


**Newsletter 13 – February 2009**


This newsletter is a special about a groundbreaking new **publication** on professional music education in the 21st century: **'Musicians as Lifelong Learners: Discovery through Biography'**, written by lector Rineke Smilde.

Rineke Smilde conducted biographical research by interviewing **32 musicians** with various careers within the international professional practice. The portraits she wrote have been published as **'Musicians as Lifelong Learners: 32 Biographies'**, which is a supplement to the publication. The set was published in February 2009 by Eburon Academic Publishers, Delft. In her study Rineke Smilde does recommendations to conservatoires for the implementation of the concept of lifelong learning, which may lead to a better preparation of the musician on the changing professional practice.

Attention and space for the different learning styles of musicians, such as informal learning and experiential learning; educational environments which are adaptive and responsive and function as artistic laboratories in which musicians can develop artistic, generic and educational leadership: these are important conditions to train musicians to become 'lifelong learners'. The definitions of quality many conservatoires use is too much limited to artistic quality. There should be more attention within the programmes for improvisation and health issues of musicians, and it is high time for the profession of music teacher to be upgraded.

These are a few important conclusions of Rineke Smilde's research, with which she completed her PhD summa cum laude at the Georg-August-University in Göttingen, Germany in December 2008. The publication 'Musicians as Lifelong Learners: Discovery through Biography' gives a fascinating insight into what the rapid changes in society mean to professional musicians and how they respond to this as lifelong learners.


**Creative workshop leader Sean Gregory**

*'I think there is a momentum now for music as a participatory experience to have a wider resonance in society.'*

**Musicians as lifelong learners**

The changes in the cultural environment have important consequences for professional musicians. They often have a portfolio career in which they fulfil different professional roles within various contexts. How do musicians deal with this, are these new professional practices reflected sufficiently in the learning environment of European conservatoires, and what does it mean for the education of future professional musicians? Rineke Smilde tried to find answers by holding biographical interviews with musicians from a range of professional practices, such as guitarist Corrie van Binsbergen, saxophone player Yuri Honing, pianist Rian de Waal and singer and pianist Dena DeRose. She investigated the relationship between their life, educational and career span with as a main thread the question how musicians learn and in what domains.


**Guitarist Corrie van Binsbergen**

*'I was alone at home watching a documentary about Nicaragua on television. It was very striking and it touched me deeply. After that I took up my guitar and started improvising. I had not done it much by that time and I remember it as an extremely important point in my development.'*

**Presentations**

Rineke Smilde will present the results of her research at a number of national and international symposia and congresses this year. On the [website](#) you will find more information about when and where these presentations (link) will take place.

Online you will also find the possibility to [order](#) the set 'Musicians as Lifelong Learners'. Price set: € 55,- + shipping costs.

**Praise for Musicians as Lifelong Learners**

*Rineke Smilde's research points directly at the critical challenge facing the education and training of musicians today, that of providing relevancy, of recognizing the vastly changed world musicians must now navigate. Now, with this body of knowledge she has given us we can reflect together as professionals and commit ourselves to positive and constructive change.*

**James Undercofler, President Philadelphia Orchestra**

*It is immensely stimulating to read Rineke Smilde's research. By developing a strong and up-to-date theoretical framework, and using a solid methodology, she widens our horizons and deepens our understanding of the modern multi-faceted music profession. The life stories and discussions form an inspiring background for developing the learning environments of higher music education.*

**Johannes Johansson, President European Association of Conservatoires**