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# Music in Future Nordic Schooling

## The Potential of the Relational Turn

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# Abstract

In this article, we discuss general school music in light of the fairly recent focus on relationality, specifically in pedagogy but also in related academic fields, such as psychology, aesthetics and philosophy. The main focus of the text is directed towards what we refer to as the relational turn in education, emphasizing school music in Nordic and Western countries.

The article is inspired by two recent Norwegian reports indirectly suggesting that the accountability and cognitive skill-oriented school policies within the Norwegian education community that have dominated for the past 20 years might be inadequate. The reports propose a new direction focusing more on creativity and inclusivity with an emphasis on deep learning and the social and emotional impact of education.

By investigating the relational turn in education as well as relationality in the fields of philosophy, psychology and aesthetics, we argue that many of these relational approaches may contribute to renewal of the rationale, as well as the construction and practice, of school music as a future curriculum subject.

In the last part of the article, we discuss how three internationally known disciplines of school music, namely music-making (singing and playing), composing and listening, could be renewed by pedagogies inspired by the relational turn.

Keywords: relationality, music in schools, pedagogic renewal, social and emotional competencies, inclusivity.

# Music in Future Nordic Schooling

## The Potential of the Relational Turn

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This article discusses general school music in light of the fairly recent focus on relationality, specifically in pedagogy but also in a number of related academic fields such as psychology, aesthetics and philosophy. Often, a focus on relationality is referred to as a 'relational turn' in these disciplines (Bourriaud 2002; Edwards 2010; Mitchell 2014). Based in teacher education, what interests us is how and to what extent a relational turn can be seen as a resource for renewal of future general school music programs in Nordic and Western countries.

The present text was motivated by two Norwegian National Official Reports on the future of compulsory schooling for students ages 6 to 18 (NOU 2014, 2015)[2]. Referring to research (OECD, 2015), the Norwegian reports argue that the development of social and emotional competence should be considered a prerequisite for any kind of curriculum learning, and that these aspects should therefore be included and integrated in attainment targets for all curricular subjects in order to achieve deep learning. Although not all countries in Western and Nordic societies have nationally mandated

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2 In Norway, music is a school subject framed by a national curriculum, and it is part of all compulsory primary and secondary education (ages 6–16). In total, 96,5% of the population attends state-run primary and secondary schools.

curricula for school music, we believe that a discussion about the future of general school music is relevant internationally. The history of music in schools and many of the challenges associated with school music are similar across the globe (Espeland 2011; Cox and Stevens 2016). Due to globalisation (Stromquist and Monkman 2014), we believe that debates across continents about music education, including school music, will become even more relevant in the years to come.

Some of the main ideas in the Norwegian Official Reports mentioned above reflect a deep concern for the future of compulsory schooling. The reports indirectly suggest that the accountability and cognitive skill-oriented school policies within the Norwegian education community that have dominated for the past 20 years might be inadequate. A new direction focusing more on creativity and inclusivity with an emphasis on deep learning and the social and emotional impact of education might be better for the future. By investigating the relational turn in education as well as relationality in the fields of philosophy, psychology and aesthetics, we shall argue that many of these relational approaches may contribute to renewal of the rationale, as well as the construction and practice, of school music as a future curriculum subject.

In the following, we present some of the main characteristics of what we have referred to as the *relational turn* in education. Next, in order to bring in a broader academic rationale, we present and discuss some recent perspectives on relationality within the fields of psychology, philosophy and aesthetics. All of these major disciplines have a long history of connectedness and relevance to pedagogy, including music teaching and education in many contexts. Thirdly, we discuss school music in Nordic and Western countries by answering the following questions: How could a 'relational turn' help renew the rationale for and practices in school music? What was and has been the foundations for school music in the past, what is at stake at present and which future challenges and opportunities might unfold in light of the recent focus on relationality? In the last part of the article, we discuss how three internation-

ally known disciplines of school music, namely *music-making* (singing and playing), *composing* and *listening*, could be renewed by pedagogies inspired by the relational turn.

