

## NORDPLUS APPLICATION 2008

### 1. Significance of the Nordic Network for Music Education

Music education (musikkpedagogikk) focuses all aspects of relations between music, individuals and society, and as an academic field it embraces artistic, scientific as well as practical perspectives representing different institutional contexts and practises. During the last few decades, an academic community has developed as a result of systematic work with undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students. In this process, academic co-operation between countries has played an important role, and our Nordplusnetwork *Nordic Network for Music Education*, which targeted music teachers who were studying music education at masters or graduate levels, has made a great contribution to this competence-building process since 1992.

(<http://www.hib.no/studier/internasjonalisering/program/musikkpedagogisknettverk.htm>).

The results of the Nordic co-operation are now slowly emerging and seen, for instance, as a growing interest of the international parties and number of joint research projects. For the Nordic institutions to be able to continue developing a strong Nordic identity and also make even stronger the international contributions, sharing academic staff who distributes ideas and draws upon each others competencies is vital. The role of the Nordplus network with its organisation of joint courses is irreplaceable for several reasons.

Firstly, the Nordic Network for Music Education **utilises effectively the academic differences** between the Nordic countries. Music education, seen as a scientific area, is highly interdisciplinary, and encompasses and draws on numerous other disciplines (e.g. philosophy, general education, anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, psychology, natural science, linguistics, ethnology, and history). While there are only a few academic positions in music education in each of the Nordic institutions, sharing the existent expertise becomes crucial. For instance, there is a strong German phenomenological emphasis within the Danish music educational community; Finland has its strengths in the philosophy of music education and ethnography; and in Iceland, the strengths are in psychologically oriented quantitative research. Nordic Network for Music Education offer access to different kinds of theories and methodologies to develop interdisciplinary understanding of the field. Through its annual

intensive courses, it has not only aimed to deepen the education of music teachers but also inspire them to continue further into research studies later on toward a doctoral degree.

Secondly, the Nordic Network for Music Education has an important **financial impact** in the field. Music education is requested and challenged not only for the reason that music is one of the most popular leisure time activities in modern society, but also because there is a growing need for music education at all levels. Music education in general, and the education of music educators in particular, is highly specialised and competence-demanding in nature, requiring more resources than teacher education in other fields. Master studies in all Nordic countries are being revised these years according to the Bologna process, and the Nordic Network for music education provides an important instrument for meeting this educational challenge.

Thirdly, the network **strengthens the international competitiveness** of Nordic music education. Despite the research competences being distributed among the Nordic countries, the Nordic community of music education at large has a distinct identity that is recognised as one by the international colleagues. For instance, when it comes to research within the area of learning music in informal contexts (e.g., through participating in rock bands, joining on-line music communities, or attending music festivals), the Nordic countries are now at the leading edge of the field. In formal music education, the student-centred education dominates both the practice and the theoretical perspectives: pupils are encouraged and allowed to bring ‘their own’ music into the classroom, and there exists great knowledge and skills concerning implementing composition and improvisation as natural parts of formal music education. As music education in many other countries is in severe crisis and has stagnated with pre-established methods and repertoires, the innovative practices in Nordic schools have raised a growing international interest. One of the underlying long-term aims of the Nordic co-operation is that students in music education become more aware of this ‘Nordic strand’ of music education to be able to take the leading international position in the field in the future.

## **2. Thematic emphasis of the network courses in 2008-2010**

The Nordic identity of music education rests on a strong, joint notion of **democracy** that emphasises openness, inclusion and welfare-for-all, among others, instead of concentrating only on professional music studies or so-called “highbrow culture”. Ideas about democracy in

education are rooted not least in a very strong continental tradition of Didaktik and Bildung (Nielsen, 2007) . Indicating the changes of education and culture in the late modernity, the notion of democracy in music education is also one of the most recent themes in the international agenda, e.g. in Canada and USA. Authors have explored how changes in societies' macro structures, related to political agendas, have affected the development of curricula also in our fields and the conditions for conducting research (e.g. Woodford 2005). Moreover, attempts have been made to investigate democracy on the micro level through looking into particular formal and informal music educational practices (e.g. Green 2002). A number of writers in the field of philosophy of music education have investigated the notion of democracy in the profession in the era of late modernity (e.g. Woodford 2005; Väkevä & Westerlund 2007). The Nordic Network for Music Education aims to explore the topic of democracy in music education from different angles (see below) through the coming three-year period (2008-2010). The following larger questions will direct the research interests of the network: What does democracy in music education mean in our contexts and how is the 'Nordic model' of democracy manifested in practices of music education in our societies? What kind of hindrances are there in the field of music, in particular, that prevent democratic practices to take place? How may the democratic processes change in the future?

As a sub theme for democracy, the topics also enlighten **lifelong learning**, not only from the students' own perspective regarding how they can continue to develop and grow as educators and musicians, but also from a more general perspective: what are the conditions for lifelong learning of music in formal as well as informal contexts?

