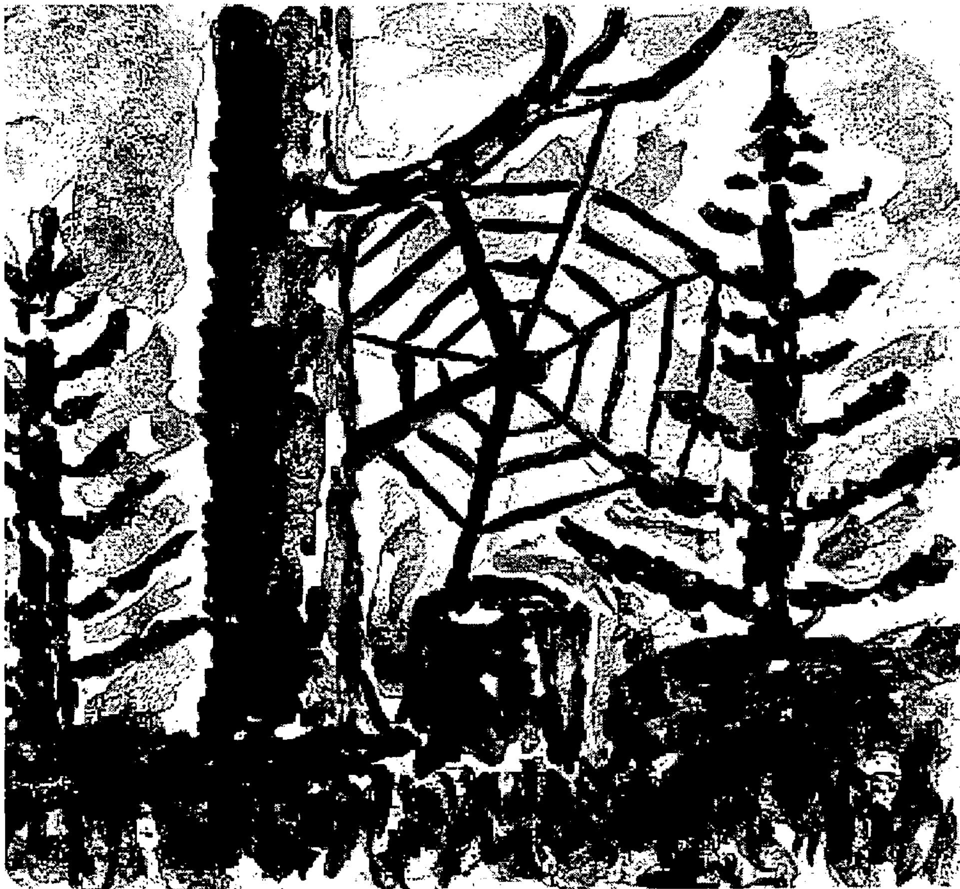
# Webs of Musical Significance

## A study of student-teachers' musical socialisation in Ireland and Sweden

*Maria Westvall*



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# DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: ____________________

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May 7th 2007

# ABSTRACT

A teacher's approach to the teaching of music is greatly coloured by his/her own experience with music. When student-teachers embark on the journey of becoming educators, they already have a variety of previous individual experiences with music, and through participation in their society and culture, they hold assumptions based on social representations of music, musicality and music education within their society.

A person's relationship with music is often multi-faceted, based not only on previous educational experiences, but also on experiences with music within the family, school and wider community. In addition, the status and function of different types of music within these settings can powerfully affect an individual's perspective on music.

The key purpose of this study was to reveal the complexity of student-teachers' relationships with music, and contribute to knowledge on three levels. On one level extend our understanding of how attitudes towards music and in particular opinions and beliefs about musicality and music education come to be held. On another level, reveal the attitudes held by student-teachers and so further inform the teaching undertaken in teacher education. A further purpose was to compare Irish and Swedish student-teachers' experiences of music and music education and in doing so, investigate how different school systems and different cultural contexts influence the student-teachers' opinions and beliefs.

The subject of this study is two groups of intending non-specialist music teachers, one in Ireland and one in Sweden. In order to get a comprehensive understanding and description of the research area, their memories and opinions of music and music education have been collected in a three-part data collection. These three data sets consist of a minor background questionnaire, written accounts and interviews. The researcher, who is from Sweden, has approached the two contexts from an ethnographic perspective by living, researching and working in the two different geographical and cultural settings.

The findings in the study reveal how student-teachers' approaches to music and music education are formed in the interplay between their personal, educational and societal experiences with music and music education. These three components jointly shape the complex web which illustrates the musical socialisation of student-teachers.

**Key words:**
Music education, musical socialisation, stores of experiences, student-teachers, social representations, webs of significance, Ireland – Sweden

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION....i

ABSTRACT....ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS....iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS....v

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES....xiii

CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION....1

Music, music learning and music teaching....1
- Global and local influences....1
- Music education in societies of growing cultural diversity....3
- Approaches to music....4
- Stores of experiences....5
- A social context for student-teachers' musical development....6
- Musical competence and confidence in education....8

Outline of the study....9

CHAPTER 2: TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK....12

Introduction....12

Social representations and common-sense knowledge....12
- Layers of socio-musical representations....15

Socialisation - participation in the social world....16
- Socialisation and enculturation....18
- Musical socialisation....18
- Interacting stores of socio-cultural experiences and emotional experiences....19
- Social recognition of musicality....20

Social formation of opinions and beliefs....20
- Ethnicity, class and recognition....22
- Musical hierarchy and socio-musical stratification....23
- Three perspectives on people's interaction with their world and music within this....23
- A comparative perspective....24
- A relational perspective versus a categorical perspective....27
- An 'in the space between' perspective....29

Summary....31

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW....32

Introduction....32

Various perceptions and common-sense understandings of musicality ..... 32
Musical competence and confidence ..... 35
Various musical competencies ..... 37
Uses and functions of music ..... 37
Music, musicking and music education ..... 40
Societal interest in knowledge ..... 42
Socialisation and identity construction ..... 43
Nature/nurture and the influence of teachers ..... 43
Inclusive agendas and contradictory representations in music education ..... 44
Musical identities and the school environment ..... 46
The family influence on children's constructions of musical identities. ..... 46
Musical roles and identities – doers, knowers and makers ..... 48
Negotiable musical identities ..... 49
Summary ..... 50
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY ..... 52
Introduction ..... 52
Research approach - principles of inquiry ..... 53
Research questions ..... 54
The research group ..... 57
The researcher's perspective ..... 58
Comparative research ..... 58
The data collection ..... 60
Background questionnaire ..... 62
Written accounts ..... 63
Interviews ..... 63
The verification process in the focus groups ..... 64
Data analysis procedure ..... 65
Narrativety ..... 67
The background questionnaire ..... 68
The written accounts ..... 68
The interviews ..... 69
Trustworthiness and limitations of the study ..... 69
Ethical concerns ..... 72
CHAPTER 5: THE RESEARCH CONTEXTS ..... 74
Introduction ..... 74
Ireland and Sweden - a general outline ..... 74

Ireland....74
Sweden....76

The education systems....79
Ireland....79
Primary Education....79
Secondary education....80
Third level education....81
Sweden....81
Pre-school....82
Pre-school Class....82
Compulsory Education....82
Upper Secondary Education....83
Higher education - University and Post-secondary Education....83

Formal and informal music education....84
Ireland....84
Primary level....85
Secondary level....85
Third level....85
Formal private instrumental education....86
Informal music education....87
Opportunities for music within school and community....87
A discussion about music education in Ireland....88
Sweden....90
Pre-schools....91
Formal music education....91
Compulsory music education....91
Higher education in music education and music....93
Municipality music school....95
Informal music education....96
Opportunities for music within school and community....96
A discussion about music education in Sweden....97

CHAPTER 6: THE WRITTEN ACCOUNTS - MEMORIES OF EXPERIENCES WITH MUSIC....105

Introduction....105

Early childhood 0-6 years....107
The Irish group....107
Musical role models in the families....108
Play, entertainment and accompanying activities....109
Access to musical instruments and audio/ visual resources in the homes....110
Traditional music....110
Music in school....111

Early childhood 0-6 years....112
The Swedish group....112
Musical interaction with parents....112
Access to instruments....113
The impact of the radio and of recorded music on tapes and records....114
Copying and improvising songs or dances....115
The church's children's hours....115

Musical experiences from early childhood - a conclusion....117

Middle childhood 7-13 years ... 119

The Irish group ... 119

Instrumental tuition and graded exams ... 120
Influences of traditional music ... 121
Concerts and competitions ... 121
Significant musical others ... 121
Teachers, selection and rejection ... 122
Formal musical teaching and learning ... 123
Perseverance and achievement ... 123
Singing for multiple purposes ... 124
Pop music and informal learning ... 125

Middle childhood 7-13 years ... 125

The Swedish group ... 125

Multiple learning processes ... 126
Musical role models and peer identification ... 127
Media impact ... 128
'The right kind of music' ... 128
Music rehearsals and performances at school ... 129
Music lessons with little sense of impact - boring or unpleasant ... 129
Encounters with musical instruments and performances in the classroom ... 131
Social and personal functions of music in middle childhood ... 132
Choir and Lucia ... 133
The municipality music school ... 134
Musical formation in orchestras ... 135
Music and Christmas ... 136
To be somebody special ... 136

Musical experiences from middle childhood - a conclusion ... 136

Teenage years 14-18 years ... 140

The Irish group ... 140

Music - a school subject among others? ... 141
Musical experiences outside school ... 142
Theoretical and practical aspects of music learning ... 143
Participation in bands, choirs and musicals at schools ... 143
Social aspects of music learning ... 144
Encounters with music education in college ... 145
Musical performances as 'confidence-strengtheners'? ... 146
Having a musical function in the social and societal context ... 146
A broader musical taste ... 146
The music teacher ... 147

Teenage years 14-18 years ... 147

The Swedish group ... 147

Music education in secondary education ... 149
'Real music' in music education ... 150
An agreeable context for music practice ... 150
Specialisations in upper secondary school ... 150
Music education? ... 151
Musical confidence ... 152
Musical autonomy ... 152
Music - a generational issue? ... 154
Music and the individual ... 154
Musical participation - a gender issue? ... 155

Musical experiences from the teenage years - a conclusion ... 156

Key representations of musicality, music practice, music function(s) and value found in the written accounts 160

CHAPTER 7: THE INTERVIEWS - OPINIONS ABOUT MUSIC, MUSIC EDUCATION AND MUSICAL CONTEXTS ..... 162

Introduction ..... 162

1. Perceptions of musicality ..... 163

The Irish group ..... 163

'A musical ear' ..... 164
The family environment ..... 164
Teacher education and its influence on the idea of musicality ..... 164
Musicality and instrumental skills ..... 165
Summary ..... 165

The Swedish group ..... 167

Musicality as a broad concept ..... 167
Motivation ..... 167
Teacher education and its influence on the idea of musicality ..... 168
Musicality, confidence and self-esteem ..... 168
Summary ..... 168

Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden ..... 169

2. Reasons for choosing music as an elective course in teacher education ..... 170

The Irish group ..... 170

Belief in education ..... 171
Music courses to increase the creativity and confidence of the student-teacher ..... 171
An established musical confidence ..... 171
A musical family ..... 171
Teachers as engaging role models / Experiences of school as a musical setting ..... 172
For the sheer enjoyment and a personal interest in music ..... 172
Music for the benefit of children ..... 173
Lack of musical competence in schools - Memories from school ..... 173
Summary ..... 173

The Swedish group ..... 174

Music - a personal interest ..... 175
Accessibility ..... 175
To be able to play a musical instrument ..... 176
Music for the benefit of children – Memories from childhood ..... 176
Lack of musical competence in pre-schools ..... 177
Summary ..... 177

Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden ..... 178

3. Reasons for music education ..... 178

The Irish group ..... 178

Diverse forms of knowledge and expressions ..... 179
Music as a part of people's lives ..... 179
The social bonding and mood altering functions of music ..... 180
Music as an important part of the school environment ..... 180
Summary ..... 181

The Swedish group ..... 182

Cultural heritage and historical aspects ..... 182
Music, existential aspects and social interaction ..... 183
Music as part of human development ..... 183

A balanced curriculum ........ 183
A sense of music being reduced in education ........ 184
Summary ........ 184
Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden ........ 185

4. Definition of good music education ........ 186
The Irish group ........ 186
Imagination, enthusiasm, encouragement adventurousness and creativity ........ 186
The importance of a varied approach to music - the three strands in the curriculum ........ 187
Child- centred music education ........ 187
Summary ........ 188
The Swedish group ........ 188
A good atmosphere and a safe environment ........ 189
Exploration ........ 189
Educational influences from other cultures ........ 190
Participation and creativity ........ 190
Summary ........ 190
Conclusion Ireland / Sweden ........ 191

5. Definition of poor music education ........ 192
The Irish group ........ 192
Detachment ........ 192
Isolation ........ 193
Performance anxiety for teachers ........ 194
Control and anxiety ........ 194
"Just doing the same old thing" ........ 195
Lack of identification with music ........ 195
Summary ........ 195
Approaches, atmosphere, rooms and resources ........ 197
Doing just one thing - no progress ........ 197
Assessment of ability and a sense of discouragement ........ 197
Influence on teaching ........ 198
Summary ........ 198
Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden ........ 199

6. Influences on opinions about musicality and music education ........ 199
The Irish group ........ 199
Parents - the enablers ........ 200
'Brilliant teachers' ........ 201
Music education in college ........ 201
Being chosen and good at something ........ 201
The experiences of music ........ 201
Accumulated personal experiences ........ 202
Summary ........ 202
Musical relationships within the family ........ 204
The teacher makes it or breaks it ........ 205
Music education in college - an encounter with new attitudes ........ 205
Peer influence, social identity and self-esteem ........ 205
The municipality music school - a societal asset ........ 206
Media influences ........ 206
Learning by taking personal pathways ........ 206
Summary ........ 207
Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden ........ 207