## The relational turn in education

In the book *No education without relation* all eleven authors published a manifesto of relational pedagogy (Bingham and Sidorkin 2004) where they claim to offer a 'third way' out of what is labelled the 'alienation problem' of Western schooling:

> Students, teachers, and parents increasingly find themselves in situations void of meaningful human contact, ridden with frustrations and anonymity. This is the cause of the widespread dissatisfaction with schooling. The low expectations, breakdown of social order, and academic failures are only symptoms of the much deeper problem of alienation. (5)

Their 'third way' is different from two other major 'ways', the first being 'traditionalist' and relying on 'high stake tests and accountability', and the second being 'progressivist', which romantically and mistakenly believes that reformed curriculum and engaged instruction can awaken all children's interest in learning (Bingham and Sidorkin 2004, 5). The suggestion that there is widespread dissatisfaction and uneasiness about the future is also expressed by leading music education philosophers such as Estelle Jorgensen (2003), who writes:

> In music education there is a widespread loss of faith in our educational systems at present. Teachers disagree about their objectives, especially since they serve an increasingly diverse constituency, and society expects more of its schools than ever before. This crisis is expressed in cultural life, especially music among the other arts. (3)

In the relational pedagogic mind-set, learning and teaching are seen as relational transformations that take place in the space, or the gap (Biesta 2004), where teachers, pupils and content meet. Relational pedagogy does not focus on transmission and training, but on transformation—a change in the learner's perception that must take place for true education to be possible. In relational pedagogy, the gap represents the difference between the teacher and learner. In traditional education, the teacher fills the gap between the teacher's knowledge and the pupil's ignorance. In relational pedagogic thinking, learning can no longer be described as a process whereby the individual only creates meaning for her/himself (Bingham and Sidorkin 2004). Biesta argues that the way in which humans perceive relations has a major effect on how and what they regard as knowledge and learning. A sender–receiver model of education presupposes that meaning is glued to information. But what is sent, Biesta (2004) claims, never defines what is received. Education is communication, he argues, and communication must be understood as a process of transformation, because how an utterance is understood depends on the communication process in itself.

Mayo (2004) wants school to focus on relations by aporia, a certain amount of frustration or confusion. He sees education as a state of constant doubt and perplexity, and thus school functions as a place where contradictions are not necessarily solved. Students have to learn to understand their relations to the world as complicated, uncomfortable and not necessarily solvable. Relations are not, by definition, only good; domination is as relational as love. Pianowsky (2004) claims that relational pedagogy requires teachers to frustrate their pupils enough to desire to learn about problematic issues regarding themselves and others. In this way, relational pedagogy can raise awareness of and responsibility for students' views of themselves and their relations.

In the framework of relationality, issues of inclusion and social justice in music education can be seen as vehicles for addressing challenging relations (Woodford

2012). In inclusive music classrooms, ethics of recognition can serve as a basis for several relations: the teacher–pupil relation, pupil–pupil relation, relations between music, methods, teachers and pupils and relation between music and other subjects and disciplines. The complexity of inclusivity also makes the relational worldview difficult and emotionally challenging (Bingham and Sidorkin 2004). The findings in an international study of inclusivity in music teaching (Burnard et al. 2008) suggest that the investigated music teachers saw the subject of music as a common ground for pupils regardless of ability, culture or socioeconomic status. The researchers claim that '...this kind of common ground is not an assumed and colonial one, which is often the case with music experience, but one that is ethically engaged with the community in a genuine relationship' (19). Inclusivity and relationality are closely linked to creativity because creativity, risk-taking and trust among individuals are always interrelated (Sawyer 2011). Inclusivity, then, possesses a cultural ability to enrich a potentially creative curriculum subject, such as music, because it allows pupils' (and people's) diverse experiences and knowledge to surface and interweave to the benefit of the creative process.

