This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge in *Music Schools in Changing Societies* on 1 February 2024, available online: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003365808-1.

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Introduction: A collaborative journey

Michaela Hahn, Cecilia Björk, and Heidi Westerlund

This book, *Music Schools in Changing Societies*, offers a perspective of collaboration and collaborative professionalism in instrumental and vocal music education in music schools. It provides insights into transformative collaboration between students, practitioners, music schools, and other institutions, policymakers, researchers, and various stakeholders based on small- and large-scale research studies in numerous European countries. Above all, the book widens the micro-level pedagogical research approaches common in the field towards understanding the societal, social, and organisational functions and responsibilities of music education institutions. *Music Schools in Changing Societies* presents a unique perspective on how music schools in contemporary societies can survive and thrive in changing circumstances. The chapters represent a large variety of innovative practices and collaborative settings, illustrating also the tensions and constraints that may be present in the process of building new collaborative forms of professionalism. Thus, this publication will be the first to address how music schools as institutions can actively contribute and respond to societal changes through a multilevel collaborative stance. Music schools are a typical context for instrumental and vocal tuition in European countries. However, there is no single model of music schools within Europe, since they reflect Europe's rich diversity in their organisational, musical, and pedagogical practices. Within the European Music School Union (EMU), the 27 member countries encompass around 6,000 music schools with 4 million students. Their institutions are embedded in different contexts – local, regional, national, and transnational; their organisational and funding structures are regulated to varying degrees; their ties to compulsory education differ from country to country; and different terms are used for the education that music schools offer. The term instrumental and vocal music education does not cover the broad variety of subjects that are offered for instance in the music and art schools in the Netherlands, in the Nordic, and in some Eastern European countries.

Alongside the common term music school, we find the colourful concepts of French *conservatoires*, Norwegian *kulturskoler*, Czech *základních uměleckých škol*, Spain's *Escoles de Música*, Slovenian *glasbene šole*, Denmark's *musik- og kulturskoler*, Austrian *Musikschulen*, and many more.

Furthermore, differing historical backgrounds, traditions, and political contexts and trends have shaped the purposes and practices of music schools, including the understandings of the responsibilities that music schools have in society. For instance, whether a music school grew out of a conservatoire to nurture the next generation of students for higher music education or out of a folk music association to keep regional musical traditions alive will make a difference that can still be recognised today. Moreover, preprofessional education of talented children and the fostering of broad amateur music-making start from different needs and purposes, which may require different curricula and courses of study – a highly topical issue in music schools in many countries. On the one hand, then, music schools must be oriented towards the entrance criteria of music universities and secure, enrich, and further develop regional cultural scenes; and on the other hand, they also need to be committed to the personal musical development of students who arrive with increasingly diverse backgrounds and will participate in a wide range of musical activities in the future. Furthermore, music schools nowadays may need to ask how they can reach children and young people who are not guided towards music studies and whose families may not know about the possibilities of instrumental and vocal studies in music schools. Does the music school system need extra outreach activities and programmes in today's society?

The diversity within the music school system is visible in the statistics of the European Music School Union (EMU, 2022). The 23 EMU member countries that reported funding stated that 81% of music school budgets are covered by public funding. Whereas in all 27 EMU member countries the state assumes responsibility for music schools to varying degrees, in at least eight countries it does not contribute financially to them. In 25 EMU member countries, the municipalities share responsibility to varying degrees, and in 21 countries, regions and provinces also play a role in the music school system (pp. 59, 61). While young people between 7 years and 17 years can attend music schools in all EMU member countries, in 11 of the 27 members, music schools are nowadays open to all age groups (p. 39). Offering mostly extracurricular music education, their positioning ranges from independent associations or members of associations to constituting an explicit part of the school system in their country (pp. 8–36).