7. Music as part of an Irish/ Swedish identity ....................208
The Irish group ....................208
The genuine or touristy Irishness ....................209
A generation shift? ....................210
Traditional music versus classical music ....................211
'Ethnomusicalcentricity' ....................213
The Irish Pride ....................214
Music arenas ....................215
Summary ....................215
The Swedish group ....................217
The Swedish summer and nature ....................218
The Swedish (lack of) musical confidence ....................219
ABBA and pop music ....................219
Music and multicultural impact ....................220
Music arenas ....................221
Generation shift? ....................222
Summary ....................223
Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden ....................224
Conclusion of interviews ....................226
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS – TOWARDS A THEORY OF MUSICAL SOCIALISATION ....................228
Introduction ....................228
Findings from the literature ....................229
Findings from this study ....................232
Data derived from the written accounts relating to representations of musicality, music practice, function(s) of music and value of music ....................232
0-6 years ....................233
7-13 years ....................233
14-18 years ....................234
Data derived from the interviews ....................236
Representations of the research group identified under each theme-heading ....................236
1. Perceptions of musicality ....................236
2. Reasons for choosing music as an elective course in teacher education ....................237
3. Reasons for the inclusion of music in education ....................237
4. Definitions of good music education ....................238
5. Definitions of poor music education ....................238
6. Influences on the participants' opinions about musicality and music education ....................239
7. Views on music as part of an Irish/ Swedish identity ....................240
Data derived from the interviews relating to representations of musicality, music practice, function(s) of music and value of music ....................241
The musical socialisation of student-teachers ....................242
A cycle of influence? ....................243
Layers of musical socialisation? ....................244
Webs of musical significance – a way of describing musical socialisation ....................246
The significance of this research ....................248

BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................................................................................... 253

Books, articles and papers ......................................................................................... 253

Internet sources.......................................................................................................... 261

Film ........................................................................................................................... 262

APPENDICES ........................................................................................................... 263

Appendix A: Statistics from background questionnaire ............................................ 263

Appendix B: Questionnaire ........................................................................................ 274

Appendix C: Letter of interviews ............................................................................... 277

Appendix D: Interview schedule ................................................................................ 278

# LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1: Global and local influence ..... 2
Figure 2: Linkage in the musical socialisation processes ..... 10
Figure 3: An illustration referring to Bronfenbrenners' model of the Ecology of Human Development ..... 21
Figure 4: The research areas ..... 55
Figure 5: Data collection design ..... 62
Figure 6: Gender, country and geographical area ..... 99
Figure 7: Playing instrument as a child ..... 100
Figure 8: Did you perform as a child? ..... 101
Figure 9: Frequency of music events as a child ..... 102
Figure 10: A cycle of musical socialisation? ..... 243
Figure 11: Layers of musical socialisation? ..... 245
Figure 12: Supportive threads in the web ..... 247
Figure 13: Threads and spaces in a Web of Musical Socialisation ..... 248
Figure 14: Mothers' activities Ireland ..... 263
Figure 15: Mothers' activities Sweden ..... 264
Figure 16: Fathers' activities Ireland ..... 265
Figure 17: Fathers' activities Sweden ..... 266
Figure 18: Frequency of music events as a child ..... 267
Figure 19: Bar Charts Music education Ireland ..... 270
Figure 20: Bar Charts Music education Sweden ..... 273

Table 1: Translation of Brändström's (1997) illustration of two views on musicality ..... 35
Table 2: Participants' key experiences with music ..... 159
Table 3: Mothers' activities Ireland ..... 263
Table 4: Mothers' activities Sweden ..... 264
Table 5: Fathers' activities Ireland ..... 265
Table 6: Fathers' activities Sweden ..... 266
Table 7: Cross tabulation Music events as child ..... 267
Table 8: Frequency tables music education Ireland ..... 268
Table 9: Frequency tables music education Sweden ..... 271

# CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## Music, music learning and music teaching

Music is a multidimensional phenomenon. This fact has consequences for the ways in which music teaching and learning are practised and for a person's engagement with music, both individually and as a member of the wider society. A person's relationship with music is often quite complex, based not only on previous educational experiences but also on experiences with music within the family and wider community (Ryner, 1995; 1999; Westvall, 2003; 2006).

This study investigates the musical socialisation of student-teachers in Ireland and Sweden, and focuses on musical experiences, opinions and beliefs in two selected groups of intending non-specialist music teachers.

Music has long been recognised as a powerful source of aesthetic engagement and expression in people's lives worldwide. There is no doubt that music also plays a significant social role in people's life around the world (Lilliestam, 2006). In growing global and multicultural societies it is therefore an important task for education, and music education in particular, to consider the dialectic relationship between music and society. Lundberg, Malm & Ronström (2000) consider it essential to investigate the relationship between music as an expression of societal transformation processes, and music itself as being the cause of societal changes. A profound individual and societal conception of the relationship between human beings and music has the potential to develop a deeper understanding of other individuals and societies in general. In this study it is therefore of particular interest to investigate the roles and functions that music plays in the lives of student-teachers, as well as their views on the significance and practice of music education.

### Global and local influences

Sociologist Roland Robertson has coined the term *glocalisation* as a way of putting global issues into local contexts (Macionis & Plummer 2002, p. 661). Glocalisation is also a useful term for the integration of music and music practice around the world into local music education, as this encompasses "signs of a global culture whilst being modified into a unique form that connects to local culture." (*ibid.*). Stålhammar (2004, p.177) suggests that the area

of music in general encompasses both global and local expressions and the interaction between them. This is particularly notable among young people. If that is the case, this is also true for music learning and hence also for music education. Few music educational books appear today, for instance, without the inclusion of music from other countries and in a variety of genres. An important aspect of any study of the musical experiences and opinions of the student-teachers is the influence of this interaction between the global and the local on their understanding of music and music education.

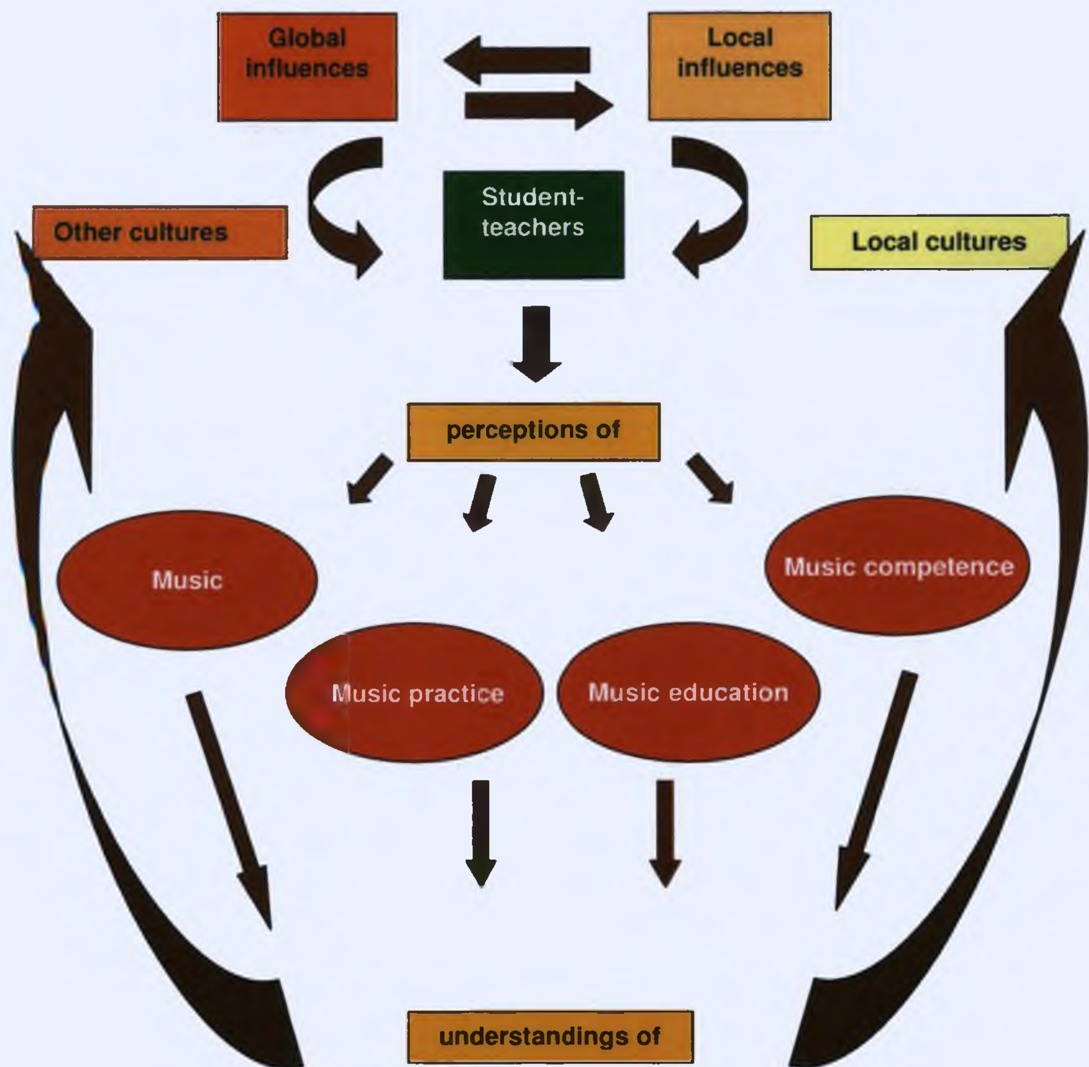


**Figure 1: Global and local influence**

**Music education in societies of growing cultural diversity**

The understanding of musical value and musical competence encountered by the student-teachers come together in the changing environment in which teaching and teacher education happens. Traditionally, music education has operated as a transmitter of musical and cultural ideals between generations. This in the past has often meant the transmission of 'high art culture' or worthy national folk culture. Increasingly what was once seen as 'commercial culture' has gained acceptance as representing youth culture and has subsequently been included in music education. This plurality of music has a number of consequences for music education, as music also has a unique power to represent its time as well as representing individuals. As *globalisation* is one of the most prominent sociological transformation processes in present-day society (Giddens, 1997), contemporary music education is often faced with a challenge of incorporating, and developing an understanding of, new and unfamiliar musical customs and perspectives into its practice. This ranges from contemporary art music practice to rap, to Cuban salsas, the fusion of Irish traditional and other world musics, Indian ragas and a variety of practices of music originating from different parts of the world. An important consideration in societies of growing cultural diversity, is if previously held opinions and beliefs about music cause difficulties, and prevent engagement with music outside the immediate culture.

Giddens (1997) argues that within a society there is often a risk that people develop *ethnocentric* approaches towards different cultural expressions. This means that their understanding of various unknown cultural actions and expression are assessed from the perspective of their own familiar context. Since most people are part of, and therefore socialised into, a specific socio-musical context, there may be a barrier in grasping the meaning of unknown cultural actions and expression without having a wider understanding of different contexts. So, for example, because of previous experience of formal graded examinations as the means of developing skill as a musician, other ways of music learning may be overlooked that are more usual in other societies. An assumption may be made as to how an individual gains skill as a musician based on the experienced common practice. In the context of this study it is interesting that a graded system of instrumental examination is almost unknown in Sweden while quite usual in Ireland. Another example with regard to ethnocentric approaches in music, may be that a particular tone and timbre of the singing voice is highly valued in Western classical music, while in rock music or in various

traditional musics, other voice qualities and ways in which the song is interpreted will be appreciated.

**Approaches to music**

Music has various uses, functions and meanings for people. It may represent technical skills, social activities, expressions, feelings, patterns, relationships, communication and aesthetic knowledge or experiences, to name but a few. Nielsen (2006) argues that music as a 'musical object' has layers of meanings. These can be defined as existential (spiritual), emotional, tensional, kinetic-motoric (bodily), structural and acoustic layers. The various layers within the musical object 'belong together' since they are experienced and appreciated together. Nielsen also discusses the relationship between music and human beings, and analyses whether the relationships between a musical object and an experiencing person have a natural common basis, or if they are individually and/or socially constructed. Regelski (2006) makes a case that music should primarily be viewed and understood in and by its practice, or as 'praxis', and he stresses the importance of the use of music in the interplay between human beings and their societies.

The various uses, functions and meanings of music are understood differently in different socio-cultural situations and contexts. However, the range of functions in music, and the interaction of these functions, can also be an influential part of the individual's relationship with music (Swanwick, 1994). The purposes of this study are embedded in a larger concept. In carrying out research in two socio-cultural environments, such as teacher education in Ireland and Sweden, this study seeks to investigate societal influences on the understanding of music, music teaching and music learning. Each participant in the two student-teacher groups in this study, experiences a complexity of continuous influences during their teacher education, which will have an impact on their opinions. These influences derive from their own experiences and reflections, from peers, teachers and from society in general. It is also of particular relevance that the two student-teacher groups are constantly influenced by the increasing cultural diversity of their own country, and it is therefore informative to study the groups separately, as well as to make an intercultural comparison of the two in this research. The musical consequences of such cultural diversity require critical examination. In post-modern societies, there is an assumption that *musical pluralism* exists. This assumes the co-existence of different music practices on equal terms in the society. However, the presence of a variety of musics within education does not automatically prove such equal valuing. While

it may appear that diverse genres are presented on an equal footing, the manner in which diverse musical practices are approached may implicitly convey a hierarchical ranking, leading to *socio-musical stratification* (O'Flynn, 2005). Regelski (2006) warns about such musical stratification in society and music education. He sketches an outline of how general musical values in Western societies historically have shaped the citizens and hence the teachers and their approach to music education.

A lack of representation of some musical genres may lead to the perception that these do not count as music. If an individual's preferred musical practice is not deemed to be worthy of notice it may lead him/her to distance him/herself from musical practice itself and a barrier can be set up between this person and the so called 'common music practice' represented in education.

Student-teachers often experience a transformation process during their teacher education. The musical experiences that they encounter during this phase are of vital importance for their own musical socialisation and their beliefs about music and music learning, which will be passed on to their future students. One might say that a cycle of influence is in operation here where students' understanding of various musical values and functions are strongly influenced by experiences in education and they in turn go on to influence their own students. In many cases the intending music teachers will subsequently represent their future students' *significant musical other*, and hence become a vital part of their musical socialisation.

**Stores of experiences**

There are a number of ways in which research tries to understand the relationship between human beings and music, and the consequences this has for how people act in musical circumstances. People's musical preferences and perspectives are strongly influenced by general opinions on music that are valid in their socio-cultural environment. This could be considered to be part of their socio-cultural 'store of experiences'. Every person also has unique individual experiences with music, which form another 'store of experiences' (Stålhammar, 2006b). When those two experience stores interact with each other, it results in a person's understanding of:

- Musicality (i.e. who is seen to be musical and what types of behaviour are accepted as evidence of musicality).

- Music practice (i.e. how music practice is understood, including music as an inclusive social activity or music as 'high art' with skilled performers and a well-informed audience).
- Musical value (i.e. the perceived status and function of different musics within a society or culture).

These are the areas this study seeks to understand from the perspective of the student-teachers.

