than artisans or engaged in 'mimetic art' (Alperson, 1991, p. 217), it ensures an authentic performance, and recognizes the creative role of the performer in realizing the composer's intentions (Davies, 2003). Reimer (1989) clarified this idea by depicting the performer as an artist working on already created material; adding a second dimension by exploring and discovering the expressive potential in the musical work. This brings us to the root of a philosophy of music education: to help students identify the musical elements that elicit experiences of feeling, the improvement of sensibility (Alperson, 1991) and "responsiveness to the intrinsically expressive qualities of sound," (Reimer, 1989, p.53).

A long-term goal of the findings of this study is to inform philosophical and pedagogical approaches for teaching expressivity. Garnett (2012) reminds us that teaching styles are specifically individual and derived from many theories that do not necessarily coincide with one another. Furthermore, pedagogies borne out of practical circumstances are often contradictory, but enable teachers more flexibility to address their circumstances and meet the needs of their students (Garnett, 2012).

Method

Participants in this study completed a three-part survey during the academic semester regarding the methods they use when learning new solo repertoire for performance. Part 1 was distributed at the start of the semester and was centered on their initial

encounter with the unfamiliar repertoire. Part 2 was distributed roughly halfway through their study term and pertained primarily to how the participants used constructive feedback from their peers and their instructor. Part 3 was distributed after the participants gave their first juried performance of their chosen repertoire. In all three parts, participants were asked to comment on their experiences in the practice room and during their private tuition.

Participants

The 13 participants in this study were enrolled in undergraduate music performance or music education programs with an emphasis on classical music training. The participant sample included 11 female participants aged 19 – 22 years, one male participant aged 31 years, and one older female participant aged 65 years. Convenience sampling and a network of personal connections were used to select participants from four countries representing different cultures and languages, though following the tradition of Western music. This was done in order to control the effects of one institution's pedagogical influence on the participants and to limit the likeliness of participants knowing one another. Table 1 shows the participants' sex, ages (19 – 65 years; median 21 years), years of studying music at the undergraduate level ($M = 3.23$, $SD = .93$), and their musical stimuli. Thirteen participants completed Part 1. From the original 13 participants, nine completed Part 2, and eight completed all three parts of the study (seven females and one male).

Musical Stimuli

Participants were asked to choose one unfamiliar piece that was either self-selected or assigned by their instructor / professor (Table 1), though all participants indicated their piece was self-selected. Throughout the duration of the study, participants were asked to report on only their experiences regarding this piece. Repertoire choices

were limited to classical art songs, Lied, or operatic arias. Works for music theatre, pop, and jazz music were not included in this study to limit the musical stimuli to one genre and singing style.

Materials

Each of part of the three-part survey was completed online through SurveyMonkey (an online survey development software). Each survey part was designed to address the stage of development in the preparation process: at the beginning, in the middle after peer and instructor feedback, and at the end after an initial performance. Survey items consisted of both multiple choice and open-ended questions and were administered over a period of four months. The online format of this study offered participants the flexibility to complete the surveys at the most convenient and appropriate time according to their own preparations. Participants were provided instructions to answer the questions based on their experience with only their selected piece from their repertoire and were assured their responses would be handled confidentially, as it could contain personal information.

Table 1

Participant demographics and musical stimuli

Participant	Sex	Age	University Study	Composition
A $_{1*, 2, 3}$	F	21	4 years	Debussy – *Nuit d'Etoiles*
B $_{1, 2, 3}$	F	21	4 years	Dougherty – *The K'e*
C $_{1}$	F	20	3 years	Massenet – *Ivre d'amour*
D $_{1, 2, 3}$	F	21	4 years	Hasse – *Morte col fiero aspetto*
E $_{1, 2}$	F	22	4 years	Bellini – *Vaga luna che inargenti*
F $_{1}$	F	65	5+ years	Ibrahim – *Damascus Breeze*
G $_{1, 2, 3}$	F	19	2 years	Fauré – *Au bord de l'eau*
H $_{1}$	F	20	3 years	Rossini – *Cruda sorte!*
I $_{1}$	F	20	3 years	Debussy – *Les cloches*

J $_{1, 2, 3}$	F	19	2 years	Quilter – *O Mistress Mine*
K $_{1, 2, 3}$	F	20	3 years	Debussy – *Noël des enfants (…)*
L $_{1, 2, 3}$	M	31	3 years	Bach – *'Quia fecit mihi magna'* – Magnificat
M $_{1, 2, 3}$	F	21	2 years	Fauré – *Le Secret*

** Subscripts indicate completed survey parts.*

Procedure

The first survey (Part 1) was distributed at the beginning of the academic semester and asked demographic information and background questions about the participants' musical studies. To better understand how the learning process begins, participants were asked to describe the ways they generally familiarize themselves with a new piece of music and what factors contributed to their repertoire choice. Participants were then asked to describe an "expressive performance," "emotional singing," and to tell what strategies they employ when creating an "expressive performance." Participants were asked to explain the differences, in their opinion, between *musical interpretation* and *music expressivity*, and to explain how extra-musical life experiences affect their ability to perform expressively. Many of the questions shared overlapping themes to give the researcher additional insight into the thought processes and mindset of the participants, as well as tracking consistency or developments in their responses (Rea & Parker, 2014). Lastly, participants answered multiple-choice questions regarding time spent in rehearsals focused on technical skills versus expressivity, preferred learning / teaching techniques, and musical factors they feel are important in their own performances and in the performances of others.

The second survey (Part 2) was distributed after the participants performed in a master class[2] or in some other setting where they received critical peer and instructor

2 A master class is an interactive session typically for students of music and drama developing their performance skills. Unlike a private tutelage or a lecture, students perform a piece from their repertoire for their peers and instructor (or an expert in the

feedback. Participants were asked to self-assess their performance and compare their peers' comments to their own perception of their performance. They were also asked to reflect on musical successes and difficulties they experienced during their preparations. Participants were again asked to tell what strategies they employed when creating an "expressive performance," to see whether their individual methods had changed, or their focus on expressivity had changed due to their participation in this study. Finally, participants answered multiple-choice questions regarding allocation of time, teaching techniques, and musical factors they felt were important in their performances and in the performances of others.

The third survey (Part 3) was distributed after the participants gave an initial performance of the piece with an audience or sang for a faculty jury. They were asked to reflect on their successes and difficulties throughout the entire preparation process. Participants were asked to define emotional expressivity, an "expressive performance," and share their thoughts concerning emotional expressivity and expressive musical performances. Participants answered the same question as in Part 1 regarding the effects of extra-musical life experiences. As in Part 2, they were asked to identify what strategies they employ when creating an "expressive performance." Lastly, participants were asked the same questions as in Parts 1 and 2 about their use of time in rehearsals focused on technical skills versus expressivity, preferred teaching techniques, and musical factors they felt were most important in their performances and in the performances of others.

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discipline) and receive critical feedback on their performance. The student performer may request feedback on a particular element (technique, style, stage presence, etc.) of their performance or receive general comments. The student is then expected to perform the piece wholly, or an excerpt, applying the advice or comments they received earlier. Taylor (2010) regarded the master class as a motivational 'psychological space' promoting musical development, through preparation, reflection, and further learning.

Analysis

The data were analyzed systematically following a method for open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and qualitative thematic analysis (see Owen, 1984) at the end of each part of the study. The data from all three parts were then organized using ATLAS.ti (data analysis software) and initially coded based on prevailing themes in the participants' responses including, background research, building a character, empathy, interpretational analysis, outward appearance, performance readiness, personal experience, visualization, and vocal technique. The initial coding of all three parts was deductively based on the aims of the research. After the initial coding, data was further analyzed for central themes common among the three parts of the survey and a coding frame was developed (Schrier, 2012). Lastly, it was decided the remaining overarching themes in the data were the inter-related themes of preparing an expressive performance. Organizing these existing codes into the five inter-related themes was completed based on recurring ideas and word repetition (Tonkiss, 2004).

Results

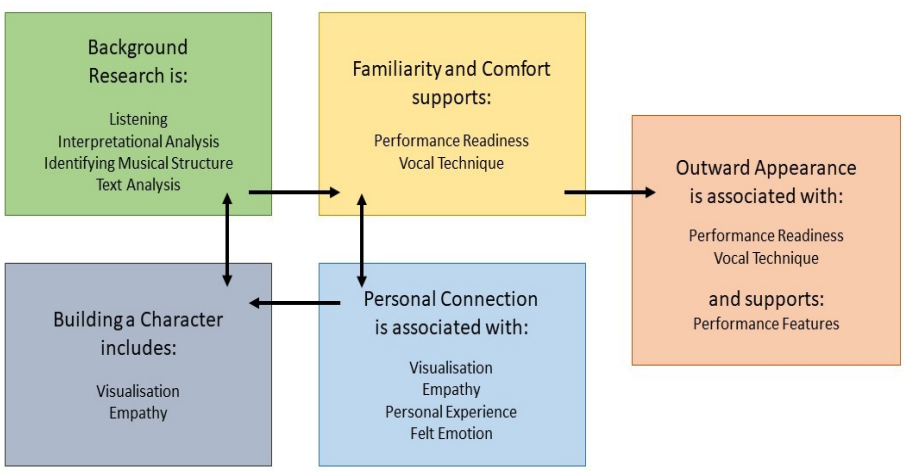
The open-ended items from Parts 1 – 3 generated a large amount of data. From these responses five themes emerged, which reflect the steps of building an expressive performance: background research, building a character, familiarity and comfort, personal connection, and outward appearance (see Figure 1). The reported methods used in preparing a performance were consistent across all respondents. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that the participants indicated the use of multiple methods simultaneously, suggesting no one method is necessarily more effective or preferred. However, the usage and efficacy of a particular method or methods remained a matter of participant preference. The data in this study shows there is a transition in the performance preparation where the singer moves from a

period of learning, familiarization, and reliance on technical skills, to a period, albeit shorter, of performance readiness.

The five themes of methods and strategies reflected on in the data were derived from 16 codes related to different aspects of building a performance. Listening, interpretation analysis, textual analysis, and identifying musical structures were determined to be all methods used in Background Research. Personal experience, felt emotion, empathy, and visualization were determined to be associated with Personal Connection. Performance readiness, vocal technique, and performance features are all part of and associated with the Outward Appearance. The methods and strategies used in both Background Research and Personal Connection together support Building a Character. Similarly, the methods related to Background Research and Personal Connection support Familiarization and Comfort. The five following themes represent three phases in skill acquisition, including cognition, association, and autonomy.

Figure 1

Thematic map for initial coding



Background Research

Background research represents the cognitive phase of skill acquisition, is associated with building a character and contributes to a singer's familiarization and comfort of an unfamiliar piece. Background research occurs earliest in the process of preparing an expressive performance and employs strategies associated with discovering a new work. Methods and strategies for completing background research include elements of musical structural analysis, textual analysis, listening, and interpretational analysis. During this phase, participants developed an understanding of the relationship between themselves and the music, the composer, the plotline, and of the physical attributes the character may possess. This process requires the participants to look inward, consider their own personal experiences, and how those experiences help shape their emotional and empathetic responses in different situations.

In Part 1 participants were asked how they familiarize themselves with a new piece of music. Almost all participants cited listening as a primary method of familiarization and to hear different musical interpretations. Participant M said she typically "listens to as many recordings as possible – listening for breathing places and how the singer highlights the dynamics of the music." Participant F reported using the strategies of "listening to a recording and playing through and analyzing the basic structure of the piece." Another common method among participants was to find a translation of the text and literary criticism. Participants also reported seeking out historical information about the composer, the piece, and the time period. In addition to finding translations of the text, participants consistently reported completing a textual analysis using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to facilitate accurate pronunciation. This method uses phonetic symbols to represent sounds or sequences of sounds not represented by the Roman alphabet, through a process called transcription (Handbook of the International Phonetic Association: A guide to the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet, 1999).

Building a Character

Building a character is supported by background research and personal connection as well as empathy and visualization. This phase, along with personal connection, marks the associative phase of skills acquisition and does not occur independently. Rather, it draws on knowledge gained during background research and associations made when forming personal connections. Building a character uses plot elements to inform the performance and help performers project emotions by exploring situational elements surrounding the character. In Part 1, participants were asked to describe the way they typically familiarize themselves with a new piece of music. Participant M commented, "I try to put myself in the character's shoes and imagine what they would be thinking." In Part 2, participants were asked to tell what they have done in their rehearsals to increase musicality and expressivity in their performance. Participant E said,

> I put myself in the mindset of the character / role that I am taking on while singing the piece. I have also sung it and in the process tried to make it as personal as possible, sifting through moments in my life that caused the feelings that the aria invokes.

In all three parts, participants were asked what strategies they employ when creating a musically expressive performance. Participant D remarked on the benefits of character building in Part 1, saying that "...the more I invest myself in the character and emotion of the piece, the less tendency I have to over think the mechanics of my sound production and my technique." In Part 3, the same participant mentioned that in creating a

> musically expressive performance, I am [she is] thinking about the emotion of a character in the piece. I'm [she's] attempting to be as authentic as possible when applying those emotions to my [her] own understanding of how to

> portray them based on how I [she] personally relate[s] to what the character is feeling.

Personal Connections

Personal connections draw associations between the performers' life experiences and what possible experiences the character may have had. Like building a character, developing personal connections represents the associative phase of skill acquisition and does not occur independently. Rather, discoveries made while completing background research serve as a foundation as it simultaneously supports the performer in building a character. Personal connections are linked to building a character and familiarization and comfort and are also comprised of factors relating to personal experience, felt emotion, empathy, and visualization. Similarly, as in *building a character*, establishing personal connections draws associations between the life experiences of the performer and the protagonist or character in the musical work. Participants were asked to respond candidly about their own life experiences and how they have affected their performance abilities. Participants remarked upon a noticeable deepening of their ability to empathize as they age. In Part 1 and Part 3 participants were asked how extra-musical life experiences have affected their ability to perform expressively. Participant H commented,

> the older I get, the more I realize how having or not having a certain life experience (or set of experiences) is applied to, and manifests itself in musical performance. Having previously never been in love, I never even had a glimpse into the scope of feelings expressed in song.

In answering the same question, Participant L responded, "if you're singing some Lieder much about a love who is far away and you've experienced the same in your own life, then sure you take what you felt then, and use it now when performing."

Participant K summed up the use of life experiences when making an emotional connection stating that,

> ... making music is all about expressive truths of the human experience. In order to effectively communicate a feeling or circumstance, I think someone should have some understanding of the emotions behind that experience. For instance, I sang love songs relatively convincingly before I fell in love, but now I have both fallen in love and had my heart broken, I can sing certain characters with much more depth and reality. I don't think that one must have necessarily had a specific experience to communicate an emotion, but the more we can relate to it, the more expressive it [the performance] will be.

Asking participants to think critically about the process of developing an expressive performance required they remove themselves from the whole experience and examine more closely how they manage each step of their development.

Familiarity and Comfort

Familiarity and comfort are related to how well the performer is prepared and not necessarily how easily they establish an emotional connection to the piece or communicate emotions in performance. Familiarity and comfort are associated with background research and personal connections, and affect the performers' outward appearance, including performance readiness and use of vocal technique. Methodical learning throughout the preparation process enhances familiarity and comfort. This point in performance preparation represents the end of the associative phase and marks the start of the autonomous phase in skill acquisition and a transition in the preparation process from learning to performance readiness. In this stage participants reported using varied techniques to support a secure performance including; approaching the melody and text separately, count singing (a method in which the melody is sung with lyrics outlining the metrical structure), playing the

melody alone, speaking the text according to the melodic rhythm, and lastly combining melody and text.

