

“There Must Be Musical Joy”

An Ethnography of a Norwegian Music School

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(ABSTRACT)

This study seeks to discuss issues and practices as found among three musicians, their classrooms, rehearsals and performances in a music school in Asker, Norway. The issues explored are more generally ‘Western’ than specifically Norwegian.

The main topic centers on emotional dimensions in musical contexts where people actively play musical instruments and/or sing. ‘Working’ musical contexts are marked by participants who approximate each others’ developmental levels and skills, physically, cognitively and emotionally. They are characterized by people who are able and willing to tap into musical as well as human inner resources and share those with students, other musicians and audiences.

Musical joy is a Norwegian expression that I borrow to describe the essential element in ‘working’ musical contexts. The nature of these emotional nuances are explored as physical movement, tension between unfocused and focused sound, and expanded consciousness.

Musical phenomena observed in Norwegian contexts are discussed in terms of cognitive categorization processes that tend to confirm the social construction of musical genres, institutions, instruments and musicians. Cognitive processes as well as emotional dimensions such as musical joy and talent may be parts of innate capacities that are then constructed in social interactions throughout life.

Observations at the Norwegian music school confirm that traditional conservatory practices combined with ensemble experiences are effective in enhancing instrumental and vocal skills. These practices are costly and difficult to implement as part of a ‘music for all’ philosophy in Western societies where art music is peripheral to everyday practice. I suggest that value in music be expanded to include different musical genres and levels of aesthetics. A redefinition of music to include practices other than sound may also be useful in terms of a philosophy of “music for everyone.”

Neither expanded value nor a redefinition of music will prove particularly effective in terms of making music central to the public school curriculum in Norway or the U.S. Music education as aesthetic education from a process or a product perspective will remain peripheral as long as there is an imbalance in the value society ascribes to intellect and emotions.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction.

This work is a study of music education in Norway. More specifically, it is about music education in Norwegian music schools, *musikkskoler*, an institution established in Norway in the 1950s with the intention of making individual and ensemble music instruction available to everyone, not just a cultural or moneyed elite.

Most particularly, this is a study of three teachers at one music school, *Asker Musikkskole*.

My preconceived notion in undertaking this study was that personal experience with music, especially singing, was more central to several aspects of Norwegian society than to American. By observing musical contexts in Norway, especially music education for children, I hoped to identify and analyze some aspects of the Norwegian experience that promoted this musical exposure, and make some recommendations that American music teachers might find useful in making their musical work more central to American culture.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps it was a result of the ethnographic method, but what I found was different from what I expected. Music, particularly singing, may be more important in Norway than in America. I cannot say. What I learned in the three classrooms at *Asker Musikkskole* concerned human universals, not cultural particulars. In other words, the three Norwegian music teachers participated in musical contexts that were not characterized by ‘Norwegianness’, but by concerns and practices common to music as it is performed and taught in the Western world in general.

### Music aesthetics, Musical joy

I found that the musicians at *Asker*, like many of us who have been trained at conservatories, music schools and universities in the Western world, function within certain assumptions about the field that rest on music aesthetics, and further, that those aesthetics are assumed to reside first and foremost within Western art music. I discuss aesthetics [emotions] and music as I experienced it at *Asker Musikkskole* as an engendered rather than an embodied phenomenon (Keil & Feld, 1994). This puts the emotional emphasis in music on the person who makes music [process, engendered] rather than in the musical composition, [product, embodied]. From this perspective, music education as aesthetic education can be understood from a framework that is ‘person’ rather than ‘composition’ oriented (Blacking, 1976; Elliot, 1994).

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<sup>1</sup> The National Standards for Arts Education (1994), for example, is an attempt to standardize what every American student should know about music. These guidelines will mean little as long as music, the way it is generally practiced and taught in educational institutions in the Western world, is peripheral to our society.

The understanding of music education as aesthetic education is not new (Meyer, 1956; Langer, 1957). However, the emphasis on the person who is making music rather than the musical product is a shift in perspective that requires a reevaluation of how and what we teach on all levels of music education. In this study, I look primarily at the spiritual dimension of active participation in musical contexts. I call this spirituality musical joy - *musikkglede* - and consider this emotional concept to be a vital part of music education as aesthetic education from a process rather than a product perspective.

#### Developmental learning in the music classroom

Based on my observations at *Asker Musikkskole*, I also discuss teaching and learning music [as played and sung] in private and group lessons. Although not directly applicable to instructional settings, I argue that apprenticeship practices where the learning process is based on the inseparability of knowing and doing are effective in music teaching and learning. Further, private lessons with one on one interaction seem to offer the teacher ample opportunities to gauge the developmental readiness level of the student. I discuss the interaction between the teacher and the student in musical settings as a musical 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1978) where the learning process can be seen and heard.

#### Musical joy and learning

The 'working' musical contexts I observed combined apprenticeship-like practices with musical joy. Learning seemed to occur as a natural part of lessons, rehearsals and performances when teachers and students tapped into emotional strengths as well as musical skills. In other words, emotional resources - musical joy - were as much a part of successful musical settings as pedagogical and instrumental expertise.

#### Social construction of musical phenomena

Keeping people, rather than the musical composition, in focus further challenges traditional views of several musical phenomena, such as Western art music and talent. It is my intent to wrestle certain musical concepts away from being considered innate capacities or God-given gifts, and to talk about them as concepts and ideas that are continuously constructed and reconstructed by people during social interaction. This particular perspective renders definitions slippery and blurred and judgments of 'good' and 'bad', 'superior' and 'inferior', 'talented' or 'not talented' largely meaningless (Becker, H., 1982; Clignet, 1985).

#### Social construction of musical emotions

There is a contradiction in this work between looking at traditional musical concepts within a framework of social construction and the way I discuss the main theme of this study, musical joy. I consider musical joy to be a spiritual resource, and as such there is no way to determine whether such a diffuse concept is innate or constructed. The capacities for musical joy and talent, in fact, may well be innate to human beings. The expression and development of both seem dependent on

social interaction between people. Ironically, we may construct the meaning of what may be an innate capacity in everyone to fit those who we decide are the gifted few.<sup>2</sup>

#### Definition of music for this study

The foundation for the discussion of music in this study is based on the process of making music in terms of playing an instrument and singing. This is a traditional view of what music is. It is the institutional conception of what they are teaching people to do at *Asker Musikkskole*. Thus, I consider the nature of music as I observed, analyze and discuss that phenomenon to be experienced sound produced during processes that combine physical, cognitive and emotional dimensions.

#### Role of observer and observed

My stay at *Asker Musikkskole* was short; it lasted for approximately one semester during the fall of 1994. The musicians at *Asker* and I interacted as friendly colleagues, discussing musical issues that were of concern and interest to all of us. The issues, however, were primarily mine in the sense that these are aspects of the music field that I have been concerned about for a long time. The musicians at *Asker* often shared my concerns, and their insights focused my understanding and gave shape to the text. However, the issues were not necessarily ones that were of primary concern to them, or even the ones they would have preferred to discuss, or felt were particularly representative of their classes. Thus, this is not a realist tale in the sense that the musicians at *Asker* emerged to tell their own story in their own words (Van Maanen, 1988). I have used the musicians at *Asker* to help me understand what went on in their classrooms, and then discussed and framed the issues to fulfill my professional agenda (Becker, J., 1991; McDaniel, 1991).

One of the musician's comments after she read my description of her classes are indicative of our different roles in this study: She commented that she could not find herself in my words. She had few objections to what I had written, she said, but she did not feel that my text reflected her as a person. In other words, my issues were not objectionable, but not of primary interest to her. And then, she could not find herself in my words. I want to stress that my words and perspectives can by no means come close to describing any of the people I met who participated in this study. After one semester and a few talks I could not possibly know any of them in any meaningful depth. By the time I left *Asker Musikkskole*, everyone involved had already assumed new concerns and interests. Again, this study is primarily a vehicle for discussing topics that I discovered or rediscovered through my observations at the music school during the fall of 1994.

Reflection on the role of the researcher in the research setting is a necessary ingredient in qualitative inquiry (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Lincoln and Guba, 1990). The relationship between the observer and the observed shapes the study. How that work is formed should reflect the essence of those relationships. In other words, the validity, the meaningfulness, the truth of the

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<sup>2</sup> I refer to general talent, not specifically applied to music.

tale, rests on whether or not the researcher's role accurately reflects what is being discussed, how that discussion is formed in context and how that discussion is eventually constructed into text. The role the intended reader has on the shaping of that text is also part of the balancing act in this performance. My intended readers are academics, music educators and social scientists more advanced than I, and whose approval I seek. Thus, the study, the way it has been conducted by me, my relationships with the musicians at the Norwegian music school and the construction of this text, primarily reflect my role of doctoral candidate.

Recent literature indicates that qualitative researchers may have gone overboard in their eagerness to escape the image of an imperial 'other' observing 'them', the research subjects, from an objective distance. In other words, social researchers may now spend too much time reflecting on the role of the observer rather than the observed (Botstein, 1993).<sup>3</sup> This is a particular concern when researchers rejoin their roots in the culture they are studying, as I did for this study. Further aggravating this problem, there is an imbalance between my academic role which is new and, in a sense, superficial, and my role as a Norwegian which is deep and complex. In this light, I have sought to use my voice, my personal experience, as a reflection - or proof - of my knowledge of Norway. My goal has been to use that voice to illuminate the musical setting at *Asker* as it fits into Norwegian society. The journey of personal cultural definition, I hope, illuminates rather than dominates my subject.

### Text

My data took four forms: 1. Descriptions of concerts, seminars, rehearsals and plays. 2. Descriptions of classroom instruction. 3. Interviews and informal talks with teachers, students, parents and administrators. 4. Reflections on and analyses of the above experiences. All four types of writing were enveloped in general commentary about Norwegian society and lengthy travel descriptions from my constant trips between home and field sites on trains, trams and buses.

There are several problems with the construction of this particular text. One has been the difficulty of combining descriptive narratives with the language of scholarly research. A dramatic account that seeks to explain underlying issues behind everyday practices does so by the power of the narrative. The text then stands on its own, making implicit meanings explicit without a need for separate scholarly analyses (Lincoln and Guba, 1990). The playwright, for instance, uses only surface actions and words to reveal deeper, intertwined meanings and contradictions. This is a powerful way of making the implicit explicit, which leaves the audience to draw its own conclusions. An explained narrative can lose its impact by constraining the issues or imposing the author's point of view on the reader. The tension between meaning and practice is resolved by the writer, robbing the reader of the emotional punch of the narrative.

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<sup>3</sup> "Today's penchant for presumed full disclosure of one's subjective standpoint, however, is more likely either a species of authorial vanity masquerading as methodological scrupulousness or evidence of a greater interest in oneself than the subject one is writing about" (Botstein, 1993, p. 124).

### Organization of the text

Going into a research setting without conscious preconceived notions of what to look for is somewhat like walking among hundreds of trees without seeing the forest, or swimming in a large pond wishing for a boat so you can escape from the sensation of drowning in details.<sup>4</sup> There is so much information that patterns are difficult to discern. I have structured this study, in part, to allow the reader to discover the issues as they slowly emerged from the setting for me. Again, this is a device often used in narrative writing to heighten the feeling of involvement on part of the reader, and to prove the validity of the issues that come out of the setting. It also has the disadvantage of making the reader feel drowned in details, as I did. Therefore, the following structural view of this study may be helpful.<sup>5</sup>

### Main issues

In Chapter 1, I introduce the two main areas of discussion in this study: Musical joy and developmental learning and teaching. From my observations at *Asker*, I argue that musical contexts that combine spiritual and emotional dimensions - musical joy - with developmentally appropriate learning and teaching practices are superior environments for learning. There are numerous other issues in this study that come to the surface, and that I discuss briefly. However, I consider musical joy, teaching and learning, and the combination of the two in musical contexts to be the main topics of this dissertation. Furthermore, I also make clear that I intend to view and discuss issues, people and events in this study from the perspective of social construction. This opens up the discussion of familiar objects, events, institutions and people to flexible and varied interpretations.

Chapter 2, Translating people to text, gives a view, by example of an interview, of the difficulties involved in interpreting people. An accurate written transformation of a person in actions and words does not exist. This is particularly true when people use one language to express themselves and the interpreter uses another language to describe them. The interview also serves to briefly introduce musical issues that surface throughout this study and gives a glimpse of Norwegian society in general.

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4 As I mentioned above, I don't think there is any way to avoid personal concerns from entering the picture. As an observer I brought with me my entire background, but I was not consciously aware of my personal angle until I had a chance to reflect on my field notes. In other words, I was not aware of the issues and my input and interest in those concerns until quite late in the process.

5 Like the analyzed and explained narrative, the 'organized' narrative loses dramatic impact as the structure is revealed in advance. However, this is not a story, but a study combining elements of story telling, reflection and academic analysis. The amount and types of information are immense and varied. Further muddling the picture is the writer, who is not likely to be Shakespeare or Ibsen. The reader, [I have been told], may get stuck in the woods if a map is not provided.



Chapter 3, *Access*, is an attempt to introduce the specific settings that I frequented in Norway and to situate those settings in a larger context of different aspects of Norwegian society. By detailed descriptions of people, events and the Norwegian landscape, I intend to illuminate general Western social and musical concerns that take unique expressions in this particular cultural context. While setting the stage for the case studies, chapter 3 also describes the often overwhelming process of gaining access to the field work settings, and the interesting roles and perspectives of the immigrant/emigrant field worker.

Chapter 4, *Music schools in Norway*, gives an historical and structural overview of this institution in Norwegian society. Public school, group music instruction is generally viewed as ineffective. Thus, the music schools grew out of a social and political climate that saw conservatory practices as the best way of providing quality music instruction to everyone without money or talent being an issue. From this perspective, the music schools can be looked at as the Norwegian answer to public school music instruction. However, the institution remains precariously balanced between state [the national government], county and individual; not fully accepted as part of the public schools. This is pretty much the same position music and art hold in the U.S. public schools, and a reflection of the peripheral role music and art generally play in Western society. I explore the interesting dichotomy between traditionally viewed elite Western art music practices and the social democratic assumptions of equality throughout this study.

Chapter 5, *Inger skal ha glede av sangen*, *Enjoy singing, Inger*, moves into the individual music lesson. I begin to realize my preconceived assumptions in this setting. In particular, I had obviously, but unconsciously, assumed that Western art music would be the framework and reference point for my observations, reflections and analysis. Further, by reviewing my field notes, it becomes obvious that I look for and comment on musical joy or musical emotions of some kind in all the musical settings I frequent. I begin to catch the nuances of emotional dimensions in this chapter. For instance, musical talent and Western art music are found to belong to a different category of ‘aesthetics’ than the more immediate and spontaneous musical joy.

This chapter, however, is mostly concerned with developmental learning and teaching. Here is the first graphic example of what I describe as the visible and aural “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1986). The interaction between expert and student in the private voice lesson is a vivid example of the novice in the process of learning new information by using a meaningful scaffold as a model (Bruner, Wood and Ross, 1976). This particular setting is suffused with a motherly, caring emotional warmth that is part and parcel of the learning process.

Chapters 6 and 7, both grow out of my observations and analyses of classical guitar, popular music and rock music lessons. These musical contexts challenge my personal views of the superiority of Western art music, and inspire a look at the link between categorization processes, cognitive learning and social construction (Barsalou, 1992). Social learning - categorization - of a

musical genre like Western art music indicates that the nature of styles of sound are constructed according to norms and conventions that are always changing. They are not fixed characteristics of the sound itself (Becker, H., 1982; Clignet, 1985).

These chapters also forward the discussion of developmental teaching and learning in the music classroom. Here, ensemble music experiences in popular and rock music indicate that apprenticeship-like practices that relate meaningfully to the students' real lives are effective (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The emotional component in these settings derives from the students' own satisfaction in their meaningful musical endeavors. The expert teacher's contribution lies in facilitating the setting and serving as a model that is a combination of a friend and an authority figure, one that 'kickstarts' and 'encourages' the students rather than leads the ensemble.

I further explore the nature of musical joy in these chapters. The popular music group that I observed brought the spontaneous nature of *musikkglede* into focus. I discuss the nuances of emotions engendered by the process of making music and compare the spontaneous joy of the popular music group with the spontaneous and practiced joy of the members of a professional chamber music ensemble. I argue that value in musically emotional experiences cannot be considered to be inferior or superior based on ideas of immediate or delayed gratification (Meyer, 1956). Observations and analysis of the popular, rock and chamber music ensembles also inspire a discussion of the physical nature of engendered processes in terms of focused and unfocused sound, as well as possible link between movement and expanded consciousness (Keil & Feld, 1994; Nørretrander, 1993).

Chapter 8, Musical joy in ensemble rehearsals and performances and Chapter 9, A discussion of 'working' classrooms, the 'star' in democratic societies, and talent, stem from my observations of one teacher at *Asker Musikkskole* who is also an active violin and accordion performer. When the expert model, the performer/teacher in this case, played with her student ensembles in rehearsals and performance, the instrumental skills and emotional dimensions of the novice players were visibly and audibly lifted to levels that extended beyond their present capabilities. I discuss the interaction in these settings as prime examples of teacher and students approximating each others' developmental levels both musically and spiritually, tapping into personal resources and letting those overflow and blend (Nørretrander, 1993).

The key to the emotional dimensions in these ensemble rehearsals and performances is the vibrant energy - muse - of the teacher as model (Bjørkvold, 1991). I discuss this particular model in terms of talent and how a talented and different individual functions in democratic societies where equality is an accepted norm. The tension between the philosophy of the music schools - music for all - and the traditionally elite practices of a Western music conservatory resurfaces in this setting. I also examine the concept of talent from the perspective of social construction. I relate talent as

an emotional nuance to musical joy and argue that emotional states may be innate human capacities that are socially constructed throughout life.

In chapter 10, Music education - aesthetic education: Process and product, I examine musical joy in detail. I look at different philosophies of music education and place my perspectives in relationship to existing ones. I go on to analyze emotions as they relate to music, the ones that are considered to be embodied in the music (Meyer, 1956; Langer, 1957), and the engendered emotions that spring from the musical participants (Keil, & Feld, 1994). I consider embodied and engendered emotions to be part of active musical experiences, but the engendered processes relate specifically to musical joy and my observations at *Asker Musikskole*. I examine engendered musical emotions in terms of physical movement, focused and unfocused sound (Keil & Feld, 1994). I also look at these processes from the perspective of enhanced consciousness, a genuinely felt spiritual involvement (Nørretrander, 1993; Bastien, 1988; Bjørkvold, 1991). I look at the different types of emotional involvement in the musical settings I experienced at *Asker* and argue that the spiritual dimensions relate specifically to the people involved in the setting and differ according to individual talents and personalities.

In my concluding chapter, I reflect on the implications of a framework that looks at music as, primarily, an emotional resource to the individual music participant throughout life. I argue that music education as aesthetic education will remain peripheral to our society as long as there is an imbalance between the value we ascribe to intellect and emotions.

## Chapter 2. Translating people to text

As I type up my data I get a chance to revisit the people I met, talked to and experienced. I listen to the tapes, I hear their voices, and I remember. The event of our meetings is like a small bubble with a myriad of impressions bumping against its surface. I am aware of the main players, yes; but also sounds, smells, glances beyond our circle; nuances that evoke other settings. I type, listen, look, remember and reflect. How accurate were my observations in the first place? How well do I remember? But more importantly, how valid are reflections and analyses that are based on words and actions spoken and done in a fleeting second, unreflected upon, by the people I am analyzing? Have they become completely different people through my eyes as I turn over their words and actions, again and again, continually finding new meaning and significance in what they say and do? The musicians at *Asker* often did not recognize themselves through my descriptions of their classes. The danger of misrepresentation is further aggravated by the fact that my words are expressed in a language other than the one with which they expressed themselves.<sup>6</sup>

So in a story that translates, not only a cultural context, but the language of that cultural context, the remaking of people into text becomes particularly complex. Briggs (1987) argues that, when interviewing people, it is important to know their language. He is not talking about entirely different languages, but nuances of speech patterns. Construction workers use different speech patterns than office workers, for instance, and the answers you get as an interviewer depend on whether or not you know how to ask the right questions within your interviewees' context. In other words, it is important to know how your participants speak in their environment in order to interpret meaning within that setting.

This consideration only hints at the cultural nuances of language. When Norwegians speak, Norway is wound up in each word, each phrase, each exclamation and question mark, each tilting of the head or gesture of the hands. So what happens when I translate their words into English? In addition to already having become disembodied by the ethnographic process, the Norwegians I am describing become wrapped in another language and the cultural context of that foreign language. Before my eyes, the music teachers and students at *Asker* are redefined into an American context and, in the process, they have become, at least partially, American.

I had not yet come to appreciate the difficulties of translating between languages and cultures when I was working on the translation of an interview with an 8 year old Norwegian girl, her mother and little sister. I was struggling to explain not only what Ellen said, but what she was like, and discovered that I was facing an impossible task.<sup>7</sup> Ellen, much more than the adults that I met,

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<sup>6</sup> I translated all my field notes to English as I typed them up. The Norwegian musicians have read and commented directly on the English version.

<sup>7</sup> All the students' names in this study have been changed. I use real names for everyone else.

refused to reshape into an English text in any way even resembling the girl I remembered. In frustration I gave up on the task at hand and began to thumb through the spring issue (1995) of *Cricket Magazine* that had just arrived in the mail for my daughter, and stumbled across the following poem on pages 4 and 5.....

### Learning English

Life  
to understand me  
you have to know Spanish  
feel it in the blood of your soul.

If I speak another language  
and use different words  
for feelings that will always stay the same  
I don't know  
if I'll continue being  
the same person.

by Luis Alberto Ambroggio  
Translated by Lori M. Carlson

As seems so self evident to me now, *tankegangen passer språket* - thoughts shape the language, [or it could be the other way around]. Each language carries its own thought processes. Therefore, Ellen's words can be translated, but *Ellen* cannot.

Below is a transcription of my interview with Ellen, the only interview I have included in its entirety in this study. I think it gives insight into Norwegian culture, music in Norwegian culture, and, it gives me a chance to explain my translation of the Norwegian language into English. Rather than choosing the 'best' translation into 'good' English, I have often chosen to translate rather literally. The English version may therefore seem a bit cumbersome and awkward, but I felt that the cultural cloak of 'Norwegianness' was preserved this way, at least somewhat, opening the possibility for broader understanding of the person in context.

#### Ellen's interview

I am on my way to *Asker* again, this time mainly to talk to Ellen, an 8 year old voice student in classes that I have observed already. It is 4 p.m. and getting dark.

Hilde, Ellen's voice teacher, has come upstairs with Ellen, Ellen's mother and sister and me to make sure the teachers' lounge is open.

Me: We can sit in the hall Hilde! Please don't worry about this, you have to teach.

Hilde: *Nei, nei, det er vel ikke noe koselig å sitte på gangen !* (No, no, you certainly can't mean that it is cozy to sit in the hall!)

[Well, no, the hall is not an especially 'cozy' or 'comfortable' place to sit. I am continuously reminded by Hilde and by so many things in daily Norwegian life that comfort, coziness - *hygge*, *kos*, - are so much a part of the fabric, the texture of Norwegian life. My homesickness, especially in my early 'American' life, was rooted in an intense longing for this intangible warm quality of Norwegianness.]

So here we are, seated around one of the pine coffee tables in the teachers' lounge. It is not as low as American coffee tables and larger. Serious eating and conversations take place around Norwegian coffee tables. Ellen's sister is 3 years old, Ellen's mother has no idea who I am, and probably just a fuzzy notion of what I am trying to do [as have I]. But she is smiling and being very polite. And then there is Ellen. Ellen looks like she feels very important right now. There is a tape recorder in the middle of the table, and she is going to be interviewed by a lady from America.....

I introduce myself: "I am Karin."<sup>8</sup>

I go on: "You are Ellen, I already know you, I have enjoyed your singing twice now."

Ellen nods and smiles. Ellen's mother introduces herself next. Time has come to Ellen's younger sister who tells me that her name is Gro.

Me: [gushing with adult sickly sweetness] Gro! And how old are you Gro?

Gro: [hint of 'baby tone' still in her voice]: *Tre år*. (Three years old).

Me: And you, Ellen, how old are you?"

Ellen speaks softly but very clearly and with a certain adult sophistication to her voice: *Jeg er åtte, jeg blir snart ni da*. (I am eight, actually, I am practically nine).

Me: And what grade are you in school?

Ellen: Second.

Me: You are in second grade. Here? At Bondi School?

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<sup>8</sup> First name basis is practiced on practically all levels of Norwegian society these days. When I grew up, I curtsied and called adults by surname and the polite form of the appropriate personal pronoun (*De, Dem, Deres*). That has almost completely changed. Everyone is *dus* - using first names only. There are exceptions: I am uncomfortable calling older Norwegians that I don't know by their first names, and I noticed that our three year old neighbor called out to my mother: "*Hei, fru (Mrs.) Thomassen!*" Correspondence with governmental agencies and lawyers is still as formally and aloofly polite as in the 'old days.'

Ellen nods: yes.

Me: How do you like this school?

Ellen: Bra (O.K.)

At this point we start discussing the red light on my tape recorder. Gro says she will let me know if it goes off so I can turn the tape around.

Me: How long have you been taking voice lessons Ellen?

Ellen: How long? You mean how many times have I taken lessons?

Me: Yes, how many years, for instance. Have you had lessons for many years?

Ellen: This is my eighth time, I think.

Me: So you have not had a singing teacher before Hilde?

Ellen: [she drags the answer out, almost a question mark at the end]: *Mmm neei ?*

Me: Why did you want to take singing lessons Ellen?

Ellen: Well, I like to sing, dance and play, but I don't play that much.

Me: So you like to sing better than you like to play - so you mean playing the piano?

Ellen: Yes. I like to sing and dance the best. That is what I like the best.

Me: Do you take piano lessons at *musikkskolen* as well?

Ellen: I think I used to take piano lessons at *Risenga*.

Me: *Risenga*?

We are a bit confused here, both Ellen and I, and Ellen's mother comes to the rescue:

Ellen's Mother: Ellen goes to *fritidsordningen (FSO)* at this school. [child care after school. Direct translation: 'spare time arrangement']. They used to offer piano lessons there. So she has taken piano lessons for one or two semesters, I don't quite remember. Now she is on a waiting list for *musikkskolen*, but there is such a long waiting list there. Because they ended the arrangement with piano lessons at *fritidsordningen*. We are also on a waiting list at a private piano studio. We also have a small arrangement (*tilbud*) through *musikkskolen* as well - up till Christmas time."

Me: So, even if you have voice lessons it does not mean that you automatically get piano lessons as well - through *musikkskolen*.

Ellen's mother: *Nei*, we had to choose, and Ellen really, really likes to sing.

Me: Do you sing a lot at home?

Ellen looks at her mother, laughs out loud: *Jeg synger ganske mye hjemme*. (I sing quite a lot at home).

I get the impression that Ellen maybe sings too much at home?

Me: Do you really?

Gro pipes up: *Jeg og !* (Me too!)

Me: You sing too, Gro? What kind of songs do you like to sing?

Long pause here, she is not quite sure.

Ellen's mother comes to the rescue again: "*Pappa* sings a lot. He sings and plays - but only around the house. (*til hjemmebruk*)

Ellen nods and agrees, yes, he does. She goes on [in a very sensible, adult manner]: Sometimes I will find a book, then I find a song I know, and then I start to practice that song a little bit. [Each phrase ends with the characteristic Norwegian rising intonation, almost like a question mark at the end.]

Me: Does *pappa* help you then?

Ellen: No, no, I am just singing [nothing serious in other words] at night, you know.

Me: Do you and *mamma* sing anything together?

Ellen: *Neeei*, I don't think so.

Gro is being quite vocal now - she wants to be part of the conversation. I make a connection here between my musical upbringing in Norway and Ellen's.

Me: My *pappa* was also the one in my family that always sang with me.

Ellen's mother: Yes, it is *pappa* here too, who plays. *Vi har et sånt keyboard vi da*, it is a little better than ordinary keyboards, so we sing Christmas songs and other songs too.

Ellen: And then *pappa* teaches us to play too.

So, Ellen has some musical experiences at home - a dad that must be pretty good at playing for pleasure, and her love of singing brought her to *musikkskolen* and Hilde.

Ellen: It is fun (*gøy*) to sing here (at *Musikkskolen*).

In the meantime Gro has climbed up behind my back and is now planted next to me.

Me: *Så koselig da Gro at du vil sitte her ved siden av meg*. (How cozy, Gro, that you want to sit next to me). Are you in a musical Kindergarten or something like that Gro?

Sort of a drawn in, breathy '*ja*,' from Gro.



From now on the ‘interview’ is a collective interaction between the four of us, with Gro obviously paying attention to everything we say and commenting throughout even though she keeps busy moving around.

Ellen’s mother: They have both been in a private kindergarten where they really emphasized drama and theater and piano and singing - sort of like part of their everyday activities.

Ellen: We sang Baa, Baa Black Sheep in kindergarten too (*bæ, bæ lille lam*). (She laughs, a little self consciously).

Ellen’s mother: Ellen has always liked to stand in front of people and sing, from she was two, three years old, in kindergarten.<sup>9</sup>

Ellen’s mother describes how long she has been waiting to get Ellen in to different musical institutions in *Asker* :

I applied about a year ago, to *Asker pikekor* (Asker girls’ choir) when Ellen began first grade.<sup>10</sup>

I get the impression that the choir was the first choice here, but that Ellen did not get in, therefore *musikkskolen*.

Me: So you were on a waiting list for a year?

Ellen’s mother: Yes.

Me: When you did get in, could you have chosen piano instead of singing?

Ellen’s mother: No, no. She was offered singing lessons, and a little extra lesson on the piano because of some cancellations

I am curious about the girls’ choir.

Ellen’s mother, exasperated, but smiling: Oh, no. You have to sign your child up as a four-year old to have a chance of getting in. We have tried another

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9 Norwegian *barnehager* are not the same as American kindergartens. *Barnehager* can be private or public, and are geared to children that are not yet in the public schools, but they are not connected to the public schools. Some *barnehager* are day care oriented, all day arrangements, others are academic preschools, others are purely for outdoor supervised free play. My children have all attended the ‘play’ kind, where they spent three hours a day playing outdoors, regardless of weather. Singing was always a large part of any number of activities, particularly at lunchtime, also eaten outdoors. When I walked by the other day, however, I heard Norwegian toddlers happily singing along with Hap Palmer on the tape recorder - in English of course!

10 Norwegian children start first grade as seven year olds. There is presently a big push to start a year earlier.

choir, but she was not comfortable there. But she really wants to start singing in a choir.

Me: Why were you not happy in that choir Ellen?

Ellen: *Neeei*, they sang such dumb songs - like 'Baa, Baa Black Sheep' and such. And then we had to lie down. Afterwards I yawned and yawned because we had to lie down. [sounds like some kind of a vocal exercise] Ellen is imitating the choral director: 'Now we are going to yawn 'in,' and now we are going to yawn 'out.' And then everyone just yawned all the time. I just felt so embarrassed (*jeg ble så flau atte..*).

Ellen's mother: But there are a couple of more choirs in *Asker*, we just have to try them out. In ..... church there is a fine *gospel kor*.

Gospel choirs are very popular in Norway at the moment - the word gospel is used with no translation as are many other American words like pop, rock, disco, hamburger, keyboard etc.

We discuss the fees at the different music schools. I have enrolled my daughter in a private piano studio where we live, the waiting list for *Oslo Kommunale Musikkskole*, the music school we zone to, was just too long - one year. I pay 80 kroner for 30 minutes of private instruction a week, that comes to about kr. 4500 for two semesters (ca. \$600).<sup>11</sup> But the private teacher takes her time with her students - my daughter's lesson runs about 45 minutes. I have noticed that the schedule at the music schools is strictly kept. You get your 20 minutes of private instruction a week for ca. kr. 1.600 (ca. \$200 for two semesters). Ellen's mother reminds me that they are on a waiting list for piano lessons at a private studio as well, and there they have to pay kr. 300 a month for 20 minutes of private instruction a week, which comes out to about kr. 75 for 20 minutes, about the same as my daughter's private teacher. So, *musikkskolen* is much more reasonable than private instruction - if you can get in.

Me: "As far as I can see, the teachers at *musikkskolen* are really quite good.

Ellen's mother: *Ja*, I think so. But I really only have experience with the one we have now [Hilde].... so I can't really say about the others. But the private piano studio where we are waiting for a place - she works here at *musikkskolen* too.

The teachers at the music schools can combine teaching at the schools with performing and teaching in other settings.

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<sup>11</sup> There are ca. kr. 6.50 to the dollar - slightly more or less depending on the rate of exchange. At 80 kroner per half hour, ca. \$12, Anna's lessons are comparable to private lessons where we live in a small town in the U.S., but inexpensive in comparison to other private teachers in the Oslo area.

Me: [to Ellen] How is your music instruction in school?

Ellen repeats my question: The music in school?

Me: Do you have music instruction here at *Bondi* school? Singing class, for instance?

Ellen: *Jaaa*, we had some music, that was in first grade, but now we don't have a tape recorder (*kasett*). We moved to the tape recorder, and when the tape recorder stopped, then we stopped and when the music started again, then we moved again.

Me: Do you have something like that this year?

Ellen: No, this year we didn't get a singing teacher (*sanglærerinne*), so we have to have music in our classroom. So now we just have a tape recorder, and we sing a little with the music.

Me: We have to finish up, it's getting so late. What else do you want to tell me about yourself, Ellen?

Ellen: I have two siblings (*søsken*). One is 10, and the other is 3. What I like to do best (*aller best*) is to sing! I like to sing! I also like to dance.

Ellen, Ellen! interrupts Gro

Ellen shushes her very gently: *ja, vent litt da!* (just wait a little bit!) And I like to play.