As we see it, the relational turn in pedagogy provides us with a potential for shifting the focus in education from learning in the individual, curriculum and pedagogy to a focus on the relation between the learner and teacher, content and curriculum. To us, this shift is crucial when thinking about the implications for the individual learner, especially when we examine how examples of a relational turn arise in psychology.

## Relationality in psychology

In psychology, the relational turn is often regarded as a critique of the belief that knowing and knowledge can be regarded as individual dimensions and described in terms of a personal epistemology (Brownlee and Berthelsen 2006; Bronfenbrenner

1979; Bronfenbrenner and Ceci 1994). Social constructivists like Gergen (1999) and Rorty (1979) claim that if knowledge is local, it is also relational and subject to negotiation and therefore unstable. Consequently, negotiations around local 'truths' will be based upon societal and personal ethics framed in a democratic ideology and performed through reflexive dialogue (Shotter and Gergen 1989). Social psychological relationalism, as described by Gergen, focuses on personal relations to the surrounding world. He and Bronfenbrenner (1979) both emphasise that human beings are influenced by and develop because of their relations to society, persons and things around them and, conversely, that they have an impact on the way things, people and relations appear. The psychological view of people as relational beings also influences how Gergen (2009) thinks about education: 'The primary aim of education is to enhance the potentials for participating in relational processes - from the local to the global' (243). Gergen proposes focusing on relational learning rather than individual learning. He places relations prior to the individual in learning, and he sees the classroom as a local and global meeting ground 'for the concerns of the world' (Gergen 2009, 243). If we have such a deeply relational understanding of learning and creating, acknowledgement of others must be key to the development and facilitation of creative processes.

## Relational aesthetics

For two centuries, aesthetic theory has been largely informed by Kant, his followers and numerous interpretations of his highly complex work, e.g. Hanslick's (1854), Guyer's (1996) and de Duve's (1996) theories on aesthetics. Additionally, 19th century aesthetics and the romantic concept of art helped shape the paradigm of Western art music (DeNora 2000; Burnard 2012). Not all aesthetic concepts of modernity are based on Kant; for example, pragmatist aesthetics, formulated by Dewey (1934) and developed by Shusterman (2000), is a non-Kantian alternative that is relational in its

own sense. Dewey (1934), pointing at the recipient's interpretation of an artwork according to his/her own feelings and understandings (36), can be seen as a precursor to contemporary relational (Bourriaud 2002) and dialogic (Kester 2004) aesthetic philosophies and practices.

Pure autonomy–aesthetic views are not compatible with a constructivist worldview, but they are nevertheless deeply rooted in most of us and within the field of art in modern Western culture (Bourdieu 1996). As an alternative theoretical path contrasting autonomy–aesthetic concepts, relational aesthetics have been emerging for quite some time (Bourriaud 2002; Rancière 2009). Relational aesthetics always start from a theme and a relation outside the artistic work, such as a problem in society or existential discussions within or by groups of people. Relational aesthetic forms are thus inherently heteronomic and therefore site-specific and inclusive (Kwon 2004). Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) coined the term *relational aesthetic* as a new and significant branch of aesthetics in his essay 'Relational aesthetic', a work that has been highly commented upon and criticised. However, variations of heteronomic art forms had been flourishing for at least a hundred years before Bourriaud's essay described as site-specific art, social art, performance and so on (e.g. Duchamp 1917; Kwon 2004; Kester 2004; Fischer-Lichte 2008). Bourriaud ([1996] 2002) described the main ideas of relational aesthetics as follows: 1) art lies in human interaction and in its social context (14), 2) art is characterised by situations in which the audience creates a community (15), 3) art is a form of life and a model of agency in the world (13) and 4) newness is no longer the prime criterion for artistic quality (11).

