LUND UNIVERSITY

The Degree Project: An Evaluation from Within

Stefansdottir, Halla Steinunn

Published in:
Konstuniversitetet-högskolepedagogiska betraktelser

2024

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):
Stefansdottir, H. S. (2024). The Degree Project: An Evaluation from Within. In Y. Hofvander Trulsson, & H. Hellsten (Eds.), *Konstuniversitetet-högskolepedagogiska betraktelser* (pp. 113-133). Lund University (Media-Tryck).

Total number of authors:
1

Creative Commons License:
CC BY-NC-ND

General rights
Unless other specific re-use rights are stated the following general rights apply:
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.
• Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
• You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
• You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Read more about Creative commons licenses: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117
221 00 Lund
+46 46-222 00 00

Download date: 07. Nov. 2026

The Degree Project: An Evaluation from Within

Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir

Malmö Academy of Music, Lund University

Introduction

This chapter builds on a quality assessment of my teaching during the preparation seminars for the 'degree project' at the Malmö Academy of Music (hereafter: MAM).[9] The evaluation is extended to review the way the course functioned on the basis of John Biggs' (2003) theories on 'constructive alignment'. As a result, this chapter also problematises the design of such coursework at a broader structural level while at the same time suggesting future initiatives for the ongoing development of Higher Music Education (hereafter: HME).

The seminars

I taught the preparation seminars for the degree project at MAM between 2018 and 2022. The coursework may be viewed as the result of two parallel educational developments. One was the implementation of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, which

[9] The basis for this chapter may be traced back to my individual work within Ylva Hofvander Trulsson's course on University Pedagogy at Lund University in 2019.

aimed to coordinate educational reform and quality assessment across the European Union, creating a 'European Higher Education Area'. This process introduced the field of artistic research, also known as a form of practice-led or practice-based research, into the conservatory system, resulting in a three-cycle education program.

Having said this, artistic research (hereafter: AR) was a topic of discussion in Sweden as early as the 1960s. The bid to introduce AR at MAM was initially rejected in 1994 but subsequently accepted in 2000, along with the AR program given at the University of Gothenburg (Lundström, 2019). The first two doctoral theses written at MAM were on human/computer interaction (Frisk, 2008) and interaction in the creative process between the performer and other agents (Östersjö, 2008). In 2009, Malmö and Gothenburg were granted examination rights (for further details see Lundström, 2019).

The degree project and its seminars are nested in the context of Swedish educational policy (Swedish Code of Statues, 2009:1037), which is focused on student learning as a means of opening the way to a process of lifelong learning. As a result, the degree project was implemented at the national level and draws directly on methodological developments within third-cycle AR. As such, it not only prepares the students for their future professional lives but may also produce a bridge between the first, second, and third cycles. This is in line with AEC (Association Européenne des Conservatoires) (2014) initiatives focused on renewal in HME (for an overview of trends in HME see for example Johansson and Georgii-Hemming, 2020; Minors et al., 2017).

Importantly, the call for renewal has been motivated by socio-political realities that have rendered Western classical music (hereafter: WCM) irrelevant in contemporary art platforms (Lebrecht, 1997). Funding is in decline, as is the possibility of securing a tenured position (Bennett, 2009; Orning, 2019). Freelancers (some of whom used to belong to orchestras that have now been disbanded) are struggling to renew themselves in our digital age. Hence, educational practitioners and HMEIs are facing demands for improvement as their WCM students, like students of improvisation and folk music, are destined for portfolio careers in a market characterised by over-recruitment (Orning, 2017).

At MAM, the first steps towards the introduction of the degree project took place in 2009 as Karin Johansson and Stefan Östersjö developed a course on masters' level set to "foster independent musical thinking and artistic initiative" (Johansson & Östersjö,

2009). The present model, in which the graduation concert and a written[10] essay constitute the degree project, was created in 2013. Since 2018, the course and its output have been examined as an independent course. Building on the Higher Education Ordinance, the MAM states that "[a] requirement for the award of a Degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts (180 credits) is the completion by the student of an independent project (degree project) of at least 15 credits in the main field of study (SFS, 1993:100, n.p.)" (Östersjö & Hellsten, 2018a). Similarly, "[a] requirement for the award of a Degree of Master of Fine Arts (120 credits) is the completion by the student of an independent project (degree project) of at least 30 credits in the main field of study (SFS, 1993:100, n.p.)" (Östersjö & Hellsten, 2018b).

At the time of my teaching, the seminars were offered in the fifth term of bachelors' studies (comprising 6-7 seminars in total) and in the second and third term of masters' studies (comprising a total of around 7 seminars). The seminars were divided into the following topics: general introduction, method, content, and form. In addition, the masters' students were offered a seminar on academic writing. Effectively, the intention was that students would put various reflective tools and theories, taught during my course, to use within their own degree projects. This would then be supported by supervision comprising a total of seven hours prior to the submission of their degree projects for examination.

The overall aim of the students' project work was to make visible the reflection in and behind all artistic activity. The inquiry is grounded in the student's own artistic practice and is reported in an essay or in a lecture recital (or in another form, if mutually agreed on by the student and the supervisor). (Östersjö & Hellsten, 2018a)

In the following I will share the quality assessment of my own teaching, which was initially conducted in 2019 and which included students within the performance programmes in music and church music. This was done both in collaboration with Professor Johansson, with whom I shared the seminars, and in dialogue with Professor Hans Hellsten[11] who supervised the degree project. It also involved audit processes and

[10] This has recently been extended to include the formats of lecture-recitals and, as I will detail later in this chapter, the audio paper.

