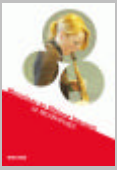


Symposium

'The Changing Voice of the Musician in Society'

Presentation Lectorate Lifelong Learning in Music & the Arts



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Musicians as Lifelong Learners: Discovery through Biography

Introduction

In this presentation I would like to share with you a research that I have carried out into 'musicians as lifelong learners'. In this study I addressed questions like what musicians need nowadays to function effectively, how they actually learn and what this means for learning in conservatoires where musicians are trained to be professional practitioners.

First I would like to consider some definitions which are of importance for you to know in order to understand my story, then I would like to tell you about what I tried to find and how the study was carried out, and third, I will then clarify things through examples from musicians' biographies and the conclusions that I drew.

Let us first have a look at the definition of lifelong learning. What is *lifelong learning in music* and why is it important? We all know that the musicians of today face major changes in their cultural environment; that these changes are taking place at an ever-increasing pace and that they are a major influence on the development of the profession. More than ever before, the future professional musician is confronted with questions of 'how can I function in a flexible way and exploit opportunities in new and rapidly changing cultural contexts'? To this end, it is worthwhile to explore the concept of lifelong learning and its implementation, because lifelong learning is in a nutshell: *a concept of learning that enables us to deal with change.*

Lifelong Learning may be defined as a concept spanning an entire lifetime in a process of “...transforming experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and the senses” (Jarvis 2002). Lifelong Learning is not ‘just’ continuing education: we can say that it is an important conceptual framework for the improvement of people's *employability* and *adaptability* (so: to generate work and to adapt to change and new circumstances). The innovative dimension of the Lifelong Learning concept lies in a new approach of the process and context of learning (Fragoulis 2002).

Characteristics of the concept of Lifelong Learning include:

- The distinction between formal and informal learning;
- The emphasis on ‘learning’ as opposed to ‘training’;
- Different approaches to learning, including learning in settings outside the school;
- The interconnection between professional and personal development;
- The role of critical reflection and reflexivity – or reflecting *on* your action, bringing about change, and reflecting *in* your action, being implicitly and explicitly responsive. This happens e.g. during improvising with other musicians, by drawing on implicit (internalised) knowledge)

When we try to understand the Lifelong Learning concept, it is helpful to first take a closer look into the definitions of formal, non-formal and informal learning. These definitions come back later in relation to the research on the lifelong learning musicians.

Formal learning is learning within an organised and structured context, explicitly designed as learning and leading to a formal recognition (Collardyn 2002). Formal learning in the conservatoire is based on a structured curriculum, with fixed learning objectives, fixed duration, content, method and assessment, and aiming for skills and

competences that are specifically relevant for the music profession. The learning is primarily *intentional* and the knowledge is mainly *explicit*.

Non-formal learning can be defined as any organised educational activity outside the established formal system, for example in collaboration with an external partner. Non-formal learning is embedded in planned activities that contain learning elements.

Within *informal learning* all aspects of learning – what to learn, how to learn and for how long – are in the hands of the individual learner, in general without interference of teachers. Informal learning in music can be defined as: “a variety of approaches to acquiring musical skills and knowledge outside formal educational settings” (Green 2002). Informal music learning can be seen as a set of ‘practices’, rather than ‘methods’, which can be both conscious and unconscious (ibid). Learning experiences can include interactions with other musicians or by development of self-teaching techniques. The learning of pop musicians who practise in the garage is an excellent example of this.

Links between formal and non-formal or informal education/learning are critical for a conceptual framework of Lifelong Learning. Learning in non-formal situations can, in principle, generate the same competences as learning in a formal learning environment (Duvekot 2002). Key for lifelong learners is less the knowledge (in the sense of knowing *that*) than the ability of people to apply knowledge (the knowing *how*) (Bjornavold 2002). That is the part on definitions.

