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## Music schools as forerunners towards collaborative professionalism

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### Introduction

The central tenet of this book is that in order to remain sustainable and relevant for contemporary societies, instrumental and vocal teaching, regardless of the context in which it takes place, must be recognised as a phenomenon that builds on *collaboration*. Supported by examples from many countries, we argue that multilevel collaboration is a vital part of how music educators and music schools can respond to wider societal concerns in ways that improve educational quality, reorganise deeply rooted value hierarchies and established practice where necessary, and expand our understanding of what professional responsibility means for music educators in twenty-first-century societies. Although collaboration is not a new idea in music education, we identify a need for a deeper and more widespread *collaborative turn* in music professionalism to allow teachers and institutions in the field to engage in processes of improving societies musically while also making them better places in which to live.

Why, then, is collaboration important in today's music education? Whether we look at the literature on cultural change, organisational development, or educational leadership, or economic value and business models, researchers now tend to highlight the contrast between an ethos of collaboration and a commonly held myth that may in fact prevent achievement: the myth of success emerging from the "Star Culture" (Rosen, 2007). Many elements of Star Culture can indeed be identified in the music field and its educational institutions. Star Cultures "reward people for competing with colleagues" and are sustained by a belief that one self-sufficient, tough individual can achieve enormous success with no help from anybody (p. xi). Conversely, a collaborative culture is one in which people work together towards better practice because they are convinced that across human efforts of different kinds, significant improvement is more likely to happen as a result of sharing and developing knowledge, insight, and skill with others. A collaborative culture "transcends hierarchy, education, field, function and location" (p. 9).

Collaborative culture may be messy and its processes are often full of uncertainties; however, it can transform disciplinary silos, fixed working styles, and stagnated institutional visions better than any top-down leadership. Indeed, collaboration may resemble the muddle of real life more than the logic of the individualistic Star Culture and, importantly, it strengthens human relationships and creates solidarity rather than mutual competition and egoistic individualism. Yet, whilst it is widely recognised that when focusing on specific common problems, professional work in general increasingly involves multilevel collaboration in teams (e.g., Elkjaer et al., 2021), collaboration and interest in public concerns are still rare in the field of the arts, and perhaps in music education in particular. It has long been claimed that the arts are “pervaded by anxiety about cuts in funding for individual artists; selection mechanisms that keep radical or disturbing work out of contention; and the perceived competition between quality and accessibility” (Ellison, 2008, p. 466) and that gatekeeping is more characteristic and often legitimised as a “normal” part of the professional “game” in the arts than a concern for the common good in open dialogue with society. Therefore, we aim to consider various possibilities for collaboration within and beyond established workplaces in music schools towards a collaborative culture and collaborative professionalism.

In this chapter, we acknowledge a distinction between *professional collaboration* and *collaborative professionalism*. Professional collaboration refers more generally to work that colleagues do together, whereas collaborative professionalism entails a more fundamental understanding that professionals who have similar concerns and sense of responsibility actively share work, inquiry, challenges, and dialogue in a culture of mutual trust with the aim of co-creating better professional practices (Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2018a, pp. 4, 15). In other words, collaborative professionalism is about co-creation and collective responsibility; it does not refer simply to occasional or random collaborative projects, although such projects can effectively support the co-creation of collaborative professionalism. In music education, advancing the concept of collaborative professionalism represents more than a commonplace recognition of the value of working with others; it is a call for *a groundbreaking collaborative turn in music professionalism*: a shift that reaches towards the power of collective effort and recognises the importance of shared goals, values, and responsibilities in a changing society, and is open for new partnerships that can transcend individual and institutional egos through working towards emerging co-constructed ideas, practical solutions, and larger visions.