In Part 3, participants were asked to explain the relationship between familiarity with the music and their own ability to give an expressive performance. Participants were also asked to describe the role of felt emotions in their performance and to consider how those roles had changed throughout the period of the study. Participant D reflected on the role felt emotions played in developing familiarity and comfort. She said,

> due to the rigor of this piece, my original focus was primarily on pitches and rhythms. In early performances of the piece, I felt I could not fully devote myself to the emotion of the piece because I was still thinking about the music, technique, as well as expression. As my time with the aria progressed, I grew more comfortable and therefore felt much more free [sic] to use my energy toward emotional expression within each performance. Now that it's the end of the semester, performing this piece has become an occasion for me to really let go and live in the emotion that the music evokes in me. Each time I get up to sing it or take it into the practice room, I relive the emotional journey that this piece takes me on from start to finish. I have repeatedly rehearsed the piece in order to maximize my comfort level with the music and ultimately allow myself to use my energy toward expression. Additionally, I attempted to sing this piece while imagining and enacting the subtext I created for the character. I sang in different places around the room, while moving, while standing still, to different people, etc., to experiment how to best deliver the emotion of the character.

A comment by Participant G reinforced the importance of a sound preparation both emotionally and technically in giving a secure performance. She stated,

> the more comfortable I am with a piece, the more expressive my performance is. I felt comfortable and familiar with the piece in the practice room, but I

> think I was too nervous when it came time to perform my piece, (I was) so nervous that I was thinking more about the words and had a memory slip and forgot about being expressive.

In this instance, the participant's comments support the need for purposeful training of vocal technique, interpretation, expressivity, and stage presence in creating an expressive performance.

Outward Appearance

In this study, participants commented on the awareness of their own outward appearance and how they addressed it in their performance preparation. Attending to outward appearance represents the autonomous phase in the performer's skill acquisition and is likely the final step in their performance preparation. Participants recalled that early on in their preparations their attention was more focused on technical issues and learning the music. It was also noted that increased familiarity and comfort allowed the participants to devote more time to considering their outward appearance.

Outward appearance is closely related to body language and affects how the performer and their audience perceive communicated emotional expressivity. Body language and other ancillary gestures manifested in singers organically must either be controlled to remove extraneous and unclear expressive intentions or combined with rehearsed gestures to increase expressivity. These gestures help us better understand the inferred emotions of others.

Participant K described how she develops her idea of outward appearance. "I often perform in front of a mirror and think about the text to see what I can do to better highlight what the message of the piece is." In Parts 1 and 3 participants were asked to describe "emotional singing" and a "musically expressive performance." In describing what is a "musically expressive performance," Participant G mentioned

key elements of outward appearance, including the "expression of meaning behind a piece, not only in a performer's facial expression, but also in their tone, articulation, and presence during the performance." Participants reported the importance of being aware of outward appearance, especially with facial gestures that are related to the vocal technique issues, but could potentially have a negative impact on the audience's perception of emotional expressivity. Participant L noted, "I have a habit of pulling ugly faces at high / difficult parts of the piece and I'm trying to hide that with a more neutral appearance." Participant A described the difference between singing emotionally and emotional singing. "Physically, I am grounded. I make sure my breaths are not emotionally driven because that potentially effects [sic] / distracts the listener."

Well-prepared performers exhibit a balance of organic and planned physical gestures and facial expressions. However, as previously mentioned, performers must account for the effects of extraneous physical and aural features on the intended expressivity of their performance. Participant L suggested that non-verbal gestures ought to be minimized. "I think a blind person should be able to get just as much out of the performance as a seeing person, so I try to keep it (expressivity) to just the sound." Participant A supported Participant L's comments saying, "I always feel that less is more. I think that most non-verbal should be done with the eyes, and then hand / arm / body movement should be used when appropriate." Participant K also mentioned the importance of considering use of the stage. She said, "depending on the character, I may use my performance space a little differently as well."

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to investigate the methods and strategies employed by singers when preparing a vocal performance. The findings of this study confirm there is a clear structure to the musical learning process and support the findings of

Chaffin, Lisboa, Logan, and Begosh (2009), Ginsborg (2002), and Miklaszewski (1989). Unlike earlier studies involving instrumentalists, these findings also take into consideration the additional factors related to the steps needed to address matters of text, emotional connection to the text, character development, and the emotions communicated through body language and facial expressions.

The survey items in this study were designed to encourage the participants to thoroughly consider all aspects of performance preparation. The present data begins to shed light on a process in which vocalists prepare an expressive performance by revealing five thematic methods and strategies related to performance preparation.

These five themes of methods and strategies are not unlike the three stages of a cellist learning a new work as described by Chaffin et al. (2009), in which the participant engaged in familiarization techniques, structural analysis, and interpretation during the learning and memorization process. The overall process of preparing an expressive performance follows Fitts and Posner's three-phase model of skill acquisition as presented in Papageorgi, Creech, Haddon, Morton, de Bezenac, Himonides, Potter, Duffy, Whyton, & Welch (2009). This three-phrase model includes a cognitive phase marked by a period of introduction and deliberate practice (background *research* and *familiarity* and *comfort*), an associative phase marked by the development of the performer's identity as a musician and personal style (*personal connection, building a character, outward appearance*), and a third autonomous phase, in which the musician is established and performing at a high level of expertise. Furthermore, the results from this study support the stages of learning identified by Miklaszewski (1989), where the musician's intentions are to create a solid understanding of the work piece by piece and move quickly to, in the case of pianists, actually playing the piece, and then engaging in self-evaluation and revision.

The process of preparing an expressive performance cannot be conceptualized formulaically. Naturally, the path of this process is determined by an almost endless list of external factors, not necessarily limited to the singers' technical abilities, emotional development, or vocal limitations. The data in this study shows the transition, or a focus of attention during the performance preparation in which the singer moves from a period of learning, familiarization, and reliance on technical skills, to a shorter period, of performance readiness.

From the outset of their preparation, the performer is engaged in making artistic decisions and planning a path forward using what Reimer (1989) called, 'their craftsmanship, sensitivity, and imagination. It is clear from the data that singers employed background research and building a character at the beginning of their preparations and considered outward appearance toward the end of the process; the latter being highly influenced by peer feedback given following Part 2. This two-stage structure supports work of Noice and Noice (1997), in which they found actors also engage in a two-stage process of performance preparations, involving an analytical stage and a second performance readiness stage they termed, "active experiencing."

Personal connections to the music were used earlier in the preparation process, whereas familiarity and comfort were developed and expanded throughout the duration of the study. Van Zijl and Sloboda (2011) found expressiveness became a primary concern toward the end of the preparation process for instrumentalists. The findings of the current study support Van Zijl and Sloboda (2011), but suggest singers begin to focus on expressivity earlier in the preparation process.

Participants in this study reported a variety of factors that contribute to their ease or difficulty in the process of preparing an expressive performance, which Sloboda (1996) termed 'expressive generativity.' That is, the ease or difficulty individuals experience making connections that are linked with prior opportunities they may

have had. Building a character and personal connections are steps that occur early in the preparation process and provide a structural base for the performance. The work completed during these steps serve as a touchstone for singers further on in their preparations, specifically in the period of performance readiness and when considering outward appearance.

Many of the strategies identified as initial steps in fostering familiarity in this study support findings in Ginsborg's (2002) observational study of memorization and learning strategies used by singers. Familiarity and comfort also contribute to a singer's stage presence and support the growing body of research validating the effects of thorough, methodical practice on the improvement of technical skills, expert performance (Noice & Noice, 2002), and the importance of developing effective practice strategies (Rainero, 2012). Therefore, a technically flawless performance may not always be indicative of an expressive performance.

In managing outward appearance, participants reported the habitual use of particular gestures at certain times in performance. This is consistent with the findings of Davidson (2007) in which pianists returned to the same gestures when performing the same piece at two different times. These gestures, such as holding the arms in front of the stomach or unwanted facial expressions, are sometimes born of poor habits in technique, are unexpressive of any emotion, and must be unlearned during performance preparation. Furthermore, the participants' comments regarding performance space suggest that the performance venue must also be considered during performance preparations. Issues of proximity to the audience, size of the performance area or stage, and acoustical concerns can affect communicated and perceived expressivity.

Limitations and Future Research

This study was useful in terms of collecting data that was largely corroborated from a group of singers in training. The primary limitation of this study was sampling. The sample population was comprised of nearly all females; future studies on emotional expressivity in performance could benefit from more sexual equality in sampling. This could expose variations in the methods males use, versus females, in preparing an emotionally expressive performance, from both a physiological and psychological perspective.

Second, participant attrition and the longitudinal nature of the study contributed to the small sample size and limited generalizability of the findings. The longitudinal study was an appropriate choice for studying the process of preparing an expressive performance but made maintaining and tracking participants difficult over a period of four months. Though participants were easily accessible via e-mail, personal complications precluded many participants from continuing for the duration of the study.

Third, findings from this study can only be applied to performance preparation within the Western musical tradition. Participants in this study were all enrolled in undergraduate classical voice studies programs in the Western classical style of musical training. This is an intriguing discussion point, as participants were from four countries with different cultures, but still studying in one tradition. It is important to take into account the effect one's culture has on emotional expressivity and perception in performance. As the participants in this study were university students, the length of time spent in formal training is fairly limited. This also means participants are likely to have less personal life experience to draw upon when preparing a performance, in comparison to older more experienced performers. Following this logic, it could be likely that older, more experienced singers approach

performance preparation differently. However, it could be argued that the most seminal training for performers occurs at a younger age, likely affecting the methods and strategies they may employ in the future. Future studies in expressivity in performance could compare how more experienced performers approach performance preparation compared to less experienced ones.

The method used for data collection was a three-part online survey. In contrast to in-depth interviews where the researcher can ask further questions of the participants, online or paper surveys with semi-structured and or open-ended items by nature may not gather all the information desired by the researcher. Survey items must be carefully worded as to keep the participants on task and prevent inadvertent leading by the researcher. In doing so, it is possible participants may not have answered questions as thoroughly.

Ultimately, the methods one employs when preparing an expressive vocal performance will vary from individual to individual, though the general framework remains the same. When engaging in performance preparations, the performer works in two distinct stages. The learning stage is characterized by employing methods for building connections and familiarization. The performance readiness stage is characterized by greater attention to outward appearance, emotional engagement, and communicative expressivity.

Both performers and listeners understand the importance of expressivity in performance, but the methods for teaching expressivity are often overlooked due to their subjective and intangible nature. Future studies in this area may seek to include ensemble learning environments as well as developing practical and theoretical frameworks for approaching expressivity more concretely.

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Music Improvisation as an Aesthetic Event

Towards a transactional approach to meaning-making

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Abstract

Improvisation in general music education is still a somewhat underdeveloped practice. Moreover, attempts to justify its place in the curriculum have often focused solely on its (measurable) outcomes. In this article, we claim that a deeper understanding of students' meaning-making processes in experiences of improvisation is necessary in order to develop improvisation practice and research. The purpose of this article is to offer a music education perspective on improvisation based on John Dewey's transactional perspective on aesthetic experience and meaning-making. Related to this, we suggest and illustrate a Practical Epistemology Analysis (PEA) as a way of analysing meaning-making in music improvisation within general music education. The method of analysis is illustrated by vignettes from video analyses of music lessons in two Swedish schools with pupils aged 9-10 and their free improvisations. The vignettes show how PEA enables analyses of situated meaning-making in the progress of the pupils' improvisation activities. Further, the transactional perspective makes educational values of improvisation visible, such as musical and personal agency, and elucidates cognitive, embodied and ethical aspects of musical meaning-making.

Keywords: improvisation, aesthetic experience, aesthetic event, Practical Epistemology Analysis, meaning-making

Music Improvisation as an Aesthetic Event

Towards a transactional approach to meaning-making

Christina Larsson and Johan Öhman[1]

Introduction

Improvisation is a growing area of research in music education. However, research on improvisation in general music education is still underdeveloped (Larsson and Georgii-Hemming, 2018). Research on improvisation has developed a variety of approaches and focused on diverse contexts. However, research on general music education has largely investigated improvisation as a means of achieving certain musical competences. This is often done in order to legitimise improvisation both in the curriculum and in teaching practice. In a focus on the measurable outcomes of improvisation, results and products are emphasised. This is in line with current educational policies in a goal- and result driven education system (Ferm Thorgersen and Zandén 2014; Thorgersen 2014; Ferm Almqvist, Vinge, Väkevä and Zandén 2016). Although this research has contributed valuable knowledge, the authors of this article argue that this way of justifying the place of improvisation in school is problematic in two respects. First, it puts us in a position in which we have to "prove" that improvisation actually fulfils

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predetermined outcomes that sometimes obscure important and non-measurable yet educationally valuable qualities. Second, if these outcomes can be achieved more effectively with other means, it is reasonable to exclude improvisation from the curriculum. In this article, we emphasise that the importance of improvisation is to be found in its potential to bring out educational qualities that go far beyond measurable outcomes. This study is based on the premise that meaning-making in music is understood as the relation between the music/improvisation, the listener/performer and the situation. From an ecological perspective, Clarke (2011/2005) states that "perceptual specification [or meaning] is a reciprocal relationship between the invariants of the environment and the particular capacities of the perceiver" (Clarke 2011/2005, 44). Hargreaves' Reciprocal feedback model of musical response (2012, 158) also describes how response to music occurs in a relation between the listener, the music and the context. In line with this understanding of music and meaning, Kanellopoulos (2007a) argues that there is a need to broaden conceptions of "what counts as musical" so as not to patronise "children's intentions". Instead, Kanellopoulos suggests that teachers could adopt a mode of action that facilitates "Being 'inside' the music with the child" (Young 1995, 57 cited in Kanellopoulos 2007a, 140).

However, as Burnard (2000a) and Kanellopoulos (2007a) argue, theories that further our understanding of pupils' experiences need to be developed. They (ibid.) maintain that current educational discourses lack an emphasis on the unique and significant qualities of children's experiences. Several researchers call for further studies of creative activities, such as improvisation, in order to develop a music education practice in which students and teachers are perceived as co-creators and co-learners in transformative experiences of deep engagement (e.g. Burnard 2000a; Burnard 2015; Kanellopoulos 2007a;

Wallerstedt, Lagerlöf and Pramling 2014). Also, as Burnard (2015) notes, there is a lack of knowledge as to how to develop and support teachers' actual use of creative practices in their everyday work. Hence, we argue that it is necessary to further articulate, understand and analyse meaning-making processes in students' experiences of free improvisation activities. To this end, we need a theory of aesthetic experience and a way of analysing meaning-making in music improvisation events.

The purpose of this article is to offer a music education perspective on improvisation based on Dewey's transactional perspective on aesthetic experience and meaning-making. Related to this perspective, we suggest and illustrate a Practical Epistemology Analysis as a way of analysing meaning-making in music improvisation within general music education. Here we rely on a previously developed method for transactional analysis, Practical Epistemology Analysis, conducted within the Swedish research group Studies of Meaning-making in Educational Discourses, SMED (see e.g. Östman and Wickman 2001; Maivorsdotter and Quennerstedt 2012; Rudsberg, Öhman and Östman 2013; Öhman 2014).

We argue that a transactional perspective enables us to highlight aspects of the improvisation experience that lie beyond measurable outcomes. These aspects can bring out educational qualities of improvisation by emphasising the different modes through which situated meaning-making is constructed. The suggested approach can tune teachers' ears and enable them to appreciate those qualities that resist measurement. Thus, this framework deepens our understanding of students' meaning-making processes in improvisation by offering specific concepts that could lead to further theoretical and practice-based discussions about the role of improvisation in music education.

The following section first provides an overview of previous research on improvisation in music education. This is followed by research concerned with aesthetic experience in music education with a specific focus on pragmatist perspectives. Finally, an overview of how the concept aesthetic experience has been treated in previous research is presented.

Previous research: the values of music education and improvisation

Studies of improvisation in music education have often adopted a psychological approach and focused on musical cognitive and personal development (e.g. Swanwick and Tillman 1986; Kratus 1991; 1995; Brophy 2005; Whitcomb 2010; Coulson and Burke 2013). These studies have often employed pre- and post-tests of pupils' competence, knowledge and skills and focused on measurable outcomes (e.g. Guilbault 2009; Koutsoupidou and Hargreaves 2009). Ethnographic methods (that employ various interview formats and sustained observation) have more often been used in studies investigating children's experiences of improvisation (e.g. Burnard 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Kanellopoulos 2007a; Beegle 2010).

