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Guro Gravem Johansen

Ingesund Music College, University of Karlstad, Sweden
Contact corresponding author: Guro.G.Johansen@nmh.no

Sanna Kivijärvi

Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki, and Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Marie-Helene Zimmerman Nilsson

University West, Sweden

Danielle Shannon Treacy

Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland

As 2024 is relentlessly moving towards its closure, global headlines remain dominated by political tensions, wars and what seems to be an incremental hostility in the public discourse. This same year the ISME conference was hosted in the Nordic region by Finland, with *Advocacy for sustainability in music education* as its overarching theme. A common notion of sustainability is to maintain or preserve practices or resources over time to ensure their access and availability for future generations. Music education scholars working with sustainability highlight that this requires active work and critical reflection beyond safeguarding a *status quo*, in order to engage responsibly with a changing world. Cecilia Björk (2024, p. 4) writes: “As music educators and music education researchers, we share the responsibility for renewed efforts, renewed hope, and transformative action.”

Taking such a stance may require asking critical questions about how experiences of meaningful teaching, learning, and engagement with music – or with other people through music – can be maintained, supported, renewed, and ensured in the future; in changing contexts and communities. Such questions pertain to a myriad of entangled music education practices covered in this volume, such as school music, instrumental tuition, choirs, special music education, music students’ practicum training, and music theatre education;

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from social value systems to individual learning strategies. However, renewing music education requires revisiting enduring questions with new approaches. For example, what kind of competence development is needed for future musicians, and how may we understand central concepts such as musicality and virtuosity when social inclusion and societal engagement are forefronted? What does learning and development mean for music education if it centers goals such as intercultural skills and artistic citizenships? This volume includes nine research articles that contribute in various ways to sustaining music education, by reinforcing the importance of access to music as a source of meaningfulness and hope in difficult times.

Silje Bjørnevoll has studied practicum conversations with preservice music teachers and mentors in Norwegian primary and lower secondary schools. In her article *Navigating between traditional and innovative music teaching*, she describes how the selection of content and repertoire is negotiated in a continuum from traditional to innovative approaches. She shows how content selection can be renewed when preservice music teachers are given more space in the practicum situation.

In the article *Cultivating ambiguities within higher music education*, Cecilia Ferm Almqvist and Linn Hentschel address the increasing expectations for societal participation towards classical vocal students. Through their investigation of a collaborative project between opera students and music theatre students with special needs, the authors identified contradicting views among students and teachers regarding the current and future expectations of voice students' competence development.

Competence development is at the core of this volume's third article, *Healthy musical identities and new virtuosities* written by Raymond MacDonald and Suvi Saarikallio. Their "humble manifesto" proposes new conceptualisations of musicality and virtuosity that take into account how music education can be more inclusive and diverse, empowering a broader group of people to participate in music-making than who is traditionally seen as capable to pursue music.

Student empowerment is central in the article *I'll figure it out myself!* by Anne Cecilie Røsjø Kvammen and Johanne Karen Hagen, which returns to the theme of musical theatre. In their study, a group of musical theatre students were presented with tools from Alexander Technique to enhance embodied learning. Through action research methodology the researchers found that these tools increased students' awareness and connections between thoughts, body and environment.

Katarzyna Julia Leikvoll explored possibilities and constraints to enhancing musical literacy in her article *Bruk av komponering og improvisasjon i instrumentallundervisning på kulturskolen [Using composition and improvisation in instrumental teaching]*. Despite instrumental teachers' responses to an online survey indicating that the majority of respondents believe that improvisation and composition are an important part of instrumental teaching, few of them reported using these activities in practice.

In the article *Peripatetic music teachers' experiences of primary school music teaching*, Ingrid Lauten focuses on peripatetic music teachers (PMT) on being insourced into primary schools. Through her analysis of interview material, Lauten shows aspects of underlying social or power structures related to classroom management, teaching, and teacher professionalism. Here the transition from instrumental to classroom teacher appears to be particularly challenging in combination, with the teachers' experienced lack of time.

In *Global artistic citizenship*, Nathan Riki Thomson focuses on gaining a better understanding of placing interculturalism and community engagement as central elements in higher music education. Findings from interviews and surveys with students in intercultural projects show that these learning environments impacted students' sense of global artistic citizenship, and enhanced their ability to create a career and engage with the changing world. He concludes by arguing for continuously re-imagining institutional structures.

Silent score reading by Maria Timoshenko-Nilsson, Erkki Huovinen, and Marcus Nyström explores the score reading strategies of choral conductors. The researchers conducted two interconnected studies addressing the conductors' explicit conceptions about score reading and their silent-reading strategies, and the combined findings reveal several script-like cognitive strategies among the conductors, where individual cognitive orientations also influence their processes.

Ida Knutsson reports a survey among classical instrumental teachers in Swedish art and music schools in the article '*It all depends on the pupils*'. The survey was designed to understand teachers' perceptions of group teaching in a practice that traditionally emphasises individual, one-to-one tuition. Knutsson found that while reluctance towards group teaching remained, with teachers generally preferring individual teaching, attitudes towards group teaching were slightly more positive than expected.

References

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