According to Bourriaud, an artwork is first and foremost characterised by its appearance in what Bourriaud calls the *interstice*: 'Over and above its mercantile nature and its semantic value, the work of art represents a social *interstice*' (Bourriaud 2002, 16). Bourriaud describes the interstice as a room of human relations that are fundamentally different from the communication zones into which we are forced in every-

day life. To Bourriaud, art is primarily a meeting in an interstice, and in this relational space, he claims, there is space for negotiations that extend across interpretations, statuses and positions. Bourriaud's concept of the interstice in aesthetics features strong similarities to Biesta's concept of the 'gap' in pedagogy, which underlines our point that relationality features similar aspects and has undergone similar developments in different academic disciplines.

## The relational turn in philosophy

Our reading and discussion of recent practices and theories of pedagogy, psychology and aesthetics suggest that there is a trend in and across these sciences and practices that may be described as relational. In these theories as well as in their corresponding practices, there seems to be a shift towards interactivity, sharing and participation rather than reception, learning and transmission. Such concepts fall within what Brownlee and Berthelsen (2006) describe as *relational epistemology*. These concepts are strikingly conducive to the main elements in the Norwegian reports that triggered this article, such as preference for deep learning over surface learning and official recognition of social, relational and emotional elements as deeply important to learning. This can be also described as an ongoing transition from a modern to a late modern rationale for agency in the world (Kuhn 2012). We have observed this transition, as discussed above, within the fields of pedagogy, psychology and aesthetics, but can it also be observed in philosophy?

In *Relationalism: A Theory of Being*, the Indian philosopher Joseph Kaipayil (2009) offers a complete relationist theory—ontic relationalism—based firmly on his view of the importance of relations not only among human beings but also between human beings and anything that can be described as an 'entity'. He argues that the fact that things and events (including humans) exist in relations '... is the very characteristic of reality, both existentially and structurally' (Kaipayil 2009, 9). This reality is

simultaneously pluralistic and unitary, and entities (e.g. things, humans and subjects) are defined by their relations. Knowledge is also relational, argues Kaipayil (2009), because '...knowledge is the result of interaction between the knower and the known' and because 'all human knowledge has its origin in sense experience' (43). Kaipayil (2009) builds on Western as well as Eastern philosophy to develop ontic relationalism, arguing the following:

> Though the concept of relation has received a good deal of attention from past and present philosophers, relationalism as a metaphysical theory has not yet been adequately expounded. This does not mean that relationalism is a novel position, unknown in the history of philosophy... But no sufficient emphasis on this idea was ever given, and a full-fledged theory of relationalism is yet to emerge (9)

The benefit of relationalism, writes Kaipayil (2009), is 'its ability to give a unified perspective on reality by accounting for the unity and plurality we experience in the world' (11). It is thus important to show how relationalism can be 'our search for the ontological principles that account for the unity and diversity of the world', and as such, be what he calls a theory 'of the one and the many'. (Kaipayil 2009, 10).

Our (admittedly superficial) journey into some neighbouring academic disciplines to education and pedagogy, including pedagogy, psychology, aesthetics and philosophy, has reinforced our desire to look more closely into the potential for renewal of school music programs based on the ideas associated and advocated by proponents of the 'relational turn'. To us, this requires a renewed focus on concepts and issues such as transformation (presented by Biesta and Jorgensen), interaction and transaction (Dewey 1949), the educational potential of the gap and the interstice (introduced by Biesta and Bourriaud), inclusion, doubt and perplexity. Before doing so, however, let us briefly discuss some of these ideas in light of the history of Western school music.

## Western school music traditions and future schooling

While school music programs may differ from country to country, and in some countries may hardly exist, it is possible to identify common factors in Western traditions of classroom music pedagogy (Cox and Stevens 2016). The initial framework for teaching music in schools is often described as dominated by a series of successful music method developers and pioneers[3]. Although this may be true, we shall argue that music as a school subject first and foremost is the result of more overarching discursive positions in political and ideological theory and systems (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990) in addition to theories about aesthetics, psychology, philosophy and general pedagogy.

