

Nordic Research in Music Education

Articles | Vol. 6, 2025, pp. 46–69 | ISSN: 2703-8041

Towards a collaborative higher music education curriculum: a singer- composer duoethnography

Lisa Fornhammar

University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland; Hochschule für Musik Carl Maria von Weber Dresden, Germany;
Universität Salzburg, Austria

Contact corresponding author: lisa.fornhammar@uniarts.fi

Miika Hyytiäinen

University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

This duoethnographic study explores the process of developing a collaborative curriculum in higher music education for singers and composers. Drawing from our experiences as a singer and a composer, we investigate the potential of third spaces in fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and breaking institutional silos. We propose a curriculum that integrates co-creation, improvisation, and cross-disciplinary dialogue, emphasizing the beginner's mindset as a tool for innovation. Our findings contribute to the discourse on collaborative professionalism and expanding professionalism in music education, aiming to support more integrated and dynamic learning environments for future musicians.

Keywords: *collaborative professionalism, contemporary vocal music, curriculum, duoethnography, third space*

Western classical contemporary vocal music (henceforth contemporary vocal music) is part of most classically trained singers' and composers' professional lives, requiring multiple skills and long-term training (Hallam & Gaunt, 2012). For singers, these skills often include mastering diverse extended vocal techniques in a vocally sustainable way and deciphering complex scores; whereas composers who write music for singers need knowledge of the technical and artistic possibilities of voice and idiomatic notation, to name just a few such aspects. While

©2025 Lisa Fornhammar & Miika Hyytiäinen. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Citation: Fornhammar, L. & Hyytiäinen, M. (2025). Towards a collaborative higher music education curriculum: a singer-composer duoethnography. *Nordic Research in Music Education*, 6, 46–69. <https://doi.org/10.23865/nrm.v6i1.36>

contemporary vocal music requires specialised technical and interpretative skills, creating and performing such music often includes collaborative components (e.g. Mösch, 2017).

Traditionally, higher music education emphasises individual musical competence (Gaunt & Westerlund, 2013). However as Bennett (2016) argues, this one-sided focus can lead to students being unprepared for the music business, where collaboration and a diverse set of skills are key components of a sustainable career and employability. Critical voices in music education argue that one-to-one “master and novice” settings in higher music education can be counterproductive to expanding the type of professionalism that responds to contemporary professional needs (Lehikoinen, 2022; Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021). This individualistic training can also lead to institutional silos in higher music education, as described by Gaunt and Westerlund (2013). According to Tett (2015), “the silo effect” is a form of tunnel vision and tribalism where people are “[...] trapped inside their little specialist departments, social groups, teams, or pockets of knowledge” (p. x).

Enhancing collaborative learning (Forbes, 2020; Gaunt & Westerlund, 2013; Roemjantsew, 2022; Smilde, 2009) and collaborative professionalism (Hahn et al., 2024) could be beneficial in combatting the silo effect. Collaboration in higher music education has been researched extensively from different perspectives, including arts-based collaboration (Young & Kenny, 2023); collaborative composing (Partti, 2012; Talvitie, 2023); collaborative learning in doctoral studies (Westerlund & Karlsen, 2013); musician-teacher collaboration (Christopherson & Kenny, 2018); and arts-science collaboration (Laes et al., 2024). Research focusing on composer perspectives (Hyytiäinen, 2022; Kanno et al., 2022; Mösch, 2017); singers’ professional education (Roemjantsew, 2022; Smilde, 2009); and between artistic and educational institutions such as music schools, orchestras, and schools (Laes et al., 2021) have indicated the importance of inter-professional collaboration, or “collaborative professionalism” (Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021; Westerlund & López-Íñiguez, 2024; Westerlund et al., 2024). Such an understanding of music professionalism proposes empowering students as active participants in their own learning, fostering cross-sector partnerships among educators and institutions, and strengthening individual professional growth as well as advocating for a transformation of higher music education, aligning with values of mutual respect, shared expertise, and social responsibility. Nonetheless, despite the growing body of research around professional collaboration in music, there is a gap in the literature regarding the co-creation of contemporary vocal music and knowledge of it as a collaborative endeavour between singers and composers.

As the authors of this study (Lisa: singer, professor and researcher; Miika: composer, educator, and researcher) we approach the above structural challenges in professional education in music, using the duoethnography method as outlined by Norris and Sawyer (2012) and Sawyer and Norris (2013). Our aim is to present tools for supporting the development of a collaborative approach by suggesting the idea of a new collaborative curriculum focusing on creating contemporary vocal music in higher music education. Although we both operate

in the field of contemporary vocal music, our goal is to generate workflows that could be utilised in other fields that require “expanding professionalism” (Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021). While juxtaposing our visions for collaborative curricula in higher music education in the duoethnographic method, we also aim to demonstrate how differently a singer and composer may understand some fundamental terms, such as “technique” and “specialisation”. We will lift these differences as a crucial part of this duoethnography. Our position as duoethnographers thus resonates with Sawyer and Norris’ (2016) description of the functions of curriculum theorists, implementers, and planners, with our roles varying between the last two.

Within this framework, we ask in this article: How might co-creation between composers and singers contribute to the development of a more integrated, higher music education curriculum? How can we create space for new knowledge in the field of contemporary vocal music? Could a duoethnographic approach contribute to breaking through silos and progressing towards a collaborative professionalism within higher music education?

By *curriculum* we refer to the structured set of core subjects within an educational program, outlining specific content and targeted goals for student achievement in each area, a curriculum specifies what students should learn, understand, and be able to do in each subject to meet established educational standards (Marsch, 2004). Moreover, we suggest that a discussion of curricula also needs to consider more philosophical and practical pedagogical questions. By reminding ourselves of the Latin verb *currere*, from which curriculum derives and which Hlebowitsh (1999) refers to as running through a racecourse, we suggest that a higher music education curriculum ought not to be a static entity but a constantly changing combination of ideas, as well as different theoretical positions and methods for knowledge construction—with autobiography as one them.

By the term “contemporary music” we refer to music rooted in the Western classical music tradition and composed roughly from 1945 through the present, resonating with modernism and beyond. Typically, scholars also use the term contemporary music in order to refer to serialism and the aesthetic schools following it, such as Western avant-garde, separating itself from the folklorism of composers such as Béla Bartók (Griffiths, 2010; Ross, 2008; Taruskin, 2010). Moreover, we acknowledge that the spectrum of what *vocal* in contemporary vocal music can mean is broad, especially concerning the techniques or training that are required. We limit the context of this paper to higher music education at universities and conservatories that provide bachelor’s and master’s degrees in vocal performance in Western classical music and composition.