Me: What do you like best about school?

Ellen: "*Friminuttene, for da kan vi leke* " "Free time (minutes), because then we can play.

She is referring to the breaks Norwegian children have between each class period so they can play outdoors in the school yard.

Ellen: Classes... I don't know. Music, I like music.

Me: Of the subjects you mean, you like music the best?

Ellen: [determined] Yes, music... and gym.

Ellen's mother: You can tell her about what kind of dancing you do, can't you?

Ellen: *Vesleringen*. (The little circle)

Me: *Vesleringen*, what is that Ellen?

Ellen's mother: *Det er gammeldans*. (It is 'old time dancing')

The interview was winding down, but we have found a new common interest here.

Me: Is this for children your age?

Ellen: There are two groups. One from 3-7 [years of age]. And then one from 7 to, I think, 13. I am in the old group.

Me: How often do you go there?

Ellen: Every Tuesday.

Me: How long have you been there?

Ellen: Many years.

Her mother concurs: Many years, since you were five I think.

Me: to Ellen's mother, - [I suspect that even though Ellen's father may be more of the playing/singing kind, Ellen's mother is really interested in dance.] Is this something you are interested in also?

Ellen's mother: Yes, I danced folk dances before I had children. We intend to start again when the children grow older and we have more time.

Ellen goes on with the dance topic: In *heldagsskolen* [all day school, i.e., school day + child care at school], I dance other kinds of dances. You know, like rock and stuff, not folk dancing.

Ellen's mother: That is ordinary dancing school.

So, Ellen goes to two different types of dancing schools - folk dancing and regular dancing school.

Ellen: We dance swing and waltz and cha cha cha.

Me: You must be quite a dancer, Ellen! Do *mamma* and *pappa* dance also?

Ellen: No, I don't think so. Then emphatically: *Nei* !

Gro is laughing in the background, I don't know if she laughs at the 'sight' of her parents dancing.

Ellen's mother: But we used to dance a lot! My mother danced all her life.

Me: [to Ellen's mother] You really enjoy dancing don't you?

Ellen's mother: Oh yes. [Her *ja*, drawn in and extended in breathiness at the end, expresses real longing here.]

Me: So you have probably been dancing since you were quite young too?

Ellen's mother: Yes, jazz ballet and that type of dancing, and ordinary dancing school with swing, waltz, ballroom type dancing. I stopped in my 20s. [regret in her voice].

Me: You shouldn't have done that!

Ellen's mother: No [she laughs].

Me: [to Ellen] Your brother is 10? Does he dance too?

Gro keeps bouncing up and down yelling *Jeg og, jeg og!* (Me too, me too!) I am sure she wants to tell me that she dances too.

Ellen: [hesitates a little] Yes, but only the kind of dancing we do in the ballroom dancing school - swing and rock - like that. Let me see, at *Heldagsskolen*, 4th and 5th grades, that is one group, and 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades, and

then 6th grade [last grade of elementary school] - My brother intends to attend that group.

Me: Does he play an instrument?

Ellen: *Neeeeiii* [question mark at the end.]

We kind of stall out here. It is getting quite late - very dark outside. I look through my notes to see if I have asked everything I needed to cover. I have a list of topics that I keep handy to keep me somewhat on track, although the format of any 'interview' is completely unpredictable. I ask Ellen's mother if I may call her if I have any further questions, and then we break up.

#### Ellen restated

Ellen's interaction with me, her mother and sister was straightforward, earnest, soft spoken and polite. As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, however, that doesn't really describe Ellen. The person, Ellen, revealed herself through her gestures, [small, sure and precise], her way of sitting and standing, [on the edge or slightly off balance, but without discomfort], a quick smile, a soft whisper, [impatient, but kind, to her sister], the tone, volume and inflection of her voice, [high, soft with question marks at the end of nearly all sentences]. I doubt if anyone can 'see' the Ellen I saw through my choice of words. However, through Ellen's and her mother's words, several aspects of Ellen's life and Norwegian society stand out.

First and foremost, Ellen is a third grader whose favorite subjects are gym and music. She likes to play outdoors during recess, and she really, really likes to sing and dance! When I observed Ellen in her voice lesson the week before our talk, I had been impressed with the fact that she really seemed to enjoy singing. "Ellen," I wrote in my field notes, "has a smile in her voice when she sings."<sup>12</sup> Her family is involved in music and dance too. Her father sings and plays the piano at home and her mother likes to dance. Ellen is involved in all kinds of music and dance activities, not just the voice lessons I had observed.

When I discuss the interview with Ellen's mother at a later date, she confirms that Ellen is involved in lots of music and dance classes because that is what she likes to do and what she is good at. Her son is much more involved in sports.

Ellen and her mother mention several aspects of Norwegian society that affect their daily lives:

There are several kindergarten (*barnehage*) options for Norwegian children that have little in common with American public school kindergartens. Some of these emphasize outdoor play, music, dance and drama.

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<sup>12</sup> I describe Ellen's voice lesson in chapter 5.

FSO (*fritidsordningen*) or child-care, is offered at the end of the school day in many Norwegian public schools. Judging from Ellen and her mother, private instruction in music and dance may be an option for the children during this time. I find out later that this is an area that the music schools would like to move into with their curriculum and teachers, and have in many areas (Chapter 4, the Music Schools).

Ellen mentions her music classes in public school. Again, this is an area in which the music schools are active, but not at all to the extent they would like to be (Chapter 4).

Ellen's mother and I discuss the cost of music instruction. The music schools are less expensive than regular private teachers, but that doesn't help when you can't get in, which brings up the subject of waiting lists. This seems to be a common problem in Norway. The newspapers are full of articles about people on waiting lists for hospitals, nursing homes, kindergartens, academic high schools, universities, music schools, and, judging from Ellen's experience, even for private music instruction and choirs.

Several of the general topics in Norwegian society and music in Norwegian society that Ellen and her mother touched on in our talk appear throughout this study. In the next chapter I expand the view of Norwegian society in general, and elaborate further on musical and non-musical educational institutions.

## Chapter 3. Access

This chapter describes the process of access and acclimation that took place during my first month in Norway. My intent is to give glimpses of the different settings I frequented as well as to introduce issues and controversies in those settings. Intertwined in the narratives are fleeting impressions of the larger context of Norwegian society, both physical characteristics as well as general social phenomena.

### Asker Musikkskole

My initial encounter with *Asker Musikkskole* provides the main theme of this chapter. That meeting was friendly, polite, and reserved - a good indicator of the type of interaction that characterized my relationships with the people at the music school. The process of finding teachers who were willing to have an observer in their classrooms eventually led me to the three musicians that form the core of this study.

### The University of Oslo

The second musical setting described in this chapter is the Department of Musicology at the University of Oslo. Some issues in the field of music surfaced in this context, such as: What is talent and who is talented? Who decides who the talented ones are? What are the criteria for the decision? The main topic of the lectures I attended at the university - musical emotions - became part and parcel of my classroom observations, and the main theme of this dissertation.

### Norwegian public schools

Mixed with the musical settings are descriptions of non-musical Norwegian contexts and experiences. My daughter's public school, for instance, gives a glimpse of a system that is shaped by a society where underlying concerns and meanings are quite different in many ways from those that shape society and the schools she attended in the U.S. Her experience provides an important perspective to keep in mind when discussing people and practices at *Asker* music school.

### Personal identity

I also describe my personal process of cultural identification and definition in this chapter. This particular story reveals some of the underlying tensions that are part of a small, homogeneous society as it faces challenges to its norms and traditions from any number of political, cultural and economic outside factors. The small size, the cultural homogeneity, the shared norms and traditions in this country are also keys to understanding how music functions in Norwegian society.

The description of my daughter's and my encounters with the broader Norwegian society is an important and integral, if indirect, part of this analytical study of musical practices at *Asker*

*Musikkskole*. These encounters affected my relationships to others in my daily interactions with everyone from my family members to the musicians at *Asker*. Throughout my stay I went through a personal classification process that involved a repositioning of ‘self’ in relationship to ‘them’, centering on various sensations of belonging or not belonging.

During this process I became convinced that the important questions did not concern ‘Am I Norwegian,’ or ‘Is this Western art music,’ but rather, ‘What is a Norwegian’ and ‘What is Western art music.’ The classification process itself then revealed the futility of trying to classify people and issues within categories of socially constructed frameworks.

### ***General description. A starting point***

The neighborhood where I grew up lies on a hill overlooking *Oslofjorden* (the Oslofjord). On a clear day from my second story windows you can see almost to the end of *Nesoddtangen*, a peninsula in the *fjord*. At night, if you look to the west, you can see the lights twinkling in *Oslo* harbor. At the north end of my road as it winds along the hill, there is a beautiful, white Lutheran church. Christmas eve finds every grave with a flickering candle; comforting, beautiful and eerily spiritual on a cold, dark winter night.

Right down the hill from the church lies my old high school; across the street is a medical center and a nursing home. Follow the street in front of the nursing home north for one block and there is the middle school, *Ungdomsskolen*, where my daughter is attending 7th grade this year.

The landscape flattens out around the middle school and the plateau is taken up by acres and acres of soccer fields. The fields are bordered by a small mountain top - a free area with trails, trees and a ski jump - on the east; a sports arena, minigolf park and horse back riding facility with miles of picturesque trails on the west; and on the north, when the plateau ends, you descend into *Oslo*, with a breathtaking view of the whole city, the harbor and surrounding hills and mountains in the north and west.

Walk down the hill to *Holtet* station. Here is the elementary school. There are doctors,’ dentists’ and lawyers’ offices, grocery stores, a pharmacy, *apotek*, [smells reassuringly medicinal], a small book store and a bank. Across the street is the post office. But the main purpose for *Holtet* station is the tram that takes you off the hill to downtown *Oslo*.

### **Home but not home**

I grew up in this neighborhood around *Holtet* station. My adult role in Norway, however, has been as a Norwegian/American, dipping in and out of this setting every year for several decades. Modern technology and modes of transportation make it possible to keep roots in many places, and



I, along with many other immigrants/emigrants, don't really leave our original cultures the way people did in the past. One of the interesting side effects of this type of existence is the experience of never quite belonging anywhere, and of seeing the familiar as strange (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Somehow I remain detached while still being part of two different worlds, and in this sense I don't truly belong to or understand either context. What I actually see is change; – aspects of society that are different from when I experienced them – or newness, because these are aspects of a society that I have never seen before. By being a constant immigrant/emigrant somewhere, I see change and newness simply because I am never a part of a norm as it gradually changes from the inside. In this respect, the immigrant/emigrant experience slices into culture the way an ethnographer carves out a separate and unique experience in a new culture. The emigrant immigrant, like the field worker, constantly juggles and adjusts between familiar and unfamiliar, us and them, belonging and not belonging (Kondo, 1990; Lavie, 1990; Rosaldo, 1989).

### *Personal identity*

#### Define yourself!

A journey of self discovery characterized my stay in Norway, one that strengthened my identity as an 'other' rather than 'them,' but as an 'other' in the sense of a border person where my persona as an emigrant/immigrant is 'me' (Rosaldo, 1989). This stay for personal and professional reasons was longer than any I had experienced in many years, and I spent a great deal of time and effort in pursuit of a Norwegian residency permit. The question of "*Er du norsk eller hva er du egentlig?*" "Are you Norwegian or what are you really?" came often, mostly from bureaucratic sources. This is not an idle or a silly question, but one that is based on philosophical and functional differences between the concepts of state and society, (*staten og samfunnet*). Society in this context is 'us,' 'the people,' whoever is occupying this place at this time. The state is the ruling body of society which more or less reflects all classes of society depending on the historical time period. The state, furthermore, has legal [judicial] power, whereas society bases its actions on legitimacy, i.e., systems of tradition and heritage (Berg, 1992). Therefore, no one that I have ever dealt with on an everyday basis in Norway doubts that I am Norwegian. In terms of tradition and heritage, I am. To the state, however, I am an American and so legally not a Norwegian. The legal definitions often change, and are never really clear or even known to most of us, thus making it possible for people to function within tradition and heritage as long as the state stays uninvolved.

It had not occurred to me that I was not a Norwegian. I had made no legal arrangements for an extended stay in Norway. Assuming our traditional and inherited rights, my daughter and I just moved right into the context, and no one ever questioned our rights to do so. When I discussed the situation with the principal of my daughter's middle school during and after our run-ins with the state, she admitted that it never even occurred to her to ask for any legal paperwork on my daughter, even though she had stacks of forms and regulations on immigrant children in her

school. She considered my daughter to be Norwegian she said, and she and the faculty would *slå en ring rundt henne* (circle her defensively) if the state should challenge her status as a Norwegian.

In the course of my dealings with so many different aspects of Norwegian society and state, I began to wonder about the nature of my own status as a Norwegian; not in terms of ‘am I Norwegian,’ but in terms of ‘what is a Norwegian’ and ‘what am I’? So, my journey of self discovery was a journey of classification, of definition. I was aware of ‘differences’ and ‘similarities’ when I dealt with people on a day to day basis on all levels, from my relatives to the musicians at the music schools. This classification process also influenced my perspectives on musical issues, Western art music in particular.

#### Extended map

In order to get to the different settings I visited during my research for this study, you have to get off ‘my’ hill into downtown Oslo and beyond. If you take the tram from *Holtet* station, the one that comes every 15 minutes rather than the one that comes every 10 minutes, you can take a tour down the hillside with a spectacular view, again, of the *Oslofjord* on the left. The tour will take you through the center of Oslo, past the king’s castle and the American embassy, past impressive mansions of various kinds behind the castle, through a charming shopping section, to the end station for this tram - *Majorstua*. You can see the famous *Holmenkollen* ski jump up on the hill. Now you are on the west side of town, the place to live if you are well-to-do and concerned with social status. The trip takes about 1/2 hour depending on the time of day. This is where I took my piano lessons growing up, and this is where I went twice a week for my choir rehearsals. This is also where I come once a week right now, to attend a music education seminar at the Dept. of Musicology at the Univ. of Oslo, housed in the very unacademic looking *Chateau Neuf*, a big, modern looking hunk of cement primarily intended for popular entertainment shows of various sorts. It is two blocks from the end station of my tram. Across the courtyard from the Dept. of Musicology and *Chateau Neuf* is *Musikkhøgskolen*, the State Academy of Music, Norway’s Julliard.<sup>13</sup> I used the cafeteria at *Musikkhøgskolen* to chat with several of the people who took part in this study. My daughter and I also ate dinner there [cheap, subsidized] or at McDonald’s at *Majorstua* [expensive for my pocket book] after the weekly seminar.

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<sup>13</sup> Universities and academic academies (*høyskole/høgskole*) are two options for higher education in Norway. Universities supposedly offer more of an academic emphasis to learning whereas the academies are geared to more practical, hands on training. The educational status of the institution depends on the subject rather than the setting. Engineering, for instance, has a better reputation at an academy in *Trondheim* than at the university in Oslo. It is also more prestigious to be a student at *Musikkhøgskolen* than at the university.

While I was in Norway during the fall of ‘94, there was pressure from the Department of Church, Education and Research, the state agency that oversees Norway’s educational institutions, towards more of an academic emphasis in the academies.

If you choose to take the bus from my house to downtown, you will ride past my daughter's middle school, over the plateau with scores of soccer fields, and down the scenic route to *Gamlebyen* (Old Town). The bus will take you through some of the poorest areas of Oslo, which also happens to be the oldest parts of Oslo with ruins from the Middle Ages - strangely untended and forlorn looking.

Immigrants, politically aware intellectuals, and young Norwegians making statements of nonconformism dominate the landscape in this section of town. There is a mixture of foreigners and Norwegians and a variety of clothing and languages here that were practically nonexistent when I grew up in this country. A store selling Asian-looking clothing now occupies my uncle's *Grønne Mølle*, the grocery store my mother worked in when I was little.

This is also the location of *Oslo Politikammer* (Police Department). I spend long hours here waiting in line with people from all over the world to gain access to the ladies who will pronounce whether or not our application forms for residency permits are finally correct so that 'we' may become, partly, 'them.'

### *The music school*

#### Access and first meeting

What a process. It seems as if it has taken me forever to get beyond my immediate setting, my neighborhood on the eastern side of *Oslo*, through downtown, and out into the western suburbs where *Asker Musikkskole* is located. Once again, I take the tram to town from *Holtet* station. I can take the one that goes every 10 minutes or the one that goes every 15 minutes today. Both stop at *Østbanen*, or *Jernbanestasjonen* (Railroad station) as it is called now. This is the main hub for public transportation in *Oslo*. Buses, trams and subways radiate from here to all sections of the city and the suburbs. This is also the main railway station for local and long distance trains. I have to take a local train to *Asker*, and I figure I will have to take a bus from *Asker* station to the school. The conductor blows a whistle while half hanging out of one of the doors looking up and down for lingering passengers. "*Dørene lukkes !*" Doors are being closed! I am worried about not being on time for the train, getting stuck in the 'closing' doors. Did I get on the right train?!!!

One-half hour to *Asker*. Pine forests, pointed hills, painted, neat wooden houses; smaller, sharper, less prosperous rooflines here. Roofs: What curious signs of economic and social status - and different from one hill to the next. Glimpses of the fjord and all the little islands in *Oslofjorden*. Sail boats dotting the sea. Beautiful day. Temperature somewhere in the low 60s, I think.

Asker is the end station for this train, which has stopped at every stop since Jernbanestasjonen. I catch a bus, direction Drammen. The bus driver charges me 5 kroner (ca.80 cents) and drops me off close to the music school. Tram round trip: Kr. 32 - \$5, Train, round trip: Kr. 50 - \$7. I cross a bridge over a busy highway. There is the school. Old, white wooden building - neat and freshly painted, well maintained - all of Norway seems well maintained to me. There is a plaque on the outside wall - I will read it later, right now I am too nervous. Up the stairs. I knock on a half open door - the right office as it turns out. Kristen, one of two instructional supervisors at the school, comes out from behind the desk - big, shy smile. He shakes my hand, bows deeply, awkwardly, in that endearing Norwegian boyish way that just brings tears to my eyes because I have forgotten, and it reminds me of the way my father greeted people. There are lots of subtle mannerisms I tend to forget. You cannot always expect to be introduced, and sometimes you don't wait to introduce yourself. It really depends on the circumstances. You may walk towards the person you are meeting, extend your hand and say "I am such and such," not in an intrusive, pushy kind of a way, but in a rather slow, solid Norwegian kind of way.

Kristen's wife is an old school friend of mine, and the one who has made my access to *Asker Musikkskole* possible. I made the arrangements over a year ago, anticipating some future need to stay in Norway for an extended period of time because of my mother. Kristen is polite, very informative and helpful. He is from the southern, coastal part of Norway, and speaks with a *Sørlands* dialect, which is soft and melodic. He tells me a little about the music school before we join two teachers and the school's *rektor* (director or principal) in the room where they eat their lunch and have coffee or tea.

The director, Arne Hagen, is friendly, open, very positive and forthcoming. His Oslo dialect comes across as hard and assertive in contrast to Kristen's speech pattern. He hands me several pamphlets with statistical information about the music schools and seems very interested in participating in the study. Both Kristen and Arne, in fact, give me a mass of information about the schools which will take some time to sort out. They both agree to read and comment on my section about the structure of the music schools and how these institutions fit into the overall musical context in Norway.

The two women who are present at the table are both quiet throughout this discussion. Rigmor is an instructional supervisor like Kristen (*Undervisningsinspektør*). She is also in charge of the band program at the school. Inger Lise is a violin teacher and heads the orchestra division. She is also an administrative assistant at the school (*kontorfullmektig*). I talk with Rigmor about the band program at a later date, and meet Inger Lise during her orchestra rehearsals. I am beginning to gain an understanding of the variety of educational opportunities in music that exist in this country, which means that the music teachers' educational backgrounds are equally varied.

The director and the teachers leave. Kristen and I go back to his office where he gives me the names and phone numbers of several instructors. He also tells me about his children and their education. His oldest son is a promising violinist, one of a select few who made it into *Musikkhøgskolen* after high school.

Kristen seems very interested in sharing information with me, but I suspect, after a while, that he is simply being very Norwegian - too polite to tell me that he needs to get on with his day! His phone is ringing throughout our meeting - he has contact with administrators and parents, and part of his job seems to be to set up individual music lessons for students.

I step out in the crisp, warmish weather and decide to walk back to *Asker* station. I love the walk and the train ride back to town. Now I know how! I enjoy watching people, what they wear and what they do, but, of course, I don't really look! We sit knee to knee and shoulder to shoulder on this train, [the seats are facing], but no one looks directly at each other, and we will probably not speak to one another unless we are already acquainted.

### Reflections on field work

After my initial trip to *Asker*, I felt overwhelmed by the complexities of fitting into a new lifestyle. I can't imagine having to adjust to field work in an unfamiliar culture with an unfamiliar language. I imagine real fieldwork to be what the Norwegian word for fieldwork conjures up for me: *feltarbeide*. This type of endeavor often takes place in areas where people are at the fringes of society, disadvantaged and in some physical danger or need. Field work, on the other hand, could mean a leisurely looking around in a field of flowers, or pleasantly working on a sunny slope, which is more like what I am doing. I am not really doing *feltarbeide*. My field is not a dangerous war zone. There are lots of flowers in my field and the surprises are not really earthshaking bombs, but more in the nature of 'this could function better than it does.'

## *Norwegian public schools*

### Anna and middle school

My daughter, on the other hand, is doing *feltarbeide*.<sup>14</sup> She is in a community of strangers speaking a language she knows, maneuvering in territory she knows, but not deeply. She is experiencing a Norwegian middle school from the inside and she is suffering the hardships of the field, emotionally and physically. Her bike, for instance, is a mode of transportation now, not a fun hobby. Try making an 8 a.m. class in sub arctic fall darkness on slippery roads when you are not used to it! Two pairs of blue jeans and several layers of skin are goners!

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<sup>14</sup> My youngest daughter, Anna, is an active presence throughout this study.

Moreover, her bike does not look like the others.’ Neither does her book bag. “I don’t care, Mom, I just don’t care that they laugh at me! Their socks are just ghastly anyway!” For some reason, probably popular media, being American is cool here right now. But she does not really fit these Norwegian adolescents’ image of what a cool American is supposed to be.

But, there are aspects of this community and school that my daughter enjoys. She has freedom to go where she likes to a much greater extent than she does in the States. She runs errands for family members and she takes the tram downtown to ice-skate and to shop. She also likes the school schedule; it is flexible and varied. She starts at 8, 9 or 10 in the morning. She is home in the afternoons at 1, 2 or 3. The subjects vary from day to day. At the beginning of the school year, the teacher sent them home early at the end of the day. They go for walks during long Norwegian lessons; they pick flowers in science. The students go to the local shopping center for pizza or hot dogs during lunch.

They call their teacher by her first name. She 27 and a brand new teacher. With her blue eyes, long brown hair, long skirt and sneakers, she looks old fashioned and romantic. She has *examen artium* from *Videregående skole* (academic high school), 4 years of *grunnfag* (Bachelor’s degree) and 1 1/2 years of *pedagogisk seminar* (pedagogy or Masters Degree in education) from the University of Oslo. The teachers at this middle school seem to be evenly divided between the two types of educational backgrounds, academies and universities. This brand new teacher seems competent and kind, and slightly overwhelmed with discipline problems.

My daughter is not thrilled with her four hours of school kitchen once a week (*skole kjøkken*, home economics). The kids here have had school kitchen since second grade. Anna’s vanilla sauce was the only one with lumps! She was mortified! They wear aprons, kerchiefs and ‘inside’ shoes to school kitchen.

Fridays, there is music, gym, math and three hours of art. Woodworking and pottery are favorite activities.

### ***The music school***

#### Access to Asker, next phase

I was apprehensive when I contacted the teachers that Kristen had recommended. I called the first one on the list, the one that would seem to be the most interesting to work with for me personally, since we work in the same musical areas. She teaches piano and is in charge of several public school choral groups. Well yes, she had heard about this study at a meeting. Yes, it sounded interesting. How much would she have to do? I told her that depended on whether or not she

wanted to read and comment on what I wrote about her classes. That sounded like entirely too much work. She was extremely busy already and her family was complaining. “I still have some of my private piano students too, they just won’t quit! And you know, those are the classes you really should observe.” “Really?” I respond. “That sounds so interesting!” “Yes, that is where I have time to explore different ways of teaching and learning the piano. I get such exciting results from my private students.” “That you don’t get from your music school students you mean?” “Well, there are so many other concerns at the music schools.”

There are obviously things at *Asker Musikk Skole* that don’t function as well as they could. Time restrictions on instruction and too much administrative busy work interfered with many of the teachers’ concerns about quality teaching and learning. However, with few exceptions, like time restrictions, I never fully explored any of the problems specific to this particular music school. My involvement with *Asker* remained surface and professional throughout my stay, which suited this context. Friendly, smiling, forthcoming, polite, aloof and private - comfortable modes of interaction for all of us. ‘I’ am certainly ‘them’ when it comes to relationships with strangers.

The choral director/piano teacher has decided not to participate in the study, but by now I have called three other musicians on the list Kristen gave me, and they seem quite interested in allowing me into their classes. All of them were open and friendly and chatty on the phone, but busy, busy, busy!

#### Hilde

Hilde Torgersen teaches voice and piano at *Asker Musikkskole*. She is also *utøvende*, that means that she performs regularly. We really get along well on the telephone, at least! But, no meeting time; Hilde wants her students to be comfortable before she introduces an unfamiliar element in her lessons. She is married to a musician, a pianist.

#### Lena

Lena Rist Larsen teaches violin, an instrument I know little about. She plays the accordion as well. She is also *utøvende*, an active performer. Lena is married to a pianist as well.

Actually, I have met Lena already. I went to her accordion concert at *Musikkhøgskolen* very soon after I arrived in Norway. She played Bach’s Goldberg variations (BWV 988). Very impressive concert, very down to earth person. “Oh yes, should be fun to participate in your study! But I am off to Cyprus! Call me when I get back!”

#### Kjell

Kjell Markussen teaches rock band, private guitar lessons and music classes for people with disabilities at *Asker*. He composes every morning. “Don’t call me in the mornings.” O.K. I felt bad when I called to reconfirm a meeting I had actually managed to arrange. He had left a phone

number at his parents.’ His father had died that day. But the person who answered Kjell’s phone assured me that I could call. We arranged a time for me to observe some of his classes. I guess that is not too bad. I have been here exactly a month and I finally get to peek in the door.

***Institute for Music and Drama, Department of Musicology at  
The University of Oslo***

It took a while before my observations at *Asker Musikk Skole* got started. Meanwhile, I had abundant access to another Norwegian musical setting, a music education seminar at the Department of Musicology at the University of Oslo. Several years ago I became aware of a Norwegian musical voice in American music education literature, a rare occurrence. I wrote the author on several occasions, and I am accepted, absentmindedly, but warmly and without reservations into Professor Jon Roar Bjørkvold’s music education seminar (*storfag*) at 1:00 p.m. every Wednesday.

*Storfag* at Chateau Neuf

Large room with long tables and chairs. Grand piano, stereo equipment, T.V., chalkboard up front. Windows in the back overlooking a seating area. I sit at the very front of the room, turned half towards the class and half towards the speaker so I can see the class and the professor. The people in this seminar are not all music students. Their ages vary. I think the majority are between 20 and 30.

In order to understand music one has to understand what music means to us personally, on an emotional level, we are told. Emotions tap into spiritual resources. Music unlocks emotions.<sup>15</sup> So this is a setting where being open, spontaneous, natural, free and emotional is important. In Norway no less! I try hard to look as relaxed and nonchalant as I possibly can and my neck hurts like crazy!

The students are mostly silent; they may smile or laugh knowingly, a sort of conspiratory laugh to convince the professor and the rest of us that they know just what the speaker means. Others stare down at their papers or write as long as possible in order not to commit themselves to a close eye interaction with this man, who can get pretty intense and personal at times.

These participants already know what the class is all about. Professor Bjørkvold and his ideas are well known in the Nordic countries. I suppose everyone is here because they feel some need or importance in getting in touch with their emotional, real selves in order to gain a different understanding of what they are doing within their own fields. [Actually I think *storfag* is a

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<sup>15</sup> This is a close paraphrase from two lectures, 8/31/94 and 10/19/94.



required part of the curriculum]. I am not sure where they are headed after they finish here, where this particular type of musical education fits into Norwegian society. What is becoming clear, however, is that some of the people here would not be here if they had passed through the eye of the needle across the street, the audition process at *Musikkhøgskolen*.

Per, a young man in his early 20s, plays the piano furiously or wistfully after every lecture. Per did not get in to *Musikkhøgskolen*. They accepted 2 of 60 pianists when he auditioned he tells me. Tears well up in his eyes. But, he claims, he is beginning to be happy where he is! Yes he is. So there! BANG! His hands strike the piano.

As I walk to the tram after a lecture, I chat with someone who has experience with both institutions. According to this person there is no comparison: The students at *Musikkhøgskolen* are much better musicians than the ones at the university. [One wonders about criteria for a 'good' musician.] The music schools draw teachers from *Musikkhøgskolen* rather than the university as well, thus showing a preference for performing artists who teach.

Arne Hagen disputes this view in a later discussion. He claims that since music education in Norway is so varied, he often goes by age in his hiring decisions. Someone Kjell's age, for instance, would have a different background than Hilde and Lena, who are younger. *Musikkhøgskolen* is a relatively new institution in Norwegian society. Kjell would not have had that as an educational resource. In Kjell's age group Hagen would look for a conservatory background supplemented by some type of musical education in a different country.

However, the European conservatory tradition does favor performing artists who teach. Being able to do, to perform, play an instrument, sing, is the ultimate proof of legitimacy in the music field. There is a prevailing feeling that if you can play an instrument or sing at a performance level, you will be able to teach other people how to play and sing better than someone who does not play or sing at a performance level.

Lena and Hilde, two of the musicians in this study, are performers who also teach. They hold masters degrees (*diplom studium*) from *Musikkhøgskolen*..<sup>16</sup> Kjell is a composer with a conservatory background from Norway and England who teaches and plays a variety of instruments. Are they superior teachers? Sometimes they are and sometimes they are not. I think their abilities to play and to sing enhanced their lessons. Certainly it was a pleasure for me to listen to them. But their performance skills did not obviously determine their success in their roles as teachers. Other factors were far more influential in establishing what worked and what did not work in their instructional contexts. Their personalities, their characters came into play here, as did the musical and teaching skills they brought to their lessons.

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<sup>16</sup> Lena finished her degree after my field work was completed.

The music school, a music education seminar, the musicians at *Asker* , the musical issues and some of the controversies in the field, my personal perspectives and roles, Norwegian society at large: The stage is set for my first observations at *Asker*.

Before visiting the classrooms, however, I will look at the institutional structure of the music schools.

## Chapter 4. Music schools in Norway

In order to understand how the music schools function in Norwegian society, it is necessary to look at two other types of music education, the conservatory tradition and music in Norwegian public schools.

### Conservatories

There are different types of music conservatories in Norway. Østlandet's Music Conservatory, *Østlandets Musikkonservatorium*, for instance, which is now part of the division of aesthetic subjects at *Høgskolen* in Oslo, traces its roots to the music school at *Veitvedt*, (*Musikkskolen på Veitvedt*), a school primarily for music educators. The old name is confusing because it predates the institution of music schools considered here. The Conservatory of Oslo (*Musikkonservatoriet i Oslo*), in contrast, traces its history to the Lindeman family, who, in 1887, established an institution mirrored on traditional European conservatories. This institution offered private instruction to children, youth and adults on traditional instruments and voice. The Conservatory of Oslo today has merged into *Musikkhøgskolen* in Oslo, which provides music instruction for both performance and music education majors.

The Norwegian public school system today consists of elementary and middle school, together referred to as *grunnskolen*, and high school (*videregående*). Children enter first grade as seven year olds. They spend first through sixth grade in elementary school, and seventh through ninth grade in middle school. These nine years are compulsory. After *grunnskolen* there are a variety of school options - trade, mechanic, etc. Academic high school or *videregående* takes another three years. Completion of *videregående* is a prerequisite for entry to academies of higher learning (*høyskoler/høgskoler*) or universities. The system functioned differently when I was young, and is in the process of changing again. *Reform -94* guarantees all Norwegians a place in academic, (*videregående*) high schools after ninth grade, and as of fall 1997, after a prolonged debate, Norwegian children will start first grade as six year olds. *Grunnskolen* will now consist of ten years of compulsory education.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> During the fall of 1994, six year olds were already attending first grade in many locations in Norway.

### Music instruction in public schools

Music instruction in the Norwegian public schools is typically taught by a general classroom teacher who has had training in music along with the regular course requirements for teaching. From my elementary school days, I remember singing classes that reflected a strong song tradition, both secular and sacred, which was heavy on a nationalistic and nature-inspired repertoire. This type of song culture is weakening in Norway today.

### Music education and the music schools

The new music schools are like the conservatories in as much as the predominant type of instruction offered takes place in small groups or privately. The music schools conduct several types of activities in the public schools, but the common bond with public school instruction lies in ideology rather than teaching methods: The goal of the music schools is to bring music instruction to everyone, not just the talented few. In order to reach that goal, music schools have to be open to everyone without prerequisites (*åpne opptak*), and cost can not be a barrier to participation.

### History of Music Schools

Pilot music schools (*forsøksmusikkskoler*) were started in the late 1950s and early 60s in *Trondheim* and *Bugn*. During this time there seems to have arisen a general concern that music activities, such as choir and bands in local communities, were declining. The music schools were intended to supplement, not replace, existing music activities in the community, as well as music instruction in the public schools.