While collaborative professionalism is not necessarily easy, as a fundamental starting point for developing contemporary professionalism in the music field it entails a promise for renewing the relationship between music schools and society, namely the possibility for professionals to assume a stronger

stance of responsibility when facing societal challenges. Collaboration in various forms involving students, teachers, different institutions, schools, networks, music universities, and associations as well as professional groups and representatives of a variety of art forms can significantly transform the perspective of teachers, students, and an entire music school organisation and with it, the wider cultural life of society. An institutional and educational culture that has been built by working together towards shared goals and expanding visions becomes strong since it is not dependent on a few individuals who may leave, but is instead supported by a strong grassroots understanding of why joint efforts matter and are worth the time and energy invested. We highlight the potential of music schools to *become and be forerunners of a bottom-up change towards collaborative professionalism* as they recognise the fundamental meaning of social responsibility that is not simply a matter of musical expertise and technical competence but serves the wider public and other stakeholders in various ways.

Leading the reader to envision such practices, we lay the foundation in this chapter for the call to a collaborative turn in music and music education professionalism in general and in music schools in particular. In the disciplinary field of professionalism, we understand music education professions as “positioned as mediators between the state and the citizen, while being accorded particular responsibilities by the state” (Dyrdal Solbrekke & Sugrue, 2011, p. 12). Since professionalism as a concept centres around competencies and work in different occupations, it involves an ethical and moral dimension of responsibility inherent in the “service” towards a community or state (see also Carr, 2000; Minnameier, 2014). Yet this responsibility is changing as society changes and therefore needs to be constantly reconsidered situationally and contextually. In this sense, we see music cultures, music education, and the wider policy goals of national governments as intertwining in the reflexive understanding of music education professionalism. In order to defend our argument, we will first set the stage for the wider societal changes that urge more attention also from music education and music schools. We then outline some of the main features of collaborative professionalism, based on literature in this field, and discuss the consequences of the collaborative turn from the perspective of music schools. We argue that engaging in collaborative efforts among colleagues as well as with other actors and with society at large is not a threat to the integrity of music schools; on the contrary, collaboration and collaborative professionalism can keep these schools both resilient and relevant in changing times, and in this way also strengthen them as institutions.

### **Music schools confronting and responding to societal challenges**

The COVID-19 crisis has been a concrete reminder that music schools cannot withdraw from seemingly distant societal issues but need to engage with

them, perhaps more than ever before. Large-scale world events and continuous societal changes affect the everyday lives of teachers and students and create professional uncertainty and pressure also in music schools and other contexts of music education. Indeed, social scientists have warned for decades that in this era, the once solid structures of institutions will become “liquid” and processual (Bauman, 2007) and professionals will be expected to navigate through various policies, national politics and struggles, and around competing values and ethical stances that may pose simultaneous and conflicting expectations (Vogd, 2017; Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021). These new expectations require that music schools widen the narrow understanding of expert work – the “technical rationality” (Mahon et al., 2020) – towards a view of professionalism which takes into account that professional territories are constantly changing and expanding as new needs emerge. Such concerns are by no means relevant only to music education but are a widely accepted state of affairs in other professional fields, too (Sugrue & Dyrdal Solbrekke, 2011). Professional work, and indeed our understanding of professionalism, has become a field of continuous struggle rather than a clear-cut reality bounded by regulations and laws (Evetts, 2014; Westerlund et al., 2022). This process of fast-paced reconstruction is also expected to be at the heart of professional work in twenty-first-century music schools.

Whilst the pressure for change is recognised around the world, European music schools provide an example *par excellence* of a professional working context in the music field in which service and responsibility to society are not an option, but are rather most often integrated in official legislation and prerequisites for funding. In Europe, music schools have a central role in the publicly funded educational and cultural system that provides instrumental and vocal teaching. This system is also predominantly legislated by national or provincial policies, and therefore cannot be seen just as an independent artistic context or led by market values and demands as private studios might be. The close relationship with public agendas, policies, and national politics creates a connection between how music schools articulate their purposes and their responsibilities within and in relation to a rapidly changing society. The link between music schools and governmental policies means that music schools cannot turn their heads away, but need to *navigate wisely* amid potentially conflicting demands. In other words, whilst this navigation is necessary, it does not follow that each and every demand posed by society must be accepted without collective reflection, without searching for the best alternatives, and without considering the consequences from multiple perspectives. Hence, collaborative negotiation and joint debate must also be placed at the centre of professional work in music schools.