**A social context for student-teachers' musical development**

According to O' Flynn (2005), "all expressions of musicality are based on dynamic socio-cultural contexts." (p.197). The social context can therefore be considered to constitute a vital factor in the development, or discontinuation, of the individual's knowledge, understanding and practice of music. In many societies and cultures the social aspects of musical activities, are the core that brings meaning to music and musicianship. Blacking (1973) points to this when he writes:

> The value of music in society and its differential effects on people may be essential factors in the growth or atrophy of musical abilities, and people's interest may be less in music itself than in its associated social activities. On the other hand, musical ability may never develop without some extramusical motivation (Blacking, 1973 p. 43).

How teachers act in an educational situation is often a consequence of their own perception of musicality. This in turn affects their understanding of the value of music education as well as their understanding of music's role in society. However, their perception of musicality is developed through experience gained by participating in a particular community or culture, and reflects the norms and assumptions of that culture. The question of whether these perceptions and understandings are primarily gained in teacher education, their wider socialisation, including previous experiences in education, family and community, or elsewhere is of particular interest.

When student-teachers embark on the journey of becoming educators, they already have a number of previous individual experiences, and through participation in their culture they hold assumptions about a number of areas, including the ways in which music, musical talent and music education are represented in their society (Addessi, 2004; 2006). 'Social

representations' of music could be described as the often unspoken general assumptions and values about music in society, in short, a shared tacit knowledge in a field. Most likely, these common-sense beliefs profoundly influence the contents and praxis of music education and therefore have a considerable impact on the teachers. These assumptions about music affect the common understanding of musical talent that may be applied in an educational context. Music education can consequently be considered to mirror its society's general musical and cultural norms and values.

During their teacher education, the student-teachers may also undergo a challenge to, or confirmation of, long-held assumptions as they interact with music education theory, and relate this to their experience of teacher education. This consideration points towards the likelihood that the student-teachers undergo two concurrent musical socialisation processes, one which is a 'civic' or personal musical socialisation, and the other which is a professional musical socialisation. The former occurs on a societal level, whilst the latter takes place in order to adapt to the conditions of the world of music education - what Macionis and Plummer (2002) call the micro-sociological. Jorgensen (1997) observes that

> ...musical socialization extends beyond the time-span typical of schooling to include people's entire lives./.../ [Musical socialization] consists of direct formal and informal instruction and indirect instruction gleaned through participating in the way of life of a particular group or institution (Jorgensen 1997, p. 21).

According to Jorgensen (1997), socialisation is a "dynamic, evolving process", which sometimes works progressively and at other times is conservative. The socialisation process is not in a constant state of flux, yet it works in two ways, since it both contributes to, and results from, a particular group's beliefs and opinions. Giddens (1997) argues that socialisation includes an awareness of social norms and actions which affect and change people during a life span. It is important, however, not to regard socialisation as 'cultural programming', as it also operates as a foundation for the development of a person's individuality and freedom. Socialisation is consequently also a way of forming individual identities, and is therefore a pathway for independent decision-making and actions.

**Musical competence and confidence in education**

The understanding of musical learning and musical participation in the ways described above, extends to the student-teachers' concept of themselves as musically able or not. In order to face successfully the challenges of teaching music, student-teachers require a sense of musical confidence and competence. Hennessy (2000) highlights this issue in her article 'Overcoming the red-feeling: the development of confidence to teach music in primary school amongst student-teachers', which deals with the anxiety that many non-specialists express in relation to teaching music. The significance of musical confidence in connection with music education is also emphasised by Young (2001), as well as by Holden & Button (2006). Holden & Button's study reveals how a considerable number of non-specialist music teachers lack musical confidence and consequently lack confidence in teaching music. The study also shows that some non-specialists do not consider themselves musical at all, which is a complicated issue since they are assumed to be competent in teaching the subject. This sense of musical inadequacy is, according to Young (2001), a consequence of inadequate school experiences of music as pupils. In the light of musical socialisation processes discussed earlier in this chapter, this is a crucial matter in music education. This is particularly interesting when comparing non-specialists music teachers to specialist music teachers.

In a study of music education students in Canada, Roberts (1991) discusses how intending music teachers are more concerned with having a clear identity as a musician than science teachers or history teachers are concerned with being a scientist or an historian. This might be a consequence of society's understanding of music teaching as the function of a musician more than of a teacher. If that is the case, it indicates that, in order to teach music confidently, the teacher him/herself also needs to identify him/herself as a musician and thereby respond to societal expectations.

Hargreaves (1996) argues that musical competence can be understood from a number of perspectives. What is musically valued can vary significantly from one society to another, and might encompass the cultural, artistic and educational traditions and practices of each particular society. On the one hand, musical competence can be understood from a specialist or a generalist perspective; on the other hand it can be understood from both a high art and popular art perspective. Within each of these perspectives competency might be acknowledged within the following areas: musical techniques, historical and stylistic

knowledge, as well as the contexts in which music is performed, practised and heard - what might be described as the socio-cultural settings.

Each society develops codes or common understandings that relate to the various musical approaches, which could also be described as social representations of music. While these perspectives might appear to be opposing, these concurrent and yet dissimilar ideas and social representations about what music competence is, co-exist in many societies. This phenomenon subsequently leads to a tension within the music teaching profession. Hargreaves points out that

> Music is perhaps unique in that it can be appreciated and enjoyed by all so that 'general' class teaching can be universally beneficial; at the same time, it demands highly specialized skills, training and dedication for successful participation on the specialist level (Hargreaves, 1996, p. 167).

While the general music teacher may not need skills at such a high level, they do need confidence in themselves as musically able. Student-teachers' conceptions of the role of music skills in general music education may result from their own previous experiences and may directly influence their musical confidence.

## Outline of the study

The study seeks to reveal the complexity of the relationship between student-teachers and music within their phases of musical socialisation, and will contribute to knowledge on two levels. On one level the study will extend our understanding of how attitudes towards music and, in particular, convictions and beliefs about music and music education, come to be held. On another level, the study will reveal the attitudes held by student-teachers and so further inform the teaching undertaken in teacher education.

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the linkage between the early musical experiences of student-teachers, the musical socialisation they undergo throughout teacher education, and the influences of their socio-cultural environments (as illustrated in figure 2 below). By doing this, the concern is to locate factors and formative experiences that have

had a considerable impact on student-teachers' present opinions and convictions about music and music education.

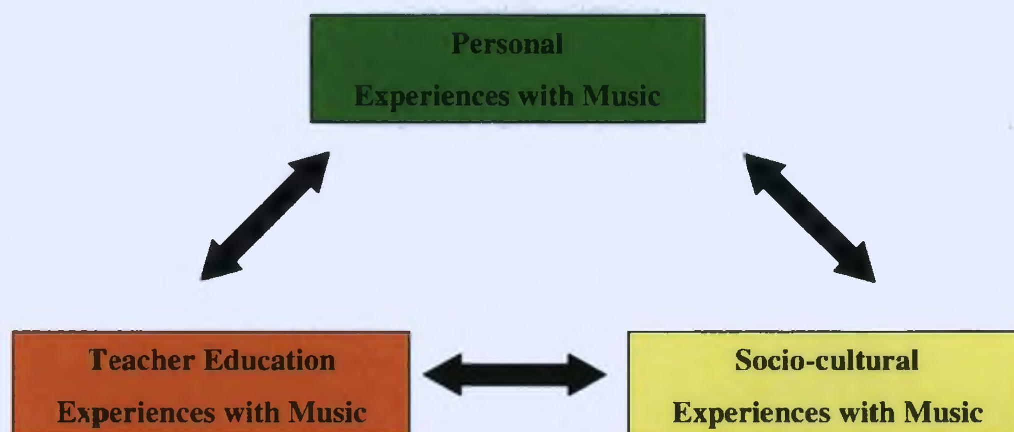


**Figure 2: Linkage in the musical socialisation processes**

The research questions posed in this study are:

- How do the student-teachers describe and value their musical socialisation phases from early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence?
- How do the student-teachers describe and value their experiences in their teacher education programme?
- How do student-teachers describe their perception about formal and informal music learning in their respective communities?
- How do these three dimensions of musical socialisation interact, and hence shape the opinions and beliefs of the student-teachers in this study?

Chapter 2 lays out the conceptual framework of the study, locating it within a sociological perspective and introduces a theoretical lens consisting of three interactional perspectives. Chapter 3, the literature review, considers previous research in the area, such as different perceptions of musicality, the development of musical confidence and competence, the uses and functions of music, music praxis and musical identity construction in music. The

methodology of this research is then presented in Chapter 4, including a description of the data collection design, which comprises three interrelated steps, consisting of

1. A questionnaire, to provide *background information* about the research groups.
2. Written accounts, dealing with the participants' perceptions of previous *experiences* with music and music education.
3. Interviews, supplying information about the participants' current *opinions* in the area of music and music education.

A set of focus groups inform the interpretation of the data and provide a verification process.

Chapter 5 outlines the context in which this study takes place. It contains a description of the two education systems, with a particular focus on music and music education in the two countries. The background of the student-teacher groups from Ireland and Sweden who participated in this study is provided through a presentation of pertinent results from the background questionnaire. Chapter 6 presents the findings of the written accounts, dealing with the participants' experiences of music and music education from early, middle childhood and teenage years. The findings of the interviews, focusing on the participants opinions of, and attitudes towards, music and music education in their societies, are then presented in chapter 7. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the findings, and leads to a proposal in chapter 8 of 'Webs of musical significance' as a model to explain the musical socialisation of student-teachers.

# CHAPTER 2: TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

## Introduction

This research deals with two groups of non-specialist student-teachers of music, one group in Ireland and one group in Sweden. The purposes of this study are to elucidate these student-teachers' own perceptions of their different musical socialisation phases and to investigate whether and how these phases interact. A subsequent issue is then to analyse how these phases of musical socialisation influence the opinions and beliefs about music learning and music teaching held by these student-teachers. In order to situate this research in the relevant musical, sociological and educational fields, two bodies of literature are reviewed. The first is mainly a socio-musicological literature from which an over-arching conceptual framework is selected. This is the subject of Chapter 2. This conceptual framework forms the basis for the literature reviewed in Chapter 3. Consequently, there is some overlap and interaction between these two chapters. Towards the end of Chapter 2, three perspectives based on social and symbolic interaction are introduced. These perspectives present a theoretical lens through which we understand how people in general, and these student-teachers in particular, interact with their world and with music within this.

## Social representations and common-sense knowledge

Researchers such as Chaib & Orfali (1995); Moscovici (1995); Israel (1995) have shown how a society's social representations of an area influence the way people think and act in relation to that area. 'Social representations' also affect how we look upon ourselves and how we assess our own qualities as strengths or as weak points. The ways in which music is represented in society is thus very relevant to a study of how student-teachers develop a concept of themselves and of others as musically able or not. The concept of 'social representations' can be understood as the beliefs, conceptions and knowledge that people develop in a collective process. Serge Moscovici coined the concept in the 1960's and developed a theory which, according to Chaib & Orfali (1995), has come to serve as a useful framework in a number of disciplines such as in social psychology, communication, anthropology, ethnology and cultural studies. Addessi (2004; 2006) points out that the theory of social representation is also a useful framework for studies of the social aspects of music and music education.

The theory of social representations is based on the conception that people's worlds are constructed by symbolic, every-day life experiences, in the social interaction between people. In short, the theory deals with how different individuals form collective ideas between themselves about their reality. Together they develop a 'common-sense knowledge', which unites them and helps them to orient themselves in the social life.

A number of the characteristics of the theory of social representations are relevant to the study of the musical socialisation of student-teachers. Jodelet (1995) discusses how institutions and media networks strongly influence the construction of social representations. These institutions and media networks are factors that also significantly form and reflect systems and 'theories' about music. For instance, which music is valuable, what the purposes of music are, and what kind of behaviours are regarded as musical in a society.

Jodelet (1995) illustrates how the concept of intelligence is represented in social representations, and the parallels for music are obvious. If the social aspects of musicality, such as cultural heritage, upbringing and educational stratification are not taken into account, the concept of musicality may appear as mythical and mysterious. It may appear to some as an innate talent. Others may search for a genetic or biological explanation, leading to theories of musical ability and skill being inherited 'talents'. Such descriptions conceal the social aspects of music and musical practice, and provide a partial explanation of musicality as mainly biological or inherited.

While the theory of social representations originates with Durkheim's theory of 'collective representations' (referred to in Chaib & Orfali, 1995; Moscovici 1995), it has developed substantially with subsequent researchers. Durkheim's focal interest, was the collective 'mind', which operates as a frame for the ideas and thinking in every society. To Durkheim, the idea of solidarity was the core in social life, which explains the emphasis on morality and social authority in this theory. Durkheim suggested that concepts, opinions and beliefs were developed in an institutional, collective context and formed a frame for individuals' behaviours. Moscovici (1995) argues that Durkheim's theory of collective representations lacked a pluralistic dimension, and consequently failed to describe the social processes in which representations are constructed.

Present day societies are generally more heterogeneous than they were during Durkheim's time, and the relationship between the individual and society has come more to the fore. The theory of social representations now tends to regard everyday thinking and non-institutional concepts and beliefs as core aspects, rather than the idea of a collective mind.

Jodelet (1995) describes the multifaceted aspects of social representations. She argues that both social and psychological dynamics within a system have to be considered, since they commonly deal with how different groups and interactions between people, are influenced by, and in turn influence, the development and structure in and of a society.

The theory of social representations is close to Mead's concept of symbolic interaction (Blumer, 1986), as it operates through processes within the individual, between individuals and also between groups in the society. Blumer, a student of Mead's, argued that a society consists of individuals with developed 'selves', who are able to refer to their own background and future when they interact with different phenomena in their society (referred to in Berg, 2003). This is an important aspect in relation to the understanding of how social representations operate in society.

According to Israel (1995), social representations include ways of thinking, imagining and sensing, and are the products of this same thinking, imagining and sensing. The essence of the thinking, imagining and sensing is the various concrete or abstract ideas and beliefs that people hold, encompassing 'common-sense' theories as well as scientific theories, myths, fantasies, images and concepts that are used by people in various social contexts. In this particular research, 'common-sense' theories can, for instance, be linked to the aspects which are considered to be included in a general understanding of the concept of musicality in a society. Israel considers this to be so important that he equates common-sense knowledge or 'lay thinking' in the theory of social representations, to the dream as the key feature in psychoanalysis and to the myth in anthropology. He cautions that common-sense knowledge is not necessarily based on actually existent phenomena, nor does it have to represent real experiences, but people will still have an opinion about these phenomena.