Nevertheless, the profile of a European music school has been described as "a clearly defined institution which forms an integral part of European

education systems" (EMU, 1995, pp. 36–37). The common features of European music schools can be seen as grounded in how their core aims have been articulated by the European Music School Union: "bringing music to large groups of the population; empowering large numbers of people to make music actively themselves; discovering talented young people and nurturing them all the way up to professional studies in music" (EMU, 1999, n.p.). These aims are held to be achieved through music schools' "scholastic and curricular structures, the variety of subjects they offer, the following of syllabuses, [and] the employment of qualified specialist staff" (n.p.). However, as societies change, the aims of music schools as institutions can be expected to expand to encompass new concerns and values, generating a need to develop new understandings of what is involved in various professions within the music school system both at the practitioner level and the organisational level. In this book, we therefore refer to professionalism as a specific concept that designates "shared" understandings of professional responsibilities and what is regarded as "good" professional work in the given era and society. Hence, professionalism also includes the necessary discussions, disagreements, and reflexivity through which something new can emerge in the contemporary professional arena. In this sense, professionalism is ultimately about the constantly changing relationship between the specific profession and society in question (Gaunt & Westerlund, 2021). Professionalism can therefore provide a powerful conceptual avenue of enquiry for music teaching in music schools and beyond.

But why do we think it is necessary, indeed crucial, to further develop instrumental and vocal education in music schools through the concept of collaborative professionalism? This premise is based on our experiences and observations of what joint efforts and collaboration can bring forth, but is also supported by a myriad of studies on how institutions and organisations, in general, can better cope and survive in times of crises and fast change (e.g., Saltmarsh, 2017; Laloux, 2014; Senge, 2006); a body of literature that is growing in studies concerning music schools as well (e.g., Väkevä et al., 2017; Westerlund et al., 2019; Westerlund, 2021). We see collaborative professionalism as an important way of enhancing educational quality and students' growth (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018, pp. 3–5). Naturally, European music schools are institutions with a clear educational mission that is solidly anchored in the field of the arts, drawing its strength from the artistic and creative processes of music. However, in order to fulfil their multidimensional bridging function and better perceive the needs and expectations of different musical contexts in which students may become active, music schools in many countries are creating new connections and collaborations with a wide variety of societal partners, encouraged by policy or as part of the schools' evolving self-understandings of their tasks (EMU, 1999). This

challenge is not simply an obstacle but can further open new, hitherto unimagined possibilities for the schools to thrive. Underpinning this book is our belief that these already existing manifestations of collaboration in music schools can thus be taken further to create a stronger, collective self-understanding of music teachers and institutions that can be described under the umbrella concept of collaborative professionalism in music education.

This book provides examples of collaborative practices supporting the process towards collaborative professionalism in music schools. These include short-term or long-term collaborations between music schools and

- The general education system, especially primary schools, where both partners benefit because music school teachers can reach out to broader groups and thus inspire potential new pupils for the opportunities they offer, while generalist teachers in schools appreciate and can benefit from the additional expertise in music lessons;
- Local and regional ensembles, orchestras and choirs, which are becoming more necessary than ever due to the ever-growing variety of recreational opportunities that attract children and young people;
- Music universities, conservatories, and further education institutions, which are important for both partners, as the demands on students are constantly increasing and preparatory musical education is mainly provided at music schools;
- Other publicly funded institutions ranging from senior citizens' homes to youth centres, from event venues to arts institutions which reflect creative and innovative approaches to increasing music schools' relevance in all sectors of today's society.

Whilst these represent only some examples of possible collaborations in the music education landscape, it is essential to learn from them in order for music schools to create and build "more collaboration across schools and systems including and especially in broader environments of competition" (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2017, p. xi). As the chapters illustrate, music school research can build on and benefit from recent national and transnational research initiatives such as ArtsEqual in Finland (www.artsequal.fi) and the Music Learning Switzerland project for mapping instrumental and vocal music learning, or the project The Kulturskole as an Inclusive Force in the Local Community in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, as well as the creation of a platform for researchers and practitioners to share their work in a continuous series of European music school research symposia organised in Vienna, Austria. Common to all these initiatives are their underlying commitment to collaboration and transformative goals. Creating shared knowledge can

support music schools in their collaborative ambitions and help initiate further innovative approaches and transformative perspectives.