[11] Incidentally, Hellsten was involved in the Polifonia (2007-2010) working group, one of the three working groups related to the implementation of the Bologna process. The work of Polifonia II resulted in a book titled *Researching Conservatoires*.

reflective work which were part of Ylva Hofvander Trulsson's course in University Pedagogy at the Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts. My continued evaluation, which is presented in the final section, draws on further teaching experiences. This may thus be viewed as an example of an 'action research spiral', in which the teacher follows the 'reflect-plan-apply-evaluate' format (Kember & Kelly, 1993, as cited in Biggs and Tang, 2011). Such work is often triggered by a need for change, as is detailed at the start of next section.

Reflection and application

As I began teaching the course, I discovered that only about one-third of the masters' students turned in their project work on time. The reasons for this are complex and involve both institutional and external factors. For example, it is usually only in the case of teaching positions or positions within the church that students are required to show a graduation certificate when they start their professional careers. In addition, the fact that the masters' students were examined only after a process that spanned three terms might be seen as undermining timely submission and as a hindrance to dynamic workflow. Similarly, the low turn-out indicated that there was a fragmentation within the program at large. In fact, it raised questions about the design of the program overall, including the late implementation of the degree project. In addition, this may have induced perceptions that there was an indifference to the program, i.e., an institutional culture that might prove discouraging for the students.

In 2019, however, the task that Johansson and I faced was that of trying to address this from within the seminars. As such, our goal was to help the students reach their 'Intended Learning Outcomes' (Gibbs, 2005) or ILOs. This approach, along with much curriculum design in Sweden, is in line with John Biggs' theories on constructive alignment, which build further on Shuell's claim that "what the student does is actually more important in determining what is learned than what the teacher does" (Shuell, 1986, as cited in Biggs & Tang, 2011, p. 97). Biggs (2005) explains as follows:

> The 'alignment' aspect refers to what the teacher does, which is to set up a learning environment that supports the learning activities appropriate to achieving the desired learning outcomes. The key is that the components in the teaching system, especially the teaching methods used and the assessment tasks, are aligned with the learning activities assumed in the intended outcomes. The learner is in a sense 'trapped', and finds it difficult to escape without learning what he or she is intended to learn. (p. 2)

One general observation was that masters' students were not formulating their ideas prior to meeting their supervisor, which hindered their progress, since they only met them in the second term. This transformed what should have been an autonomous process into a traditional master-apprentice format, which constitutes an educational paradigm within HME. Such an approach entails teachers tending to "teach the way they were taught" (Holmgren, 2022, p. 19) and is aligned with an 'instructional' model for later recall during examinations. This produced a real perceived hinder to the students' learning process.

In addition, I noticed a lack of student engagement during the seminars in both cycles, which gave me the impression that the students were not actively interacting with the knowledge that was being shared. I suspected that this lack of engagement would hinder their ability to incorporate this knowledge into their own project process. Consequently, revisions were made to shift the level of engagement from low to high. As shown in the graph below, this change in teaching methods was intended to move away from a view of students as passive recipients and towards a focus on problem-based learning.

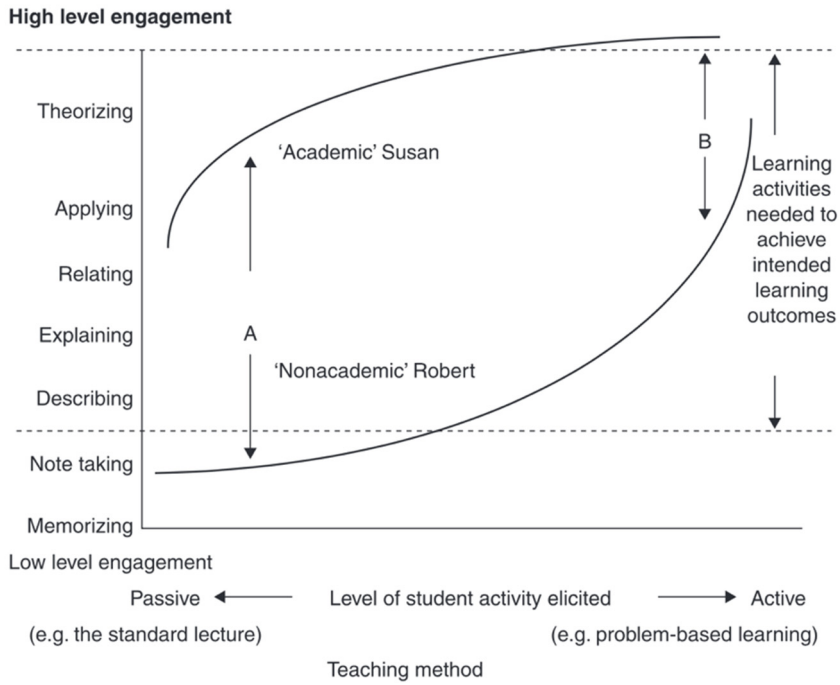

Figure 1. Student orientation, teaching method, and level of engagement (Biggs & Tang, 2011, p. 6).