Social representations are cultural occurrences that are influenced by the cultural heritage and context, and they appear implicitly for the members in a society. Moscovici (1995) suggests

that this is achieved over time and that the way language is used reinforces the common-sense knowledge.

There is an important relationship between individual and collective representations in a society (Moscovici, 1995, p. 59). Individual representations are in a shifting process while the collective represent consistency in the transmission and reproduction of ideas and opinions between generations. While the personal opinions and beliefs of the individual originate from the collective representations, they are unique for each individual. They are influenced by personal experiences, and they tend to be in a constant flux, due to this complexity. The collective representations, however, are shared by the members in a group or in a society in the same way as they share the same language. The main function of collective representations in a society is to maintain a connection between the members of society which is dependent on thinking and acting in similar ways. Social representations can for these reasons, be understood to represent a consistency as well as a flow. The individuals in this process are often located in what Swanwick terms 'the space between' (Swanwick, 1999), that is, amid the societal understanding (collective) and their personal understanding (individual). This 'phase' or 'space' referred to by Swanwick also pertains to the musical socialisation among student-teachers. The concept of social representations provides an important description of these ongoing processes.

**Layers of socio-musical representations**

When studying social representations, it must be remembered that the dynamics of the representations (Moscovici, 1995, p. 66) may result in an individual holding conflicting beliefs simultaneously. Thus as social representations stand for a shared knowledge in a society, they consequently represent agreed, contrasting and diverse opinions simultaneously. Depending on which sphere, group or belief a person identifies him/herself with in society, a variety of opinions will be held.

Within every individual's conceptual world, a number of social representations co-exist in a unique network, and the representations can therefore be contradictory. This, however, is not anything exceptional, rather it is the complex way in which people understand their world from different influences and from different perspectives. This is also a way of being socialised into one's society.

In order to understand the connection between social representations and the practice of music and music education, one needs to consider the complex patterns of social representations in this particular area. Music and music education are understood from a number of different perspectives, such as biological, psychological, sociological, physiological, educational, and cultural perspectives, to mention just a few. These perspectives all form the collective 'common-sense knowledge' that affects general opinions of music and music education.

In relation to a society's common-sense knowledge of music practice, Blaukopf (1992) refers to Durkheim's concept of collective consciousness, or collective representations, and argues:

> The idea of collective imprinting is also valid for the music of modern industrial societies; we can recognize a collective norm not only in the tonal system consisting of an octave divided into twelve equal sections but also in the institutionalized occasions and venues of music-making (concert, theatre, church), in the predetermined organization of musical performances (e.g., orchestras with instrumentation that may actually be mandated), in predetermined musical events (e.g., the length of an orchestral concert) and even in the ritual of behaviour that determines when the audience is allowed to express approval (or disapproval). Thus Durkheim's approach is also useful in the area of artistic and musical activity (Blaukopf, 1992, p. 43).

It has to be taken into account, however, that Blaukopf first wrote this (in German) in 1982. During the end of the 20th century, various societal changes have resulted in more individualistic approaches to different phenomena, which may, for instance, have affected a collective consciousness of music.

## Socialisation - participation in the social world

During teacher education, student-teachers participate in a process of constantly shifting patterns of actions, which suggests that previously held opinions and assumptions of musical knowledge, musical value and musicality are either strengthened, challenged or reassessed. This process requires new knowledge to be internalised in what Stålhammar (1995; 2006b) describes as the student-teachers' 'depots of experiences' or 'stores of experiences', and it is a learning process that takes place in a social context in the interaction between the individual and his/her society. People understand situations, actions and phenomena in the light of their previous experiences, and every individual reads meaning into things and

occurrences through the lens of his/her unique set of individual and societal experiences. As Berger & Luckman (1979) suggest, being a part of the society is to participate in its dialectics. The individual influences his/her social world at the same time as the social world is being internalised in the individual's life as an objective reality. Socialisation is a lifelong process, where general societal opinions and occurrences become meaningful in the subjective world of the individual. This process is fundamental to how the individual becomes a part of society and how the society becomes part of the individual.

In childhood the individual undergoes a primary socialisation which is essential to the process of becoming a member of the society. Every following process is regarded as a secondary socialisation. Within this secondary socialisation, the individual crosses thresholds to new contexts and circumstances and thereby achieves new knowledge about, and new meaningfulness in, his/her own and the social world of others.

Parents, siblings, and later on friends and teachers, are vital to the individual's primary, and early secondary socialisation (Froehlich, 2007). These people are both close to, and important to the individual and hence constitute his/her significant others. The opinions, attitudes and beliefs held by significant others represent norms that are transmitted to the individual's world, and thus become the framework of norms which is interpreted by the individual as a general reality. At that stage he/she has internalised the significant other's opinions and beliefs into his/her own world. This route can be described as a socialisation into the general norms of a society, which shapes the individual's identity as a member of that society. Giddens (1997) stresses, however, that even if we are all influenced by our social environment, our actions are not totally determined by our social context. We also develop our own individualities.

During teacher education the student-teacher experiences a socialisation process into the role of a music teacher. Within this, his/her opinions and beliefs about musicality, musical ability, musical knowledge and musical practices will be confronted. This process can be explained as another secondary, or tertiary socialisation (Froehlich, 2007), which takes part within the interaction between the student-teacher and the particular educational environment. From an interactional perspective, the individual is subsequently a partaker, who makes and reads significance into different phenomena within the relationship with his/her surrounding society.

> The meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing (Blumer 1986, p. 4).

Blumer (1986) explains 'meaning' as a social product that is constructed in the interaction between people and their experiences. Consequently, the meaning of different phenomena, such as the concept of musicality, is constructed in the interaction between people and their experiences.

### Socialisation and enculturation

The two concepts 'socialisation' and 'enculturation' are useful frames in relation to this study. They both deal with the aspects of becoming a member of society as well as participating in the transmission processes of the cultural heritage within a community. In the literature concerning the social aspects of music (Jorgensen, 1997; Merriam, 1964) these two concepts can be understood quite similarly. Socialisation, however, is generally described as the process by which individuals socially learn the patterns of the community in which they live, whereas enculturation may be understood as a wider process in which an established culture 'teaches' the individual its norms and values, so that the individuals hence will become accepted members of the society and find their suitable role (Jorgensen, 1997; Georgii-Hemming & Stålhammar, 2006). In this study, socialisation is used as a key concept since it encompasses not only the way people learn to be part of a particular society, but also comprises a range of other social aspects and experiences that interplay in this process.

### Musical socialisation

The concepts of musicality and musical knowledge are connected to their social context. Different societies and cultures have diverse expectations of musical knowledge, and understand the meaning of musicality differently due to social circumstances (Kwami 2001; O'Flynn, 2005). What is regarded as significantly musical in one context, might not be considered particularly musical in another. In one situation music may be viewed as a social activity, in a second situation it might be regarded as an aesthetic activity. In a third situation music will be experienced as communication, whereas in a fourth situation music will be considered to be a specific craft and skill that only a few can master.

Thus musicality can be considered as a multi-dimensional concept, which encompasses a number of different meanings. In some situations musicality signifies the ability to pick up a tune by ear, in another it means to easily join in a collective musical context. Rhythmical and dancing expressions and responsiveness are relevant musical qualities in some environments, and in others, the exact rendering of a musical piece is valued as evidence of musicality. Furthermore, the ability to individually interpret a musical piece or compose one's own, is often seen as evidence of musical skill and intelligence. Therefore, musicality is understood differently by people, depending on the situation.

The transmission of music between generations has traditionally been an important function in a culture, and has been a vital part in a person's musical socialisation. Not only have songs or tunes been passed on, but also the ways in which music has been perceived, performed and encouraged or not by others in a particular socio-cultural context are also transmitted. Musical socialisation is a process that takes part in a number of layers and places: in homes, in schools, in a wider community and through media. In McCarthy's case study of the transmission of music in Ireland, *Passing It On* (1999), musical socialisation in a societal context is illustrated as follows:

> Each of us is introduced to music in a unique way though experiences in home, school and community. Those experiences can be fruitful and fulfilling, leading to a life-long engagement with music or they can fail to nurture our innate music impulse. What is common across all time and cultures is the fact that the transmission of music is an integral part of the generational transmission of culture, occurring primarily during childhood and adolescence (McCarthy, 1999, p. 2).

**Interacting stores of socio-cultural experiences and emotional experiences**

A useful way of conceptualising the process of musical socialisation, is to use Stålhammar's (1995; 2006b) concepts of 'depots of experiences' or 'stores of experiences'. A person's accumulated experiences from music, within and outside of an educational context, are gathered both in a 'store of socio-cultural experiences' and in a 'store of emotional experiences'. Stålhammar describes how a person's store of socio-cultural experiences consists of memories and experiences from contexts where practical and theoretical musical competence has been developed and formed. These contexts can be the homes, the music schools, media or interplay with friends. The contexts are influenced by the values that are

rubberstamped in a particular cultural environment. A person's store of emotional experiences consists of subjective, emotional experiences, which are influenced by the particular socio-cultural environments in which these emotional experiences have been accumulated. The stores of experiences presented by Stålhammar, suggest an important model of the understanding of musical processes, and as such, also inform music education about some significant factors that influence a music teaching/learning situation.

**Social recognition of musicality**

Lundberg & Ternhag (1996) discuss two main categories of social recognition of musical ability and musical competence. These categories either co-exist in a society, or separately represent a major societal view. One category represents a given or 'assigned' competence and the other a deserved or 'earned' competence. In the first category, assigned competence, a person is considered by the surroundings to have been "born into" a musical identity by being brought up in a context which has a societal recognition of a strong musical status, for instance, being part of a family which is known for a generational involvement in music by their society. In the second category, earned competence, anyone is considered to be able to access, or 'deserve' musical status in competition with others. In this case, music education (formal as well as informal) plays a vital part as an enabling factor. This theory has, however, long been a part of an understanding of the recognition of musicality. Similar categories were discussed by Merriam (1964, p. 131), referring to Ralph Linton, who in the 1930's identified the societal status and roles of musicality as either 'ascribed' or 'achieved'. Wallin (2002) suggests that the socio-cultural context sets the frames for what is considered to represent music and musicality in a society. This could be understood as society creating 'musical frames', and the people within the society - consciously or unconsciously - adapting to this frame in order to gain acceptance and participantship. The socio-cultural context can therefore be said to significantly define the concepts of music and musicality in a society.

## Social formation of opinions and beliefs

Bronfenbrenner (1979) presented a theoretical model for the Ecology of Human Development, which describes the processes between the active, growing human being and the changing environments in which this person lives. Bronfenbrenner's model provides a constructive description of how contextual influences affect the roles, relationships and

activities between the human being, mainly the child, and the ongoing environmental processes at different levels.

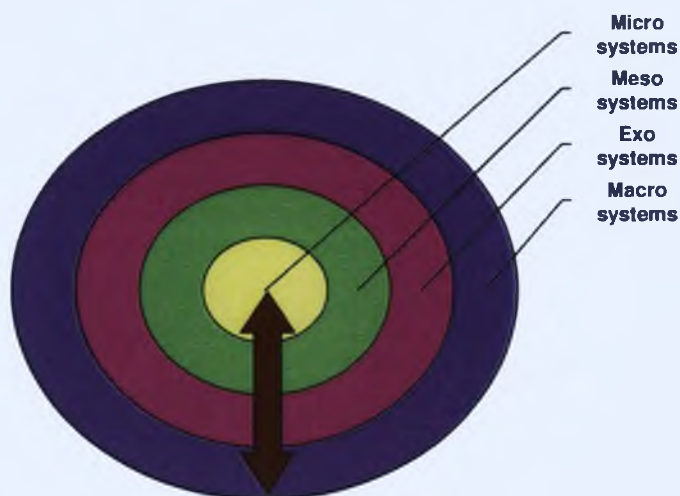


**Figure 3: An illustration referring to Bronfenbrenners' model of the Ecology of Human Development**

In the model above, the smallest inner circle represents the micro systems in which the child is directly involved. These are, for instance, the home, the neighbourhood and the school. The next circle symbolises the meso systems, which 'handles' the /interaction between the different micro-systems. According to Andersson's (1980) explanation of Bronfenbrenner's model, the child's actual reality does not consist of a number of isolated environments such as the home, the school and neighbourhood, but of a more integrated, holistic picture. However, within this picture, the differences in the processes of the various micro systems may create conflicts in the child's life. An example of this is if the family members and the school teacher communicate different, and/or conflicting, values about music practice. Regular instrumental practice may be presented as play, a development of skill or the preparation for professional career, and each will affect the child's musical socialisation differently. The next circle, the exo systems, encompasses the 'indirect' environments which influence the micro systems such as societal institutions and media. Other exo systems can be parents' or teachers' membership and position in different environments and work places that indirectly have an impact on the child's life conditions. The different micro, meso, and exo systems within a particular cultural environment form a larger system which represents the

general ideological, economical, historical and political values of the society. These general patterns are symbolised in the outer circle and constitute the macro systems, which can also be referred to as societal representations within a culture. Bronfenbrenner represents a psychological perspective, where the direction within the model is from the centre (the child) out to the wider circles. From a sociological approach, however, the model can be understood from the macro level and in, towards the centre. From a social psychology perspective, a third view point may be considered which deals with a dialectic relationship between the different circles. Lamont (2002) uses Bronfenbrenner's model to explain a child's musical development. Her discussion of the impact the school environment has on the child's development of a musical identity is further considered in the literature review in Chapter 3. Borthwick & Davidson (2002) examine another micro system, the family, and the impact key others, or significant others, have on a child's developing attitudes, values and beliefs towards music, musicality and musical ability.

**Ethnicity, class and recognition**

In societies of cultural diversity, ideologies of social categorisation need to be considered. The relationship between the two concepts of class ideology and ethnic ideology was first illuminated by American anthropologist Dan Aronson (referred to in Lundberg *et al.*, 2000). Lundberg *et al.* (2000) review the two concepts, and explain the ideas of justice and equality from the perspective of class ideologists, as representing the opinion that everyone should be treated like equals. Since all people are considered to 'be the same inside', all observable differences between people are the result of outer circumstances. Ethnic ideologists, on the other hand, state that justice and equality in a society stand for the right to be recognised and treated as different. Related to music in education, these concepts could suggest that all music on the one hand should be treated equally as having the same value, and on the other that as different types of music have different functions, meanings and practices, they should not be presented as the same as 'all' music but recognised for their differences. Taylor (1994), a Canadian professor of philosophy, argues that, although those two ideologies may appear to be divergent at a first glance, there is a close connection between the two. A conception of everyone being equal could be interpreted as emphasising people's equality in value, according to Taylor. However, in a post-modern society, where the conception of individual identities is in focus, a 'politics of recognition' of individual differences is acknowledged as a way to prevent discrimination. In order to avoid stratified or decontextualised practices of music education (Kwami 2001), one might consider the

inclusive dimension of 'musics of recognition'. For music education this would encompass recognition, practice and encounter with different musics (and their representatives) in the classroom, as this may broaden a general understanding and experience in the society of the various meanings and functions music has in people's lives.