In line with Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018), we can agree that collaborations vary in many aspects according to culture and institutional contexts. A music school may appear to be a relatively homogeneous entity with like-minded teachers because of its specialisation in music, and yet the individual instrumentalists and singers (and in many music schools also performers and visual artists) engage in practices that are in many ways very different. Therefore, collaborative professionalism may require extra efforts and continuous nurturing even within one institution. Moreover, it may seem that Europe is united by a uniform understanding of what music schools ought to do, and yet the collaborations represented in this book illustrate how they are rooted in the culture and the system of music education of the respective countries and influenced by their local and national policies, politics, and even religion. The joint endeavours to overcome institutional and social boundaries are apparent in all the outlined collaborations, striving to share and exchange knowledge, thereby paving the way to collective responsibility, joint work, and common purpose (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018, pp. 4–5). Becoming more familiar with collaboration partners may in fact increase appreciation of variety and diversity within the educational system.

Music Schools in Changing Societies includes chapters from researchers and researching practitioners from twelve countries because we wish to encourage and inspire not only researchers but also practitioners, leaders, administrators, and policymakers to engage in collaborative work. The collaborations presented in the book come from Austria, Britain, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. Together, they can be seen to exemplify the beginnings of processes rather than finalised models, and we hope that readers will elaborate the ideas and concepts further according to their specific aims and needs. In this sense, the book calls for collaborative professionalism as an unfinished, continuous, and open-ended process.

In the opening chapter ("Music schools as forerunners towards collaborative professionalism") Heidi Westerlund, Cecilia Björk, and Michaela Hahn raise fundamental questions about the role of collaboration by repositioning instrumental and vocal music education in a rapidly changing society. Public demands for free access, equity, and wide participation as well as a view of the societal responsibility of music education as a service to communities reach far beyond traditional artistic aims. Researchers now largely agree that teams, communities of practice, and networks not only serve as locations for learning professional practice but also as locations for inclusion, participation, and innovation. The authors aim to show that a shift towards collaborative professionalism in music can enable music

schools to act as game changers in processes of making contemporary societies not just musically better but better and more sustainable places to live. This chapter sets the stage for theoretical understandings of why collaborative professionalism is necessary in twenty-first-century instrumental and vocal pedagogy and music schools, and what such professionalism entails.

Part I approaches *collaborative teaching and learning* at micro-level, including collaborations between students and teachers, among teachers, and between teachers and university researchers. Chapter 2 ("Children as collaborators in music schools: Locating student voice in professional landscapes") by Tuulia Tuovinen focuses on the need to recognise students as "central stakeholders" in music school education. Tuovinen argues that although student participation and engaging students with their perspectives on music school education has been the subject of a number of initiatives, reducing inequality is not only a policy concern but a matter of children's agency within educational relationships. Contextualising her discussion within the framework of Finnish government-regulated music schools, she claims that student voice could become an important driver for change. The next chapter ("Designing a collaborative micro-environment for flute beginners in Slovenian music schools") by Ana Kavčič Pucihar and Branka Rotar Pance focuses on collaborative learning in instrumental lessons. The authors make a case for acknowledging the benefits of group teaching and the need for instrumental teachers to design learning environments that favour collaborative learning in music schools. Establishing such environments can serve as the first tier of a process for wider institutional collaborative practices. The authors also address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis and the adjustments to teaching practices that it necessitated. Cecilia Björk, in her chapter "Enhancing professional-ism through collaboration between music schools and a university" argues for collaboration between music school practitioners and researchers in order to transform practices, addressing the professional loneliness experienced by many instrumental teachers. Björk describes a collaborative model where teachers and researchers work together in an atmosphere of mutual concern, openness, and appreciation. The chapter discusses potential challenges as well as relational and ethical issues associated with such collaborations and outlines practical and administrative steps to building collaborative partnerships between music schools and institutions of higher education.

