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Music and Arts Schools

Extra-curricular Music Education: A Comparative Study

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Music and arts schools – Extra-curricular music education in Sweden

A comparative study

Marja Heimonen

Preface

Music educators may often be unaware of practices that exist outside their own regions and countries. Comparative studies of music education, such as the present one, can bring light, then, alternative practices that can be of interest and benefit beyond their original settings. In some countries – North America, for example – instrumental and vocal lessons and ensembles of various kinds are typically offered by the curriculum of the comprehensive and secondary school, or as extra-curricular activities connected with and located in the school and under the direction of the school's music teachers. This may be supplemented by private studio instruction offered by individual teachers or in “music stores” that sell instruments and music, but also provide some lessons.

In many countries – throughout most of Europe, for example – there are two more or less distinct strands to music education. On one hand, “general” or “classroom” music is taught to children and adolescents as a part of the general education offered by comprehensive and secondary schools. Alongside this general music education, instrumental and vocal lessons and ensembles are offered by independent music and arts schools or other institutions, as well as by music services and private teachers. In Finland, for example, such independent music schools are governed by law (Basic Arts Education Act 633/98) and a national curriculum framework issued by the National Board of



Education.¹

The present study focuses on music education for children and adolescents offered by music and arts schools receiving public financial support (from the municipality or the

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state) and that are “independent” of the comprehensive and secondary school. For these purposes, then, “extra-curricular” music education will be understood as “voluntary” instruction pursued mainly outside of the curriculum of the comprehensive or secondary school. Sweden was chosen because of the several similarities it has with Finland. Both countries are so-called Nordic “welfare societies”, and have the same kinds of educational and cultural policies. However, the Swedish and Finnish systems of music and arts schools are quite different.

Certain aspects related to music education are analysed in the light of two general principles: the right to an education, and the right for freedom in education. The intention is not to solve all the questions addressed in this study, but rather to describe the educational and legal issues in their present form, and, in the process, to raise certain philosophical questions that may well be relevant for other countries and formal systems of music education. In particular:

1. How do the principles “the right to an education, and the right for freedom in education” function in extra-curricular music education for children and adolescents?
2. What kind of regulative model would best promote the aims of extra-curricular music education for children and adolescents?

A partially open and flexible regulative model of extra-curricular music education for children and adolescents is supported. A balance between positive and negative freedom is the aim of this regulative model; in other words, the model secures the financial resources, but at the same time leaves space for autonomy and flexibility. It makes holistic aims in music education possible. These aims are similar to the governing principle of the “best interests of the child”, which is the most important legal principle in all action concerning children in Finland. Furthermore, this principle, which is formulated in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, has been ratified over almost the entire world. The working of this principle in practice is studied in the context of a municipal arts school (*kulturskola*) in Sweden that offers extra-curricular education in music and other arts subjects for children and adolescents.

The music school

The term “music school” is commonly used in almost all European countries. No binding international commitments have been laid down regarding the minimum requirements that a school entitled “music school” should fulfil; however, there are some exceptions.²

Membership in a national music association affiliated with the European Union of Music Schools (EMU) entails certain prerequisites, for example concerning the subjects offered as well as the qualifications of teachers.. In this way national associations may try to distance *their* “music schools” from other, often commercial enterprises, which frequently also adopt the name 'music school' (EMU 1995, 36). This kind of national association has been established fairly recently in Sweden.³ However, in England there is no association that would qualify for membership in the EMU. The national associations of music schools in Germany and Finland (VdM and SML, respectively) are members of the EMU.

In Sweden, several municipal “music schools” have changed their names to “arts schools” (*kulturskola*), also translated as “cultural schools”. Furthermore, the translation of the Finnish term *musiikkioppilaitos* into English is complex; in fact, it also has been translated as “music institute”. However, “music school” has been declared to be the translation that best represents the nature of music education offered by these Finnish schools when the term is used for international and comparative issues.⁴

Comparative law research: Looking for the soul of the laws

According to Legrand, the fundamental nature of comparative law research is expressed in the words of Montesquieu: “It is not the body of the laws I am looking for, but their soul” (Legrand 1996, 81). Comparative research should therefore not merely concentrate on legislation and the legal norms of different countries; the surrounding social context, including the cultural, historical, administrative, political, and ideological factors of the research subject, should also be taken into account. According to Legrand, studies concerning the nature of knowing and of observation conducted in other fields,

for instance in social anthropology and psychology, are of relevance to cross-cultural research in comparative law. The researcher should study the *nature* rather than the *structure* of the law. In other words, the focus should not be on “law as rules” in the form of legal texts and regulations, but on “law as culture”. This means that the hidden ideologies behind the legislation should also be taken into account (Legrand 1995, 272; Legrand 1996, 56; Sutela 2001, 76).

In this study, law as culture is more important than law as rules due to the fact that in some countries, such as in Sweden, there are no acts governing music education offered by music and culture schools. In addition, when the law governing music and music education is studied, confining oneself only to the very surface of the law would not provide an accurate picture of the research subject. On the other hand, “law as culture” is such a wide expression that its meaning has to be clarified. The two principles concerning law and music education – the right to music education and freedom in music education – cited earlier are closely connected to the related principle addressing the best interests of the child, which is stated to be the most important legal principle in matters affecting children, and could be regarded as belonging to the surface of the law; in other words, “law as rules”. Yet, it is also involved with “law as culture”; in other words, the “deeper” levels.⁵

One of the aims of comparative research is to acquire knowledge of foreign legal systems; therefore, the structure of the music-school system and the law of different countries are explored. These may be used as examples, for instance, if recommendations are made to develop the legislation of the home country of the researcher (Sutela 2001, 77).⁶ In this study the aim of the comparative component is to shed light on the Finnish system of music schools. Exploring countries with different backgrounds offers a new perspective on the positive as well as the problematic factors of regulation governing music schools in Finland and, possibly, music education elsewhere.