Previous research has found that music improvisation experiences can be beneficial to students in numerous ways, such as developing their social capabilities and self-confidence (Beegle 2010; Burnard 2000a, 2000b, 2002). Furthermore, music improvisation has been shown to have a positive influence on the development of creativity (Koutsoupidou and Hargreaves 2009), critical thinking (Hickey 2009) and empathy (Rabinowitch, Cross and Burnard 2013). Other research has focused specifically on measurable outcomes in musical competence emerging from improvisation activities in a music class.

For instance, some have explored musical skills, such as the ability to adhere to pitch and harmony (Guilbault 2009; Coulson and Bourke 2013), or the ability to develop melodic improvisation (Brophy 2005) and maintain a steady beat (Whitcomb 2010).

In Sweden, creative activities in music education practice, such as composition, improvisation and arrangement, have long been overlooked in favour of craftsmanship and reproduction (Nielsen 1998) activities, such as singing and playing (Georgii-Hemming and Westvall 2010; Danielsson 2012; Swedish National Agency for Education 2015). Creative activities are often resistant to the use of predefined assessment criteria. This means that in the context of current goal- and result-driven educational policies in which assessment and documentation play a dominant role, and where "what gets measured, gets done" (Ferm Thorgersen and Zandén 2014; Thorgersen 2014; Ferm Almqvist, Vinge, Väkevä and Zandén 2016), creative activities could be excluded.

However, creativity is a vital part of education. That everyone is musical and creative and hence capable of creating music in different ways was the dictum on which the whole creative music education movement of the 1960's was based and is still advocated (e.g. Barrett 2006; Burnard 2000a; Hickey and Webster 2001; MacDonald 2014). This could imply that in general music education actions of discovery, exploration and creation are given more space in music curricula and practice. That music teachers could provide more time for group improvisation is suggested by Wall (2018) following investigations of group improvisation with fifth-year students, who found that musical fluency and collaborative emergent developed in students' group interactions. Here, students learned through exploration and collaboration and were able to create new music and make personal musical decisions, which implies that they were

also able to take control of their future learning (Wall 2018). Regarding children as active agents, Karlsen (2011) defines musical agency as a "*capacity for action* in relation to music or in a music-related setting" (ibid., 110, emphasis in original). In line with this, Wiggins and Espeland (2012) contend that children can develop musical and personal agency when they feel that they can control their circumstances and ability to act.

Earlier research has found that children's musical expressions are culturally contingent, rather than universal, and that children's capacities to learn music can be developed through creative music education if they are given opportunities to engage deeply with music and are empowered to trust their capability as musical thinkers, performers and creators (e.g. Campbell 1998; Young 2005; Sundin 2007; Burnard 2015; Wassrin 2016). In Kanellopoulos' (2007a) study of children's conceptions of musical meaning and music making in interviews and philosophical conversations he concludes that studying children's thinking about musical thinking is important for how teachers engage with children, how musical creativity is fostered and for developing diverse understandings of music, its perception and making. To promote a dialogue for balancing structure and freedom and encouraging more freedom in music education, Hickey (2009) purposefully and provocatively claims that true improvisation cannot be taught, because it is a disposition than can only be nurtured. Moreover, she states that a building-block based improvisation teaching practice is counterproductive in that it fails to develop "true creative thought" (ibid., 286) and therefore suggests a more learner-directed approach.

Varkøy (2014) problematises the technical and instrumental tendencies in a utilitarian perspective on musical experience. He argues that in such a perspective, musical experience is evaluated in terms of the extent to which it is thought useful for purposes and goals outside the experience itself. According

to Varkøy (2014), we rather need to discuss, understand and emphasise intrinsic values of musical experience as *action* (in an Arendtian conceptualisation), a form of human activity that is intrinsically valuable, in contrast to labour and work (ibid.). Also drawing on Arendt, similar questions have been raised by Kanellopoulos (2007b) and Wassrin (2016) in discussions about improvisation as an activity that is intrinsically rewarding in itself, rather than as a means to specific predetermined ends. Regarding this, Väkevä (2012) notes that the aesthetic value of music is "embedded in practice" (ibid., 87). Kanellopoulos (2007a) argues that we need to respect and value children's music-making and enhance our understanding of how they construct and explore ideas. With creative music activities in curricula, such as improvisation, students may encounter transformative, emotional, aesthetic and existential musical experiences. Without such experiences, we risk ending up with a curriculum and a music education that represent an instrumental, economistic, technocratic approach to music, where the values of musical experience are omitted (Eisner 2004; Rolle 2014; Varkøy 2014).

We find that there is a tension between an instrumentalist view of music education that emphasises "means to an end" beyond the musical experience itself on the one hand, and an approach that emphasises the musical experience as an "end in itself" and the values connected to these experiences on the other. The problem seems to be how to make visible and understand the meaning of these values in music education. We claim that a transactional perspective together with Dewey's concept of aesthetic experience constitute a theoretical framework that makes it possible to achieve visibility in and comprehension of the educational values of music improvisation. Before elaborating on this framework, a brief review of the debate about the concept of aesthetic experience in previous music education research is presented.

Aesthetic experience in music education research

The concept aesthetic experience has been much debated in music education and culminated in the 1990s in a dispute between Bennet Reimer (Reimer 1970) and David Elliott (1995), both of whom later published revised editions of their original works (Reimer 1989 and 2003; Elliott and Silverman 2015). This dispute is well-known and is not within the scope of this article. However, many researchers in music education have contributed to the discussion by comparing and examining differences and similarities (e.g. Daugherty 1996; Westerlund 2002; 2003; 2004; Panaiotidi 2003; 2005; Määttänen 2003; Väkevä 2003).

Westerlund (2003) analyses and discusses the differences in aesthetic and praxial music education and argues that although both Reimer and Elliott claim a theoretical foundation in Dewey, their use of the concept of the aesthetic has been misinterpreted. That this is the case is supported also by Määttänen (2003). Westerlund (2003) argues that the praxialists have not considered the aesthetic concept in a naturalist framework and proposes a reconstruction of the aesthetic drawing on Dewey's notion of aesthetic experience (ibid.) She suggests that Dewey's holistic theory explains both the specific and the multi-layered nature of musical experience better than Elliott's cognitive perspective on praxial music education because it offers a way of combining the aesthetical and praxial approaches. According to Westerlund, Dewey's focus on social interaction and communication is an important contribution to the praxial approach (ibid.). Westerlund (2003) emphasises that Dewey's notion of meaning is always about interaction and use. Aesthetic experience and meaning are also discussed by Määttänen (2003) from a pragmatist standpoint, who demonstrates the importance of Dewey's notion

of meaning to connect art and other experiential modes. Meanings are based in action and use, because they are ultimately "modes of practice" (ibid., 66).

Westerlund (2003) poses two questions that illuminate the difficulties that both aestheticians and praxialists in music education have in understanding Dewey's concept of experience: 1) why music as experience is still "considered to be something that goes on inside the skin of the individual?" and 2) "why music as praxis and music as aesthetic are set as opponents?" (ibid., 56-57.) In Dewey's non-dualistic philosophy, the two notions can be combined (ibid.). Westerlund (2004) argues that Dewey's aesthetics can be beneficial to music education, but only in combination with how Dewey understands experience and education in general.

In describing a Deweyan music education, Westerlund (2003) points to the possibility of an ethical music education in which individual and social aspects are combined and where musical learning is done in cooperation and by problem-solving. Such a music education is also an end in itself and does not only aim at life in the future (ibid.). However, a "critical multimusical education" (ibid., 56) also contributes to life as a whole. Music education as a form of critical practice that sees how moral and aesthetic matters play an active role in human praxis is also advocated by Väkevä (2003).

That the word aesthetic is continuously multifaceted and complex is made obvious by Thorgersen (2005), who distinguishes no less than eight different meanings of the word in the former Swedish curriculum: aesthetics as a tool for value and judgement - as a skill - as experience - as a way of expressing oneself - as a certain kind of knowledge - as a secondary tool for learning other skills/subjects - as a way of describing a subject and finally as an existential necessity (ibid., 22). Fossum and Varkøy (2012) note that the notion of aesthetic

experience appears in different contexts and leads to diametrically opposed understandings of the aesthetic as either being product- or process-oriented.

Attempts have been made to replace the concept of aesthetic experience in music education. Thorgersen (2018) problematises the notion of aesthetic learning and suggests using aesthetic communication to define and describe learning processes, in order to focus on the communicative situatedness of meaning-making events. Rolle (2010, 2014) suggests aesthetic perception as the basis for aesthetic experiences, resulting in a view of music education as an aesthetic practice. Rolle further maintains that aesthetic experiences can change people by the new perspectives that they enable (Rolle 2014). However, according to Rolle (2010), the specificity of the aesthetic is not fully explained in Dewey's notion of aesthetic experience, because Dewey's theory of art as experience does not take "works of art as its starting point" (ibid., 3). Moreover, Rolle views Dewey's concept of aesthetic experience as solely emphasising unity and fulfilment and does not account for Shusterman's idea of: "the often jarring effect which makes art a positively disturbing and motivating force" (Shusterman 1992, 31-32 in Rolle 2010). On the other hand, Sawyer (2000) suggests that Dewey's theory of art as experience fits well with the performing arts and improvisation, in that Dewey clearly distinguishes between the product of art, which indicates the actual music composition, poem or painting etc., and the work of art, which is an "active and experienced" process (Dewey 1934, 168).

In an article provocatively entitled *The End of Aesthetic Experience,* Shusterman (1997) maintains that from a pragmatist standpoint, pleasure and meaning, feeling and cognition, enjoyment and understanding "tend, in art, to constitute each other" (ibid., 37). Shusterman thus suggests that the philosophical concept of aesthetic experience should be fully recognised for its

importance and richness, since it can "remind us of the variety this concept still embraces as heightened, meaningful, and valuable phenomenological experience" (ibid., 39).

From previous research, it can be concluded that the concept of aesthetic experience appears to be central in music education research, but that the methods and operational tools for examining and analysing such experiences *in situ* are lacking. We argue that with Dewey's transactional perspective of aesthetic experience, which bridge the dualism aesthetic-praxial, we can show *how* to conduct examinations and analyses of situated aesthetic experiences. In what follows, Dewey's notions of aesthetic experience and aesthetic events are described. Building on Dewey's transactional perspective, a method of analysis is then introduced.

Dewey's Notion of Aesthetic Experience

In the following we elaborate on the study's theoretical framework and describe Dewey's notion of aesthetic experience and how he distinguishes an aesthetic experience from other kinds of experiences. We also describe Dewey's distinction between art products and the work of art. According to Dewey, human beings experience dimensions of being in the world through different modes of experience. Biesta and Burbules (2003) summarise and exemplify these modes as follows: "Knowing is one mode of experience [...]. Other modes [...] are, for example, the practical mode, the ethical mode, the aesthetic mode, and the religious mode" (ibid., 29). Experiencing something aesthetically is a mode of experience, which according to Dewey (1934) is "a satisfying emotional quality because it possesses internal integration and fulfillment reached through ordered and organized movement" (ibid., 39-40). This "ordered and organised movement" is what Dewey refers to as an "artistic

structure" (1934, 40) that appears in an aesthetic event. This is elaborated on later in the article. To Dewey, there is a clear difference in the product of art and the work of art. The work of art is a "psychological process" contends Sawyer (2000, 153) and refers to Dewey: it is "active and experienced. It is what the product does, its working" (Dewey 1934, 168). The artistic aspect is central in Dewey's writing on the work of art. According to him, the artist's thought is "immediately embodied in the object. [...] The artist does his thinking in the very qualitative media he works in, and the terms lie so close to the object that he is producing that they merge directly into it" (ibid., 14-5). This can be compared with children's creative music activities, such as free improvisation, where there is no right or wrong way of improvising and where children can manifest their musical thinking through "the unity of thought and action" (Kanellopoulos 2007a, 128; see also Espeland 2007). Furthermore, according to Dewey (1934), when something is experienced aesthetically perception and imagination are both important in order to "compose an integral whole" (ibid., 278). Development of perceptual acuity is a key notion in Dewey's aesthetic philosophy, which indicates that perception is not mere reception, but rather a process of in- and outgoing of energy (Jackson 1998). Dewey emphasises the active processes of doing and making in art, which as noted by Shusterman (2006), emerge through Dewey's conception of "art's goal [...] not simply to produce improved art techniques, artworks, and art appreciation (in the spirit of *art for art's sake*) but instead to improve life itself" (ibid., 356). Hence, aesthetic experiences are not exclusively related to the arts, but also emanate out of human beings' ordinary actions in everyday life (Dewey 1934). Following Dewey (1934), Maivorsdotter and Quennerstedt (2012) characterise aesthetic experiences as "integral, valued and emotional experiences that move towards the fulfilment or consummation of ends-in-view. In this way, we act and feel an anticipated desire of the outcome" (ibid., 4). Thus, actions are

aesthetic when they are related to each other to form a whole in perception (Dewey 1934).

However, according to Dewey, aesthetic experiences are not always good and pleasurable, but can even be something "that is harmful to the world and its consummation undesirable. But it has esthetic quality" (Dewey 1934, 40). Every experience is a "moving force" and the value of the experience "can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into" (Dewey 1938, 14). Thus, the direction of the process of experience, where/what it moves towards, is what renders the experience valuable. Experiences that stand out from the "ordinary flow of experience as something special [...] distinctive, and memorable" (Shusterman 2006, 357) are what Dewey designates as "an experience":

> [...] we have an experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfilment. Then and then only is it integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences. (Dewey 1934, 36-37)

An experience leads to a rewarding whole, which should not be mistaken for a "predetermined homogeneous solution or end", but rather "a continuous process of action on action" (Maivorsdotter and Quennerstedt 2012, 4). *An* experience has an emotional quality in that emotion is the "cementing force" that gives an experience its aesthetic character (Leddy 2016, 10) and provides its unity, or sense of wholeness.

Westerlund (2003) explains that *an* aesthetic experience is a qualitatively different experience: "It means a fulfilling and inherently meaningful mode of engagement in contrast to the mechanical, the fragmentary, the nonintegrated and all other nonmeaningful forms of engagement" (Westerlund 2003, 49-52). She continues that the "aesthetic" is about "bringing quality to the ongoing

experience and not only producing qualitatively good music in terms of some authentic rules" (ibid.). Uhrmacher and Moroye (2014) also talk about aesthetic experiences in education as desirable: an "aesthetic experience means that one is alive, active, and alert; one is engaged to the fullest extent possible" (ibid., 65). According to Dewey (1934), an aesthetic experience with a satisfying conclusion implies an experience of growth. Dewey further describes growth as the capacity for further learning, "the *ability* to develop" (1916/2005, 49, emphasis in original). Where there is no anticipation and engagement, the gap lingers, which implies that there is no fulfilment phase: "such experiences are *anesthetic*" (Dewey 1934, 41). The structure of the aesthetic experience as an aesthetic event is elaborated on in the next section.

The Aesthetic Event

According to Dewey, an aesthetic event is characterised by a distinctive form that consists of "inception, development and fulfillment" (Dewey 1934, 57). When something is experienced aesthetically, which is the same as saying that when someone has *an* experience, it follows an "ordered and organised movement". Dewey refers to this as an "artistic structure" (Dewey 1934, 40). Thus, the structure of *an* experience follows a certain pattern, namely the pattern of an aesthetic event (Dewey 1934). Such an event has a clear beginning, a development and a consummation of felt harmony and balance.

The elements of tension and resistance that appear in the development phase are of special importance. Dewey declares that without "resistance, ambiguity and doubt" there would not be any development (Dewey 1934, 143). The fulfilment/consummatory phase of an aesthetic event always presents something new or unexpected that could not have been foreseen. An experience is characterised by the "spontaneity of the unpremeditated" (1934,

144), thus saving it from being something mechanical or calculated. However, spontaneity is not merely an expressive outburst in the moment, but rather results from long periods of activity: "Subconscious maturation precedes creative production in every line of human endeavour" (Dewey 1934, 75-76).