Part II ("Music schools reaching out: Institutional, cross-sectoral, and teacher collaboration") gives the stage to music education as a multifaceted and highly specialised field with a wide variety of requirements and multiple actors. Widening the theme of institutional collaboration from micro-level interactions towards complex systems-level collaborations, Michaela

Hahn, in her chapter "Pushing institutional boundaries: An educational governance perspective on music education pathways through music school, *Musikgymnasium*, and conservatory" builds on an educational governance framework to analyse how students' individual music learning pathways can be supported in Austria. Hahn argues that interfaces, where intensive and sometimes conflictual interactions between the collaborating institutions occur, can be central to enhancing individual pathways for young people and support institutional change towards collaborative professionalism. In the next chapter ("Ethno gatherings: Possibilities for meaningful collaboration across the formal and non-formal continuum"), Ana Čorić casts the net wider to examine collaborations between music schools and cultural interest groups, such as the Ethno Camps that gather young musicians from various musical and cultural backgrounds for international workshops focusing on traditional, folk, and world music. By analysing cases of collaboration with Ethno Camps in France and Estonia, Čorić argues that such vibrant, culturally hybrid collaborative spaces can boost the growth of a young musician's self-identity while developing a collaborative educational culture. Moving to the possibility of cross-sectoral collaboration between one song-writing community, music schools, communal youth services, the City of Helsinki, and business partners from the music industry, Anna Kuoppamäki ("Institutional collaboration creating new spaces for young people's musical authorship: The case of G Songlab") presents an initiative that creates new learning spaces to support young people's transformative music engagement, independent artistic activity, and equal access to music education in Finland and beyond. Kuoppamäki also argues that this collaboration provides an inspirational example of how new kinds of cross-sectoral professionalism could enhance institutional resilience to better meet the demands of a changing society in which many young people are not reached by music schools alone.

Collaborative professionalism can be enhanced within a music school and in partnerships between different institutions and societal actors, but also as part of intercultural work organised by music schools that are active in different countries. Theodora Tsimpouri and Anthoula Koliadi-Tiliakou's chapter "Interschool collaboration enriches students' musical education: Insights from a Greek–German transnational project" presents a case study of transnational collaboration between music schools in Greece and Germany. The authors call for collaboration that includes not only artistic and pedagogical aspects but also acknowledge the relevance of social factors, cultural diversity, and community programmes in local contexts to providing a wider range of learning experiences not just for music school students, but for their teachers as well. Completing Part II, Martin Galmiche, Heidi Westerlund, Tuulikki Laes, and Lauri Väkevä

("How social innovations can enable socially just spatial politics and collaborative professionalism in music education: The case of AÏCO at the *Conservatoire de Lyo*n") emphasise the connection between collaborative professionalism and social innovations that can significantly expand the reach of music schools. They present the case of AÏCO in France, a pro-gramme for "instrument learning and collective invention", conceptualising it as a social innovation that promotes "spatial justice" and offers new possibilities for redistributing socioterritorial capital in and through music education in a city where services are unequally distributed between different areas and groups of the population.

In the final part, Part III ("The impact of shifting cultural and educational landscapes: Countrywide systems and policy-driven collaboration"), collaborative professionalism is examined from wider national systemic and policy perspectives. Anders Rønningen ("'No *kulturskole* is an island': Insights from a collaborative development project in three Nordic countries") analyses principals' and municipal leaders' reflections on collaboration as a game changer for more inclusive music and art schools in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, and calls for recognition at policy level of the importance of music and the arts and their potential for creating a more inclusive community. Through experiences from a practice development project based on action learning (KIL), the author illustrates the necessity of increasing diversity at all levels in collaboration between music schools and other organisations and agencies such as public schools, youth organisations, and refugee services. The chapter by Marc-Antoine Camp and Bastian Hodapp ("Collaborating for research, researching for collaboration: On mapping nationwide extracurricular music education in Switzerland") introduces another system-wide project initiated by the association of Swiss music schools. The chapter maps the diverse types of providers and the diversity of learning opportunities, enabling an analysis of collaborations and interconnections within the music education system of the country. The authors argue that as music schools maintain the most intensive and varied collaborations, they also bear a great responsibility for optimal interactions in collaborations at local, regional, and national level.