Within the study on ‘musicians as lifelong learners’ which I did, I used biographical research to examine the developments in the professional lives of 32 musicians. I focused on the relationship between their life, educational and career span and especially on the question how they learn as a musician. My point of departure (or

working hypothesis) was that research into musicians' learning styles, attitudes and values could show that informal learning and related modes of learning, in both formal and non-formal educational settings, should play a more prominent role throughout different stages of learning in music education (including the conservatoire). The outcomes of the research, which should emerge from the analysis of these learning biographies, could result in a deeper insight into the conceptual framework of lifelong learning in music, and lead to recommendations for change in learning environments of the conservatoire and for continuing professional development of musicians. Future musicians would then be given the opportunity to acquire a reflective and reflexive attitude in dealing with change in society and their cultural environment and develop into true 'lifelong learners'.

Research questions

These were my research questions:

- What knowledge, skills and values are considered necessary to function effectively and creatively as a (contemporary) musician?
- How do musicians learn and in what domains?
- What does the necessary conceptual framework of lifelong learning for musicians entail and what are its implications for education and learning environments?

They were underpinned by three subsidiary questions, which first needed to be addressed:

- What are the main changes for the European music profession?
- What are the likely implications for the professional training of musicians?
- In what ways do conservatoires respond to these developments?

By means of interviews which I held with professional musicians with varied professional practices and in different phases of their life, I tried to gain understanding into the role of the concept of lifelong learning within these musicians' personal and professional development. What kind of lifelong learners are they? I covered musicians from different countries, working in the creating, performing, teaching and/or entrepreneurial domains in the interviews and elucidated divergent careers. As we all know, career types show much overlap, so I decided to use highly flexible categories:

- Category I: Soloists
Performing musicians whose professional lives consist mainly of giving concerts;
- Category II: Music pedagogues / educators
Musicians engaged (almost) solely in teaching;
- Category III: Musicians with a portfolio career
Musicians combining different roles within various areas of engagement.

I took four age categories into account:

- years after graduation (up till 35 years); adulthood, centring on personal identity and the period of professional integration;
- between 35 and 45 years; adulthood and further professional development;
- between 45 and 55 years; life turn and mature adulthood;
- from 55 years onwards; mature adulthood.

Backgrounds – subsidiary research questions

Before we move to the outcomes of this biographical research let us first look at some more background, relating to these subsidiary research questions.

We can argue that the main trends and changes in post-modern life, with its reciprocal relationship between on the one hand the focus on the local and on the other hand the aspects of globalisation, are found extensively in the arts and in music. New art forms, new music and new artistic languages, often using new technology, are shaping a diverse cultural landscape. More than once threats are perceived in the arts (like e.g. the loss of identity) but also opportunities (like the possibilities of the virtual world).

The sociologist and philosopher Zygmund Bauman (2005) stresses that in no previous time has the necessity for making *choices* been so prominent, one reason being that people fear to be 'left behind' or excluded because of failing to commit to new demands. This has major implications for education and learning. Learning, Bauman says, should indeed be lifelong, because lifelong learning equips us to make our choices, and it especially helps us "to salvage the conditions that make choice available and within our power" (p. 128).

Lifelong learning and its implications clearly range from the global world to the local region, or, as we can say: on the *macro* level of society at large, on the *meso* level (of the institution and learning environment), and on the individual *micro* level, relating to the individuals in society.

We can say that *the concept of learning* changes and within this shift we see that *biographical knowledge and learning* play an important role. Biographical learning includes people's experience, knowledge and self-reflection, their learning about transitions and crises in their lives; in short everything people have learned throughout their lives and have absorbed into their biographies. From biographical learning a new understanding of people's learning processes can emerge, both in terms of emotion and cognition. We therefore speak not only of lifelong but also of *lifewide* learning (both horizontal throughout the lifespan and vertical, e.g. intensive experiences during a period of transition). Think e.g. of the situation of changing jobs.

When we now get back to musicians, we can argue that the interrelated development of their life, educational and career span can give us important knowledge, understanding and insight. The transitions in their lives are of special interest, leading to change and decisions that underpin their biographies.

Changes in the profession...