### Musical hierarchy and socio-musical stratification

As presented above, there is a current discussion on equal value or stratification in society in general, and the main features of class ideology and ethnic ideology can be transferred into the context of music education. O'Flynn (2005) argues that contemporary music curricula demonstrate a clear aim to provide a pluralistic approach in music education. In doing so, the status and the recognition of different musics and musical practices need to be taken into account. According to the ethnic ideology, equal recognition of difference is the central goal, and class ideologies strive for the right for everyone to be treated like equals. In order to provide a music curriculum where different music and musical practices will be considered to have equal value, O'Flynn suggests that a 'polycentric' approach in music education (where more than one type of music is at the centre of music education) is essential. If such an approach is not considered, there is a risk that different musics and musical practices will be assessed in hierarchical order, and students could become socialised into an understanding of different musics having different value, not different meanings and praxis. Kwami (2001) points to the fact that musical practices operate differently in different cultural contexts, which has an effect on a multi-cultural music education. He states:

> The various musical traditions around the world may be united in qualifying as a distinctive means of human discourse. They constitute a global phenomenon of communication and expression linked to cultural practices, and operate in *different* ways in *different* contexts. The fact that the term 'music' may not have a specific equivalence in some cultures is problematic and limiting when an attempt is made to accommodate some non-Western music perspectives into Western music (Kwami, 2001, p. 143).

An aspect of this particular study, is how recognition of different musics and musical practices are understood by the student-teachers participating in the study.

### Three perspectives on people's interaction with their world and music within this

In order to examine the interaction between human beings and music, and the conditions and prospects for musical development in a society, three interactional perspectives drawn from

the literature are introduced below. These represent a theoretical lens through which we can analyse how people interact with their musical world.

The three perspectives are;

- *A comparative perspective*

This considers the shift in the range and scope of the understanding of what is valuable in music when encountered in a variety of contexts.

- *A relational perspective versus a categorical perspective*

This considers how aspects of musicality and perceived musical competence relate to an enabling or disabling environment.

- *An 'in the space between' perspective*

This considers where a person is in his/her thinking on music and music education. The 'space between' is defined as the fluid gap between previous musical experiences and future expectations of musical encounters. In this space, ideas about musicality and music teaching are in a constant flux. These ideas, however, are often located in two places at once, as strongly held beliefs interact with new impressions. The space between functions as a switch between before and after musical encounters, and may result in previously strongly-held convictions being abandoned or in other ideas being maintained and reinforced.

The comparative perspective exemplifies multifaceted relationships between human beings and music, whereas the relational/ categorical perspectives reveal ambiguous understandings. Both are affected by contextual factors which constitute meaning in music and musical practice. The 'in the space between' perspective, in contrast, demonstrates the human being's individual, operative space in connection to music and musical practice, which is shaped by subjective emotional and socio-cultural experiences.

**A comparative perspective**

People are shaped by those cultural ideals and concepts that are central and important in the environment of which they are part. This in turn affects societal perceptions on what is valued in music. Bouij (1998) describes two cultural concepts that can represent two opposite viewpoints on music and musicianship. These concepts were especially in focus during the

1980's, but they are still a matter of discussion in music education. One of the concepts is an anthropological-social ideal, the other is an aesthetic-normative ideal.

The anthropological - social ideal represents a broad view on music and musicality, which encompasses active participation in music and an inclusive interaction with all music makers in a social context. The people themselves contribute to music by participation, and they also define the criteria for music and musicality. An aesthetic - normative ideal, on the other hand, represents a more specialised idea about music and musicality. Music practice, from an aesthetic - normative point of view, has its focus on professional practitioners and their audience, and traditional aesthetic criteria set the norms for music practice. Sundin (2003) questions the polarisation of the two concepts. He points out that the two concepts co-exist rather than contrast with each other, which is an opinion also supported by Bouij (1998). Every musical context has its own aesthetics, according to Sundin. By this, he indicates that his perception of the concept of aesthetics has a broader meaning than the more normative idea of "the fine arts".

In musical cultures with a broad, anthropological view on music, the focus on the collective is stronger than on the individual. Music therefore plays an important role as a part of life and functions as a social tie between people. As music is regarded to be a general, inter-human activity, all members of the community are more likely to access musical interaction within the group than they would in a specialised society (Wallin, 2002). If an individual in the group is found to have musical difficulties, the others in the group will probably still include him/her musically (Gardner, 1983; Bjørkvold, 1996). This inclusion may be due to the fact that the social functions of musicality are taken for granted in the community, but it may also lead to musical development for the individual. Jorgensen (1997) points to the fact that in most societies different musical statuses are appointed to different people within a group. This is not particular to any type of music but would exist in most musical cultures. However, the idea of the musical group acting as the educational instrument for the individual's general musical development, illustrates that there are a number of various musical approaches that can develop music education as a discipline.

Western cultures have an apparent technological and professional focus, and seem, according to Wallin (2002), to be strongly influenced by aesthetic norms. The perception of musicality in Western societies is strongly influenced by an industrious way of thinking and acting. This

has tended to disenfranchise the music ability of society in general. The perception has developed that the musical person is the expert highly skilled musician rather than the generally capable music-maker. Musicality is seen to reside in a small group of 'gifted' people who hone their skill, rather than being a characteristic of society in general.

The two practices of music and musicianship described by Wallin (2002), inform and can develop the praxis of music education. If music is considered to be an act of "togetherness" and inter-human relations, it provides opportunities for individuals to continuously practise, in a safe environment, and be "trained" into music and musicality. These experiences, in turn, have the potential to improve general musical skills of the people in a society. By continuous hands-on practise and numerous musical encounters, people have the prospect of developing musical autonomy, which is a fundamental basis for musical development. Since the aims of improvement, development and refinement are typical characteristics of a professionalised society, a combination of an anthropological-social perspective and an aesthetic-normative perspective on musicality points towards an expanded dimension of music education, which has the potential to develop a more general involvement in musical activities and actions in society.

Swanwick (1999) discusses how musical actions and conventions in different cultures are often quite different. When being exposed to different approaches and practices, people tend to become aware of their own musical praxis. Musical meaning is generated in social contexts. According to Swanwick (1994), it exists in parallel to, and interacts with, other cultural activities and expressions. For example, music may play an important role as a social tie in a group, such as enjoying and participating in traditional dancing in a pub, or singing together in a choir. It may also have accessory purposes in order to maintain traditional functions and standards, as for instance, the uses of anthems at international sports games, or the song-singing at birthday parties. Swanwick suggests that the focus in music education should be on music as a means of communication on a number of symbolic levels, since music is both a way of thinking, of understanding and of perceiving life. Consequently, such a focus promotes a joint perspective of an anthropological and an aesthetic view on music as also prescribed by Sundin (2003). O'Flynn (2005) draws attention to the difficulties in formulating a polycentric view of music education, since "musical activities and ways of thinking about music relate to the wider beliefs and values of the society concerned" (p.195). O'Flynn points, therefore, to the significance of cross-cultural diversity in music education,

which may be developed in a 'dynamic interchange' between "musicians, teachers, learners and various musical-social groups in our own and other cultures". This is a clear argument for how comparative aspects may develop the area of music education.

In this study one of the aims is to comprehend the present attitudes of student-teachers to different musical genres - attitudes which influence their musical practices. A second aim is to investigate the effect of their own teachers' reflections of musical value. This is included in the content which they present and pass on and which becomes the musical experiences of the intending teachers. These issues are two interrelated factors that affect both the content and the attitudes in the student-teachers' intentions and in preparations for teaching music.

**A relational perspective versus a categorical perspective**

To assess whether a person is musical or not is a complicated task, if not impossible, since this requires a universal norm of what musicality represents. The understanding of musicality is, however, tied to a socio-cultural understanding of the concept. It is therefore important to investigate what social factors, norms and values affect people in a society, in their way of estimating, valuing and understanding music and music education. A central issue is the question of what constitutes the concept of normal musicality in a society. Musicality may be understood in a number of ways, such as talent, ability or as an intelligence (Gardner, 1983), for instance. Some people argue that musicality is inherited, whereas others state that it is a skill that is best developed in a musical environment. Musicality can be regarded as a one-dimensional ability, but it may also be regarded as a rounded, holistic ability, which often depends on the societal and contextual expectations (Wallin, 2002). Welch (2005) argues that all people engage with music, as it is an integrated part of our social and cultural environment. According to Welch, musicality is part of the general human design. However, people are not musically identical, due to different musical opportunities in life. O'Flynn (2005) suggests that every person has a unique musical personality and that people's musical diversity arises from experiences of how music is valued and practised in families, communities, schools and the wider society.

Hargreaves (1996) suggests that music, hence musicality, can be regarded both as a highly specialised skill, as well as a general and universal expression. The tension between these is very evident in music education. In many societies there is a long tradition of specialist education, where 'talented' pupils are given tuition in traditional orchestral instruments, and

where they reach high levels of achievements. General music education, on the other hand, has as a main principle that music can be performed, composed, and enjoyed by all pupils at all levels. The goal is musical understanding and enjoyment rather than expert skill. Ruddock & Leong (2005) argue that human musicality is often researched as musical ability. However, like Welch (2005), they refer to a wider perspective on musicality as being a general human feature, an understanding which has gradually gained currency during the last decades, much due to Blacking's (1973) research concerning musical competence.

If music is considered to be a human ability, this itself implies that there is a possibility of musical disability. Musical disability is often expressed in terms of tone deafness, lack of notation skills, or rhythmical difficulty. Within the discipline of special education there is currently a discussion about the distinction between the terms dysfunction and handicap, and the way society understands and reacts to these two concepts. The values underpinning the curricula of many countries suggest that dysfunction be dealt with from a relational perspective. This means that educational praxis should aim to diminish the effects of the dysfunction for the individual by modifying the environment. The World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning (ICF), recognises that it is environmental factors which prevent people from full participation rather than the dysfunction itself. The concepts of being musically able or not are social representations that are particularly apparent in various Western societies (Bjørkvold, 1996; Wallin, 2002; Welch, 2005). However, relational aspects, i.e. the relation of the environment to the difficulty with regard to musical development, is generally not discussed and assessed within these societies.

The relational perspective can be contrasted with a categorical perspective. From a categorical view point, the individual is the holder of the problem [dysfunction] and not the surrounding environment. The individual is considered not to fulfil the standards for what is considered to be normal in his/her society. From a categorical perspective therefore, the dysfunction could easily be considered a handicap. Conversely representatives of a relational perspective argue for a societal responsibility. The problem should not be the responsibility of the individual. The concept of handicap is produced in the interaction with the environment and therefore the environment should change to accommodate and diminish the dysfunction.

So what then is the connection between musicality and a relational perspective? Musicality is defined by its context and can be described as a quality, knowledge or ability. A teacher's actions are influenced by the opinions and experiences of musical standards within a socio-cultural context, which he/she accepts as 'normal'. Music education is therefore constructed by the social norms and values that are central to the social environment in which it is situated. Definitions of musicality may be very different, especially when defined by people from various cultural contexts. What is considered to represent musicality in one context, might not be regarded as musical in another. Consequently standards in defining musicality vary depending on the cultural environment. It can therefore be said to be formed and generated in its socio-cultural context.

A number of people have, for different reasons, musical dysfunctions, such as, rhythmical difficulties, or problems in singing in tune with others. But are they 'unmusical'? Do they have what might be considered a musical 'handicap'? Is it perhaps possible with the right type of intervention to overcome this dysfunction? From a relational stand point, being unmusical or musically handicapped, is a construction made through interaction with the surroundings. The task for music education, which a variety of curricula impose, is therefore to provide adequate music education in order to diminish any musical dysfunctions. This area is particularly interesting in relation to the musical socialisation of student-teachers. Opinions about musicality and musical ability are easily passed on from teacher to students, and may influence the musical socialisation at various levels. There might be a link between a teacher's own musical confidence and the views he/she conveys to his/her students regarding musicality and musical competence. Two examples of research which exemplifies the consequences of a relational versus a categorical view are Holden & Button (2006) who report on the lack of musical confidence, and a self-perception of not being musical among non-specialist music teachers. This is also a topic discussed by Young (2001) and is further discussed in the review of the literature in Chapter 3. Hence, this is an important aspect to consider with regard to a relational versus a categorical perspective on musicality and musical competence in education.

**An 'in the space between' perspective**

During teacher education, student-teachers may shift their perspectives on music, musicality and music education, as a result of interactional experiences that affect previously held beliefs and convictions about music. The impact of teacher education can therefore challenge

a person's concepts of musicality and the facets of musical value. There is also a likelihood that there might be a shift in the understanding of the role and function of music education in society as well as the role of a music teacher.

Music and dance play essential parts in children and young people's everyday life. Lundberg *et al.* (2000) describe the dialectic relationship between music as an expression of significant changes in society, and music as having the potential to cause societal changes. One example might be the changed gender patterns within musical practice reflecting similar changes in the wider society. For instance women's increased representation of traditional male musical roles and genres such as composers, producers and conductors, or the changing cycle of men as represented as vocalists and dancers in Western popular music, which may in a previous era have been regarded as more of a female role. The dialectic relationship between musical and societal changes of music, however, can also be linked to music as an implicit or explicit transmitter of political issues and values, particularly in countries where the spoken word is highly controlled. When things cannot be said they can often be conveyed through song or instrumental performance.

Teachers generally tend to teach the way they were taught themselves, which may be particularly relevant for music education (Sundin, 1988; Bouij, 1998). This assumption indicates that teachers might presume that music learning consists of a certain pattern of set techniques. These represent values and patterns in relation to music as a fixed object. However, in people's musical interaction with their environment, new values and models are generated and previous structures cease, or transform. Music education can therefore be considered as a process, which is affected by socio-cultural influences.

Musical learning processes in today's society are often generated in the interaction between the media and live musical arenas. These processes, when formal and informal musical competences are intertwined, increase the role and relevance of music as an identity marker as well as a social tool in education.