In her chapter "From collaborative subsidiarity to professionally recognised collaboration: A way forward for instrumental and vocal music education in Ireland", Dorothy Conaghan critically examines the music education system in Ireland where the basic principle of subsidiarity facilitates local collaborations but may fall short of securing broad access to instrumental and vocal education. Conaghan argues that without government leadership and subsequent investment to expand and develop a specialist teacher status and non-parent-dependent policy of music school provision throughout the country, instrumental and vocal music education

will continue to privilege higher-income families. In the next chapter ("The 'right to all possible paths': Alliances and collaboration between music schools, the education system, and cultural institutions for the horizontal extension of the arts and arts education practice"), Enric Aragonès Jové illustrates that most policies aiming to improve access to artistic activity focus on providing initial contact with music as a first step, but neglect continued, sustainable opportunities of practising the arts. He argues that the aim of music schools must reach beyond educating those who come to them or increasing the number of people who practise the arts. According to Jové, collaborations are crucial for changing and reshaping music school education based on a network conception and thus become true reflections of their local communities. Adriana Di Lorenzo Tillborg and Patrick Schmidt take the readers back to collaboration between music schools and compulsory schools in the context of Sweden ("Multicentric policy practice: collaboration as policy enactment in Sweden's Art and Music Schools"). Based on a study conducted with music school leaders, the authors show that collaboration between music schools and the compulsory school system is seen as a significant intersection for enacting national inclusion policies. The authors suggest that in particular, the potential of collaboration in sparsely populated regions should be further explored and considered by policy actors at different levels.

As a prominent, long-term initiator of collaborative educational programmes, Peter Renshaw ("On the significance of collaboration: A personal perspective") reflects on current and future perspectives on collaboration in music education settings. Drawing on numerous testimonies from young people, he calls on individuals and institutions to realign priorities and enter a phase of reassessment and reshaping. He argues passionately for a future with imagination and a vision that is responsive to new circumstances and new possibilities – and demonstrates that this has to be done "together", echoing the first chapter by Tuulia Tuovinen in emphasising the role that young people must play in this radical transformation towards collaborative professionalism. The book closes with the editors' final reflections ("Present and future prospects of collaborative professionalism in music schools") on how ongoing global changes are challenging the whole field of music education in unprecedented ways. They contend that collaborative professionalism provides a hope for the collective efforts towards better futures and pathways for new transformative practices in turbulent, uncertain times.

Acknowledgements

The shared journey that led to this publication started in October 2019 during the second European Music School Research Symposium with the provocative question "Music Schools – Masters of Collaboration?"[1] One

of the core intentions was to initiate and strengthen collaboration between researchers and practitioners within the network community, currently consisting of more than 250 persons from 30 European countries and reflecting a rich variety of professional backgrounds: established researchers, music school leaders and teachers, doctoral students, presidents and board members of national music school associations, and people who integrate many of the functions and perspectives mentioned in their professional lives.

First and foremost, we sincerely thank our co-authors for their commitment, and especially their willingness to engage in this project and the associated collaborative process. During the editing process the authors worked on their respective sections, commenting on each other's work. In several online meetings, shared and differing ideas were debated, thus also making the creation of this book a collaborative process. Furthermore, we thank Neil Perkins for his accuracy, ingenuity, and patience during the proofreading process. We ourselves have learnt an immense amount about the European music school systems and their particular features and challenges, especially through the feedback from the working groups. We are very grateful that in this collaborative process the authors have also been able to benefit from each others' strategies and perspectives, while identifying fundamental commonalities alongside all the differences.

We also thank the many funders who made these chapters and the underlying collaborations possible, in particular the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, along with the Center for Educational Research and Academic Development in the Arts (CERADA), and the ArtsEqual initiative of the University of the Arts Helsinki funded by the Academy of Finland's Strategic Research Council under its Equality in Society programme with grant number 314223/2017.

Note

1 More information about the European music school symposia: https://www.mdw.ac.at/european-music-school-symposium/

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