That is some sociological background. Let us now further have a look at those questions which dealt with the changes in the European music profession, the implications this has for the professional training of musicians and in how far conservatoires respond to these developments.

The changes and trends in the European musical landscape are manifold and in the research they were examined from the point of view of audiences, cultural policies, technology, teaching in music schools, the importance of community work and most of all the emergence of the *portfolio career* (Amussen and Smilde 2007). I drew on an extended research on the changes in the European musical landscape which has been carried out by a working group of the AEC on 'Trends and Changes in the European Music Profession'. I was member of this group.

Most important within the music profession is, and we will focus on that here, the emergence of the portfolio career. The musician of today is rarely employed in one job for life (or even one job at a time), but is increasingly an entrepreneur who has a *portfolio career*, combining several forms of professional activities.

Exact figures of musicians holding a portfolio career are not known. It is difficult to picture because of this overlapping of activities. However we may assume that the increase of portfolio careers is substantial, through contacts held with alumni and alumni research carried out by a number of European conservatoires.

Having a portfolio career does not at all mean that a musician is not employable; rather this reality reflects societal change.

... and musicians' roles

Holding a portfolio career with overlapping activities in the colourful professional practice requires the musician to have many *roles* at the same time. A British research project on the work, education and training of present day professional musicians and their changing career patterns looked at the areas of engagement for the present day musicians and more than 50 multi-related roles or skills were identified. These were divided into related areas, and from there four central roles were defined; those of *composer, performer, leader* and *teacher*. These roles are overlapping and relevant to all genres of music. This approach is certainly applicable to the European situation.

No matter what their primary area of engagement is; musicians today must take up various interrelated roles that require many skills and attitudes of adaptation and responsiveness. Examples of roles are those of a(n):

- innovator (explorer, creator and risk taker);
- identifier (of missing skills, and of means to refresh them);
- partner/co-operator (within formal partnerships);
- reflective practitioner (engaged in research and evaluative processes; able to contextualize experiences);
- collaborator (dialoguing with professional arts practitioners, students, teachers etc.);
- connector, in relation to conceptual frameworks a musician deals with;
- entrepreneur; job creator.

Conservatoires' response

Let us now have a look at the conservatoires' response to this. The question of what is required to obtain successful professional integration for musicians, especially in the light of all the changes in the social and cultural landscape is of key importance. How successful are European conservatoires in addressing this question, while preparing their students for a future professional life, which is so complex and multi-

dimensional? What do graduates need once they enter the profession and how do conservatoires respond to these needs?

The main characteristics of training and development in today's conservatoires still differ widely. Although there are many different systems of professional training for musicians, they have in general one thing in common: that is that institutions do not adapt sufficiently to the requirements of today's profession, nor to the specific demands of their students and graduates.

In the beginning of 2000 the AEC carried out a major research project which investigated the professional integration and continuing professional development for musicians and the needs of recent graduates of European conservatoires (Lafourcade and Smilde 2001). I was involved in this research project. This research showed that graduates encounter a variety of problems.

Former students of conservatoires in the European Union were asked about their professional life and needs after graduation. A wide variety of issues were raised in the responses, nearly all of which related to finding (or generating) work. The students mentioned the fact that they had not gained enough experience in the professional world before graduation.

The top skills that they had missed *during* training at the conservatoire were health-related skills, improvisation and participation in chamber music and larger ensemble performance. The main thrust in the response upon the question what they needed *after* graduation was a strong need for *life skills*, being generic skills, like networking, presentation skills, entrepreneurship; dealing with health issues; teaching skills and improvisation.

In addition we assembled information about what provision for continuing education existed, and whether there was a match between these needs of graduates and this provision. The outcomes were striking: the highest priority in needs felt by the students, namely life skills, was the lowest priority of the conservatoires, in terms of provision.