One of the central issues that concerns music schools is how they may, and are able to, respond to new policies suggesting a more active

stance towards inclusion and integration of immigrants (Papademetriou & Benton, 2016; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2014). In Europe, “free movement, migration and asylum have become central ... and will doubtless maintain their salience as key priorities” (Geddes & Scholten, 2016, p. 238). It has become clear that the diversity of cultures and groups in the European population is likely to keep increasing and that music schools will have to align their future visions and strategies with this reality. The historian Rita Chin (2017) describes heterogeneity in European societies as follows:

This diversity is readily apparent in cities, big and small. It is there on the streets and in the subways, visible in countless restaurants and public markets. It is also increasingly manifest in commercial media and mass entertainment ... One can see the shifts, as well, in television programming ... in prominent theatrical productions; or in critically acclaimed cultural performance venues ... There is now a museum devoted to the history of immigration in Paris, as well as a documentation center and museum of migration in Cologne. In politics, too, immigrants are members of the Houses of Lords and Commons; represent constituencies in the Bundestag, the French National Assembly, and European Parliament ... Former colonials, guest workers, refugees, and their descendants, in short, are now woven into virtually every aspect of European public life.

(Chin, 2017, pp. 297–298)

The question is then, how do European music schools reflect this diversity and how can they justify practices without responding to the rapid changes that are taking place everywhere else in society? As Chin (2017) argues, these questions are not distant politics but, with time, become local and domestic with a direct or indirect impact on all societal actors.

As such, the issue of diversity in music education is not a new topic and has most often been conceptualised under the umbrella of multicultural music education. In the 1980s and 1990s, multicultural discourse was already highlighting diversity as a value in cultural life and education, taking the perspective of ethnic rights and the recognition and preservation of difference as a starting point (e.g., Elliott, 1995). This approach later faced critique, since it also tends to support segregational ideas and justify geographically and ethnically grounded “us” and “them” divisions (Westerlund & Karlsen, 2017) – a view that has immediate relevance in the context of music schools that have historically been grounded in the Western classical music traditions. Chin (2017), along with many others, argues that multiculturalism understands each culture to be operating according to its own specific principles, resulting in a view in which “the

logical focus of politics became the championing of differential rights for different groups” (p. 292).

Accordingly, it could then be suggested that music schools mainly serve those who are interested in learning the classical music traditions of Europe instead of constituting educational contexts that reflect their surrounding hybrid societies (but cf. Coric, this volume). In everyday use, multiculturalism can be underpinned by a fixed, ethnocentric understanding of musical identities that ignores the change that takes place when connections between the previous life and the new one are lost, in immigrants’ lives, for instance (Karlsen & Westerlund, 2010). Importantly, it also seems to fail to steer music educators towards constructing *shared* principles and new cultural practices that require collaboration and co-construction and hence do not imitate tradition. As Chin (2017) and many others argue, multiculturalism may end up serving as “an engine of homogeneity, emphasizing cohesion and sameness within ethnic groups” (p. 293) and simultaneously preventing the co-construction and collaboration that children and young people are, after all, expected to be able to enact elsewhere in society.

For music schools, an unreflected, “geographically” oriented and ethnicity-based multicultural logic can thus provide a presumably legitimate escape from complex diversity politics. In other words, although the aim of recognising the cultural rights of various groups can be supported, incentives to organise institutional practices around ethnic culture can be counterproductive in terms of responding to immigrants’ or anyone else’s needs as they “freeze those very identities and communities in place” and “prove both isolating and divisive in actual practice” (Chin, 2017, p. 293). From the perspective of music schools, there is therefore a need for a more complex politics of diversity in music education (Westerlund et al., 2021) that recognises that integration and co-existence require *mutual change* from all participants, including music schools, and that the question of increasing societal diversity is not simply a matter of musical genres, traditions, and already constructed musical identities. The politics of diversity recognises that music education may indeed sustain the “opportunity gap” (Putnam, 2015) but can also inversely *provide* opportunities for inclusion for children and youth from less advantaged backgrounds, for instance by taking the specific situation of the children and youth in question into account (see Galmiche et al., this volume). In addition, it recognises the need for new (hybrid) musical identities beyond any assumed and fixed ones, given the hybrid nature of musical cultures themselves and the dialogical ways in which new practices and identities are co-constructed.