Functionality is said to be the basic methodological principle of comparative law (Zweigert & Kötz 1998, 34). The theoretical and methodological perspectives of the present approach are thus also functional; in other words, the main question is how a

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particular problem has been solved in different countries. The approach is systematic; music schools are explored from the outside, the backgrounds of the institutions as well as their regulation (including, for instance, legislation and other official documents) are described first, then certain elements involving the aforementioned principles are compared.

The factors according to which legal systems are explored and compared with each other have raised several questions among legal scholars. Some argue that the focus should not be on historical development, legal content, and observable techniques concerning the rules of law, but rather on whether countries have the same legal culture; in other words whether the citizens' attitudes to law and their expectations of it resemble each other.⁷ Furthermore, they argue that the criterion for comparing and grouping should be the "style" of the legal systems. "Style" as a concept originates in the literary and fine arts, including music, and is also used in law. Factors corresponding to different "legal styles" are numerous, but not all of them are important or essential as differentiating qualities. Yet, there is no final proof of what is regarded as important and essential by a scholar; the scholar makes his or her own judgements concerning how (and how many) styles are identified. However, the following factors have been identified as crucial for a style of legal system or legal family):



1. Historical background and development determine the style of most legal systems. One example is the development of the common law that has, for instance, been described as "the law of the common people of England" (Slapper & Kelly 1999, 3).
2. The distinctive modes of legal thinking. For instance, enacted statute law consisting of abstract norms is used in continental European legal systems, whereas common law is case-centred; it has gradually developed from decision to decision. In short, the English improvise whereas the Continentals draw up rules and systemise them.
3. Distinctive legal institutions (such as trust in common law) lend a characteristic style to a legal system.

4. Sources of law and the methods of interpreting them mark the style of legal systems.

5. The style can be marked by an ideology (political or religious). (Zweigert & Kötz 1998, 68–72)

In conclusion, all classifications have a utility and function depending on the perspective chosen by the researcher and the aspects most interesting to him or her. Furthermore, a detailed method for a comparative study cannot be laid down in advance; a method may be taken as a hypothesis, but it is followed through only by gradual trial and error (Zweigert & Kötz 1998, 33, 73).

In this study, the criteria for different legal styles are used as a means to explore extra-curricular music education for children and adolescents in Sweden and Finland. The historical background is explored, as are the distinctive modes of legal as well as cultural and educational thinking. For instance, enacted law governing music schools is used in Finland but not in Sweden. A systematic network of music schools has been established in Finland while no formal decision has been made to establish a network of music schools in Sweden – although, there is a municipal music or arts school in almost every Swedish municipality. The style of the Finnish system is marked by the way in which legal and other regulations (including curricula) are interpreted. The socio-political ideology behind the educational policies in various countries is also explored, since educational aims – as well as public financing of music education – are affected by such factors.

Comparative music-education research

Studying aspects of music education in different countries helps the researcher to reflect and understand such education in his or her home country better. However, comparative music education as a field of research is also valuable in its own right. At least the following major contributions have been made to this field. In the 1960s Bereday stressed the importance of the systematic collection of data, interpretation, and juxtaposition leading to comparison, as well as the need to acquire experience in the

foreign culture under investigation (Bereday 1964). Eckstein and Noah favored quantitative methods in the late 1960s, for instance, since they argued that objectivity in comparison could be reached through minimising cultural bias (Eckstein and Noah 1969; Tate 2001, 225–227). However, other researchers were critical of approaches emphasising quantitative methods, since statistical methods lose the critical perspective that is linked to the cultural background of the researcher. Holmes argued in the 1980s that the problem-solving approach of Dewey could be applied in comparative research (Holmes 1981).⁸

Since the early 1980s, the methodological debate has shifted towards the acceptance of approaches of a broader character. In other words, it is unlikely that there is one ideal way to conduct comparative research. The growing interest in other research traditions, such as anthropology and ethnology, has also led to the development of alternative approaches. The purpose of the research is crucial when the method is chosen; a variety of methods may even be used in one study (Tate 2001, 226).

Kemp and Lephed provide a model or framework for the classification of international music education that can be applied either to single-system or comparative studies. Global statements, as well as distinctions between systemic and non-systemic cultural transmission, are included in this framework. *Global statements* are studies that address issues related to music education that are of relevance to an international audience (for instance, philosophical issues such as music as a universal language – or more often nowadays, musics as different practices).⁹ *Systemic studies* focus on formal systems of music education that exist within national systems (“comprehensive schools”), whereas *non-systemic studies* focus on music education that does not involve formal instruction in schools. Of course, both of these systems can also be studied, for instance in terms of the relationship between systemic and non-systemic instrumental instruction in school and out of school. Systemic education research is divided into the “overview” and the “thematic” in a national context. These studies are either single-system or comparative studies, but in practice most of them have been single-system studies including only informal comparisons. Unlike comprehensive overviews, smaller studies

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may focus on particular themes (or they may include brief overviews) (Kemp & Lepherd 1992, 775–786; Tate 2001, 228–229). According to Lepherd, thematic comparisons may cover assessment procedures in different music conservatories. National systems may also be the focus for comparison.

Holmes (1981) provides one conceptual framework for comparative research. According to him, one of the aspects to be studied concerns the *aims* of education – understood in terms of constitutions, legislation, curricula, and professional associations. Aims have been divided into child-centred, society-centred, and subject-centred, and the comparative interest is in the degree to which they are stressed in various countries. Another category to be explored is administration, especially the relationship between the national, provincial, and local levels. The financing of education (for instance, government provisions), the organisation of music education, curricula, and teacher education are also worthy of study. In conjunction with the aforementioned model, the comparative method developed by Bereday is useful when national systems are in focus. According to Bereday, national systems have to be described and interpreted (for instance, according to the model of Holmes). Juxtaposition and preliminary comparison ending in detailed comparison then follow (Bereday 1964; Lepherd 1992, 33–39; Kemp & Lepherd 1992, 777–778).