Adopting a macro view of existing music curricula in many Western countries, it is clear that well-established academic traditions focusing on work-based aesthetics, transmission-based educational theories and psychological theories focusing on perception and reception have been and still remain as vital elements in the existing rationale for music in schools (Mark and Gary 2007; Cox and Stevens 2016; Sætre 2014). Bourriaud's aesthetics, for example, constitute a very different platform than the aesthetic foundation of the modern school subject of music. For the latter, the aesthetics of the nineteenth century defined high-quality pieces of art as those given to us by a genius, and quality was determined by its newness and inner qualities. Aesthetics, in theory and practice, is currently marked by several threads of criticism that seek to answer the philosophical problems proposed by the concept of an artwork. In this context, it seems highly relevant to determine the extent to which such transitions and

3 A list of these influential movements and pioneers will be too long to mention here. However, names like Dalcroze, Orff, Kodaly, Paynter, Gordon, the Music Appreciation Movement, El Sistema and Musical Futures should illustrate what we have in mind.

concepts can affect our thinking about not only the rationale for music in schools but also for the subject's specific contents.

When discussing music as a part of future schooling, we must consider that traditional school music for some years has been heavily criticised for being insufficiently relevant to young people (McPherson 2015), insufficiently culturally sensitive (Drummond 2005), insufficiently critical (Hess 2014), too focused on training versus education (Bowman 2002), too sceptical of technology (Savage 2005) and too focused on performance over creativity (Burnard 2012). Although many of these criticisms might be relevant in many contexts, they fail, in our view, to provide balanced solutions applicable to national curriculum frameworks, and they do not seem to be grounded in a deep knowledge of relational recent trends in philosophy, pedagogy and aesthetics.

The modern subject of music in Western public schools is mainly constructed in three parts: 1) music making (or performing), 2) music listening and 3) composing (McCarthy 2004). In many Western countries, curricula often describe the subject of music by sets of learning outcomes within these three areas or with direct or indirect reference to them. We hope to show, however, that the rationale for the inception and constitution of music as a curriculum subject needs to be a dynamic one, ready for and adaptable to continuous change. Although brief and un-nuanced, we dare to describe the rationale for the first phase of music in schools (primarily singing) as based in religion and cultural transmission. The next phase (singing and listening) seemed to be more justified by aesthetics (Cox and Stevens 2016) and, first and foremost, by an obligation to transmit classical masterpieces to pupils (Espeland 2011). The third phase added intentional creativity in the form of composition, with a rationale comprising elements from progressive didactics, education, pedagogy, modernism in music and child psychology (McPherson 2015; Barrett 2011; Paynter 1970). In Norway, this historical development has until recently taken place within increas-

ingly prescribed and competence-based curricula focused on accountability, educational instrumentalism and learning outcomes.

Teaching and learning in the Western world today seem heavily influenced by the national results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD 2017; Pereyra, Kotthoff, and Cowen 2011). In Norway, as well as in other countries (Lines 2006; Espeland 2011), a debate about PISA has marginalised music in many schools. Summing up our mini history of music in schools and its rationale, it seems fair to say that a rationale built on instrumentalism, transmission of cultural works and values and individual creativity, although still relevant, is inadequate as a rationale for school music to maintain an important place in contemporary and future national Bildung[4] projects.