As Westerlund (2002) argues, it is a challenge to music teachers to understand how they can support students to have fulfilling musical experiences. In line with Sawyer (2000), we argue that Dewey's theory of art as experience, and specifically the concept of aesthetic event, can be helpful in this. Many musical learning and meaning-making experiences, such as learning a new piece of music one is interested in and eager to be able to perform, could be described using the inception-development-fulfilment pattern of the aesthetic event. Improvisation is no exception. For instance, the improvisation process is initiated by a teacher who suggests an improvisation activity. In the development phase, doubts and hindrances need to be dealt with and overcome if the process is to become a fulfilling experience. Music improvisation means making musical decisions in the moment, which includes recalling and re-actualising previous experiences in the current musical situation. In improvisation, previous experiences of music in various contexts are adapted and adjusted to new situations. Hence, improvisation does not occur out of the blue: "All improvisation takes place in relation to the known, whether the known is traditional or newly acquired" (Bailey 1992, 142).

In the next section we describe Dewey's transactional perspective and suggest a method of analysis based on this that enables analyses of meaning-making in improvisation activities to be conducted.

A Transactional Perspective and Understanding of Meaning-Making

As this article is concerned with improvisation within music education, meaning-making is of course of utmost interest. In view of this, we now turn to Dewey's transactional understanding of meaning-making. According to a pragmatist perspective, experiences are intimately connected with actions. Human beings constantly do and experience in a continuous rhythmical process of doings and undergoings (Dewey 1938, see also Garrison 2001). Experience emerges in interactions between people and/or between people and objects. In every experience there is a "reciprocal relation between the individual and the sociocultural environment" (Östman and Öhman 2010, 13). This implies that when someone does something, he/she subsequently undergoes the consequences of this action. Hence, through our actions we are interwoven with the environment in what Dewey designates as transactions (Dewey and Bentley 1949).

Continuity and change

Dewey's principles of continuity and change are vital in a transactional understanding of meaning-making. There is continuity in all human events because "every experience influences in some degree the objective conditions under which further experiences are had" (Dewey (1938, 37). Continuity in students' learning in general music education can be understood as the way in which they recall previous experiences in order to make sense of new ones (Wickman and Östman 2002; Öhman and Östman 2007). Different forms of music and musical actions that have been experienced before, such as listening, playing, improvising and dancing, can be "included as part of the event, in

action in a certain situation" (Quennerstedt et al. 2011, 165). Recalled experiences that are related to a new situation undergo change and gain different or "extended meaning" (ibid.). Hence, continuity and change are two sides of the same coin (Öhman and Östman 2007).

In the continuous flow of encounters in the environment we are sometimes confronted with disruptive moments and resistance that "open us up to questioning our taken-for-granted ideas and habitual ways of being" (English 2016, 1048). Encountering improvisation as a novice could be such a disruptive moment, or gap, where one is uncertain how to act. In the transactional process of bridging an indeterminate gap and being able to move forward in the situation, previous experiences have to be recalled and re-actualised. Here, imagination plays an indispensable role, in that it opens up the mind to embrace the new. English declares the educative value of disruptive moments:

> [...] these moments of discontinuity or interruption have educative value: such moments offer us the opportunity to take in something new —the new idea or object that initially confuses us—in a way that can transform our thinking and modes of acting. (English 2016, 1049)

This is a back- and- forth process that includes previous experience as well as anticipation of a resolution according to participants' perceived purposes, or their ends-in-view. In these transactional encounters participants (both subjects and objects) undergo change contingent to the situation. This implies that meaning is subject to change when conditions are changed, i.e. the meaning of things, events and actions are contingent on individuals' transactions in the social, cultural and material environment. Hence, "meaning and essence emerge as a consequence of transactional processes" (Garrison 2001, 286). Meaning is not treated as something intrinsic to things and actions

in themselves, or in the minds of human beings, but is rather "a property of behaviour" (Dewey 1958/2013, 179).

As experiences are social and involve contact and communication, they do not belong exclusively to individual minds (Dewey 1938). Dewey talks about communication as a process of coordinating activities by making something in common, thus indicating that meaning-making is fundamentally a social process (Garrison 1995). Biesta and Burbules (2003) express this as "Finding a response that brings about coordination is therefore the same as saying that the meaning of the situation for *this* organism has become clear" (Biesta and Burbules 2003, 36, emphasis in original). In the improvisation process, it means that meaning is created when actions in the specific situation create relations for a common purpose, which lead to an open ended, rather than a predetermined, conclusion. The encounter becomes a rewarding experience of participation and communication when the interaction between individuals and the environment is carried out to the full (Dewey 1934), i.e. when students have found a response that brings about coordination and have managed to improvise in a specific situation, within a specific environment. Dewey therefore rejects the conception of intrinsic value as some kind of existence or property that has value in itself, regardless of context and action. Thus, the values of music improvisation are things that emerge in the act of improvisation, in transaction with the environment, through experience.

Meaning-making in music improvisation situations is a form of non-linguistic meaning-making (Määttänen, 2010). According to Dewey, knowledge is transformed both in the production and experience of art: "[knowledge] becomes something more than knowledge because it is merged with non-intellectual elements to form an experience worthwhile as an experience" (Dewey 1934, 302). Leddy (2016) explains that in Dewey's theory

of art, "Life is made more intelligible by art not through conceptualization but through clarification and intensification in experience" (Leddy 2016, 18). Thus, in the transactional process, "aesthetic experiences can genuinely transform habitual ways of thinking, feeling and perceiving" (Jackson 1998, xiv) in ways that can also lead to meaning-making emerging in music improvisation encounters.

We therefore suggest that taking Dewey's transactional perspective and theory of aesthetic experience as points of departure and applying these concepts to improvisation facilitates an investigation of students' situated meaning-making in improvisation events.

Methodological consequences

Based on this transactional perspective, we now turn to investigating meaning-making *in situ*, i.e. improvisation situations in which actions and transactions can be observed. A transactional understanding of meaning-making does not presuppose a division between the inner mind and the outer reality/body. The individual student and the environment are reciprocally constituted in transaction, since "the unity of language, meaning and reality is a natural ingredient in our daily life" (Öhman and Östman 2007, 156). This means that meaning-making is observable in both spoken and embodied action (Östman and Öhman 2010; Quennerstedt et al. 2011). From a pragmatist perspective, information about human beings can only be obtained through their actions (Öhman and Östman 2007). What we know is first revealed through our actions, which is the "import of Dewey's claim that 'knowledge lives first in the muscles' - and not in the mind" (Biesta and Burbules 2003, 11). This enables investigations into ongoing practice.

Practical Epistemology Analysis

An analysis method is needed to investigate meaning-making in the improvisation of aesthetic events in school. Here we turn to a method called Practical Epistemology Analysis (PEA), which has been and still is used to analyse learning and meaning-making processes in ongoing encounters in which individuals and the environment transact. PEA facilitates an analysis of meaning-making in situ, rather than assessing students in pre- and post-tests. With PEA it is possible to analyse the "direction that meaning-making takes as a result of situated transactions" (Maivorsdotter and Quennerstedt 2012, 6).

PEA builds on a pragmatist perspective on epistemology and on Dewey's theory of transaction, as described above. It also draws on Dewey's principles of continuity and change (1938). These lead us to accept that human beings use previous experiences in new encounters, whereby these re-actualised experiences are subject to change. The emerging meaning-making is visible in the consequences of the actions and in the ways recalled experiences undergo change. Furthermore, it uses Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of language game that appears in his later works (1953/1992 and 1969/1992), which underlines that the meaning of language is found in its contextualised use, in practice (for further descriptions of PEA epistemology and ontology, see Wickman and Östman 2002; Öhman and Östman 2007).

PEA is a strictly empirical method in which only observed actions are subject to analysis. For this reason, analyses are conducted on video recordings of students' improvisation activities in class. The methodology has been developed by the research group *Studies of Meaning making in Educational Discourses* (SMED) (see e.g. Wickman and Östman 2002; Östman and Öhman 2010) and has been applied to a variety of empirical material, such as

video recordings of students' and teachers' interactions in science education (Lidar et al. 2006), young children's outdoor activities (Klaar and Öhman 2012) and recorded classroom discussions in science education (Rudsberg, Öhman and Östman 2013). In this article, PEA has been adapted for the analysis of meaning-making in aesthetic events that emerges in the context of students' musical improvisations.

Analytical concepts of PEA used in the aesthetic event

The following analytical concepts are central to a PEA: *purpose*, *encounter*, *stand fast*, *gap*, *relation* and *re-actualisation* (Wickman and Östman 2002; Klaar and Öhman 2012; Rudsberg et al. 2013). These concepts are explained below. In this article a PEA perspective is combined with the three integrated phases of the aesthetic event (see Table 1).

Inception phase

In the "inception phase", the process starts with the task given by the teacher, which functions as the students' common purpose, or their end-in-view. This purpose opens up a *gap* between what is immediately intelligible, what *stands fast*, i.e. what the students already know and hence accept without question, and what they not yet know and need to figure out in the current situation. In the following socio-musical and material *encounters* the students interact with improvised sounds and movements, their peers, their teachers, the material aspects of the room and the musical instruments. In these encounters, the participants' actions call for new actions, such as responding to the music played with improvised movements – "saying yes" and agreeing by imitating – making a musical utterance– responding to a musical utterance– rejecting by not responding etc. Hence, new *gaps* emerge. In order for the interaction to

proceed, these gaps need to be filled with new actions (Rudsberg et al. 2013). These actions relate to the perceived common purpose, or the end-in-view. In the vignettes that are used as illustrations of the perspective suggested in this article, the specific ends-in-view are: (a) to improvise movements to music and (b) to improvise music as an illustration of a story.

Development phase

In the "development phase", the *gap* becomes visible between that which *stands fast* and that which challenges the students' habitual actions. These challenges are observable tension, anticipation and/or hesitation to take a decision to improvise. In order to fill the gap, a *relation* needs to be created between what the students already know, that which stands fast, and the gap that is opened by the intention to fulfil the purpose of the activity at hand. The desirable end-in-view, the improvising purpose, initiates an inquiry process that includes *recalling* previous experiences and anticipating how to *re-actualise* them. Previous experiences can vary, e.g. musicological facts, from long ago, or recent situations (Rudsberg et al. 2013).

Fulfilment phase

In a successful "fulfilment phase", a *relation* is created between what stands fast and the current situation. This is done by *recalling* previous experiences and using anticipation and imaginative capabilities to *re-actualise* the previous experiences in the current situation. A recalled experience that is re-actualised in a new situation gains new meaning, because no situation is exactly the same as a previous one. This means that what stands fast in one situation is subject to change in another. This is a process through which music students'

comprehension of music, their own capabilities, their bodies and improvisation becomes more diverse.

It should be noted that the phases of the aesthetic event are analytical tools; the aesthetic event is a unified whole in which these phases are experienced as integrated.

Inception	Development	Fulfilment
The teacher creates a task that becomes the common *purpose* of the activity.	What s*tands fast* becomes visible because the students act without questioning.	The students *re-actualis*e a previous experience in the current situation.
A *gap* is opened by the purpose between what the students already know and what they do not know.	Tensions between anticipation and hesitation makes visible what *challenges* the students' habitual actions.	A *relation* is then created between what is recalled (and hence stands fast) and the current situation.
The students engage in musical - social - material *encounters*.	The students start an inquiry, *recall* previous experiences and anticipate and imagine the next step; how to re-actualise these.	The gap is successfully bridged and as a consequence *meaning* emerges.

Table 1. The three integrated phases of an aesthetic event in students' improvisations.

Vignettes to illustrate a PEA of meaning-making in improvisation

In what follows we draw on two video recordings of improvisation activities in a music class and analyse them through a PEA perspective. The recordings are from a larger research project that was conducted with nine to ten-year-old pupils from year four in two Swedish primary schools. The teachers conducted music lessons with free improvisation, where the pupils encountered music

improvisation activities in differing ways. In total twelve recordings were transcribed and analysed. From this rich material, episodes were discerned in which the pupils' observable actions displayed all three phases in an aesthetic event. These aesthetic events were selected for detailed analysis. The following vignettes display two of them.

Free improvisation in this context means non-idiomatic, non-genre specific improvisation with no specific preconceived outcomes, where the teacher provides some frames in order to structure the pupils' improvisation activities, but where the pupils themselves direct the improvisations within the frames they choose. Initially, the improvisation activities focus on improvising movements to music in various ways and do not include playing any musical instruments. Later on, rhythmical/percussion instruments are added, together with ensemble instruments like keyboard/piano, guitar and drums. From the beginning and throughout the project the teachers emphasise that there are no "right" or "wrong" in these improvisation activities and the pupils are instructed to affirm each other's initiatives and not be judgemental. In the first illustration, Sebastian, improvises movements in the moment recalling and re-actualising specific disco dance moves. In the second illustration, Hanna and Mia collaboratively improvise music on the piano as a sonic illustration of a story they have made up themselves. These two vignettes have been selected because they differ in three main ways: (i) the use of recorded music to improvise movements vs. pupils improvising on the piano, (ii) communication in a group vs. communication between two pupils and (iii) the use of clichés vs. the invention of new music.

Sebastian and the disco moves

The lesson started with exercises aimed at enhancing attentiveness to one another, listening with both body and mind and responding and saying "yes" to each other's initiatives. At first, the pupils walked criss-cross in an attempt to find a joint pulse. Individual initiatives to start and stop walking were then encouraged by the teacher. After a couple of minutes, the teacher introduced music with a steady fast beat, 120 BPM (Norwegian Mood by Groupa on the album Fjalar) and asked the class to follow the timing of the music and add a *different* way of walking. After one minute the teacher asked them to *add more body movements*. As the pupils did not respond to this request, their ways of walking and moving did not change. In the first 8 minutes of the lesson Sebastian, had not taken any initiatives to stop/start walking, improvise different ways of walking, or introduce new movements. However, he had participated with, followed and imitated his peers.

The aesthetic event that is used as an example is as follows: After a short break the teacher again asked the pupils to *focus on improvising movements more than on walking in time* and introduced new music, this time a typical disco tune from the 1970s with a strongly emphasised beat. The following table (Table 2) displays observations of the class in the left-hand column and the Practical Epistemology Analysis in the right.

Observations	Practical Epistemology Analysis
The teacher starts some new music, this time a typical disco/dance tune from the 1970s with a strongly emphasised beat. When the music starts the teacher says: Now you can just walk around a bit first. In the usual way first, and then go ahead and do... some ... more movement...than walking.	The new music together with the perceived purpose to improvise different movements create a new *gap*. What *stands fast* for Sebastian in this situation is walking in criss-cross in the classroom and walking in time with the music.

When the music plays all the pupils immediately start walking. They walk in time to the music, at first in the circle but then in criss-cross.	
The children take turns at improvising movements, all but one, Sebastian, who doesn't take any initiatives to improvise. The other pupils improvise different movements that now are much more energetic, imaginative and playful; enacting for instance animals like a rabbit and an elephant. Sebastian actively participates throughout the activity. He observes, pays close attention to his peers, listens to the music and follows and imitates his peers smiling and obviously enjoying the activities.	In this *musical and social encounter,* Sebastian and the other pupils transact with the music played and with one another. It is observable how actions call for actions, i.e. improvised movements call for imitations. Sebastian imitates his peers' movements without hesitation, without questioning, it *stands fast* to him how to act in this situation However, the *gap* lingers, since Sebastian as yet has not improvised any movements.
After two minutes with improvisations and imitations of movements to this disco tune Sebastian now takes an observable improvisation initiative for the very first time in this lesson, ten minutes into the lesson. He suddenly stops walking, stands still for a few seconds and then starts to make moves similar to disco dance moves á la John Travolta. First standing on the spot, he puts his left hand on his left hip and swings his right arm up and down, to and from the left hip, and then starts to walk very energetically in time and with continuous movements. His moves evoke utterances of delight from his classmates: one girl excitedly exclaims - "Wow!" Sebastian is totally engaged in the activity, his dance moves are energetic, he has a big smile on his face and an upright posture when improvising these moves.	Sebastian *recalls* a previous experience, the disco moves. Sebastian *re-actualises* his previous experience, the disco moves, in the current situation. By doing this he creates a *relation* between his recalled experience and the current situation. This relation enables him to move on. Sebastian has *bridged the gap* and *meaning making* has taken place.