Within every socio-cultural context there are co-existing people who constantly interact with each other and also with a set of agreed knowledge and values. The individuals in each socio-cultural context also negotiate with the outside world. These encounters with 'the world beyond' the familiar context, generate a space between previous and new experiences. In this

'space between', new ways of thinking and acting towards music and music education are developed, when previous opinions and actions are confronted, reconsidered or proved. Blumer (1986) implies that the individual constantly takes part in an intra-personal interaction, which means that we do not only react to outside factors, but also reflect upon our own experiences.

## Summary

The conceptual framework of this thesis encompasses the connections between social representations, including common-sense knowledge, and the understandings and practices of music and music education. The social formation of a person's opinions and beliefs in connection to music, can be seen to be closely linked to theories of social representations. The model of interacting 'experience stores' leads to an understanding of three aspects of music which are at the heart of these experiences; musicality, musical value and music practice. An understanding of how this is achieved is gained through considering the social recognition of musicality. The issues concerning ethnicity, class and recognition of differences, provide an insight into how and why people place a value on certain music and music practices. These particular issues can be examined through the three suggested theoretical perspectives of how people interact with the world and the music within this world, which are; a *comparative perspective, a relational (versus a categorical) perspective* and an *'in the space between' perspective.*

# CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

## Introduction

This chapter outlines previous research in areas connected to student-teachers' musical socialisation. It begins with an overview of research into the ways in which musicality may be represented in society, followed by a section on the relationship between musical competence and musical confidence. Two interrelated parts follow, one on the various ways in which musical competency is understood, and the other identifying roles and uses of music. The distinction between the two concepts of socialisation and identity is then discussed. A variety of research dealing with the inclusive or exclusive nature of music education and the influence this has on the development of musical identities in the school environment is then considered. Research on family influence and the construction of musical identities, in addition to the variety of musical role-taking within families, form the penultimate part of the chapter. The chapter closes with a review of music and national identities and of the potential of the musical classroom to ameliorate musical deprivation and inequality.

## Various perceptions and common-sense understandings of musicality

The ways in which musicality is represented in a society play a significant role in how the content and practice of music education are formed, understood and passed on in society. Robert Walker (1996) draws attention to some essential aspects concerning the relationship between general assumptions of musicality as being an innate quality, and the consequences this has for music education.

> If musical ability appears in only a few, why, then, are we educating all children in music in our schools? Should we not simply identify those with ability, as research indicates, and eliminate those without it because they would obviously not benefit from musical instruction? Again we cannot have it both ways. We cannot talk of musical ability which implies an uneven distribution across any populace and of an education for everyone in music, unless we educate the masses towards different educational goals than those with innate musical ability. But there is a more profound problem which needs addressing. Why are we in the west so concerned with musical ability? Few other cultures see musical ability as something specially endowed on a few (Walker, 1996).

Brändström (1997) points to the fact that quite a large number of people consider themselves to be non-musical. Their self-conceptions regarding musicality have often been shaped and established by their teachers at an early age at school. The effect of a teacher's negative responses to a student's musical ability may lead him/her to distance him/herself from musical circumstances, resulting in a sense of being musically 'disqualified'. Teachers of music hence have a great responsibility in considering these circumstances, and acting in such ways that their students do not lose their musical confidence, but instead are encouraged to develop musically.

Ryner (1995; 1999) and Bouij (1998) both independently emphasise how teachers' approaches to the teaching of music are strongly connected to their own experiences with music. In *The Janus-Face of the Subject of Music* (1995), Ryner investigates previous experiences of music as a school subject in a group of Swedish student-teachers. For some of these students, music as a school subject represented an enjoyable subject; for others, it was a severe source of performance anxiety. For these intending teachers, those early experiences are still vivid today, which affect the way these student-teachers think and act in relation to music and music education.

Welch's (2001; 2005) comment, used as part of the conceptual framework of this study (Chapter 2), that people are not musically identical, poses a challenge for music education to develop each individual's musicality. He suggests that "early enculturation can both foster and hinder musical development and the realization of our musical potential." (Welch, 2005, p. 117). He particularly points to the effects that negative comments from teachers can have on a person's musical confidence. Welch (2005) means that such comments arise from several false assumptions from the teachers, concerning musical development, and may generate a sense of being humiliated in front of friends and peers, which "can lead to life-long self-perception of musical disability." (*Ibid.*, p.118).

Brändström (1997) has investigated the attitudes and beliefs about musicality in a group of Swedish music teachers and students, and he argues that musicality appears to be comprehended as a multi-facet concept. He identifies two chief interpretations of musicality recognised in the Western world. One could be termed a traditional concept of musicality, representing the beliefs that musicality is a unique 'gift'. The consequence of a 'traditional' view of musicality can result in a categorical assessment of musical ability, as 'you are either

musical or you are not'. During the last decades, however, a contrasting view of musicality has developed, where the personal experience and understanding of music and musical activities are emphasised. This perspective represents a broader and a 'relativistic view' of musicality, and Brändström defines this as the other chief perspective on musicality. This relational or relativistic view on musicality has become influential, particularly among many educationalists, since it aims to represent dialogue, mutual benefit and self-expression in the area of music. Creativity is also one of the key features in this view of musicality. While Brändström's work is carried out in the area of music education, it is possible to link his concepts of an absolute and/or relativistic view on musicality to Lundberg and Ternhag's (1996) description of social recognition of musicality.

These two perspectives on musicality described above, can symbolise two opposite opinions on musicality. On the other hand, as Brändström (1997) suggests, these two contradictory perspectives on musicality seem to exist in parallel within music teacher education, and they therefore equally shape the intending music teachers' understanding of musicality. He defines the two perspectives as an 'absolute idea about musicality' and a 'relativistic view on musicality'. Brändström's theories on the two different understandings of musicality as absolute or relativistic fit well into the relational or categorical perspective of musicality, referred to earlier in this thesis. The ability of people to hold these two contradictory opinions at the same time although perhaps within different contexts, is also an example of people being in the 'space between'.

According to Brändström (1997), it seems to be a widespread understanding in the Western world, that being musical entails a certain amount of effort and efficiency, particularly within the field of singing and instrument playing and is often described in such terms as being able to pick up a tune, to have a good musical memory and a fine sense of rhythm. Below is a model of the contrasting views on musicality proposed by Brändström (1997, p. 16).

| Absolute view on musicality | Relativistic view on musicality |
|---|---|
| innate | achieved |
| a few gifted | everyone |
| skill | experience |
| measurable | not measurable |
| reproduction | creativity |
| efficiency | understanding |

**Table 1: Translation of Brändström's (1997) illustration of two views on musicality**

Nowadays, the relativistic view on musicality seems to be well-established, and informs the music curricula of compulsory education in both Ireland and Sweden. However, Brändström as well as Alexandra Lamont (2002), argue that an 'absolute view' on musicality is fairly widespread in non-compulsory, extra curricular music education.

In music teacher education, Brändström suggests that the two perspectives seem to co-exist, often due to the fact that the music educators themselves are also professional musicians; hence they pass their own musical opinions and beliefs on to the student-teachers. Another theory connected to the fact that the educators are also professional musicians, is that the music student-teacher often aims to become a professional musician and to combine this with a professional career as a teacher. This is also supported by Bouij's studies (1998; 2004).

Norwegian musicologist Bjørkvold (1991; 1996) suggests that continuous experiences and involvement in musical activities are crucial to maintain and develop the innate musical ability all people have from birth. He argues that in Western societies these circumstances are not recognised or accentuated, and therefore musical ability is not maintained and developed among people in general, only among a few. In other [musical] societies, however, people generally may maintain and develop their musical abilities as a result of frequent and inclusive musical encounters.

## Musical competence and confidence

The discussion above, concerning music education students, highlights the reality of non-specialist music teachers also. Non-specialist music teachers may not identify themselves either as music teachers or as musicians. Several studies have indicated that non-specialist music teachers do not consider themselves to have sufficient musical competence to teach the

subject well (Hennessy, 2000; Young, 2001; Holden & Button, 2006). This is an opinion linked to their society's common-sense understanding of music and who is musical.

There seems to be a common assumption that when considering music education, we are dealing with different level of competencies. Non-specialist music teachers, for instance, do not usually consider themselves competent enough to carry out a specialist's task, but are teaching music as a part of a holistic curriculum. Hennessy (2000), Young (2001) and Holden & Button (2006) point to their findings of non-specialist teachers often experiencing a lack of confidence in teaching music in general education, even though their task is a general task rather than a specialist task. These implications suggest that for the teaching of music, it may be important to consider the teacher's perception of his/her musical competence (including the familiarisation with and development of musical skills). This has consequences for the development of musical confidence. If a teacher is unsure of his/her skill in music it will be difficult to teach that subject with confidence.

Considering the theory of social representations, one may expect that 'professional' ideas about musicality and music education (i.e. the ideas of the music specialists or musicians) are the most highly regarded representations in this particular area. If musicality is generally understood according to the 'absolute view' described by Brändström (1997), the consequence might be that a student-teacher who does not consider him/herself to have an innate talent for music may lack musical confidence. There is also a danger that a teacher's fragile, or non-existent musical self-confidence may be transmitted both in an open and/or concealed way to his/her students. A teacher may undermine a student's musical development by assessing that the student is not 'musical enough'. If, according to his/her ideas on musical talent, the student does not immediately 'prove' to have a musical 'talent', for example a good singing voice, or a quick ability in playing an instrument, the child/student may then receive a negative response, or none at all, from the teacher. The student then is likely to feel let down in his/her musical endeavours. Such a scenario may be the result of the teacher's belief that 'you are either musical or you are not'. With regard to teachers' responses to musical endeavours, Brändström (1997) also argues that positive feed-back on musical involvement from an early age and onwards is likely to have an important impact on the individual's musical development. The perception of 'being good' at something, such as music, leads a person into continuing engagement with music and a cycle of confirmation of musicality.

### Various musical competencies

Hargreaves (1996) refers to music researcher Stefani's model (1987) of musical competencies. A distinction is made between 'high' and 'popular' musical competencies. High musical competence is described as dealing with areas of music that demand precise technical or artistic skills, and Hargreaves exemplifies these areas with opera or 'classical' music. 'Popular' musical competence, on the other hand, signifies a more global and functional social practice of music. The examples given by Hargreaves are popular music in restaurants and public places. These contrasting perspectives provide a clear idea of the range and contrasts of musical competencies in a society. However, in present-day society the picture is slightly more complex, and not only opera and 'classical' music represent high technical and artistic skills. One may argue that a number of contemporary musical styles are also embraced by the musical discourse of 'high', specialist musical competence. In addition, pieces of classical music are often played in a number of everyday situations such as in shops and in restaurants. Cook (1990) argues that when music is played in shops, restaurants and airport lounges for instance, it is produced in a particular way to suit the purpose, and works as 'canned music'. It is used for a particular 'de-musical' purpose, and the music is heard, rather than listened to.

> There is a good deal of hard evidence that music heard in this manner - heard rather than listened to - has an influence on the mood of the listeners; hence its widespread use in industrial or office environments as a means of enhancing productivity./...../ Many people are irritated when they hear Mozart in the supermarket, not because they find the sound intrusive or unpleasant, but because they feel that it is in some sense a betrayal of Mozart's music to hear it and yet not give it the attention that it deserves. The surroundings, in other words, devalue the music: they cause it to be heard in such a way that it ceases really to be music at all, and becomes indistinguishable from Muzak (Cook, 1990, p. 13).

Cook describes above a scenario which by some people would be regarded as an unconscious form of 'music consumption'. Others, however, may define it as an everyday interaction with music, representing a general sense of well-being and accompaniment to other daily activities.

## Uses and functions of music

Music can function in both social and aesthetic ways. These can both be present at a practical musical level or when music is being used for other purposes such as spiritual or ideological

(Georgii-Hemming & Stålhammar, 2006). The possible functions of music are important to consider in relation to the area of music education, particularly since the emphasis on various functions of music has changed over time in education. Today, in both the Irish and Swedish curricula (Government of Ireland, 1999a; 1999b; Skolverket, 2000), the social aspects of music education have become increasingly central, and a focus on music as a means for the wider development of the child. Furthermore, music as a part of the individual's self-expression is perceived to be a vital function of music as part of education. In the interaction between these various functions, the individual's (musical) identity is believed to be formed.

Within the area of ethnomusicology, Merriam (1964) suggests that the *uses* and *functions* of music are central issues in this field. The early literature of ethnomusicology dealt with music's *uses* and *functions* in societies in a way that the two were more or less understood as inseparable or identical (Merriam, 1964; Nettl, 1983). Merriam, however, implies that there is an important distinction of meaning between *uses* and *functions* of music, although the two concepts are complementary. Merriam (*ibid.*) investigates the two concepts from a researcher's perspective, and he pictures the *uses* of music as something that is obvious, and often practical, for the person who participates in the musical act (as a performer or listener), whereas the *functions*, are considered to be more implicit, and are not necessarily as directly applied and comprehendible for 'the musical participant', as are the *uses* of music (Lundberg & Ternhag, 1996). Concerning the *uses* of music, Merriam explains that it ranges from

> the ways in which music is employed in human society, to the habitual practice or customary exercise of music either as a thing in itself or in conjunction with other activities (Merriam, 1964, p. 210).

*Functions* of music, however, are interpreted by Merriam to entail "what music does for and in human society" (Merriam, 1964, p. 219). He proposes ten *functions* of music that aim to have general applicability in various (cultural) contexts. These functions are

- emotional expression
- aesthetic enjoyment
- entertainment
- communication
- symbolic representation

- physical response
- enforcing conformity to social norms
- validation of social institutions and religious rituals
- contribution to the continuity and stability of culture
- contribution to the integration of society

Ethnomusicologist Nettl (1983), responds to Merriam's distinctions between the *uses* and *functions* of music, and argues that the list is "broad and diverse". He agrees, though, that while there is a clear line between the *uses* and *functions* of music, a distinction could not always be made. To exemplify this, Nettl mentions the *use* in entertainment, in which, according to him, the *uses* and the *functions* of music are identical. This example seems too general, as a particular piece of music may be perceived by some as entertainment, while for others the same piece may have a political or commercial underpinning.