The approach of this study embraces both comparative law and comparative music-education research. The framework of Kemp and Lepherd (1992) is applied, and adapted to the research questions. Finnish music schools having law-based state support are part of the formal education system (although studying there is voluntary). In other countries – such as in Sweden – such schools do not necessarily belong to the formal education system, although they may have considerable collaboration with the official schools (even more than in Finland). Finnish music schools are educational institutions that resemble official schools to some extent. Thus the approach of this study is characterised as systemic and thematic (focusing on two principles: the right to education and to freedom in education), and also includes a brief overview of the music-education systems. In addition, Holmes' framework is used and adapted when different music-

school systems (including, educational aims, administration, finance, structure and organisation) are explored.


Challenges in comparative research

One of the basic problems in comparative research (regarding both law and music education) is the question of what is comparable. Satori refers to apples and pears; in some respects they are comparable (fruits), but in other respects they are not (shape). According to Satori, only entities that share similarities as well as differences (although not those that are too great) can be compared with each other. Careful classification is an effective instrument for differentiating what is similar and what is different (Satori 1994; Lephherd 1992, 41).

The political use of comparisons of educational achievement is significant, although not as common in music education as in other subjects, such as mathematics, reading, and writing. Therefore, researchers should minimise the tendency to oversimplify and make inappropriate generalisations in comparative studies (Tate 2001, 231).

The cultural background of the researcher may limit the objective study of other cultures. Therefore the values of the researcher should be made explicit in order to avoid ethnocentric bias in the interpretation of the findings. Another related issue is the extent to which educational practices in one country may be “borrowed” and implemented in another. Adaptation is necessary for cultural borrowing and transplantation (Tate 2001, 232; Lephherd 1992, 42).

The use and meaning of language need to be carefully considered in comparative research (as well as in other fields of research) since some terms can be difficult or even impossible to translate because they do not exist or have different meanings in the countries that are being compared. Comparisons may also be problematic due to differences in the structure and organisation of schools (Lephherd 1992, 41–42; Tate 2001).

 One step in the process in comparative research is to build a system, preferably a very loose but a coherent one.¹⁰ As mentioned earlier in connection with comparative

music education, successful cultural borrowing requires adaptation. The same point could be made when a researcher is choosing a method or a perspective. This study applies the frameworks or models developed by Kemp, Lephherd, and Holmes, which are nevertheless adapted to the research questions. However, as mentioned earlier, a method can only be taken as a hypothesis. Whether it is suitable or not to a particular approach must be discovered by gradual trial and error.

Swedish Arts Schools: Background – Voluntary music activities and creating a welfare state: *Folkhemmet*

Music education has been offered in municipal music schools in Sweden since the 1940s. It was provided in about 50 municipalities in the 1950s, and has gradually expanded to nearly every municipality. Municipal music and arts schools (*kommunala musik- och kulturskolor*) became the “general arena for instrumental teaching” in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1980s, a music school existed in 282 of the 284 municipalities (Finansdepartementet 1999, 129; Stålhammar 1995, 34, 261; Graneheim 1994, 4; Den kommunala musikskolan 1976, 10; Gustafsson 2000, 202).¹¹

There are various reasons for the growth of municipal music schools in Sweden: the main idea has been to create an opportunity to learn to play an instrument or to sing regardless of the social and economic background of the child.¹² In line with the growth of the nine-year comprehensive-school curriculum (which was instituted in 1961), local authorities felt the need to organise the teaching of instrumental music. The “popular education movement”, (i.e., the attempt to strengthen the musical life of the municipality), and the involvement of enthusiastic individuals have also influenced the increase in the number of these schools. No special statement on establishing a network of municipal music schools has been made by the state authorities. Voluntary musical activities have been the basis for these schools in most municipalities (Persson 1998, 1–3; Stålhammar 1995, 260–261; Gustafsson 2000, 203).

In the 1960s (during the time of a lively popular education movement in

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Sweden),¹³ different kinds of cultural projects were granted considerable financial resources. This continued in the 1970s; yet, the concept of culture as a basis for these investments widened. The statement in which eight goals in the field of cultural policy were formulated by the Parliament has been considered of great importance. According to this Statement (SOU 1976:33, 50–52), cultural policy should:

- Promote the right to free expression and create factual preconditions for the realization of this right;
- Create opportunities for creative activities of people as well as promote contacts between them;
- Counterbalance negative impacts of commercialism in the field of culture;
- Promote the decentralization of activities and decision making in the field of culture;
- Take account to the needs and experiences of existing groups;
- Enable artistic and cultural renewal;
- Secure the maintenance of earlier culture as well as keeping it alive;
- Promote the exchange of cultural experiences and ideas both nationally and internationally.

In line with these eight goals, the Association of Swedish Municipalities (*Svenska Kommunförbundet*) published *Den kommunala musikskolan* (The municipal music school) in 1976. This book includes information about the cultural ambitions the Association thought should be promoted. This volume is advisory rather than legislative, but the objectives and activities of music schools are close to the stated aims of education in comprehensive and upper-secondary school as formulated in the Education Act (*Skollagen* §1). On the other hand, local autonomy was also to be promoted (*Den kommunala musikskolan* 1976, 3–4, 15). The economic development of municipalities was not as positive as the local governments had anticipated, and fewer duties for music schools were set out in the second edition of this volume (*Den kommunala musikskolan: en resurs i kulturlivet* 1984).

Another publication of great importance with regard to the development of Swedish

cultural policy was *Forskning om kultur: Rapport från en arbetsgrupp inom HSFR* (1984) (Research of culture: the report of a working group within the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, *HSFR*). The concept of “culture” was divided for the first time into aesthetic and anthropological culture. A culture of active people was regarded as better than one of passive people, and the old expert-driven culture was criticised because it was not considered the best for promoting citizens. In other words, this report reflected the left-wing climate of the 1970s (*Forskning om kultur* 1984).