Hence, to encourage active participation during the seminars we utilised approaches that engaged students in structuring the received information. In doing so, we followed Biggs and Tang's (2011) suggestions about the way teaching may be distributed i.e., shared across teachers, individual students, and student groups, in the following ways:

- teacher managed with little student participation: lecturing, tutorials;
- teacher managed with some student participation: setting assigned readings or textbooks, laboratories, concept mapping, minute papers, teaching study skills in context (…);
- teacher managed with active student participation: peer teaching, peer-assisted study sessions (PASS), interactive work in class, bulletin boards, various group work;
- student managed: collaborative learning groups, chat rooms;

- individually managed: reading, searching the web, soliciting advice, listening to a lecture, and strategic management of these activities using metacognitive and study skills. (p. 135)

In the subsequent seminars, we implemented peer-learning by organising the students into discussion groups based on the theme of their work, such as 'practicing', 'performance practice/concert formats', 'composition/improvisation', and 'instrument'. The topics discussed within each breakout group were related to the seminar topic. The teacher actively participated in the breakout sessions by circulating between the groups, providing support, and gaining insights into the progress of the work of different individuals. We also introduced peer-learning by inviting a Master II student to share her work as a best-practice example. Additionally, students were given assignments between seminars to support their individual work.

Simultaneously, we restructured the bachelor level examination so that the final seminar in January served as a platform for students to present the status of their work and submit half of their thesis. In return, they received written feedback from Johansson and myself to guide them in their continued work. In the case of masters' students, these were invited to present their project to the class as a whole mid-way through their project work.

My individual planning focused on my lecturing style. Traditionally, lectures involve the teacher 'talking at' the students, which has been described by Biggs and Tang (2011) as a situation in which "both teacher and students see the lecture as a matter of teacher performance, not of learner performance" (p. 138). To address this, I incorporated regular intervals for discussions to maintain student engagement, since research suggests that the student attention span lasts around 10-15 minutes (2011). Additionally, to further shift the focus from teacher performance to learner performance, I asked students to provide an overview of the lecture to a fellow student.

To enhance student engagement, I introduced the interactive app Mentimeter based on feedback from my colleague, Adriana Di Lorenzo Tillborg, who observed my classroom. Despite breakout sessions for discussion, the classroom was often silent, even when I directly asked questions. Mentimeter provided an anonymous and collective platform for students to respond to various questions, such as their understanding of artistic creativity, their topics of interest, and relevant methods for their own work.

Figure 2. What does 'artistry' mean to you (Stefánsdóttir, 2019).

Within the lecture sessions, I utilised various forms of media such as audio, video, digital blogs, and magazines. These media served as tools to capture the students' attention and were integral to my teaching. The choice of media was in each case based on the topic of the seminar. The media were used to showcase examples of artistic outcomes, discuss different methods for data collection and analysis, demonstrate data handling techniques, share and discuss presentation formats, and even to make the topic of academic writing more engaging. Additionally, they provided a platform to share best practices from previous student projects, senior artistic research, and the field of music and sound art. This emphasised that sources could take various forms besides written sources, and some may even become platforms in students' future professional lives, such as blogs, magazines, and radio stations.

Importantly, my choice of media aimed to promote diversity in the classroom. This was a deliberate act to resist the reproduction of dominant Western music ontologies, which have had a lasting impact on both human and non-human entities (Leech-Wilkinson, 2020; Stefánsdóttir, 2023). From the perspective of Western classical music, its canonical outlook has limited live performances to the reproduction of scores.

This anthropomorphic system also views technologies as mere tools and has co-opted recording technology for the purpose of regulation (Leech-Wilkinson, 2020).

Similarly, and essential to any review of teaching, codes of conduct within the field of Western music cultures are intertwined with cultural ideologies that can be exclusionary and discriminatory. This is evident in the promotion of a historical narrative that favours men in Western classical music, electronic music, and sound art (Eckhardt & De Graeve, 2017; Rodgers, 2010; Sadie & Samuel, 1995). This narrative also perpetuates the exclusion of women from the history of music technological innovation (Rodgers, 2010). One consequence of this is that the practice of sound reproduction and technological forms that are "culturally coded as female or maternal have been systematically devalued or controlled" (p. 12).

Such realities are often apparent in curation within the field, prompting Sandeep Bhagwati to describe them as "failures of research—and a lack of the ability to listen with your ears awake" (Bhagwati, 2020, II section, para. 6). Curation within the music field may be seen as an act of organising, selecting works, steering processes, and presenting. It is not merely limited to the professional field but extends to choices within HME that uphold norms and values through curriculum choices. Hence, teachers play a central role in the stakeholder system of WCM, as emphasised by Leech-Wilkinson (2020). Choosing media for seminars that are intended to assist students on their way towards a qualitative inquiry that will further help them to become active contributors to society therefore involves ethical responsibilities and cannot be separated from the politics of listening. Viewed from this perspective, the choice of media serves as an invitation to the concept of 'acting with theory', as proposed by Dernikos et al. (2020), which creates new formations of intersectional justice (Strom & Martin, 2017, as cited in Dernikos et al. 2020). This also ties in with the way that my own research has noted that the present inertia of WCM may be explained using feminist intersectional theory, which proposes that masculine norms and power are deeply institutionalised, even to the extent of making gender invisible (Magnusdottir & Kronsell, 2015).