A comment on Merriam's and Nettl's ideas concerning the uses and functions of music, and how these may relate to music education, is appropriate. The distinction of *uses* in music, can be explained on a micro-sociological level, such as within the area of music education. In music education, *the uses* of music can be understood in praxial, or hands-on ways (Regelski, 2006). So, for music to comprise *functions,* it also requires *users*, or *doers* (Lundberg, *et al.*, 2000), for example persons who, through craft and actions, use and communicate music. Hence, the *uses* of music constitute the foundations of musical *functions* in a society, and the task for compulsory music education is to enable people to develop as musical *users* or *doers.*

The recent curricula of Ireland and Sweden (Government of Ireland, 1999a; 1999b; Skolverket, 2000) can be interpreted to reflect the idea of various functions of music in a society, and this is at present what could be described as 'common-sense knowledge', or social representations, about music and music education in Ireland and Sweden. Yet, within a particular cultural context, certain functions of music may keep the community together in interconnected ways. In her study of the transmission of music in Irish culture, McCarthy (1999) argues,

> As a cultural practice, music functions in highly complex and powerful ways to advance ideologies and to form and transform the identity of communities (McCarthy, 1999, p. 13).

In order to elucidate how various functions of music and music education interplay within a community, and also how these functions are transmitted, McCarthy (1999) has developed a thematic framework, which is constructed of four interrelated perspectives on music and musical practice. These perspectives are:

- Music as a culture (a foundation and motivation for transmission)
- Music as canon (a content and set of values that is transmitted)
- Music as community (a context of transmission)
- Music as communication (a system of methods, media, and technologies used in transmission)

These perspectives explain how social representations of music (and music education) operate in different societies.

## Music, musicking and music education

Small (1998) first coined the concept of *musicking* as a way to describe in the English language the practice, or the actual 'doing' of music. He defines *musicking* or *'to music'* like this:

> To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing (Small, 1998, p. 9).

Froehlich (2007) refers to Small's definition of *musicking/to music,* and further emphasises *musicking* as a purposeful social act of music-making, where both performers and listeners are equally involved. Elliott (1995) stresses the actual performing part of 'to music', e.g. playing instruments and singing, and equals this to *musicing* (Elliott's spelling). Elliot's definition, though, can then be understood as narrower than Small's, since it chiefly focuses on practical performances of music.

A verb in the English language was required for the practical and social aspects of music, hence their constructions of *musicking* or *musicing.* (Small, 1998, Elliot, 1995). In the Swedish language, however, a verb for the practical aspects of music-making, *musiciera* has existed for a long time. The closest definition in English to the general understanding of

*musicera* in Swedish, will probably be Elliott's definition, where the actual performing part of 'to music' is emphasised.

Swedish musicologist Lilliestam (2006) emphasises that music is a social and cultural act, and he suggests an even broader definition of *musicking*, than that of Small. Lilliestam argues that *musicking* encompasses all activities in which music is incorporated, and exemplifies these as *listening, singing, playing, composing, improvising, dancing, talking about music, reading about music, collecting music(s), constantly "having music on one's mind" or remembering music within oneself* (translation from Lilliestam, 2006, p. 24).

Small criticises the ways in which school music is practised, and underlines the importance of music education entailing the type of *musicking,* which is purposeful for the students. If this is done, it will result in an interplay and interconnection between the social and musical meanings in music education (Small,1998; Froehlich, 2007).

The current curricula/syllabi for music in both Ireland and Sweden, do place an emphasis on what can be described as *musicking*. As a general description of music in a child-centred curriculum, the following description can be read in the Irish curriculum:

> As a collaborative, interpersonal activity, music develops social skills through group performing or composing projects where ideas, instruments or specific skills are shared (Government of Ireland, 1999a, p. 3).

The practical aspects of active music learning are also considered:

> This enables the child to gain first-hand experience of what it means to be a listener, performer and composer in the world of music (Government of Ireland, 1999b, p. 8).

In the Swedish steering document for music education in compulsory school, the *Syllabus of Music*, the following definition can be read:

> The subject of Music aims at giving each pupil a desire and the opportunity of developing their musical skills, to experience that a knowledge of music is grounded in, liberates and strengthens their own identity, both socially, cognitively and emotionally (Skolverket, 2000).

The following examples are some proposals quoted from the Swedish syllabus (Skolverket, 2000), as goals to aim for in compulsory music education which relate to *musicking* and the development of musical and social skills in the 'doing' of music.

> develop a knowledge of instruments and song as the basis for singing and playing music individually and in groups and for their further development in music
>
> develop confidence in their own ability to sing and become aware of the opportunities it provides for development and its social importance
>
> develop the ability to create their own music to communicate their thinking and ideas
>
> use their knowledge of music to play and sing together and thus develop responsibility and co-operation skills

The Irish curriculum prescribes similar activities, which is comprehensively described in the Teacher Guidelines for Music in Arts Education (Government of Ireland, 1999a).

Perhaps an obstacle within formal music education is that it is concerned with evaluation of the students' musical efforts. Small indicates that *musicking*, or 'to music' is not about assessment, but about a social and musical encounter, and that it is an "investigating tool." Hence, the practising of *musicking* as part of school music is a challenge for music education.

**Societal interest in knowledge**

German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas (1972; 1974) suggests that society has three major interests in knowledge; a technical interest, a practical or a communicative interest, and an emancipatory interest (Månsson, 2003). These three interests in knowledge, have their foundation in three key spheres of human life, which encompass:

- Work - to technically learn to master and predict nature.
- Understanding - To communicate verbally and culturally with other people.
- Liberation - To release oneself from oppressing and hierarchical structures.

One particular aim of this study is to investigate whether the participants' understandings of music and music education reflect these three societal interests or not.

***Socialisation and identity construction***

Canadian sociologist Brian Roberts (2000) remarks that there is often a confusion in the terminology of sociological concepts in music education research. In particular the concepts of socialisation and identity seem to be on occasion confused. While investigating the relationship between the construction of student-teachers' musical identity and their enculturation and socialisation processes, this literature review aims to deal with previous research in the areas of musical identity, since this highlights how student-teachers' musical and social processes can be explained and understood.

> While socialization is limited to a situated reality and can certainly have a wider field of influence than the isolated location of the social unit, identity construction takes place for an individual within all spheres of one's existence. Therefore the complex identity construction of any individual will be much more global than any single specific society in which that individual operated. Furthermore, one's identity does not necessarily totally conform to the socialisation model nor accept all that is being 'taught' socially (Roberts, 2000, p. 56).

This study deals with two groups of student-teachers and their musical socialisation, and it is therefore important to examine what different mechanisms will influence the socialisation process. The individual's identity constructions are part of a whole pattern of external and internal influences and interactions, which affect the individual's socialisation process in a particular area. As Roberts (2000) points out, the individual does not necessarily accept what is being 'taught' socially, due to his/her complex identity constructions. This is particularly interesting in relationship to musical socialisation. Swanwick (1999) emphasises the importance of the individual's 'space between', which can be described as our own experience of the world, and a 'direct' understanding of a phenomenon, in this case, musical situations and musical experiences. 'The space between' can function as an independent area in which the individual is not only adapting to what is being taught socially, but also developing his/her own relation to a phenomenon. This could also be described as developing a self identity in relation to music rather than a social identity.

**Nature/nurture and the influence of teachers**

In order to acquire a deeper understanding of how environmental factors shape a person's musical development and identity, it is illuminating to examine successful musicians' experiences from childhood and adolescence in connection to music. Karen Burland and Jane

Davidson (2002) investigated the experiences that have influenced the lives and careers of a group of [Western] 'talented' musicians. A key issue in such a study is whether musical development happens due to innate, genetic factors, or by environmental factors. According to Burland and Davidson, previous research has found that in some cases innate factors do have a role to play in relation to musical development. They caution, however, that this is difficult to prove definitively. In their study they decided to focus on environmental aspects, as they have found strong support for the influence life experiences and environmental factors have as a significant part in a person's musical development.

In Burland and Davidson's study (2002), the influence of other people, the impact of institutions, and finally the importance of motivation, are found to be vital factors for the musical development of the individuals interviewed. So, for a successful musical development of the individual, the role of the teacher and the feedback the teacher provides seem to be important. The interaction with likeminded peers and intrinsic motivation have also proved to be significant factors for the successful musical development of the individual. Burland and Davidson also refer to earlier research, which found that the first music teachers of successful musicians are:

> perceived positively in terms of personal characteristics, as friendly and chatty, and as a good player. Conversely, for those [music students] that had given up, the first teacher was viewed as unfriendly, and as a bad player (Burland & Davidson, 2002, p. 124).

These findings suggest that in the stage of early musical development, a friendly interaction between the teacher and the student is highly motivating for the child. However, as the child grows older and gradually achieves more musical autonomy, it seems that the particular musical role-modelling of the teacher, becomes more important to the musician-to-be than the personal relationship between the teacher and the student.

### Inclusive agendas and contradictory representations in music education

Music is a compulsory school subject in most countries, and Thorsén (2002) argues that there are two main objectives in including music as part of the contemporary curriculum. One objective is the developmental aspects of the child, where the focus is on motor, emotional and cognitive skills. In this context, music itself plays a subordinate part, and is there to support other skills. The other objective, according to Thorsén, is to practise music education

in a way where the social and communicative aspects of a child's development are in focus. These aspects encompass "the child's [musical] socialisation process and construction of identity", as the child is a part of the society and of the different groups within that society. Lamont (2002) deals with the latter aspect in her study and states:

> Music clearly does enable children to define themselves in relation to others. However, at present, classroom music helps some children to develop a sense of group identity and togetherness, but for other children the activities at school beyond the classroom lead them to develop a sense of group difference (Lamont, 2002, p. 56).

According to Lamont, compulsory music education aims for an inclusive agenda. In music education overall, however, parallel ways exist of considering how music and it is practised. Lamont suggests that some of these ways operate in less democratic forms such as in instrumental and extra-curricular tuition on musical instruments. Lamont also suggests that these parts of music education may be more related to an elitist and individual approach to music education and musical development, than the general curricula prescribe. If this is the case, it is a problematic issue, as children, according to the English curriculum (Qualification and Curriculum Authority, 2006), are expected to define themselves, as well as to develop a sense of group identity and togetherness through music education at school. Since a hidden curriculum in music may exist, there is a risk that all children will not acquire equal perceptions of what music is valued, who is considered to be musical, and how musicality develops. Another issue in relation to Lamont's research is that students who express the most positive musical identities are those who participate in extra-curricular music education. These students are also the ones who are most appreciative towards compulsory music education and the music teachers. Considering the rich involvement of these students in various musical activities, Lamont's findings may suggest that these students are seeking more than what compulsory music lessons supply. The quantity of compulsory music education might not be sufficient enough for students to develop an understanding of and sense for music. This is of significant importance, as school is an influential milieu for the transmission of social representations and social experiences. In essence, the school is one of the important contexts where formative opinions and beliefs about music, and different musics, value, status and functions are shaped. .

**Musical identities and the school environment**

Lamont (2002) draws an interesting picture of children's developing musical identities in relation to their musical experiences at school. She describes the relationship and the differences between the child's personal identity on one hand, and the child's social identity on the other hand. The personal identity is salient in early childhood, as personal features seem to dominate young children's more global identities, whereas the social identity gradually becomes more influential in middle childhood and adolescence, since the child at that age grows to be more concerned and aware of group comparison. This, in turn, is important for the shaping of children's understanding of themselves and others, and is therefore influential for the progress of their musical socialisation. The development of identity is shaped by the circumstances in which the children grow up; in other words, of contextual influences. From the age of 7 onwards, being a member of a group is of importance in relation to the development of a musical identity, according to Lamont. In adolescence then, attitudes and emotions in relation to music seem to be the most central part of the musical identification.

**The family influence on children's constructions of musical identities.**

In the consideration of the conceptual framework, (Chapter 2), Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theoretical model of the Ecology of Human Development pointed to the family as one important micro system. In this system the child is surrounded by significant, or key, others, who are highly important for the child's development, especially in the early years. Borthwick and Davidson (2002) emphasise the parents' and family birth order as key influences in the child's construction of a musical identity. Parents' musical opinions play an important role for the young child, and the child will either come to replicate or amend these. It also seems to be the case that the family birth order and the parents' interaction with the individual child within the family context, play an important part in the shaping of a child's musical identity.

Borthwick and Davidson (2002) refer to Byng-Hall's (1998) family script theory in their investigation of family influences on the development of musical identities. According to Byng-Hall (1998), the family's attitudes, legacies and myths are significant issues, which are important for the child's socialisation and enculturation in society, and which are provided by the child's key or significant others (i.e. parents and siblings). This theory illustrates the patterns of the interplay within the families and their shared expectations about what roles are

to be played in various contexts, and how the family members get to know their roles. Family scripts may have a trans-generational influence, which means that family values are passed down between generations. From a trans-generational point of view, the idea of a family script may sound slightly deterministic. However, Borthwick and Davidson's study (2002) reveals interesting aspects on how musical identities are uniquely supported (or not supported) in a study of 12 families.

Musical practices and musical attitudes are rewarded differently in different family contexts. This supports the theory of a relational perspective on musical development. Borthwick and Davidson describe how, for some families, music was at the heart of family sharing. In some families, children received appreciation for their reliability in their practice activities, and the parents mainly focused on knowledge and technical skills. To some parents the child's musical knowledge was regarded as a sign of a cultural competence, which may be perceived to be an attractive feature for the parents. In several cases, particular Western classical music was considered to be a challenging intellectual skill as well a gateway to good social encounters.

In Borthwick and Davidson's study (2002), the parents' diverse, and sometimes contradictory approaches were discovered concerning the relationship between music and career encouragement. Although music was considered an important activity by all the parents in the study, some of them were clear that they did not want a musical career for their children, probably due to concerns regarding financial security. In these cases the contradictory attitudes by the parent had a slightly confusing effect on the children. Conversely, the other parents had a musical career for their children as a main target for their musical activities. In some families the 'musically talented' parents paid extra attention to the child that was reckoned to have 'inherited' his/her musicality. The effect of this was that the other children in the family did not perceive themselves to be as musical as their siblings, and instead questioned their own musical identities. An aspect that developed the whole family musically, was when all family members were willing to share various musical experiences and tastes, and this became a mutual family matter.

## Musical roles and identities – doers, knowers and makers

Two aspects of the practice of music in Western societies in the 20th and 21st centuries are, on one hand, the emphasis on the importance of individual identities, and on the other hand, the separation of musical roles. Lundberg *et al.* (2000), attempt to classify the different actors within music in a society, by their aims and goals. *Doers* are the ones who play an instrument, sing or create the music (including composers), i.e. the ones who 'make music'. *Knowers* are described as those who know about music: their main aim is the possession of knowledge. The third group they identify with the term *makers,* those whose principle motives are to distribute and sell the work of the doers and knowers. The word 'makare' in Swedish is derived from craft trades such as shoemaker or watchmaker and so a more useful and descriptive term might be *trader*. The definitions of musical actors, by Lundberg *et al.*, can also be recognised in Green's (2001) suggestion of three main areas of musical practice. Those are *the production of music,* which involves "who produces what music and how they go about it", *the distribution of music*, and finally *the reception of music* which deals with how people use music.