After the Second World War, Swedish pedagogical discussion was closely linked to *Folkhemsbygget*, the building of the welfare state. The municipal music school was introduced at this time. A close relationship between politics and pedagogy existed during the time both the municipal music school and the curriculum for the comprehensive school were being established. This cultural policy changed in the 1990s: the comprehensive school and the upper-secondary school were brought under municipal ownership in 1992, and after a few years the “free school” was introduced. At the same time, music schools suffered from economic depression. However, these schools were “saved” by the activity of people at the local level. The concept of the “arts school” (*kulturskola*) was introduced at this time (Persson 2001, 331–32, 373). A radical democratic perspective arose when Swedish cultural policy was analysed in the late 1990s. Promoting the right to free expression and creating opportunities for exercising this right, as well as supporting active participation, were mentioned as aims in official documents (Löfberg 2000, 22–25).

Swedish local self-government: Different kinds of organisations and no special legislation

The concept of the municipal music school (*kommunal musikskola*) refers to different kinds of organisations: joint stock companies (for instance, in Solna, owned by the municipality), associations, music and dance schools, and arts schools. In all of these cases the teaching costs are mainly financed by municipal tax revenue. According to the statistics provided by the European Union of Music Schools, Swedish music schools have



been financed up to 90–92% by public subsidies (EMU 1995, 110, 236; Persson 1998, 4).¹⁴



There is no special legislation governing music schools in Sweden.¹⁵ The Local Government Act (*Kommunallagen*) refers to municipal music schools, but only a few



paragraphs affect these schools, and then only indirectly.¹⁶ Yet, the principle of equality – as well as other legal principles – is also applied to municipal music schools (Persson 1998, 4).

The activities of municipal music schools are not directed or controlled by national regulatory instruments. Furthermore, no national statement has ever been made in regard to the establishment of these schools. Municipal documents may regulate them, but the effect of these documents on the activities of music schools is not invasive. The reason for this kind of regulation (which differs significantly from the formal control of general education) may be the fact that music schools have developed from private as well as municipal activities and music circles; in other words, from voluntary musical activities. Furthermore, the aforementioned local traditions varied in different municipalities (Gustafsson 2000, 202; Stålhammar 1995, 261; Den kommunala musikskolan 1976, 10).

A lively discussion concerning the need for a special Act for music and arts schools took place in several Swedish newspapers throughout the 1990s, when financial support for these schools was reduced in several municipalities. An act covering music schools was passed in Denmark in 1991, and Norwegian music schools are covered by a special



act of their own.¹⁷ Most writers, refusing to accept the idea of introducing legislation, referred to the strong and long Swedish tradition of local decision-making and local self-government (Hägroth et al. 1999, 7, 35–36). Furthermore, the heads of private arts schools complained that financial support based on legislation would only benefit a limited number of schools, and the competition between private and municipal arts schools would become unfair. One of the fears of passing a new Act was that local politicians might reduce support for municipal arts schools to the minimum level under the law. On the other hand, some believed that a minimum level is better than no



support.¹⁸

During the 1990s, municipalities tended to reduce (or even discontinue) their financial support, especially of activities that were not based on law (such as music education offered at municipal music and arts schools) (Persson 2001, 373). The principle of equality suffered when the schools were obliged to raise their fees (Bergendahl & Claesson 1998; Franzon 2000; Zetterström 1996). The education of future professionals was discussed when class sizes became bigger and queues for municipal music schools became longer; in some municipal music schools children had to wait for three or four years before getting in. Furthermore, no programme for young students especially interested in music and aiming to become professionals is offered in conjunction with professional music education at the university level. The Association of Swedish Music and Arts Schools (SMoK) was in favour of a special Act; in short, they regarded an Act of Parliament as a more secure basis for public support than the promises of local politicians (Abrahamsson 1998; Lundberg 1996; Bojs 1996; Cederberg 1992; Ahlqvist 1992).

No special act for music and arts schools was enacted in Sweden. However, the Swedish idea of democracy is put into practice through local self-government, and passing a music school Act is regarded as a violation of that fundamental principle (Zetterström 1996).

Collaboration and the principle of equality

The principle of equality is the most important principle in cultural and educational policy in Sweden. Therefore, music education provided by municipal music schools has to be offered to every child, although studying at a music school is, of course, voluntary. This principle of offering every child in the municipality the possibility of studying at a music school could be interpreted to mean, for instance, that applicants take a preparatory course for a year, after which the “talented” pupils are selected for the music school. However, the principal idea in the 1960s and 1970s was that music education at these schools should be offered to every one who was interested in music and not only to the

musically talented (Persson 1998, 55, 97; 2001, 265, 377). Thus, no entrance examinations or other exams are normally set at these schools (Gustafsson 2000, 209–210).¹⁹

Collaboration between music schools and compulsory (as well as upper-secondary) schools has been very common in Sweden,²⁰ often in the form of paid services offered by music schools (EMU 1995, 110).²¹ According to the Curriculum for the Comprehensive School (*Lgr 69*),²² in certain cases pupils were allowed to attend music-school lessons for 20 minutes per week during comprehensive school hours. This right to attend a music school during school hours was not included in the next Curriculum, but the right of pupils to receive a certain number of lessons in different subjects was secured. Music lessons for children at comprehensive schools are often given both by music-school and classroom teachers (working collaboratively). Collaboration is also common regarding school orchestras and choirs, which are often conducted by teachers from the music schools. In addition, music schools organise concerts for schools (Persson 1998, 70; Stålhammar 1995, 8, 118–130).

Music schools also collaborate with local orchestras. For instance, teachers in music schools who perform with an orchestra have been allowed (since 1969) to reduce their teaching load. In addition, local orchestras have organised concerts for pupils. They have also given concerts together with music-school pupils. Conductors of student orchestras at music schools sometimes also conduct local choirs or orchestras. These conductors help the local orchestras attract new members and, at the same time, offer an opportunity for the pupils to continue their musical activities after studying at the music school (Persson 1998, 60–64).