Some reports indicate that in many countries, the student population of conservatoires and music schools mainly consists of students from upper-middle-class families living in the wealthiest parts of urban communities (Perkins, 2013; Tregear et al., 2016; Vismanen et al., 2016; Wright, 2015).

These reports show that financial limitations and a lack of cultural and social capital most likely obstruct free and equal access to music school education. Generally, this gives children from wealthy and educated families better conditions and access to music school education, and causes education to be largely inherited, as many music education researchers have pointed out (Conaghan, this volume; Väkevä et al., 2022; Wright, 2015). In European countries, the students of music schools typically represent the white, middle-class majority; yet it is seldom mentioned that this may be due to various sociocultural obstacles that ethnic minorities are facing, rather than a consequence of “natural selection” (see Galmiche et al., this volume; Väkevä et al., 2022). The reason for this imbalance may be, for instance, that the children’s parents lack knowledge of the educational options in the country (Väkevä et al., 2017), or that immigrants have had experiences of racism that make them choose their social interactions and engagements carefully.

Moreover, because music schools are the main institutions for music students preparing for university (Rehorska, 2018), the problem of unequal access may have far-reaching implications for the future student population in higher music education and the diversity of future music teachers and musicians generally (Hahn, this volume). It is therefore the task of professionals working in European music schools to become more reflective about the hidden mechanisms that may sustain unequal selection of this kind and to act against the exclusion that follows. They must address the issues of wider inclusion in their strategies, as requested by the European policies (Europe, 2020, strategy; Vision Europe Summit, 2016) and also consider including not just popular music but also folk traditions and music cultures outside the European context in their educational programmes.

The large-scale demographic changes in European countries we have described above are just some of the aspects that shake professional understandings of what matters in the work of a music educator, and also create a tension between what is considered as “normal” and what society and policymakers might expect from music schools. Outside music, researchers on professions and professionalism agree that “[c]ontemporary conditions differ profoundly from those of the industrial economy that prevailed when classical definitions of professions were being articulated” (Sugrue & Dyrdal Solbrekke, 2011, p. 2). Current conditions, Sugrue and Dyrdal Solbrekke argue,

may alter the very meaning of work and one’s dedication to a profession and its moral and societal obligations ... [and] the cumulative impact of these forces of change strongly suggest (*sic*) that it is delusional to persist with a view that social structures, role models and values are “given” or “self-evident”.

Thus, teachers, leaders, and musicians working in music schools cannot perceive their working contexts only as places for transmitting the “European heritage” to the next generation, but need to integrate concerns for social responsibility into their professional transformation and futures. As the chapters of this book illustrate, the quality of the work conducted in music schools can no longer be reduced simply to musical quality, but needs to be integrated, negotiated, and balanced with multiple quality criteria (Laes et al., 2021). This is a situation which fundamentally affects music school teachers’ and leaders’ present and future activities, their position in society, and their experiences and understandings of themselves as professionals.

### **Multilevel collaboration as a strategy towards collaborative professionalism**

In this book we see collaboration as a way to address the many criteria for *what counts as good work and excellence in professional practice* in times when music teachers in music schools, as any professionals, are also expected to develop their working contexts responsibly from multiple perspectives. By addressing the need for music schools to engage with wider societal concerns, we recognise the potential of *multilevel collaboration* as a creative and open approach. Although individuals may have an important role in initiating and championing novel ideas, most of the chapters in this book show that collaborative practice requires multiple partners, multilevel co-constructions, and constant processes of co-development. In other words, collaborative practice will never be perfect, fixed, and final. As Hargreaves and O’Connor (2018b) argue, multilevel collaboration is ideally “embedded in the culture and life of the school, where educators actively care for and have solidarity with each other ... as they pursue their challenging work together” (p. 3). A collaborative educational culture as a result of collaborative professionalism is neither only about making teaching and learning music more effective nor about increasing collective forms of music-making, such as orchestras and chamber music ensembles. Rather, it explicitly contributes “to the improvement of the wider society” (Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2018a, p. 15).