Research approach and conceptual lenses

This research has emerged from our collaborative practices and teaching that have taken place in different contexts, described in detail below. However, it was during our doctoral studies that we chose to investigate these practices by using a collaborative research methodology

which enabled us to reflect on our practice in a more detailed manner, explore and describe together our experiences as educators, singers, and composers, and to involve the reader in active meaning-making (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). This process led to the aim to provide suggestions on tools and structures for higher music education curricula in order to enhance collaborative teaching and learning practices and co-created contemporary vocal music, as well as write a duoethnography, where “two or more researchers of difference juxtapose their life histories to provide multiple understandings of the world” (Lewis & Christophersen, 2021, p. 9). The choice of this study’s methodology can be justified also historically, since the development of the duoethnographic method was initially intertwined with curriculum studies (Lewis & Christophersen, 2021). Duoethnography has since been used to discuss various topics, such as music teacher’s agency (Hogle & Bramble, 2020), teacher-musicians’ experiences in quarantine (Sefton & Sirek, 2023), and social justice in music education (Lewis & Christophersen, 2021). Norris and Sawyer (2012, pp. 11–23), lists the duoethnography’s initial tenets:¹

1. *Currere*: the duoethnographic method views a person’s life as a curriculum consisting of “present abilities, skills, knowledge, and beliefs”;
2. *Polyvocal and Dialogic*: dialogue functions as a mediating device;
3. *Disruption of Metanarratives*: challenges and potentially disrupts the metanarrative of self at the personal level by questioning held beliefs;
4. *Difference*: the differences between duoethnographers are not only encouraged but also expected;
5. *Dialogic Change and Regenerative Transformation*: duoethnographers (themselves) change as a result of the embodied and dialogic research process;
6. *Trustworthiness Found in Self-reflexivity, Not Validity and Truth Claims*;
7. *Audience Accessibility*: people are eager for stories, not dissertations—consider the meaning of the story;
8. *Ethical Stance*: putting the Other in the dialogue on equal terms as in the ethics of caring.

In particular, tenets two, three, four, five, and eight in the list have guided us in our study. The second and fourth tenets describe how different voices are present in duoethnography and the importance of the differences between the authors, allowing our respective voices to create friction and coherence. The third tenet relates to Norris and Sawyer’s (2012) point that “[the] voices of each duoethnographer are made explicit throughout the piece. Although some joint narration may exist, the stories rest in juxtaposition. [...] It] is deliberate, to disrupt the metanarrative found in solitary writing” (p. 24). Moreover, the tenets of Dialogic Change and regenerative transformation aptly describe how the process has altered some parts of our identities as artists and pedagogues (see also Breault, 2016), not

¹ We have added the numbering for clarity, which does not imply any ranking.

forgetting the Ethical Stance's tenet requirements. These tenets have guided us through this ongoing discussion as authors, as we have different roles in various contexts.

One example of this juxtaposition can be taken from how we as co-researchers have allowed ourselves to focus on where we have different approaches to the terms that we use in our joint study:

Lisa:² *Maybe the most important aspect of a duoethnography is the limitations, which helps the author to maintain a structure during this pretty free-style work, in a scientific sense. ... One of the limitations is that we are not researching the other person, but using them as a site for research. The information goes through this person, limiting your personal involvement as much as possible, trying to take a perspective from outside.*

Miika: *Somehow the part that is clearer to me is the autoethnography, which is this idea of being included and involved with the people and social structures of what you are studying. Autoethnography allows the researcher (teacher or artist) to create words for these narratives that we would not see otherwise. And in duoethnography instead of one there is two, who are in this continuous dialogue. The narrative then is what is being told in an academic context from the point of view of these two people.*

During the research process, we co-developed a fruitful structure for generating empirical material during the writing process. This included scheduling a full day where we asked each other questions in a semi-structured manner that allowed space for spontaneity. These discussions preferably took place at Lisa's studio in Leipzig, which is a rather neutral but inspiring place, full of posters, books, and scores on the topic. To prepare for the meetings, we both read a theoretical text that served as a starting point for our discussion, for example works such as *Zen mind beginner's mind* (Suzuki, 1970),³ duoethnographies written in a contrasting manner, or articles on curriculum theory. Miika then transcribed the recorded text automatically, using the Happy Scribe application. The study ended up consisting of roughly 12 hours of recorded conversations, resulting in 75 transcribed pages. After some preliminary editing, such as dividing the text into themes, titles were added in order to produce a manageable pool of raw material, which was still intact but easy to utilise in the final text. Our intention has been to maintain a balanced authorship of the material. Dissonances that emerged during the discussions were non-hierarchical, allowing our author positions to fluctuate (cf. Hogle & Bramble, 2020). During the process, we started choosing the most representative quotes, allowing only minor edits for clarity. The time between our meetings created a certain distance from the texts and helped in reading them more analytically and deciding how much to edit the original text, and what was too personal or not articulated enough as described (see e.g. Sefton & Sirek, 2023).

2 Quotes from the authors' joint discussions are written in italics. The authors are henceforth referred to as Lisa and Miika.

3 The original Japanese term is 初心 or Shoshin.

From silos to collaborative learning and professionalism

As stated previously, the silos that exist in the context of higher arts education “can hold back artists from seeing alternative, additional opportunities, and from using their full potential to make a living from the arts and to contribute to society” (Lehikoinen, 2022, p. 85). A jump out of the silo requires making changes to both the curriculum and the prevalent way of thinking in professional education.

As already mentioned, collaborative professionalism has been introduced as a response to the silo effect, as it urges professionals to work together in a more collaborative way (Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2018, p. 4). According to Bennett (2016), collaboration is one of the important steps on the student’s route to employability. Collaborative learning has been suggested as one possible tool for supporting the student’s path towards collaborative professionalism (Forbes 2020; Gaunt & Westerlund, 2013). Collaborative professionalism thus expands the taken-for-granted view of individualistic expertise common in higher music education, which, according to Gaunt and Westerlund (2021), has to change now that the “challenges are not simply creative or economic ones” but when music professionals may “need to engage with dilemmas of social, cultural, political, technological, and ecological change” (p. xviii).

A third space for co-teaching

This duoethnographic study reveals structures in our work as educators that resonate with Bhabha’s (2004) concept of the third space: “[an] ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present” (p. 4; see also, Norris & Sawyer, 2012). The third space theory, originally introduced in a postcolonial context amidst the hybridity resulting from two or more cultures meeting, has since also been used as an analytical lens in higher music education (e.g. Thomson, 2021). The dialogical nature of the duoethnographic method is understood as opening up a third space that can spark our imagination and allow creative results to emerge. Our definition of the third space is however not only a mental but a physical space that both singing and composition students could potentially share, working somewhat outside their own expertise; and allowing them to learn new artistic techniques, methods, and communicational skills. Yet reaching into the unknown in a third space needs to be a safe experience, for example regarding vocal health when experimenting with the voice. An important pedagogical aspect of this is providing enough time, space, and other resources for rehearsals and performances, where trial and error is an important part of the process.