One of the aims of this kind of collaboration (called “music everywhere”) has been to give the municipality value for its money. Concerts and instrumental lessons may sometimes be given free of charge to schools, companies, and churches, for example. One of the principal aims has been to make the activities at the music school more visible, because there is always the danger that local authorities will reduce their subsidy.

According to the ideology of the Social Democratic Party, cultural activities should be within reach of everyone. Therefore, concerts have been arranged at workplaces and shopping centres, and music-school students and teachers have even performed in local prisons (Persson 1998, 63–79; 2001, 315).²³

Aims and curricula: Local decision making

According to Stålhammar, the curricula for general education in Sweden (for example in comprehensive schools) are the results of political compromises. Therefore, the contents as well as the aims of education are not neutral. On the contrary, they are connected to political issues (Stålhammar 1995, 35).

Municipal music schools are not directly regulated by the state. They may develop their own curricula without control from outside authorities. Yet, local authorities and political representatives may affect the content of education by regulating financial support from the municipality. The threat of reduced subsidies affects the aims and activities in the music schools. Thus, aims are preferably in line with the ideology of the political party that has the majority of representatives in the local government.²⁴ As a result, music school education is connected to local political issues. For instance, both pop and rock music were introduced as subjects when music education offered by music schools was criticised as being directed only to those interested in classical music. In the 1980s several local authorities (the cultural boards) had a special budget for immigrants, resulting in the introduction of multicultural music education (Persson 1998, 70–71).

In short, a municipal music school serves the expectations of the municipality. Pupils learn to play an instrument, as well as sing and dance, and they find new friends at these schools. Some of them prepare for future studies in music.²⁵ The music schools also provide an opportunity for musicians to acquire further income by teaching music. Local authorities regard the municipal music schools means for raising the standard of musical life in the municipality (Persson 1998, 1–44).

The educational aims of the state authorities may sometimes indirectly affect the

music schools. For instance, according to SOU 1972: 26 (*Barnstugeutredningen*), music education influences the development of pre-school-aged children in several ways (SOU 1972: 26, 211–213). The teachers are instrumental in fulfilling the seven aims referred to that can have an effect on child development. Concerts and singing events for small children have been arranged in public libraries, for instance. In addition, musical events organised by music school teachers have been arranged at play-schools, pre-schools, and hospitals, and “babysinging” for parents with their babies has been organised by music schools (Persson 1998, 57–59).

There is a tendency to make subjects other than music – such as dance and theatre – available at music schools. During the 1990s several music schools changed their names to “arts schools” (or “cultural schools”). These schools offer a variety of subjects and collaborate with other schools and institutions (EMU 1995, 112).

The Arts School in Örebro Sweden

Örebro Arts School (*Örebro Kulturskola*) has been in existence since 1957. It was originally mainly a music school called the Municipal School of Music, and was renamed the Örebro Arts School in 1993 (also translated as Örebro Culture School).²⁶ This school is the second biggest arts school in Sweden,²⁷ serving over 8500 pupils each year. The school offers instruction in dance, theatre and drama, arts and design (oil painting, drawing, film, computer arts), music (advanced training and performances), and cultural management.²⁸

Örebro Arts School cooperates with ordinary schools (both primary and secondary), for instance by organising educational programmes for them. The aim is to use art to enhance the general process of learning. In addition, music-education programmes are arranged for young children in nursery schools, as well as for disabled children. The school has projects in several ordinary schools; the aim is to develop these schools into cultural Centres.²⁹

This culture school collaborates with professional orchestras, including the Swedish

Chamber Orchestra, theatres (e.g., local theatre institutions, the Regional Theatre), and museums. It cooperates with several schools and organisations in Latvia, Spain, Lithuania, Finland, Norway, and China. The vision of Hans Skoglund, the former Head of this school, is to offer cultural education to all the 2000 teachers and directors at the various schools in Örebro. The aim is for every school in Örebro to become a cultural school; i.e., that all children should have the opportunity to find their means of artistic expression.³⁰

Örebro Arts School: Forms of regulation

Municipal support was 21.5 million SEK in 2001, although the threat of cutting back the subsidy is always present. In addition, approximately 12 million SEK per year is collected in student fees and from school concerts and projects. The arts school is a voluntary form of educational establishments (*frivillig skolform*); in other words, the municipality is not obliged to finance it.³¹

The arts school itself can mostly decide how to use its resources. Certain duties have been assigned to this one by the municipality, e.g., it has to give one theatre and one music performance every year for the comprehensive school pupils. The costs of these performances are approximately 1,7 million SEK. In addition, the municipality has given special resources for certain projects.³²

There is no National Curriculum. The management at Örebro Arts School expects the instrumental and vocal units to design their own curricula. For instance, the stated aim of the curriculum formulated by the wind unit states is to inspire and direct the work in the unit, and to inform the colleagues (in other units) as well as others about the content of the education. This curriculum is very specific and includes:

1. Visions of a better job, grateful pupils, a musical attitude toward music;
2. General aims, e.g., the pupil should have a sound and a creative attitude to musical activity, artistic practice, and culture;
3. Specific aims, e.g., the pupil should be capable of improvising and composing, and he or she should achieve a good quality of sound with his or her instrument.

In addition, attributes such as the right attitude, autonomy, creativity, and willingness to practice are also mentioned.³³

Education is organised on five levels; the first level is for children of 9 to 10 years and the fifth for 14- to 20-year-old pupils. After this the pupils should be prepared to enter some kind of professional music education. The aims and content of the education are prescribed for all these levels and include one major subject, solfege and theory, practice, matters concerning attitude and autonomy, taking care of instruments, creativity, improvisation, playing in an ensemble, and listening.³⁴

The municipality of Örebro has published a “Vision for Children”, which is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Örebro declaration states:

Every child in Örebro, without exception, has the right to live and develop under circumstances that promote the best interests of the child and, depending on age and maturity, take account of his own will and opinions.³⁵

Örebro Arts School is a municipal authority (“*kommunal myndighet*”) and operates under the Board of Education of the Örebro town council. Therefore, this published Vision is one of the declarations on which the activity of the school is based.³⁶ The importance of equality is stressed when this article is interpreted: studying at the arts school should be a right of every child in Örebro.