Since a collaborative culture places *social responsibility* at the forefront of the activities in current troubled societies, it can challenge old professional boundaries and assumptions of what the purpose of professional institutions could be. However, research outside the music field shows that when collaboration, community, and teamwork are consciously enhanced, the new collaborative culture can provide benefits such as “greater efficiency, better results, moral consolation, enhanced motivation, commitment to change, worker retention, diversity of perspective, and tenacity in the face of obstacles or disappointments” (Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2018a, p. 12).

A collaborative educational culture brings social responsibility to the surface of the functions of the institution; a shift that requires mutual trust, sharing, and co-creating but also space for challenging and critiquing, debating, inclusion and empowering (p. 15).

Importantly, we do not imply that collaborative professionalism should compromise musical and artistic criteria. A collaborative culture does not dilute musical values but creatively and imaginatively integrates other values into professional work as well (Laes et al., 2021). Thus, a collaborative culture distances itself from the old value hierarchies (such as intrinsic vs. extrinsic or musical vs. extra-musical values) by seeing musical activities and education as parts of complex and heterogeneous societal and social processes, as intertwined with wider societal and life processes, and also as able to contribute to these processes in multiple positive ways. Collaboration pushes forward innovative pedagogical practices and supports and strengthens joint institutional development and quality enhancement (Hofecker & Hahn, 2016).

However, it is commonly recognised among researchers that a collaborative culture and professional collaboration do not emerge spontaneously, but need to be “cultivated ... facilitated ... [and] nurtured” (Rosen, 2007, p. 218). Deep, genuine collaboration is not easy, but hard reconstructive work, particularly if an individualistic Star Culture is accepted as the norm. In order for a collaborative turn to take place, collaborative professionalism needs to become a fundamental part of the conscious self-understanding of music school teachers, leaders, and other staff members in their professional contexts, as well as of the students and their families in terms of educational objectives.

The basic idea of collaborative professionalism resonates with earlier research on collaborative learning in higher music education (e.g., Gaunt & Westerlund, 2013) and studies on the great benefits of learning with and from peers (e.g., Ardila-Mantilla et al., 2015; Björk, 2016; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2004; Pucihar & Pance, in this volume; Westerlund, 2006) as well as, for instance, collaboration as the grounding principle in children’s creativity (e.g., Giglio, 2015). The educational benefits of collaborative practice have been discussed in the context of doctoral studies in music education (Westerlund & Karlsen, 2013) and composition education (Partti & Westerlund, 2013). The creation and nurturing of musical communities of practice has been posited as a gateway to wide-ranging music education for all pupils and as means of connecting musical practices to society (Ardila-Mantilla, 2016); yet the notion of learning through participation in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) has gained its popularity mainly outside Western classical music pedagogical practices (but cf. Ardila-Mantilla et al., 2015). For instance, some music schools still organise teaching and learning largely according to the one-to-one

master–apprentice model in which competition between students, rather than collaboration, is common. Such practices can perpetuate the “me” rather than “we” culture as a rigid organisation of teaching hours in the tradition of individual lessons, thus limiting teachers’ possibilities not only for collaborative peer-learning for their students, but also collaboration between the teachers (see Björk, this volume). Collaboration between teachers may be encouraged but is often unpaid work, creating a clear value hierarchy between different teacher tasks. In contrast to silo practices or a Star Culture, collaborative professionalism emphasises conscious work towards creating better professional practice *together* (Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2018a, p. 4). Collaborative professionalism thus requires that music school teachers and music schools as institutions – and their partners – recognise and are conscious of how individualism is manifest in professional practices and what its negative consequences may be. However, as described by Hahn (this volume), there is no contradiction between collaborative professionalism and a concern for individual educational pathways; on the contrary, dialogue and shared responsibility may be precisely what is required in order to support each student’s needs and aspirations.