Conservatoires

Information Exchange
Performance skills
Pedagogical skills
Life skills

Former students

Life skills
Performance skills
Pedagogical skills
Information exchange

One of the explanations for this mismatch might be the low value given by the conservatoires to the opinion of former students when deciding on provision. It showed that conservatoires gave more priority to their own perception of their former students' needs instead of asking questions directly. In short, students' opinions were at the bottom of the list.

A small scale research of the AEC among former students and employers in 2007 still endorsed our finding that not sufficient attention is paid to health issues, improvisation and pedagogical skills.

In general we found in that research, and I found it again in my recent research, that conservatoires hardly take the changing society into account and rarely consult partners from the professional field, let alone their former students. In addition, the conservatoires' definition of quality is a narrow one, limited only to quality of performance. When making qualitative judgements arising from various processes, projects and performances in different contexts, conservatoires fail to take the variables arising from such different contexts into account.

The core questions

So far this background. The core research questions, as we remember being the question of what knowledge, skills and values musicians need in order to function effectively and creatively as a (contemporary) musician; the question how musicians actually learn and third, what this knowledge means for the concept of lifelong learning and what its implications are for education and learning environment, underpinned my interviews with the 32 musicians.

The interviews

I had of course to make a choice for the musicians to be approached for an interview. I based my choice first and foremost on the research questions. I looked for musicians ranging from those having a more or less traditional career path, like for example orchestral musicians and music teachers, to musicians who perform and create on the cutting edge of various genres, areas of engagement and disciplines.

I also tried to find musicians with different learning paths, ranging from having continuous formal education from early childhood on to a completely informal learning path, with all kinds of mixed learning paths in between. All in all, I tried to use criteria for my individual choices which would increase the opportunities for optimal contrasts between the musicians.

The interviews took place by means of open key questions, which addressed musicians' life, educational and career span as well as its interactions. In the interviews I tried to aim at finding determining moments in the life and career span (critical incidents) and I explored educational interventions (by teachers, parents or the musicians themselves). The main thread throughout the interviews was the question of how one learns as a musician and the transitions and transformations in learning which could be observed. An interview would lead to a draft learning biography, which would then be validated by the musician.

Analysis and findings in the biographical research

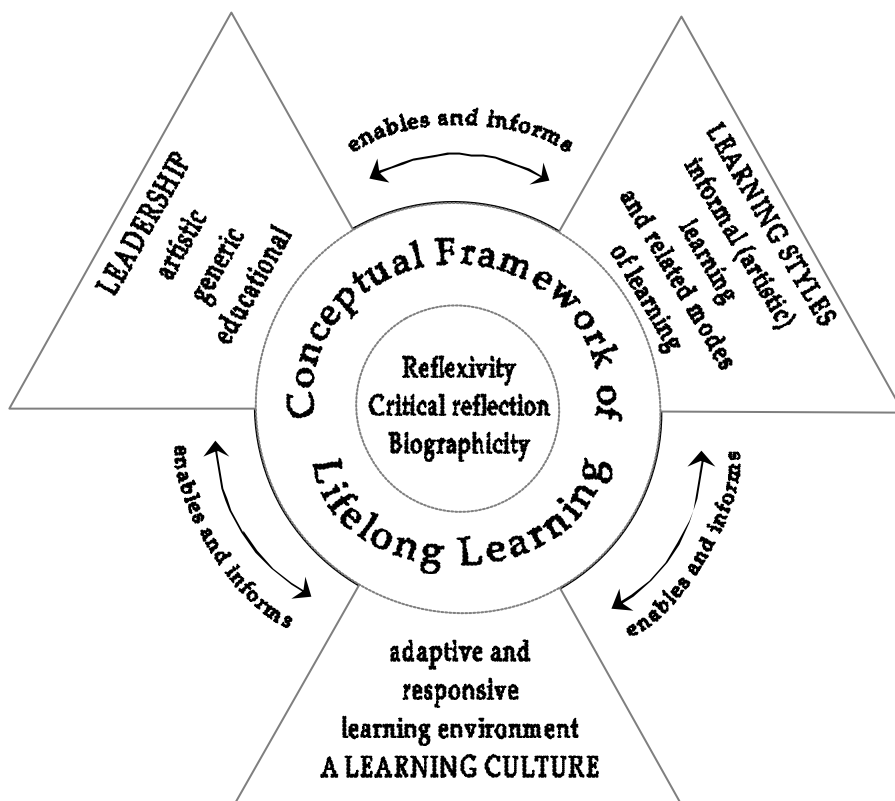
I would like to share findings with you which emerged from the analysis of the 32 learning biographies, and illustrate them through some examples.