Interest in these prototype institutions grew throughout the 60s, and in 1973 the national level Norwegian Cultural Council (*Norsk Kulturråd*) formed a committee to study the music schools. In 1975, the Braseth committee, named for its chairman, Nils Braseth, suggested that county music schools should get support from the Norwegian government, since without government support, only the richest counties could afford them. In 1979 the Government's Music Advisory Committee (*Statens Musikkråd*) set up a new group, the Hagen committee, to further develop the suggestions set forth by the Braseth committee (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1984/85).

On February 6th, 1980, the county music schools were brought up for discussion in Parliament (*Stortinget*). The debate showed broad acceptance of the government's role in sharing the cost of running such institutions. Several representatives (*statsråd*) stressed the fundamental assumption

of general admissions (*åpne opptak*), and low or preferably no tuition, as an argument for connecting the music schools with elementary and middle schools (*grunnskolen*). Ideally, the cost of public music instruction through the music schools should be part of the budget of the existing public school system. In other words, the music schools should be financed by the county, (*kommune*), district county (*fylkeskommune*) and national government (*staten*) along the lines of other educational institutions in Norway. The need for a law concerning the music schools was also discussed, based on the experiences of combining the music schools and elementary schools in the pilot studies in *Trondheim* and *Bugn* (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1984/85).

The number of music schools has steadily grown over the years. In 1982 there were 175 music schools in Norway. By 1994, the number had grown to 330. As of 1994 there were approximately 82.000 students enrolled nationwide, which represents 17.5% of all children and youth in Norway between the ages of 7 and 16. Economic support from the national government, district counties and counties has grown from ca. 5 million kroner in 1982 to ca. 296 million kroner in 1994 (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1984/85; Norsk Musikkskoleråd (NOMU), 1994).<sup>18</sup>

However, in spite of a steady increase in the number of music schools over the years, as well as increased government support, many counties in Norway still have difficulties maintaining quality music schools. Information from 1984/85 noted that only 11 of 309 counties with under 7,000 inhabitants could afford them. Of 155 counties with under 3,000 people, 116 (77%) did not have music schools. All counties with more than 35,000 people had music schools (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1984/85).

Furthermore, music schools have not been established as educational institutions on an equal basis with the public schools. Costs are not completely covered by the government, and there is still no national law connecting the music schools to the public school system. In some counties the students' share of tuition is high, compromising the objective of general admission (*åpne opptak*). In 1985, it was noted that "The students' tuition has reached a level where a social imbalance is the obvious result." Lack of money also made it necessary to create large instructional groups. These large group sessions tended to be split up into individual instruction periods, where

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<sup>18</sup> The music school movement is not unique to Norway. In 1984, all 284 counties in Sweden had music schools with 370.000 students enrolled. (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1984/85).

the parents ended up paying proportionally a great deal for very short lessons (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1984/85, p. 5). Based on these economic difficulties, the then Church and Education Department continued to formulate guidelines for government support and to consider a law for county music schools in line with the public schools.

### Ideology

Proponents of music schools offer two justifications for these institutions in Norwegian society: 1) Music is an emotional resource to the individual. A musical [emotionally healthy] person is in turn a resource to society; 2) Hand in hand with the social value of music, goes the equality concept - music for all - which means that quality music instruction in the music schools must be made economically feasible for everyone.

The head of the Church and Education Department in the mid 70s linked the spiritual and social value of music in the following words:

When we now, for a long time have put all energy, thought and care into economic and social renewal, and when we incrementally have achieved a good deal in these matters, then the time has come to think of one's soul. And if we don't have a soul, we need to get one. In the middle of the soul lives music. Music comes from the soul and it is directed at the soul. Someone has to make music for us. Preferably we ought to make music ourselves - every one of us.

*“Når vi nå lenge har lagt all kraft, omtanke og omsorg i økonomisk og sosial nyvinning, og når vi etter hvert har kommet et godt stykke på veg slik, da må tiden være inne til å tenke på sin sjel. Og har vi ingen sjel, så får vi skaffe oss en. Midt i sjelen bor musikken. Derfra kommer den - dit går den. Noen må spille for oss. Helst bør vi spille selv - alle.*

(Egeland, in Johnsen, 1978, p. 15).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> During my stay in Norway, Gudmund Hernes was the head of the Church, Education and Research Department, (*Kirke- Undervisnings- og Forsknings Departementet*) and a major force behind the changes in the Norwegian educational system. The reforms can be seen as an attempt to internationalize Norwegian education in order for Norway to compete within a global economy (Lauvdal, 1993). His radical changes were seen as a set-back by many Norwegian educators, in particular those involved in music, art and health related professions. After successfully implementing his reforms in the educational sector, Hernes has now (1996) moved on to become the Minister of Health and Welfare (*Helseminister*).

The spiritual and social benefits of music were also cited by the 1977 Braseth Committee, which stated that “ Music activates children and youth, contributes to a person’s well-being, and develops a person socially, emotionally and intellectually. It works to inhibit isolation and loneliness, and it inspires to group activities and cooperation. Musical activities contribute to a rich cultural life in local communities” (Norske Kommuners Sentraforbund, (1984/85), p. 6). Attempting to convince local communities that music schools were needed, a supporter wrote: “We note that more and more groups of teenagers are not interested in positive social activities.... It is necessary that the counties provide a stimulating recreational environment for youth.” Arguing for public funds to support the schools, he went on: “Culture should not be ‘a luxury for the few.’ The music schools are there for everyone who is interested in, wants and has ability to acquire musical education - without social imbalance” (Solheim, 1978, pp. 7-10).

#### Social and financial structure of music schools

The music schools offer instruction to the surrounding communities as well as the public schools. Music school education is financed by the county, the district county, the national government and the individual student.

Music schools are owned and operated by individual counties (*kommuner*) (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1984/85). The county(*kommunen*) is the smallest unit of government in Norway. It is in charge of the local health system, local roads and elementary and middle schools (*grunnskolen*). The district county (*fylkeskommunen*) controls district hospitals, roads and high schools (*videregående skoler*) . The national government (*Staten*) is in charge of country wide or specialty hospitals, domestic highways and university or other academies of higher learning. (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1987). The individual counties (*kommunene*) in Norway have increasingly assumed a larger share of the running of local affairs. Counties take care of more and more of the local citizens’ needs from ‘cradle to grave.’ The county is run by the county council (*kommunestyret*), which is the only county organization elected by the people who live in that county (Kommunenenes Sentralforbund, 1994, p. 7).

In each county, (*kommune*), the county council (*kommunestyret*) establishes committees (*hovedutvalg*) to be in charge of different areas. These differ from county to county, but committees generally are formed for administration, culture, education, health and welfare, and technical concerns (Kommunenenes Sentralforbund,1994, p.8). Since county music schools do not fall under the public school law (*grunnskoleloven*), they may be variously run by either a cultural

or a school committee (*kultur , skoleetat*) . A school committee (*skoleetaten*) seems to be most commonly in charge of the music schools (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1984/85; Kommunenes Sentralforbund, 1994).

The county council (*kommunestyret*) often recommends that music schools form a music school committee (*musikkskoleutvalg*) under the school or cultural committee (*skole, kulturetat*). The county council sets guidelines for the responsibilities, administrative directions and composition of the music school committee. The music school committee often consists of political representatives from the cultural or school committees (*kultur, skoleetat*), parents and teachers from the music school. There are no students on the music school committee, in contrast to the public school committees, where students were added after the ‘oversight’ of excluding them was corrected (Eian, interview, June, 1995). The county council encourages the music school committees to keep in contact with the local education and the cultural committees, in order to become a politically cooperative organization between the two (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1984/85; Kommunenes Sentralforbund, 1994).

Individual music schools often also have a parent organization (*foreldreråd*). It is recommended [from what organizational level the recommendation comes is unclear], that the parent organization have representatives from different school districts in the county (Kommunenes Sentralforbund, 1994, p. 13).

The national government (*staten*), which has contributed economically to the music schools since 1982, sets the following conditions for financial support: The school has to be a county school. The school term must follow the regular public school instructional year. The county has to provide at least half of the expenses of running the school. The student’s share of tuition (*egenbetaling*) should not be unreasonably high, that is, no one should be excluded for economic reasons (Kommunenes Sentralforbund, 1994, p. 12). Tuition in 1993 could not exceed kr. 1600 (ca. \$250) per year. Reduction in price for siblings is available. No one should have to pay for more than two music students. Any number of siblings can take lessons for the price of two, and the second child pays a reduced rate. (Kommunenes Sentralforbund, 1994, p. 38).

The music schools sell instructional hours (*salg av timer*) to the community at large and to the public school system. During the school year 1993/94, Norwegian music schools spent 80% of their time providing music instruction to private students within their individual counties. Other



services in the communities accounted for 16%, and the music schools spent 3% of their time teaching in the public schools. As of 1994, the national government provided 19% of the cost of running the schools. The County provided 59%, and the students 22%. Tuition differs from county to county, but, on the average, the student's share in 1994 came to kr. 1,009 per year. (ca. \$150) (Norsk Musikkskoleråd, NOMU, 1994, pp.3,7,8,9).

### Asker Musikkskole

Asker Musikkskole was established in 1978. It seems to follow the general model for county music schools. The school is run by a director or principal, (*rektor*), two educational inspectors, (*undervisnings inspektører*), and two administrative assistants (*kontorfullmektiger*), who share a full position. During the school year 1994/95, Asker had 55 teachers, full and part time. The teachers and administrators often hold 'combined positions' (*kombinerete stillinger*). They work not only for the music schools, but also for public schools, as private teachers and performers (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1984/85, p. 15). In 1994/95, the school had about 750 students. It was one of the 10 largest county music schools in the country. The county has a music school committee (*musikkskoleutvalg*), which in Asker's case is called The Council for the Music School (*Styret for Musikkskolen*). Its members include parents, politicians and teachers. The secretary for the council is the school's director. *Asker Musikkskole* has a parent organization, which does not necessarily reflect the different school districts in the county. (*Foreldrerådet FAU*) (Notisen, April 1994, pp. 2 and 3). Until recently, the council reported to the committee for education (*skoleetaten*) rather than the committee for culture (*kulturetaten*) in Asker county.

A telephone conversation with director Arne Hagen illustrates the complex relationships within which the music schools operate (telephone conversation, Nov. '94). I was curious about the 1994 Music School Statistics that indicate that music school faculty only spend 3% of their time in the public schools. I knew the information had to be at least partly inaccurate. *Asker Musikkskole* was listed as providing no services to the public schools, though I had learned that they conduct both band and choral activities in the school system in Asker. (Norsk Musikkskoleråd, NOMU, 1994, p. 18).

The statistical data, Hagen replied, is, indeed, misleading. Even though *Asker* is listed as providing no services to the public schools, they have been active in the bands in the public schools for several years. In fact, they have provided a model for other counties to follow in this respect (*Asker modellen*). In 1994, they also began choral activities in the public schools, and

Hagen serves as a counsel or guide (*veileder*) for the music teachers in elementary and middle schools (*grunnskolen*). As a counsel for the public schools he coordinates music courses for general classroom teachers, provides personal guidance for music teachers, and serves as an adviser on Music Objectives for the Elementary and Middle School (*Mønsterplanen for Grunnskolen*). All the schools in the county can use Hagen's services on a voluntary basis, but none of these services showed up in the statistics (Interview, Nov. 1994).

Hagen: Let me use our school choirs as an example. Asker has a choir project which we just started in the fall of 1994 with the public schools. The choir project consists of six schools where all third graders take chorus. *Asker* could have put this under 'sale of hours,' but we didn't. The teacher's salary is paid directly by the public schools. Some of the teachers have combined positions (*kombinerter stillinger*). They work for the music school and the public schools, and they are paid by both. What the public schools pay directly to the music schools is not refunded or granted by the national government, and therefore does not show up in the statistics.

I take the opportunity to discuss music instruction in the public schools with Hagen. Music education in this setting is often considered to be difficult, in part because the instructional group is so large. In fact, early supporters of the music schools felt that one of the reasons the schools became accepted was that they offered music instruction privately and in small groups. (Opdal, 1978, pp. 30-39). Odd Eikemo, Special Council to the music school council at the Counties' Central Coalition, (*spesialråd for musikkolerådet* at *Kommunenes Sentralforbund*) felt that it was self evident that very little could be accomplished musically with 28-30 students in the classroom. "Perhaps with singing," he said (Telephone call Nov. '94).

*Asker's* director approached problems in public schools music instruction from a different perspective:

Hagen: We have to go way back here, to consider teacher training generally in Norway. A teacher in the public schools on the elementary and youth school levels should be able to teach all subjects. The education of the general teacher, (*almenlærer*), is set up to cover all subjects, including music. Music instruction is, therefore, part of the general course work at the educational institutions for teachers in Norway (*Lærerhøgskolene*). These days there is a choice of subjects and you can choose not to take certain electives. The tendency is to leave out music because the average

person feels untalented at music - feels they lack background. So, the general teachers, in elementary schools particularly, only rarely have specialized musical education. The music teachers in the middle schools (*ungdomsskolen*) are better prepared. They have additional training in music.

I had gained the impression that the music schools see their future as part of the public school system. The impression is reinforced by the debate in Parliament, attempts to be included in the public school law (*grunnskoleloven*), to be financed on an equal basis with the regular schools. It is also evidenced by the preference for inclusion in the school rather than the cultural committees in each county. Such a move would put the music schools on an equal basis with educational institutions generally, and enhance both financial security and social acceptance. The complicated arrangement of music school/public school instruction, financed by a mixture of private, county, and national funds puts the music schools in an unstable position where they have to continually negotiate their existence within changing and complex political and financial realities. This is really a rather ‘un-Norwegian’ situation in a country where educational institutions are typically sanctioned and financed by the county or state, but very typical of the uncertain position music and art generally hold in the Western world.

Hagen confirms that the music schools wish to play a part in the public schools and explains additional ways he seeks to work in this sector:

Hagen: The music schools want to gain more influence in the public schools. SFO (*Skolefritidsordningen*), school spare time arrangement, or child care), is promising.<sup>20</sup> We want more influence here. Late teaching hours for music is a problem. We need to teach where and when it is most beneficial to the children, parents and teachers.

He goes on to tell me about ‘pink’ and ‘white’ sheets, (*rosa og hvite ark*), explaining how the activities that the music school wants to undertake have to be negotiated politically.

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<sup>20</sup> Ellen and Ellen’s mother have already introduced SFO, *skolefritidsordningen*, the care provided for children in the school facilities when the regular school day is over. Ellen indicated that music and dance lessons are already offered in several settings, but not on a consistent basis.

Hagen: The pink sheet budget requests are only pink hopes really until they have actually been transferred to white sheets. This means that the politicians are cooperating and things are progressing with our requests.

Hagen seems worried about *Asker Musikkskole's* impending transfer from the school to the cultural committee in Asker county. It may weaken the future role in the public schools that he has envisioned. (Kjernlie, March 1 1994, p. 12).

Hagen: The music schools need and want to gain more influence in the public schools. I worry about the shift that *Asker Musikkskole* is facing - from the school committee to the cultural committee. I worry that the contact with the public schools will be reduced, the functions will be weaker. It is the politicians, of course, that have decided that the running of the school will now be taken over by the Cultural committee (*Kulturetaten*). But, perhaps we will meet more understanding from other people who are used to working with similar artistic concerns.

The complex, fluid nature of the political context, as well as the difficulty of confining an ethnography to a specific time-period, was brought home to me when I called Hagen in June 1995, several months after I acquired my initial information. I called to verify the composition of the music school committee. In the interim, the committee for culture (*kulturetaten*) had taken over the running of the music school, and the composition of the committee had changed. The previous committee consisted of three politicians, one parent and one teacher. The new committee will consist of two politicians, two parents and one teacher. This, according to Hagen, reflects an emphasis on the users (parents/students) rather than the politicians (*styrking av brukerne*). Hagen will remain as the committee's secretary. He seemed much less concerned about the shift from school to cultural committees than he was in November 1994.

The music schools have grown steadily over the last 10 to 15 years. They have more students, more money from the public sector, and have become accepted as quality educational institutions in the communities. However, the county music schools have tried from the very beginning to play a major part in the public schools, and that goal has never been fully achieved. In spite of choirs, bands, and increased cooperation with SFO, (child care after school), the county music schools are still minimally involved in the Norwegian public school system.

### What do the music schools teach?

Primarily, the music schools offer instrumental and voice lessons to children and young people between 4 and 19 years of age, but anyone younger or older can also participate. The instruments taught vary depending on local interests, but, in general, they include woodwinds, horns, strings, piano, guitar, accordion, synthesizer and percussion. There are relatively few students studying the cello, contrabass, oboe, bassoon and organ. In areas with strong folk music traditions, there is an increased interest in traditional folk instruments, such as *hardingfele* (a fiddle from a particular section of Norway - *Hardanger*), *langeleik* (reminiscent of the dulcimer) and folk accordion. By far, the most popular instrument is the piano. 15,300 of 70,005 students took piano instruction during the school year 1992/93. Then comes the violin, and, in third place, the guitar. Music classes for students with a handicap are becoming more and more popular (Kommunenes Sentralforbund, Kirke-Utdannings- og Forskningsdepartementet, 1992/93, pp. 3,4, 5).

For preschool children the music schools offer musical kindergarten (*musikkbarnehager*) and pre-instrumental groups. 10,300 children of 70,005 took these classes in 1992/93. (Kommunenes Sentralforbund, Kirke-Utdannings- og Forskningsdepartementet, 1992/93, p. 3). *Oslo Kommunale Musikkskole*, for instance, offers four different classes for preschool and young elementary age children. 1) Music in the beginning of life, 8 week long courses for infants from 3 months; 2) Musical Kindergarten. Music/movement/rhythm and singing classes for 4-6 year olds. Group size varies from 12-15 children; 3) Music preschool for ages 6-8. These are preparatory instrumental and vocal classes with 5-6 students in each class. Instruments include barred instruments, such as Orff instruments, recorders, piano and strings; 4) Music workshop offered for ages 6-8 in groups of 12-15 students. This is a continuation of musical kindergarten rather than an introduction to instrumental and voice lessons (Oslo Kommunale Musikkskole, 1994/95).

There are also chamber groups, bands, orchestras and choirs connected with the music schools, but, for the most part, the institutions wish to supplement the ensemble activities already taking place in the community, in line with the original intentions of the music schools in the 1950s. The music schools may sell conducting or teaching services to local choirs, bands and orchestras (Oslo Kommunale Musikkskole, 1994/95).

Some music schools offer music theory and ear training as separate classes. These are open to everyone who is interested, but are geared to students who intend to pursue music at higher educational institutions (Kommunenes Sentralforbund, 1990 p. 28).

As is the case with Asker Musikkskole, music schools often conduct choir and band activities in the public schools. Music schools also teach during SFO, the time some children spend at school after the regular school day is over. The elementary and middle schools are in the process of rescheduling their classes, which, in some cases, also has made it possible for music school students to leave their classrooms to get music instruction (Kommunenes Sentralforbund, Kirke-Utdannings- Og Forskningsdepartementet, 1992/93, p. 1). However, the working relationship between the music school and the public schools varies greatly from one county to the next, from full integration in some counties to none at all in others (Kommunenes Sentralforbund, 1994, p. 47).

### Observations at Asker

The following chapters describe what I experienced in three classrooms at Asker Musikkskole. I was a passive observer in all of these settings and had ample opportunity to take detailed notes. I also taped every session, all interviews and informal talks. I have kept the descriptions of private and ensemble music instructional settings pretty much as I wrote them down initially. The stories are interspersed with personal reflections and analyses. In each case, I have tried to project and preserve the personalities of the people involved as well as the atmosphere of the setting. According to the people I observed, sometimes they felt I was successful at describing them and their classes, and sometimes they felt I ‘missed the boat’ completely. Again, the topics I discuss are not necessarily the ones these musicians would have chosen to discuss, but ones that were of concern to me, that I felt were illuminated by their classes and comments.

## Chapter 5. *Inger skal ha glede av sangen. Enjoy singing, Inger!*

### Private instruction

Most of the classes I observed at *Asker* were private lessons. One-on-one instruction where the teacher and student meet once a week is obviously very different from teacher/student interaction in a regular classroom where one teacher sees 25+ students every day, several times a week. Some of the administrators at the music schools may work regular day time hours, but the music school teachers work at different sites,<sup>21</sup> work irregular hours, and they combine teaching with many other musical concerns. Since both the teachers' and the students' lives are only marginally spent inside the music school institution, the classroom and the school contexts, with their general classroom and school concerns seem to fade. Regular schooling often becomes a context to be learned in itself, obscuring the real learning process [of academic subjects] that is supposed to be taking place in that institution (Bereiter, 1990). This is not the case when music is taught privately, after school. The focus stays on the musical instrument and the two principal actors involved.

The social relationship between the two people involved in the learning process is the content of the private lesson. The process includes the teacher guiding, consoling, encouraging the student about playing the piano or singing, yes; but not exclusively. The teacher and student discuss their day, how they are feeling, what they got for their birthdays. There are lots of smiles, laughs, jokes. The student complains, the teacher commiserates, admonishes, praises. There is no way the private teacher can ignore the whole person standing in front of him/her; and that person often has a lot on his/her mind that has little to do with music. The violin teacher's comment when complaining about the 20 minute time limit on instruction was: "How am I supposed to find time to ask how their dog is?! I have to know how the individual student is feeling that day before I can teach them anything."

Insufficient time was a concern for the choral director who had not been able to participate in this study, the violin teacher and the voice teacher. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, as long as the music schools are not fully funded by public funds, and 'equal access' precludes charging the private student too much, there is simply not enough money to pay for long, individual lessons (Norske Kommuner Sentralforbund, 1984/85, p. 3). What would be an adequate amount of time for this type of teaching? Enough time to include the concerns of the student in context, to ask the person in front of you how their day has been, how their dog is. This is one way the teacher can determine what the student is ready to absorb at that particular time and place, and a vital step in the learning process.

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21 Some of the music instruction takes place at the county music school. Most classes are held at local public schools after regular school hours. The students attend the school closest to their home.

Teaching late, after the regular school day is over, is another problem for music teachers. As Arne Hagen already pointed out, everyone involved in the process is tired (Chapter 4, p. 37). Further, the isolation that many teachers feel in their classrooms may be more pronounced among music school teachers than teachers in daytime schools. Private music teachers have even less time and opportunity to meet each other and talk about problems and concerns connected to their jobs and professions than teachers in general.

Nevertheless, the private lesson is a privileged setting for teacher/student interaction. There are few discipline problems. The participants are less concerned with their roles in the institution and better able to concentrate on each other and the music lesson. There is a real opportunity for the teacher and student to get to know each other, thus maximizing the possibility of approximating the student's learning level, the point where s/he is ready to move on to a new stage of development (Vygotsky, 1986).

#### Classroom observations

I begin with Hilde Torgersen, singer and voice teacher. Hilde was actually the second person whose classes I visited, but her instructional settings had an emotional dimension that I began to see as vital to a positive interaction between a student and a teacher. Furthermore, it was through her lessons that I first became aware of the issues that I am discussing, and my perspectives on those issues.

#### Wednesday Sept. 21 '94

Hilde teaches at *Bondi skole*, an elementary school in *Asker* county on Wednesdays. [My talk with Ellen, her mother and sister took place here.] The school is located at the bottom of a hill, and the room<sup>22</sup> Hilde uses is fairly dark. It seems quite pleasant, though - large and clean with big windows looking out over the school yard with lots of trees. There is a grand piano, out of tune, with an unpleasant ringing noise. Hilde, as it turns out, thinks the room is uncomfortable to teach in, the piano is unsatisfactory, and the room, as a whole, is unaesthetic. I don't think it is that bad - some interesting decor! Skeletons, stuffed owls, etc.

#### Marius

Hilde is teaching when I come in. The student is Marius, a 12 year old boy. Marius has just moved to *Asker* with his mother and brother, so this is only the fifth lesson Hilde and Marius have had together. They meet once a week. They are doing vocal exercises and rhythm exercises, triplets, (*triole*) that Marius is working out by clapping '1,2,3' on his knees. The triplets are later transferred to vocal exercises on 'ja.' Hilde wants him to try out his falsetto range. Marius objects that it sounds flat (*falskt*), so they give that up.

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<sup>22</sup> *miljørommet*, or environmental room.



Hilde's instructions to Marius are very clear and simple, and she is not rushed in her manners or her way of speaking. Her speaking voice has a beautiful, clear, melodic sound; medium low pitch. [She is a mezzo soprano]. She is calmly cheerful with Marius, encouraging, but not gushing (*overstrømmende*). The teacher/student relationship seems warm, friendly and relaxed.

After a few minutes a new student comes in. Hilde says to Marius: "We did not get much singing done." They only managed to finish vocal exercises, but Hilde has photo-copied a song for him to learn for next time, and there is a feeling of completeness even though the session was short.

### Inger

The new student is Inger, who is 9, is in third grade, and has been taking piano and singing lessons from Hilde for several years. Inger will get 20 minutes of piano instruction first, and then 20 minutes of voice. This is not considered a shared lesson as in half voice half piano, but two private lessons on different instruments. [Inger also plays trumpet in a school band. I observe her band later. I didn't recognize her at first, but she skipped over to me and started talking as if she had known me for a long time. Kjell, the guitar instructor, is the conductor for her band group].

Hilde introduces me, and there is a brief disagreement about how long Inger has been taking piano. Inger plays from the Bastien piano series, and seems quite familiar with the notes and the instrument.<sup>23</sup> Inger and Hilde play a duet together, which sounds good. Inger is a lot more certain of herself when she plays with her teacher.

Inger works on her part of a new duet. She seems hesitant and a little embarrassed. She has difficulty with triple rhythm. It is harder for her to play with an accent on the first of three beats [triple rhythm] than with an accent on the first of two or four beats [duple rhythm]. Hilde is patient and lets her work out her own rhythm, but has to step in after a while. "Let's sing and play it together," she says. Again, they are both playing and singing. Inger seems to physically adjust her rhythm to Hilde's. She watches Hilde's hands intently, ignoring her own hands as well as the written music on the stand in front of her. Hilde sways slightly from side to side in a, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3 beat. Inger moves with her. Again, like in the duet they just played, Inger seems to be able to match Hilde's playing, by actively trying to do what she sees, feels and hears her teacher does. The singing seems to be another supporting physical activity that strengthens the feel of the beat. Inger is slowly learning to play triple meter by singing, playing and swaying with her teacher as a model and guide. I don't think she can quite manage without Hilde yet, but she is getting there.

Hilde gives Inger's shoulder a tiny squeeze when the song is over. She looks so pleased with her student. Inger is all smiles.

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<sup>23</sup> The Bastien piano series is frequently used by Norwegian piano teachers. Other American piano methodology books like Schaum and Thompson are also popular. These books are used in the original English (Doornbos, 1994).

### How did Inger learn to play a waltz?

The interaction between Hilde and Inger is an example of a social dialogue between adult and child, expert and novice, where the adult helps the child understand and complete tasks the child could not have accomplished on her/his own (Langer & Applebee, 1986). The process in which the interaction takes place has variously been termed the zone of proximal development (Wertsch, 1985, pp. 67-76), and ‘scaffolding,’ ‘support’ (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). According to Vygotsky, this zone applies to the “distance between a child’s “actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving” and the higher level of “potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Wertsch, 1985, pp. 67, 68). Thus, the zone of proximal development is concerned with the process of child development, what Inger is becoming or what s/he is learning beyond what s/he already knows, rather than what she has learned or is at any one stage. Wood and his colleagues developed the idea of ‘scaffolding’ to describe this linkage process between adult and child, where the adult then functions as a ‘support’ or ‘scaffold’ for the child.

### Social processes that hold key to learning

What took place in the interaction between Inger and Hilde when Inger was trying to learn triple meter? According to several researchers, the learning process as seen in social contexts is accomplished in set ways: The adult first models, then coaches and then fades. Modeling consists of the adult thinking out loud about ways to solve the problem facing the child. Coaching or scaffolding takes place when the child is faced with the problem and the adult cues the child in order for the child to solve the problem her/himself. Fading occurs when the adult’s cues disappear over time as the scaffolding has become internalized in the child and s/he can solve the problem, and others like it on her/his own (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1989).

### Is music academic?

In a way, the above model fits what I saw in Inger’s lesson. However, mastering a musical instrument is different from learning an academic subject. Vygotsky’s research revolved around academic disciplines and specifically excluded “specialized, technical skills such as typing or bicycle riding,” which he considered to have little impact on development (Wertsch, 1986, p. 71). Can the process of learning to play the piano be compared to the process of learning an academic discipline such as the above research refers to?

I consider the nature of playing the piano in terms of what I observed in Inger’s lesson to be cognitive and technical in the sense that a technical skill does not exist independently of cognitive development. Making music, singing or playing an instrument, involves physical skills as well as mental concepts. Emotional aspects of the musical experience also plays into this definition.

### The importance of ‘doing’ in music

Learning to play an instrument, however, leans toward technical, physical skills rather than academic knowledge. You cannot explain how to play the piano, you must be able to play it. When it comes to music, doing, not talking, is knowledge. In this respect, Inger’s lesson is more reminiscent of learning in natural social contexts than learning in instructional settings. In fact, apprenticeship practices where the learning process is based on the inseparability of knowing and doing describe the interaction between Inger and Hilde better than the scaffolding process taking place in academic settings (Brown et al, 1989).

### Apprenticeship practices in music

Music methodologies have reflected the importance of ‘doing’ in the process of learning and teaching music for a long time. Carl Orff (1950), in adopting and adapting not only African instruments but African apprenticeship practices to music teaching and learning, argued that the process of learning music was best accomplished by a sequence of actively 1) listening [observer]; 2) echoing [imitation]; 3) improvising [creation based on a given scaffold or model]; and 4) creating [independent practice of music away from adult model].

However, Inger’s private lesson is an instructional setting. As such, apprenticeship practices do not adequately describe the learning process. Apprenticeship practices that have been studied in natural settings indicate that learning a skill in such a way often takes a lifetime of participation in a culture where the apprentice moves from being an observer and imitator to being a full participant in his/her profession (Lave & Wenger, 1991). A master drummer from the west coast of Africa described his learning process as follows: “I watched and listened for many years. I learned and sang all the songs with my mother. I played all the rhythms on my body, on rocks, on the sand. Then, when I was nearly twenty years old, I played my first drum” (Conversation, October 1994)<sup>24</sup>.

The nature of music as a subject where knowledge is an ability to do encourages learning practices such as apprenticeship instruction that teach mastery by doing. Yet, those practices don’t fit Western instructional settings where we teach/learn music, or the time frame of our music lessons. Inger’s lesson is not an apprenticeship in terms of Lave and Wenger (1990) or the African drummer. Yet, Inger was beginning to master triple meter, internalized in a social process of interaction between an adult model and child.

### Developmental readiness

What happened in the process I just observed? First of all, Inger was ready to learn triple meter. Judging from her playing and singing, she already knew rhythms in two and four very well. With

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<sup>24</sup> Studies indicate that apprenticeship practices are effective because they are an authentic part of a real setting, and may lose validity out of natural contexts (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

her teacher's help, she was at a point in her personal rhythmic development that made it possible for her to move on to triple meter at this point.

Could she have managed without Hilde's help? Probably not with understanding, that is, with the cognitive connection between new and old knowledge which indicates that learning has taken place. This type of understanding marks the student's readiness to move on. When a child is copying a teacher, s/he is performing a rote learning task. Imitation is copying with understanding. When a child imitates with a sense of understanding, s/he makes a leap from what s/he already knows to something new. "With assistance, every child can do more than he can by himself- though only within the limits set by the state of his development.... The child is most successful in solving problems that are closer to those solved independently; then the difficulties grow until, at a certain level of complexity, the child fails, whatever assistance is provided" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 187).

#### Private lessons are opportunities to find individual readiness level

Private lessons are effective because the teacher has a real opportunity to get to know the student and what that student already knows. The social interaction between Inger and Hilde in their private lessons over several years made it possible for Hilde to determine that Inger was developmentally ready to move on to a new skill. In addition, Hilde's caring personality suffused the setting and seemed to be part of her ability to successfully sense what her student was ready to absorb.

The music teachers' frustrations about time limits on instruction indicate that most of them know that developmental readiness is holistic, not tied to a specific skill, concept or time frame. The student has to be ready to move on emotionally, mentally and physically. The state of readiness may change from one lesson to the next, or from one minute to another during the class. The teacher needs time to find out when, how and with what material to proceed with the next step.

#### Inger's voice lesson

It is time for Inger's voice lesson. No vocal exercises, - songs right away. I am familiar with the repertoire. Inger starts with "*Da barnet sov inn*," "When the child fell asleep," a lullaby I remember well from my childhood voice lessons. It is part of a song repertoire appropriate for young people, and fits into the Western art music tradition.

Hilde explains a bit about the composer, about the meaning of the text. "Think about what you are singing about". "*Tenk på hva du synger om.*". Inger's posture droops. She seems tired, not really interested in the lullaby she is singing, but she nods absentmindedly and carries on.

Hilde, cheerfully: "*Nå gir vi oss.*" - "Enough for today. Try to practice the melody for the Nocturne if you have time." Inger quickly puts her music in a plastic grocery bag and dashes out

the door. Hilde chats a bit with Inger's mother who is waiting outside on one of the wooden benches that line the hall.<sup>25</sup>

Inger may have been ready to move on with musical skills and concepts, but physically and emotionally she was tired. Hilde decided that it was hard for her student to stay focused, finished up quickly without making a point of forcing Inger to concentrate, and allowed her to do what she was ready to do - go home.

#### Break between lessons

Hilde and I go upstairs to the teachers' lounge at *Bondi* school. Large, airy room, lots of windows with homespun looking curtains. Nice solid pine furniture. Candles on all the tables and tablecloths to match the curtains. Wooden ceiling lamps concentrated over tables. Nice, clean, uncluttered, solid, simple, unpretentious, reassuring, cozy - Norwegian.