Table 2. A Practical Epistemology Analysis of Sebastian and the disco moves

This event follows the structure of an *aesthetic event*. A gap is opened in the inception phase by the common purpose of improvising different movements. In the development phase, that which stands fast and that which challenges the pupils becomes visible and the process of inquiry begins. Finally, in the fulfilment phase, the created relation between the recalled experience and

current situation occurs at the moment when Sebastian happily improvises his dance moves. In this re-actualisation he manages to bridge the gap. This implies a meaning-making experience for Sebastian that is one of growth and musical agency.

Sebastian appears to regard the need to improvise movements as a challenge. This creates a gap filled with tension, which is why it takes him so long to make the decision to improvise. Sebastian hesitates to improvise even though he obviously enjoys the activities. He listens attentively to the music and observes his classmates taking initiatives to stop and start walking, walk in different ways and with various gestures. He participates and imitates his peers without hesitation, which means that imitation does not challenge his habitual actions. For Sebastian imitation stands fast; it is not something to be questioned. But he does not take an initiative to improvise until ten minutes has passed. It is he who must decide whether, when and how he is going to improvise movements, and this is the gap that he needs to fill. Sebastian and his peers pay attention, observe and listen to each other's actions with their "whole bodies". Here, the pupils are engaged in a joint activity and participate in an embodied musical communication. In this communication they respond to each other's actions by imitating. By doing this they accept and affirm each other's improvisations. That they accept and affirm their peers' actions shows that they are aware of the social and moral norms that are privileged in this particular moment.

Sebastian needs time to make the decision to improvise. It takes time for his idea to mature so that he can create a relation that will bridge the gap and turn this situation into a meaning-making aesthetic event. When he finally decides to improvise it is a result of the process of recalling, anticipating and imagining the disco moves, thus adapting his previous experience to the

present moment. This is an act of re-actualisation. Exactly which previous experience he will recall is not clear. Hence, imagination is the capability that enables him to recall an experience and relate it in-action to the current situation. This is how we understand that he is actually imagining something. The task requires that he does not imitate a peer, but rather anticipates and imagines something that he can recall and re-actualise. He finally manages to fill the gap by creating a relation between his previous experience of the disco moves and the situation at hand. Finally, Sebastian is satisfied with how the end-in-view is reached. This becomes obvious through his body posture and facial expressions. For him, this has been *an* experience. Hence, as contended by Dewey, imagination plays a significant role in the meaning-making process.

So far, the emphasis has primarily been on the process of meaning-making, on the *how*. Sebastian creates meaning in this situation by recalling the disco moves in combination with the music played, which correlates with the *continuity* aspect. By re-actualising these moves in this specific context in the music class with his teacher and peers, they gain new meaning in relation to their function in the encounter, which correlates with the *change* aspect. When re-actualising the moves, Sebastian contributes to the improvisation activity by bringing something new to the class, namely a cliché with certain recognisable dance moves that are appreciated by his peers. Sebastian's meaning-making, the *what*, is constituted by the relation between what stands fast for him and what is experienced in the current situation. Sebastian manages to take a decision to improvise and decides what to do and when to do it in accordance with the common purpose, the end-in-view. This implies that he experiences himself as capable of acting in this musical improvisation situation, being in charge and taking ownership of his actions, which can be described as an experience of musical agency. In his improvisation of the dance moves he makes use of a cliché. The way he now seems to understand improvisation

includes making use of clichés, which could be said to reflect a *cognitive* aspect of musical meaning. In the fulfilment phase, Sebastian expresses joy in the freedom of improvising body moves to music, which reflects an *embodied* aspect of musical meaning. Finally, an *ethical* aspect of musical meaning is reflected when he accepts and affirms his peers' improvised movements and imitates them. Hence, Sebastian's comprehension of *what* improvisation can be about and *how* it can be conducted is extended in this transactional process when he re-actualises the disco moves.

This meaning-making experience implies that Sebastian has exceeded his repertoire of possible accessible actions in music improvisation. He has learned that by recalling and re-actualising a previous experience he is able to adapt and adjust his actions to musical improvisation in a way that is satisfying for him and for his peers. With this extended repertoire he now has tools for further development in other situations of musical improvisation and creativity.

Musical communication with Hanna and Mia on the piano

In another music class, also with pupils aged 9-10 years, the teacher introduced an improvisation activity. The children were asked to work in pairs or in small groups to make up a story together and then illustrate it by improvising on musical instruments of their own choice from those available in the classroom. Finally, in turn, they performed their improvisations in front of the teacher and their peers. The teacher asked the pupils to think of their improvisations as conversations. First, they were given time to make up their story, select instruments and explore ways of improvising musical illustrations of their stories. After eight minutes they began to perform their improvisations; each pupil taking it in turn to perform and listen to each other's stories and music. Two girls, Hanna and Mia, were just about to begin and had decided to

improvise on the piano. Hanna sat at the right-hand side of the piano and Mia at the left.

The analysis of this improvisation is presented in Table 3 and has also been transcribed (Figure 1). In Table 3, time is specified in the left-hand column so as to correlate with the time specified in the score. This vignette differs from the previous one, in that new gaps emerge when the players act on each other's actions.

Hanna narrates their story whilst sitting on a revolving chair, swinging from side to side: "*We climb up a tree ... or we are up in a tree*. And then ... (hesitates) *we play and so on* (spins her wrists around to illustrate the playing). *Then we climb down from the tree - and I happen to injure Mia* (Mia giggles). *Then we get angry with one another and then we climb up the tree again. Up in the tree Mia pushes me* (Hanna chuckles a bit) *so I fall down from the tree. But in the end, we make up and are good friends again.*" The girls look at one another and laugh and then turn to the piano and Hanna, facing Mia, says: "*Shall we start?*"

Observations and comments to help readers connect the observations to the story The time stated correlates with time in the score.	**Practical Epistemology Analysis**
3:12´: Their musical improvisation commences with Mia playing a tone cluster with both hands, first in the deep bass. She then corrects herself and says "No!" and plays a tone cluster in the treble. (Mia corrects herself because according to the story they are playing up in the tree from the beginning.) Hanna turns to Mia and looks at her with an intense gaze. She smiles in eager anticipation, but looks stern/tense at the same time.	The initiating *gap* is created by the common purpose to illustrate their story by improvising music. Mia's first action creates a new *gap*, as it doesn't correlate with their story. In her second action, she *recalls* experiences and knowledge of pitch and how the piano is constructed in relation to "high" and "low" notes; something that *stands fast* for her. When she *re-actualises* this previous experience/knowledge and manages to create

	a *relation* between her recalled experience and the current situation, the gap is bridged.
3:14´: Hanna plays random, descending notes in the treble also using both hands but without looking at the keyboard, she keeps looking at Mia. They then both play random notes and tone clusters in a descending movement. There is no particularly recognisable melody, rhythm or harmony here. (This is where they start to climb down the tree.)	Hanna responds and acts on Mia's actions in this new emerging *gap* to illustrate climbing down the tree. For Hanna too, knowledge of pitch and how the piano is constructed in relation to "high" and "low" notes, *stands fast*. When recalling this knowledge, she *re-actualises* it, creates a *relation* and bridges the gap.
Mia pulls her fingers over the keyboard from the treble towards the bass trying to perform a glissando, but she doesn't put enough pressure on so her fingers merely slide on top of the keys. (This is the moment when Mia is injured and they get angry with one another.)	A new *gap* emerges when Mia is to illustrate the moment she is injured. Mia now *recalls* glissando as an option of musical expression. She *re-actualises* this knowledge but doesn't fully manage to bridge the gap, because she is not able to perform the glissando. The knowledge of glissando *stands fast,* but the ability to perform it has yet to be realised.
They both stop playing, look at the keyboard and there's a moment of silence, a short pause. Mia searches the keyboard for a moment. 3:20´ Mia hits a note in the bass, F3. Then she continues to play using her right-hand fingers 2-3-4-3-4 and it develops in to an ascending scale: F3-G3-A3-B3-C4. (They start climbing up the tree again.)	This moment of silence and searching the keyboard can indicate uncertainty how to continue; it is another emerging *gap*. Mia *recalls* previous experiences of playing scales on the piano, which obviously *stands fast* to her because she uses all her fingers and not just her index finger. She *re-actualises* these previous experiences of playing scales in this situation, creates a *relation* and bridges the gap.
Hanna looks at Mia, smiles almost triumphantly, and without looking at the keyboard but constantly looking at Mia hits a C7, with a very short, stressed touch, like a staccato. (This indicates that they are once again up in the tree.)	Mia's ascending scale opens a *gap* for Hanna to fill. Hanna responds to Mia's ascending scale, acts on Mia's actions and *recalls* emotions in previous experiences and *re-actualises* these in this musically and bodily expressive play and action. The *gap* is bridged by the relation that is created.
3:27´: Again, Mia tries to play a glissando. Her	The *gap* of the glissando seems to linger but

ascending glissando is again silent, but she finishes it off with a forceful C4 before playing a sounding descending glissando. (This indicates the moment when Mia pushes Hanna down from the tree.)	is then eventually bridged in the descending glissando as Mia *recalls* the previous experience of playing glissando and *re-actualises* it in this situation by applying more pressure. This *relation* bridges the gap.
3:32´: Mia hits a forceful C2 but uses two fingers so B1 is also heard. She looks at Hanna and keeps her fingers on the keys, the notes sound for three seconds. Hanna looks at Mia and plays an A3 without looking at the keyboard, she keeps her eyes on Mia. Mia still keeps her fingers on the key but hits the B1 again. She then looks up at Hanna. Hanna plays a G4 and the notes F4 and E4 sound simultaneously. She looks a bit hesitant but still smiles at Mia. Then Mia plays a chord with both her hands but lets go of the left hand's notes at once, so the one note sounding is an A3. She casts a quick glance at Hanna. (This part of the story indicates that Mia hits the ground.)	Here a new *gap* has emerged; hesitancy and uncertain actions are evidence of this. The players *recall* experiences of conversations and private talks and *re-actualise* these experiences in their improvised play and actions, glances and facial expressions. They have managed to create a *relation* between recalled experiences and the current situation,
3:41´: Hanna steadily watches the keyboard and plays the five first notes of an ascending A minor scale starting on A3. She plays in a steady beat with equal length of the notes, using only her index finger.	A new *gap* is visible as Hanna now watches the keyboard when playing the scale. Scales as a musical concept *stand fast* for her. She *recalls* and *re-actualises* previous experiences of scales, even though she might not have played them on the piano before and through this *relation* manages to bridge the gap.
Mia suddenly breaks in and continues the melody that Hanna has introduced and plays the notes D4-E4 rhythmically and accurately in time with Hanna's tempo. (They are starting to make up again.)	Hanna's five notes in A minor open a *gap* for Mia. Mia seems to recognise a melody, *recalls* a previous musical experience, and quickly fills in the missing notes, thereby *re-actualising* the previous experience, creating a *relation* and bridging the *gap*.
3:45´: Hanna responds with an expressive heavily stressed C7, much like an exclamation mark, and looks at Mia with an intense, firm and decided gaze. She then plays a seemingly random	Mia's actions create a new *gap* for Hanna. She *responds* to Mia's actions and *recalls* a previous emotional experience, which she *re-actualises* expressively in musical play, facial

descending melody in marcato with a slight accelerando, using only her index finger: B7-A7-F7-D7-E7, whilst constantly looking very intensely at Mia and not at the keyboard. The improvisation ends and the two girls burst out laughing. (They have finally made up and are good friends again.)	expressions and body gestures. This *re-actualisation* creates the *relation* between her recalled experience and the current situation.

Table 3. Practical epistemology analysis of Hanna's and Mia's improvisation at the piano

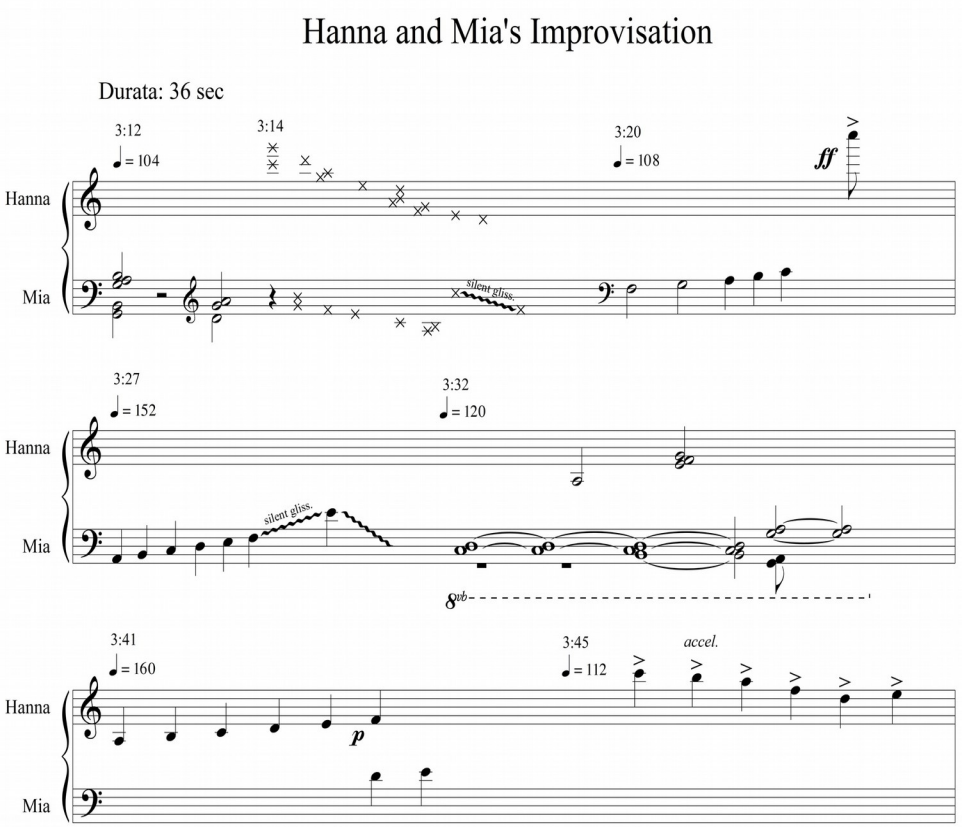

Figure 1. Hanna's and Mia's improvisation score

Hanna and Mia are fully engaged in the task of illustrating their story through improvised music and transact in material, musical and social encounters with the environment. They encounter the piano and experience the resistance of

the keys and the differing pressures they have to use to get the various dynamics and musical expressions they want. Their musical encounters occur in relation to the sounding properties of the piano: to the sounds-timbre-chords-notes-melodies-rhythms they themselves create on the basis of moment-to-moment decision-making. They interact (transact) in social encounters as collaborators in improvisation, involved in a musical dialogue in which they listen and respond to one another and act upon each other's actions. It is an act of musical communication and conversation. Every action opens a gap that the other needs to fill by responding in some way, in action-on-action sequences. In these encounters, the girls pay close attention to one another and to the sounds that are improvised.

Hanna and Mia manage to bridge the overarching *gap* opened by the perceived common purpose, the end-in-view by improvising sounds and music to illustrate their own story. In this, they manage to create *relations* between recalled previous experiences, knowledge and memories and the current situation. These relations are constituted by several *re-actualisations* of previous experiences that the girls *recall* and utilise in this new situation. In this process, the story serves as a structuring frame that offers both possibilities and limitations to imagine and anticipate possible musical actions to illustrate the story. Hanna and Mia anticipate a desired end-in-view and by doing so are able to improvise their story musically. Here, imagination, and especially musical imagination, expressed as instant "thinking-in-action" plays an important role. Climbing up and down trees is an example of a shared experience that they imagine musically and illustrate on the piano by improvising ascending and descending tone clusters and glissandos in the treble and bass.

This musical improvisation experience comes to a satisfying close for the girls, as they, through their actions-on-actions in which they attentively listen,

imagine, respond and communicate, create the necessary relations, bridge the gaps and move on in the situation. This meaning-making can be described in terms of embodied, cognitive and ethical aspects of musical meaning. The embodied aspect is observable in the enactment of their story, which they imagine musically and play out on the piano. The cognitive aspect can be observed in their use of previous knowledge and experiences in order to improvise music, such as knowledge of scales and glissando, the construction of the piano and conversation as a form of improvisation. Ethical aspects of musical meaning imply affirming, responding and saying "yes" to each other's improvisational actions, without evaluating them. They have learned that they can re-actualise their previous experiences and use their imaginations to collaboratively improvise a musical conversation on the piano. Hence, this is an aesthetic experience that is of particular value from an educational point of view, in that it promotes and affirms a capability to improvise music. In other words, it is instrumental in the development of musical agency.