Transdisciplinarity

Our work as researchers, as a singer and a composer and as educators, is also transdisciplinary. Leavy (2011) defines transdisciplinarity as “forging coalitions and collaborations across disciplinary and geographic borders” (p. 14). By going beyond established borders, engaging with practitioners, and also having open boundaries for our own work, this

collaborative practice actively expands the established discipline-specific scope of professionalism, and thus both benefit from one another. A contrasting example would be multidisciplinary, where each discipline works in parallel, maintaining its own methods and autonomy. Instead, we have integrated multiple disciplines in our activities and hence created intersections where the problem-solving takes place holistically by crossing over existing knowledge-boundaries to answer the requirements of innovation and creativity.

Two professional journeys meeting

Aligning with the method of duoethnography, we will next outline our backgrounds (see also Lewis & Christophersen, 2021), which while travelling along different paths nevertheless brought us to the same place: the doctoral school at University of the Arts Helsinki.

Our musical journeys

Our social backgrounds are rather similar; we were born into monocultural middle-class families (Lisa in Sweden; Miika in Finland), where we both actively participated in public music school. Early on, Miika was interested in singing and associated himself more with performers than composers. Nevertheless, he studied composition and now works as a composer, often writing for singers. In the same way, Lisa felt like a stranger among her fellow voice students, and quite soon felt more at home with the composition students. This feeling of belonging strongly impacted both of our life paths and enabled a very specific understanding and emotional relationship with each other's disciplines.

Miika: *I started singing very early, since I wanted to express things with music theatre and voice was a natural part of it. (...) Actually, I always felt like I'm a singer. Lisa, don't you, actually, feel like a composer?*

When Miika met with other composition students and composers, they seemed to have a somewhat different understanding of what it meant to be a composer. Only after moving to Berlin and starting his *Kompositionsdiplom* studies did he find his aesthetic direction:

Miika: *I started to regain my position as an active artist and composer, and the aesthetic that I had as a child; I don't need just to write notes, but can be a composer and a performer, positioning myself however I want with my voice.*

Although Miika associates himself strongly with singers, he chose to focus on composition and performing in ways that don't require a classically trained voice. Likewise, for Lisa the path to becoming a singer was not straightforward. Before she started her education in

classical singing at the Universität Mozarteum Salzburg (Mozarteum) she sang in choirs, played double bass and bass guitar in a rock band, and tried out singing in musicals in the US.

Lisa: *When I started at Mozarteum I was a true beginner in terms of classical singing. I was belting and started to discover my head voice again, but for a long time I sounded like a boy soprano with no vibrato at all. Experimenting with all kinds of musical forms has always been a special interest.*

Lisa joined the social groups of the composition students and took improvisation courses, where composition students, conducting students, and singing students took part.

Lisa: *I felt very much at home with the clique of composition students. It quickly became a place where I fit much better than in the singing department.*

Miika: *Did you ever compose?*

Lisa: *I never did. I have never taken any lessons, maybe I should.*

This co-mingling of different worlds has allowed both of us to navigate the field of contemporary vocal music more easily. In Lisa's case, this means suggesting alterations that allow the composer's idea to be clearer both for the performer and—as a result—for the audience. Miika, on the other hand, often combines two extremes: abstract philosophical or mathematical ideas with the performer's physicality.

Our paths as teachers

Since our musical identities were never monodisciplinary in terms of musical genres and practices, incorporating a new identity as teachers in higher music education—for Lisa in 2007 and Miika in 2014—in the space between the composition and singing departments came naturally. One of our tasks has been to coach composers and singers from composition to world premiere both when teaching separately and together. Our joint teaching has taken place at the University of the Arts Helsinki (Uniarts Helsinki) as part of The Center for Educational Research and Academic Development in the Arts (CERADA), at the Universität der Künste Berlin (UdK Berlin) and at Hochschule für Musik Dresden (HfM Dresden).

Lisa discovered her passion for teaching shortly after her graduation from Mozarteum, realising that pedagogical work combined with performing as a freelancer perfectly nourished each other. She applied for a teaching job in contemporary vocal music that did not yet exist, at her alma mater:

Lisa: *My only official training in contemporary music was a summer course for one week with Ensemble Recherche and Salome Kammer as a teacher. I was hired due to my, at the time rather limited, expertise in performing contemporary vocal music, despite my lack of teaching experience or pedagogical background.*

From 2016 to 2024, apart from teaching *Aufführungspraxis neue Musik*⁴ at Mozarteunm, Lisa taught improvisation and leading projects with singers and composers at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Leipzig. In addition, since 2023 she has been a guest professor for contemporary vocal music and head of the master's programme for contemporary music at HfM Dresden.

For Miika, the pedagogical journey started in mathematics and science, in which he is a licensed teacher in Finland. Since 2010 he has given lectures and workshops at universities across Europe. In Berlin, he has collaborated on projects between the UdK Berlin and local public schools, as well as mentoring professional singers and composers. One of his most extensive pedagogical initiatives was the “Soap Operas”, a series of seminars at UdK Berlin, Germany, conducted alongside Mathias Hinke and Caroline Scholtz-Ott from 2016 to 2019. These seminars combined theory and practice, bringing together composers, singers, and instrumentalists; many of whom were training to become music educators themselves. This series offered composers and other music students the opportunity to engage in a transdisciplinary learning environment.

Although contemporary vocal music is our shared special interest, we also have experience teaching our disciplines more generally, which helps with communication with other music university teachers. As we have discussed this aspect of our work, we have been able to identify the most important dissonances, which is crucial for the duoethnographic method. For Lisa, a classical technique is fundamental to the teaching scheme and is the foundation for versatility and experimenting, regardless of vocal style or era. For Miika, the definition of composition technique is somewhat different, typically learned by analysing and mimicking historical styles. Still, for him, they need to be extensively re-evaluated and sometimes even purposefully forgotten to find the technique or system that is typical for a particular composer or even a specific composition.

Co-teaching

The benefits of co-teaching in the context of vocal music for both students and teachers have been described, for example, by Zanner and Stabb (2013). Vocal music is fundamentally a collaborative art that flourishes from the co-teaching of educators from different backgrounds and points of view.⁵ Another result of co-teaching is that students learn to work as a group where everyone, both students and teachers, needs to take responsibility. In our co-teaching we have experienced similar positive effects.

The first time we collaborated in a higher music education setting, albeit not yet as co-teachers, was in 2016 when Lisa was invited to UdK Berlin to give a short lecture about contemporary vocal music and notation in the above-mentioned course Soap Opera. On

4 Performance practice in contemporary music.

5 In the case of Zanner and Stabb (2013), the focus was on musical and theatrical aspects.

this specific occasion, Lisa provided mainly theoretical input from a singer's perspective. During the discussion afterwards, Matthias Hinke, who initiated the lecture, stated that the mandatory course at UdK Berlin for composition students, Instrumentation, only contains one sentence about the singing voice, whereas all other instruments receive extensive treatment (see also, Hyytiäinen, 2022).