The decision to share Nguyễn Thanh Thuy's documentary *Culture Soldiers* (2019) was made as a means of reminding students of the necessity of situating and contextualising one's work. This documentary, which formed part of Nguyễn 's doctoral thesis *The choreography of gender in traditional Vietnamese music* (Nguyễn, 2019) also provided a

platform for discussing the socialisation of a musician's body. Similarly, interviews with the interdisciplinary artist Meredith Monk and the hip-hop producer, rapper, and educator 9th Wonder were introduced to bring 'different frequencies' into the classroom. The interview with 9th Wonder also allowed me to highlight the achievements of a female instrument inventor, as it was produced in relation to the 10th anniversary of Maschine, which was created in part by the engineer Steinunn Arnardottir.[12] Both videos were used as material for exercises that encouraged students to actively engage with instructional charts and consider the distributed nature of musical creativity.

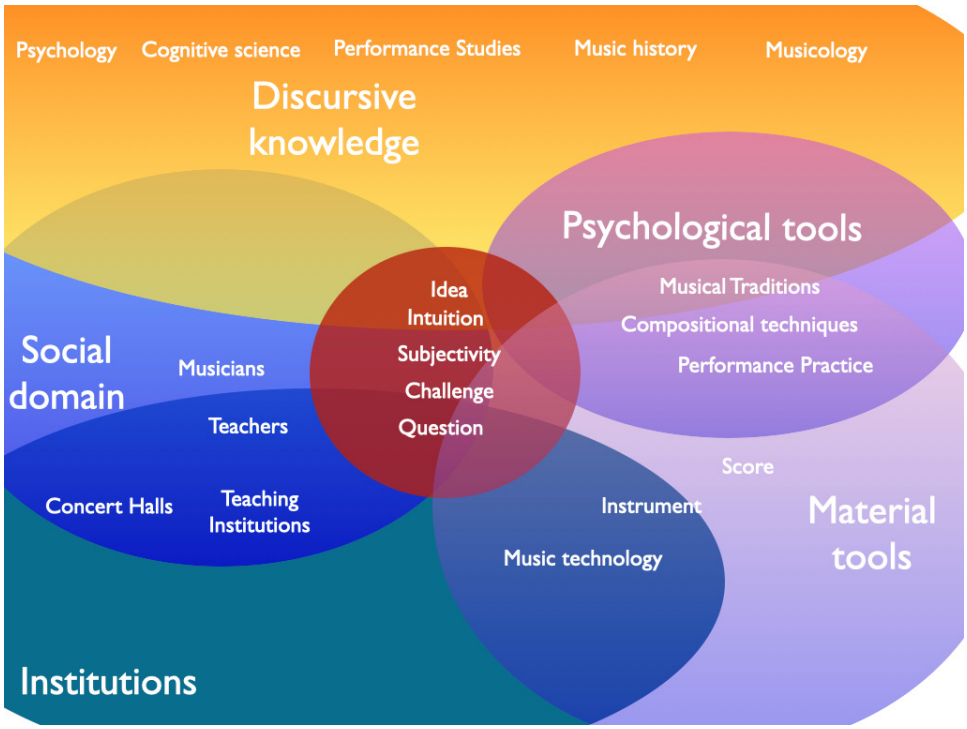

Figure 3. A chart taken from the bachelors' and masters' instructional material, used to display the context for a musician's work (Östersjö, 2016 in Östersjö & Hellsten, 2018a).

Similarly, a video from the artist-researcher Catherine Laws's project *Player Piano* (Quek, 2018) with a focus on subjectivity formation through performance was also

[12] Such teaching materials may in return open up for further discussion regarding the inbuilt colonising effect of the digital workstation's tuning system (Faber, 2021).

shared. Later, I began incorporating my own audio papers[13] (Stefánsdóttir, 2019, 2021), which introduced the students to this presentation format while at the same time sharing with them AR that was linked to interdisciplinary work in the studio environment and ecological sound art.[14]

The implementation of the above strategies resulted in a more engaged classroom.[15] The supervisors also provided positive feedback regarding our mid-way examination of student projects, noting that this approach benefited the students and made their process more dynamic. Moreover, the number of masters' students who submitted their degree projects on time increased, although this can be attributed to the combined efforts of the entire degree project team, led by Hellsten. However, as a teacher and supervisor, my continued observations up until 2022 raised questions about the extent to which the seminars effectively helped students achieve their ILOs. It is this continued evaluation that forms the basis of the final section of this chapter.

Evaluation of course design

To date, we have seen examples at MAM where seminars and the students' continued work on their degree projects have been essential in helping students obtain additional insights and enhance their artistic expression. This is in line with the ILOs since it leaves them better equipped for their future professional lives as portfolio musicians. In some cases, it has even brought students to the point where they are able to formulate and apply for a PhD in artistic research. Östersjö presented such examples at the 2018 European Platform of Artistic Research in Music (EPARM), providing a status update

[13] The audio paper, as an academic format, was first presented by the musicologists Sanne Krogh Groth and Kristine Samson in a manifesto published in 2016 in the Danish musicology journal *Seismograf*, which accompanied their first collection of audio papers. The format was further developed through seminars and an international symposium instigated by Groth and Östersjö.

[14] Both papers were created during my period of doctoral research whose aim was to examine the agencies at play in artistic processes, explored through the work of performer, curator and composer active in the fields of contemporary music and sound art (for further details see Stefánsdóttir, 2023).