Hilde lights the candle on our table. She has brought along hot water in a thermos, a tea bag for me and one for herself, - extra candy bar for me. She eats sandwiches that she has brought from home.

Hilde has already told me in an earlier telephone conversation that she has 41 students, and that this is her third year at *Asker Musikkskole*. Twelve of her students are new this year .

Hilde: My main problem is that I never feel I have enough time for each student. And the older the student gets, the more challenging the lesson becomes. With Inger, for instance, I don't talk technique at all, and I gave up on vocal exercises. I want Inger simply to enjoy singing. *Inger skal ha glede av sangen.*

#### Engendered processes. Musical joy

The emotional aspects of Inger's lesson were primarily connected to the social interaction between teacher and student. The emotional dimensions I had been looking for in both Marius' and Inger's lessons revolve around active involvement in musical experiences. Inger did not bring a musically emotional dimension to her playing and singing. Nevertheless, Hilde put her finger on what, to me, came to define 'engendered' musical processes in the context of music teaching and learning at *Asker Musikkskole* (Keil & Feld, 1994). "I want Inger simply to enjoy singing." "*Inger skal ha glede av sangen.*" I did not know it at the time, but *musikkglede* , the emotional, spiritual joyful dimension that are part of musical experiences is the aesthetic I look for in process oriented 'engendered' music education.<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, when Hilde claimed that she wanted Inger simply

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<sup>25</sup> Lots of forgotten coats from the daytime classes hanging on long coat racks above the benches. The children in elementary schools often take their coats and boots off in the hall before entering their classrooms.

<sup>26</sup> I discuss engendered processes and musical joy in Chapter 10.

to enjoy singing, she also implied that enjoying making music, at least at Inger's level, comes from simply singing songs, not from learning vocal technique.

Hilde goes on talking about Marius, the first student I listened to:

Hilde: Marius is 14. We have just started, and it takes so long to get acquainted.<sup>27</sup> Marius and his brother went to *Trondheim Musikkskole* before they came here. Marius took clarinet and voice lessons there.

*Trondheim musikkskole* was a pilot school within the music school movement and has a reputation for excellence (Chapter 4, p.2).

Me: Is *Trondheim* really that good?

Hilde: I don't know, but Marius seems to be good. He didn't feel the pitch on one of the songs was right for him, so he asked me if he could transpose it to a different key, for instance.

Hilde brings up the time limits on instruction again. She feels this is the main disadvantage of teaching at the music schools. A group lesson is 45 minutes and includes two to three people.

Hilde: It may be O.K. to teach guitar that way, but voice is very difficult to teach in a group. You have to find people who fit together, are on the same level and who can get along.

She often ends up giving ca. 20 minutes of private instruction to each person instead of going through the hassle of organizing a group. This seems to be a common solution to the problem (Norske Kommuners Sentralforbund, 1984/85; this study, chapter 4, pp. 31, 32).

Hilde has four years + two at *Musikkhøgskolen* in Oslo, *Kandidatstudium* + *Diplom studium*.. I think of this as a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree, but there is really no direct translation possible from one cultural context to the next. Hilde and her pianist husband perform regularly, mostly contemporary classical music by Norwegian or Nordic composers who compose music for them.

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<sup>27</sup> The importance of taking time, not rushing things, feeling comfortable, is prevalent, not just in Hilde's lessons, but in Norwegian society. One of my daughter's teachers at the middle school argued that her main goal was to make her new student feel at home. "How can we expect her to learn anything if she doesn't first feel safe [trygg] and comfortable in the school environment?" That process, she continued, would take time, and could not be hurried.

Hilde has spent 17 years as a performer with *Rikskonsertene*. These are educational concerts sponsored by *Staten*, the national government. Hilde and I, at a later date, had an interesting conversation about the low status of performers who perform through these state agencies. [I discuss status and institutions in Chapters 9 and 10.]

Hilde: People seem to look down on me because I take these jobs with *Rikskonsertene*. They seem to be saying, you, who are a performer, do you really have to take jobs like that? It is so insulting and it makes me feel inferior. I think it is a rewarding and O.K. (*grei*) job. And it pays well. I get kr. 1900 a day for a concert, about three hours of work (ca. \$270).

Hilde has a half time job with *Musikkskolen*..

Hilde: I teach 14 hours a week, that is a 55.5% position. I get *lektor's* salary, kr. 7.700 a month; that is the highest wage step. (ca. \$1.200)<sup>28</sup> I teach Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, at different places, mostly schools, in the county.

Hilde seems content with her status as a musician and teacher at this particular point in time. She completed her formal education at one of the most prestigious musical academies in Norway. The music school setting is one where she does not necessarily have to worry about preparing her students for higher musical studies or lives as musicians. This is a place where the underlying goal is to teach music to everybody, not the talented few (Chapter 4, p. 32). The music school provides her with paid sick leave as well as a pension plan. Like many of the other music teachers, Hilde's part time status allows her to perform as well.

#### Back to teaching. Western art music tradition

We go back downstairs. Two teenage girls are waiting for Hilde. They are sharing this lesson. There is lots of talking to start things off. The girls seem shy, mostly because I am there, I am sure. Hilde asks how their vocal technique is coming along? They hem and haw, laugh a little bit - look at each other. They work on breathing technique, to control the air flow while singing, which is quite different from automatic breathing. Hilde walks around and corrects them. She is humorous and reassuring, shows and explains with her whole body how she wants them to breathe. "You have to feel the contact with the support in your body" she says. Breathing consciously to produce a tone is difficult. The girls look strained and uncomfortable [and funny] and as they look at each other they buckle over with laughter.

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<sup>28</sup> A teacher with the title *lektor* generally has four years + pedagogical seminar from the university, + university level concentration in another subject with thesis (*hovedfag med hovedoppgave*). A *lektor* is qualified to teach in academic high schools (*videregående*), the three years beyond middle school.

Then the vocal exercises: “Try to feel how it feels to combine what you feel during the breathing exercises with the act of singing,” Hilde explains. “*Prøv å kombinere det dere føler ved pusteøvelsene med sang.*” The girls hold on to their ribcages to feel how they feel when they breathe. Here comes the high notes in a singing exercise. The girls hold on to themselves for hard life, and the notes sound flat and squeezed. Hilde and both of the girls burst out laughing. Hilde chuckling: “*Lurere å ikke holde igjen dere (når dere skal gå litt høyt). Sånn er det nå engang her i livet!*” “Smarter not to hold on so tight (hesitate) when you go for the high notes. Life is often like that really.”

I am nibbling on my candy bar in the back of the room, enjoying myself. There is such a good atmosphere in the room. These two girls seem to be on the same level singing wise, and they seem to get along well with each other. Hilde and her two students are comfortable with each other as well. They alternately chat, laugh and sing throughout the lesson.

Hilde’s exercises, technique and repertoire are all in the classical Western art music tradition. None of the girls are particularly comfortable with this genre of singing. Nevertheless, they seem to expect this type of instruction and songs in their voice lessons. The vocal style is right for Hilde. This is what she is trained to do, this is how she sings, and this is what she expects to teach. This is also the singing tradition in which I was brought up, and the type of lesson I had expected to observe. In spite of the fact that the students struggle with the technical conventions of singing in this style, everyone in the room is comfortable functioning in our different roles within a culture of music and music education that rests on Western art music.

The girls go on to sing a Swedish song. There is security in singing together; individual weaknesses are obscured, but not completely hidden. *Sangglede* ? Joy in singing? Hmm, not really. They struggle to achieve ‘correct’ voice placement, clear vowels, effective breathing, and the result is, - well, pinched and somewhat dry.

#### Talent, not musical joy

The emotion I am referring to, *sanggleden*, is the same joy in singing that Hilde was mentioning in connection with Inger’s lesson. This particular lesson, however, was so much like a traditional Western art music lesson that I automatically judged what I experienced in terms of technique and emotion. The emotion I was looking for in this case was not musical joy of the engendered kind (Keil & Feld, 1994). I was looking for the emotional nuance in talented singing, as it relates to musicality and Western art music (Kingsbury, 1988). Did the girls sing with proper technical skills? More importantly, did they sing with feeling?<sup>29</sup>

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29 I discuss these nuances further in the chapter on musical joy (Chapter 10). Music underlined applies to the talented type of emotional involvement throughout the study.



### Teaching style: flexibility and warmth

Hilde is in the process of modeling a new song. She chooses the literature carefully. She has a large *trillebag* - shopping bag with wheels - full of vocal and piano literature chosen to fit the different students in her classes. Hilde, in fact, tries to accommodate both literature and singing techniques to the needs of the individual. The result is that each lesson has a core of sameness, but differs depending on the background, skills and needs of the individual. The music stays within the framework of what can be defined as Western art music, the selections change from student to student. Hilde also changes as she meets the student's personality, mood, skills, needs. She responds with a nod, a look, a smile, a pat on a hand - reassuring, comforting, quietly praising. She is soft and motherly with the very young; firmer and more friend-like with the older ones. Even the nature of her singing voice takes on characteristics of her students' voices. Hilde searches for individual levels of 'readiness' to learn, both with her material and her personality.

I am absolutely green with envy over this woman's piano skills! Beautiful clear, resonant, rich mezzo soprano voice and excellent piano skills!<sup>30</sup> The two teenage girls rest their elbows on the piano and I sag back in my chair as we listen to Hilde sing the new song.

### Musical joy and talent

Here is *sanggleden*, the intangible spiritual joyful dimension connected primarily to the act of singing. This singer also brings out the emotional aspects of the musical source. She sings with feeling in the Western art music tradition. The song, sung with emotions, both musicality and joy, is communicated to the three of us listening. I experience the melody's purity and structure through the performer, and a personal joy in hearing this simple song and accompaniment, sung and played by an expert.

### Ellen

It is 6:45 p.m. and time for a new lesson for Hilde. The student is Ellen, whom I have already introduced through the interview in chapter 3. Like Inger, Ellen starts directly on songs - no breathing exercises, no vocal exercises. Ellen stands with her back to me. So did Inger. The two teenagers half faced me, in a recital sort of way. Ellen stands close to Hilde, hangs a little on the piano, one arm resting along the top. Teacher and student look directly at each other almost the entire lesson. There is no attempt to perform for me. Hilde is very tender and soft spoken with her young student, Her voice sounds soft and textured, childlike, when she models new songs. Teacher and student hum the rest of a new song together, smiling at each other when they finish. These two enjoy singing!

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<sup>30</sup> I found a high level of piano proficiency in the musical environments I visited. Hilde could as well have been a piano performer as a vocal performer. Kjell was a decent pianist in addition to all his other instrumental skills. Observing a choir rehearsal at *Musikkhøgskolen*, I noticed that the conductor chose [seemingly at random] choral members for accompanists. Everyone seemed equally at ease reading different sections of a very difficult score.

Ellen is small; long, blond hair; flowery pants and black patent leather shoes. She is attentive, interested, focused. And she sings and sings, lots of songs. Hilde and Ellen sing some songs together. They chat a while, or actually, Ellen chats for the most part. They agree on new songs to learn for the next lesson. At one time Hilde addresses me: “*Er ikke Ellen flink til å synge?* “ Ellen half turns to me, she looks shy, but very pleased. This is really not an attempt to include me in the lesson, but to acknowledge Ellen and how well this particular lesson is going. Yes, I smile back, she sings very well, and such nice rhythm and good pitch too! Even though there was no emphasis on learning pitch or rhythm in this lesson, Ellen used these technical skills well as part of singing.

#### Ellen has a smile in her voice when she sings

However, the tangible part of Ellen’s songs and singing lesson was the joy of singing. Here it was again - *sanggleden*, - not the enjoyment of tone quality, nuances of dynamics, excellent pitch that was part of the joy of Hilde’s song. Ellen’s song is a child’s song. The pitch is not always perfect, the tone is breathy. But there is a smile in her voice when she sings. In this particular lesson the emotional warmth of the social relationship between teacher and student blurred with the emotional warmth of the engendered experience of making music.

#### Hello Tension

I feel expectations rise as we face the last student of the evening - Marianne. Marianne is in the last year of academic high school, *Videregående*. She has short, black hair, black leather jacket. She is casual, a little sullen. Hilde introduces me. Marianne, loud, short, in no particular direction: “*Bra med litt publikum.*” “Good to have an audience.”

Again, I am struck by how much Hilde changes according to the personalities of her students. Tone of voice, texture of voice, nature of smile, posture, all different from one student to the next. Since the repertoire changes as well, each class period seems new.

I half expect Marianne to sing ‘Which Witch,’ a Norwegian rock opera; but this girl is not quite what she appears to be, or tries to appear to be. The exercises and songs in this lesson are all Western and art music. And Marianne is really pretty good as judged by Western standards of art musicianship. She has been taking lessons at *Musikkskolen* since she was 8. She has good technique, sings difficult repertoire. I am impressed by her Italian diction, and a little surprised that the Italian aria suits her better than Norwegian contemporary song literature. She is singing in an upcoming concert, to honor the Norwegian composer Johan Kvandal.<sup>31</sup> And Marianne struggles with this song that is reminiscent of the traditional sounds of Edvard Grieg, but has intervals and rhythms that are unlike Grieg and so difficult to sing! And Hilde coaches; gently, but insistently.

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31 I attended the concert and comment on several aspects of the performance in Chapters 8 and 9.

There is laughter and chatting, but also a stiffness, an underlying tension that was not part of the young children's or the other teenagers' lessons. There is a performance coming up, which means that the student and the teacher will be judged on the student's performance. The music schools' philosophy may be to teach music for everyone regardless of talent, but when you are faced with an audience, the element of 'how good you are' invariably enters the picture.

Joy in singing? No, this lesson was mostly about technique. Personally, I was all wrapped up in pinched upper register, too much air in the middle register, lack of blending between registers, I did not even think about *musikkglede*.<sup>32</sup> Who has time for joy, this is real music!

I am exhausted at the end of Marianne's lesson. Hilde is still as professional as when she started, although she looks tired. [She teaches from 3:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Wednesdays.] Hilde and I and Hilde's *trillebag* overflowing with music walk up the hill to her car. I am relieved to get a ride to the train station. Hilde's husband is off on a concert tour to somewhere in Europe, and Hilde's day is still not over as she rushes home to help him get ready for his trip.

#### Western art music and musical joy

As I settled down for the train ride to Oslo after Hilde dropped me off at *Asker* station that night, I looked through my field notes. My casual impressions were jotted down all over the margins. [These could be comments about the weather, tones of voices, whether or not I liked what I heard and saw]. I was struck by several things. I had not consciously reflected on what type of music I would be observing in Hilde's classes. Judging from my notes, however, I assumed that the type would be Western art music. This being my field, I moved right into the context, automatically making judgments about technique and emotions according to the conventions of the genre. One of the questions I grappled with as I settled down for the train ride from *Asker* to *Oslo* that night was one I came to ask myself throughout my observations. Why did Ellen and Hilde embody and communicate musical joy when others did not? Did Western art music have anything to do with *musikkglede*? Here are some of the comments I wrote down on the train:

#### Is it possible to enjoy singing Western art music if you don't have a trained voice?

Yes, there is joy in singing vocal repertoire in this genre inexpertly. Ellen enjoyed singing, and I enjoyed listening to her. The teacher did not expect her young student to sing with technical expertise; she modulated her voice to approximate Ellen's as mothers do when babies learn to talk, rather than using her trained voice to model the 'right' way to sing in the Western art music tradition. NB! [Here I wrote several exclamation marks] Teaching of technical skills do not have to be learned separately. In Ellen's lesson, it happened naturally as part of the process.

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<sup>32</sup> Technical conventions of singing in the Western art music tradition.

Yes, there is joy in singing Western art music with technical skill! Ellen's song and Hilde's song were both enjoyable, but in different ways. The expert singer's aesthetic derived from the engendered processes of singing and from her talent at bringing out the emotions in the musical source. The 'novice's aesthetic' rested primarily on the physical activity of singing, particularly when the song was sung with a teacher in a warm social context. *Musikkleden* as transferred to me, the listener, was similar, regardless of the expertise of the performer.<sup>33</sup>

There is an imbalance in the teaching/learning context when the students get older. It is no longer O.K. just to enjoy singing with the voice you have. Western art music has singing rules that require certain physical adjustments of the vocal apparatus that take considerable practice, and that not everyone can master. If your teacher begins to demand this type of singing, and if you are incapable of imitating the model, there is no aesthetic enjoyment in Western art music. The imbalance in the teacher/student relationship increases as the expectations rise on part of the teacher and the student, and there is no way the novice is going to be able to imitate [copy with understanding], the expert's skills. Looked at from a developmental perspective, the teacher has not been able to meet and approximate the student's readiness level. The internalization process does not work (Vygotsky, 1978). The imbalance was most noticeable with Marianne, who actually was pretty talented and expected a lot of herself. The two teenagers were frustrated when they didn't sound the way they felt they should, but they didn't seem to care all that much; they actually had fun anyway.

#### There is and there isn't joy in singing Western art music

So, based on six of Hilde's students, I came to the temporary conclusion that Western art music could be sung successfully - with emotion - by people with and without required technical skills. The emotional dimensions of the active process of making music did not seem to depend on ability, but on personal emotional resources brought out during the process.

#### Musical joy and different genres of music

Emotional dimensions in musical contexts became a major concern in my next chapter, observations of Kjell Marcussen's classes, as well. In his lessons, the social context and this teacher's way of interacting with his students are very different from Hilde's lessons and teaching processes, but no less effective. The outstanding phenomenon in some of Kjell's classes, however, is musical joy, the personal joyful dimension of active participation in making music. This time, musical joy is expressed through Western popular music.

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33 I discuss the levels of musical aesthetics and the value of those experiences in chapters 9, 10 and 11.

## Chapter 6. Musical joy and popular music.

September 16, '94

I am fighting my way through rush hour traffic on my way to observe Kjell Marcussen's classes. Kjell teaches a rock group, a private guitar student and a popular music group on Friday afternoons - a group of people and activities that constitute a minute part of Kjell's life as a musician, but people and activities that offer a wealth of insight into many musical issues.

The major topics that I will discuss in this chapter are similar to the ones that arose in Hilde's voice lessons. I broaden the discussion of Western art music and introduce Western popular and rock music.<sup>34</sup> These different genres of music are presented side by side in Kjell's Friday classes. Then there are Kjell's teaching processes that change to mesh with the different genres he teaches as well as his different students and contexts. And, in Kjell's popular music group, I found the emotional warmth that Ellen expressed when she sang to and with Hilde: a strong, vibrant, spontaneous and heart warming *musikkglede* (musical joy).

Several other issues appear in this chapter as well. An interview with a Norwegian teenager brings to mind the marginal place Western art music holds in our society in contrast to the prominent position held by Western popular and rock music. As Hilde Torgersen and Kjell Marcussen both illustrate, because of the peripheral position of Western art music, the music schools provide a welcome economic base for Western art music musicians.

Based on Kjell Marcussen's classes and comments, I also begin to look at the underlying philosophical foundation of the music schools: music for everyone. Economic realities seem to make private instruction for everyone difficult to implement. Kjell questions whether it is even desirable to teach everyone music regardless of motivation and interest. He also brings up the issue of status in the music field, indicating that performers are more highly regarded than music teachers.

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<sup>34</sup> I don't consider the definitions of these genres to be of interest in this study. The process of grouping styles into categories, however, is important. I discuss these processes in chapter 7.

### Introducing Kjell

Someone is playing the violin in the downstairs living area at *Asker Musikkskole*. My daughter and I listen at the door. We find out later that this is Kjell playing; another one of his innumerable and constant musical pursuits. He is just learning to play the violin, a new instrument for him. Someone else comes in. “Anything open?” “No! I am looking for Marcussen,” I say. “Oh! Are you Karin? I am Hilde.” She knocks on the door where Kjell is, and we have a general ‘hi, I am such and such session.’ [This was the chance meeting that ‘opened the door’ to Hilde’s classes].

The rock group has not shown up today, Kjell says. The leader of the group called and said he is not coming, and in that case, the rest of the group does not show up either. So we go upstairs to the office, have instant coffee and talk. The office is one big room with office equipment and a large practical, comfortable sofa/chairs/ table arrangement. My first meeting with the administrators at the music school took place here (Chapter 3).

Kjell is probably in his early to mid 40s, very thin, and quick, both in manners and speech.

Me: The fact that these people don’t show up - does that mean that the group is not particularly interested?

Kjell: No, not really. It means that they pretty much run themselves. I am more of a guide or an inspiration when they need me.<sup>35</sup> They practice really, until they can manage on their own. There is a yearly festival (*Asker festivalen*) where they can make a debut concert. They suggest their own repertoire, they play what they want to play. It is difficult to change these young people’s convictions about what they like or dislike within popular music. Members of the band come and go. However, these band members all have background from school bands (*korps*). Two of them take lessons in classical guitar [from Kjell] and are allowed to stay in the rock band only as long as they practice their instruments.

Kjell does not like the electric guitar as an instrument, or pop music as it has become. It has become more and more simplistic - undemanding, he says, and he tries to give all the band members as broad a knowledge of the general music field as possible.

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<sup>35</sup> Kjell uses the words ‘*sparker igang*’ and ‘*oppmuntrer*’ to describe his role in the rock group. He ‘kickstarts’ and ‘encourages’ rather than leads the group.

Kjell asks if I want to come back next week to observe the rock band, and I say that I would like to do that if I may, but right now I wonder if I may observe his private guitar student. “Oh! Kjell says, “*legen min...* my doctor.”<sup>36</sup> Kjell explains that he gives 13 hours of private guitar instruction a week. He also conducts four school bands, where he is both the arranger and the conductor. He does this on Wednesdays. “*En ganske strabasiøs jobb* ” “quite a tiring job” he exclaims.<sup>37</sup> “So, if you want to come along on a Wednesday you need to bring your *matpakke*.” (Lunch bag)<sup>38</sup>

So Kjell is an extremely active musician and music teacher. His speech is fast and high pitched. His whole persona seems busy, as he restlessly skims from one activity to the next. He composes, conducts school bands, teaches private guitar students, a rock band, and classes for students who are disabled.

Me: Would you say that, as a musician, you can support yourself with these different musical activities at the music school?

Kjell: Oh, absolutely, - quite well. However, the connection (*tilknytningen*) to the music school is absolutely a necessary base from which to operate as a musician.

He goes on to explain that he has worked at *Asker Musikkskole* for 12 years. He is a full time employee. I am not absolutely sure how many hours of teaching that entails, but none of the other music teachers I observe have full time positions.

I follow Kjell upstairs to meet ‘his’ doctor, the guitar student.

### Classical guitar lesson

Very nice room, small, but open, clean; large, old-fashioned window looking out over some nearby trees and a green hill. Busy winding road between the school and the trees. Kjell and the doctor sit in two chairs with foot rests, music stands and guitars. The doctor is perhaps early to mid-thirty, medium height and build, comfortable, neat ‘leisure’ type clothes, khaki pants and striped shirt - clothes a little wrinkled - nice friendly eyes, horn-rimmed glasses, self-conscious

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<sup>36</sup> This doesn’t mean that Kjell uses this particular doctor, only a way of saying that ‘this particular student is a physician.’

<sup>37</sup> *Strabasiøs* has connotations of hard work rather than tiring.

<sup>38</sup> More than a meal, a Norwegian *matpakke* brings to mind a frugal, healthy, down to earth life style.

smile at me, the intruder.

Kjell explains - with authority: “He does this for fun, for relaxation, for the accomplishment - something completely different from his work.” I assure the poor man that I do not know how to play the guitar, and certainly am not there to critique his musicianship! [which, of course, I proceed to do in the next paragraph]. Kjell goes on to explain that he feels that learning to play the guitar when you are past 25 or 30 is really very, very difficult. Playing the guitar is quite asocial, he says, not like playing in an orchestra, an ensemble - the guitar is a lonely endeavor. The doctor is quiet during this exchange, he mumbles in agreement about the guitar being difficult for an adult. [I wish Kjell had not said anything, it is as if he is apologizing in advance.]

The lesson starts with scales. Kjell explains the finger techniques, how to get the best tone quality from the guitar by using the fingers correctly. Then he asks what piece the doctor has been working at. He plays part of the piece himself -very well. The doctor tries, rather haltingly, but not too bad. Kjell tells his student about the different chords the composer has used, something about the style of the piece. The doctor mumbles in understanding, occasionally he asks a question. He looks tense - poised way over the guitar, looking intently at his own fingers on the frets. I wonder how much time he has to practice! And if he does this to relax? He doesn't look relaxed, or, like he is enjoying himself particularly. But this is an adult lesson and the adult student seems to expect the intellectual interaction. Kjell is interested, encouraging, but not overly enthusiastic.

They play a piece that the student knows better - together. Again, a very tense experience, but this piece sounds good. I am struck by the difference in tone quality between the two of them, however; Kjell's mellow and resonant, the student's thin and dry. With reference to the friendly atmosphere in Hilde's classes, there is little sense of warmth in the social interaction between Kjell and this student. Neither is there any joy connected to the musical experience itself, either in the act of playing the guitar or in bringing out emotional dimensions in the musical source. Yet, the student seems to feel a sense of accomplishment in what he is doing. It is as if he expects playing classical guitar to be difficult. Satisfaction is achieved through sheer struggle.

I talk to Kjell's student afterwards - not a very successful encounter. Talk about reserved and awkward! We both are. I feel embarrassed at having imposed on his lesson and he obviously did



not enjoy having me there.<sup>39</sup> He does not come from a musical family, he tells me, he has just always wanted to play classical guitar. He has been with Kjell for 2 years. I tell him that I did not think that he looked particularly relaxed during the lesson, which strikes me as rude the minute I say it, but too late now! He laughs and says that, well, he tries hard and likes to do something completely different from what he does all day, something that is not nearly as stressful as what he does for a living. Why *Asker Musikkskole* ? He has no idea. It is there! Close by and available. He had heard about Kjell, and is pleased with the instruction.

### Popular music ensemble

Kjell has started a new lesson while I am talking upstairs. This lesson is downstairs in two large rooms, the 'living room' area with two grand pianos, where we heard Kjell practice the violin earlier.<sup>40</sup> My daughter is standing outside the door. She has been reading in the lounge while I observed the guitar student, and now we both listen at the door. It sounds like someone is having fun in there! We open the door quietly and sneak in. Kjell is playing the piano and a girl is seated at a microphone with an electric guitar. She is singing an American ballad. She sings with obvious '*innlevelse*' (living with or in the music) and gusto.<sup>41</sup> Anna and I sit on the floor by the door. After she finishes the song, Kjell introduces us. We shake hands, and Grete exclaims that our hands are very warm. Kjell turns Grete's chair around so we can hear and see her better. It looks and sounds like she enjoys every note she sings and plays. [Grete is blind].

After a while, in comes a young man bounding towards the drum set (*slagverk*). Kjell: "Lars, you are late, why are you late?" He keeps repeating the question, but Lars doesn't answer. He is sitting at the drum set already, poised to go, completely ignoring Kjell. [Lars is 17, and has Down's Syndrome]. After a while they start up again, with the same song Grete just sang by herself. Kjell sets the beat, Lars starts the percussion, Grete and Kjell come in after a couple of measures. Grete's voice is somewhat overwhelmed by the piano and drums, but she does not seem to notice. Lars plays with complete body involvement and accurate rhythm, great enthusiasm, tremendous enjoyment in both the motion of the drumsticks themselves, his body and

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<sup>39</sup> I don't get this from his demeanor. He is as sweet and polite as he could possibly be; yet another smiling, *blid*, friendly, accommodating and aloof Norwegian.

<sup>40</sup> In many ways, Asker music school seems more like a large home than a school.

<sup>41</sup> The Norwegian word *innlevelse*, 'in the process of living in or with,' is so appropriate here. Grete was part of the music or in the music as she sang, and each note was experienced with joy, not just by her, but by us, the audience.

- when he is aware of it - the ensemble playing. He gets easily distracted - scratches his head, his nose, loses the beat, but Kjell and Grete adjust, and on they go. With the exception of the distracting movements, Lars looks like he could join any popular music band as a very competent percussionist. They play one song after another - pop ballads - in Norwegian, Swedish and English.

I don't think I have ever seen two people enjoy playing and singing more than these two! Kjell is part of the group, playing the piano, occasionally humming the tune along with Grete. He does not let Lars get away with his distractions. They start pieces over again in order to make him focus better. Grete mumbles agreeable (*blide*) comments throughout. The interruptions don't seem to ruffle her a bit.

So here is Western popular music played inexpertly with intense involvement and joy. As yet, I cannot label the positive, joyful dimension in this context as emanating primarily from the act of singing/playing, the interaction with the musical source or from the ensemble musical experience. Musical joy permeated the whole setting.

### Intermission

Lars helps Grete - at Kjell's prompting - into a chair in the other room. Kjell runs out to buy a snack. I talk to Grete and Lars while he is gone. Grete tells us that she is 23, [she looks younger], and she knits clothing at a knitting cottage (*Strikkestue*). She says she likes her work, people are very nice there. She keeps touching Anna's hair, commenting that, when they both sit down, they are the same height. Lars, in the meantime, has placed himself on the opposite side - cleared a space between two chairs - and is pretending to be a newscaster on T.V.

Kjell returns with juice, (*saft*) doughnuts (*smultringer*) and instant coffee.<sup>42</sup> While we eat, Lars entertains us with Norwegian fairy tales from his place inside the make-believe T.V. Lars plays all parts with great involvement in voice and body gestures, but I understand very few of the words. Kjell keeps a running commentary of what Lars is trying to tell us. Grete mumbles contentedly and nods her head, completely in tune, it seems, with what Lars is doing and saying. She comments and laughs along with Kjell's explanations, whispers to Anna to make sure she knows

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<sup>42</sup> *saft* is concentrated fruit juice and sugar mixed with water. Norwegian doughnuts or *smultringer* are like plain doughnuts, but harder.

what fairy tale Lars is covering at the moment.

Lars is very 'cool,' very coordinated in the way he moves. Kjell explains that the teenager loves Michael Jackson and models himself on the way he and other popular stars walk and act. He also copies other languages. Lars 'speaks' French, American and New Norwegian, (*Nynorsk*).<sup>43</sup> He copies the tone, inflection and the body movements of the language to the point where meaning is communicated. When he sees my tape recorder, he clears off some chairs from a long table, lies down on the table in a spectacular but nonchalant way - brushes his hair from his brow - where there is none, and is ready to be interviewed.

Kjell finally interrupts Lars to get him to finish his very long and involved stories, tells him to help Grete back to her chair and microphone. He cleans up the cups and crumbs, and on we go with the last part of the session.

Everyone is tired now. Kjell looks completely exhausted. No wonder, it is Friday, ca. 7 p.m. This is his last lesson of the week. Lars is slightly less enthusiastic, but Grete is still going strong, just as sweetly and softly as when she started.

Grete's mother picks her up after the session. Lars gets to bicycle home by himself, for the first time apparently. He puts his helmet on and off he goes with the same energy and spirit as he showed when he played the drums. He makes an 'exit,' waving to us - royal wave.

My daughter and I take off down the road towards *Asker*. Kjell is cleaning up when we leave, and we arrange to hear the rock group next Friday.

#### Friday, Sept. 23. Time to observe the rock group

My first impression: What a bunch of awkward-looking, 'trying to be cool' young men! [Four 15 year old boys.] Their body language is stiff and self conscious. The music they are playing sounds like one long, loud chord being played over and over. The song is simple and repetitive - in English, of course. Kjell had expressed earlier that he, personally, felt less and less of an appeal in modern rock music. And further, that he had very little influence in the choice of repertoire for

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<sup>43</sup> Norway has two official languages, *Riksmål* and *Nynorsk*. The former is a language evolved primarily from Danish. *Nynorsk* is a mixture of traditional dialects.

this group. So, I am wondering: Do these boys choose the music because ‘this is what is being played these days?’ Is there a social protest or expression these tunes are communicating to a certain age group just like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones struck a chord in my generation? Or, am I simply completely deaf to the attraction and/or meaning of this type of sound?

Both social protest and my ‘deafness’ are partial answers to the function and popularity of rock music. Different types of rock music have been controversial since the genre emerged in the mid 1950s, in the same way new cultural trends are generally seen as threats to traditional values.<sup>44</sup> (Shuker, 1994, p.251). According to Bjørkvold (1991), rock music takes different expressions in different cultural contexts, but derives its general appeal and popularity from adolescent protest and opposition to traditional values.<sup>45</sup> My reaction [distaste is perhaps too mild?] to Kjell’s rock group fits right into the norm of what people my age would generally be expected to feel about loud, obvious statements of protests against my traditions and values. The boys, in turn, would expect me to disapprove of their choice of music, since part of the appeal and function would depend on my generation’s negative reception.

### Rehearsal techniques

The group is practicing a new piece. There are wires everywhere - very large tape recorder, amplifiers, electric guitars, drum set. Lots of noise in a small room that looks geared to classical sounds. This is again the downstairs ‘living room’ area at *Asker Musikkskole - salongen* - with the two grand pianos and pictures of classical composers on the walls, and a French Horn with fake ivy cascading out of the bell. Everything seems light and airy; wooden, painted walls, Norwegian ‘institutional’ furniture which does not seem institutional at all - light, sturdy wood and solid colored fabrics - lace curtains.

The group listens to the tape, and then plays what they hear. Actually, first Kjell plays what he hears, and then the boys copy him. They disagree with Kjell’s interpretations and he follows their lead. He is their teacher, but one who seems to carry little authority. It doesn’t seem to concern him. The boys call him Kjell. He walks back and forth, restlessly, quickly, plays different instruments, discusses interpretations as they hear it on the tape. He insists they repeat certain

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<sup>44</sup> The older generation’s negative reaction to rock music has at times been so strong that Shuker describes it as ‘moral panic’ (Shuker, 1994, p. 252).