The second collaborative situation was the earlier-mentioned singer-composer course at the Uniarts Helsinki, organised by the CERADA during the study year 2018–2019. The goal again in this course was that students should create short new vocal pieces in pairs or small groups. The working methods included both theoretical and practical workshops, musical work in small groups, and individual lessons. The course started in the autumn of 2018 with the singing and composition students, with a partly theoretical and partly practical one-day workshop where the students could improvise together. Due to the interactive and practical part, it was pretty easy to form groups that were then expected to collaborate during the following study year. The first seminar occurred in a large conference room at the Music Center, a location normally not used for teaching. This gave the seminar an official and heightened atmosphere, but fortunately did not interfere with the students' creativity. We noticed that the choice of location for each meeting strongly affected the atmosphere.

Our next encounter in this course was an extended lecture concert in March 2019 during the Uniarts Helsinki's "Research Days" at the Camerata Hall of the Helsinki Music Centre. The lecture recital started with a theoretical part and ended with a live composition and performance. This was followed by a workshop with the students involved in the project where more specific issues were discussed, for example, how to practise microtones, followed by more improvisation. Since there were no available rooms at the university, we had to be creative, and held the second workshop at one of the group rooms at the newly opened public library, Oodi, situated just next to the Music Centre. The change of location to a neutral room in a creative environment was a great boost for everyone. The benefits of using neutral spaces that are not normally utilised for main subject lessons (singing or composition) was applied later in our collaborative curricula.

During that study year, in addition to the group seminars we taught individual lessons with the composition-singer teams, which took place online and in different spaces at the Uniarts Helsinki. During these occasions, one or both of us met with the groups, or parts of them, to discuss different aspects of their artistic process and practical work. The topics of these lessons varied from general artistic concepts, specific technical questions (notation, artistic references, vocal technique, and pronunciation) to organisational questions (technical possibilities, schedules), and sometimes even more general discussions such as different aspects of working as a singer and composer.

The final week of the course in May 2019 included intensive rehearsals ending with a presentation of world premiere compositions and one video documentary during a day

for composition and music theory students to present their work. The performances took place in different rooms, since some required a grand piano and an organ; which meant that the audience was guided to different locations. The atmosphere among the students was, especially towards the end, enthusiastic and light-hearted. In their spontaneous comments they mentioned as positive aspects the opportunity to work together with students from other music disciplines and our novel approach to education and contemporary vocal music, which encouraged experimentation beyond one's own expertise. The final compositions ranged from art songs to guided improvisation with music and movement. Three out of the four composers participated as performers of their own pieces in different ways.

Lisa: *The joint teaching had a lightness that I was not used to, due to the fact that I almost always teach alone. This is where we noticed, I think, how well we work together.*

Seeing the process through our methodological lenses, the joint working and studying can be understood as occupying a shared space, not simply as a mental space but as a social and concrete, physical space, combined in third space theories (Bhabha, 2004). To explore this, we analyze the current situation by examining various pedagogical scenarios in higher music education, ranging from short workshops to specialized programs, such as master's degrees in contemporary music. Based on this analysis, we propose a collaborative curriculum.

Towards a collaborative curriculum for the future

A collaborative curriculum for singers and composers should respond to and evolve from existing curricula. We first present these existing frameworks, then introduce our proposed curriculum, and finally analyze the productive differences that emerge from our diverse backgrounds.

The current role of contemporary vocal music in higher music education

Many universities provide short workshops on contemporary vocal music for singers and composers, with a wide variation in their content and breadth. Some universities also have master's programmes for performers of contemporary music. However, to our knowledge, there is no education for specialising in composing vocal music (Hyytiäinen, 2022). During our discussions we recognised our supposition that vocal music is seen as a small and less important part of a composer's career, something that should not be the focus of a professional composer. This presumption is especially striking since we ourselves have ample personal evidence of the opposite; vocal music is an important aspect of the work of many of the most performed present-day composers (see e.g. Mösch, 2017).

- Miika: *Educating singers as contemporary music specialists is more realistic, since there are probably more singers who will concentrate on contemporary vocal music as professionals. But we can dream! We can say that these types of programmes for composers could exist in the future! [...] For example, at UdK Berlin you can specialise at least in experimental music theatre, intonation, orchestral music, and electronic music. And Intonation, for instance, is a much smaller niche than vocal music.*
- Lisa: *I think that a specialised education for composing vocal music only makes sense if combined with an aspect of performance.*

This presupposition of the lesser importance of vocal music in compositional studies also seems to be manifested in higher music education curricula for composing students; concentrating on music theatre, orchestral music, or electronic music are all valid routes for a composition student, whereas vocal music is not even mentioned in the current study plans (Hyytiäinen, 2022). If short workshops exist as outliers from the main path of the curriculum, the idea of exhaustive specialisation studies seems far-fetched, to say the least. According to our experience, most music universities see contemporary music as an important part of a singer's training. The most casual level of training is the mandatory contemporary vocal music pieces that are often required as part of the performance examination⁶ concert. Regular workshops are common, but direct collaboration with composers is not mentioned in the course descriptions. However, in a course with only singing students participating, the collaboration possibilities are limited. An increased number of European music universities, such as Hochschule für Musik Basel, Hochschule der Künste Bern, HfM Dresden, Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Graz, Mozarteum, and Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart, offer master's programmes for singers and instrumentalists in contemporary music.

Moreover, there is a structural difference between the education of singers and composers. Contemporary vocal music is not usually indicated as part of the basic studies, at least in Europe, and the non-mandatory courses and workshops are offered irregularly and to a varying extent and quality (Hyytiäinen, 2022). To our knowledge, specialised studies in vocal music composition do not exist in Europe. Like other musicians, composers typically start by studying more general skills (at the bachelor's level) and then specialise in a single skill, such as music theatre, electronic music, etc. According to our experience, it would be interesting, realistic, and beneficial to have vocal music as one of the options for specialisation, since a broad scope of competence is crucial for all composition students. Similarly, when a singer specialises in contemporary music, balancing the technical requirement by singing classical music should be considered, since this can support the flexibility required for employability (Bennet, 2016).

6 A public exam where the students are graded on their artistic performance.

Despite the limited focus in higher music education curricula on contemporary music, the interests and expectations of the students at Mozarteum today are very different in general since Lisa started teaching in 2007.

Lisa: *Just before Christmas, I had an eye-opening experience [in a competition for singers]. Most of the finalists had very innovative concepts, combining acting, speaking, props, and performance elements of different sorts. It seemed as if the creativity had been put on hold during the pandemic and now is exploding. This is why it is of utmost importance that we as educators make sure higher music education can support this creativity and not limit it.*

This indicates that drastic changes in higher music education are possible. With optimism we will move to describing our vision for future education.