[15] I should also note that, although it is not the focus of this chapter, the Covid-19 pandemic started only a few months after my first round of evaluation. This came to present unprecedent challenges to education and required teachers to adapt and integrate digital tools into their activities to an even greater extent.

following the first five years of implementing the coursework at MAM. This served as a testament to the successful integration of AR methods into bachelors' and masters' projects.

The six selected student projects explored topics such as the role of listening in musical improvisation, the relationship between performer and audience, and interdisciplinary investigations of lighting from the perspective of interpretation and composition (Östersjö, 2018).[16] As a result, they

> suggest some opportunities that artistic research methods do offer to students in the conservatory. The possibility to intentionally design projects that address specific artistic challenges, and to study such processes through reflection and observation constitutes a path towards independent artistic development. But also, the possibilities inherent to the positioning of one's practice in relation to other bodies of work, to other practices, and further to a socio-cultural context, allows students to develop a critical understanding of the role of institutions, as well as their own roles as individuals and artists in this context. Hereby a space for action can be identified, within which they can become part of a development of new avenues for music in contemporary society. (p. 5)

A year later, one of the bachelors' projects that I supervised used these very same reflective tools to address some of the challenges produced by the institutional outlook. Violinist Agnes Scherwin's point of departure was the fact that a certain repertoire was something that the student 'had' to have played at all levels of study, including the chamber and orchestral levels. According to her, this produced a competitive atmosphere within the education program. Overall, it left Scherwin questioning how she could carve out a space to explore her own artistic voice (Scherwin, 2019). This example, in which the student's project enacts a resistance to a stakeholder system (see previous section), reminds us that hierarchical values of this kind are at odds with what Orning has defined as a 'polyphonic performance practice' which seeks to "empower the students to think and act independently" (2019, Conclusion section).

Inherited values have commonly been manifested in many degree projects. Performance students steer themselves towards improving their interpretation of the (white male)

[16] These same projects, by Peter Olsson, Pontus Häggblom, Maria Isabel Edlund, Fredrik Schützer, Susette Johansson, and Alessandro Perrini were later shared within my lectures, as examples of good practice.

canon by focusing on performance practice or seeking methods to practice more efficiently and cope with the pressure to attain perfection. Similarly, composition projects are typically a solitary activity, although there are exceptions that involve collaborative projects with performers. As a result, there is a frequent lack of engagement with spatial agency, audience relations, digital technologies, interdisciplinarity, and societal issues.[17] Likewise, an informal survey conducted among my international masters' students in 2022 revealed that prior to the seminars, only one of them had previously employed audio or video recordings as a method to document their artistic processes.[18] Certainly, this can be attributed to the late introduction of the degree project within their studies, differences between program design within European institutions and a WCM paradigm that restricts performers from engaging with technologies other than their instrument. This is the case despite research showing that the recording technology allows for continued material engagement through micro-sonic listening (Östersjö, 2020), which may provide the practitioner with further insights into varying phenomena via analytical approaches while at the same time constituting a material approach to developing new artistic methods (Östersjö et al. 2023; Stefánsdóttir, 2023; Stefánsdóttir & Östersjö, 2021).[19]

Such observations prompted me to launch a pilot project in 2020-21 between MAM and the Inter Arts Center[20] in Malmö. The project allowed masters' students, majoring in performance, to access the centre's staff and facilities. As an example of the project's outcome, trombonist Lukas Nordanskog, under the supervision of Kent Olofsson and myself, created a multi-channel composition using his own field recordings and later improvised within the work at a concert organised by the academy.

---

[17] A similar point was raised by Kent Olofsson in his individual work during the University Pedagogy course at Lund University in 2019 (Olofsson, 2019). Olofsson's assessment aimed to propose new program offerings for composition education. His analysis also highlighted an existing barrier within the institution, where degree projects were treated as side projects rather than being recognised as essential to students' overall learning. This challenge was previously mentioned in this chapter.

[18] As a result, I assigned the students an exercise involving lo-fi equipment for data gathering, even before they finalised the topic of their individual projects.

[19] My prior research demonstrates the integration of audio and video technologies, particularly in the application of stimulated recall methods, as an integral part of analysis and artistic creation.

[20] The Inter Arts Center is the research facility of LU's Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts. For more information, please visit: https://www.iac.lu.se.

This student-centred pilot project resonates with European initiatives (e.g., NAIP, CoPeCo) that prioritise mentorship, experimentation, cross-border collaboration, and individualised study paths. It drew inspiration from ESAIM[21], a Swedish Vinnova-funded collaboration between The Royal College of Music in Stockholm and The Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, which aims to enhance students' capacity in the professional field through independent work that combines music and technology. Moreover, it corresponds with the competence areas identified in a pan-European survey (REACT, 2021) examining ways to promote students' creativity, along with reflexive and critical thinking.

- Holistic and tailored education with a student-centred approach;
- Increased tuition in music pedagogy;
- A deeper and substantial connection of music performance modules in HEIs [sic] curricula with other music related courses, with other art forms, and with themusic performance industry as a whole;
- Establishing an international dialogue, collaboration, and exchange of ideaswith other universities' students and faculty;
- Courses on technological literacy and competences;
- More practical opportunities and artistic mentoring support as well as career management;
- Development of critical thinking and self-reflection skills;
- Importance of understanding authenticity in performance. (p. 22)

The survey is a response to HME realities, highlighting that musicians are trained according to available competences rather than in response to their need to forge a professional life as creative professionals.