## The current situation for music in schools

Music in compulsory Western schooling in the 21st century has fallen under intense pressure (Mark and Gary 2007). Today's western pupils are often described as digital natives (Prensky 2001), meaning that they often do not possess a practical conception of a world without the Internet as a major source of access to information, music, communication and creation. Practically speaking, pupils have access to all kinds of musics from around the world. As for education, the Internet also provides a considerable amount of learning resources, for instance, on apps or YouTube, available to anyone with Internet access. The music learning arena has thus transcended the music classroom and the band room into digital and global spaces, and it is not necessarily limited to what is curriculum-based or considered by a teacher to be a 'healthy'

4 Bildung is a key concept in Scandinavian and German education (Willberg 2016), and it 'refers to the German tradition of self-cultivation (as related to the German for: Creation, image, shape), wherein philosophy and education are linked in a manner that refers to a process of both personal and cultural maturation' (Wikipedia: Bildung: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bildung).

choice. The teacher as a cultural and artistic gatekeeper might therefore be in danger of fading in importance. Different musical identities can increasingly be constructed and made culturally meaningful through individual choices of influential sources. Peers seem to play a significant role in adolescence, inevitably connecting the construction of musical preferences and behaviors to sociocultural issues of gender, race, culture and personal economy (Parke and Ladd 2016; Yang, Wang, and Mourali 2015).

The whole music environment and background for music as a compulsory curriculum subject in the Nordic and other Western countries, therefore, seems to be fundamentally changed, and for many reasons. The overwhelmingly active commercial music industry dominates the musical scene (King and Himonides 2016), and thanks to modern technology, one can listen to music nearly everywhere and in almost any situation (e.g. on the bus, running, doing homework or in a setting reserved for members of a special subculture). Music creation increasingly occurs in authentic analogue situations outside schooling (Green 2002; 2008). Often, music creation starts from scratch, but it can also involve sharing and re-constructing in cooperation with a classmate or virtually with someone from across the world (Zucker 2016). Performing can also be shared via digital events, with geographically distant people playing together in real time. The use and reuse of previous artistic material is significant (Bourriaud 2005) in today's musical life (Ruthmann et al. 2010; Ruthmann and Hebert 2012; Koops 2012). 'New' music is influenced by different cultures—old and new, local or more distant in space—and thus the traditional conceptions of quality might seem to be breaking down, enabling the emergence of hybrid genres, art forms, tastes and intentions. Ultimately, these changes create a vastly different cultural environment for music as a curriculum subject compared to the environment when the modern curriculum subject was developed in the 20th century (Goodson 2013).

# Directions in a relation-based renewal of school music

Recent developments in school policies in Norway (and elsewhere) and in the relevant aesthetic and educational theories and practice may appear to be quite radical. Yet, politically, the official Norwegian reports we referred to in the beginning of this article, argue for a renewal in contents as well as pedagogical approach. Our focus on the relational turn leads us to question the very foundation upon which music as a curriculum subject was created and developed in the 20th century. This, however, does not mean that we think instrumentalism, work-based aesthetics or the transmission of prior knowledge and culture is irrelevant for school music.

It is, in our view, not a question of replacing an existing rationale for school music, but of modifying and supplementing such a rationale. Neither do we think the solution lies in the substitution of formal music programs, which are often associated with the 'old' rationale, with more 'informal' programs, which are often focused on children's interests and priorities. A study of Swedish compulsory music education (Georgii-Hemming and Westwall 2010) reports that school music often is based on informal learning, the pupil's individual wishes and practical music-making in bands and large singing groups. The reseachers argue that such a program is not necessarily meaningful for pupils. Georgii-Hemming and Westwall (2010) describe the Swedish situation of school music as follows: 'Instead of deliberately structured and formalized learning, large parts of music education are currently characterized by informal pedagogical strategies' (30). The researchers conclude that the teacher should be reinstated as the one responsible for decisions regarding music activities and content because 'if responsibility for music education content and activities is left completely to students, teachers risk to fail students, the music and the meaning that music can have for people' (Georgii-Hemming and Westwall 2010, 31). We agree with Biesta (2013) that a shift in focus from transmission to transformation in pedagogy and a

stronger focus on relations in no way diminishes the need for the professional and well educated teacher. Although Biesta's claim addresses teaching in general, this stance seems utterly relevant to teaching music. To us, it follows that a focus on the relational turn and renewal of the subject of music in schools also can renew our understanding of what it takes to be a relational and professional music teacher.