Third space curricula for singers and composers

As mentioned above, the properties of the physical space in which collaborative learning takes place play an important role. Ideally, this space is a fairly large room with good electronic equipment such as projectors and speakers, located on neutral ground. This means that it should not be a room where the students normally have their voice or composition lessons, since it may create a problematic hierarchy, as some students are there only as guests of the others. An example of the impact of neutral space was described above in relation to co-teaching in the workshop spaces of the library. A neutral space can also be seen as an invitation to work according to the beginner's mind (Suzuki, 1970), resulting in a fresh start for creativity. Our experience is that a neutral but supportive space can encourage students to use their individual expertise to experiment with remarkable freedom.

Figure 1 visualises the student's training in their main subject, with the learning process happening in the third space, and the contact between them, which enables an upward cycle towards both deepened expertise and expanding professionalism; a compositional idea requires an extension of the classical vocal technique, and a vocally healthy way of establishing this vocal extension is developed with the main vocal teacher. Our practical experience has shown that this exploration and extension can also create positive effects for the core technique (see e.g. the connection of special whistle register training and basic passaggio technique in Holmes-Bendixen, 2013). This kind of process can and should involve an ongoing fruitful dialogue between the responsible teacher and the students as well. However, just as important is that the participating group has a chance to develop its own dynamic, which means, for instance, that it should be clear that joining the group in the middle of a session is not allowed, and that sessions without a supervising teacher are just as important for the creative process.

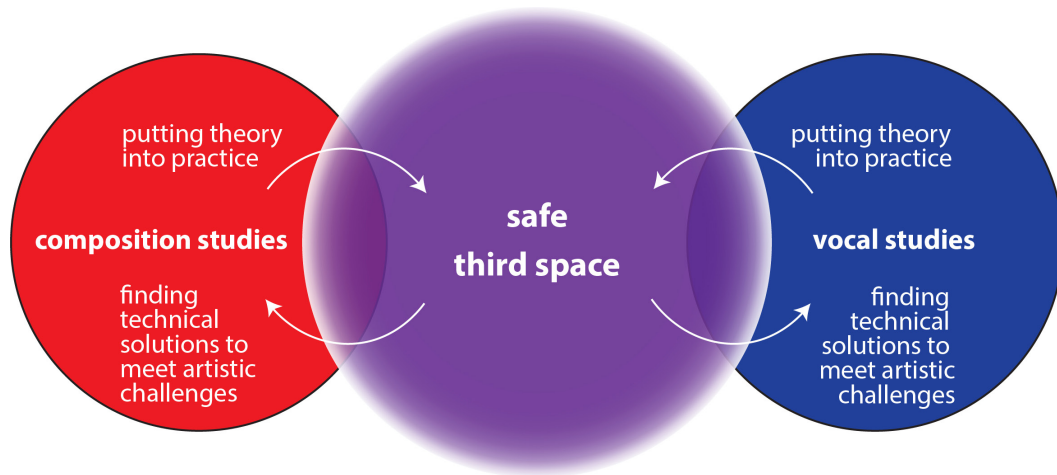


Figure 1. Transdisciplinary collaboration in higher music education

When applying transdisciplinary collaboration in higher music education, one important aspect is to find the right balance in relation to the time and resources reserved for developing specific skills related to the main subject. In our experience, the most fruitful results come from an ongoing exchange between the main studies and transdisciplinary studies. This aligns with the critical points that Latukefu and Verenikina (2013) mentioned when describing how singing students participating in a collaborative project had fewer individual voice lessons than previously. Instead, their study notes that the students had more group lessons, a fact that neither teachers nor students were happy about. However, according to Latukefu and Verenikina (2013), there was no clear evidence that the students' development was negatively affected. While the participants of this study were not students of classical singing, this study nevertheless indicates that the balance between collaboration and individual lessons is crucial.

It is our conviction that the individual voice and composition lessons must be maintained and well planned, but that consideration must also be given to planning what kind of lectures profit both groups and which only one of them. In addition, the creative freedom of shared space is not always fruitful for students who are in an early phase of developing their basic technical skills. During these crucial phases, excessive collaboration may even be counterproductive and reverse technical development. Roemjantsew (2022) supports this idea by arguing that in collaborative learning the goals, guidelines, and tasks need to be well-defined, and simply working in groups is not sufficient. For example, a task could be for singers to describe their own voice type to composers according to the Fach System, or for composers to explain specific compositional techniques to singers. The explanation itself can deepen the understanding of both parties (see also, Ford & Sloboda, 2013; Lebler, 2018).

While working with mixed groups of singers and composers, we have intuitively used exercises that encourage students (and us as teachers) to use their individual skills in new and unexpected ways. Later on, we were able to contextualise it as the beginner's mind (Suzuki, 1970), aiming to empty our minds as educators and as students in order to be open to the new and unknown (Bresler, 2015, p. 7). In our context, the important aspects of the

beginner's mind are openness to new ideas and acceptance of the limitations of our professional expertise and creativity. The beginner's mind can be seen to have a special role in the process of teaching and learning contemporary vocal music, where the ideas, techniques, and demands are new for every piece. As Bresler (2019) describes this practice: "While the feeling of unknowing is not a comfortable one, it supports fresh seeing and theorising." (p. 7)

Our co-teaching has been research-oriented. For us, this means staying in close contact with other artists who are active in different fields of research, and with voice researchers and phoniatic specialists (see Fornhammar et al., 2020). The ideal situation is when there is an institute for voice science at the teaching site, where a continuous exchange of knowledge can occur, including diagnostic support when facing especially difficult vocal challenges. These challenges can include growling, distortion, or intentionally making the voice sound hoarse, all techniques that can be found in contemporary music as well as in, for example, heavy metal singing. Hence, in this respect the boundary between contemporary vocal music and other genres is often fluid. The phenomenon of becoming unintentionally hoarse (vocal fatigue) has been studied by phoniatic researchers (Solomon & DiMattia, 2000), and is something that should be taken seriously by not only voice teachers but also composers.

Our individual visions of a collaborative curriculum

Lisa: *If we're talking about higher music education, I think two years is a good time period to specialise in contemporary vocal music. One of the things I really would like to try out would be to start with a kick-off semester, where part of the concept would be a daily morning warm-up session for new students of all disciplines, Monday to Friday, 9.00 to 9.45. The idea would be to ask teachers from different departments to take turns leading these warm-ups and to invite students from different disciplines to take part, for example from the jazz department or from the music education department. Students from the church music department would also be very interesting, since these students are often great at improvising. I think this could be a great way for the students to get to know each other, as well as get to know their own bodies and instruments and how to open up their own creativity.*

As a side note, I have experienced this several times: if you offer students a non-judgemental space and clearly state that here everything is right and nothing is wrong as a basis for the improvisation, true magic can happen. When the creativity opens up I see sparks in the eyes of the students, regardless of whether these are composition students, classically trained singers, actors, or amateurs. The most rewarding experience is when you as an educator see how a new world opens up for originally very sceptical classically trained singers. This is the essence of why I do what I do.