While analysing the learning biographies, three key areas in the narratives of the musicians emerged. They can be described as

- musicians' different forms of leadership (artistic, generic and educational);
- the interconnection between varied learning styles of the musicians, and

- their need for an adaptive and responsive learning environment within a reflective and reflexive institutional culture.

These *key areas of knowledge and understanding*, derived from the learning biographies are highly interconnected and they enable and inform each other. Let us have a look at them.



We might say that together they form a *holistic* conceptual framework of lifelong learning in music which has at its heart a core of reflexivity (being reflexive means being responsive, both implicit and explicit); critical reflection (understanding your experiences and learn from them) and biographicity, which means that you can understand new experiences in life and link it to old ones, bringing about a learning chain. This may sound quite abstract; we can explore this a bit further through biographical examples.

Leadership

First we will look at 'leadership'. The word 'leadership' is mostly understood as connected to the institutional level (the leader is the director of the school, or the conductor of the orchestra). However it can also be perceived on the individual level.

Leadership, we could say, is dependent on authority and the ability to exercise authority. Within musicianship (e.g. chamber music) we can speak of *shared authority* through collaborative artistic practice, which is underpinned by qualities like informed decision making (sometimes tacitly, e.g. while playing chamber music), adaptability, flexibility, committed values and attitudes. The musicians I investigated show various forms of artistic, generic and educational leadership. The interconnection between personal and professional development is very important within musicians' leadership and learning. The ability to be reflective and reflexive is connected to this. Musicians' leadership is closely connected to their learning styles, as we will see.

I will illustrate this concept of leadership connected to learning styles through the biographies of two musicians. They are of cellist Mike and French horn player John, both middle aged male musicians and highly skilled performers. We will look at issues of their artistic and generic leadership which are connected to their learning styles and I will show how their biography is related to their learning.

What is *generic leadership*? We might describe it as the ability to lead by example and by attitude, including the development of life skills as well as issues of musicians' self-identity, self-esteem and coping strategies. Let us explore this generic leadership more in-depth while focusing in particular on a striking finding in the biographical research, which was the enormous amount of physical and mental

profession-related health problems, the way musicians dealt with it and the *transformative learning* that evolved from it. Transformative learning can be understood as learning that enables the learner to gain new understanding through critical reflection on his or her own assumptions and presuppositions. Moreover, transformative learning is highly related to one's feeling of identity.

It is well-known that musicians suffer much from both physical and psychological problems which are profession-related. Health problems can be very distorting, and are often experienced as an attack on musicians' self-identity.

Mike had an accident which brought him into a crisis, which in the end also contributed to substantial changes in his life, including a divorce.

What happened (...) is that I cut my left index finger off (...) And I knew in that second that this was it. I said to myself, 'Okay, this is the end. That's it. This is my career. I did some interesting things and that is that' (...) The accident happened in June, and I think I accepted a concert in January after that (...) I told myself, 'If I can play this concert well, I am going to keep my job, if not I'll change profession'. My surgeon came to Switzerland to hear me play again. It was such hard work...a life-altering experience I think. Objectively maybe not, but subjectively I took it very badly. I told myself that I could come back from this once, but not twice.

Mike feels that in the end coping with this accident has improved his playing. He says:

I had to think again, and think ahead. Well, actually, my mind made me improve (...) My background made me use my brain. It made me think, how I could deal with turning it around (...) The technical ability came back fully, but I had had to deal with the problem more deeply.