<sup>45</sup> Bjørkvold (1991) points out that the appeal of rock music is not isolated to teenagers. There are emotional dimensions to popular music that transcend age and social protests (p. 280).

passages again and again to get a 'clean' sound. The boys concur, but they would like to practice something they know better. *Asker festivalen* is coming up soon - the opportunity for this band to play with other bands in the area in front of a large audience. Kjell, sharply, impatiently: "Could we think musical quality here for a moment rather than popularity?" They continue practicing the new piece.

Popularity among peers is probably part of the attraction of rock music, but I think personal and social emotional factors of independence and protest are more important to these young men. I see teenage boys and their rock groups on Norwegian T.V. all the time.<sup>46</sup>

### Rock group interview

Kjell disappears upstairs to 'his' doctor, the classical guitar student. The boys disassemble the equipment and I talk with them for a while. I am not comfortable with this age group. I don't ever seem to 'find the rhythm,' or 'talk their language' (Briggs,1986). I remain 'the adult,' 'the mother,' 'the teacher,' the outsider. The talk is short and stilted. I sense towards the end that the boys, who were initially intrigued at being interviewed and observed, are impatient, and are politely exasperated with another uninteresting and stuffy adult.

Tor has stood out as a leader the whole time. I assume this is the one Kjell talked about last week when the group did not show up. The boys, including Tor, seem quiet and shy and younger than 15. Tor talks for everyone and tells me that the four of them are in 9th grade at the same middle school. He would like to go on to a school with a musical concentration, but these schools have become too classically oriented, and what would he do with that type of education anyway? "Music doesn't lead anywhere, it doesn't get me a job afterwards." (*Musikken fører ingen sted*). Tor also thinks that music should be available for everyone, but that music, even at the music school, has been and still is only for those who can afford to pay - the elite.

By rejecting classical music as an employment opportunity, Tor is expressing a sentiment held by several classical musicians and people who study Western art and music contexts. Becker (1982, p. 52), claims that most students at art schools end up as sophisticated audiences of art rather than as economically independent practitioners. Kingsbury (1988) argues that, "the concentrated focus of conservatory training seems more an inculcation of devotion than a preparation for a career. The

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46 Ca. 90% of rock musicians in the Nordic countries are male (Bjørkvold, 1991, p. 279).

sense of commitment among conservatory students seems more personal, moral, and emotional than professional or economic” (p. 19).

Musical institutions seem to be changing, however. Brown University in Providence Rhode Island offers a combination of academic courses and practical experiences related to the popular music field, and seems very successful at placing their students in the real world (Stewart, 1996, pp.47-49). Even a traditional Western art music ‘stronghold’ like Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester is now experimenting with an expanded curriculum in order to provide jobs for their graduates (Wilson, 1997, pp. A10,11).

Tor explains that he and one of the other boys take classical guitar lessons from Kjell. He plays a tape for me - classical, but not of them playing. “This is the type of music we play.” [He obviously expects this type of music to please me]. The other boys are in school bands, but in and out.

*Asker festivalen* is very important to this group. There are lots of cellar bands out there Tor tells me. The festival makes it possible for all these bands to play for each other and an audience. *Musikkskolen*, according to Tor, gives this particular group of boys an edge over the other bands. They have a place to practice, instruments, speakers, microphones. Some of them do own their own electric guitars, but most of the equipment belongs to the school. Most importantly, they have Kjell, who interprets and arranges the music, and who also encourages them to keep practicing. Kjell’s ‘aloofness’ or ‘distance’ while still being one of them, - able to play all the instruments, seems to suit this type of teaching/learning interaction well.<sup>47</sup>

#### A talk with Kjell during break between classes

Kjell takes a break before Grete and Lars’ lesson. He paces back and forth outside, smoking a home rolled cigarette. This is one of those spectacular autumn afternoons in Norway - warm, but crisp, the leaves are just beginning to turn. Kjell talks while he walks back and forth; the traffic

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<sup>47</sup> A footnote on Tor, the leader of the band: I later hear him play classical guitar at the concert honoring the Norwegian composer Johan Kvandal. He is very serious and quite good. Around Christmastime, *Aftenposten* - one of Norway’s leading newspapers - writes an article about up and coming Norwegian athletes. There is a big picture of a young man in a hooded skintight blue suit speedskating - sure enough - Tor. So, this is a versatile young Norwegian - a promising rock/classical musician/athlete, with ideas and opinions about social injustice - polite to stuffy middle aged ladies - not bad for 15!

streams by on the road behind him.

Me: You wear a lot of hats at the music school!

Kjell: Well, I have pretty much created these jobs (classes) myself. I was a guitar teacher exclusively, and I needed to do things differently. My job here is based on being able to do just about everything. (*Satse på alt mulig*).

Me: What about your compositions?

Kjell: Yes, I also earn money on my compositions, of course, so, yes... I am alone. If I had a family, I could not work as much as I do. I am up every morning at 9 to compose. I also play violin in an orchestra now . I practice the guitar about three hours a day, to keep my technique up to par. I like to do many different things. I need challenges.

We go on to discuss the bands he conducts on Wednesday afternoons. He does things very differently, he says. He feels he may be criticized for lack of academic background when it comes to directing a band.

Kjell: *Jeg har vært meget omdiskutert, jeg !* I am a very controversial person really! [He laughs]. But , I feel that there must be joy in playing music (spilleglede). I think there is something wrong with higher educational institutions when it comes to the goals of instructions. They create musicians who, in fact, are too good for what they end up doing. They could have been musicians (*de kunne ha vært musikere* ). Now they are overqualified for their jobs. (*overkvalifiserte i jobben* ). It is not on the teaching level that they should work, I am sure of that. I am not saying here that they are not doing a wonderful job of teaching, I am sure they are.

The status of musical performers reflects a field where knowledge is doing

I mentioned in chapter 3 that the music field seems to prefer teachers who can perform. In examining the nature of playing an instrument and singing, it becomes clear that making music includes physical skills, mental concepts and emotional dimensions. However, being able to do stands out as the physical manifestation of knowledge in the performing music field. Thus, it is not surprising that the performing musician is the one that reigns supreme, not just as a performer, but as a teacher.

In fact, I distinguish throughout this study between musicians who teach and musicians who perform and compose. I use the words music teachers for people who do not perform, and

performers and composers for musicians who can ‘do.’ There is difference in status accompanying these terms, from high to low depending on levels of performance skills. Kjell indicates that even the word ‘musician’ is preferably used for people in the field that can ‘do,’ i.e., perform.

When Hilde and I talked about the status of performers, she pointed out that there is also a difference in performance status depending on where you perform. People wondered about her skills because she performed in a supposedly inferior context. (*Rikskonsertene*). (Chapter 5). These are only a few examples of the nuances involved in status and musical phenomena. [I discuss status throughout Chapters 7, 8 and 9.]

### Music for everyone?

Kjell and I continue chatting in the nice autumn afternoon, and I comment that he does not seem to be lacking students at *Asker Musikk skole*.

Kjell: No, that is true. We have long waiting lists. It is almost too bad that there are so many people who want to play. It has become a disease! There must be a special interest behind this. Learning to play an instrument must be motivated by more than just getting a guitar for Christmas. You can, in a way, measure the level of interest. For instance, my son, he cannot be apart from his soccer ball. He can sleep with his soccer ball. It is clear, this is his biggest interest in life. If anyone feels that way about the guitar - that you kind of have to touch this guitar every day, then you have the motivation needed to play the guitar successfully.

Should music be for everyone? *Asker Musikk skole*, like the one in Oslo, has long waiting lists. There is a first-come, first-serve philosophy here that treats everyone equally. Interest, motivation or special musical abilities are irrelevant in the important quest to prohibit money and talent from becoming either an obstacle or a vehicle to private music instruction.<sup>48</sup> When quality instruction is affordable, everyone signs up. Is that not good? Yes and no. As I already discussed in Hilde’s chapter, there simply is not enough money to teach everyone privately and still keep the student’s part of the tuition low enough to avoid economic elitism.

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48 When the county music schools were discussed in Parliament (*Stortinget*) in February of 1980, general admissions and low or preferably no tuition were fundamental ideological assumptions, and the main argument for connecting the institutions with elementary and middle schools (*grunnskoleloven*) (Chapter 4).



Now Kjell brings up another objection to the success of universal music. There must be motivation to succeed, he says. Motivation here can be looked at as part of ability or special talent. If a person is motivated to play and sing, it may mean that this is something they like to do. Judging from Ellen in Hilde's voice lessons, there is a connection between enjoyment in singing and playing, motivation to sing and play, and how good you are at making music. There is a lot of talent wasted when Ellen, along with several other interested, motivated - and talented - people have to wait in line to get in.<sup>49</sup>

### Back to popular music ensemble

At this point we go in to Grete and Lars who have been waiting for their next class to start. They both sit quietly - Grete in a chair by the microphone and Lars by the drum set. It doesn't seem like they have been communicating with each other, but there is no way of knowing.

Kjell: I am sorry I am late, I was chatting a little. - How are you? [ in English].

Lars: "I am fine!" [In English with a distinctly Norwegian 'fein.']

Lars and Grete are sitting by their instruments, but they are not completely ready to go. Kjell admonishes Lars to get everything ready before the class starts, both for himself and for Grete. [Actually, I think the rock group put all the equipment away when they left, which means that Lars has gotten several things out and ready, and someone must have helped Grete into her chair.] He says nothing to Kjell, however, just keeps jokingly on with greetings in English and French, with the amazingly correct mannerisms of 'English' and 'French.'

Kjell shows Lars how to get everything ready, while Anna and I talk with Grete. She tells us how happy she is to have us in her class again. Kjell bustles on telling Lars what to do to set up the equipment. Lars sits behind the percussion set, showing no signs of paying particular attention, until Kjell insists that he comes over to see where the wires are connected to Grete's amplifier. They walk off to see where the equipment is stored in a room next door. Lars mumbles busily on in a language that sounds like French.

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49 Kjell was very open about what he felt worked and did not work at *Asker Musikkskole*, and never hesitated to voice his opinions to me [or ,I assume, to anybody else]. His comment after reading an early version of my description of his classes: "This sounds O.K., but you are way too kind (*snill*)to the music school!"

Me: Is that French he is speaking?

Grete: I don't know. [I have walked over to where she is sitting.]

Grete: You are so tall!

Me: Am I? Perhaps it seems that way because you are sitting. I am 1.65.  
(165cm).

Grete: I am 1.60.

Kjell comes back. Are you 1.60, Grete?

Grete, softly: Yes.

Kjell is parental and concerned when he talks to these two, but he is not that different from the way he acts with the boys in the rock group or with his classical guitar student. Impatience, aloofness, interest and concern are mixed in his teaching style in all the classes I have observed, - to varying degrees, but Kjell stays basically the same. There is no sense of change in terms of Hilde's teaching style, where tone of voice, posture, words, all were adjusted to meet the students' needs. In Kjell's classes, the social interaction during the learning process is marked by adult distance, aloofness and mutual respect rather than the warm, caring parent to child give and take that took place between Hilde and her students.

There are many arrangements with foot stools and equipment and a discussion of the autumn vacation coming up. [A week off from the public schools at the end of September when the music schools are not in session]. Finally Grete's guitar is tuned and everyone is ready. Lars has a hard time finding the beat this time, everything seems a bit sluggish. He also has a tendency to rush the beat; and then, there is, of course, his habit of scratching and stopping. Not to mention that he loves endings with *ritardando*, (slowing down) *crescendo* (getting louder) and a huge bang on the big drum! - very dramatic, effective and loud! Grete adjusts to all changes in beat and tempo. There is not the same joyful spirit that characterized the first session, probably because we got off to a slow start, but the second song gets better. Kjell and Grete practice the words to a song in Swedish. Kjell voices the words and Grete echoes. Grete - in our direction: "I can speak Swedish, you know."

Break again, or, actually, the opportunity for these people to socialize. Kjell puts the water on to boil, then runs off as he did the first time we were here, to buy juice and something to eat. Anna takes Grete in to a table in the 'dining room.' Lars dashes off to his place in the 'T.V.' between two chairs. Grete keeps feeling Anna's hair, telling her how pleased she is that they are the same height. Then we have a long conversation about desks. Grete feels the table she sits at: *Jeg er*

*glad i pulter jeg. Med respatex . (I like, or I am fond of desks. With respatex). I love respatex. I love desks. I love the word desk. It is so strange, desk, desk, desk. (pult, pult, pult).*

Grete goes on: Lots of people dust their desks. (*tørker støv av pulten sin* ).

Me: Do you dust at home?

Grete: Yes, I like to dust. [She laughs self-consciously, softly].

Me: Tell me about your school, Grete!

Grete: Oh, I loved school. I learned to read and write. But I don't go there any more. I work now, I go to work, I knit. She pretends to knit furiously and laughs. Grete 'feels' my hair the way she feels Anna's to check how tall I am. "Oh! You are so tall. I am very little."

Grete's speech is very soft, tentative and her sentences are fragmented, but she has no trouble getting her meaning across. She loves to sing, she says, but she only sings here, not at home. She is sad that the music school has autumn vacation, that means she doesn't get to sing for a whole week.

Kjell returns with apple cakes and juice (*saft*). He sits down next to Grete; they talk about how their week has been. Lars is entertaining us again from his television set. Kjell and Grete laugh and comment on Lars and his jokes. He is very preoccupied by 'pupper' today (breasts). Kjell banters on with him, but is quite firm when he thinks the 'breast talk' has gone on long enough.

We clean up after the snack. Anna and Grete walk back to Grete's seat by the microphone. The session goes on as before. The joyful spirit of the first session I observed is there, but tired now. Kjell gets annoyed with Lars for stopping the steady pulse all the time. Lars scratches his nose and his head and winks at his audience - us. Grete is completely unruffled.

As the lesson ends, Lars takes off on his bike and Kjell gets ready to drive Grete home.<sup>50</sup> As we walk out together we see Lars glance at us and then take off hurriedly on his bike. He has been watching some boys play basketball in the school yard, but obviously has been told that he is supposed to be going straight home.

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<sup>50</sup> Her mother works, and the taxi arrangement that the Norwegian state provides for people who need transportation for health reasons has not worked out. Grete has been denied funding.

## **Chapter 7. A discussion of categorization of musical genres, teaching practices and musical joy**

I felt that Kjell's classes bring the topic of musical genres to the surface, in particular as Western art music stands out in sharp contrast to rock and popular music. Here I will examine the process of defining certain types of sound as art music, and how we often label these particular sounds as 'good' in contrast to other musical styles that are felt to be inferior.

Kjell's interaction with his students changed depending on musical styles and contexts, further emphasizing and reflecting the different conventions of Western art music and popular music. Like Hilde, Kjell found the developmental level of his students, but in different ways. I will discuss his teaching style that was based primarily on adult social interactions rather than the parent/child relationships in Hilde's classes.

The joy in singing (*sangglede*) that Ellen expressed when she sang to and with Hilde takes on a vibrant strength and spontaneity in Kjell's popular music group. I will talk about musical joy in Kjell's popular music group as an emotional dimension that was primarily part of actively making music, but also integral to the interaction with the musical product and the social aspects of the musical setting. Some of the other issues from Kjell's classes – the problem of talent and the idea or ideal of 'music for everyone,' – I will discuss further in the next chapter.

### ***Western art music and popular music. Categories***

#### Are definitions important?

Hilde Torgersen and I discussed Western art music during my visit to Norway the summer after my field work, "Why is it important to discuss what Western art music is?" Hilde asked. I teach and sing all kinds of music that I like, and I don't spend a lot of time reflecting on the definitions of any one style." I agree with Hilde. I don't think the precise definitions of musical styles are particularly important in this study. The process of placing different types of music into categories, however, is of interest in many different ways.

I would like to argue that the process of categorizing Western art music, from a perspective of cognition and social construction, challenges the ‘superior’ label often attached to this genre of music.

#### Personal categorization process: Grouping with affective dimensions

Throughout the fall, 1994, I listened to more amateur and professional musical groups than I have in a long time. I became conscious of the fact that I automatically [unconsciously] define most of what I hear in terms of two large categories, Western popular and Western art music, without much thought, but with considerable judgment. Along with the categorization process comes a ‘like’ or ‘dislike’ dimension, probably learned with the categories as part of my particular and general social context. Such judgments immediately arose when faced with a particular style; as when I felt ‘dislike,’ ‘unease’ when I heard Kjell’s rock music group.

#### Categorization: Perception and grouping

Categorizing consists of two processes. First, I perceived, i.e., I heard and saw the music, the musicians, the setting. Then I categorized that information. Very simply put, the brain seems to organize incoming information by grouping similar phenomena together [based on linking new to old information] in increasingly hierarchical structures (Schank & Abelson, 1977). Sometimes we group phenomena based on similar characteristics, sometimes the brain classifies and groups incoming information based on rules (Barsalou, 1992, p. 29).<sup>51</sup> Judging from my personal categorization processes of Western art music and popular music, I learned emotional dimensions such as ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes,’ ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ along with defining characteristics and rules.

However, no information that we perceive is completely similar or fits into the exact same set of rules.<sup>52</sup> Thus, in order to make sense of the mass of information we receive from our surroundings, we approximate similarities and make up new or revised rules to fit different circumstances. In other words, it is impossible to fit anything [or anybody] into a neat, stable, consistent category. What we think of as Western art music or popular music, for instance, is

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<sup>51</sup> I will discuss music perception and emotional understanding in Chapter 10 (Meyer, 1956).

<sup>52</sup> The nature of the information we receive from the environment varies as well. For instance, objects seem more stable and less open to changing interpretations over time and in different contexts than concepts and ideas. Concepts such as status or talent are particularly complex in the categorization process. Western art music and popular music are less abstract, but equally difficult to fit into neat categories.

sound that has been constructed in certain ways according to conventions agreed upon by people involved in the field. Those conventions and, by consequence, those sounds, change continuously (Clignet, 1985; Becker, H. 1982). In addition to the fluid nature of the information and the categories, there is also the subjective element of ‘good’ and ‘bad.’

### Is Western art music innate or constructed?

The notion that Western art music is superior to other types of music is connected to the difficulty of thinking of the norms and conventions as well as whether or not we approve of what we hear as dimensions of sound constructed by people. We think of norms and conventions, good and bad as innate to the music, not as descriptors that help us group information into categories. This is particularly true in the case of artistic phenomena. Aesthetic dimensions of art and artists are commonly considered to be innate, even God-given, gifts. “Creativity is involved which has the power to mirror the essential character of society from which it emanates, esp. if the creativity comes from an established creative genius” (Becker, H. 1982).

Thus, Hilde and I, along with many musicians trained in conservatory traditions in the Western world, function within a culture that has a tendency to look at our musical genre as a ‘superior’ aesthetic art form. “Among musicologists, music educators, and even some ethnomusicologists, the doctrine that Western European art music is superior to all other musics of the world remains a given, a truism.... A more subtle form of this dogma is the concept that Western art music is intrinsically interesting and complex, while other musical systems need their social context to command our serious attention” (Becker, J. 1987, p. 341).<sup>53</sup> In fact, until recently, Western art music was simply called ‘music,’ or sometimes even ‘good’ music, with no modifiers of any kind (Kingsbury, 1988, p. 17).

Frankly, I don’t believe that I consciously think of Western art music as superior to other styles of music. I am abundantly aware of my Western European ‘colonial sins’ in thinking of myself and my cultural heritage as better than others’ (Becker, J.,1987).<sup>54</sup> I think there is a danger that in order to correct our past mistakes in belonging to a ‘superior’ culture, we focus too much on our

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<sup>53</sup> The underlying reason for this, according to Becker, is that Western art music is thought to be based upon natural acoustic laws (Becker, J., 1987, p. 342).

<sup>54</sup> J. Becker claims that “The doctrine of the superiority of Western music is the musicological version of colonialism” (1987, p. 342).

sins in our concern and consideration for the 'other' in order to be 'politically correct' (Botstein, 1993). I think a deep understanding and appreciation of our own cultural context, which includes Western art music, is desirable and unavoidable.

However, just looking at my reactions [my field notes] to Kjell's rock group made me uncomfortably aware that I unconsciously still think of Western art music as 'good' music, and certainly as superior to rock music.<sup>55</sup> By looking at its categorization in terms of cognitive and social processes, Western art music loses some of its status and luster as an innately 'superior' art form.

#### The categorization process - teaching and learning

In addition to the cognitive and social aspects of categorization that tend to confirm the social construction of information, the categorization process itself is interesting to look at from a learning and teaching perspective. "Categorization provides the gateway between perception and cognition. After a perceptual system acquires information about an entity in the environment, the cognitive system places the entity into a category." (Barsalou, 1992, p. 15). The cognitive system does not place an entity into a category automatically. The process itself as well as the categories are learned in social contexts through interaction with people in our environment from birth. This is where adult models like teachers enter the picture. Kjell and Hilde functioned as models and guides providing the information their students needed in order to link new to old information in the brain. Researchers think that perception and the ability to categorize are innate (Barsalou, 1992). However, without people interpreting perceptions, categorization - learning, understanding - could not take place.

Teaching models transfer more than identifying characteristics and rules: Ellen absorbed Hilde's attitudes towards the music they sang as well as her love of singing, along with vocal rules and techniques. This is where we learn the 'like' and 'dislike' dimensions of our concepts and categories.

#### Teaching practices - Western art music. Classical guitar lesson

Kjells' teaching style reflects the characteristics, or the norms, of the different genres of music he

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<sup>55</sup> In fact, I was tempted to leave my reactions to Kjell's rock group out of this study, and I modified them somewhat.

teaches. Kjell's classical guitar instruction was formal, intellectual, geared to the technical demands of playing Western art music on the guitar. The interaction between teacher and student concerned the written music and the physical demands of executing the notes on the instrument.

Looking at the classical guitar lesson from the perspective of the student's developmental readiness gives a possible clue as to why Kjell's guitar lesson seemed unproductive. The gap between what the student could play independently and what was expected of him in the lesson was too wide (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 187). However hard the student tried to succeed at playing, he achieved only a tense, dry sound in comparison to his teacher's resonant fluency. Enjoyment, either in the social interaction between teacher and student or in the musical experience itself was lacking in the class I observed.

#### Teaching practices - Rock group

The instruction in the teenage rock group was structured to fit the nature of the music, following aural rather than written musical traditions. The group listened to the music on a tape. Kjell played every instrument as he heard it; there was disagreement and discussion about Kjell's and the boys' interpretation of the tape. The session was more like a regular practice session among adult musicians than a traditional class. This included the freedom to cancel a lesson, which happened the first time I came to observe. There was no 'punishment' for this as far as I could see, as there probably would have been in ordinary classroom situations. Further, the rehearsal had a real purpose: the upcoming performance at the *Asker* festival. This was not a recital put on by the music school, but an authentic performance setting. In fact, as Kjell mentioned, he does not see himself as a teacher in this group. He 'kickstarts' and 'encourages' the teenagers. He is there when they need him, until they feel they can manage on their own (Chapter 6).

The practice of using first names for traditional authority figures has an interesting equalizing effect under these circumstances. Calling Kjell by his first name makes it easier for the students to move into his teaching sphere.<sup>56</sup> They question his judgment. They tell him when they would rather do something else. In Kjell's case, in spite of his buddy approach, you always know where the teacher is: he does have authority, but one that can stand challenges and setbacks. "The students don't think any less of me when I admit that their way is better," he says (Ch 6).

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<sup>56</sup> The practice of calling teachers by their first names in Norway has a curious effect of 'lowering' the teacher to the student's level, [or elevating the student to the teacher's]. This was noticeable in Kjell's classes as well as in my daughter's classes at her middle school.



### Teaching practices - Popular music group

The popular music group also played by ear. There was no written music. I presume Kjell plays for them and shows them what to do by example whenever they learn a new song, but there was no instruction as such when I observed this group. Grete, Lars and Kjell had a ‘musical get together,’ not a lesson. It was as if the three of them played for fun at a neighbor’s house, complete with a break for socializing. No wonder Grete was sad that the music schools take a fall break.

### Social music

In fact, the subject of music and the technical demands of playing an instrument were secondary to other purposes in both Kjell’s popular and rock music groups and in Hilde’s classes with her young students. Hilde put aside the teaching of the norms of vocal use in Western art music to focus on the joy of singing and playing together. Kjell extended the ‘other than musical purposes’ of the popular music group session to include food, entertainment from Lars and general small talk of his and his students’ lives. Grete’s and Lars’ group, in fact, reminded me of country [contra] dancing sessions where the dancing is essential as a reason to get together and to raise spirits; but there is food and small talk as well. The combination of music, dance, social in contra dance sessions and music, food and talk in Kjell’s classes blends musical and personal elements, enhancing enjoyment in both.

### Teaching practices: authentic parts of students’ real lives

I discussed apprenticeship practices in Hilde’s voice lessons in terms of the effectiveness of modeling and imitating in music where ‘doing’ is inseparable from knowledge (Chapter 5). Apprenticeship practices are not directly applicable to Kjell’s or Hilde’s musical settings. Neither Kjell nor Hilde are training students to become masters of their musical ‘trades.’ Nevertheless, I felt that Kjell’s popular music and rock group were effective mainly because they were authentic parts of the students lives outside the musical settings (Lave & Wenger, 1991; this study, Chapter 6).

### Conclusion: Teaching practices in Kjell's popular and rock groups

Kjell did not gauge developmental readiness with emotional nuances as Hilde did in her classes (Vygotsky, 1986). Kjell met the needs of his groups by offering a musical and social setting that fit their tastes, emotional desires for maturity, independence, [the rock group] and social belonging [the popular music group]. Three things were at work: 1) A non traditional classroom geared to the musical levels, tastes and emotional needs of the students; 2) Nontraditional teaching practices designed to fit the styles of music and the needs of the students; 3) The musical settings served a real-life purpose, something that was truly important to the students beyond the classroom.

### Musical joy. *Musikkglede*

And then, of course, there is the musical joy that was so spontaneous and strong in Kjell's popular music group. I was moved to tears by the warmth, joy, vibrancy, 'living in the music' - *innlevelse* - with which Grete and Lars sang and played.

### Musical joy: an individual interaction with the instrument

The first time I heard Grete play and sing by herself with Kjell accompanying [and humming] at the piano, I was struck by the fact that they both seemed to have fun playing and singing together, as Hilde and Ellen did in their voice lesson. However, even though there was a joyful element to the musical interaction, Grete seemed primarily absorbed in a quiet, warm contentment, centering on the act of singing and accompanying herself on the electric guitar.

When Lars entered the picture, the dynamics of the group changed. Kjell became less laid back, the pace quickened, the noise level increased. The rhythmic beat and Lars' energy created a vibrant excitement in the room different from the quiet contentment that was noticeable when Kjell and Grete played by themselves. Like Grete, however, Lars seemed to derive more pleasure from his individual musical experience than from interaction with the ensemble. His musical joy seemed to stem from the physical activity of handling the drumsticks, striking the percussion instruments and responding in a rhythmic, dance-like, complex and coordinated way to the sound he created.

As a listener experiencing the musical joy in Kjell's class, I was not consciously aware of emotional nuances. Musical joy permeated the whole setting and there was no noticeable distinction between emotions emanating from interaction with the musical source, the act of singing or playing, an interactive ensemble experience, or the atmosphere that arose from the social context. In this particular setting, I think *musikkleden* stemmed from the students' individual

enjoyment in singing and playing their musical instruments. However, the individual joyful experience would have been difficult to achieve without the musical source, the ensemble and the setting.

#### Musical joy: Sound is marked by individual personalities

When musical joy seems to emanate primarily from an individual interacting with a musical instrument, it becomes obvious that the emotion itself takes on the characteristics of the person playing and singing. This was particularly clear with Kjell's popular music group. Grete's music carried her quiet, sweet disposition, evident also in her tone of voice, her way of walking and sitting. Lars' explosive energy and vibrant charm were part of his drumming as well as his acting, his walk, his 'royal' wave, the way he bicycled. The emotional dimensions of the sound were colored by their unique personalities.

#### A chamber orchestra performance

I had a similarly musically emotional experience several weeks later at a concert with a professional chamber orchestra (*Oslo Kammerorkester*). This small group of young string players played with a *musikkglede* that made the audience vibrate. They were technically excellent, but it was the musical joy and musicality that each person expressed slightly differently and very enthusiastically that gave the ensemble life.

In the professional Western art music performances that I experienced, I separate musical joy and musicality. When Hilde sang, for instance, I interpreted the emotional dimensions as an intangible spiritual joy connected primarily to the act of singing as well as musicality. She brought out the emotions in the musical source in the Western art music tradition and she brought a personal joy and character to the experience (Chapter 5).

#### Musical joy: Focused and unfocused sound through movement

Tying movement patterns to emotional dimensions in sound is a leap of faith. Nevertheless, there is a connection between the way a musician physically creates sound and the way the sound emerges from the instrument. The 'living' sound that the members of the chamber music group expressed seemed tied to their physical movements. Like Lars, the professional musicians played their instruments with dance-like, coordinated movements that looked easy and unrestrained, yet, at the same time, intimately connected to the instrument, the rhythm and the sound (Chapter 6). However, unlike a traditional ensemble where the members move and play as one instrument,

these musicians displayed individual and different movement patterns to the extent that the appearance of uniformity and sameness in a traditional ensemble was disturbed. Each member played with an individuality and freedom [as evidenced by their movement patterns] that created an intense excitement when played off against the uniformity of the ensemble. It was as if all these musicians played in time with the beat, but not quite; they added their own individuality to the ensemble sound which was part of the excitement, the joy (Keil & Feld, 1994).<sup>57</sup>

Again, as I was listening to the chamber music group, I was not aware of emotional nuances. I was filled with the same uplifted feeling I felt when I listened to Grete and Lars. In contrast to Grete and Lars, however, the musical joy in the ensemble was part of the interaction between the musicians in the group as well as an individual joyful interaction with the instruments and the musical source. In fact, as I described above, I think the particular excitement in this chamber music performance was created, in part, by the musicians individuality sometimes conforming to and sometimes contrasting with the uniformity of the ensemble sound (Keil & Feld, 1994). The enthusiastic audience response also played a part in this context.

#### Is movement a key to expanded consciousness?

I want to look at instrumental movement patterns and a possible connection to musical emotions from a different perspective: I mentioned above that Kjell's students [particularly Lars] and the chamber musicians moved rhythmically, with a dance, play-like ease. In fact, the musicians in both ensembles seemed to have let go of a certain physical rigidity and self-conscious control that, in part, may have enabled them to experience an emotional involvement with the music, to go beyond the technical to an expanded performance, where intellect and emotion coexisted (Nørretrander, 1993, p. 312). Nørretrander claims that this type of experience is common in performance situations. The balance between the control of the intellect - consciousness - and the free expression of the unconscious self - emotions, spirit, soul, - has to be reached before a holistic artistic experience can unfold.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> I discuss the connection between a physical unrhythmic/rhythmic execution of music and our perception and definition of musicality further in the chapter on Musical Joy.

<sup>58</sup> The psychologist Abraham Maslow uses the term *peak experience* for this state of consciousness (in Nørretrander, 1993, p. 318)

Some interesting observations about ‘expanded consciousness’:

1) Neither group could sustain an intense emotional experience throughout their performance/class. The chamber orchestra reached their intellectual and emotional peak during their first number and never quite found the combination again. Grete’s and Lars’ vibrant energy came together after a couple of songs and flagged after their break when everyone was tired.

2) Nørretrander ties the ability to reach the state of expanded consciousness in performance to intense practice, which certainly applies to the chamber music group (p. 319). Grete and Lars were quite accomplished at singing and playing their instruments. However, their musical joy was not reached through constant work on musical skills and instrumental technique. Theirs was a natural and spontaneous involvement with and enjoyment of the musical experience, much like that experienced by Ellen in Hilde’s classes. However, the heightened emotions that I experienced during the performances were similar in the professional and the amateur groups.<sup>59</sup>

#### Musical concepts and social construction

I mentioned in my introductory chapter that there is a contradiction in this work between the way I talk about musical joy and musical concepts such as Western art music. Western art music is recognizable as a product where norms and conventions can be talked about as socially constructed. Musical joy is an abstract, emotional dimension experienced by people actively engaged in making music. The conditions that allow musical joy to exist and spread may be socially constructed. However, like our ability to perceive and our tendency to categorize (Barsalou, 1992), our capacity for emotions like *musikkglede* may be innate.

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<sup>59</sup> I discuss levels of emotional involvement further in Chapter 10, Musical Joy.

## Chapter 8. Musical joy in ensemble rehearsals and performances

Lena Rist Larsen is the third musician at *Asker Musikkskole* who participated in this study. Lena's instruments are the violin and the accordion. She is a student at *Musikkhøgskolen*, [she has since graduated with a Master's degree, *diplom studium*], a performer as well as a teacher. I entered Lena's classes as I had the others': I was looking for emotional dimensions in musical contexts. Western art music is back as the reigning paradigm, the foundation for all of Lena's musical settings that I experienced. This time, however, the issues of musical emotions and Western art music grew out of ensemble rehearsals and performances, as well as private instructional settings.

Lena, by the sheer force of her dramatic and driving personality, brings the discussion of conservatory practices for everyone a step further. While addressing the same contradictions and problems that Kjell and Hilde did, she embodies the balancing act practiced by a person who is both talented and different, in a society where sticking out is not generally admired, particularly if that means that you might think you are better than others.

Sunday, Sept. 11 - 7:00 p.m.

My daughter and I are attending Lena's accordion solo recital at *Musikkhøgskolen*.