Students should be encouraged to initiate and lead projects themselves, in order to prepare for life as professional musicians.

Lisa: *I think it would be a great way to learn how to survive as a freelancer, which is essential since only a very small number of all music students will be employed at an opera house, orchestra, or choir. (...) My experience is that today most students of all disciplines build their own career. However, this is even more common when specialising in contemporary music.*

One important aspect of this approach is encouraging the students to work together regularly but without a teacher, since artistic freedom should not be underestimated. There is a different energy, depending on whether a teacher is present or not.

Miika: *Composers need to learn how to speak with a singer and to understand enough of the terminology. So, if a singer says: "I am a spinto or a 'this-and-that-something-absurd-soprano'", you roughly understand what they mean ... Often we talk about private matters, and confidence is the key. On the first level, the composer and singers need to be very open about the fact that it is ok not to understand many things; this is why they are studying. They need to be humble enough to ask: what does this notation mean, or how does your voice work? But the level of trust goes even deeper. In my vocal compositions, the vocal registers often play an important role. But discussing them is quite often a tricky thing, as the singers have spent years trying to homogenise the register.*

In general, the question of communication is central: How can composers and singers learn enough of each other's disciplines, terminology, and practice to support each other's professional work? One practical way is finding artistically common ground by using improvisation and creating quick, semi-improvised, quickly-composed miniatures. On the one hand, singers can experience an approachable version of composers' work by creating structures or rules in the improvisational process. Composers, on the other hand, can experience embodiment when using their voices and being in direct contact with the audience. This is again an example of working in an unknown field, and requires the openness described through the concept of beginner's mind.

Our pedagogical idea for a collaborative curriculum combines workshops with more autonomous work in small groups. The first workshop could provide music theory and technical exercises. Another possibility could be to start with group improvisation if the group dynamic allows it. The theoretical background could include extended vocal techniques, an overview of most of the repertoire, and an option for notation, whereas the technical exercises we have used dwell on improvisation, microtonal singing, and some extended vocal techniques suitable for the group.

Creating a non-judgmental space that allows these work modes to flourish is therefore the core of our pedagogical idea, and one of the educator's most important and demanding tasks. In the process of a long workshop, these processes take place on a larger scale. The students take responsibility for their productions' different artistic and practical aspects.

Miika: *The aspect of producing goes for everyone; the teacher is supervising, but the students have the responsibility for their productions. They can learn this by following professionals or by working briefly as an assistant, as I did for Jennifer Walshe.*

The differences between our collaborative curricula and the dialogue they created revealed our understandings of and ideas about education, but also revealed how we (and possibly other professionals, too) see ourselves and each other as singers and composers. Whereas for Lisa achieving the target curriculum is a question of optimising an existing curriculum, for Miika the whole idea of composers having substantial special education in vocal music seems just distant and even a bit absurd.

Adopting a beginner's mindset towards collaborative professionalism

Some of the ideas that have developed during the writing process of this article have already been put into practice in an experimental setting as extracurricular courses, as well as in workshops outside higher music education. An example of our co-teaching in this context was a crash course on extended vocal techniques and notation organised by HfM Dresden in March 2024 with students from the jazz music department. As educators, we aimed to give a brief overview of the historical background and theory that the students put into practice in small groups. We had a clear plan of what we wanted to accomplish during the workshop: show the students a wide variety of extended vocal techniques and notation by practically trying these out in the group as performers and composers. Ultimately, the students gained an overview of what they had learned through this seemingly improvisational process. The combined effect of the utmost control from the workshop leaders enabled the utmost freedom for the participants, which was possible because of the collaborative processes put in place and the openness of the beginner's mind.

The process of writing this duoethnography has also opened up a space for our own creativity as artists. An example of this is how, one morning at the sports hall at Uniarts Helsinki, between meetings, other rehearsals, and teaching, we began experimenting together on a new vocal piece, *Drömspel* (2023). As artists, we experienced how liberating a clear frame for working—a safe third space—can be for creativity. *Drömspel* has already been performed in various contexts.

In the artistic process of *Symbol-Body* (2024), we went even further towards transdisciplinarity, where the “presentation of the data [follows] an arts-based format” or a “dramatic performance” (Leavy, 2011, p. 130) are ways of sharing information. This music theatre piece is co-created, and the disciplines are continuously in flux; the artistic process, with its ups and downs, is left intentionally visible (an example of *Symbol-Body*'s visual language can

Drömspel
Movement:

Text: Fonden dras upp; nu synes en ny fond föreställande en gammal ruszig brandmur. Midt i muren är en grind som öppnar till en gång, hvilken mynnar ut i en grön ljus plats där en kolossal blå Stormhatt (Aconitum) synes.

ll:hihi:ll:haha:ll:hoho:ll

Fo_n_den dras upp; nu synes en ny fond föreställande en gammal ruszig brandmur.
v<<<!/mit#: i mu:ren e:r en: grm:d som: öpp:nar til: en: gøq: /v<<<!
hvilken mynnar ut i en grön ljus plats
v<<<!/ dè:r en: en kolòs'a:l blo: blå stòr:m.hat: akonitum s'y:nes /v<<<!

Tape:
Whispers

Figure 2. Page four from the score *Drömspel* by Miika, with a graphic score inspired by 1990s video games and utilising inspiratory singing.

be found in Figures 3 and 4). To analyse the piece in detail would be beyond the scope of this article; however, we argue that the whole creative process would not have been possible without the regenerative transformation that resulted from working on this duoethnography.

One central theme that consistently surfaced in our pedagogical and artistic discussions was notation. We both recognized its crucial role in contemporary vocal music, yet our perspectives on it differed. For Lisa, the primary concern is readability and fluent interpretation. For Miika, the process is more holistic, emphasizing the overarching structure and the craft of practical note-writing. This contrast represents a productive dissonance at the core of our artistic and pedagogical processes—another being the question of specialized studies in contemporary vocal music for singers and composers. These shared, juxtaposed, and personal experiences can be understood through the lens of collaborative (Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2018) and expanding professionalism (Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021), where collaboration defines processes such as learning, conducting artistic work, and deliberately countering the silo effect.