[W]e talk about the rights and participation of every child and not only of those whose parents are interested, or who are strong enough to take the initiative themselves.³⁷

The work at this arts school is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 31 of this Convention is especially mentioned:

State Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

A shortened version of this convention, including almost all the articles, is to be found in the Internet-brochure of this school. The concept “child” refers to every person who is under 18 years old (Art. 1). The principle of the best interests of the child is declared to be the most important one: “*barnets bästa skall alltid komma i första rummet*” (Art. 3).

The school does not set examinations or issue diplomas. After a performance visit to Latvia, Skoglund described the “philosophy” of this kind of system:

No, we don't have any examinations or diplomas, which shocked the Latvian listeners -- when they heard the results we have managed to achieve. Well, they're bound to the concept of equality coloured by elitism (“*rätt elitistisk likformighet*”). I watched a short TV programme on the Finnish education of conductors yesterday evening – they think just as we do. Namely to start from the individual and his or her qualities and not to create a norm to be reached by everyone.³⁸

The individual is the starting point; his or her goals and dreams are most important. One of the aims of the education given at the school is to nourish these dreams and keep them alive. In addition, the principle of equality is interpreted so that there is room for everyone and for every kind of dreams.³⁹ The goal is to offer all children and young people the best possible educational opportunity to develop their own cultural expressions and artistic talents. The school aims to provide tangible means for promoting democracy and freedom of speech, diversity and perspective; in other words, the aim is to lay the foundations for a positive journey through life.⁴⁰

Örebro Arts School is said to be a school for the future. Activities are (at least officially) directed by visions that are usually based on the visions and declarations of the municipality. These may be based on international declarations and treaties, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

According to Skoglund, the state does not directly regulate these schools at all. The subsidy and the framework budget (*bidraget / ramen*) are the only regulation of the

municipality. Municipal documents covering aims and visions may influence policy; however, these documents are seen as very general and the school itself is able to determine how they are applied. Even the Association (SMoK) for these schools does not influence the activity of this school.⁴¹



The challenge of this kind of decentralisation where schools decide policy for themselves poses certain concerns, for example, *who* has the right to decide the aims of the education provided– local authorities by financing the school, the Head, or the teachers?. Furthermore, the teachers may even be unaware of the aims and plans of the Head of the school or of the local politicians on the municipal boards. A gap between teachers and pupils and those who make the decisions and plans may exist despite efforts to inspire all members of the organisation to take part in the realisation of the visions.

One of the challenges also relates to possible bias and attitudes of music school teachers. These professionals have years of training, but mainly to become performers, not teachers. The gap between their visions and the reality at a music school may cause conflicts.⁴² For instance, the principle of equality may be interpreted in several different ways. The teachers may not always be willing to emphasise the right of every child to attend a music or arts school. They might prefer to teach selected (“talented”) students instead of giving only 18 minutes personal instruction a week to every child who wants it.



Some final remarks

1. The right of every child. Gustafsson explored the polarity between the Child and the Music in his dissertation on music education in Sweden (including all fields of music education). He asks, “Should music be brought to the child, or should the child be brought to music?” During the 20th century, the emphasis was on the child; in other words, developing the capacities of children was more important than the earlier focus on cultural preferences that were set in advance (Gustafsson 2000, 312). As the former Head of Örebro Arts School stated, the starting point was the child and his or her capacities, not a general norm with standards that everyone should reach. Yet, this child-centred view of education with broad aims (including not only teaching musical skills but also improving

self-confidence and social skills) should also affect higher music education for potential teachers. Otherwise, the official vision and pedagogical reality may never meet in the classroom situation.⁴³



No special legislation has been enacted covering Swedish music and arts schools. A few paragraphs in the Local Government Act covers the aims (and the right to decide them), but even these paragraphs, and indeed the whole law, have been characterised as inconsistent and difficult to interpret and apply. Therefore, culture and tradition – and local politics – have taken over the role of the legal text. This has been regarded as practical and acceptable, yet there is always the danger of the misuse of power (Tivenius 2001). Legal regulations may function as control instruments, but they may also be the means of protecting the weaker party. Teachers at these schools may even consider themselves the “weaker party” compared with local politicians or heads of schools.

In any case, the question of interpretation always remains. For instance, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child may include the right of every child to participate. Furthermore, it may also refer to the principle of the best interests of the child (Art. 3) regarding the right to receive sufficient instruction. If the extent of instrumental teaching at a municipal music or arts school is limited to 18 minutes per week, pupils may be obliged to take private lessons paid for by their families. In other words, the principle of social equality may not work in practice. Of course, special courses for skilled students are offered at most music schools. Nevertheless, the most important part of musical studies may be the instruction need to acquire basic skills. Thus, more private instruction may also be needed for beginners. For instance, Örebro Arts School declares that its aim is to give pupils both “roots and wings”.⁴⁴ Yet, is it possible to teach the pupil musical skills (roots) as well as to nurture his or her own ideas and dreams (wings) if the available time for a particular child is limited to 18 minutes? This child-centred aim may perhaps not be as child-centred as it first sounds.