Conclusions and Discussion

In this article we have shown that a combination of Dewey's transactional perspective and Practical Epistemology Analysis can facilitate an understanding and analysis of aesthetic events of improvisation, thereby enabling observations of the improvisation process and aspects of meaning-making. PEA provides a definition of meaning-making as a process of re-actualisation, which implies that recalled experiences are successfully related to the present situation. In this process, both the individual who experiences and that which is experienced are subject to change. This definition of meaning-making helps us to understand *how* meaning is created and *what* meaning consists of. In PEA, the pupils' previous experiences and the present situation

are considered in order to understand the meaning-making process. This meaning-making process reflects the continuity and change aspects of Dewey's transactional perspective.

The value of improvisation

Previous research has claimed that activities in music classrooms can lead to fulfilling and rewarding meaning-making experiences (e.g. Väkevä 2003, 2012; Westerlund 2002; 2003; 2004; Määttänen 2003; 2010). In illustrating the use of PEA, we have described and demonstrated a theoretical perspective and a method that makes it possible to analyse the process of such an experience, i.e. *how* it comes about in improvisation activities. We have also shown what constitutes such an experience, namely the specific, educationally valuable aspects of meaning-making that are illuminated, enabled and emphasised in this process. These aspects of meaning-making and the specific aesthetic quality of the experience are not measurable, in that they cannot easily be related to syllabi knowledge requirements and therefore often go unnoticed. We maintain that these important qualities in music education need to be recognised and enhanced. If this is not done they may be lost altogether, which would surrender our practice to an instrumentalist view of music education in which everything has to be measured.

When actions based on previous experiences are introduced into a new context they are inevitably changed, transformed and gain new meaning. That Sebastian can re-actualise his previous experience of the disco dance moves in the new situation implies that he has created a relation that bridges the gap opened by the perceived common purpose: to come up with different ways of moving to music. The girls who improvise on the piano also recall, anticipate, imagine and re-actualise previous experiences of playing together up in a tree,

playing the piano, musical concepts like scales, dynamics and musical articulations like glissando, staccato and marcato, even though they may not be acquainted with those particular musical terms. As a consequence of their successfully created relation between previous experience and the situation in hand, the pupils experience personal and musical agency in these aesthetic events. This in turn extends the pupils' repertoire of possible actions in musical improvisation, which implies that their knowledge is furthered in several ways and that they now have tools that help them to deal with new situations of free group improvisation.

The point that is argued here is that even if children are not experienced instrumentalists or improvisers, they can create meaning through their improvised music by re-actualising previous experiences in situations where they are attentive, communicative and can use their imagination. In the process of experiencing, i.e. their doings and undergoings, they learn something about themselves and what they are capable of. In that they experience personal and musical agency. They also learn something about their peers and about music. This learning is connected to the meaning-making process in which they undergo the consequences of their actions, i.e. the point where the principles of continuity and change "intercept and unite" (Dewey 1938, 44). At the moment when their actions are successfully linked to the perceived common purpose of improvising, the pupils enter a process of exploration that, when it reaches a satisfying close, leads to the creation of the particular meaning of this particular improvisation. Thus, as Westerlund (2003) argues, the pupils undergo change and, in turn, change their musical environment.

The analyses of the vignettes used in this article illustrate how meaning-making takes place both at an individual and a social level. The individual level of meaning-making implies that an individual recalls previous experiences and

relates them to the current situation, i.e. the pupil re-actualises his/her experiences. The social level of meaning-making implies that action-on-action emerges in the class as a result of the communications between the pupils and between the teacher and the pupils. These actions offer possibilities and also limitations, i.e. frames that help to structure the event. Improvising different movements to a certain tune, in this case a disco/pop-tune from the 1970s or creating a story and illustrating it in a musical improvisation/conversation are examples of such structural frames.

Previous research, as mentioned earlier, has shown that improvisation fosters the development of certain musical competences, creativity, critical thinking and social capabilities. To these capabilities we can now add new knowledge about meaning-making processes in improvisation. In these processes, pupils' previous knowledge and experiences are recalled and, when they are re-actualised, i.e. when a relation is created between what was previously known and the current situation, they create meaning of this particular situation. This meaning can be described in terms of *embodied, cognitive* and *ethical* aspects of musical meaning. In the improvisation activities the pupils learn how to act when improvising movements and/or music to illustrate a story. Meaning is created in action, in practice, in the actual moment when they make their improvised movements and music, which implies an *embodied* aspect of musical meaning-making. The pupils use clichés, for instance the disco moves and the scales, and make use of their imaginative capabilities to enact different movements and illustrations of the story. Hanna's and Mia's collaborative improvisation is a form of musical conversation. Improvisation as everyday conversation and dialogue has been discussed in previous research, for instance by Sawyer (e.g. 2003/2010) and Kanellopoulos (2007a). This musical conversation reflects their "thinking-in-action" (Kanellopoulos 2000, 221) which implies "thinking musically in the

moment of performance" (ibid., 238). This implies a *cognitive* aspect of musical meaning, namely the pupils understand how to use tools like clichés, imagination and/or conversation in an improvisation. The *ethical* aspect of meaning-making emerges when the pupils accept, affirm, respond to and support each other's movements and initiatives without evaluating or questioning them. Hence, the pupils learn "in action" about ethical and social norms and values.

In our view, the transactional perspective on aesthetic experience offers a response to Rolle's (2010) claim that the specificity of the aesthetic is not fully explained in Dewey's notion of aesthetic experience. We are critical of Rolle's concept of aesthetic perception, because it limits and narrows the concept of aesthetic experience and does not include communication and imagination. We suggest that the artistic structure of the aesthetic event describes what Dewey calls the "work of art"; the active and experienced process that in our study is observed in musical doings and undergoings. In the vignettes used in this article the pupils are observed to be perceptive, communicative and imaginative, in that they pay attention, listen and observe and are engaged in the in-and-out going of perception (Dewey 1934). Communication between peers and between peers and teacher proceeds throughout these aesthetic events and is observed when they are involved collaboratively in creating improvised actions and music. This could be taken to rather support the use of the term aesthetic communication suggested by Thorgersen (2018). We have also seen that imagination plays a significant role when recalling previous experiences and anticipating how to re-actualise them to bridge a gap in improvising movements and in illustrating a story musically. As we see it, perception together with communication and imagination plays an important role in the meaning-making improvisation event.

Varkøy (2014), Rolle (2014) and also Eisner (2004) emphasise the importance of having transforming and existential experiences in (music) education. A transactional perspective makes it possible to observe how musical experience as *an* experience can induce growth and hence transform "habitual ways of thinking, feeling and perceiving" (Jackson 1998, xiv).

When conducting PEA it is not possible to determine which instances constitute aesthetic events with an observable purpose and gap during the actual recording. Entire sequences therefore need to be recorded, which means that a rich material needs to be gathered. Ethical considerations when video recording young people in school, including obtaining the consent of participants and their parents/caregivers if they are below 15 years of age, is a requirement that is not unique to PEA, but nevertheless needs to be considered at all times when people participate in studies in which video recording is used for documentation.

Implications

We maintain that the knowledge that is created by using the transactional perspective can contribute to both a theoretical and practice-based discussion about improvisation that has implications for further research and for improvisation in general music education. We suggest that music teachers in their pedagogical considerations when planning and conducting improvisation activities should consider the relevance of previous experience, the *process* (recalling and re-actualising previous experiences in aesthetic events), *content* (the direction that meaning-making takes towards personal and musical agency and as embodied, cognitive and ethical aspects of musical meaning) and time. Sebastian, for example, needed *time* for his idea to mature. Rushing through

improvisational activities could imply that some students will never experience agency in improvisation.

Dewey's theory of aesthetic experience, and specifically of an experience, provides concepts that enable us to apprehend the educative qualities of improvisation experiences and highlight their value for education. The aesthetic event makes the integrated artistic structure of a fulfilling experience visible. Combining a practical epistemology analysis with Dewey's concept aesthetic event clarifies how an improvisation experience can develop in a direction towards musical agency and meaning-making at both an individual and a social level. It also makes evident that in this process, cognitive, embodied and ethical aspects of musical meaning-making are enhanced. The transactional perspective facilitates an in-depth and fuller comprehension of the educational and musical value of incorporating improvisation in music education.

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Does this Work [of Art] Invite Me into [Intersubjective] Dialogue?

Discussing Relational Aesthetics in Music Education

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Abstract

Some artistic and educational practices in music have yet to be defined within the dichotomy of referential and autonomy aesthetics. However, there has been an ongoing shift towards more interactive, social and relationally founded aesthetic practices, which often originate in other art media but influence music as well. In this article, we investigate relational aesthetics' place and further potential in music education, taking Nicolas Bourriaud's term 'relational aesthetics' as a point of departure. Originally a theory concerning a specific postmodern genre within the visual arts, we identify and discuss certain elements of Bourriaud's relational aesthetic theory that are relevant for music education, particularly the role of intersubjective relations. We further explore the traces and relatives' of relational aesthetic theories that may already exist in and around music education, such as musicking and communicative musicality. As a result, certain aspects of relational aesthetics become more explicit than in Bourriaud's theory, particularly *care in intersubjective relations.* Furthermore, we discuss the potential importance of relational aesthetics in music education practices, exemplified by teacher education, school concert visits and piano teaching. Finally, we conclude with some remarks on relational aesthetics as a resource in music education and arts education in general.

Keywords: aesthetic theory, relational aesthetics, music education, musicking, communicative musicality

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Discussing Relational Aesthetics in Music Education

Torill Vist and Kari Mette Holdhus[1]

Introduction

During the last few centuries, paradigms have shifted in both pedagogy and the arts. In Western discourses, art and beauty were integrally related until the late nineteenth century, when artists who embraced modernity proposed 'aesthetic ugliness as a true artistic response to the realities of the modern world' (Winston 2015, 9). Recently, there has been an ongoing shift towards more postmodern aesthetic practices, which tend to be more interactive, social, democratic, and relationally based. In parallel, educational discourses have progressed through the stages of behaviourism, cognitive, socio-cultural and relational learning theories. To us, a major reason for supplementing modernity's view of art is not only aesthetic but also grounded in what we want for our fellow human beings. (Following this article's argumentation, we might even define such motives as within the aesthetical).

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We acknowledge that music experience and knowledge development happen within a cultural, intersubjective and relational reality. Nevertheless, contemporary arts consist of a huge number of different practices. Practices within the modernity discourse are still often viewed as separate from everyday life; artworks may be considered to contain coherent messages or meanings that emerging independent of their context, and recipient strategies may be restricted to those that are discrete and contemplative (Goehr 2007). Relational practices,[2] on the other hand, are primarily heteronomic and cannot exist without relying heavily on shared social practices and human relations (see also Kester 2004; Kwon 2004). As such, they can be seen as contrasting more work-oriented aesthetic forms.[3]

Today, it is possible to trace relational artistic behaviour across genres and art forms all over the world. In music, it could be a symphony orchestra surprising visitors at a marketplace, pop crowds contributing to their favourite artist's appearance by making noise, or parents singing a lullaby. These aesthetic practices address problems related to *intersubjectivity* or *interhuman relations* that, in our opinion, have not been thoroughly and explicitly addressed in a modernity discourse of music aesthetics. A rationale for many relational artistic practices was formulated

2 For instance, collaborative arts, community art, social art practices, or site-specific art.

3 What we term in this article 'a work-oriented' discourse or aesthetic form is described as 'the regulative work concept' by Goehr (2007). Bourdieu terms this 'the charismatic ideology' (Bourdieu 1993, 47), which he claims purports the artist as a unique and magical creator of original works and the work as a talking subject. The real production, though, he claims, occurs based on the artist's and audience's education and habitualisation towards this specific view. This is a way of relating to art to which Western societies have been socialized for and that can be recognised in many musical genres, including popular music (Burnard 2012). Recently, however, it seems to us that some music educators who follow the philosophies (and practices) associated with work-oriented modernity also place a stronger emphasis on relational topics, sometimes even on *intersubjective* relations (e.g. Varkøy 2017; Pio and Varkøy 2012).

by Nicolas Bourriaud (1998/2002) in his book *Relational Aesthetics.* By no means did Bourriaud 'invent' relational practices, but in his curatorial work and writing, he identified some of their common characteristics and developed the now-well-known term 'relational aesthetics'. The term has primarily been used in the field of visual arts and is not as often used in discussions of music, although this might be changing (see Cook 2012; Valberg 2011). After researching relational perspectives in music education for a decade (Holdhus and Espeland 2013; Holdhus 2018; Vist 2009, 2016), we have found 'relational aesthetics' to be a fruitful term to use in connection with music educational practices as well as visual practices, and we believe the term is too good to reserve for specific visual art traditions. Not every part of Bourriaud's theory is relevant to our discussion, but we often find ourselves using formulations and elements from his texts to drive our thinking within the field of music education. Additionally, as music teachers, we may be in a position to use Bourriaud's ideas more freely compared to visual artists and teachers; we are not 'burdened' with the rather heavy critique of the theory by those involved in the museum or art exhibition context, in which the theory was developed.

This article addresses the need for music (and other arts) education philosophies to deal with the theoretical issues underpinning relational practices. In this article, we also argue that such a philosophy can afford meaningful music (and other arts) experiences to a wider public or group of students. In our view, relational perspectives and intersubjective relations are embedded in any art form. Already, there are music education practices that are clearly interactive and socially and relationally based. Furthermore, relational aesthetical practices have existed for a long time, although they have not necessarily been recognised as such or as art. Therefore, in our investigation of relational aesthetics' potential in music education, we present some of the salient features of Bourriaud's theory of relational aesthetics (in particular, the role of intersubjective relations), its critiques, and its possible relevance

for music education. We then discuss what could be considered traces and 'relatives' of relational aesthetics that already exist in or around music education (Small 1998; Malloch and Trevarthen 2009; Dissanayake 2000; Stern 1985/2000; Higgins 2012). Finally, we discuss relational aesthetics' potential importance for music education practices, exemplified by teacher education, school concert visits, and piano teaching, and conclude with some remarks on relational aesthetics as a pedagogical and intersubjective resource in music education and other types of art education. In this article, we also reveal that the major change—and our major contribution—when relational aesthetics is applied to music education may be a focus on care in intersubjective relations. Care is not as explicit in Bourriaud's theory. We suggest that this is an important issue in any type of art education.

Relational Aesthetics

According to Bennett Simpson (2001), the first appearance of the term 'relational aesthetics' was in the catalogue for the exhibition *Traffic*, which was curated by Bourriaud at *CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bourdeaux* in 1995. The book *Relational Aesthetics,* originally *Esthétique relationelle* (1998), was published three years later. It consists of several essays, some of which were first published in magazines and exhibition catalogues and considerably reworked for the book. Many of the essays primarily discuss elements of 1990s visual art practices, like those of Felix Gonzales-Torres and Rikrit Tiravanija. They discuss visual (or conceptual) artworks that create a social space in which people come together to participate in shared activities. We mainly focus on the more general ideas presented in the essay titled 'Relational Form', which extend far beyond the decade of the 1990s.

A Theory of Relational Form

The essay places relational aesthetics far away from (a work-oriented) autonomy aesthetics, instead describing 'a game, whose forms, patterns and functions develop and evolve according to periods and social contexts, it is not an immutable essence' (Bourriaud 1998/2002, 11). Bourriaud claims that '[r]elational aesthetics does not represent a theory of art, (...) but a theory of form' (1998/2002, 19). However, perhaps revealing a wide definition of 'form', he later defines relational aesthetics and relational art, respectively, as an '[a]esthetic theory consisting in judging artwork on the basis of the inter-human relations which they represent, produce or prompt' and '[a] set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than independent and private space' (Bourriaud 1998/2002, 112–113).