A small audience is scattered around *Lindemansalen* (Lindeman auditorium).<sup>60</sup> People are chatting, greeting each other. I wave to Inger Lise, the person in charge of the orchestra division at *Asker Musikkskole*. Large, spare formal stage - beautiful wooden floor. Marble busts of Norwegian musical dignitaries line the walls. Nice atmosphere, on the warm side. Here comes the performer. Lena strides, fast and confidently, from the back of the stage to the front. High heels, sweeping purple ballroom gown, puffed sleeves; hair swept back and flying. Accordion is strapped to her chest. Powerful! I am impressed; Anna giggles. Yes, the accordion looks so out of place where it is; here, in this formal setting, on this formally dressed person!

Lena plays Bach's Goldberg variations (BWV 988). Her program notes indicate that, as far as is known, this is the first time this piece has been performed on the accordion in Norway. The performance is technically nearly flawless and impressive musically.<sup>61</sup> The intriguing aspect of this concert for me, however, is the combination of the traditional conventions of Western art music with a non traditional Western art music instrument. Lena, perched on a stool in her purple ballroom gown, accordion on her lap, embodies this mixture of tradition and change. There is the traditional formal gown. The choice of music couldn't be more traditionally acceptable. Lena's

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<sup>60</sup> The Lindeman family founded the Conservatory of Oslo in 1887, the forerunner of *Musikkhøgskolen*. (Chapter 4).

<sup>61</sup> Lena plays with technical skills and emotional nuances.

whole demeanor is one of restraint, elegance and high class; her appearance fits the type of music she plays, except for her hair which won't quite stay in place. And then all of this tradition and high class are fronted by a large, clumsy folksy instrument. Is the performer intentionally contrasting formal appearance with the informal instrument?

Concert over - lots of applause. Anna and I go to meet Lena along with the entire audience it seems. Very enthusiastic parents, family, teachers and friends. Now I am able to place her as a student in this context. On the stage she projects an aura of professional musician, not that of a student at all. Back stage she is very nice and friendly, greets Anna and me as old acquaintances. This person who seemed so different and aloof on stage is completely ordinary and down to earth, very much in harmony with the folksy image of her accordion.

### Status

When Lena and I discuss the concert later, I am curious about the blend of tradition and change that I saw on stage. Lena tells me that her appearance, demeanor and choice of music are indeed deliberate attempts to elevate the status of the instrument. "Besides," says Lena, "I love to dress up" (Talk, October, 1994).

The issue of status has entered this study on several occasions already. I felt my lack of status as a music teacher as I began to observe the two performers and one composer at *Asker Musikkskole*. Kjell confirmed this by arguing that the performers who teach at *Asker* could have been musicians, thus implying that teachers of music are not musicians on the same level or of the same status as performers of music (Chapter 6). Hilde and I discussed how status varies among performing musicians depending on where they perform.

### Social construction of status in musical contexts

In the previous chapter, I discussed Western art music as sound that has been constructed in certain ways according to conventions and rules agreed upon by people involved in the field. Affective dimensions, such as 'good' and 'bad,' 'I like this' or 'I dislike that,' are as much a part of the constructed sound as the norms and rules. When I discussed the superior label often attached to Western art music, I was referring to the status of that particular genre of music. Thus, the concept of status is yet another attribute that we attach to phenomena in our environment along with norms, rules, 'likes' and 'dislikes.' H. Becker (1982) and R. Clignet (1985) describe artistic works, concepts and ideas as agreements by practitioners in the art field concerning the norms and traditions of that field. The agreed upon conventions, along with nuances such as 'good,' and 'bad' and status, come to constitute the concepts themselves. We tend to think of the norms and conventions, good and bad, high or low status as innate characteristics of the sound rather than man-made descriptors that help us group information into categories (Chapter 7).

### Conventions with status change over time

Since social construction depends on people both constructing and learning, and since our cognitive categorization processes seem conveniently imprecise and adjustable; (Barselou, 1992), norms, conventions and status change continuously depending on time and place. For example: The accordion is an instrument constructed by people and used in musical contexts where norms generally apply to casual social gatherings of people who are not, as a rule, thought of as a social elite. As was made clear by my personal reaction to Lena's accordion concert, attributes of 'working class' and 'low status' still cling to the instrument for me, regardless of the Western art music setting.

Other instruments, types of musicians, and genres of music have changed status over time. Like the accordion, the flute used to be considered a low class instrument.<sup>62</sup> Accompanists used to play off stage, as if they had no impact on or importance to the performer on stage. Ballet music was once considered low class and was not performed in prestigious concert halls (Clignet, 1985, p. 152). In terms of social construction and the inevitability of change, if enough people agree that Western art music is superior, or that the flute or the accordion are superior instruments, then status becomes attached to the artistic instrument, composition or idea or institution or person, and the position of the artistic work, musical style, instrument, person or institution is strengthened in society.

### Lena and reconstruction of the accordion

In this light, what Lena is doing is socially reconstructing her humble instrument, which is not innately humble, into an instrument with status to match other instruments in the Western art music tradition. Howard Becker (1982) would characterize Lena as a 'maverick musician.' She is an artist who is already an expert in her field, but feels restrained by the conventions of that field and does 'her own thing' (p. 371). If she can make enough people agree with her over the years - convince them so to speak that the accordion is a 'high class' instrument, the instrument may become the violin of the 21st century (Clignet, 1985; Becker H., 1982).

Lena obviously knew that by playing Western art music on the accordion on a traditional concert stage in a traditional ballroom gown, she was trying to change people's opinions about the instrument (Talk, October 1994). However, she did not consciously think of herself as an agent working to implement change within the norms and traditions of her field. She had no sense that she was doing the same thing to the accordion that artists before her had already done to the flute or ballet music. She intuitively and skillfully worked as a practitioner within underlying meanings and assumptions of her field to implement change without being consciously aware that this is precisely how change is implemented and new norms, with all the affective nuances, are formed.

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<sup>62</sup> The social construction of the physical instrument is also continuous. The appearance seems to change subtly, often over long time periods, as people involved in the field reconstruct the object to improve the sound according to technological advances.



### October 3

Lena took off for Cyprus right after her accordion concert. I was supposed to call her as soon as she came back, but this is the first I have gotten around to it. Lena sounds busy and cheerful on the phone, and casual, easy to communicate with. She talks a lot and very fast in a high pitched, rather strained voice - and seems completely open, free, and unguarded in what she says. “ I am combing my hair, getting dressed and eating breakfast at the same time. No, don’t call me tonight, I teach till ten. I also have to help Wolfgang pack, it goes faster that way.” [I presume her husband is going on a concert tour].<sup>63</sup>

I get the impression that I had better grab the opportunity to talk while I can, so I ask if Lena has any concerns about her teaching at *Asker Musikkskole*. Mainly, she says, she feels that the teaching time is too limited. “You get 18 min. and 45 seconds per student and that is just not enough if you want to really get into the material, especially if you have an interested student.” In addition, Lena feels that there is no time for ‘*hverdagen*’ - every day concerns. “When am I supposed to ask how they feel? How their day has been? How their dog is? All of these things are so important to the overall context of what I do.”

### Private instruction. Time is too limited to find the student’s developmental level

I have already mentioned Lena and her comment about her student’s dog as an example of the general frustration felt by many of the music school teachers about time limits on instruction (Chapter 6). The benefits of one-on-one teaching, which gives you an opportunity to bring out the best in your student, are compromised. The teacher needs time to get to know the student in context in order to gauge when and with what material the student is ready to move on.

### Elite instruction for everyone?

In addition to her concern about time constraints, Lena speaks about the underlying contradictions between the concept of private instruction and music for everyone.

Lena: Let’s face it. Private instruction is instruction for the elite. And this is a real problem in a country where it is not socially acceptable to think that you are better than anyone else. Here in Norway, it is wrong to be better than others.

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<sup>63</sup> On one of my trips back to Norway after my fieldwork was over, I called Lena. It was 8:00 p.m., and as Lena answered the phone I heard several violins tuning up in the background. “Oh, I am so sorry, I am disturbing a rehearsal,” I exclaimed. Lena: “Don’t be silly, I always have two seconds to talk to you. Just a normal day really, I had my students, a couple of classes. Now we are rehearsing for a concert tomorrow. And, oh yes, I had my wisdom teeth pulled this morning.” Lena’s ‘normal’ day, as I learned very quickly, would kill a ‘normal’ person!

Several issues have emerged concerning private instruction at the music schools. 1) The position the institution holds in Norwegian society is not strong enough to financially support music instruction for everyone, at least not the way it is currently practiced; 2) Kjell brought up the question of motivation. Is it possible or even desirable to teach everyone music, regardless of interest? 3) Lena now brings out the contradiction between practice and ideology. The music schools' practice of private instruction seems to be at odds with the music school philosophy of 'music for everyone.' On a larger scale, private instruction viewed from an elitist perspective sits uncomfortably in a social democracy where equality is the norm.

#### Don't act like you are better than anyone else

Lena's statement that it is not socially acceptable to be better than anyone else may be particularly applicable in Norway with its social democratic political structure. However, elites are generally not easily tolerated in democratic societies, especially not an elite that flaunts its privileges. The Western art music prima donna provides an interesting example: Our perception of the gifted artist as a person with elevated status apparently began during the Renaissance. That lofty place sometimes allows the famous artist, the stereotype prima donna, to ignore social norms of 'decorum, propriety and common sense' (Becker, H. 1982, p. 14). There are indications that the temperamental star's privileged position is crumbling. When the famous soprano Kathleen Battle's behavior ran contrary to an opera production at the Met, she was fired. Her replacement was hailed as a diva, but not a prima donna (Washington Post, Feb. 9 and 17, 1994). And, indeed, the talented prima donna who presumes rights and privileges because of her talent, would have a hard time living in Norway. Talent is admired, but it must be cloaked in genuine modesty.

Lena and I finish our conversation quickly. Phone calls are expensive during the day, particularly since I live on the east side of town (*Bekkelagshøgda*) and most of the music teachers at *Asker* live outside the city limits, on the west side of town, - long distance rates. Lena teaches at *musikkskolen* on Mondays and Tuesdays from 5:00 - 10:00 p.m. We decide that Monday October 10 will be a good day for me to observe. We will meet later at *Musikkhøgskolen* to talk, which is a half way meeting point for both of us.

#### Monday, October 10

Lena teaches in a small, rectangular, very cramped room at *Musikkskolen*. It is clean, light and airy, big window with nice curtains, nice wooden lamp, but this is, in voice teacher Hilde's words, not an aesthetic room, it is too small and crowded! I would grow weary fast in this room.

Lena is cheerful, unbelievably 'up' and 'chirpy.' I know she has taken classes at *Musikkhøgskolen* today and would not be surprised if she has rehearsal after teaching till ten tonight. Lace black blouse under beige, large jacket. Black hose, black stirrup pants, high heels - hair bow.

5:20 - 5:50 p.m.

The first student I listen to is a 12 year old boy. He seems strained and stiff. His mother, who sits in the corner of the room, whispers that this is his fourth year of taking lessons. After that initial answer to my quick question, she becomes completely absorbed in her book. I strain to see what she is reading - ah, *The Bridges of Madison County*, - in English.

The boy takes instruction well, seems open and interested, “O.K., I will try it this way, yes, that seems to work better.” I don’t hear any noticeable change. He sounds O.K., but the pitch is a continual problem, his head juts forward out of line with the rest of his body.

Lena is positive, praises him occasionally [student seems pleased] - she is straight forward, (*grei*), firm, cheerful and fast. She has a cold today.

Lena joins him occasionally on her violin. Her expert playing, like Hilde’s piano duets with her students, ‘lifts’ the student’s performance to something that approaches a musical sound. The boy, in this case, smiles proudly when the pieces he plays with Lena sound good. He also answers some of her questions about music theory correctly. He glances at his mother and receives a distracted approving nod. Resigned, crooked smile when Lena gives him the new music for an upcoming concert. Five new pieces...

Lena peeks out in the hall to see if the next student has arrived. No, no one is there yet. “O.K.,” she says cheerfully. “That gives you two more minutes.” Another resigned crooked smile from the student.

Lena and I chat briefly before the next student comes in. She has 21 students that she teaches in two evenings. Hilde takes a break between her students. She actually sits down, eats something and has coffee or tea. Kjell takes a break of sorts. I don’t know what he usually does to relax, but when I was there, he talked with me while pacing restlessly back and forth outdoors. Lena, however, teaches straight through for five hours.

Me: Wouldn’t it be less tiring to break it up?

Lena: I don’t have time, this is the only way I can structure my teaching and still get everything else done.

All her students except two play in weekly ensembles in addition to their private lessons. There is a junior group (*aspirantgruppe*) and an orchestra or senior group (*seniorgruppe*). Lena conducts both groups on Saturdays.

5:50 - 6:15 p.m.

Live gets her violin ready. She is nine her mother tells me - beginning student. Lena is firmly encouraging - goes over lots of finger technique. She does not join this girl playing, but she is intensely involved, lively and cheerful, - and a little strained. Live gives very little feedback to Lena's teaching attempts. She has obviously not practiced a lot. Lena reminds her how good this would sound if she practiced! Encourages her to use a practice form to see how much, or how little, she practices at home.<sup>64</sup> Live is shy, but smiling. Lena is friendly, but it is obvious that she would like the student to practice more. [The room seems cramped, there is lots of noise from other students in other rooms].

Most of Lena's students come into the room very quietly, get their violins ready and wait for their turn. The routine seems well established as if the schedule is strictly adhered to throughout the evening. It would have to be. 10:00 p.m. is late for lessons for anyone, let alone children.

The third student I observe comes in at 6:05 p.m., gets her violin ready and sits down to wait until Live is finished. Pia whispers to me that she has played the violin for three years, then she quit for a year, but now she has started again. Pia has that sweet-natured, mild, polite 'Norwegian' smile (*blid*). [I think of it as the cooperating smile, the 'of course I will do my best' smile and say thank you and please every time it is called for and often when it is not. I find it frozen on my own face quite often these days]. Pia tells Lena that she has practiced her third position this week, and the two of them discuss positions on the violin intensely and at length.

6:35- 7:00 p.m.

The next student has been setting up and is ready to go as soon as Pia finishes. Pia stays a while to listen. This is Signe. Signe is 12 and has played the violin for five years. She sounds better than anyone else I have heard tonight. She and Lena play together at first, then Lena listens and watches her student intently. Signe has been trying a new practice technique, but something is still going wrong. Lena is incredibly intense as she watches the student's every move. Signe's eyes are glued to the page as she plays one of the pieces for an upcoming orchestra concert. I am holding my breath as I get caught up in this intense atmosphere. The other students have not responded to Lena's energy, but this one does. It is as if all three of us are charged with the same urge to play well! It is somehow imperative that Signe succeeds at this particular piece! "*Den kjøper jeg!*" " O.K. I buy that one! That one is acceptable!" Lena's exclamation - short, to the point, pleased.

Signe's posture droops with pleased relief. I am breathing again. The student played flawlessly, but not quite on pitch and the music was not what I would call vibrantly alive - but, improvement; there was improvement.

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<sup>64</sup> The form is supposed to keep the student on track, remind him/her to practice by writing down how long and when.

### Heidi and a renewed look at status

The next student comes in with her mother. Heidi's *mamma* told me when they came in that her daughter feels safer (*tryggere*) with her in the room. She also eyed my tape recorder suspiciously, and I explain what I am doing there. Heidi has taken lessons for one year and two months. She started with a regular private instructor, but she finally made it into the music school her mother whispers to me. Heidi is a sweet and cooperative student who struggles with the instrument, but I am mainly intrigued by the implications of her mother's whispered comment.

### Status of music schools

I have gained the impression during my time at Asker, that *Musikkskolene* as musical institutions are gaining status in Norwegian society. In terms of social construction, when status becomes attached to social phenomena like instruments, people and institutions, the position these phenomena hold in society is strengthened. Supposedly then, enough people are beginning to agree that the music schools are institutions worthy of status. How is that agreement reached? 1) The waiting lists. Students and parents wait in line for as long as a year to get in to some of the music schools. In Heidi's case, as soon as she gained entrance, she left her private teacher. I am beginning to suspect that status is partly tied up in the difficulty of getting in. The schools must be good if everyone is waiting in line, right? 2) There are some good performers that we see on T.V., read about in the newspapers; children as well as professional musicians. Yes, I went to 'such and such' *musikkskole* as a child, they tell us. 3) Some of the teachers are graduates of institutions that already have high status, like *Musikkhøgskolen*. 4) Some of the teachers, like Lena, are visible performers. Both Lena and her husband were described as musical prodigies on a television program that featured the two of them. All this contributes to convince more and more people that the music schools are good and desirable.

### State supported status

The fact that the music schools are partially state supported is also a factor in enhancing status (Clignet, 1985). In other words, the Norwegian state has the power to imbue institutions with academic acceptability as well as financial stability.<sup>65</sup> Clignet further claims that this type of patronage "tends to freeze the prevailing styles" (norms) "into new forms of high culture, which thereby lose their initial spontaneity" (p. 210).

### Frozen art in the U.S.

According to Clignet, federal support in the U.S. tends to go to the artistic group or person with most political clout or influence, thus, again, reinforcing the status of existing institutions and artists. A recent article in *The Washington Post* describes this problem in terms of the NEA

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<sup>65</sup> The reasoning could go as follows: If the state supports the music schools, someone in authority must have thought them worthy of support. The fact that people make these decisions through discussions and consensus is rarely reflected upon; the basis for acceptability and validity would seem too arbitrary.

(National Endowment for the Arts), the federal agency that funds artistic organization and artists in the U.S. The “systemic” problem with the NEA, according to the author, is that “

...the endowment (along with, since the late 1980s, many private arts funders) has quietly pursued policies rooted in identity politics - a kind of separatism that emphasizes racial, sexual and cultural differences above all else. The art world’s version of affirmative action, these policies haven’t excited much controversy, but they have had a profoundly corrosive effect on the American arts - pigeonholing artists and pressuring them to produce work that satisfies a politically correct agenda rather than their best creative instincts (Breslauer, 1997).

### Frozen art in Norway

Hans-Jacob Brun, the director of the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art in Oslo, describes a similar phenomenon of funding for politically correct art in Norway: “After World War II, Norwegian art entered into a growing alliance with the social-democratic program of social planning...” By bringing pictorial art into the public sphere, Norway ran the risk of turning it into smug, conservative, socially-realistic “official” art. Norway decided (in the 70s) to define this ‘politically correct art’ as ‘experimental,’ ‘avant-garde’ and ‘free.’ The artists and art who fit this ‘institutionalized freedom’ were the ones that got funded by the state (Brun, 1994).

### Is Asker Musikkskole frozen as an institution?

Clignet, Breslauer and Brun talk about art styles, but it is interesting to look at the music schools from the same perspective. *Asker Musikkskole* seems to be changing all the time. It is not ‘frozen’ as an institution. This may be due, in part, to the fact that the music schools are not fully funded by the state. *Asker Musikkskole’s* director, Arne Hagen, seemed to be constantly involved in negotiations within shifting power relationships between politicians, parents, teachers and students. Thus, the music schools have to keep several social factions happy in order to survive, which may contribute to the institution’s popularity and viability.

### 7:00 p.m. My stamina is running low

Eva, Lena’s next student is almost 12. She tells me that she is in sixth grade. I forget to ask her how long she has played, but she sounds quite good when Lena harmonizes with her. But the dry, lifeless sound of slightly out of tune violins is beginning to get to me. There is a certain energy when Lena plays duets with her students. But without Lena playing, there is little *musikkglede* on part of the individual student.

I am not going to last until 10:00 p.m., I can tell. Again, the trip home in the dark is looming before me. Lena seems cheerful and unruffled by my lack of stamina when I quickly tell her between students that I think I had better leave. “That is fine,” she says. “The next three students have all played for a long time. They are pretty good, and if you like you can always hear them

later.” I will call Lena tomorrow morning to see when I can come to observe an orchestra rehearsal. “Call early! I am going to *Trondheim* Wednesday through Friday of this week, I have a lot to do before I can go!”

What a schedule! Lena’s spirit has not flagged once throughout the afternoon and evening. She is intense, firm, uncompromising in her standards, humorous, doles out measured praise cheerfully. She is ‘up,’ ‘up’ all the time, never a break, never a let-down. She must be uncomfortable in those high heels! And the room, although somewhat aesthetic when no one is in it, is way too crowded for teaching! And are there tuba students upstairs throughout the entire evening?

#### Western art music and teaching/learning interaction

Like Hilde, Lena is teaching in the Western art music tradition. Unlike Hilde, she does not blend emotionally with the people she teaches. In other words, Lena stays pretty much the same from student to student. She has enormous energy as a teacher; she is cheerful and friendly, but, like Kjell, she does not get too involved. She mentioned that she felt bound by the time restrictions, that she felt she had very little time to get to know her students, but I have a feeling that this ‘cheerful aloofness’ is part of her teaching style regardless of time restraints. She is encouraging, but sparing with her praise. She is firm, keeps the schedule. She will tell you [kindly] if she doesn’t think you practice enough. Enjoyment is not the prime objective of these lessons, improvement is.

Lena’s way of teaching is traditional instructional practice in the Western art music field. The process yields results over a period of years. But as is often the case with this type of instruction, the lessons are dry, without joy, and, in spite of Lena’s intensity and personal skills, relatively little of this professional musician’s enormous musicianship and musicality are transferred to her students.

I am a lot like Lena in my teaching style, very positive, friendly, intense, with lots and lots of energy that I try to pour into my students. After many years of teaching, I felt that my instructional style, however energetic and enthusiastic I was, did not transfer my joy of music to the students. My students were enduring rather than enjoying their classes. Something was lacking and I was not sure what, but the same ‘ingredient’ that was lacking in my classes was also absent in some of Hilde’s, Kjell’s and Lena’s lessons - particularly in those where meeting the standards of Western art music were important.

Lena’s ensemble settings turned out to be quite different from the private lessons I attended. But before I observed Lena’s orchestra rehearsals, I had some other interesting experiences with *musikkglede* - musical joy -that related to the joy or lack of joy in traditional and not so traditional music lessons, and how to incorporate that spirit into teaching.

### Oct. 21. Brazz Brothers

My daughter and I are attending a workshop with students from the University of Oslo and lots of other musically interested Norwegians. We are here to experience music teaching ‘with heart.’<sup>66</sup> The Brazz Bros. play for us - upbeat, jazzy type stuff, - of course, why else all the zzzzzzzs - and they do sound good! I get this helpless feeling of inadequacy as they divide us all up in groups so that we can learn to bring the joy of music to our teaching as well as to our playing, the way they do. Anna joins the percussion group. I join the vocal group. O.K. We are echoing the model section by section, then putting it all together. We are singing and playing in three and four part harmony within half an hour. No notes were necessary in the learning process.

### Learning by doing

The seminar leaders are using teaching practices that are common in many music methodologies, techniques that reflect the importance of actively ‘doing’ in the process of learning, teaching and making music.<sup>67</sup> But I am not that impressed. I have experienced similar teaching processes in much more effective and spiritually fulfilling ways. Several Orff workshops in the U.S. come to mind, and a session right here in Oslo, with an African/Norwegian drummer, again one of the immersion sessions organized by Prof. Bjørkvold.<sup>68</sup> So, I am disappointed. I agree, I think some of the ‘note by rote’ teaching in ensembles could be better done by letting go of the notes on the page. Add a little spirit and listening skills by imitating a model (*gehørspill*) rather than staring stiffly at a page all the time. But my session with one of the zzzzs was forced, and ‘heart’ was largely missing. We did learn the song, however. And off we trot to join the others.

### Everyone sings and plays together: Enter musical joy

We are putting it all together now. The melody, the piano, the percussion, the brass. Scores of people making music together - music none of us has ever heard a few hours earlier. And we sound pretty awful! But how wonderful and thrilling the experience is! So, here is the vitamin shot, the joy of music, the lifting of the spirit. And it didn’t take that much! And it didn’t take perfect musicianship and technique! We sing, we play, we look at each other, smile, even move around a little to the music. Anna and I feel uplifted as we float home in the darkness and rain. It helps that one of the university students and her daughter give us a ride home.

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<sup>66</sup> Professor Bjørkvold’s music education seminar involved several activities designed for his students to actively experience the ‘lifting of spirit’ ‘the special room,’ the ‘peak experience’ that is particularly strong in certain musical settings. The Brazz Brothers seminar was part of an in depth experience of this kind. I attended one of four sessions with this group.

<sup>67</sup> I described these practices in Hilde’s chapter as adaptations of apprenticeship practices in natural settings, and used the processes of the German composer and music educator Carl Orff as an example. These processes use imitation, improvisation and eventual creation as the basis for music learning and teaching. Reading a musical score comes after the internalization of musical skills (Chapter 5).

<sup>68</sup> African dance and music with Kouame Sereba.



### Lesson gasps for air. Ensemble lives

I did not get any new ideas about how to incorporate joy in my teaching from the Brazz Brothers seminar. On the contrary, my lesson reminded me of how rarely *musikkglede* is part of instructional settings at all. But what does linger in my mind is the thrill of being part of an ensemble. Like Ellen in Hilde's classes, Grete and Lars in Kjell's classes, Anna and I had great fun singing and playing 'just the way we were.' Our enjoyment was different from that engendered through the quiet interaction between Hilde and Ellen, the instrumental and social interaction in Kjell's popular music group, and the practiced musical interaction of the chamber orchestra. Anna and I experienced a 'sing along' type of musical occasion, where people get together socially and find a cohesiveness and joy in jointly making music.<sup>69</sup>

### Different levels of emotional joy

Like Ellen, Grete and Lars, however, Anna and I felt the joy of music through an inexpert performance. We could all sing a tune more or less on pitch. Our instrumental skills were adequate to accompany a simple song. We stayed in rhythm with each other. However, the musical joy we experienced certainly did not spring from the intense practice underlying the aesthetic experience of expert performances (Nørretrander, 1993). Is the aesthetic experience of novice and expert really that different? Did the members of the chamber orchestra experience a different type of emotional wholeness and joy than we did? I suspect that the spontaneous and natural nuances of musical joy that we felt as part of an amateur group are present at some level for expert and novice alike.

### Meyer's three types of musical enjoyment

Meyer claims that there are three aspects of musical enjoyment: the sensuous, the associative-characterizing, and the syntactical (Meyer, 1994, p. 34). The sensuous relates to the spontaneous joy I am referring to in this study. The syntactical can refer to the trained response of expert performances. The associative kind can color both of the other 'enjoyments.' Meyer feels that there are aspects of all three nuances of emotions in all musical experiences. However, tying the emotions to immediate or delayed gratification, he argues that the delayed gratification is of more value than the immediate one. I don't think that the enjoyment that Grete, Lars, Anna and I felt is of less value than that felt by the members of the chamber orchestra; different, but not of less value. In this respect, Meyer's is an arbitrary judgment connected to the supposed superiority of Western art music.

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<sup>69</sup> E. T. Aston (1968) lists as one of the many functions of music precisely this power that music has in group situations to bring people together. "The potency of music is greatest in the group."

## *So, what about Lena's ensemble?*

### Saturday November 5

I am off to *Asker* again. It is nice to travel during the morning hours; much less traffic at the train station downtown. I enjoy the walk from *Asker* station to the music school. The air is cold and brisk; I am squinting towards a hazy sun that rises late, sets early and hugs the horizon all day in between. There are lots of people out walking and bicycling, and today I feel in tune with all these casual looking people with their backpacks and shopping bags. I know when to nod, when to avoid eye-contact, when to hurry by. I am not even out of breath as I reach the top of the hill. I must have been here a while.

### Orchestra rehearsal

The rehearsal is underway when I get to the music school. I sit down on a chair in the open doorway. The musicians are all sitting in a U shape, facing away from me, but I can see the faces of the children on the side of the U facing me, and I have a wonderful view of Lena. Black skirt today, black hose and a cream colored shirt, the high heels are in place as well as the black bow in the hair. She is conducting, correcting, consoling, praising, tuning violins, all at breakneck speed. The rehearsal is moving along efficiently.

### Apprenticeship practices adapted to musical settings

There is a broad span of ages, ca. 8 - 18 I would guess. The younger children are interspersed between older, more experienced players. Inger Lise, the teacher that I met during my first meeting at *Asker* and at Lena's accordion concert, sits in the orchestra the whole time, next to the students, playing along with them, unobtrusively guiding. There is another adult placed behind another inexperienced violinist. He points out her place in the music, helps her with other practicalities that gives her a chance to keep up with Lena's directions.

There is a certain energy and involvement among the older members. The little boy close to me does not play much. He follows along though; he hits entrances now and then. The younger members seem generally somewhat lost, hunched over.

Hunched over, yes. All the younger children seem a bit timid, most of them sit towards the back. The atmosphere, however, is not intimidating, so I assume the younger orchestra members are nervous and apprehensive because fall rehearsals have just started. They are mostly watching and listening; they are not going to play very loud until they have more control over their instruments and the setting.

### Novice learners imitate expert models

Like apprenticeship practices, the ensemble setting with mixed ages and skills works by having the young students observe, listen and join in when they feel they are ready to play as part of the

ensemble. The older students and adult teachers serve as models and guides [scaffolds], making it possible for the novice to play beyond his/her present capabilities. These are roles that the younger students will move into as they grow older and more sure of their instrumental skills and orchestral practices (Vygotsky, 1986; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

Social interaction is an important part of the picture, but peripheral to the actual playing. The older orchestra members and the adults talk softly to each other, pointing, correcting, encouraging. Lena and Inger-Lise communicate informally throughout. The rehearsal is going well. Lena uses a very traditional rehearsal approach: reading notes, beating out rhythm. She is, as she was in her private teaching, 'up,' 'chirpy,' incredibly energetic, but aloof, distant nevertheless. The students are orderly and attentive; very little discipline talk is needed.

#### Lena as model

Lena gives up on conducting with an assortment of pencils and grabs her violin to demonstrate. The students pick up their violins one by one and imitate her. The 'woodenness' of their postures is gone. They actually have a whole model to observe and imitate now, not just a pencil waving in the air. They straighten their backs and look directly at Lena; their eyes are no longer glued to the music in front of them. They obviously listen to her, but it is her movements as she moves with her instrument that they try to copy.

Lena goes back to her 'pencil' conducting. They repeat difficult passages again and again. The energy from the conductor is tangible. She is driving them on. This is not learning from within because you are self motivated, it is a push from the outside that the students are accepting and moving with. And the ensemble is getting noticeable better. Would they be even better if the drive came from them? If Lena had used different, less traditional rehearsal approaches? I am thinking along the lines of 'playing by ear,' *gehørspillmetoden* à la the Brazz Brothers here. My immediate answer would be yes, try something new! But, I am not sure. I think there are other things at work in this setting.

#### Intermission

Everyone gets new music. The other violin teacher, Inger Lise, serves cakes and juice (*saft*) in the adjoining room. The rooms are large, home-like and comfortable, the same area Kjell used for his popular music and rock groups. But there is not a lot of social interaction. Some students stand by themselves, others chat a little. You get the feeling that these people are not friends outside this setting, and have a hard time opening up to people they don't know well. Most of them look like they would rather have gotten the rehearsal over with and gone home early.

#### Story behind the orchestra

I decide to go over to the next room to talk to Inger-Lise. She tells me that she has been involved in private teaching and the orchestra at *Asker* for a long time [much longer than Lena], and about

the struggle they have had to go through to get the orchestra to the point it is now. I ask if the orchestra members pay an extra fee for the Saturday sessions. “No, when we began this endeavor, we were afraid of losing members, so no, there is no extra fee.”

Lena and Inger Lise teach every one of the orchestra members privately. They share this group, in other words. Inger Lise is the organizing force behind the ensemble; she takes care of all the details, she makes it all run. However, the key to the success of this group may be Lena’s visibility as a performer, her status as a musician. Inger Lise says that Lena is enormously popular with the students. There is absolutely no hint in Lena’s or Inger Lise’s behavior or words that any of them think their roles in the orchestral production is any more or less important than the other’s.

### Back to rehearsal

Listless atmosphere now. Lena looks tired, but, characteristically, there is no lagging in her no nonsense approach. She is as intense and involved as always, does not put up with lack of involvement, but cheerfully and firmly keeps the members at their tasks. Oops, the girl at the grand piano nodded off for a minute there. Lena laughs. On we go. But almost everyone steals glances at the clock on the wall.

The repertoire has been alternately traditional Western European art music and Norwegian art music. The ending piece is a ‘mini’ national anthem, an ode to *Asker*, the community they live in. *Asker er bygda vår*. ‘Asker is our home.’ [*Bygd* has connotations of farming community, part of *Asker* in a not too distant past, I am sure, but no longer]. The orchestra members move into the song with a certain vigor and enthusiasm, more because it is the last piece of the day than any real community spirit? There is a feeling of relief when the final chord has died out. The kids hastily put their instruments away and head for the door.

### Small ensemble

Why am I not surprised to find that the end of one rehearsal is just the beginning of another one for Lena? Now comes a small ensemble of teenage girls, ca. 14 - 18 years of age. They have all played the violin anywhere from five to ten years. Inger Lise first cleans up after the orchestra, then joins Lena and the girls. They stand in a half circle. Lena plays and conducts with her violin, Inger Lise fits in as an ensemble player. I am so impressed! There was a hint of better musicianship and musicality in the orchestra [technical and emotional musical skills]. The improvement from the private lessons, in fact, was considerable. But the small ensemble is far superior to the orchestra. I am sitting on the bench by the grand piano, facing the group. They are all about the same size, and they move individually as they play, but with a certain togetherness.<sup>70</sup> Lena is a tangible force here, as a player and conductor, and she literally lifts the ensemble to a superior performance.

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<sup>70</sup> Reminiscent of the chamber orchestra, but not with the same coordination and intensity.