The main theme of the three-year cycle within the Nordic Network for Music Education is '**Democracy in music education from a Nordic perspective**'. By exploring further aspects of this larger topic, each year will have a more specific sub-theme. These sub-themes are 1) '**Globalisation and identity in music education**', 2) '**Social justice and inclusion in music education**', and 3) '**Power relations in music education**'. Below follows a description of each sub-theme together with suggested topics for keynotes and keynote speakers.

### **3. Organisation of resources in network courses in 2008-2010**

To construct the 'Nordic identity' of the music education community, the lecturers of the Nordic Network for Music Education will mainly be chosen from the network institutions.

However, for each of the three years we will also invite a keynote speaker from outside the Nordic context. This will allow us to relate more strongly to the international discussion on democracy in music education and negotiate our own views and practices within the wider international field. Each main keynote lecture will be followed by responding keynotes, which intend to initiate discussions and make possible tensions visible to the students. In addition to these keynote lectures, the students will participate in panel discussions and workshops. They will also have their own presentations based on their master's thesis in process. These presentations will be further commented by using resources found within the network, such as doctoral students. Besides introducing the students to the academic seminar tradition, the purpose is to encourage in attending international conferences. The official language of the courses is English to fully include the Finnish, Icelandic and Baltic participants as well as the international guest speakers in addition to prepare the students for wider international communication.

#### **4. Publications following from the network activities**

The students involved in the Nordic Network for Music Education will be encouraged to publish and share their papers on a web page provided by the coordinating institution, Bergen University College ([www.hib.no](http://www.hib.no)) after participating the intensive course. The commentators' contributions will also be available on this site. The keynote lectures of the courses will be published in the Finnish Journal of Music Education. The participating students have the possibility for publishing course reports in the Ajankohtaista/Recent activities -section in the journal. The Finnish Journal of Music education is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes research of music education in Finnish, Swedish and English languages.

#### **5. Financial plans**

Keynote lectures with speakers from network institutions, panel discussions and workshops have been recurring activities within the Nordic Network for Music Education, and will demand similar financial resources as granted in previous years. Whenever possible, the use of international keynote speakers will be connected to visits at one of the network institutions prior to and/or after the intensive course to share the travel and accommodation expenses. Some extra grants may, however, be necessary. The internet publishing of students' papers

will be taken care by the coordinating institution, Bergen University College. However, some extra resources may be needed for administrating the web page.

## **COURSE PLAN 2008-2010: DEMOCRACY IN MUSIC EDUCATION FROM A NORDIC PERSPECTIVE**

### **2008: Globalisation and identity in music education**

Globalisation and the cultural pluralism that follows from it, challenges the traditional view of identity construction in general, but also in music education in particular. What kinds of identities are allowed or encouraged to develop in music education, and how the challenges and problems that follow from pluralism are to be solved, are questions possible to explore in the light of the concept of democracy. Align with the notion of maintaining and developing parallel and multiple identities, we wish to examine matters related to national, musical, gender, ethnic and religious identity and music in education. We will also discuss an identity of 'professional music educator'. Suggestions for keynotes are as follows:

- Aspects of identity in late modernity – a general view
- The 'professional music educator'
- Nordic music education vs. global ideas of what music education should strive towards
- Globalisation and the increase of popular music
- The question of authenticity in music
- Historical vs. trendy – the conservatory tradition and the relation to pop music

### **2009: Social justice and inclusion in music education**

Perspectives of social justice are relevant, not only in terms of democracy as such, but also in terms of various dimensions of music education when dealing with pedagogical choices, interactions with students and the selection of curriculum content. Central questions are for instance: Whose music counts? What educational and musical ways of knowing are legitimate? Which musical roles take precedence? The answers to these questions signalise values and assumptions about justice, equity and fairness, and regulate who is included in, or excluded from, music educational contexts. Moreover, matters of inclusion are an important part of the Nordic democratic educational tradition. Suggestions for topics are:

- Music education and class
- The role of historical national aspects in a situational ‘post-modern curriculum’
- Special needs in music education
- Students’ music versus teachers’ music
- Social justice and the curricula in formal music education
- The social construction of musical talent – are there some kind of unconscious exclusion built into our music educational practice?

### **2010: Power relations in music education**

As most professional arenas, music education is a field of power negotiations. However, this is rarely made visible or discussed within the profession itself. To raise the participating students’ and teachers’ consciousness in this regard we will expose them to various theoretical conceptions of power and discuss power relations within the field connected to aspects such as gender, queer perspective, teacher-student interactions, and to the power that researchers themselves may possess. Suggestions for topics are:

- Discourse and power – the Foucault tradition
- Distinctions and fields in a Bourdieu understanding
- Music education and gender
- Thinking about music education from a queer perspective
- Teachers’ authority – a myth? Thoughts concerning power in master-apprentice relationships
- Research as power