If one explores and discusses artwork as social interstice, intersubjectivity is at the core of aesthetic practice and hence *within the artwork*. In our opinion, this changes or expands what is usually understood as music experience, musical encounters or musical elements, and is relevant to teacher–student relationships. Intersubjectivity (at the core of aesthetic practice) further changes the role and actions of the viewer/audience/spectator (or student). As Bourriaud claims, 'the artist encouraged the "beholder" to take up a position within an arrangement, giving it life, complementing the work, and taking part in the formulation of its meaning' (1998/2002, 59). Hence, the audience—or student—becomes necessary for completion of the artwork. To fulfil this idea, a common understanding of equity between participants and moving beyond the view of the artist as genius and ruler of the artwork are important. Furthermore, it goes beyond the idea of the teacher as the only expert of music expression in the classroom, supporting the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as today's relational educational philosophies (United Nations 1989; Gergen 2011; Biesta 2004).

Judging on the Basis of Inter-human Relations

Gert Biesta (2013) reminds us that, to fulfil the function of education, teachers are responsible for facilitating learning processes in a professional manner. The pedagogical situation necessarily provides the teacher with a certain element of power. Hence, within any explicit educational relation comprising teachers and learners, consensus and equal power relations can only be partly achieved. This, however, must by no means overshadow the principle of equality of intelligences described by Jacques Rancière (1991). Within this philosophy, the student's intelligence is viewed as equal to—and yet different from—anybody else's intelligence. Grant Kester's (2004) dialogic aesthetics strives toward such a respectful equity-based, relational practice. In this theory, the participatory or *sharing* role of the spectator is even more crucial than in Bourriaud's theory, and the emerging artwork might even be considered a situation of *care*.[4] Kester points out that differences in language and social situation between participants within dialogic art might be a challenge. To us, as authors of this article and as music teachers, an educational situation actualises such a challenge. We acknowledge that students are an important part of educational and aesthetical relations, and as such, they should have a say and be enabled to contribute.

In addition to these ideas, judging artworks and educational practices based on their inter-human relations, in our view, becomes important for teachers' assessments as well as for art critiques. Bourriaud's questions "Does this work permit me to enter

4 Hence, our use of the term *care* is more inspired by Kester and interhuman care in early childhood education and care discourse than by 'sorge', the wider care structure proposed by Heidegger.

into dialogue? Could I exist, and how, in the space it defines?"(1998/2002, 109) might be useful also for judging educational practices' quality and meaningfulness. In a visual art exhibition context, this perspective may differ more dramatically from the traditional (modernity or work-oriented) context than from music education contexts. Music, dance and theatre have always been relational; it is the *conscious* emphasis on encounters, interstice, care, inter-subjectivity and inter-action that has changed. As we see it, scores, co-musicians and lullaby have always invited dialogue, 'completing' the (sound-based) artwork. The audience's/students' 'position' may change when a relational perspective is adopted in the context of music education.

When artwork represents a social interstice, and the substrate of this kind of art is formed by intersubjectivity, it is our view that this area of exchange should be judged 'by analyzing the coherence of its form, and then the symbolic value of the 'world' it suggests, and of the image of human relations reflected by it' (Bourriaud 1998/2002, 18). In music education, when the relationship between the teacher and the student can be seen as part of the artwork, 'relational' has implications beyond the structural or formal elements of 'the art object itself' (to use a modernity discourse) and beyond a traditional understanding of 'context'. Such a shift in the dynamics of art-making processes suggests a reconceptualisation of music towards art as an in-the-making process in which inter-relational elements are critical for engagement with the 'doing'.[5]

5 Our focus on social interstice and intersubjectivity, however, does not do justice to Bourriaud's complete theory; he also discusses relations between the individual and the material in a more traditional sense. Another element that is less emphasised in this article is that the new is less important when judging aesthetic quality than ideas like relevance, usefulness, and pertinence. Furthermore, inspired by phenomenological attempts to repeal the traditional separation between senses and thoughts, physical and tactile aspects are of great importance to Bourriaud. The body is considered the starting point for perception, and each participating body means something in the artwork as a whole. An in-depth discussion of these aspects of Bourriaud's theory is beyond the scope of the present work.

Elements of Critique

Bourriaud's theory of relational aesthetics has been criticised for being romantic, elitist and directed toward Western middle-class, educated art lovers (Bishop 2004, 2012). Critics have also argued for the immediate need to construct quality criteria addressing relational art. Claire Bishop (2004) claims that relational aesthetics should be embraced in eulogistic terms and that criteria determining the quality of this sort of aesthetics should be critically examined and discussed. She also claims that relational aesthetics is inhabited by idealistic artists who want to save the world, but it is too closely related to neo-liberalism to be useful as a vehicle for radical political change: '...so many other aspects of this art practice dovetail even more perfectly with neoliberalism's recent forms (networks, mobility, project work, affective labour)' (Bishop 2012, 277). In an early chapter of her 2012 book, Bishop thus disaffiliates from Bourriaud and the term 'relational aesthetics'.

In contrast, we find the term useful, although we agree with her claim that Bourriaud's use of 'relational aesthetics' has severe limitations. For instance, Bourriaud's relational aesthetics primarily addresses adult audiences. To us, the younger children are, the less they can be defined as only 'spectators' or 'receivers' of a musical encounter, regardless of whether it is educational. In line with current educational practices, discussing art as being 'transmitted' to children becomes irrelevant. Therefore, relational theories and art forms can be interesting to explore also—or in particular—when working with young children as audiences or pupils. Furthermore, in *Relational Aesthetics,* Bourriaud writes that relational aesthetics' 'basic claim—the sphere of human relations as artwork venue—has no prior example in art history, even if it appears, after the fact, as the obvious backdrop of all aesthetic praxis (...)' (1998/2002, 44). We cannot support this claim, especially not without limiting 'art history' to an elitist, narrow definition of fine art. Bishop (2004) also

comments on this claim, but writes that relational art started with Duchamp's ready-mades. To us, and as Bourriaud says elsewhere, '[a]rt has always been relational in varying degrees' (1998/2002, 15). Interactivity is anything but a new idea.

At least in music education, a relational perspective might involve acknowledging aspects and practices that have not been considered art. It might also involve identifying parts of our practice that previously lived in the shadow of more prestigious and elitist elements of the artwork, such as the care and intersubjective communication associated with lullabies.

Traces of Relational Aesthetics in Music

Although we claim that relational *practices* in music have existed for a very long time, the term 'relational aesthetics' has been rare in musical scholarship until recently.[6] Nevertheless, topics combining relations and aesthetics (but not relational aesthetics) are frequent. Deanne Bogdan (2001), relying on postmodern theory, explored musical listening and performance as embodied dialogism. In her work, artwork represents 'the other'. She claims that her experiential encounter is remarkably similar to that of a personal (real) other. Still, the musical encounter she explores only involves herself and a 'music minus one' compact disc. Similarly, Frederik Pio and Øivind Varkøy, from a modernistic point of view, focus on the individual's thinking (through music) about the world, describing 'artwork as a prism for the being to which man has a relation' (2012, 110). They claim that we are invited by paradigmatic musical artworks to become part of a shared world. In the following section, we discuss what could be considered closer 'relatives' of relational aesthetics that already

6 For example, a search on Bourriaud in *Philosophy of Music Education Review* (September 2017) produced no results.

exist in or around music education and present some scholars who have already used the term.

Relational Aesthetics in Musicology

Georgina Born uses the term *relational musicology,* proposing a musicology that 'addresses different orders of the social in music and their complex interrelations' (2010, 235). She strongly problematises the dominant conceptual boundaries that have underpinned large parts of her field, which posit the social as extraneous to and only part of the context of music. According to musicologist Nicholas Cook, '[t]he core insight of Nicolas Bourriaud's "relational aesthetics" is that art is not addressed solely to the individual but creates relationships between its spectators' (2016, 10). Cook claims the same is true of music, but musicologists—both 'old' and 'new'—have often neglected or not seen intersubjective relationships as aesthetically significant: 'Yet one of music's most important roles lies in the construction and negotiation of relationships at both individual and group level' (2016, 10). Pointing to Bourriaud and a perspective in which relations are seen as part of the artwork, not only its context, Cook writes, '[s]een in this way, music becomes not just a metaphor but a metonym of social interaction' (Cook 2012, 196).

Cook also refers to ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin, who by 1992 had suggested that musical encounters of any kind are central to musicological explanations. Slobin links a focus on the local to a relational approach in his attempt 'to lay out the musical interplay–the cultural counterpoint between individual, community, small group, state and industry' (1992, 4). Hence, analysis of individual and cultural identities is important in a relational musicology, as are the different orders of the social (in music) and their complex interrelations.

Musicking as Relational Aesthetics

Christopher Small claims in his book *Musicking* that '[m]usic is not a thing at all, but an activity' (1998, 2). The book attacks the Western classical music tradition. Some of Small's formulations may seem a bit outdated today, but his impact on music education discourse is indisputable. We find it strange that his message about the importance of the *relations* in musicking has not had the same impact as his concept of activity, at least not until recently and not in our Scandinavian discourse.

Without using the term 'relational aesthetics', Small suggests that people come together in a musical performance 'to take part in a ceremony in which their values, which is to say, their feelings about what are right and proper relationships, are affirmed, explored and celebrated' (1998, 185). The parallel to the interaction between infant and mother (discussed below) is striking. As the quote suggests, the theory has a strong relational perspective; we could almost claim that Small is defining the musical material as 'context' and relationships as 'content'.

In Small's opinion, the primary meanings of music are not individual, but social. Any concert or musical encounter presents us with a certain set of relationships, which are fundamental for understanding the activity that we call music. Hence, permission to enter a dialogue becomes a prerequisite for what he calls *musicking*. While proposing a framework for understanding all musicking as a human encounter and activity, he describes his theory as 'an important component of our understanding of ourselves and of our relationships with other people and other creatures with which we share our planet' (Small 1998, 13). Thus, his emphasis on social and emotion(al) knowledge as an outcome of the music encounter is more explicit than in Bourriaud's theory, as is his emphasis on care for others.

Furthermore, Small emphasises that every human being is born with the gift of music, but that in the Western world 'our powers of making music for ourselves have

been hijacked and the majority of people robbed of the musicality that is theirs by right of birth' (1998, 8). In Small's words, traditional Western work-oriented, one-way communication is 'in a social vacuum; the presence of other listeners is at best an irrelevance and at worst an interference in the individual's contemplation of the musical work' (1998, 6). As mentioned above, Bourriaud's theory also rebels against such ideas, seeking equity between participants and encouraging the listener or 'beholder' to take up a position that complements the work and participate in the formulation of its meaning. Similarly, Small advocates viewing music and music education as doing something together and 'a musical performance as an encounter between human beings that takes place through the medium of sounds organized in specific ways' (1998, 10), without defining some participants as experts and others as obedient listeners.

To conclude, not far from Bourriaud, Small suggests that musicking establishes a set of relationships and that the meaning of the act lies in those relationships. Music as action, in this sense, is *relational action.* However, Small emphasises the potential for *knowledge* within these encounters more than Bourriaud, thus extending what can be relevant knowledge in music education beyond 'autonomous' knowledge of music. The act of musicking 'provides us with a language by means of which we can come to understand and articulate those relationships and through them to understand the relationships of our lives' (Small 1998, 14). In comparison, Bourriaud claims that 'any artwork is a relation to the world made visible' (Strecher 2002), or audible, we may add. Small claims that who we are is how we relate. Thus, to affirm or celebrate our relationships, like we do in musicking, is also to explore and celebrate our sense of who we are. Even more than in Bourriaud's theory, then, musicking

> is an activity by means of which we bring into existence a set of relationships that model the relationships of our world, (...) then musicking is in fact a way of knowing our world (...) the experiential world of relationships in all its complexity–and in knowing it, we learn how to live well in it. (Small 1998, 50)

Relational Aesthetics in Communicative Musicality

Earlier, we questioned Bourriaud's claim that relations are new in aesthetics, mentioning the lullaby as an ancient example from the field of music. According to Ellen Dissanayake (2000), lullabies and improvisational melodic and rhythmic expressions have been used to help children regulate feelings and interact with others throughout history. In these situations, musicality 'can be considered as a form of psychological "holding" that encompasses the handling of the baby' (Gratier and Apter-Danon 2009, 314). Despite Bourriaud's lack of focus on children, it seems to us that the most explicit argumentation for music's potential (already) unique contribution to a relational aesthetic theory comes from the relationship between child and caregiver and ideas like Dissanayake's theory on the origin of the arts, Stephen Malloch and Colwyn Trevarthen's (2009) theory on communicative musicality, and Daniel Sterns' (1985/2000) concept of affective attunement in his theory of self.

Half a century ago, when definitions of the listener as passive or contemplative were still dominant, infant research experienced a shift away from the 'passive infant'. Infants were seen as born with a motivation for sharing mental states from the very beginning through their body, gestures and voice. Parents' and infants' mutual enjoyable and knowledgeable communications were described 'in terms of rhythmic patterns of engagement that could be represented as "musical" or "dance-like"' (Malloch and Trevarthen 2009, 1). As Katerina Mazokopaki and Giannis

Kugiumutzakis put it, music became 'a model to guide the analysis and understanding of the communicative and emotional components of interaction between the two companions' (2009, 188) long before verbal speech. When research on children investigates such aesthetic interactions, it also judges these 'works of art' based on inter-human relations, to use Bourriaud's terms. Here, elements of musicality and intersubjectivity seem heavily interlaced and could be described as the 'cradle' of music, dance and drama (Dissanayake 2000). Both young infants and adults seem to have an intuitive capacity for sharing implicit emotional meaning in these musical rituals of human relations (Stern 1985/2000).

Malloch and Trevarthen (2009) also posit that musicality serves people's need for companionship and plays a vital role in creating and sustaining human social relationships. Their term 'communicative musicality' is defined by the three parameters: pulse, quality and narrative. Pulse is the regular succession of discrete behavioural events through time, while quality refers to the modulated contours of expression moving through time. Together, '[p]ulse and quality combine to form "narratives" of expression and intention' (Malloch and Trevarthen 2009, 4), which allow infants, children and adults to share a sense of relational sympathy and meaning. Hence, in communicative musicality, intersubjective musical expressions are seen as rhythmic patterns of engagement or intersubjective patterns revealing qualities of relationships. This kind of 'musicking' encourages both the child and parent to 'take up a position within an arrangement, giving it life, complementing the work, and taking part in the formulation of its meaning' (Bourriaud 1998/2002, 59). Pointing towards Small's perspective on knowledge, Lori Custodero sees communicative musicality as 'a fundamental source of relationship, comprised of musical dialogues that generate knowing of the world through knowing each other' (2009, 514). She also thinks the same forms of interaction re-emerge throughout one's lifespan in freely creative settings. Although typically seen as a stepping stone to early

childhood music education, we also consider communicative musicality to have the potential to make visible important meanings in music education far beyond early childhood.

Affect Attunement as Aesthetic Relations

In Stern's (1985/2000) theory of self, some of the terms have particular relevance for communicative musicality. *Affect attunement* is what we see when parents, communicating more or less nonverbally with their children, are imitating and mirroring their children's emotional expressions while keeping the same affect contour. It is the intersubjective experience of shapes, intensities and temporal patterns that is meaningful for the child, or 'the performance of behaviors that express the quality of feeling of a shared affect state' (Stern 1985/2000, 142). Affect attunement, then, is based on the matching and sharing of vitality affects (emotional forms or energies) across different modalities, as when (audible) music expresses human emotions. Consequently, and parallel to Small's idea that musicking can strengthen identities, selves and relationships, the child is afforded an opportunity to be acknowledged and to experience her/his own feelings as real, important and accepted by others before verbal speech. According to Stern, it is this 'music' that will permit the emergent self to appear, which is crucial for normal infant development. We cannot find a similar developmental focus in Bourriaud's work, although his theory of relational aesthetics clearly affords space for it. It is in such dialogues, and in the spaces they define, that the child exists and develops.