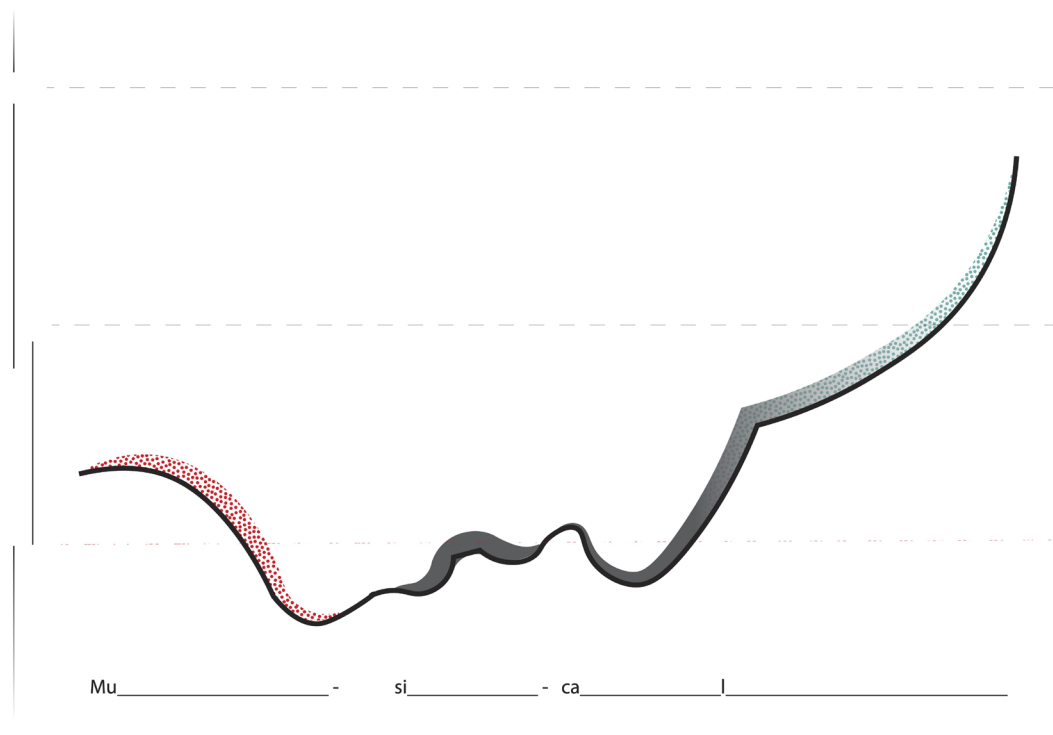
Concluding thoughts

In this duoethnography, we have reflected upon possibilities for and encouraged discussions about contemporary vocal music in a higher music education context, specifically

on including collaborative practices in formal curricula for the professional education of musicians. It is evident that more research is needed to explore the variety of practices used by individual teachers around the world in order to better understand the long-term effects that third spaces can have on the professional pathways of students with different educational backgrounds. This study has aimed to provide one further step on that path. For us, and we dare say also our students, working with contemporary vocal music has brought much intellectual joy, a feeling of personal connection, empowerment, and moments of flow—even if it may feel terrifying to reach into the unknown. The process has demonstrated the special position of contemporary vocal music in higher music education. We can only hope that the current demands of the work field spark a revolution in the education of vocal music as part of composers' education, as well as further inclusion of collaboration as part of higher music education practices and curricula. There is also an emerging interest in and living examples of transdisciplinarity and expanding professionalism in the professional arena. In the examples we have given, the artists do not see this as the only way to survive in an ever-changing music industry, but as a freely chosen possibility to build a unique career, combining different areas of expertise in various ways (see also Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021).

In this duoethnography we have envisioned our collaborative curricula, thereby aiming to contribute to curriculum development in higher music education. Parallel to analysing the collaborative curricula in this duoethnography, we have been implementing parts of them in different contexts and thereby making these discoveries a defining element of our teaching. Finally, by our example and artistic and academic input, we have aimed to promote the transformation of higher music education as a whole. At the same time, this duoethnographic process has proven to be a fruitful source of pedagogical, artistic, and academic inspiration for ourselves. The “dialogic change” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, pp. 12–23) did indeed occur: describing the concepts of vocal and composition technique to each other has fundamentally and in unforeseeable ways changed the way that we, for instance, see and talk about ‘technique’ in any discipline.

Throughout this study, we have consistently put into practice our ideal of integrating a beginner's mind and third space approach with music educators, students, amateurs, and experts within workshops and conferences in higher music education. Parallel to this process we have continuously strived towards our ideal of combining beginner's mind and third space with music teachers, students, students, amateurs, and specialists in higher music education workshops and conferences. Theoretically speaking, we have witnessed collaborative professionalism expanding the traditional boundaries between different music professions, hence also implementing the idea of lifelong learning as a core concept in teaching music while experiencing both students and professors in playful contexts.



Figures 3 and 4. Two screenshots from the video projection of *Symbol-Body*. Lisa's face is scanned in 3D; it functions as video art and simultaneously as a basis for graphic notation.

Author Biographies

Lisa Fornhammar is a versatile singer, educator, and researcher specialising in contemporary music. Her repertoire spans from Baroque to avant-garde, with engagements at major opera houses and concert halls across Europe. A dedicated educator, she has been Guest Professor for Contemporary Vocal Music at the Hochschule für Musik Dresden since 2023. She is currently completing her doctoral studies in experimental vocal techniques and pedagogy at the University of the Arts Helsinki. In 2025, she was appointed Vice Rector for the third cycle, research, international relations and professionalisation at HfM Dresden.

Miika Hyytiäinen is an internationally active composer and performer specialising in music theatre and vocal music. His transdisciplinary approach has led him to work in education and research alongside his artistic practice. During his doctoral studies at the University of the Arts Helsinki, he explored communication between singers and composers, developing the Voice Map Method to enhance collaboration. Since 2013, he has also pioneered the graphic Soune notation, which merges musical notation with elements from other art forms.

Acknowledgments

This study was financially supported by CERADA (Center for Educational Research and Academic Development in the Arts) and Universität Mozarteum Salzburg.

References

- Behar-Horenstein, S. L. (2000). Can the modern view of curriculum be refined by postmodern criticism? In J. Glanz & L.S. Behar-Horenstein (Eds.), *Paradigm debates in curriculum and supervision: Modern and postmodern perspectives*. Bergin & Garvey.
- Bennett, D. (2016). Developing employability in higher education music. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 15(3–4), 386–395. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022216647388>
- Bhabha, H. K. (2004). *The location of culture*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203820551>
- Breault, R. A. (2016). Emerging issues in duoethnography. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 29(6), 777–794. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2016.1162866>