The Norwegian governmental reports (NOU 2014, NOU 2015) we have referred to in this text, suggest that curricular renewal in Norwegian schools should seek to simplify and reduce an overloaded curriculum by identifying and renewing the key elements of curricular subjects. Applying such an approach to Nordic and Western school music invites a discussion of the three key elements traditionally comprising school music programs in Western countries: 1) music making (or performing), 2) music listening and 3) composing (McCarthy, 2004). How could these areas, or key elements exist as major curricular areas of school music in the context of renewal and in light of the principles and propositions of the relational turn?

First, we shall argue with Jorgensen (2003) that the renewal of music as a curriculum subject and its teaching should be characterised by transformation rather than transplantation. We also believe that the future path of school music should be related to the past as well as the future and should be grounded within relevant theoretical fields.

Performing, music making or singing and playing might appear to be the backbone of school music. In some contexts, this aspect of school music dominates the scene in schools, sometimes resulting in the exclusion of reflection and a critical approach (Georgii-Hemming and Westwall 2010; Hess 2014). Performing and music making is intimately connected to bodily, sensory, feeling-based musical expression and action, and in schools, music is most often performed in groups; how can such a discipline be more relational than it already is? As we see it, a relational focus on a renewed performance-based discipline must involve specifying the focus of the 'per-

forming'. Elliott (1995) describes music making as a *praxis* incorporating far more than the physical actions necessary to produce sound: 'Praxis is guided by an informed and ethical disposition to act rightly – musically, socially, communally and so forth – with continuous concern for protecting and advancing human creativity' (44). From a philosophical perspective, a relational approach to music making can address this activity as a central, body-based part of a larger whole or as a core element of the all-encompassing verb to *musick* (Small 1998). This verb 'covers all participation in a musical performance, whether it takes place actively or passively' (Small 1998, 9). *Musicking* is recognised as a deeply relational enterprise, and Small (1998) claims that playing and rehearsing music can never occur free of relations:

> If [...] musicking is an activity by means of which we bring into existence a set of relationships that model the relationships of our world, not as they are, but as we would wish them to be, and if through musicking we learn about and explore those relationships, we affirm them to ourselves and anyone else who may be paying attention, and we celebrate them, then musicking is in fact a way of knowing our world... (50)

Performing music, as a vital element of *musicking*, should be discussed in a broader context than mere instrumentality in classrooms as well as in other contexts. Given the strength of music making as an act of social and emotional agency[5] around the world, a relational focus on performing might involve what could be labelled as *humanizing musicking*, the ultimate goal of which is to enhance humanity (Small 1998; Craft 2010). Such a focus could be criticised for harbouring instrumentalism, but it would respond to the call for greater emphasis on the social and emotional aspects of

5 According to Priestly et al. (2015), 'agency can be described as the ability or potential to act' (22). Further, according to Biesta and Tedder (2007), '[t]he achievement of agency will always result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations' (137).

learning, and it would thus have a higher potential to contribute to personal *Bildung*, especially if contents and activities were culturally sensitive and critical.

Music listening has often been criticised for its heavy reliance on the canon of Western classical music and for neglecting relevance when selecting musical examples (Drummond 2010; Hess 2014). In Norway, listening is still part of the music curriculum, especially in primary schools, but it is increasingly being replaced by listening as background, ear training or edutainment (Espeland et al. 2013). In many secondary schools, listening only takes place when the pupils make their own music. It is therefore possible for this part of school music to be beyond the possibility of transformative renewal. Even if a modern international discipline of music listening has been thoroughly researched, developed and recommended as responsive and interactive music listening in school music programmes, such listening practices have not been sufficiently established in many schools (Espeland 2004; Kährik, Leijen, and Kivestu 2012; Herbert 2011; Kerchner 2000). Relation to the musical work has been and continues to be an overarching principle in educational music listening practices. What might be lacking, however, is a stronger focus on personal listening (DeNora 2000) and much greater awareness of the cultural and critical aspects of listening. A renewed listening discipline should therefore, in addition to recommending responsiveness as a guiding principle, include a stronger focus on personal as well as aesthetic, artistic and critical listening so pupils can relate to, interact with and discuss music in and across cultures. A culturally sensitive listening approach should allow pupils to experience and access musical values, ideas, critiques and expression in and across cultures to a much greater degree than when music listening as a discipline was first developed (Espeland 2011).

