



2 N D I N T E R N A T I O N A L C O N F E R E N C E

The Changing Face of Music Education
CFME09

MUSIC AND ENVIRONMENT

ARTICLES

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EDITORIAL

The aim of the conference “The Changing Face of Music Education” is to bring together educators, musicologists, and practicing musicians in order to promote and generate new ideas about music and music education.

The main topic of the conference on music education is environment. In a very broad sense, the concept of environment can refer to mental, cultural, social, or the physical environment, which in turn, can be created, reflected, and integrated with the music and different music activities. The aim of the conference is to emphasize the importance of the environment in music education or closely related fields and to generate further ideas as to how knowledge of the environmental aspect can enhance the quality of our everyday praxis.

The conference is taking place in Tallinn, Estonia, from April 23–25, 2009. It is hosted by the Department of Music of the Institute of Fine Arts at Tallinn University.

There were submitted 98 abstracts. Each abstract was peer-reviewed by three evaluators. The authors whose abstracts were accepted were enabled to submit the full text of their presentation, which, in turn, were again peer-reviewed by two or three international experts. As a result, the proceedings include 68 abstracts and 34 articles.

The organizing committee thanks all evaluators and contributors.

A – Abstract
 AR – Article
 T – Talk
 W – Workshop
 P – Poster
 K – Keynote

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PREFACE

It is an honour to be asked to write the preface to these proceedings. Critical reflection on the activity of teaching and learning is the lifeblood of any lively and progressive educator. Not every music educator seeks to present papers at educational conferences. Practitioners who present papers like those contained in this volume are offering a model for all their colleagues – they demonstrate exemplary characteristics of reflective inquiry.

Reflection is critically observing the relationship between what you intend to do (goals/aims), what you do (activities), and the outcomes of what you do (results). There are probably at least two kinds of reflection, one aimed at better achieving outcomes within agreed goals, and one aimed at reviewing the goals. This embodies the difference between improving what you do, and doing new things.

This distinction has a long pedigree in the psychological study of expertise and creativity. The first, improving what you do, is the stuff of normal everyday expertise. Unless you are doing that, you really cannot even be called an expert. It's what every competent practitioner does in their daily practice. They can do it better or worse, sometimes get stuck on plateaus, sometimes leap forward, but this is their daily bread. It's what we do as teachers and researchers, and it is what we expect and encourage our students to do. There is no one word which perfectly describes this kind of reflection, but let us call it professional reflection.

Examples of reflection at this level (taken from the themes of some of this conference's papers are): specific teaching techniques, how to provide classroom music education suitable for specific ethnic or cultural groups, or use of new technology in the classroom.

The second kind of reflection, changing what you do, is not everyday. It happens once in a while, and can often lead to radical new ways of thinking or doing. It is about the setting of new trends, the reconceptualisation of the field or the activity. By definition, this cannot be an everyday activity. Reconceptualisation of a field requires that there is a field to reconceptualise. And fields only exist because there are thousands of people who have devoted millions of hours to establishing and maintaining these well-recognised fields, well-recognised ways of doing things. There's no one word for this second kind of reflection either, but we could call it paradigm reflection. (I take this from the brilliant work of Thomas Kuhn on scientific creativity, which he sees as the bringing into birth of new paradigms. Such a term seems equally apposite for artistic and cultural change.)

Examples of reflection at this level, as shown through these papers would include: analysis of failures of music curricula to keep pace with social change, supporting music learning outside the school environment, new types of activity and engagement for music educators.

There is a tension between these two types of reflection. If you only engage in professional reflection, you may fail to engage with larger problems facing society – hoping perhaps unrealistically somehow that things which worked when you were young will continue to work for ever. If you only engage in paradigm reflection, then your work can become ungrounded and too swayed by fashion. I would generally suggest that 90% of reflection needs to be professional reflection, and that paradigmatic reflection becomes more important in times of crisis or social change. Are we in a time of crisis for music education? Some delegates believe so!

Paradigm reflection needs particular support and one environment in which it may be promoted is in conferences such as this. During the normal working life, it may not be appropriate to question the fundamentals of one's practice very often. At conferences such as this, we may be encouraged and inspired to ask the bigger questions. What is music education for? Does it have different goals in different cultures, and at different ages? Are there categories of children (the so-called "gifted") who require a different kind of education? How do we evaluate



whether music education is meeting the cultural and social needs of our society? Is the training we supply for our music educators fit for purpose?

Sometimes posing such questions can be troubling, even threatening. However, it is not only music education which may be in crisis. It appears that human society is facing multiple crises, political crises, economic crises, demographic crises, cultural and religious crises, and crises of environment and resources. We need to be able to face crises and undertake constructive and co-operative problem-solving on many fronts in our lives. And such problem-solving requires us to avoid the twin traps of hopelessness and dogmatism. The truth is that no-one really knows where our societies are headed, or what the best solutions for avoiding breakdown and catastrophe are. But we are not helpless passengers on a runaway train. We can do something. Improving the music education of our young people may not solve many of the world's problems, but in learning how to better solve our own professional problems we may, in some small way, become better equipped to solve some of the larger problems of humanity. That, in any case, is my hope for the conference.

I salute the organising committee of this conference and their courage and resourcefulness in putting together such an inspiring programme. I also salute the delegates, who come from all parts of the world, each having transcended local difficulties large and small to do so. May music education, and our lives, be the better for our having come together.

John Sloboda

March 20, 2009