Clearly Mike refers here to mental coping strategies as well. “My background made me use my brain” refers to the parental background, the way Mike was raised in a wise and supportive way. We will get back to him shortly and first have a look at a big mental health problem which we encounter: performance anxiety.

Performance anxiety or ‘stage fright’, connected to high perfectionism and a low self-esteem is found a lot. The majority of the musicians are very perfectionist, stating that they work extremely hard and that it is never ‘good enough’. Admitting to having performance anxiety is still often a taboo (Wynn Parry 2004). The example of John, principal French horn player in a world-famous orchestra, is illuminating. He suffered a major break-down caused by a collapse through stage fright which had been building up for years and he consequently developed strong coping strategies. His narrative is a core story of a critical incident which led to important transformative learning.

(...) at the beginning of this season it went wrong. I (...) had to play a solo, and for three seconds I had a severe black out. No sound whatsoever came from my instrument. Over and done with. I thought ‘this is it’. I felt the moment arriving, but the moment it actually happened I confronted myself, so to speak. Those few seconds made me decide that I would stop playing, but not before I had done everything I could to find out what had happened and whether I could cope with it. I had played very well for the last few years, but also I had often left the artist foyer with a feeling like, ‘thank God, I have survived it again’.

John’s coping strategy was quite powerful. He knew that, like him, other musicians suffered from stage fright, although it was never openly discussed. He took on leadership by attitude and example by taking a ‘risk’, which was being open with the management of the orchestra and then the second one, which was discussing his

problem openly with his colleagues and peers, in order to help and empower each other as a group.

A lot of transformative learning emerged through doing this. John can, while still being in the process himself, reflect on his stage fright and transform it into something useful for his students. This is the ultimate definition of transformative learning, which in the end leads to learning how to take effective social action.

Also Mike suffered from stage fright. Mike already had to cope with nerves when he was a child. He now feels that his stage fright developed because he had to fight against himself as he had an ideal about how the music should sound. A great feeling of perfectionism underpinned this. Mike learned to cope with it and also feels that the fact he gets older helps, making reflexive discoveries:

(...) there is also the problem that when you are very, very nervous, sometimes you are basically nervous about the view that you have of yourself. And the audience is this mirror, so you don't want to see yourself. So you don't accept something in yourself. Now I feel a little better, because I have nothing to lose. I have the age I have and I play. And okay, one evening is a little less good, another is better. It is human and everything is relative. By now I've learned to accept some shortcomings. And I can have great moments. I am not talking about great music, but about great moments as a person. What I mean is feeling really fulfilled.

The fact that 'it is human and relative' is (now) recognized by John as well. Mike's great moments as a person, despite shortcomings, echo in a similar statement of John:

I feel privileged that I am able to share with other people what is close to my heart, and that I am allowed to do it the way I do, including my shortcomings.

Interestingly, both musicians use a (perhaps unconscious) coping strategy here which is highly transformative. They let go of the idea of connecting their own self-

identity to perceived 'failure' or 'non failure', but place the communication through music at the core. Mike acknowledges the fact that stage fright somehow gets more resolved once one gets older, letting go of the direct relationship with self-esteem and high perfectionism. We can certainly regard this as transformative learning, giving the learner new perspectives to build into his life.

Both Mike and John had to start rethinking their musicianship after their crises on a deeper level. John showed generic leadership, consisting of leading by example and attitude by creating a change through his own reflexive intervention in the institution he was part of, in his case the orchestra. He realised how he could have built this continuously growing performance anxiety and what he needed. It was most probably his age, the life phase he was in, which made him aware and which also enabled him to be reflective and reflexive about it.

However, there was another reason why John could feel empowered to act as he did. In order to understand this it is relevant to draw on the concept of a *community of practice* (Wenger 1998). Addressing the (tacit) understanding and trust in the orchestra, John says:

(As a musician in this orchestra) you learn to develop antennae that receive everything and transmit this to you so that you can respond. All these antennae in our orchestra are directed towards each other. (...) We have a tremendous feeling of musical empathy (...) Everyone recognises each other's colour and sound, everyone listens to each other's sound (...) Listening to each other's sound is the secret of everything. You catch someone's sound and the sound catches you.

