

# Nordic Research in Music Education

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## Editorial

As we publish the first issue of volume 2 of the NRME Journal, the world is still battling the global pandemic caused by Covid-19. Isolation and work or study in our domestic spaces perhaps still dominate the lives of most students, teachers, and academics. In these times of loneliness, it is therefore vital to notice, nurture, and interact with the communities around us, whether physical or virtual. The need for such increased community engagement is currently also expressed through a sharpened global impatience with injustice in many areas. This development calls for a scrutinization of the values and practices guiding our professional lives, including the music education community.

An academic journal such as this is a space where a plurality of people and perspectives can be brought together to share stories, and it is an arena for critical inquiry. With demands for increased justice and equal access to professional spaces or knowledge domains comes the need to question representation: “*How [stories] are told, who tells them, when they are told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power*” states the Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.<sup>1</sup> Breaking with canonized storytelling, while encouraging mutual curiosity, respect, and openness to the unexpected, can be the foundation for critical investigations – a third space where new insights and ideas can emerge.

On that ground, we hereby invite you to engage with the current issue of NRME. It encompasses nine research articles in English and Norwegian, which address a plurality of themes and angles. When viewing them as a whole, they appear to be loosely connected through the notion of *space*: how we physically, metaphorically or virtually inhabit spaces; the tools that are needed for entering a knowledge domain or space; the thresholds that exist for accessing educational spaces; and the ways various professional spaces facilitate learning and identity formation as well as cultural reproduction and power battles.

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1 Adichie, C. N. (2009). *The danger of a single story*. TEDGlobal2009. [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story#t-707621](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story#t-707621) Retrieved 05.03.21.

The issue begins with Tuula Jääskeläinen challenging the reader to think about questions of equity and cultural reproduction through the lens of entrance into Higher Music Education, in her article *Tuition fees, entrance examinations and misconceptions about equity in higher music education*. By comparing tuition fees and entrance examinations in Australia, Finland, and the United Kingdom, Jääskeläinen claims that such entrance thresholds may contribute to the reproduction of traditions of inequality in music.

The reading of music notation is an important tool for entering various music practices, which is addressed by the two next articles. Sanna Kivijärvi and Pauli Rautiainen approach notation from the perspective of policy regarding equal access to music in their article *Equity in music education in Finland: A policy window opened through the case of “Figurenotes”*. Western standard music notation represents, according to the authors, a pedagogical practice that influences the accessibility of music. “Figurenotes” is an alternative notation system based on different colors and shapes indicating pitch. In this study the authors describe a music education practice in Finland where the use of “Figurenotes” has led to inclusion of students with disabilities, a finding that has raised awareness of structural inequity in Finnish music education.

In her article *How can knowledge about language learning and teaching be used to enhance the study of music reading at the beginner level? [Hvordan kan kunnskap om tekstlesing og lese- og skriveopplæring i grunnskolen brukes i noteopplæring på nybegynnernivå?]*, Katarzyna Julia Leikvoll shows how a large body of research has established cognitive similarities in reading language and reading music. Due to these commonalities, she identifies an unexploited transfer potential of teaching methods for reading language/text to teaching methods for reading music. By looking into current language reading methods, Leikvoll recommends a renewal of how music literacy is taught.

The renewal of western classical music history pedagogy is the focus of the article *The “operatic” of opera in music history pedagogy – Exploring the temporal narrativization of opera*, by Liisamaija Hautsalo and Heidi Westerlund. They suggest applying narratology to operatic analysis in order to break with canonized forms of music history pedagogy. By utilizing the multiple media types that opera entails as well as different ways of approaching “the architecture of temporal narrativization”, they argue that the special nature of opera – the *operatic* of opera – may be better understood.

What kinds of narratives are created when music listeners interact with algorithms in a streamed media landscape? Cecilia Ferm Almqvist, Susanna Leijonhufvud and Niclas Ekberg look at the ongoing formation and cultivation of the self in their article *Spotify as a case of musical Bildung*. In the virtual music media space, the algorithmic interplay between Spotify and the user positions technology as a non-human co-actor of learning-with and thinking-with for the responsible and knowledgeable human being, the authors suggest.

The ways our physical bodies inhabit and interact in physical spaces may influence opportunities for learning. In her article *Towards the attainment of mindful bodily relations in music education*, Cecilia Ferm Almqvist explores the question of how to develop educational spaces and relations in ways that allow all pupils to achieve their potential. From the

theoretical perspective of female situated bodies, she specifically addresses ways of creating an educational space that allows girls who play the electric guitar to transcend as musical bodies, and calls for mindful bodily teacher-pupil relations.

Another space for student-teacher interaction is investigated in Gry Sagmo Aglen's article *The practicum conversation in the School of Music and Performing Arts teacher education programs: An arena for the development of students' professional understandings* [Praksissamtalen i kulturskolelærerutdanninger: En arena for utvikling av studenters profesjonsforståelse]. The arena she has studied is a supervision situation for three parties: the student-teacher, the teacher educator, and the student-teacher's in-school practicum supervisor. Aglen shows how this situation can mirror a community of *many* practices and diverse knowledge cultures. Student-teachers' possibilities for professional learning in this space of tensions and negotiations partly depend on whether they are allowed active participation in discussions that emerge in the practicum conversation.

In Vilma Timonen's article *Co-constructing an intercultural professional learning community in music education: Lessons from a Nepali and Finnish collaboration*, the theme of professional learning communities is continued, but with an intercultural scope. Timonen studied the collaborative activities of Finnish and Nepali music educators during 2013-2016 that aimed at establishing a music teacher education program in Nepal. Through participatory action research, Timonen looked at both the advantages and complications involved in such intercultural development work. For this and similar work to realize its reflective, ethically engaged and diversity-aware potential, Timonen underscores the need for systematic operational models that support such professional learning.

As the two latter articles indicate, professional learning is deeply intertwined with the development of professional identities. *Using discourse analysis to understand professional music teacher identity* is the title and topic of the issue's final article, written by Anne Jordhus-Lier. In her methodological meta-discussion of a study of teachers in one Norwegian School of Music and Performing Arts, she explores what discourse analysis has to offer in terms of insights into the context and complexity of a field. She contends that discourse analysis is a tool for revealing power relations and developing understandings of how identities are constructed and negotiated.

The editors would like to thank all of the authors of this issue for their contributions. Each article is followed by a short biography of its author or authors. The quality of this journal also depends on the contributions of our scholarly community of peers, and we would like to thank all the peer reviewers (see Review Panel) from this and previous volumes of NRME and the NNMPF Yearbook. Finally, we would like to thank Anders Eggen at the Norwegian Academy of Music and Marte Ryste at Cappelen Damm Forlag for their assistance in publishing this issue of Nordic Research in Music Education.

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