[21] The ESAIM project lasted from 2018 until 2022 at The Royal College of Music in Stockholm. The project published a handbook in Swedish (Nevrin et al., 2021) on supervision. Additionally, ESAIM laid the foundation for a new project, AIM, which in turn has led to a new master's program in music: AIM - Artistic Interdisciplinary Master, starting in the fall of 2024. Both projects were led by Henrik Frisk.

In relation to my evaluation of the degree project presented above, it can be concluded that the students can be set on a path of individual reflection, thereby at times also enhancing their technological competence. However, the continuous use of these tools (with or without critique) in line with the existing hierarchical values found within HME raises the question of whether the students are achieving the overall educational goals. This in turn points to the need for further constructive alignment across the institution, for example in line with the 'hows' outlined in the above survey.[22]

According to Biggs and Tang (2011), such work requires the establishment of infrastructure and quality enhancement mechanisms, a form of support that "involves leadership, strategies of implementation, formative evaluation for quality enhancement, and a developmental framework for implementing constructive alignment" (p. 291). This leads on to a point that is missing from the REACT report, which is the need to consider the role of music-making in society in any revision of music education. As has been observed by Jonathan Impett (2017), building on the work of Giorgio Agamben and Alain Badiou, "(w)e inhabit a cultural environment of fragmentation, a glorious but potentially disempowered kaleidoscope of overlapping interests, tastes, and traditions in which the academy and the state have withdrawn from judgements of intrinsic value and criticism is impoverished" (pp. 221–222). Remedying this requires an admission that the concept of the canon is no longer a viable foundation for music-making. Rather, "the production of knowledge is the natural work of music—or, less ambitiously, of Western art music—and that in this present environment the work of musicians must be to address its need for a context, however local, in which to emerge" (p. 222). This is echoed by Georgina Born, albeit in the context of research on digital art music.

[22] The REACT survey is a much-needed initiative when it comes to the development of HME. At the same time, as Holmgren (2022) has noted, the field of HME is suffering from a lack of research into the teaching and learning of musical interpretation, and also from a lack of empirical research in Sweden into the effect that more progressive forms of instrumental education have had on practice. Holmgren's own empirical research into piano pedagogy is an interesting contribution as it explores the dialectic possibilities of such teaching. Likewise, Markus Tullberg (2022), via his notable ecological-enactive research on instrumental teaching, has shown how a sustainable process may be formed via activities that go beyond a focus on repertoire, wherein "(w)hat might seem like peripheral activities of music learning might over time have profound consequences in terms of affordances" (p. 247).

> [T]he neoliberal university (fourth plane) makes possible inventive first-plane musico-social experiments, while retaining a specific (third-plane) raced, gendered body of practitioners. In academic digital art music, the action and the politics arise mainly on the first and second planes, against a background of resilient continuities – and the virtual absence of a politics – on the third and fourth planes. (2022, p. 479)

As noted by Darla Crispin, AR "exists in two milieus - artistic and scholarly", and as a result "it has both a dual requirement and a dual responsibility" (Crispin, 2019, p. 55). In Sweden, the dissemination of AR within HME beyond the third cycle has been most evident in the realignment of curricula, more specifically in the form of the degree project. This chapter represents one of the few evaluations of output beyond the assessments produced by the Swedish Higher Education Authority.[23] According to Östersjö (2022), however, "it is in the further critical potential that the greater usefulness of the research outcomes can be identified" (p. 151).

While this chapter does not map in detail how such further integration might occur, this process is bound to intersect with an existing view within the field of music research, that it is not only "theory and methods [that] need to be decolonized but also the very foundations of our embodied practices, including our listening" (Östersjö et al, 2023, p. 5). This aligns with a wider call within Western Academia to look beyond a pro-colonial lens, echoed in the question "Why is my curriculum white?".[24] At the same time, as in other fields, the attempt to "listen with your ears awake", so described by Bhagwati (2020) and go beyond a "white racial frame" (Feagin, 2009, as cited in Ewell, 2020) may succumb to the trap of tokenism (Hodkinson, 2020). At worst, actions taken under the guise of diversity may merely be "*a way of appearing to address the problem*" (Ahmed, 2019, p. 156, emphasis in original).

Viewed from this perspective it is not sufficient merely to insert a course on 'studio recording' into the program-offering of HMEs in order to improve technological literacy and competences. Rather, the field needs to align such changes in the

[23] Östersjö's conference paper *Critical thinking through music* (Östersjö, 2018), cited in this chapter, looked at student projects produced between 2013-18. Johansson's paper *Experts, entrepreneurs and competence nomads: the skills paradox in higher music education* (Johansson, 2012) included parts of an evaluation conducted in relation to her and Östersjö's initial development of the degree project at MAM.

[24] This was the title of a campaign started by University College London students. It aimed to address issues of equality, diversity and discrimination in the institution's curriculum and teaching practices.

curriculum with an updated usage thereof, where technologies may even be key to decolonising method approaches. Such quality enhancement can be implemented through the program offering at large and is bound to align with an institution's overall review of its dominant values, whether on an explicit or tacit level (Jørgensen, 2000). This is thus bound to produce different situations as the teacher embarks on the adaptation of the teaching environment "through the lens of sound theory of teaching and learning" (Biggs & Tang, 2011, p. 34). This is a difficult task, but one that is necessary to enhance student experiences as the students formulate their identities and roles for creative futures within societies in change.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Karin Johansson, Stefan Östersjö and Markus Tullberg for taking the time to read the text and provide valuable comments.