### Small ensemble in concert

A similar 'peak' experience took place during a concert that *Asker Musikkskole* put on in honor of the Norwegian composer Johan Kvandal. I had a chance to hear Marianne, Hilde's student, sing at that time. Tor, Kjell's rock musician, played classical guitar. Lena conducted/played as the leader of her young ensemble. The excitement of the performance atmosphere [the composer was in attendance], added to the interaction between Lena and her students. They all played a very difficult piece with vibrant musicality, a piece I am willing to bet none of the students could have gotten half way through on their own. Lena's comment: "Of course the music was too difficult. We went into the concert with the attitude: We will manage this! (*Dette greier vi!*) (Telephone conversation, Oct. '95).

### Off to another rehearsal

I probably should have passed up the chance for a ride downtown with Lena. I had no idea what I was in for. This energetic, vibrant musician is, in addition to her fast teaching and fast talking, an incredibly fast driver! I pray I will live to see my family again as we slalom east towards Oslo. Lena talks about her future plans and her life as a musician as I glance nervously in the side mirror expecting to see flashing lights any minute.<sup>71</sup>

Lena, of course, is on her way to a rehearsal for a concert that is going to be broadcast that night from *Uranienborg kirke* (church). What a whirlwind schedule she has! She could teach full time at *Musikkskolen*, I suggest. This would give her a steady paycheck, pension benefits, etc. As I suspected, this is not quite in the cards for Lena. She may consider some position within that institution in the future, but one of her long term goals is to get into the Norwegian Broadcasting's Corporation's Orchestra. Ah. Performance opportunities with status, security and pension points.<sup>72</sup> However, gaining entrance to this institution, Lena says, is very difficult and complex. She is not sure she will make it through the audition process.

### Coda

After Lena drops me off, I catch my tram a couple of blocks from the church where she is rehearsing. Is it possible to have an emotional attachment to a tram? Well, I do. I have been taking this particular tram [it has changed appearance and routes throughout the decades] since I was seven years old - when I was first allowed to go off to my piano lessons by myself. And I feel like I have come home as I settle down by the window. I love the sight of the buses going by inches from my eyes, the hustle and bustle of the area around the main railroad station, the smell of exhaust, the drab colossal new post office building, the jaunty tall profile of a hotel and shopping complex someone told me was built in that direction in order to face Mecca (!) And then,

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<sup>71</sup> Lena was interviewed on T.V. after a performance, and the interviewer must have heard about her driving habits! Lena: "I know what red means and I know what green means, but who is to say what yellow means!"

<sup>72</sup> *Kringkastingsorkesteret* is one of the performing arts organizations supported by the Norwegian government.

finally, 'my' hills on the east side of Oslo - up, up towards *Holtet* station, past *Sjømannsskolen* (Maritime school) with the dark statue of the devil on horseback clutching a struggling figure on the way to Hell; and the wonderful view of *Oslofjorden* dotted with sailboats and fishing boats, passenger boats and islands.

## Chapter 9. A discussion of ‘working’ classrooms, the ‘star’ in democratic societies, and talent

### *‘Working’ classrooms*

Lena possesses a strong human spirit, vitality and energy in and out of musical settings. The combination of her musicianship, musicality and character that did not communicate to her students in private lessons, did transfer to her students in ensemble settings. It was as if, in these contexts, Lena tapped into her inner resources and allowed them to emerge. She shared of herself; there was no aloofness or reserve. Her students seemed to absorb her strength, musically and personally, in part by modeling themselves on her movement patterns. Movement served as a vehicle to Nørretrander’s expanded consciousness (1993, p. 312), similar to Lars’ physical attack on the drum set.<sup>73</sup> (Chapter 7). The result: Everyone played at levels beyond their present abilities. “Of course the music was too difficult. We went into the concert with the attitude: We will manage this! *Dette greier vi*” (Lena, Oct. ‘95). Lena was the main ingredient in this expanded experience. She literally ‘lifted’ the group from an ordinary student ensemble to a group delivering an exceptional performance.

#### The musician/teacher with a muse

I mentioned above that the ‘working’ classrooms I observed at *Asker* seemed to have a teacher who was prepared to teach at the student’s developmental level. For this setting to work, the students, in turn, have to be prepared to learn. ‘Prepared to teach’ does not just mean an ability to sense the developmental needs and levels of the students. It means that the teacher has to possess musical and human resources that inspire the students to use the teacher as a meaningful ‘scaffold’ in their learning processes. Lena and Hilde serve as examples of this type of teacher. I am borrowing a term from J.R. Bjørkvold (1991, p. 161) to describe them: They are both teachers with a muse.<sup>74</sup> Lena’s spiritual energy is very different from Hilde’s, but both use their musical skills and their personal, emotional strengths to promote learning in their students.

Thus, the classroom that functions both in terms of learning and musical joy seems to have teachers that employ their particular talent and spirituality in appropriate developmental interaction with their students. The students are prepared to learn, to imitate meaningfully, their instructors’

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<sup>73</sup> Movement and dance are strong vehicles through which heightened experiences like musical joy can be reached and communicated. Literature, theater, humor are other such facilitators or ‘keys’ to a personal muse (Bjørkvold, 1991).

<sup>74</sup> The different terms describing spiritual states: muse, musical joy, peak experiences, expanded consciousness, depict different nuances of personal emotional experiences. Thus, Bjørkvold’s muse is not my musical joy. Musical joy is a nuance of ‘muse’ and the term that I felt best described what I saw in some contexts at *Asker Musikkskole*.

musical and human strengths, which means that the student has abilities and strengths in tune with those of the model (Vygotsky, 1986; Bjørkvold, 1991).

#### Imitating movement in Lena's ensemble. A developmental perspective

I talked about Lena's students in performance and rehearsals modeling Lena's movement patterns. Looked at from the perspective of musical joy, it seems that movement in itself may be a key to expanded consciousness (Nørretrander, 1993). Looked at from a learning and teaching perspective, musical movement and the resulting sound offer a view of developmental learning.

#### Musical 'zone of proximal development'

Let's look at Lena's small ensemble. The teenage girls in this group were between the ages of 14 and 18. They had all played the violin anywhere from five to ten years, making it possible for them to interact musically with Lena on a level that could approximate hers. This is where Vygotsky's term 'zone of proximal development' applies particularly well to musical interaction between an expert and a novice (Vygotsky, 1978; this study, chapter 5). Although Vygotsky specifically excludes "specialized, technical skills such as typing or bicycle riding" in his views, the interactive movement patterns and resulting sound in the physical act of making music make just such a 'zone' visible as an active arena of learning processes where the novice blends with the expert in sound, performing beyond the level s/he is currently on. In terms of Vygotsky's developmental readiness, Lena's ensemble students had reached a level of musical accomplishment where their skills could approximate Lena's. Lena's students were ready to imitate her with a sense of understanding, the prerequisite for making the leap from old to new knowledge.

Thus, the visible zone surrounding the musical interaction between a novice and an expert, expressed in Hilde's duets with her students and Lena's active participation in her student ensembles, shows the blending of skills that enable the student to move to a different level of understanding in the learning process.<sup>75</sup> One of the keys to this fruitful relationship is the approximation of skills. Hilde moved musically as well as intellectually and emotionally to meet her students' developmental level. In Lena's case, her small ensemble students had achieved a level where they could blend with her musical skills and move beyond their present level. During this developmental interaction, the novice and the experts used more than their musical skills. They allowed themselves to tap into and share personal spiritual resources that seemed as much a part of the 'developmental zone' as the musical components.

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<sup>75</sup> The musically 'visible' 'zone of proximal development' is visible through physical movement and audible through sound.



### *The 'star' in democratic societies*

Lena served as a model for her students through musical skills and by allowing them to share in her inner, personal strengths.<sup>76</sup> The small ensemble in rehearsal, again, serves as an interesting example of Lena as an expanded role model.

Lena moved right into the rehearsal with no delays and her customary no-nonsense approach. The main concern: We have considerable musical goals to accomplish, and let's not waste time. The girls seem highly motivated to succeed. Are they that interested in the violin? Maybe some of them are, but their eagerness to play well is tied to Lena, not just as a music teacher, but as a person. She is young, energetic and cheerful. She has presence and authority way beyond her years. She is successful as a performer, she has an aura of fame. But she interacts with these girls as if they are her absolute equals. They alternately play, laugh and banter about any subject imaginable. Thus, Lena is a perfect role model in this setting. She is an authority figure. She stands out as different, successful and talented, but she acts like one of the girls, making it possible for them not only to approximate her musical skills but to see themselves as her. They move into her sphere of sound and also into her character.

#### Lena, a democratic star

This ability to be a star and an ordinary person at the same time seems to be a complete part of Lena as a person. She embodies the balancing act practiced by a person who is talented and different in a society where that balancing act is essential. In other words, talent is allowed, even admired, as long as it is not flaunted. The traditional prima donna role is not one that is suited to democratic societies where everyone considers themselves to be equally valuable (Chapter 8). Besides, as a 'prima donna', Lena's students would not have been able to see themselves as her. She would not have been an effective model.

#### The orchestra production

The combination of talent and 'ordinariness' was particularly noticeable in Lena's orchestra rehearsal. Lena and Inger Lise were co-workers in a production, not a star with a supporting cast. It was obvious that both of them thought of their roles in the orchestra as equally important. The emphasis on the production rather than the star fits into a way of looking at art and music as "work that some people do," rather than as work that is done by people who are somehow imbued with special artistic gifts (Becker, H., 1982).

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<sup>76</sup> Here, Lena's personality was visible and audible in the musical sound in terms of her characteristic intense energy, not in terms of musical interpretation. There is controversy in the classical music field as to whether or not performers should allow their personality to influence what supposedly is the composers' communicative intent. Reminiscent of social construction, people identified as 'great' musical performers are sometimes admired for their ability to put their personal mark or character into the musical sound, and sometimes not (Ruhe, 1997).

This suits these people and this context and this society. Yet, Lena is undeniably the star, the leader of the orchestra. In this respect we cannot get away from looking at art and music as a production and something more at the same time. In other words, art and music is the work some people do, but this work has inescapable aesthetic dimensions (Becker, H., 1982, p. 35). In order to be an effective model, Lena had to be a ‘star’ and completely ordinary, all at the same time.

#### Talent and music for everyone

Lena’s talent and how she deals with it become particularly interesting in light of the underlying philosophy of the music schools: Music instruction should be available to all Norwegian children and youth regardless of financial resources. Talent is not mentioned. Whenever I brought up the topic in conversation with the music teachers at the school, it was obvious that they did not discuss this issue much. After a puzzled silence the musical kindergarten teacher said: “That is not what we do here. We teach music for everyone.” However, ‘music for all’ is usually taught in group lessons, not privately. And as Lena pointed out: “The concept of private instruction carries an underlying assumption that we are conducting training for an elite. But, with the music schools, the intent is that everyone can participate. Here there is no elite thinking” (Telephone conversation, Oct. 1994).

#### The music schools and conservatory practices

Lena is right. In the sense that private instruction generally is expensive, it does cater to an economic elite or to people with exceptional talents who are willing to sacrifice to pay. Thus, the music schools can be viewed as trying to offer elite instruction to everyone by making such practices affordable. Obviously the music schools don’t look at this as elite instruction, but simply as the best way of teaching and learning how to play an instrument and to sing. Historically, the reason the music schools were modeled on conservatory practices was because group instruction was seen as an ineffective way of teaching music to everyone. One of the early supporters of the music schools claimed that the fact that the institutions offered music instruction privately and in small groups was one of the reasons the schools became accepted in the first place (Opdal, 1978, p. 30). Many people who have been involved in public school group music instruction in the U.S. and in Norway would probably agree with O. Eikemo, who felt that it was self evident that very little could be accomplished musically with 28-30 students in the classroom. “Perhaps with singing,” he added (Telephone call, Nov. ‘94; chapter 4).

Yet, the imbalance between practice and ideology remains. The music teachers I observed at *Asker* are all talented musicians who were trained at traditional conservatories and academies with status. In other words, they are musicians with talent, trained in musical settings that teach talented musicians, in turn teaching in a setting employing conservatory practices geared to talent; Yet, teaching for talent is not what they seek to do at the music schools.

The discrepancy between practice and ideology is lessened by practical problems. First of all the position the institution holds in Norwegian society is not strong enough to support music instruction for everyone through conservatory practices. This is the problem that music, as currently practiced in conservatories, music schools and universities, is facing in the Western world in general. In Norway, the combination of ideological and financial restrictions manifests itself through time restrictions on instruction. These limits on time infringe persistently and tangibly on the music teachers at the music schools, more noticeably in a social context that sees a person's development as a holistic, lifelong, growth [not necessarily of the progressive kind]; something that should unfold comfortably, safely; a natural process that cannot be rushed. The result, judging from Hilde and Lena's perspectives, is that there is never quite enough time to really bring out the best in the individual student. Furthermore, since the music school mission of 'music for all' extends to talent as well as to money, there is no audition process to screen students that are motivated to learn music from the ones that are not.

'Music for all' 'works', but cannot be universally implemented through private instruction

In spite of underlying contradictions and practical shortcomings, I think the music schools are successful at giving what they see as the best possible music instruction to large numbers of young people. The combination of private lessons, weekly ensembles and frequent performance opportunities is particularly effective in improving musical skills and, yes, in bringing out talent.<sup>77</sup> The music schools have tried to implement these practices on a national level with governmental financial support. And, 'music for all,' taught through conservatory practices, by 'muse'ical teachers, seems to foster a number of talented musicians whose teachers and role models may, in addition to musical skills, teach their students that there is no contradiction in being exceptional and completely ordinary at the same time. But, the music schools do not reach everyone, and I question how effective conservatory practices would be without 'muse'ical teachers (Bjørkvold, 1991).

### *Talent*

When Lena and I discussed the issue of the mission of the music schools, 'music for all', as opposed to music for the talented, I asked her what she thought was important when it comes to music education. She responded, "Can't we teach music as a subject to everyone, and then give the ones that are good at it private instruction?" (Telephone conversation, Oct. 1994). I think the discussion of 'music as a subject for everyone' would have to involve a redefinition of music and, except for a surface glance, that 'redefinition' is beyond the scope of this study (Chapter 11). I

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<sup>77</sup> American public school bands are effective for some of the same reasons.

will briefly discuss private instruction for ‘good’ music students, however, which brings out the interesting and controversial issue: How do we determine who is talented?

My daughter and I attended a cabaret which illustrates [and exaggerates] the problems connected to the judgment of musical talent.

### Wednesday December 12

Some of the students in Professor Bjørkvold’s seminar are putting on a show [part of their course requirements] in *Lillesalen*, a small auditorium in *Chateau Neuf*.<sup>78</sup> Anna and I make our way through the crowded bar/cafe adjoining the theater to buy our tickets - kr. 49.90. We each pay with a 50 kroner bill and get 10 øre back, the smallest coin still used in Norway, which turns out to be our ‘ticket’ - cute. The students are madly getting ready for the performance, the first of two, and we are enduring the wait in the eternal haze of cigarette smoke. “Don’t breathe Anna!” “Right Mom.”

Finally we get in. The auditorium is small, seats perhaps 100 people. There is a largish area in front of the stage with piano, drum set, electric guitar on a chair and trumpet on top of the piano. Slightly dilapidated ‘feel’ to the whole place - black curtain. I think the walls are black too, dark at any rate.

O.K. Here we go. Fun to see people we have barely noticed in weekly seminars perform on stage. Impressive trumpet player. The shyest of shy in the class turns out to be the electric guitar player and the clown of the play. The pianist wistfully plays his own compositions on the piano, negotiates the stage clumsily when he has to.

### The Audition. *Opptaksprøven*

Two men and one woman sit behind a table placed diagonally on stage. The woman wears a hat with a feather, hair in a bun. She greets the nervous candidates as they approach the table. Nasal, haughty, refined west-side of Oslo accent: “Hello, I am ‘so and so’” [alluding to one of the famous members of the faculty at *Musikkhøgskolen* across the street]. “I hope you don’t plan to waste our time with anything except Western art music dear, that is the only good music God created you know!” [Amused murmurs from the audience]. The young girl who is ‘auditioning’ speaks softly with a strong country accent, and sings a beautiful Norwegian folk song in a clear bell like voice. The female judge: “Oh, my dear, I hope you know that you have to lose the dialect!!! You cannot get anywhere in the arts with that unsophisticated way of speeeaaaking!!! I am appalled!!! Neexxtttt!!!!

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<sup>78</sup> *Mens vi venter på Bob Ottar*, (While we wait for Bob Ottar), *Storfagskabaret* 1994. Written, composed and performed by students at the Institute for Music and Drama, Dept. of Musicology at the University of Oslo.

Someone is making a spectacular entrance from the back of the auditorium. A woman ‘sweeps’ in, high heels, tight fitting short dress, cigarette dangling in a long cigarette holder. One of the male judges falls all over himself kissing her hand and introducing her to the rest of the panel. “This is ..... ! The niece of .....! You all know the famous artist .....! Talent simply drips from the members of that family. The panel of judges swoons with delight.

The diva gets ready to sing. Arms outstretched: She is enunciating, she is emoting, she is dramatically and tragically involved in the song!!!! And no sound comes out.

The female judge is positively ecstatic: “Oh yes, oh yes, this is real talent! If only everyone was so well prepared in Western art music! She is in, she is in!!!!!! All the judges pursue the candidate to the door, showering the diva with admiration and praise.

An amusing satire by a community of music students/artists ridiculing evaluation systems, the evaluators, the criteria for good and bad within their field in their cultural context to the great amusement of peers who are suffering through the ups and downs of the same system. Again, the issue of talent takes on an added dimension in democratic societies where everyone is supposed to be equally valuable and exceptional - or is it valuable and ordinary?

However, negative feelings about evaluators of art in any capacity from critics, judges, ‘guardians’ of entrance requirements, to publishers or gallery owners, are extremely common. In fact, judgments of talent or no talent, good or bad art, often seem to revolve around standards that seem to have little or nothing to do with any inherent value of the art or the artist, [if any such exists], and a lot to do with the evaluation process, the evaluators and their particular context.<sup>79</sup>

#### Social construction of talent. Status of evaluators

Let’s look at the panel of evaluators that were satirized by the students at the University of Oslo. They are ‘gate keepers’ at the most prestigious academy of music in Norway, which means they are judges whose words concerning ‘good’ and ‘bad’ music – and musicians – carry a great deal of weight. Here the issue of status comes back into play. Clignet (1985) argues that whether or not a work of art is considered to be artistic depends on the reputation held by the people who are judging the art work. In other words, whether or not a person is judged to have talent depends on the status of the evaluators. In this respect, a non-musician who thinks a person is talented would

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<sup>79</sup> One of innumerable examples of the difficulty of evaluating artists and art works comes from the visual arts: In their early days, (1860s) the Impressionistic artists - now greatly admired - were at best ignored, and often scorned and ridiculed. “For years after Manet exhibited two paintings of ‘unseemly’ women, he was the man who “painted such filth” and that “terrible realist”. “They are raining insults on me, I’ve never been led such a dance,” he wrote to his friend Baudelaire. So many of these painters were refused wall space at the ... official Salon shows in Paris that one year Napoleon III ordered an exhibition of the rejects - the Salon des Refuses - so that excluded works might have a public showing” (Dudar, 1994, pp. 78-88.)

have little influence on whether or not we identify someone as talented. The faculty at *Musikkhøgskolen*, on the other hand, would have a great deal of influence (Kingsbury, 1988, p. 75). “The people who proclaim art to be ‘art’” [or Lena, Hilde or Kjell to be talented] “are not necessarily or even primarily the artists themselves, but the reviewers or publishers or critics who pronounce the artistic merit of the work of art or the performance, and who are powerful and influential enough in their fields to get their peers to agree.” (Clignet, 1988, p.37).

*Norges musikkhøgskole* is funded by the Norwegian government, and has the aura of validity and stability that accompanies that social standing, which also applies to the University of Oslo, of course. As I have already described, the tendency of government supported institutions in the U.S. and Norway to define art and artists according to prevailing traditions or ‘political correctness’, can limit definitions of talent and restricts access to those institutions (Clignet, 1985; this study chapter 8). In addition, the status of the institution reflects on the people who practice within that agency, imbuing them with high or low status, talent or no talent in turn.

#### Is talent constructed status?

I mentioned in my discussion of Western art music that it requires an analytical effort to think of aesthetic norms as conventional descriptors that help us group information into categories rather than innate dimensions of sound (Chapter 7). This becomes particularly difficult when it comes to musical phenomena such as musical joy and talent, because emotions are involved, and aesthetic dimensions of art are commonly considered to be innate, even God-given, gifts (Becker, H. 1982). And, when it comes to a concept like talent, looking at the issue in terms of social construction can obscure rather than illuminate the concept. In fact, we avoid the real question: What is ‘art’? Is there a substance that we can call ‘talent’, or is talent only the norms and conventions that we decide it is at any one period of time?

I have discussed the nature of music as practiced at *Asker Musikkskole* as experienced sound involving physical, cognitive and emotional dimensions. Here, the emotional dimensions mark the difference between music and music. Thus, by evaluating talent we are, for the most part, evaluating emotions. Can this person sing or play with feeling? “A person whose performance is “expressive” or “from the heart” and [sings or plays] “with feeling” will... be considered to be talented.” (Kingsbury, 1988, p. 70).<sup>80</sup>

In this respect, whether or not a person is judged to have talent depends on whether or not people think that the emotional dimensions of sound are sufficient for the singer or instrumentalist to deserve the label ‘talented.’ Thus, there is an emotional resonance that the evaluator can sense and

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<sup>80</sup> Within conservatory practices in the Western world the notion of talent as it relates to musicality, the emotional component of music, is fundamental. Many ethnomusicologists note that this emphasis on talent does not exist in other cultures, “along with a corresponding lack of significant differentiation of musical ability among the people” (Kingsbury, 1988, p. 60).

use as a basis for his/her evaluation. Nevertheless, for the most part, evaluating emotions seems about as real, substantial and objective as evaluating status! If we understand talent to be concerned with emotions [innate capacities?], Kingsbury may be right when he argues that an evaluator of talent is asked “not just for musical evaluation, but for divination.” (1988, p. 64).

### Is talent musical joy?

Both musical joy and talent are emotional dimensions of human experiences, and may, along with other human abilities to perceive and categorize (Barsalou, 1992), be innate. There are aspects of musical joy in talent, but the musical joy that I found in these musical settings was not necessarily connected to the notion of a talented musician. Musical joy can flourish with or without talent.

### Talent and the music schools

The philosophy behind the music schools rests on an ideology that recognizes music as an emotional resource to the individual as well as a benefit to society. Music for all did not necessarily mean private instruction for all. It meant that everyone should be able to use music as an emotional and spiritual resource in their lives, at whatever level of accomplishment that might be. At *Asker Musikkskole*, both in private instruction and in ensembles and performances, ‘music for everyone’ can be discussed in terms of an emotional and spiritual resource, not necessarily connected to talent, which sometimes flourishes and sometimes doesn’t.

In the next chapter I will discuss music education as aesthetic education, as an emotional resource. Through my observations at *Asker* I began to understand music aesthetics not as an integral part of the musical source, but as an integral part of the music maker, not dependent on the musical context in terms of private or group lesson, Western art music, popular or rock music, or talent in the ‘gifted’ sense, but centered in the emotional resources of the people involved in the musical experience.

## Chapter 10. Music education - aesthetic education:

### Process and product.

In this chapter I will discuss musical joy as I began to understand that concept through my observations at *Asker Musikkskole*. I begin by looking at different philosophies of music education and by placing my perspectives on musical joy and music education within or outside those ideas. I will discuss utilitarian views that primarily look at music as a benefit to man in society as well as the recent trend, (1950s), which is to consider music education as aesthetic education, i.e., to enjoy music for music's sake rather than to look for social values in musical pursuits (Mark, 1982). My emerging views and observations fall within the aesthetic tradition, but focus on the individual music maker more than on the musical product (Blacking, 1976; Elliot, 1994). I see musical joy as part of the aesthetic product as well as the process of making music.

In order to gain a clearer understanding of the concept of musical joy, I then go on to analyze emotions and music generally. As I see it, there are three main emotional experiences involved in the musical process. There are the embodied emotions in the musical piece, 'life type' emotions within composed music such as fear, love, anger and sorrow (Langer, 1957). There are also embodied musical emotions that are part of the structure of composed sound termed norms, changes, tension and release (Langer, 1957; Meyer, 1956). Then there are engendered external emotions that spring from the musical participant actively involved in some part of a musical experience, what I call *musikkglede* or musical joy.

#### Musikkglede - Musical joy - a spiritual resource

By making a distinction between embodied musical emotions (Meyer, Langer) and emotions that are primarily external to the musical stimulus itself, it becomes clear that what I was looking at and commenting about in Norway, indeed, what I have been concerned about in the musical lives of my students for years, is *musikkglede*, the musical emotion that is engendered in the person rather than embodied in the music. All the emotional dimensions of musical experiences are important, but it takes someone with *musikkglede* to bring the experience to life, regardless of the type of music or the level of musicianship. I consider this external musical emotion to be a human emotional resource, (Nørretrander, 1993; Bastien, 1988; Bjørkvold, 1991) one that is easily ignited in musical settings, but not limited to that field. Musical joy is part of those spiritual



dimensions that add meaning to our everyday lives, from a trip to the playground to a concert performance.

#### Musical joy as an engendered process

I talk about the experience of making music as an engendered rather than an embodied process, (Keil & Feld, 1994), and go on to discuss the importance of movement in the process of making music. The two types of movement that I am concerned with are: 1) The physical skills required to make instrumental and vocal sounds; and 2) The musical movement that is connected to physical instrumental movements, but seems to spring from the musician's internal spiritual resources.

Neither movement nor cognitive activity in and of themselves are sufficient to explain what happens in musical contexts when musical joy is present. The classes at *Asker Musikkskole* where the spiritual dimension of musical joy was present were instructional settings where 'complete' learning was taking place. The students in these lessons seemed to absorb the entire musical experience; physically, cognitively and emotionally. On the surface, sessions with and without musical joy seem pretty much the same. However, the instructors that tapped into musical joy seemed to be genuinely involved in spiritual resources, which in turn extended to include all the participants.

#### Talent and personal strengths. Does spiritual involvement need to be parental?

I used to think that caring deeply, like a parent, for the students you teach has to be a major reason some contexts 'work' in terms of learning where others do not. I still think this is the case in many instances, particularly in early childhood education. However, since musical joy flourished in 'non-motherly' settings at *Asker Musikkskole* as well, I revised my view to consider a parental, caring aura to be one that is uniquely suited to 'motherly' teachers like Hilde. Other personal strengths worked for different instructors, Kjell and Lena, in their musical settings.

Two aspects of this spiritual resource seem particularly important: 1) Individual ability or talent, which may lie in the arts or in any other human endeavor; and 2) Personal characteristics or strengths that determine how we use and communicate those talents. Kjell, Lena and Hilde's classes give some insight into non traditional instructional settings where these particular musicians use their talent and personalities to bring out musical joy and learning in their students.

### Musical joy and the music classroom

Can musical joy be added to classrooms that teach some level of active musical processes [playing an instrument and singing] to everyone? Musical joy as spontaneously experienced [immediate gratification] does not require complex abilities. There has to be willingness to experience music on the part of the student, but the teacher can approximate the student's abilities and interests with levels and choice of material as Kjell and Hilde did in their lessons. A simple as well as a complex song of any musical genre can be sung by a novice or an expert, with or without *musikkglede*.

How do we put musical joy in a process that seems to defer enjoyment until the technical demands of music and instrument have been mastered, which often takes years and years of daily practice? Part of the answer may lie in the fine distinction between the classrooms with musical joy and the ones without. Genuine involvement on part of all the participants involved, including parents, seems to be helpful.

### Musical joy and the audience

My role in musical experiences at *Asker Musikkskole*, concerts and rehearsals was mostly that of a listener. I discuss the role the audience plays in the construction of musical joy.

### Musical joy and social experiences

Looking at the warm, parental interaction between Hilde and her students brings another aspect of emotions and music into play, one where the emotional overtones of the social situation itself are most important. This is not the nuance of musical joy that I refer to as engendered processes that springs primarily from actively making music. I briefly discuss emotions and music where the embodied emotions in musical sound and the engendered emotions of the musical process are present, but secondary to whatever social experience is taking place.

## ***Philosophies of music education***

### Music education - aesthetic

Hilde, Kjell and Lena taught their older students the formal and technical skills needed to sing and play Western art music in ways that could bring the aesthetic qualities of the musical composition itself to life. Locating musical aesthetics in the musical score is part of a long standing European tradition of looking at the formal properties of the musical source itself as embodying aesthetic

qualities and values. In this view, aesthetics is embedded in the music, and the listener who has been trained to understand musical aesthetics can elucidate and enjoy the emotional nature of musical compositions (Elliot, 1994, p. 10).<sup>81</sup> According to this view, the emphasis in music education from the mid 20th century has been to teach students to recognize, execute and enjoy the intrinsic aesthetic - emotional - elements of composed music (Elliot, 1994; Mark, 1982).

### Music education - utilitarian

The practice of teaching this type of product aesthetic, as Lena, Kjell and Hilde all did in some of their classes, i.e., conservatory practices, is what I described as the discrepancy between practice and philosophy at the Norwegian music schools (Chapter 9). The music schools do consider music education to be aesthetic education, but not as aesthetics are thought of as being primarily part of the musical source itself. The music schools hold that music aesthetics are an emotional resource to the individual in society. In other words, musical emotions are good for the individual and, by extension, beneficial to society at large (Chapter 4). This utilitarian way of looking at music in society extends back to the time of Plato; The view was prevalent in the Western world until the middle of the 20th century, when music education as aesthetic education gained acceptance (Mark, 1982, p. 20).

To summarize, the music schools' philosophy can be seen as primarily a utilitarian approach to music education: Musical emotions are important to the individual in society. Aesthetic music education, in comparison, acknowledges the value of musical emotions to the individual, but without the further emphasis on the individual in society. Moreover, this approach centers musical emotions in the musical source itself. My observations at *Asker* also centered on musical emotions as an important resource to the individual, but finds those emotions primarily in the musical process (making music), not in the musical product (composition).

### Musical joy - people in focus

By focusing on emotions revolving around the people involved in the experience of making music

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<sup>81</sup> To me, the word 'aesthetic' carries connotations of beauty and perfection. As such, the word fits a discussion of emotions in Western art music the way we have become used to looking at Western art music - as a 'superior' art form. However, 'aesthetics' have little to do with the emotions I consider to be part of the experience of musical joy. In fact, musical joy has little to do with what we normally consider 'beauty' and more to do with the original meaning of the word aesthetic, which comes from the Greek word *aisthesis* meaning sense experience or perception (Elliot, 1994, p. 10).

rather than emotions embedded in the musical source, I am following a trend found in several musical fields, that sees the meaning and the function of music as part of the musical process rather than the musical product. Many ethnomusicologists, for instance, focus less on the musical product than on the music makers. In *Music, Culture & Experience*, John Blacking argues that we should emphasize the process of creating music, that is, the way people express their experiences in society musically, rather than the musical product (1995). Others note that even “scholars of American music in recent years have more and more looked beyond the selective, aesthetically dominated perspective of the concert hall and begun to consider any kind of music made in America as potentially significant. They have broadened their focus from Music with a capital M to *music-making* : in John Blacking’s phrase, from product to process...” (Crawford, 1985, pp. 485, 486). In the field of music education, also, the emphasis is shifting from centering musical emotions in the musical stimulus itself to the experience of making music, or to music as “a particular kind of *intentional human activity*” (Elliot, 1994, p. 15).

### *Emotions and music*

In the following section I discuss the concept of musical joy from the perspective of music aesthetics as a human process rather than a musical product. This is partly a matter of emphasis, since the product is related to the process. I begin, therefore, by looking at how musical emotions are thought to be part of the musical product itself.

#### Meyer

Leonard Meyer (1956) argues that musical sounds reflect ways we experience and make sense of the world. That is to say, the way we perceive sound determines how we construct and understand music. He bases our perception of sound on principles found in Gestalt psychology, which holds that the mind organizes the overwhelming number of sense perceptions in our daily lives into the simplest structures possible (1956).<sup>82</sup> In my discussion of Western art music, I talked about these processes as possibly innate human capacities to categorize, where the brain organizes perceived information by grouping similar phenomena together based on linking new to old information in increasingly hierarchical structures (Barsalou, 1992; Schank & Abelson, 1977;

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<sup>82</sup> Meyer cautions that there is no accurate way of accounting for musical perception purely in Gestalt terms, and, further, that the way the mind organizes data is learned differently in different cultural contexts (1956, p. 85).

Chapter 7). However, it is the musical source itself that is the focus of Meyer's analysis of emotions and meaning in music, not the perception of sound.

Musically embodied meaning, according to Meyer, rests on expectations. We expect a certain phrase or chord because we have heard similar constructions of sounds before. The foundation for the affective [natural] or aesthetic [learned] response to music is the inhibition of a tendency to respond, or the frustration of expectation, which then is followed by the expected [tension and release] (Meyer, 1956, pp. 35 & 43). Meyer further argues that delayed gratification as in a learned response to music is of more value than the immediate gratification of an affective response.

It is because the evaluation of alternative probabilities and the retrospective understanding of the relationships among musical events as they actually occurred leads to self-awareness and individualization that the syntactical response is more valuable than those responses in which the ego is dissolved, losing its identity in voluptuous sensation or in the reverie of daydreams. And for the same reasons works involving deviation and uncertainty are better than those offering more immediate satisfaction. I am not contending that other modes of enjoyment are without value, but rather that they are of lesser order of value (Meyer, 1994, p.35).

As I have already mentioned, I don't think it is possible to connect value to types of emotions. In this respect, Meyer's levels of aesthetic values are tied to the supposed superiority of Western art music (Chapter 8). In his comments to the reprint of several of his articles, including "Some Remarks on Value and Greatness In Music," from which the above quote is taken, Meyer says: "I now feel that, though the account of value given in this chapter is relevant to our understanding of the values of Western art music at least since the Renaissance, it may not be applicable to the musics of other cultures..." (Meyer, 1994, p. 22).