- Bresler, L. (2015). *Beyond methods: Lessons from the arts to qualitative research*. (Perspectives in music and music education; No. 10). Malmö Academy of Music.
- Bresler L. (2019). Wondering in the dark: The generative power in the arts and in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & M. Giardina (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry at a crossroad* (pp. 80–95). Routledge.
- Christophersen, C., & Kenny, A. (2018). *Musician-teacher, collaborations: Altering the chord*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315208756>
- Forbes, M. (2020). The value of collaborative learning for music practice in higher education. *British Journal of Music Education*, 37(3), 207–220. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051720000200>
- Fornhammar, L., Sundberg, J., Fuchs, M., & Pieper, L. (2022). Measuring voice effects of vibrato-free and ingressive singing: A study of phonation threshold pressures. *Journal of Voice*, 36(4), 479–486. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2020.07.023>
- Gaunt, H., & Westerlund, H. (Eds.). (2013). *Collaborative learning in higher music education*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315572642>
- Griffiths, P. (2010). *Modern music and after*. Oxford University Press.
- Hahn, M., Björk, C., & Westerlund, H. (Eds.), (2024). *Music schools in changing societies: How collaborative professionalism can transform music education*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003365808>
- Hargreaves, A., & O'Connor, M. T. (2018). *Collaborative professionalism: When teaching together means learning for all*. Corwin.
- Hlebowitsh, P. (1999). The common unity and the progressive restoration of the curriculum field. In L. Behar-Horenstein & J. Glantz (Eds.), *Modern and postmodern perspectives in the curriculum field* (pp. 54–69). Greenwood.
- Hogle, L. A., & Bramble, C. (2020). Teacher agency through duoethnography: Pedagogical DNA in a community of learner-teachers. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 21(15). <https://doi.org/10.26209/ijea21n15>
- Hyytiäinen, M. (2022). *Voice map method: Enhancing composer-singer communication*. Sibelius Academy of the University of Arts.
- Kanno, M., López-Íñiguez, G., & Westerlund, H. (2022). Composers' reflections on the relevance of artistic doctoral education in Finland: From self-development towards knowledge exchange and knowledge creation. *Trio*, 11, 39–55. <https://doi.org/10.37453/tj.120925>
- Laes, T., Thomson, K., Treacy, D. & Westerlund, H. (2024). Towards 'swampy lowlands' of professional practice: Higher music education teachers reflecting on arts-science integration in the Artists for a Sustainable Future course. *Diskussion Musikpädagogik*, 102, 3–10. <https://www.junker-verlag.com/dmp-102>
- Laes, T., Westerlund, H., Saether, E., & Kamensky, H. (2021). Practicing civic professionalism through inter-professional collaboration: Reconnecting quality with

- equality in the Nordic music school system. In H. Westerlund & H. Gaunt (Eds.), *Expanding professionalism in music and higher music education—A changing game* (pp. 16–29). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003108337-2>
- Latukefu, L., & Verenikina, I. (2013). Expanding the master-apprentice model: Tool for orchestrating collaboration as a path to self-directed learning for singing students. In H. Gaunt and H. Westerlund (Eds.), *Collaborative learning in higher music education* (pp. 101–109). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315572642>
- Lebler, D. (2013). Using formal self- and peer-assessment as a proactive tool in building a collaborative learning environment: Theory into practice in a popular music programme. In H. Gaunt and H. Westerlund (Eds.), *Collaborative learning in higher music education* (pp. 111–21). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315572642>
- Leavy, P. (2011). *Essentials of transdisciplinary research: Using problem-centered methodologies*. Left Coast Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315429137>
- Lewis, J., & Christophersen, C. (2021). Frontiers of difference: A duo-ethnographic study of social justice in music education. *Music Education Research*, 23(1), 90–104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2021.1887114>
- MacPherson, S. (2010). Teachers' collaborative conversations about culture: Negotiating decision making in intercultural teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(3), 271–286. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109353032>
- Marsh, C. J. (2004). *Key concepts for understanding curriculum*. Falmer Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203326893>
- Mösch, S. (2017). *Komponieren für Stimme: Von Monteverdi bis Rihm. Ein Handbuch*. Bärenreiter-Verlag.
- Norris, J., & Sawyer, R. D. (2012). Toward a dialogic methodology. In D. Lund, R. D. Sawyer, & J. Norris (Eds.), *Duoethnography: Dialogic methods for social, health, and educational research* (pp. 9–39). Left Coast Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315430058-6>
- Partti, H. (2012). *Learning from cosmopolitan digital musicians: Identity, musicianship, and changing values in (in)formal music communities* [Dissertation]. Sibelius Academy.
- Roemjantsew, T. (2022). *Collaborative learning in conservatoire education: Catalyst for innovation*. ICLON PhD Dissertation Series.
- Ross, A. (2008). *The rest is noise: Listening to the twentieth century*. Picador.
- Sawyer, R. K. (2003). *Group creativity: Music, theatre, collaboration*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Sawyer, R. D., & Norris, J. (2013). *Duoethnography*. Oxford University Press.
- Sawyer, R., & Norris, J. (Eds.). (2016). *Interdisciplinary reflective practice through duoethnography: Examples for educators*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-51739-5>
- Smilde, R. (2009). Musicians as lifelong learners. In P. Alheit & H. von Felden (Eds.), *Lebenslanges Lernen und erziehungswissenschaftliche Biographieforschung*

- (pp. 175–189). VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-91520-3_10
- Solomon, N. P., Glaze, L. E., Arnold, R. R., & van Mersbergen, M. (2003). Effects of a vocally fatiguing task and systemic hydration on men's voices. *Journal of Voice: Official Journal of the Voice Foundation*, 17(1), 31–46. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0892-1997\(03\)00029-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0892-1997(03)00029-8)
- Suzuki, S. (1970). *Zen mind beginner's mind*. Shambhala.
- Talvitie, R. (2023). *Muuttuva säveltäjä: Kohti dialogisia käytäntöjä*. Sibelius Academy of the University of Arts.
- Taruskin, R. (2010). *Music in the late twentieth century*. Oxford University Press.
- Tett, G. (2015). *The silo effect: Why putting everything in its place isn't such a bright idea*. Little Brown.
- Thomson, K. (2021). World in motion ensemble: My professional journey with refugee musicians and music university students. In H. Westerlund & H. Gaunt (Eds.), *Expanding Professionalism in Music and Higher Music Education: A Changing Game* (pp. 129–142). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003108337-11>
- Walshe, J. (2016, January). *The new discipline*. Borealis festival. www.borealisfestival.no/2016/the-new-discipline-4/
- Westerlund, H., & Gaunt, H. (Eds.) (2021). *Expanding professionalism in music and higher music education: A changing game*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003108337>
- Westerlund, H., Hahn, M., & Björk, C. (2024). Music schools as forerunners towards collaborative professionalism. In M. Hahn, C. Björk, & H. Westerlund (Eds.), *Music schools in changing societies. How collaborative professionalism can transform music education* (pp. 12-29). (ISME Global Perspectives in Music Education). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003365808-2>
- Westerlund, H., & López-Íñiguez, G. (2024). Professional education toward protean careers in music? Bigenerational Finnish composers' pathways and livelihoods in changing ecosystems. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 46(1), 66-79
- Westerlund, H. & Karlsen, S. (2013). Designing the rhythm for academic community life: Learning partnerships and collaboration in music education doctoral studies. In H. Gaunt & H. Westerlund (Eds.), *Collaborative learning in higher music education* (pp. 87–99). Ashgate.
- Young, K., & Kenny, A. (2023). Music, memory and migration at night: Relational ways of knowing through arts-based collaborations. In *Sonic signatures: Music, migration and the city at night* (pp. 19-37). Intellect Ltd.