The third (and youngest) discipline in school music is music composition. In Norway, composition was first introduced as an area of study and classroom practice in the national curriculum of 1997. Its international foundation was Anglo-American

(Paynter 1970; Davies 1963), and programmes involving musical improvisation. The reception of such a practice in Norwegian schools, as in many other countries, has been slow and mixed (Webster 2012; McPherson 2015; Johansen 2003; Espeland 1995, 2006). However, composition can easily be connected to the political rhetoric regarding the importance of creativity in compulsory schooling (Craft 2010). As we see it, creative school music practices should not be confined to the discipline of composing alone; musical practices lend themselves to creative practices in performing and listening as well, because creativity is so closely connected to imagination, which is key for invention and new solutions (Hargreaves 2003). The relational turn is crucial for creativity, including composition, because recent theories have underlined the importance of creativity as a collective and interactive endeavour (Sawyer 2003, 2011; Gershon and Ben-Horin 2013). A relation-based renewal of composition should include more of the collective aspects of creativity, with improvisational and compositional activities and actions not only including generation of musical ideas but also sharing, collaboration, communication and critique.

## Concluding remarks

We have argued that the 'relational turn', in different forms, could serve as a major and unifying concept for the renewal of school music, particularly given its capacity to overcome many current and future challenges facing music in schools. Some of these challenges are of a general nature, such as increasing bureaucratisation, alienation, pressure for accountability, a lack of creativity and inclusiveness, increasing globalisation and, particularly in Norway, a rapid shift from a monocultural to a multicultural society. The Norwegian reports that motivated the writing of this article have brought the question of renewal into focus for all curriculum subjects in Norway, including school music, and pointed to social and emotional competence as a key factor in such a renewal process and its implementation.

In conclusion, we argue that school music cannot, and should not, aim to overcome these challenges as a curriculum subject isolated from increasingly important community music initiatives directed towards children (Veblen, Elliott, Messenger and Silverman 2013; MacDonald, Kreutz and Mitchell 2013). The rationale for music as a compulsory subject in future public schooling could be improved by activating a web of music relations (Plomp and Nieveen 2010) rather than reducing music education for children to a didactic triangle between the teacher, pupil and music. Such a web must take into account relations to musical artefacts, events, genres, politics, theories and people and cultures in and out of school. One significant aspect of a relational approach to the subject of music is also that it allows us to relate to the past and thus to the way in which music education has been successfully implemented and is still conducted in many places. Furthermore, we shall argue that the didactics of school music, which are to some degree still separated into music making, listening and composing, with necessary renewals, still could serve as strands, or key elements, in Norwegian school music and beyond. This curricular distinction should be regarded as inherently related; who can make music without listening or create without making music?

We close this article by agreeing with Kaipayil (2009) that the very identity of any entity in the world—in our case, music as a school subject—is defined by its relations (e.g. among its curriculum constituents, teachers, pupils, artefacts, visiting artists, classrooms and venues). According to Kaipayil (2009), these can be described as the entity's intra-relations—relations among its constitutive elements—and inter-relations—relations with other entities. Adopting such a relationalist stance, however, should not lead to a misconception of relations as only good or high-quality. In the case of school music, a stronger focus on the relational turn in an improved rationale for school music must be subjected to constant criticism. Its ability to welcome controversial as well as progressive, educative and enriching topics should serve as the primary criterion for quality.

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