References

AEC (Association Européenne de Conservatoires, Academies de Musique et Musikhochschulen) (2014). *Perspectives on 2nd Cycle Programmes in Higher Music Education*. Lifelong Learning Programme.

Ahmed, S. (2019). *What's the use?: On the uses of use*. Duke University Press.

Bennett, D. (2009). Academy and the real world: Developing realistic notions of career in the performing arts. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, *8*(3), 309–327. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022209339953

Bhagwati, S. (2020, September 25). *Curating musicking as a mode of wakefulness in interesting times*. [Conference presentation]. Symposium "Curating diversity – Decolonizing contemporary music." https://www.field-notes.berlin/de/festivals/43680/konferenzen/75591/texte-dokumentation/75602/sandeep-bhagwati-curating-musicking-as-a-mode-of-wakefulness-in-interesting-times

Biggs, J. B. (2003). Aligning teaching for constructing learning. *Higher Education Academy*. https://bit.ly/3W24NTl

Biggs, J. B., & Tang, C. S. (2011). *Teaching for Quality Learning at University: What the Student Does* (4th ed.). McGraw-Hill Companies Inc. 2011. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=405333&site=eds-live&scope=site

Born, G. (2022). Postlude: musical-anthropological comparativism – across scales. In G. Born (Ed.), *Music and digital media. A planetary anthropology* (pp. 439-494). UCL Press.

Crispin, D. (2019). The deterritorialization and reterritorialization of artistic research. *IMPAR: Online Journal for Artistic Research, 3*(2), 45-59. https://doi.org/10.34624/impar.v3i2.14146

Dernikos, B. P., Ferguson, D. E., & Siegel, M. (2020). The Possibilities for "Humanizing" Posthumanist Inquiries: An Intra-Active Conversation. Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies, 20(5), 434-447. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708619829793

Eckhardt, J., & De Graeve, L. (2017). *The second sound: Conversations on gender and music*. Umland editions.

Ewell, P. (2020). Music Theory and the White Racial Frame. *MTO 26*(2). DOI: 10.30535/mto.26.2.4

Faber, T. (2021, February 25). *Decolonizing electronic music starts with its software | Pitchfork*. https://pitchfork.com/thepitch/decolonizing-electronic-music-starts-with-its-software/

Feagin, J. (2009). *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-framing.* Routledge

Frisk, H. (2008). *Improvisation, computers, and interaction*. [Doctoral dissertation, Lund University]. LU Publications OA. https://lup.lub.lu.se/search/files/3649816/1242295.pdf

Groth, S. K., & Samson, K. (2016). Audio papers-a manifesto. *Seismograf*. HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.48233/SEISMOGRAF1601

Hodkinson, J. (2020, October 15). *Curating diversity in Europe, Panel I: The emancipation of curating* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAiqC7eRpvY

Holmgren, C. (2022). *Dialogue lost? Teaching musical interpretation of Western classical music in higher education*. [Doctoral dissertation, Luleå University of Technology]. DiVA Portal. https://www.diva- portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1618286&dswid=6859

Impett, J. (2017). The contemporary musician and the production of knowledge. In J. Impett (Ed.), *Artistic research in music: Discipline and resistance* (pp. 221–236). Leuven University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt21c4s2g.6

Johansson, K. (2012) Experts, entrepreneurs and competence nomads: The skills paradox in higher music education. *Music Education Research, 14*(1), 45-62. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2012.657167

Johansson, K., & Georgii-Hemming, E. (2021). Processes of academisation in higher music education: The case of Sweden. *British Journal of Music Education, 38*(2), 173-186. doi:10.1017/S0265051720000339

Johansson, K., & Östersjö, S. (2009). *Master Programme in Music Performance/Master Thesis Course - Malmö Academy of Music 2009-2010*. [Unpublished manuscript]. Malmö Academy of Music.

Jørgensen, H. (2000). Student learning in higher instrumental education: Who is responsible? *British Journal of Music Education, 17*(1), 67-77. doi:10.1017/S0265051700000164

Kember, D. & Kelly, M. E. (1993). *Improving teaching through action research*. N.S.W.: Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia.

Lebrecht, N. (1997). *Who killed classical music? Maestros, managers and corporate politics*. Carol Publishing Group.

Leech-Wilkinson, D. (2020). *Challenging performance: Classical music performance norms and how to escape them*. Version 2.04 (May 11, 2023) https://challengingperformance.com/the-book/

Lundström, H. (2019). Svensk musikforskning – de senaste 100 åren. *Swedish Journal of Music Research 101*, 1-43.