### **Collaborative professionalism in music schools**

In general, the culture of professional education after the Second World War has been said to emphasise increased narrow specialisation which tends to “privilege expert or esoteric knowledge at the expense of moral and societal responsibilities” (Dyrdal Solbrekke & Sugrue, 2011, p. 16). In music, these technical specialisation and specialist solo-worker models may still be recognisable in instrumental and vocal teaching and learning and reinforced by the Star Culture of higher music education. Traditional institutional sociocultural contexts (orchestras, opera, concert halls, churches, and educational contexts including music schools) have shaped the understanding of the criteria for specialised musical expertise, related professional education, and the occupational future that the education is designed for. At the same time, the established ways of working tend to produce professional fragmentation, 2011, specialised occupational territories, and institutional “silos” that do not collaborate with each other (Gaunt & Westerlund, 2013). It is therefore necessary to reflect on what Star Culture might produce and what it prevents in music school contexts.

Since today’s professions are by definition geared towards being “‘collectively oriented’ rather than ‘self-oriented’” (Dyrdal Solbrekke & Sugrue, 2011, p. 13), the solutions to emerging problems should also be sought together. Professionalism in general is therefore conceptually seen as exercised *with* people rather than done *to* them, as Cribb and Gewirtz (2015) argue:

Working collaboratively is often defended on the grounds of cost-effectiveness ... But the fundamental ethical driver behind these changes is the recognition that people – whether “professionals” or “clients” – are equally important and equally deserving of respect.

(p. 125)

However, initiating collaborative professionalism reaches even further and requires more than the exchange of ideas or respect of the “other”: it requires new kinds of professional reflexivity about the existing work culture (the social structures, scheduling principles, patterns of interaction, etc.) that may perpetuate the institutional silos and safe professional boundaries while effectively preventing new, even surprising collaborative initiatives from emerging. In such processes, music schools become what the organisational researcher Peter Senge (2006) has called “learning institutions”: organisations “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together” (p. 3).

### *Learning to co-work*

Multilevel collaboration in music schools can be understood differently depending on how deeply it permeates and characterises the practice. According to the seminal work of Andy Hargreaves in this field, collaborative professionalism needs to be understood as more than only talking, sharing, and reflecting together, since it points to the need of professionals to concretely “labor and work together” (Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2018a, p. 4). A collaborative culture “permeates the whole school or system, not simply a set of meetings or task-driven teams” (p. 15). Moreover, it requires willingness to work together and create value in cooperation with others. It is a culture in which the “‘we’ and ‘our’ exist only when the consequences of combined action are perceived and become an object of desire and effort”, as the educational philosopher John Dewey explained (Dewey LW 2, p. 330). The heart of the ethos of collaborative professionalism is, as Hargreaves and O’Connor (2018a) put it, “*our* students”, not “*my* students” (p. 15).

Furthermore, collaborative professionalism does not aim at developing general models but rather at producing rich and helpful local solutions. Based on their experience in different countries of how collaborative professionalism can be enhanced, Hargreaves and O’Connor (2018a) recommend that educators should create collaborative inquiries in which students are turned “into change makers with their teachers” (see Tuovinen,

this volume); where teachers use technology “where and when it has a positive impact on collaborative professionalism”; and “build more collaboration across schools and systems, including and especially in broader environments of competition” (p. 9). Moreover, collaborative professionals should make efforts to “keep evolving the complexity of collaborative professionalism beyond conversations or meetings to deeper forms of dialogue, feedback and inquiry” also soliciting “critical feedback from peers inside and outside one’s own community” (p. 9). Thus, collaboration towards shared goals in music schools does not necessarily imply like-mindedness, nor does it require the members of the working community to be similar. Instead, it encourages finding the strengths of the individuals for the benefit of the community. Collaboration is not fixed but makes space for the unexpected and unique to further feed collaborative processes. Indeed, as Rosen (2007) argues, collaborative processes tend to be characterised by a degree of “collaborative chaos” in which “the unstructured exchange of ideas to create value” is given space (p. 12).

Although collaboration requires extra effort and may also involve tensions, ruptures, and disagreements, it is still a worthwhile pursuit, since it can be a way of mobilising collective efforts towards aims that the involved partners could not reach on their own (see Hakkarainen, 2013, pp. 12, 18). In addition, while collaboration often requires a great deal of negotiation, it may also be particularly rewarding on an emotional level, adding intensity to work and learning. When necessary change becomes part of everyday life in multiple places and at multiple levels, people need each other. Collaboration develops what researchers have called *networked expertise*, arising from “sustained collaborative efforts to solve problems and build knowledge together” (p. 18). Furthermore, it has been suggested that such sustained efforts in teams, communities of practice and networks serve as locations for novelty and innovation, since innovation also requires collaborative activity and knowledge-creating communities (Hakkarainen, 2013, p. 19).