### Langer

Susanne Langer (1957) describes music, and art in general, as representing feelings in abstract form. To her, a work of art

...is an expressive form created for our perception through sense or imagination, and what it expresses is human feeling. The word "feeling" must be taken here in its broadest sense, meaning *everything that can be felt*, from physical sensation,

pain and comfort, excitement and repose, to the most complex emotions, intellectual tensions, or the steady feeling-tones of a conscious human life” (1957, p. 15).

Susanne Langer’s emotions include Meyer’s experiences of tension and release. She writes, “A work of art is a composition of tensions and resolutions, balance and unbalance... Life is a natural process of such tensions, balances, rhythms, it is these that we feel, in quietness or emotion, as the pulse of our own living” (1957, p. 8).

However differently they express their perceptions of musical emotions, both Meyer and Langer talk about human emotions that are created in abstract forms by artists and embedded in the artistic work itself. Along with the long traditions of European art music, Langer and Meyer have inspired a philosophy of music education that holds that what we do in music class is to teach students to recognize, execute and enjoy the intrinsic aesthetic - emotional - elements of the musical source itself. MEAE, ‘music education as aesthetic education’ is said to have originated with Langer and Meyer and made into the basis for present day music education in the U.S. (Elliott, 1994, pp. 9 and 11).

#### Emotions in composed sound (product) reconsidered

When it comes to constructed emotional sound with a recognizable form, as in Western art music, I doubt that everyone experiences similar emotions through that sound or that any of us experiences what the composer felt or intended to communicate when s/he constructed that sound. Let us say I am listening to a piece of music, a piano sonata. What do I feel? I find myself listening for the sounds themselves, without any particular emotional involvement. I anticipate the form of the piece, I hear the beginnings and ends of phrases, sections, modulations between keys, changes in modes, tempos, dynamics. I enjoy the variety of the composition; there is just enough balance between the theme and the changes between themes. I feel detached from any possible emotions embodied in the music such as intense or everyday feelings, but I do enjoy the way the composer has constructed the sounds. In other words, I am experiencing a formalistic or learned aesthetic response to Western art music ( Meyer, 1956 ).

In my experience, Western art music is not emotional as in “what it feels like to be alive” (Langer, 1957). The emotions I feel on hearing a piece of music have nothing specific to do with anger, love, frustration, sadness or even ordinary humdrum daily emotions. They are more general and detached feelings revolving around the physical structure of the composition in terms of theme, the

normal state, and variations from the theme, the changes.

### *Musical joy/ Musikkglede - a spiritual resource*

Let me go back to the piano sonata. I can listen to the composition in a detached manner enjoying and appreciating how the composer has constructed the sound. However, depending on how the performers interpret and play the composition, I can experience a variety of emotions that range from generally pleasant to exhilarating. These emotions are related to the sound itself, but they are primarily a result of the musical involvement and joy with which the performers play. What I feel as a listener is an uplifting of my spirit, a general feeling of enhanced emotional involvement that seems to vibrate to and with an aura that emanates from the performers through their instruments to me.

This emotional aura, then, is what I call *musikkglede*. It is connected to musical sources and events, but it is not of music. Musical joy is the spectrum of positive emotional states from elation and thrill to contentment and warmth that participants in musical activities derive from the sheer pleasure of playing, singing, composing or listening to music, either alone or together. That is the kind of emotion that I felt when I listened to Grete and Lars in Kjell's class, when I heard Ellen sing and when I experienced Lena's string performance. I sensed their enjoyment in making music.

#### Is musical joy musical?

Musical joy - I found it in Grete and Lars, in Ellen, in the professional chamber orchestra, in my grandson when he sings Beatles' songs, in the drumming seminar, in the jazz concert I just attended, in the dance concert last week, in Anne Cath. Vestlie as she was the embodiment of Norwegian 'grandmotherhood' in *Huset i skogen* at *Oslo Nye Teater*.<sup>83</sup>

And here I have to introduce one of Norway's 'beloved' artists: Anne Cath. Vestlie is the author of many Norwegian children's books. I listened to her read her stories on the radio, *Barnetimen for de Minste*, Children's Hour for the Smallest Ones, when I was growing up, and Anna and I were privileged to see her perform the role of *Mormor*, the grandmother in her books, on stage

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<sup>83</sup> 'The House in the Woods', a theater performance at Oslo New Theater.

while we were in Norway during the fall of 1994. When she made her entrance in the play, I can only describe her as a person who, to me, was filled with ‘musical joy’. But her joy had nothing to do with music. Anne Cath. Vestlie as *Mormor* simply embodied and projected a spiritual joy that enfolded and suffused actors and audience alike. The spirituality was part of her; music had no role to play here, although the play itself did set up its own unique emotional context.<sup>84</sup>

Well, isn’t musical joy musical? No, it isn’t unique to music, although it gets easily ignited in musical contexts. Musical joy is a manifestation of spiritual joy, the wellspring of undefinable stuff that adds meaning to everything we do, from a walk in the woods to a lecture on engineering. This is Bjørkvold’s ‘muse’(1991), this is Nørretranders’ ‘enhanced consciousness’ (1993), this is Bastian’s ‘golden moments’ when ‘it’ ‘takes flight’ (1988), this is Keil’s ‘engendered feelings’, ‘groove’ or ‘swing’ (1994). After a dance concert that was notable not for the skillful dancing, but the bubbling, overflowing delight of the dancers, one of my relatives said: “ I don’t know what type of dance that was, but it sure had soul!”. Yes, and muse, soul, groove came from the dancers; not from the notes of the music, not the dance, the book, the play, the party, or the disembodied lecture. The individual human being brought ‘joy’ to whatever it was they were doing and brought out the soul in the music, the dance, the lecture, and projected that soul, musical joy, to others. This type of spirit must be what James Clerk Maxwell referred to when he commented on his scientific accomplishments on his deathbed: “What is done by what is called myself is, I feel, done by something greater than myself in me” (in Nørretrander, 1993, p. 16).

### *Musical joy as an engendered process*

What about the nature of musical joy in itself? Now we are back to embodied musical emotions in terms of Meyer (1956) and Langer (1957) and how those embodied emotions might be viewed through a process rather than a product. Leonard Meyer (1956) argued that the meaning of music lies in the perception and understanding of formal relationships in the musical product, particularly in Western art music.

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<sup>84</sup> Here is a case where a theater performance served as a key to heightened emotional experiences. (Bjørkvold (1991). I have discussed movement and dance as examples of such facilitators earlier (Chapter 9)



### Harwood

Harwood (1976) has looked at Meyer's meaning of music and focused on the human process rather than the musical product. The process of making sense of musical sound, according to Harwood, consists of "grouping perceived information into meaningful categories to be a) stored in memory, b) used to understand new musical experience through active construction of the musical event, and c) transmitted between members of a musical community" (p. 527). Harwood is expressing musical sound perception in terms of cognitive processes as I did with the perception and understanding of Western art music. The brain seems to organize information by grouping similar phenomena together based on linking new to old information (Meyer, 1956; Harwood 1976; Barsalou, 1992; this study, Chapter 7). Whereas Harwood seems to view the transfer of musical knowledge in musical communities as a separate process, I look at the categorization process itself as being a construction of knowledge, taking place continuously during social interaction from birth, or possibly before (Chapter 7).

Meyer cautions that there is no accurate way of accounting for musical perception purely in Gestalt terms, and, further, that the way the mind organizes data is learned differently in different cultural contexts (1956, p. 85). Harwood agrees that the expression of sound varies across cultures. He argues, however, that the process of perceiving and making sense of musical sounds is universal; human beings don't organize data differently, but we do interpret what we organize in different ways. Harwood's views coincide with recent findings in the field of cognition that indicate that the ways the mind perceives and organizes data may be innate and universal human capacities (Barsalou, 1992; this study, Chapter 7).

Meyer (1956), and Langer's (1957) embodied musical emotions as well as cognitive perspectives on perception and understanding of sound (Harwood, 1976; Barsalou, 1992) provide a framework for discussing musical emotions in terms of human processes. Focusing on the person actively making music offers a further perspective on the nature of musical joy.

### Keil

Keil (1994) contrasts Meyer's product oriented musical experience with the process of making music, calling his understanding of actively making music 'engendered' rather than 'embodied.' According to Keil, the engendered musical experience belongs to the process of making music but cannot be looked at as separate from Meyer's embodied meaning. Thus, the process and the product belong together as one coherent musical experience, but, particularly when looking at

music in performance, it becomes clear that it is the process rather than the product that is in focus (p. 54).

### The nature of music

When Inger was in the process of learning to play triple rhythm in Hilde's lessons, I discussed the nature of learning to play the piano as a combination of cognitive understanding, emotional nuances and physical skills. I argued that however much you tried to explain how to play the piano, the only way to prove that you could play would be to play. "When it comes to music, doing, not talking, is knowledge." (Chapter 5). In terms of Keil's engendered and embodied categories, it becomes clear that the process of making music (engendered) emphasizes physical activity whereas the reaction to the musical product (embodied) focuses on cognitive skills (1994, p. 55). In this mind-body dualism, Meyer (1956) comes down on the side of mind as the focus for sound perception, although he studies the product of perception rather than the process. An emphasis on process (Keil, 1994, Blacking, 1995, Elliot, 1994) brings out the nature of performed music as a subject where being able to 'do' is all important.

### The body in movement with music

When it comes to the process of making music, the importance of actively doing is particularly strong. By actively doing I mean that the body moves with the music. Keil (1994) mentions the strong ties between dance and music: "There appears to be a serious referential flirtation, if not an out-and-out romance, between music of the engendered feeling type and dance" (p. 56). However, the type of movement I observed in people who were making music was not dancing to music, but movement that related directly to the musical instrument. In Kjell's popular music group it was the way Lars held the drumsticks, the way his whole body moved to strike the drum, that created the impact of the sound. In the chamber music group it seemed as if the string players carved out space with their bodies, arms, hands and violin bows with sound as the end result. Lena's small ensemble was in more or less constant movement with her. The result of that movement, again, was the sound coming from the instruments themselves.

### Movement as sound. Tension creates engendered feeling

What happens when movement ends up as sound? There have been attempts to analyze movement as sound, for instance as a drummer taps the drum set on or slightly behind or before the beat or the underlying pulse. This slightly off the beat sound is said to create the constant tension between the strike, the attack, the movement of the musician, and the underlying pulse. The tension

between the pulse and the strike, then, creates the groove, the swing, the engendered feeling (Ellis, 1991, p. 707; Keil and Feld, 1994).

The way the musician's instrumental movement pattern creates sound - where the body meets the instrument - the touch on the keyboard, the strike on a drum, the attack on the violin is connected to what I call musical joy and musicality. Here there is a connection between movement – inspired musical joy, and movement – inspired musicality or talent. The notion of being musical or talented in Western art music, for instance, does not fit what I see as musical joy. However, there is musical joy in musicality.<sup>85</sup> For what is it we evaluate when we judge musicality? It is the feeling a musical performer puts into the music, and that feeling is often described as the way a singer 'approaches' the tone, the way an instrumentalist 'touches' the keys of the piano and how the violinist 'attacks' the strings (Keil & Feld, 1994; Kingsbury, 1988).<sup>86</sup>

Keil (1994), discusses the instantaneous experience of tension and release of music in performance as emotional excitement that lies in the continuous tension between the underlying pulse and the rhythm/melody being played. This is the emotional nuance that I felt was created through the way the Norwegian chamber orchestra (*Oslo Kammerorkester*) combined individual, free 'movement as sound' with the underlying sameness of the ensemble (Chapter 7). These instantaneous experiences constitute immediate rather than delayed emotional gratification, which again questions the notion that some musically emotional experiences are more valuable than others (Meyer, 1994).

### Instrumental movement and musical movement

Thus, there are two movement patterns that I am concerned with in the process of making music.

1) The movement of the physical body parts involved in the technical aspects of producing instrumental and vocal sounds; and 2) Movement that stems from a personal spiritual resource that ends up in an 'approach' to the physical instrument that is part of what I interpret as

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<sup>85</sup> Although, as I have mentioned before, musicality and talent are not necessary elements in the expression of musical joy (Chapter 1 and chapter 9).

<sup>86</sup> Kingsbury (1988), argues that musicality looked at as an innate capacity may be unteachable. "Thus we arrive at the paradoxical fact that musical talent is that which can't be taught to the few who can be taught it."(p. 82). I have mentioned throughout this study that the emotional components of musical experiences, talent, and musical joy may be innate. However, if there is a connection between musicality and the tension between pulse and rhythm/melody, there is a possibility that musicality can be taught. However, I feel that the ability to create tension in this way may be an inborn ability in itself and, further, that musicality, [creating a groove], encompasses far more than being able to place a 'touch' slightly before or after the beat.

musicality. The latter ‘musical’ movement pattern that is connected to an instrument, the instrument as a bodily extension, both physically and emotionally, is also an important part of what I call musical joy.

#### Musical joy; physical enjoyment of movement

I don’t mean to imply that engendered feeling is musical joy or that musical joy is musicality or that musicality is movement. In fact, there is such an array of words used to describe emotions connected to music and musical experiences, it is difficult to determine if anyone is talking about the same thing at all (Nørretrander (1993); Bastien (1988); Bjørkvold (1991); Keil & Feld (1994). However, there is a relationship between these concepts, and, getting into the groove or entering musical joy can be accomplished through movement. Movement created sound when Lars hit the drum set, but it was as if the movement itself was part of the thrill of playing. Lena’s whole body moved in harmony with the accordion, her fingers attacked or caressed the keyboard as if she relished the movement patterns in and of themselves. Even though I could not detect a ‘lesser’ emotional involvement with the violin, she complained that “the violin doesn’t feel like an extension of my arm the way the accordion feels like an extension of my body”.

In fact, I cannot remember an emotional musical experience where the musicians did not move with their instruments. Movement seems to be an important part of allowing the body to experience musical joy, closely connected to the emotion itself. I see Lars and the chamber orchestra members moving with a dance-like ease. I see Hilde and Inger, swaying back and forth on the piano bench; I see Lena conducting with her violin attached to her whole body in movement, the ensemble glued to her, moving with her. The musicians seemed to have let go of a certain physical rigidity and self conscious control that may have been part of their emotional involvement with the music. “The sight of the gestures and movements of the various parts of the body producing the music is fundamentally necessary if it is to be grasped in all its fullness” (Stravinsky, in Keill, 1994, pp. 56-57).

#### ***Musical joy is part of genuine and complete involvement in musical experiences***

However, grasping music ‘in all its fullness’ (Stravinsky) is not done by merely moving. It is part of a complex musical experience, one that includes physical movement, cognitive and emotional processes. Here we return to musical joy as part of human emotional resources in general.

(Nørretrander, 1993; Bastien, 1988; Bjørkvold, 1991) and to the lessons at *Asker Musikkskole*, in the instances when I felt that the classes were ‘working’; i.e., when I felt that musical joy was present among all the participants, including me, the observer/audience.

#### Complete learning in instructional settings. Musical ‘zone of proximal development’

I used the term musical ‘zone of proximal development’ (Vygotsky, 1978) to describe what I experienced in the ‘working’ musical contexts at *musikkskolen*. The interactive movement patterns and resulting sound in the physical act of making music makes the ‘zone’ visible and audible as an active arena of learning processes where the novice blends with the expert in sound, in the process of moving to a new level of accomplishment (Chapter 9). This context includes teachers as models that employ both human and musical resources, teachers with a ‘muse’ (Bjørkvold, 1991). It includes students that are motivated to learn, imitate meaningfully with understanding (Vygotsky, 1986), their instructors’ musical and human strengths. It includes *musikkglede*, which, in various ways, permeated all aspects of these instructional settings. The students seemed to learn by absorbing, taking into themselves, a complete learning experience, not just a musical one.

#### How do you tap into musical joy?

On the surface, sessions with and without musical joy seem pretty much the same. Whether or not musical joy was present rested on a hairline distinction between a genuine and a surface involvement by the participants, particularly on part of the instructors. In the classes at *Asker* that were successful, the teacher seemed to employ deep personal resources that in turn extended to include all the participants. Bastian, (1994), when talking about music performances that ‘work’, talks about this genuine involvement. He expresses the necessity of ‘entering into the music’ in order to feel the involvement yourself, as well as letting that emotional involvement spill over so that the other participants can enter and participate in that spirit with you.

Paul Bley uses a river metaphor to express a similar experience:

Basically the body of music that exists is like a river meeting a dam-constantly accumulating. It’ll find the weakest spot, and finally it will break through and continue-but it will still be a river.....,whatever you use [to approach a piece of music], there has to be *a groove to get into*. That’s the hard part. Once you’re into it, you don’t have to keep deciding whether or not the next phrase is going to be good or not..... When you *get into something* to start with, don’t worry about the

rest of the set; it's going to be beautiful (Bley, 1965: 16-17; in Keil, 1994, pp. 58-59, italics by Keil).

This is, perhaps, why the energetic and skillful musical seminar, the technically brilliant performance, the innovative instructional methods, Lena's [and my own] tireless, dramatic and involved lessons sometimes do not work. We are not, for whatever reasons, in that particular setting and time genuinely involved in what we are doing. We don't allow ourselves to tap into a personal emotional core, or get into a groove, so that our students can participate in that spirit or groove with us.

When I talked to Lena after she reviewed her chapter, she commented that she had, at first, disagreed with me when I claimed that she stayed emotionally aloof in her private lessons. "I am so involved and energetic in my lessons, how can you interpret that as distancing myself?" she asked. Then she reread the story: "Strangely enough, I think you are right. I don't share my inner self in those situations, I don't know why, it is as if I reserve myself in a way". This reserve reminds me of teachers in many settings, not just music; and the one thing they have in common is that they teach lots of students. Classroom teachers with 20+ students, Lena with one student after another on a continuous basis for five hours; there is a sense that you have to reserve a core of yourself to keep up your stamina for so long; you simply can't 'overflow' and 'blend' spiritually for six hours, five days a week, or for five hours between 5:00 and 10:00 p.m. on a Monday night. However, tapping into this core of spiritual energy does seem to be necessary before musical joy can be experienced by the musical participants.

Talent and personal strengths. Does genuine spiritual involvement need to be 'motherly'?

I interpreted the emotional involvement in the classes at *Asker Musikkskole* as 'caring' on part of the instructors, and 'caring' seemed to me to be a motherly or parental type of involvement with the students. This was particularly evident in Hilde's voice lessons. However, neither Kjell nor Lena were particularly 'parental' in their classes. Yet, several of their musical contexts worked just as well as Hilde's lessons in terms of musical joy.

The emotional dimensions in musical contexts take different forms depending on the teacher/performer's unique strengths. The parental, caring aura was uniquely suited to Hilde in some of her voice lessons. Other personal strengths worked for Kjell in his social music get-togethers and Lena in her ensembles and performances. Each one of these musicians has unique

abilities within music and a unique inner character that influences and strengthens the way they use their talents. Their students were enjoying themselves and learning when their teachers tapped into their unique strengths in talent and personality and allowed those strengths to emerge and blend with the participants.

### Spontaneous musical joy in the music classroom

Can musical joy be added to classrooms that teach some level of active musical processes [playing and instrument and singing] to everyone? Musical joy as spontaneously experienced [immediate gratification] does not require complex abilities. The student has to be willing to be part of musical experiences in some way, but s/he does not have to be talented musically. The teacher can approximate the student's abilities and interests with levels and choice of materials as Kjell and Hilde did in their lessons (Vygotsky, 1986; Bjørkvold, 1991; this study chapters, 5,6, 9 and 10). A simple as well as a complex song of any musical genre can be sung by a novice or an expert, with or without *musikkglede*. In order for everyone to experience musical joy, we don't have to teach them a particular genre of music - musical joy is to be found in all types of music. In order to teach musical joy to everyone, we don't have to teach them to play an instrument particularly well. They will get as much spontaneous joy from a song simply sung as from the most finely tuned and executed performance. However, Grete and Lars mastered their instruments. Grete could sing and play the electric guitar. Lars could execute different rhythm patterns with coordination and skill. Ellen sang simply, but she negotiated pitches and rhythm patterns, she could distinguish between meters.

So, musical joy does not depend on skills on an instrument. Nonetheless some level of skill is needed so that the practitioner can experience the thrill of active participation at his/her level. Again, the factor that has to be vibrantly in place is the 'muse'ical teacher. S/he has to be genuinely involved and interested in his/her particular talent and strength, and vitally concerned that those strengths are communicated and transferred to the student.

### Can we put joy in advanced Western art music lessons?

How do we put musical joy in a process that seems to defer enjoyment until the technical demands of music and instrument have been mastered, which often takes years and years of daily practice? I am assuming here that even 'talented' people with built in motivation need something to keep the spark going. Well, we could all be like Hilde and blend emotionally with our students, but obviously not everyone is able to do that and certainly not all the time. Lena and I discussed

bringing life to individual art music instruction. She mentioned parental involvement as one way to go.

Look at Suzuki. That works because the parents are involved the entire way. My mother, for instance, always took a vital interest in what I did musically. If I didn't feel like practicing one day, for instance, she would say: "Just half an hour Lena, then I will come and listen to you." And that was the incentive right there - she sat and listened to me. Then the involvement and the enjoyment grew. People were impressed by my playing, they wanted to listen to me. By the time I was a teenager I was hooked and good enough to get enjoyment from the way I handled the instrument, the way I interpreted the music, the way people responded to my playing" (telephone conversation, June 1995).

Parental involvement is mentioned as a vital factor in musical development in numerous studies (Bloom, 1985; Sloboda & Howe, 1991, 1991). We are back to Hilde's unique interaction with her students, her caring, her nurturing, her blending into their space, their context; to Kjell's involvement in the larger context of his students' lives - their social lives, what they do when they don't make music. Lena's mother, we may assume, didn't just pretend to be interested, she truly was. I remember the mother who was sitting in on her son's violin lesson with Lena, absorbed in a book. She was there in body, but certainly not in spirit. There has to be true interest on part of the parent, teacher, adult; meaningful, warm involvement. As in the fine distinction between the classrooms with musical joy and the ones without, the difference seems to be genuine involvement. The emotions have to be truly felt.

### *Musical joy and the audience*

Part of the power of musical joy is the participation effect that emanates from the performers and the music played that extends to and includes the people who merely listen. A lot has been written about this effect and the hypnotic surge that ebbs, flows and grows between performers and audiences (Keil and Feld, 1994, Bastian, 1988). The audience at a concert feeds into and adds to the spirit of the performers performing as does the physical space itself, the concert hall, the acoustics, the size. At a professional concert, like the chamber music concert in Oslo, I don't feel like a complete participant in musical joy the way I did when I listened to Grete and Lars, but I still feel the vibrant energy of the performers, and I give it back, in the form of warm applause,



attentiveness, approval. But there is a line between the performers and the audience at professional musical events that precludes a true social occasion. The performers are on stage, the audience is - well - in the audience. There is interaction, but not true interaction, and it is the rare professional concert that gives the audience a true sense of belonging - of participating - in the musical joy of the performers.

This is where the family atmosphere at student performances blurs the line between stage and audience. The audience already knows and has personal, emotional connections to the performers. The positive energy emanating from the listeners is already there without reservation, so the emotional communication taking place among the performers has something to bounce against and soar with.

The 'soulfulness' of the dance concert I described above also had an audience factor, but more in terms of Kjell's social setting than ordinary performance settings. This performance took place in a space with no real separation between the audience and the performers. Food was served and eaten throughout the evening and the smell of coffee and warm pastry filled the air. Children moved around in the aisles. A man in his 90s clapped enthusiastically in rhythm with the drums. People chatted with each other and the performers between and during dance numbers. We were all participants in the joyful aura of a social occasion, made complete by music and dance. That is, the musical energy, soulfulness seemed to begin with the performers, to strike a chord in the audience and to prosper and grow in a warm, social context. The musical joy was not an immediate part of the context, it took a while before the performers warmed up, and in the beginning I was not sure that this particular group could reach a spark in themselves or communicate their joy to us. But they did. By the time they danced a Latin American number, their spark and energy, individually and among each other were more than apparent and it radiated to us. Still, it took a while before the audience was willing to receive that energy. Then, there was that familiar, warm buildup of *musikkglede* or 'soul' that ebbed and flowed and changed throughout the evening.

#### Musical experiences in social settings. Do Norwegians sing more than Americans?

Looking at the warm, parental interaction between Hilde and her students brings another aspect of emotions and music into play, one where the emotional overtones of the social situation itself are most important. This is not the nuance of musical joy that I refer to as engendered processes that springs primarily from actively making music. Here we are talking about emotions and music

where both the embodied emotions in musical sound and the engendered emotions of the musical process are present but secondary to whatever social experience is taking place.

I was reminded of some of my childhood musical experiences when I was observing a musical kindergarten class at *Asker* one day. The teacher called out the title of a song they were about to sing and the children all squealed with delight and anticipation. The emotional warmth and spirit were tangible as they dashed over to sit next to the teacher. And I knew the song as well as they did. The minute we started singing I could feel the Christmas season coming, the smell of the snow, the brightly lit candles against the dark winter night, the excitement of preparations and packages and family gatherings. It was the remembered social occasions connected with Christmas that brought the joy and anticipation to all of us.

These are the referential emotions that music can evoke, the remembrance of special occasions connected with and cued by musical sources, from nursery rhymes to national anthems. I remember the intense pride mingled with tears when marching and singing in the 17th of May parade in downtown Oslo, waving my flag at the royal family on their castle balcony. Just the thought of the combination Norwegian national anthem/flag brings tears to my eyes.

The Norwegian musical kindergarten teacher has an advantage when it comes to inspiring musical joy in her students, one that is most likely rooted in the small size and homogeneity of Norwegian culture. All the children knew the song, and, most likely, also shared the same holiday experiences and traditions. I had the same feeling in the music education seminar at the University of Oslo. An instantaneous warm, emotional atmosphere was created the minute we began to sing Norwegian children's songs. What amazed me was that all these people, half my age, knew the same songs I had learned as a child, and obviously had an emotional connection to these songs like I do.

Yet another example of this 'national,' common emotional bond occurred when Anna and I attended Anne Cath. Vestlie's performance as *Mormor* at *Oslo Nye Teater*. The New Theater was packed with people from very young to very old and everyone knew *Mormor* in Anne Cath Vestlie's persona, her dog, (*Ovnsrøret*), her eight grandchildren, the mother and father and the entire plot unfolding on stage. "*Nå kommer røverne snart !*" "Pretty soon the robbers will come!", the little girl next to Anna whispered excitedly, and the whole audience was drumming with excitement before they indeed came, as they always do, and as we had seen and read a

hundred times before. Anna and I booed the robbers along with all the other Norwegians, we screamed with glee as *mormor* danced around the pole in the front yard. We seemed to be participating in a ritual of emotional ‘Norwegianness’ all tied up in that wonderful grandmother on stage.

All of these occasions are instances when national pride, comfort and joy in common traditions are brought out in musical or theatrical contexts. This is the power of music in groups that E. T. Gaston (1968) referred to as one of the functions of music, one that also carries uncomfortable connotations of the power music has to bring people together in nationalistic pursuits of various kinds.

The important aspect of the common traditions in Norway that brought us all to these emotional thresholds, is not that everyone has something in common, but that these traditions, the nursery rhymes, the stories, have achieved emotional significance to many people by the fact that someone that cared about us sang and read to all of us when we were little. This is where *musikkglede* starts. My grandmother and father sang Norwegian nursery songs with me as I sang them with my children and now with my grandson. The songs become more than songs, they become emotional sustenance, and a key to unlock *musikkglede* throughout life (Bjørkvold, 1991).

## Chapter 11. Conclusion

I have argued throughout this study that what makes music music are the emotional nuances of sound that originate in the person actively engaged in musical processes. Thus, the value of musical experiences [any genre, any level of aesthetics], lies in the emotional dimensions of that experience. In our society, we acknowledge the importance of healthy emotions as vital to a 'whole' person. The role music plays in human emotional experiences has been recognized as unique and powerful for centuries. Nevertheless, music, as generally practiced in educational institutions in the Western world, is not central to our society.

### Expanded concepts of value in aesthetic experiences

One way of making music less peripheral to Western society is to emphasize the process of making music rather than the musical product, and to expand the concept of value to include immediate as well as delayed gratification (Meyer, 1956). This is already being done in some cases. In addition to traditional conservatory practices, the Norwegian music schools offer instruction in different musical styles, and claim to consider all genres of music to be equally valuable.<sup>87</sup> In the U.S., the Eastman School of Music is expanding its curriculum to include other genres of music in addition to Western art music. (Freeman, 1997, in Wilson, A10).<sup>88</sup> Brown University is geared exclusively to the popular music culture and its graduates seem to have few problems finding jobs (Stewart, 1996).

However, there are not many Western art music institutions that are changing [yet] to model Eastman. And I have little doubt that many Norwegian music schools as well as Eastman still consider Western art music to be more valuable than some other genres of music. But there is no reason why more people cannot learn to enjoy Western art music. The enjoyment that I learned through my teachers, who were all steeped in classical music and genuinely loved their genre, can, in turn, be transferred to my students by me. Bringing this genre to the general community in approachable ways can also transfer the emotional experiences of the performers to people who are

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<sup>87</sup> "Group work in [jazz, pop and rock] is more immediate and intuitive than the premeditated... classical music, without one being any less valuable than the other. Wise and proper guidance within one cultural genre will no doubt enrich the other." (Kommunenenes Sentralforbund & Kommuneforlaget, 1989, p. 64).

<sup>88</sup> "According to the Recording Industry Association of America, 2.9 per cent of the recordings purchased in 1995 were classical, down from 3.7 per cent the year before" (Wilson, 1997).

not experts in this style. “Most of the world thinks a classical musician is one who sets himself above the rest of the community....We have to figure out how to create common ground” (Frame, 1997, in Wilson, A11).

There are other examples of expanded frameworks of value. Tor, the promising Norwegian classical/rock/athlete indicates that different dimensions of aesthetics can easily coexist. John, a young rock musician with a lovely soprano voice willingly sings classical duets with an opera singer. And I have juxtaposed different musical genres and levels of aesthetic musical experiences throughout this study in an attempt to minimize the stigma of ‘primitive’ in immediate and spontaneous emotional experiences.

#### Revised definition of ‘music for all’

Yet another way of centering music in society is to redefine ‘music for all’ as something more or other than active sound processes. A ‘redefinition’ of music is beyond the scope of this study, but some possibilities present themselves. Studying music from an historical perspective can be considered to be a musical process. Writing about musical practices in society as I am doing may also be defined as a part of a musical practice. However, if musical joy is part of active and immediate processes, is there musical joy in music redefined? Is there, for instance, musical joy in this particular study, in a musical product as text?

#### Music education as aesthetic processes

Expanding the notion of value to include different genres and levels of aesthetics as well as redefining expanded musical processes will not make music - popular or classical - central to the public schools or to society as a whole. A subject that is, in essence, emotional, and that fosters emotional growth in different ways throughout life, will play a peripheral role in a society that does not value emotions on an equal basis with intellect. Music, as a reflection of the role of emotions in our society, is practiced as a hobby by all except an elite group of practitioners within popular music, classical music and education. It will remain a hobby until emotional and cognitive experiences are considered to be of equal value by those responsible for the design of educational curricula.

The current peripheral practice of music and the struggle to make that practice more central to society are parallel [but differently expressed] in the U.S. public schools and the Norwegian music

schools. Both recognize the value of active musical processes in the lives of school age children and youth. Both see the instructional benefits in a combination of private lessons and ensemble experiences. The music schools in Norway are viable, but precariously balanced between state, county and the individual. “Music for all” is not accepted on an equal basis with “Norwegian for all”, “math for all”, or even “English for all”. And, “What every American should know about music”, continues to be replaced by other more important intellectual concerns. The complaint is still the same: Music instruction is “taking time away from core subjects.” (O’Harrow, R., 1997).

There is a tendency to search outside music itself for justifications for the teaching of music as an academic subject. These days, the justification seems to be that music education is valuable because it makes you better at other academic disciplines. Scientists in many areas are now finding proof that music prepares the brain for different types of higher thinking skills. Music is seen as an aid to later “complex math and engineering skills”, for instance. Looking at music as an “instrument for education” is part of a utilitarian music philosophy that extends back to the time of Plato (Hancock, L.1996, p. 58). Again, this tradition puts an emphasis on the central role of intellect in our society and avoids the crucial role of emotions and music in human development. Music as support for other disciplines is yet another way of defining music and music education as peripheral, not central.

Music education is of primary value as aesthetic education in a myriad of nuances from [or before] birth to death. Studies in various scientific fields [often used to justify music’s public school support role] indicate that music is a natural part of human development (Fox, 1991; Ostwald, 1990; Papousek, et al, 1990, Hancock, 1996; Discover, 1994). In this study, I have described the emotional dimensions in the effective instructional settings at *Asker Musikkskole* that worked to promote both joy and learning in all the participants. Ellen learned from a caring ‘muse’ical teacher, Grete and Lars found joy in a musical classroom that was uniquely suited to their emotional and intellectual needs. Lena poured her musical and spiritual resources into her small ensemble in rehearsal and performance. The answer to the periphery or centrality of music is to recognize that emotions are central to human experiences and that music is an integral part of those experiences, both as a subject in itself, and as an essential part of our growth throughout life.

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### **Experience**

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1992 - 95. Graduate teaching assistant, Virginia Tech. I taught Music 2214, Class Applied Piano for three years while pursuing a Ph.D.

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1977 - 91. Preschool/elementary music and movement instructor, Montessori Country School, Herndon, VA, The Children's Center (Montessori School), Strasburg, VA, and Vostrikov Academy of Ballet, Winchester, VA.

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