2. Autonomy. According to Olsson, the term “autonomy” refers to freedom, which is always a relative concept. Institutional activities in music and arts schools thus have to be related to the frames that direct and limit them. The degree of freedom in an institution

cannot be taken out of its historical context. A high degree of autonomy enables an institution, such as a school, to arrange its concerns according to its own internal values and aims; in other words, it is under internal control. On the other hand, strong external direction and control result in a very limited degree of autonomy. For example, according to Hans Skoglund, the former Head of Örebro Arts School, external control is minimal at this school. The state does not control the school at all; the only Association covering such schools has nothing to do with the inner life of the school, and the directive documents of the municipality are loosely worded. The threat of the school's subsidy may be reduced is the only control instrument used by the local government. Generally, the activities as well as the aims of education can only be controlled by financial means, mainly by the local budget (Olsson 1993, 202).⁴⁵

Very limited external control indicates strong internal control. For example, the units of instrumental and vocal teachers formulate the curricula at Örebro Arts School. The detailed curriculum developed by the teachers of the wind unit even aims to control the attitudes of pupils towards music. Thus, external control may give a particular teacher even more freedom in deciding educational aims and methods than the very strong internal control of the faculty unit.⁴⁶

The complexity of the concept of autonomy cannot be explored if only its extent is studied. It is not only formal control and direction, but also strong informal control and direction that are typical of educational institutions. For instance, the background, values, and aims of teachers are important in the teaching of music, as well as in formulating curriculum. Furthermore, the degree of autonomy is always in flux; some educational activities may be given more autonomy, while control increases in another sector. The demands of people – the tension between those who insist on change and those who prefer the status quo – are related to the degree of autonomy. In short, autonomy and freedom of activity at educational institutions are relative: they depend on the context and they have to be related to the boundaries that limit educational activities (Olsson 1993, 202–203).

National Curricula are the regulatory instruments of the aims and contents of music

education at comprehensive schools. Although no special curriculum for all the music schools has been formulated, the national curricula for comprehensive schools sometimes also affect the collaboration between the two. The curricula known as Lgr 62 (curriculum for the Comprehensive School, 1962) and Lgr 69 formed the basis for classroom teaching in music up to 1980. The aesthetic goals of the Lgr 62 have been expressed in terms of “an effort towards understanding”, and in Lgr 69 as “an effort towards involvement and social activity”. According to Lgr 80, the school has to reflect the present, but also have a historical perspective. The Lpo 94 curriculum has a policy rubric of “from school music to music in school”. In short, there is a progression from school singing (before the 1960s) and from school music to music in school.⁴⁷ Music education was built on the interests of children: while earlier curricula stressed singing, listening, and musical theory, the new curricula emphasised music making, improvisation, and composition (Nilsson 2002, 213). Municipal music schools also underwent the same kind of development “from school music to music in school”. Stålhammar found that “after a phase of progressively ordered songs for children and specially arranged pieces of classical music, the music school developed gradually into a part of the pupil’s own world. The music school became a part of the society, which furthermore in the 90s has led to its development from music school to arts school.” Thus, the music education offered at municipal arts schools and comprehensive schools has become closer and closer (Stålhammar 1995, 7, 260–261).

The Swedish term, curriculum (“*läroplan*”) has generally been given the meaning of a directive document regulating the contents, quantity, and distribution of education. On the other hand, the term “curriculum” has a broader meaning in the English language and includes the philosophy as well as the views behind the curriculum content. The fear that direction and control of education is too strict has been common in England (Stålhammar 1995, 63). Yet, even following the significant national educational reform in 1988, the document “Music in the National Curriculum” included more directive and concrete examples than the Swedish curriculum (Lgr 80). In addition, Swanwick aimed to create a theory that would help the formulation of a curriculum. The same development

from school music to music in schools is noticeable in both of these countries, although, the means of reaching the same goal are different. In England there is a tendency to strengthen the control of education, while in Sweden (after Lgr 69) more freedom is allowed and the curricula (*kursplaner*) include fewer concrete directives than before (Stålhammar 1995, 64).

When assessment (i.e., national evaluation) was introduced into Swedish comprehensive schools in the late 1980s, music as a school subject was also evaluated. These results affected the planning of new curricula, although the formulations were left rather open.⁴⁸ The principle of local autonomy is important: no “list” of compositions that ought to be taught is given, and the music teacher can choose folk songs, rock, or Bach. The municipal music schools also offer a similar kind of music education based on playing and singing all kinds of music. This broad view has affected the role and the requirements of music school teachers: particularly since the 1990s, when music schools widened their subjects and activities, even changing their names to cultural and arts schools, the importance of a wide range of capabilities in teachers has been stressed (Heiling 1997, 88–97).

When there is no law, or if there are merely a few legal regulations governing activities – such as in the Local Government Act – other kinds of norms take the place of formal ones. For instance, tradition or political interests may replace the law. The aims of different kinds of interest groups are discussed publicly. For instance, a lively discussion between local politicians and the Head and teachers of an arts school occurred in the local newspapers of Örebro (Tivenius 2001). Yet, this kind of “selling music by words” (giving written arguments for the justification of music and music education in a local community) has also been criticized; words may become more important than sounds when the justification of music education is discussed nowadays (Heiling 1997, 105).

Summary

According to Gustafsson, Swedish municipal music and arts schools are unique in the world; no similar schools with the same kind of background or aims exist in other countries. The principal aim of the municipal music schools in Sweden has never been to

find and select the most talented students or their potential future professionals. On the contrary, a broad range of activities, as well as an attempt to offer music education to as many pupils as possible, has characterised Swedish music schools. There has also been active and intense collaboration between the Swedish music schools and the general educational establishments. However, this cooperation has also caused problems, for example, with regard to the attitudes as well as the education of music-school teachers, for example (Gustafsson 2000, 211; Brändström 1997; Bouij 1998; 1999; Bladh 2002).

One of the main arguments in this study is that music education has an important role to contribute when music is regarded as part of the good life. The aims of the kind of music education in question, then, should be holistic: music education should take a broad view of the way it relates to human experience. Thus, the state is obliged to produce conditions and circumstances for music education, rather than to regulate its content. However, the following question may also be asked: How can we leave the content open, and at the same time provide a structure for music education? This is a question of legislation, especially in Finland. Different legal and financial instruments are analysed in order to show how the law as an instrument for music education could help music educators reach their principal educational aim of promoting music as part of the good life. Certain of the findings may also be of interest and relevance to music educators working under other formal circumstances.

Notes

¹ See Heimonen (2002) concerning music schools in Finland compared with music-education systems in England, Sweden, and Germany.

² For example, the use of the term music school is protected by law in Germany in Brandenburg (BbgMSchulG, section 4), Bavaria and Sachsen-Anhalt (Statistisches Jahrbuch 1999, 10).