### ***Leadership towards collaborative professionalism***

It is clear that collaborative professionalism also requires *new kinds of institutional leadership* in music schools and music education institutions. Collaborative culture is not simply achieved through scheduled meetings, but can occur through spontaneous and informal interactions on the fly. According to Rosen (2007), collaborative leadership is “less about individual moods and styles and more about guiding team members, listening to their concerns, and welcoming input” (p. 219). Collaborative leaders in schools strive for “the perfect balance between inspiring stakeholders to collaborate and co-constructing building and classroom-level goals”

and they do this in a highly transparent way (DeWitt, 2017, p. 173). This requires leaders to trust others and build trust within their institution and beyond, and to have the courage to take risks since there is no certainty of success and possible mistakes will be visible for everyone.

However, according to DeWitt (2017), collaborative leadership in schools always aims at learning for students and must therefore “enhance the instruction of teachers, build deep relationships with all stakeholders, and deepen our learning together” (pp. 3–4). If and when music schools are led as sociocultural professional workplaces rather than expert silos for exclusive and individualist learning, it becomes possible and crucial to identify how “different kinds of work arrangements and relationships lead to not only an overall enhancement of worker competencies and stocks of knowledge but organizational capabilities to produce integrated solutions responsive to evolving problem situations” (Marsick, 2014, p. 1). Collaborative leadership thus requires “walking in the shoes of others and inviting others to walk in your shoes” (Rosen, 2007, p. 220). It may require relentless patience, and it cannot be forced. DeWitt (2017) therefore suggests that leaders should be role models for students and teachers, and collaborate more than negotiate or regulate (pp. 180–181). Consequently, leadership within the school is another essential factor for bottom-up processes and innovations, while national or regional governance of the whole music education system also has significant influence – it can support music schools in creating new and innovative collaborative practices or make them difficult or even impossible. Thus, music education governance must always consider the individual music school as a pedagogical unit with its individual context and environment, just as the individual music school must respect the regulations and measures of national governance authorities in its practice and organisation. In the best case, governance and leadership collaborate and co-create a joint vision and path for more inclusive and sustainable music education, learning from each other in the process through collaborative professionalism (Hahn, 2015, p. 219).

### **Concluding remarks**

In this chapter we have argued that collaboration has the potential to be a significant strategy for addressing the many criteria for what counts as good work and excellence in professional practice in times when professionals, also in music education, are expected to develop their working contexts responsibly. Quality in music schools can no longer be reduced to musical quality only, but needs to be integrated with other important values. However, this does not mean that everything must be changed. The central challenge for music schools may then be to strengthen their

ability to see the connection between various needs and even the smallest actions that teachers and institutions can perform in response to the great societal crises of our time, without feeling powerless and hopeless and without demolishing practices that are worth saving as they are. Hence, with support from recent research and as illustrated by many practical case examples in this book, we have argued that advancing collaborative professionalism as a wider understanding of what belongs to the realm of professional responsibilities might become an essential dimension of instrumental and vocal teaching in music schools in the twenty-first century.

Collaborative professionalism, as well as the lack of it, can be seen and experienced in very concrete and simple situations. Even music played by students in music schools is to a great degree presented in public spaces, as recitals and concert performances are part of music school education. Therefore, music school education can be considered as visible to the public, representing values and relationships. Education does not happen behind closed doors, and many initiatives try to put music school students and their music in places where they are seen by a broader audience. In this respect, music schools can be forerunners in society in exemplifying collaboration in their activities; they can “perform” collaboration in ways that many other societal actors cannot. We therefore truly believe that a collaborative turn towards a more widespread collaborative professionalism can enable music schools to act as game changers in making contemporary societies not just musically better but better and more sustainable places to live.

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