Various meanings can be explored in John's narrative, in the first place the artistic community of practice of him and his colleagues, where there is apparently a deep tacit (an implicit) understanding between the musicians and a sense of belonging, but we see also the metaphor of colour and sound which stands for the shared identity of this community. Tacit understanding in a group presupposes trust and it is not

surprising that upon John's mental break-down this trust showed itself. John took up leadership by example by starting to cope with his stage fright through breaking a taboo within a community of colleagues in the orchestra who suffered from the same.

When we feed these stories back to the notion of *biographical learning*, we can say that numerous examples of such transformative learning were found throughout all career and age categories, and they were connected to critical incidents in musicians' life histories and/or educational interventions which were initiated by the musicians themselves or others, mostly parents.

Transformative learning during the life span is clearly highly influential in musicians' career development. It can be found in John's biography, who through his life-experience turned into a leader who leads through example in a community of practice (Wenger 1998), where musicians can act as their own change agents.

Musicians' learning styles

Now we will have a closer look at musicians' learning styles. When we go back to our two musicians and look deeper into their biography, we can acquire more insight into how and why their coping strategies emerged and how this is connected to their learning styles.

Let us as an example listen to John's narrative about his first encounter with music:

When I was eight years old my father all of a sudden put a bugle in my hands and took me to the wind band. Actually I could hardly read music. The librarian of the band was handing out a march; he saw me sitting there and gave me a second bugle part. There I was! Then my neighbour William whispered to me: 'You come and sit with me; I'll teach you those notes'. That's how it went. My siblings played in the same band.

John's biography shows a direct relationship between this story about his childhood and his feeling of 'belonging' in the symphony orchestra as an adult, which empowered him to consider his colleagues as trusted peers (people you learn with and from). Also Mike relates about the importance of performing with trusted peers, he says for instance about making chamber music that "I would never walk on the stage with three or four people I don't know to play Beethoven."

We can argue that within the area of *artistic leadership*, the core is constituted by tacit understanding in the context of artistic laboratories (a chamber group for example), which requires a lot of trust amongst musicians. This perception of being in a community of trusted peers taps into another level of the biographies of Mike and John, which is their *informal learning*. The informal music-making throughout childhood had a strong impact for both musicians. Mike played in ensembles with other young children coached by a much loved teacher, and John had huge impressions playing in the village brass orchestra with his family.

Within the biographical research it shows clearly in many of the life stories that three interdependent incentives appear fundamental to the process of shaping musicians' self-identity: the first *being singing and informal music-making throughout childhood*, the second *improvisation*, and the third is *engagement in high quality performance*. These processes seem to lead to transformative learning in music throughout life.

Informal learning is clearly a very important mode of learning in music, in childhood as well as later in life. A sustained opportunity for informal learning and improvisation brings musicians in a situation where dependence of each other and thus trust and overcoming one's feelings of vulnerability are required. It can lead to musicians' feelings of empowerment for being expressive and thus to the development of more positive self-esteem, enabling musicians to develop modes of artistic leadership which match their self-identity.

Another important aspect of musicians' informal learning is *peer learning*, taking place in a setting of trust among friends. Musicians learn in a reflexive way, by

playing together and improvising, but also by listening, observing and having conversations.

In the biographies strong informal learning processes were observed within formal settings, sometimes within non-formal contexts. Learning which takes shape in this way strengthens musicians' feeling of ownership of their learning as well as their sense of belonging. Opportunities for learning by doing, or experiential learning in formal settings, especially in the conservatoire, were often created through educational interventions by the musicians themselves.

Musicians' artistic learning also happens in a highly informal way, though, especially in the case of classical musicians, underpinned by formal, knowledge-based learning. This goes for musicians of all ages.

Learning environment

We now get to the third area of knowledge and understanding which emerged and which is important to enable musicians' leadership and lifelong learning and that is the learning environment and the learning culture in the institution.