Stern's theory of affect attunement also includes sensitivity to affect contours or *forms*. Taking Bourriaud literally, he claims that his theory is one of form. Sensitivity to expressive forms (but not intersubjective or relational forms) is a common element in many aesthetic theories. Bourriaud refers to Serge Daney's position that '*all form is a face looking at us'* (1998/2002, 21, italics in original). The (mother's) face may be

the first *visual* form to give meaning to us, but since our *aural* sense is better developed at birth, we find it reasonable to suggest that (the origin of) all form, and hence all meaning, may be *a (mother's) voice 'singing' at us.* Following the core ideas of relational aesthetics, a lullaby sung without a (physical or imagined) child could hardly be defined as a lullaby. If the artwork does not permit Bourriaud or the child to enter into a dialogue, the work of art—and the form—is not complete.

Despite the differences between the discourses in which these theories were developed and their differences in terms of focus on care, communicative musicality, like relational aesthetics, takes human relations as a point of departure. Furthermore, both theories talk about art forms 'where the substrate is formed by intersubjectivity and which takes being-together as a central theme' (Bourriaud 1998/2002, 15). Intersubjectivity not only represents a social setting for the reception of art but also is considered the quintessence of these artistic practices and an element of artworks.

Music–Community

Closing this section, we need to briefly discuss two of the most clearly relational areas in music, although neither of them seems to rely on Bourriaud's relational aesthetics. Defined as facilitation of local music activities, community music (CM) is similar to relational aesthetics in its heteronomous understanding of music as well as in its 'active intervention between music leader or facilitator and participants' (Higgins 2012, 3). Ranging from democratically driven communal bands and choirs to music activities for/with disabled people or underprivileged groups and community music therapy, CM practices address issues like social justice and identity formation. They recognise social and personal growth to be as important as musical growth. Furthermore, social and political agendas seem to be much more explicit within CM practices than within Bourriaud's theory. In some aspects, certain CM discourses might even adhere to Bishop's (2012) theory of radical political communal art forms.

CM is often understood as an approach to active music-making and musical knowing 'celebrating informal learning and the musical amateur' (Kertz-Welzel 2016, 113), and according to Lee Higgins, 'community music's key characteristics can be expressed through the themes of hospitality, the creative workshop, friendship and cultural democracy' (2012, 8). In particular, the act of hospitality runs deeply through CM practices and is parallel to care, which we emphasise. Hence, the question *does this work [of art] invite me into [intersubjective] dialogue* is clearly relevant for judging CM practices as well. Nevertheless, when scrutinising recent issues of the *International Journal of Community Music,* we find that an explicit philosophic aesthetic approach to CM seems to be limited or lacking, as also expressed by Alexandra Kertz-Welzel (2016). Still, CM's reliance upon a postmodern vision of art, and thus its similarity to relational aesthetics in its emphasis on process and in the particular relationships of communities, inclusion and democratic engagement of all participants, are clear. However, it seems to us that when judging artwork on the basis of inter-human relations, CM discourses sometimes become more instrumental than Bourriaud's relational aesthetics.

Not far from Small's theories, music teacher and therapist Even Ruud (e.g. 2010, 2004/2015) has advocated for music as a form of communication and interaction for more than 30 years. His ideas are widespread among music therapists[7] as well as educators and have influenced our perspective on relational aesthetics. In line with Ruud, in *Relational Music Therapy* Trondalen describes musical meaning as constituted 'through an active co-creation and interplay with other fellow beings by way of intersubjective sharing and interaction' (2016, 8). She writes that, as an art form, music therapy involves subjectivity, individuality, creativity and beauty, but that 'as an interpersonal process, it involves empathy, intimacy, communication,

7 Stige's (2003) work in community music therapy is relevant for educators as well, as is Valberg's (2011) discussion on relational aesthetics.

mutuality and relationship' (2016, 4). We suggest that an intersubjective and relational perspective on music *education* (as well as therapy), acknowledges the teacher–student relationship as a frame and relational possibility in and of itself for development *and* learning.

Potential Importance for Music Education Practices

If the definition of music changes, the meanings of music also change. This influences the content, objectives, necessary teaching skills and even what we assess and what is seen as 'quality' in music education. Small writes that if we think about music primarily as action and action as concerned with relationships, 'then we see that whatever meaning a musical work has lies in the relationships that are brought into existence when the piece is performed' (1998, 138). Parallel to this, a successful artwork should, according to Bourriaud, reach out of its own existence and afford relations and dialogue. Today, a fair share of (at least Western) children's listening and composing goes on outside of school and educational contexts, as they literally have access to the whole world's music in their pockets. Thus, their musical agency is significant, and a contemporary approach to music education, in our opinion, must take these circumstances into account.

From a general (relational) educational perspective, Kenneth Gergen claims that 'education is more fruitfully conceived as a process for enhancing participation in relational process' (2011, 241). Bourriaud's question, then, could inspire us to ask, *does this educational practice invite my student into dialogue?* In our class preparations and assessments, we are also 'judging artworks [and the way we approach them] on the basis of the inter-human relations' (Bourriaud 1998/2002, 112, our brackets). What we are suggesting is that, in preparing for our next piano lesson, day care circle time, or visiting school concert, Bourriaud's theory may afford an

expanded focus and space for intersubjective relations, dialogues and interactions as objectives in music education.

Although we emphasise that it is the teacher's/performer's responsibility to initiate such dialogues, without the involvement of all parties, a relational artwork will not exist. According to Small, any performance should be judged based on its success in bringing into existence a set of relationships that the participants feel to be ideal, and on its capacity to afford them the ability to explore, affirm, and celebrate those relationships. Quality, then, means performances 'that [empower] all the participants to do this most comprehensively, subtly and clearly, at whatever level of technical accomplishment the performers have attended' (Small 1998, 215).

Here, we can only briefly discuss and exemplify a few specific practices with which we are familiar as music teachers. Our practices in music education also carry a heavy burden of tradition and knowledge developed within modernity's focus on the composer and the art work per se (Espeland 2011, Goehr 2007). Equipped with a toolbox that includes relational aesthetics, how can educators further inspire and improve music education practices?

Does this Teacher Education Invite Me into Dialogue?

We are currently teachers in early childhood and music teacher education. At least in the Scandinavian early childhood teacher education curriculum, the relational theories of Small, Dissanayake, Stern, Malloch and Trevarthen are common. Still, we claim that there is a way to go until the main ideas of relational aesthetics have found their way into every aspect of our teaching (Vist 2014, 2017). Many teachers, like us, grew up in modernity discourses and hold degrees as classical musicians.

This interstice between a background in modernity and current philosophical engagement in relational theories can sometimes reveal the potential for further

development towards relational perspectives. We propose an approach in which everyone is included and seen as equally musically valuable, despite differences in skill. At the same time, we find traces of discourses that effectively 'kill' our students' musical self-esteem, whether they manifest in graded guitar exams or vocal solo disgrace (Vist 2014, 2017). Nora Kulset (2017), interviewing an early childhood teacher, was told that the music courses during the interviewee's education took away much of her joy regarding music. Many of our students also enter their educations with attitudes toward musicality and the value of music that they have inherited from a work-oriented discourse, which may exclude them from seeing themselves as musical or able to relate to others musically. Thus, both teachers and students more or less tacitly operate based on views that might threaten their musical enterprises. We doubt that this is the best foundation for future music activity in day cares or classrooms.

It seems like discourses in which musicality is reserved for the elite or defined as the ability to play from a score, sing in tune or perform on an instrument are hard to get rid of, even in early childhood education (Vist 2014, 2017). However, we find that the content of didactical categories change when one considers relational aesthetics and explicitly asks questions such as the following: *Does this [music teaching] invite my students into dialogue? Could these young students exist, and how, in the space it defines?* Gaining consciousness and skills that allow one to think more relationally about music could change the discursively inherited ways of music education. Even our exam assessments should change to value the relational and communicative qualities of student performances more heavily at the cost of instrumental skills.

Does this Visiting School Concert Invite Me into Dialogue?

In our Norwegian context, where 96,5% of children attend public schools (Statistisk Sentralbyrå 2015), there is a comprehensive state-run system of visiting art practices in

schools, including professional concerts. In her doctoral research, Holdhus (2014) found that these visiting professional concerts in Norwegian schools mostly take place in a highly regulated manner directed by the musicians. Many of these musicians want to communicate with and relate to their young audiences, but they reveal a lack of ability to experience their audiences as 'performance owners' or as 'interesting contributors', and are thereby far from affording a relational aesthetic practice.

Their practice thus seems to be ruled by discursive sayings and taken-for-granted power structures. For instance, musicians and artists in this practice rely heavily on repeated stories of children as inherently suited to experience artistic utterances, while teachers and schools are seen as obstacles to children's creative and sensory lives (Digranes 2009; Christophersen 2013). Contradicting these views, Holdhus (2014) points out that teachers are a significant resource for artistic enterprise in schools; they know the individuals and relations in their classes, what competencies and tensions are present and what the children's interests are.

To really invite into dialogue, artistic contributions involving pupils should be grounded in a stance of equity acknowledging the *school* context. Consequently, we claim that pupils, teachers and visiting musicians need to treat each other's knowledge, cultures and apprehensions as equally significant, in many ways practicing aspects of dialogic aesthetics as suggested by Kester (2004). In accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989), Norwegian schools underscore and encourage children's democratic right to have a say and to fulfil their potential. We argue that pupils' or children's current cultural situations and rights, together with relational aesthetics, can be utilised as educational and artistic possibilities and, thus, that concerts and artist visits for today's schoolchildren can be shaped more like dialogues.

The artist in a dialogic practice has a facilitative function, working to transform participants' voices into an artistic shape upon which they can agree (Kester 2004). We agree with Valberg (2012), who claims that the Norwegian term 'henvendelse'—to address or approach someone in a communicative and inviting/requesting way—is a basic state of any participant in relational artistic processes. However, this must be facilitated and encouraged by the artist, like the care and hospitality mentioned above. We will add that in a verbal dialogue, it is considered rude not to listen to others' responses when asking a question. Why should this be any different in music performance or education?

Does this Piano Teaching Invite Me into Dialogue?

Piano students are afforded an enormous amount of music for any technical level compared to most other instruments. Although many new beginner methods have been introduced, older methods still stand, even some from the 1950s and 1960s (e.g. Thompson 1955; Schaum 1962; Agnestig 1958). These methods have proven their quality for decades. However, do they afford the optimal skills and music experiences for today's children? It seems to us that the modernity discourse still dominates in many piano lessons and books in a way that complicates the development of new educational thinking. Is the explicit aim of most piano lessons primarily to make the music invite the student into dialogue, as Bourriaud suggests, or primarily to make the student play the music the way the discourse expects it to be played? Have modernity's ideas proven to be so successful for piano teaching that piano discourses are less willing to critically analyse their ideas and perspectives on humanity, teaching and music in the twenty-first century?

Today, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989) explicitly demands that teachers and caregivers facilitate and acknowledge children's rights to participation and expression in different media—to see children, not as 'becomings',

but as 'beings' (James, Jenks & Prout 1985). What do 'different media' and 'beings' mean in the context of a classical or jazz piano lesson? Many beginner pianists get to play Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' from Symphony No. 9 in arrangements that meet their technical level but are far away from Beethoven's original. In this way, traditional piano teaching invites the student into dialogue, at least technically. However, as we recall from our own development, are not students often told that certain music is still too advanced or not suited for piano? Developmental psychology and musicology could be accused of a reductional attitude toward children's use of music, as Barrett claims (2009). We suggest that this is often rooted in a modernity philosophy and discourse and that relational ideas can afford a less reductional attitude, both towards the artwork, as above, and towards other aspects of teaching.

Within arts-based research methodologies, a/r/tography explicitly relies on relational aesthetics (Springgay et al. 2008). Jee Yeon Ryu, a piano teacher and researcher, claims that living and working in the typical a/r/tographical interstice between musician, teacher and researcher enables her to reflect better on her own performance. An a/r/tographic approach to piano pedagogy can, in her opinion, help create meaningful music-making and piano-learning that encourages investigation and reflection on relational issues between a teacher and student. It also allows room for improvisation; she claims, 'I am learning to create a space and time for my students and myself to attune to our own musical selves' (LeBlanc et al. 2015, 364).

Concluding Remarks

In this article, taking Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics* as a point of departure, we have argued that relational aesthetic theories are relevant for music education. We also claim that 'relatives' of Bourriaud's relational aesthetics already

exist in or around our field, like musicking, communicative musicality, CM and relational theories in musicology and music therapy. In today's music education philosophy, music is a diverse and changing human practice, and it is the bearer of multiple meanings and values (Bowman and Frega 2012). However, we claim that there is a need for development and refinement of intersubjective or interpersonal relational elements within music education in order to clarify, transform and improve the contemporary field of music education practices and to see relational aesthetics as a *pedagogical and intersubjective* resource in music education. We also claim that our music education perspective has something to 'give back' to visual (and other types of) arts (education), expanding the theory, particularly in terms of care.

Ruud writes, 'Something was lost when music became an art form within an aesthetics, which became disentangled from everyday life and separated into its own sphere. Music became less important (...)' (2008/2015, 225). We want to see music and other types of arts education reclaim their importance as central forces in humanising culture (Kaur and Dave-Mukherji 2015), and 'armed with Small's concept of musicking, we can deal with music in its full social-cultural significance' (Odendaal et al. 2014, 162). We believe that arts educators, as well as artists operating within an educational context, will probably have to take an additional step away from autonomy aesthetics in the years to come. This is why we argue that relational aesthetics have something to add to the 'relatives' in music introduced above and that music in this sense has something to add to its art relatives. Bourriaud's focus on *intersubjective* relations, his suggestion to *judge* (in our case, teach) *on the basis of such relations* and his postmodern stance, in which democratic and intersubjective relations *are seen as part of the artwork*, represents a fruitful supplement to existing conceptions of dialogical approaches within the arts.

It seems to us that relational theorists within music are focusing on intersubjective relations in a way that puts terms like care, hospitality, identity and inclusion more at the forefront than does Bourriaud's theory. Schools and day cares of different kinds can be seen as societies 'concerned with health promotion and mutual caring', as Ruud (2004/2015, 502) describes community music therapy. Regarding this matter, Bourriaud appears rather neutral. Does he—and the visual art discourse around him—reveal some trace of modernity or work-oriented aesthetics in the lack of focus beyond the art world and (the new and wider definition of) the artwork? Bishop's (2004) critique of Bourriaud also points to the lack of a political agenda for change and justice. However, as Alexandra Kertz-Welzel (2016) comments in her critique of community music, such agendas may also become a limitation. We find value in both perspectives, or preferably, in the interstices or gaps they create.

As a parallel to Bourriaud's *interstice*, Biesta's educational term *gap* illustrates the places where transformation—or learning—takes place. He writes, 'education is located not in the activities of the teacher, nor in the activities of the learner, but in the interaction between the two' (Biesta 2004, 12). Arts education also takes place in the transformative gap/interstice between the teacher and the learner. Returning once again to aesthetics, focusing on the interstice also helps make explicit the importance of seeing relations not only as context but also as existing within the expanded artwork. For those of us born in the middle of the twentieth century who grew up in a modernity discourse, terms like 'interstice' and 'gap' help us achieve the radical shift in attention needed to see relations as existing within the artwork and knowledge and, hence, to strive for what we want for our fellow human beings, including our students.

When relations become part of the artwork, relational skills become part of musicianship—and today's arts teachers' skills. A significant teaching skill in relational arts education will therefore be to 'nurture student's awareness of the many

ways in which arts arouses, comforts, bonds, and creates who we are as embodied, social beings' (Elliott and Silverman 2012, 59). As it has helped us here, a Bourriaudian question could support the development of such skills: *Does this work [of art] invite [my student] into dialogue?*

As we end this text, we want to point out that by no means do we want relational aesthetics to be the only aesthetics in arts education. In a postmodern discourse such as that of Bourriaud, grand theories are out of the question. If any artwork is a relation to the world made visible, the individual's relation to the artwork also has importance and value. We see no reason to forget the wonderful richness of the relation between the person and the materials and art works, as documented throughout our aesthetic and philosophical history, so long as the discourse provides room to acknowledge intersubjective relations as well. What we suggest is that arts—in our case, music—educators consider intersubjectivity and relations as core aspects of their field. As stated by UNESCO, '[e]ducation is not only about the acquisition of skills, it is also about values of respect for life and human dignity required for social harmony in a diverse world' (2015, 37).

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