Magnusdottir, G. L., & Kronsell, A. (2015). The (in)visibility of gender in Scandinavian climate policy-making. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *17*(2), 308–326. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2014.896661

Minors, J., Burnard, P., Wiffen, C., Shihabi, Z., & van der Walt, J. S. (2017). Mapping trends and framing issues in higher music education: Changing minds/changing practices. *London Review of Education 15*(3), 457–473. https://doi.org/10.18546/LRE.15.3.09

Nevrin, K., Lidgard, E., Arctaedius, T., & Frisk, H. (2021). *Handboken för konstnärliga exjobb: Konstnärligt examensarbete i samverkan med extern part* [The handbook for artistic exam-jobs: Artistic degree project in collaboration with an external part]. Royal College of Music in Stockholm. https://bit.ly/3Q4ot6r

Nguyễn, T. T. (2019). *The choreography of gender in traditional Vietnamese music*. Lund University. [Doctoral dissertation, Lund University]. LU Research Portal.

https://portal.research.lu.se/en/publications/the-choreography-of-gender-in-traditional-vietnamese-music

Nguyễn, T. T. (2019). *Culture Soldiers* [Film]. Lund University.

Olofsson, K. (2019). *Utbildning i skapande i det konstmusikaliska fältet: Det skriftliga examensarbetets möjligheter vid kompositionsutbildningen vid Musikhögskolan i Malmö* [Creative education in the field of art music: The potential of the degree project in the composition education at the Malmö Academy of Music] [Unpublished manuscript]. Lund University.

Orning, T. (2017). 'Future musicianship and present educational practices': A response to eight questions on the future of the conservatoire as an institution. *Music & Practice*, *3*. https://www.musicandpractice.org/volume-3/tanja-orning/

Orning, T. (2019). Professional identities in progress – developing personal artistic trajectories. *Norwegian Academy of Music*, *40*(3), 107–124. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2014.895306

Östersjö, S. (2008). *SHUT UP ' N ' PLAY ! Negotiating the musical work*. [Doctoral dissertation, Lund University]. LU Research Portal. https://www.lu.se/lup/publication/759bb8db-ccf3-4e9c-8d7d-dea74fcc3f28

Östersjö, S. (2018, March 24). *Critical thinking through music* [Paper presentation]. EPARM, Porto, Portugal.

Östersjö, S. (2020). *Listening to the other*. Orpheus Institute Series.

Östersjö, S. (2022). Nordic Contexts. In *Practice as Research in the Arts (and Beyond): Principles, Processes, Contexts, Achievements: 2nd ed. 2022* (pp. 147-154). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-90542-2_9

Östersjö, S., & Hellsten, H. (2018a). *Instructions for the independent project (degree project) at bachelor level.* [Unpublished manuscript]. Malmö Academy of Music.

Östersjö, S., & Hellsten, H. (2018b). Instructions for the independent project (degree project) at master's level. [Unpublished manuscript]. Malmö Academy of Music.

Östersjö, S., Thủy, N., Hebert, D., & Frisk, H. (2023). *Shared Listenings: Methods for Transcultural Musicianship and Research* (Elements in Twenty-First Century Music Practice). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781009272575

Polifonia Research Working Group (2010). Researching Conservatoires - Enquiry, Innovation and the Development of Artistic Practice in Higher Music Education. AEC Publications Accessed online https://www.aec-music.eu/userfiles/File/en1b-aec-pocketbook-researching-conservatoires.pdf

Quek, L. (Producer) (2018). *Player Piano* [Video]. Vimeo.

REACT - Rethinking Music Performance in European Higher Education Institutions. (2021). *Artistic career in music: Stakeholders requirement report.* UA Editora. https://doi.org/10.48528/wfq9-4560

Rodgers, T. (2010). *Pink noises: Women on electronic music and sound*. Duke University Press.

Sadie, J. A., & Samuel, R. (Eds.). (1995). *The Norton/Grove dictionary of women composers*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Scherwin, A. (2019). *Who knows best? About authenticity in performance practice* [Unpublished undergraduate thesis]. Malmo¨ Academy of Music.

Shuell, J. T. (1986). Cognitive conceptions of learning. *Review of Educational Research, 56*(4), 411-436. https://doi.org/10.2307/1170340

Stefánsdóttir, H., S. (2019) *Vad betyder 'konstnärskap' för dig / What does 'artistry' mean to you* [Chart/Mentimeter] [Data].

Stefánsdóttir, H. S. (2019). He(a)r: Of an ecological enactive perspective. *Seismograf, 1*(22) DOI.ORG/10.48233/SEISMOGRAF2203

Stefánsdóttir, H. S. (2021). Fleshy listening and multi-entity performance: On analytical processes within artistic research. *Seismograf, 26*. DOI.ORG/10.48233/SEISMOGRAF2604

Stefánsdóttir, H. S. (2023). *HÉR! An Exploration of Artistic Agency* [Doctoral dissertation, Lund University]. LU Research Portal. https://portal.research.lu.se/en/publications/hér-an-exploration-of-artistic-agency

Stefánsdóttir, H. S., & Östersjö, S. (2022). Listening and mediation: Of agency and performative responsivity in ecological sound art practices. *Phenomenology & Practice*, *17*(1), 116-136. 10.29173/pandpr29464

Strom, K. J., & Martin, A. D. (2017). Thinking with theory in an era of Trump. *Issues in Teacher Education*, *26*(3), 3-22.

Swedish Code of Statues (SFS) No. 2009:1037. *The Higher Education Ordinance.* Ministry of Education and Research, Sweden. Issued: 4 February 1993

Tullberg, M. (2021). *Wind and wood. Affordances of musical instruments: The example of the simple-system flute*. [Doctoral dissertation, Lund University]. LU Research Portal. https://lucris.lub.lu.se/ws/portalfiles/portal/96021759/Wind_and_Wood_Tullberg_2021.pdf