³ SMoK, Sveriges Musik och Kulturskoleråd, was founded in 1996 at the annual meeting of the FSMK, föreningen Sveriges Musik och Kulturskolledare (which was founded in 1979 and liquidated in 1997). <http://www.smok.se/eng/ehistorik.htm> (27 April 2001)

⁴ SML, Association of Finnish Music Schools. In Finland these schools are granted state support by law.

⁵ According to Tuori's theory of the multi-layered structure of law, three levels can be defined: (1) the surface level (statutes and other legal regulations, court decisions and legal dogmatic work), (2) the level of legal culture (expert level of legal professionals), and (3) the deep structure of law (the fundamental normative principles) (Tuori 2000; 1997, 432–436). See also Tolonen (2001) and Siltala (2000, 157–158) on the questions when “levels” in law are defined; the “deeper” levels are regarded as particularly problematic.

⁶ C.f. Tate 2001; Lepherd 1992; Kemp & Lepherd (1992) on the problems and dangers of cultural borrowing and the need for adaptation.

⁷ See Legrand 1995; op.cit. Zweigert & Kötz 1998, 67.

⁸ See also Tate 2001, 225-227.

⁹ See Regelski 1996; 2000; Elliott 1995 and the so-called praxial philosophy of music education.

¹⁰ See Lepherd (1992) about the problems if the system is too strict.

¹¹ According to EMU (1995, 237), there are 283 music schools with over 300 000 pupils and almost 6000 teachers in Sweden.

¹² According to Olsson (1993), during the early 70s the general aim of the cultural policy in Sweden was to make the arts more accessible to people. See also SOU 1954: 2.

¹³ See SOU 1968: 15.

¹⁴ C.f. Skoglund 13 Febr. 2001; 8 May 2001.

¹⁵ An Act governing music and culture schools exists in Denmark. In Sweden the possibility to get a same kind of act was discussed in 1998; yet, the result was that no legislation for these schools was enacted.

¹⁶ See Kommunallag (1991:900) 3 kap §§ 9-10, 6 kap. §§ 33-34; Tivenius 2001.

¹⁷ In Finland, the first act governing music schools came into force in 1969.

¹⁸ See "Musiklivet förtvinar" in Svenska Dagbladet (26 Oct. 1996); Bojs 1996.

¹⁹ E.g, everyone is accepted at Örebro Kulturskola, although some courses require passing an entrance examination.

²⁰ Music schools and comprehensive schools co-operate in 95 % of the municipalities (Stålhammar 1995, 8).

²¹ C.f. Skoglund and Tivenius, 8 May 2001.

²² See Läroplanen i grundskolan. Lgr 69 sid 111.

- ²³ The Social Democrats have had some 30 percent of the seats in Parliament since the 1998 election, and have been in office since 1994 (Bogdan 2000, 36). This party has its most important strongholds in the industrial municipalities of central Sweden and in the northern part of the country (Häggroth et al. 1999, 99).
- ²⁴ Interview of Hans Skoglund, 8 May 2001.
- ²⁵ According to Brändström (1997, 18), almost all students at a higher level (aiming to become professional music teachers) have studied and received their basic education at a municipal music school. C.f. Bouij (1998, 348), who states that 78 % of the students in his research had attended a municipal music school. His study focused on the progression of a music student out into professional life (Bouij 1998, 345).
- ²⁶ <http://www.orebro.se/kulturskolan/nyheter/engelskv.html>. (18 Febr. 2001)
- ²⁷ The biggest school is in Stockholm (Skoglund, 13 Febr. 2000), and was established in 1961 (Gustafsson 2000, 206).
- ²⁸ Skoglund (2001): Örebro Culture School -- A Culture School for the Future. Unpublished paper.
- ²⁹ Correspondence with Hans Skoglund, 19 Febr. 2001.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Correspondence with Hans Skoglund, 13 Febr. 2001.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ See Läroplan -96. Blåsenheten vid Örebro Kulturskola, 1-10.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 11-25.
- ³⁵ Örebrovisionen antagen av kommunstyrelsen. December 2000.
- ³⁶ Skoglund, 13 February 2001;
<http://www.orebro.se/kulturskolan/nyheter/engelskv.html> (18 Febr. 2001)
- ³⁷ Skoglund, 19 February 2001. Translated from Swedish by the writer.
- ³⁸ Skoglund, 19 February 2001. Translated from Swedish by the writer.
- ³⁹ In the 1990s the cultural and education policy emphasized the diversity of educational practices.
- ⁴⁰ <http://www.orebo.se/kulturskolan/syheter/engelskv.html>
- ⁴¹ Skoglund, 13 Febr. 2001.
- ⁴² See, e.g., Brändström 1997, 13-15, 18; Bouij 1998; 1999; Bladh 2002.
- ⁴³ See, e.g., Bouij 1998; 1999; Brändström 1997. Bouij states that a brass teacher in a municipal music school, for example, is often responsible for the whole brass family. A

broad view of music and music education is therefore an asset for music teachers (Bouij 1999, 90; 1998).

⁴⁴ This refers to child-centred aims in education.

⁴⁵ Correspondence with Skoglund, 13 and 19 Febr. 2001.

⁴⁶ See Bouij 1998, 238 (the story of “Annika” is an example of strong internal control used by colleagues); Olsson 1993, 202; Läroplan – Blåsenheten i Örebro Kulturskola.

⁴⁷ The new curriculum for secondary education in 1994 (Läroplan för de frivilliga skolformerna 1994 – Lpf 94) also entailed a much greater emphasis on freedom of choice and diversity. The aim was to develop the pupil’s ability to take personal responsibility for his or her studying (Karlsson 2002).

⁴⁸ The control of education has changed: assessment indicates control (management) by results. Aims are no longer stated in plans (kursplaner); they may be determined at the local level. Yet, the problem of evaluating music education (e.g., the “product” or the “process”) remains. (Heiling 1995, 7.)

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