What do they need? In short we can say that where musicians encountered an adaptive learning environment in the conservatoire which gave them space for their own artistic laboratories where they could develop their (professional) identities, they then functioned in the best way. This included having supportive, knowledgeable and coaching teachers. Teachers were nearly always very important for the musicians; both positive and negative experiences had a strong and long-lasting effect on the musicians.

I will share with you a few more observations and then I will come to my conclusions and closing remarks.

We read more than once in the biographies that there was (and often still is) a considerable hierarchical thinking in the conservatoires about the music profession, where the profession of teaching is lowest on the ladder. In short it comes down to:

teaching is something for failing performers. But also I heard: a professional choir singer is a failing soloist, and: an orchestral musician is a failing chamber musician. This is a kind of hierarchy that was sadly often imposed by teachers on their students. This hierarchical thinking even extends to musicians' perceptions of their *identity*.

One of the music educators said during the interview that she does not perceive herself as a musician. I actually heard her say that she does not *dare* to perceive herself as a musician, because her whole story was basically about identity: she related about the struggle she had with a low self-esteem during adolescence, about her huge motivation for teaching music, and although at some point she was successful as a music teacher she said: I don't perceive myself as a musician. It was a fact that during her studies in the conservatoire all her existing lack of confidence had hugely increased due to the hierarchical thinking in her environment which impinged upon her awakening professional identity.

However, here is some good news: the biographies of John, Mike and some others (interestingly often from the category of soloists!) strengthen the importance of good teaching and the notion of teaching as a multi-layered profession. They show strong interrelationships between performance and teaching, how these two strengthen each other, feed into each other and inform each other, leading to important insights into what we might term educational leadership, going beyond mere teaching, e.g. including mentoring. We shouldn't forget how much John shares now with his students about his battle against performance anxiety and what this brings to them!

In addition it is striking that both the interest in teaching and awareness of the need of one's entrepreneurship came in general at a later stage in the process of musicians' development. This is partly due to values conservatoires gave to this (in particular in the case of teaching), *and* to the fact that the conservatoires they were in only paid attention to entrepreneurship (if any) in a marginal way.

But that is not the whole story. It showed more than once that *by nature* musicians feel themselves performers; performing is at the basis of their intrinsic motivation

and identity. So: conservatoires may have to start from *that* point of departure in their teaching and learning in their laboratories, and focus at some point in the educational process on teaching and entrepreneurship in an integrated and relevant (read: experiential) way, informed by *artistic* values. Only *then* can this have an impact on musicians' sense of identity. We read this (sometimes between the lines) in a number of biographies. Also an interesting fact is that 50 % of the musicians already started their career during studies. This could make us think as well!

Conclusions: implementation of a conceptual framework of lifelong learning in music

Concluding, I would like to share with you some thoughts about the implementation of the conceptual framework for lifelong learning in music as we can perceive it from the evidence we find in the biographies. It would include:

- an artistic, generic and educational laboratory whose challenging learning environment reflects the workplace, encompassing informal learning in non-formal learning contexts, and with a strong commitment to quality and knowledgeability. The environment is non-judgemental, leading to increased self-confidence of the student;
- a culture in which ideas can be transformed entrepreneurially and where the concept of leadership in a variety of contexts is valued and woven organically into the curriculum;
- increased personal development emerging from an awareness of one's identity as a musician, fostered by self-exploration and self-management;
- continuing professional development integrated into all aspects of conservatoire life.

And then educational interventions which could be included:

- To give improvisation a fundamental role in music education and moreover use it as a strategy for preventing and overcoming performance anxiety, which is often caused by a low self-esteem;
- To create space for students' own interventions and leadership during higher music education in relation to building their future career;
- To listen and respond to former students, in order to learn for curriculum development.

And this last bit is, I think the most important, I will therefore finish with a quote from one of the musicians I interviewed, who runs a department in a conservatoire in the UK. He says:

The real chats with students in conservatoires always happen too late, when students are nearly leaving.

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