Perspectives of individual roles and specialised practices of music presented by Lundberg *et al.*. and Green, are interesting to contrast to various musical practices around the world. Kwami (2001) refers to some African musical cultures where the common-sense understanding indicates that all human beings are inherently musical and that musicality is a basic human attribute. This description is also supported in Wallin's (2002) article on music in collective societies as opposed to individualistic societies, as well as by Bjørkvold (1996), who highlights music's social characteristics, and aspects of "togetherness" in collective societies.

As mentioned by Kwami (2001), the concept of music is defined differently by different societies. Bjørkvold (1991) exemplifies this by presenting the concept of *ngoma*, which is Swahili, and identifies an interconnected concept of drum, play and dance, possibly also sung poetry. Similar concepts to *ngoma* exist in other African societies, such as *nkwa* in Nigeria, which encompasses song, dance and play, and *wún* in Cameroon, which represents the interplay of singing and dancing. Related concepts are found in other cultures in the world, for instance, the two united expressions of *pese* and *siva*, song and dance, in Samoa, which always operate as a joint concept (*ibid.*).

**Negotiable musical identities**

Thorsén (2002) recalls that when music first became established as a school subject it was used to secure the hierarchical structure within one single value-system. In the Western world, the aesthetic concept of culture, including music, came to shape the contents and values of music education in the industrialised world. This meant that the music teachers' tasks were to 'refine the cultural taste' of their students, which consequently lead to a stratified approach to music and music education (Thorsén, 2002; Regelski, 2006).

Folkestad (2002) discusses the concepts of national musical identities in relation to cultural musical identities. The latter is described as a musical identity which is formed in groups, who share the same musical preferences, but it is not necessarily connected to a person's national or ethnic relationships. Blacking (1995) suggested the term 'sound group' to describe a similar phenomenon:

> A sound group is a group of people who share a common musical language, together with common ideas about music and its uses (Blacking, 1995, p. 232).

Blacking, however, might have pictured a sound group in a literal way, while Folkestad (2002) seems to argue for a more general idea of cultural 'group-belonging'. The individual can have several cultural identities and he/she may negotiate between these in different contexts (Folkestad, 2002; Dolloff, 2006). Cultural identities are described as having an immediate impact on the theory of musical meaning and musical communication being constructed in a social and interactional context.

Folkestad (2002) argues that human beings may be better able to approach and understand each other by their cultural identities, than inter-ethnically and internationally, since ethnic and national identities are not negotiable in the same way as cultural identities are. This idea is interesting, however, in a more global perspective, which is quite complex, since musical and cultural borders and stratification may be just as firm as ethnic and national boarders and stratification. One needs to consider that, although living in generally globalised, mediatised and, to some extent, multicultural societies, it cannot be assumed that everyone has similar access to multiple cultural influences and to people representing various cultural aspects. There is also a prospect that a person's contact with diverse cultural expressions may be quite

superficial, as many people may not experience musically and culturally diverse environments on a common basis. In that respect, music education has an important task in providing multi-faceted musical experiences and understandings as part of the formation of young people's identities. Such a contribution from music education, would be a vital aspect for education in general, in order to prevent ethnocentric attitudes, or as Thorsén (2001) prefers to call it, 'cultural chauvinism'. In this perspective it is also relevant to relate to Lundberg *et al.* (2000) and Charles Taylor's (1994) research on politics of recognition.

Kwami (2001) suggests that, since the classroom context differs from any other musical context, it has the unique potential to ensure musical equal opportunities in relation to a number of social, ethnic and gender issues within a musical field, which consequently affect the students' and teacher's relationship to music and music practice. Such de-contextualisation of musical activities in a classroom can act as a transformer (Ehn & Löfgren 2001) between previous and new musical experiences. This, in turn can influence new ways of thinking and acting towards music (Swanwick, 1999).

## Summary

The literature review considered social representations of musicality and the consequences of those in music education. A number of sources were found to be particularly useful in illuminating this area. Welch (2005) commented on how a person's musical potential may either develop or become repressed as a consequence of his/her socio-cultural environment. Bjørkvold (1991; 1996) stressed the importance of continuous experiences with music for the development of the innate universal musical ability, which he considers all people to possess. Brändström (1997), Bouij (1998) and Ryner (1995;1999) pointed at the effects of student-teachers' early experiences of music education in relation to them becoming teachers of music, and Brändström suggested that contradictory representations of musicality were implicitly transmitted to student-teachers of music. Hennessy (2000), Young (2001) and Holden & Button (2006) considered the correspondence between non-specialist music teachers' musical confidence and their musical competence, and Hargreaves discussed musical competencies in terms of 'high' and 'popular'.

The literature also revealed and defined a number of issues and concepts that are useful in informing this study. The multi-faceted aspects of music together with an exposure of various functions and uses of music, were discussed by Merriam (1964), Nettl (1983) and Georgii-

Hemming & Stålhammar, 2006. Three spheres of knowledge, as defined by Habermas (in Månsson, 2003) were introduced, which can be used as a way of understanding people's engagement in music and music education. The concept of *musicking* was introduced in the literature, defined by Small (1998) and Lilliestam (2006), and the concept of 'the space between' in relation to music (already introduced as a theoretical lens in the previous chapter), was described by Swanwick (1999).

Roberts (2000) discussed the distinction between the concepts socialisation and identity with regard to the area of music and Thorsén (2002) and Lamont (2002) considered musical development, and the development of musical identities in the school environment. Burland and Davidson (2002) and Borthwick and Davidson (2002) took family influences on the individual's musical identification and growth into account, while a role-identification within the area of music was suggested by Lundberg, *et al.* (2000). Moreover, Green (2001) introduced three main areas of musical practice. Cultural identities in relation to music and music education was commented on by Folkestad (2002) and Thorsén (2001; 2002), while Lundberg, *et al.* (2000) considered different aspects of musical and cultural diversity in a society.

# CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

This is a comparative study of student-teachers in Ireland and Sweden who are preparing for music teaching within general education. When students commence their teacher education they have already formed opinions and beliefs about music and about music in general education. This research investigates these opinions and beliefs, based on previous experiences, which shape student-teachers' attitudes towards music. Among these are, the relative value of particular music genres and practices, the understanding of what behaviours can be understood as musical, beliefs about who is musical and how musicality is transmitted. These opinions and beliefs are formed through their socio-cultural experiences, through individual experiences with music and through personal contact in education with particular teachers' beliefs about and approaches to music. As teachers themselves, the students in turn have the potential to strongly influence attitudes held by their own pupils to music. The transmission of these attitudes and the construction of these beliefs are often implicit and unexamined.

One of the complexities in studying attitudes of student-teachers towards music is whether these attitudes arise from a primarily musical perspective or primarily educational perspective. This research seeks to illuminate and reveal the process of the musical socialisation the student-teachers undergo within and outside education, and to present a way of understanding this process that will contribute to our knowledge of student-teachers and to the process of musical socialisation, as well as assist those in charge of music teacher education.

Froehlich (2007) argues that the area of music education is enfolded in two main societal traditions. One is described as a tradition of "music making, listening, and responding" and the other as "the traditions of education as a societal mandate". Froehlich continues:

> The first tradition holds firmly to music artistry and musicological scholarship, the latter including music sociology. The second tradition, that of education as a field of study, relies mostly on pedagogical principles rooted equally in psychology and sociology (Froehlich, 2007, p. 1).

**Research approach - principles of inquiry**

In outlining the approach to research, one should consider Wolcott's (2001) distinction between the two concepts of 'method' and 'methodology'. According to Wolcott, method refers to fieldwork techniques and analytical procedures, whereas methodology presents underlying principles of inquiry rather than specific techniques. To maintain the integrity of a piece of research, the nature of the research question, rather than a particular research method, is the indicator of which approach and techniques will be the most appropriate for the study.

Every researcher makes a decision whether to apply a predominantly qualitative or quantitative approach to the research methodology, and such a decision is taken with consideration of the area to be researched, and also with regard to the nature of the research questions. Woodford (2002) notes the limitations of quantitative research in studies of the construction of music teacher identity when he comments on one study:

> The reader is informed of how many or what percentage of undergraduates subscribed to a particular opinion or understanding of role-identity, but is left with little sense of how those opinions or understandings are shaped by social forces (Woodford, 2002, p. 680).

The advantage of a 'constructive' methodological approach is that it can reveal previously unknown and unanticipated factors. A significant aspect of a qualitative approach to research methodology is that it encompasses multifaceted social situations, and involves the acceptance of ambiguity and contradictions in a researched area. Maykut and Morehouse (1994), emphasise the value of 'contextual findings', rather than broad generalisations, as an important component in qualitative research.

This particular research deals with the complexity of social, cultural and emotional experiences and understandings in relation to music and music education. In order to approach this complexity, the researcher aimed to follow an explorative path, based on the participants' information. A comprehensive way of investigating perceptions of musicality and music education was therefore decided upon, which also included the researcher immersing herself in the student-teachers' diverse social and cultural contexts. As a consequence of these aspects, a decision was taken by the researcher early in the research

process, that a qualitative approach was the most suitable approach to this study, particularly since it tolerates, and emphasises the strength of, the idea that social existence involves uncertainty.

**Research questions**

The questions addressed in this study are:

- How do the student-teachers describe and value their musical socialisation phases from early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence?
- How do the student-teachers describe and value their experiences in their teacher education programme?
- How do student-teachers describe their perception of formal and informal music learning in their respective communities?
- How do these three dimensions of musical socialisation interact, and hence shape the opinions and beliefs of the student-teachers in this study?

In answering this question data has been gathered in four main areas:

- Socio-cultural influences and the contextual settings (gathered in background questionnaire/written accounts / interviews).
- Experiences of music and music education (gathered in written accounts).
- Experiences from teacher education (gathered in interviews).
- Opinions about music and music education (gathered in interviews).

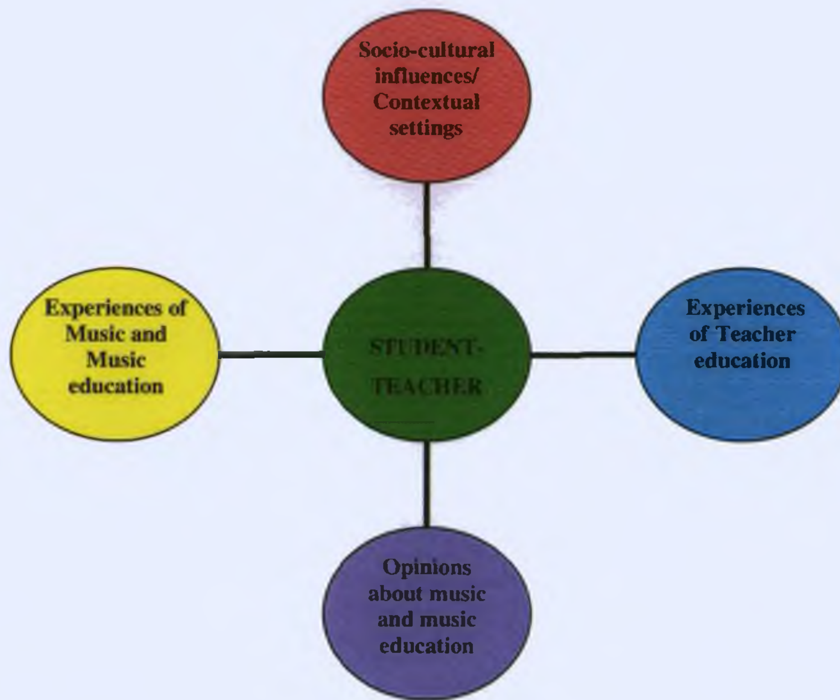


**Figure 4: The research areas**

Chapters 2 and 3 identified a number of issues which need to be considered in the approach and design of this research. These are brought together in the following paragraphs in order to inform the research methodology.

Brändström's (1997) identification of a cyclical process of (music) teaching, and his finding that music student-teachers may hold contradictory views, based on both an *absolute* and a *relative* view of musicality, must be considered in gathering and analysing data in this research. Welch's (2001; 2005) and Wallin's (2002) findings on the factors influencing perceptions of musicality and the consequences for musical practice should be considered within the scope of the data collection. Particularly, the enabling and disabling consequences of perceptions of musicality, and the different attitudes towards musicality between collective and specialised societies must be taken into consideration.

The variety of perspectives on musical competence, as arising from 'high' or 'popular' musical perspectives identified by Hargreaves (1996), or the expectation that music teachers

would develop special rather than general musical competences, as considered by Bouij (1998) and Roberts (1991), should find a place in the research. The issue of the effect these expectations have on a teacher's musical identity should also be considered.

Perspectives on the development of musical self-confidence in student-teachers are an important consideration in this study. Ryner's studies (1995; 1999) of the connection between non-specialist teachers' early memories of music education and their development of musical self-confidence as well as the findings of Young (2001), Hennessy (2000) and Holden and Button (2006) of a low sense of musical self-confidence among non-specialist music teachers, should be taken into account in the design and analysis of the data. Another important aspect of the study is the relationship between a people's perception of musicality, music practice, and the status and functions of music within their society in their development of music confidence. Three theoretical lenses are presented in chapter 2 in this thesis: *a comparative perspective*, a *relational perspective* versus a *categorical perspective*, and an *'in the space between' perspective.* These are useful analytical tools when considering student-teachers' opinions and beliefs on music.

The uses and functions of music in the wider society have consequences for, and resonate within, a more particular educational context. Merriam (1964) distinguishes between uses and function of music, and his listing of ten defined functions of music, might inform the analysis of the data.

McCarthy's (1999) discussion of the transmission processes of music and music education within a culture presents a useful thematic framework for the understanding of these processes. Thorsén (2002), Folkestad (2002), Kwami (2001) and O'Flynn's (2005) research point to the necessity of accommodating a broad understanding of music and musical practice within the design of the research tool and within the analysis of the data gathered.

One key aspect of this research is a comparative dimension (Tate, 2001) between the influences operating in the two different cultural contexts of Ireland and Sweden. Lundberg's *et al.* (2000) identification of the various actors within musical contexts, and Lundberg & Ternhag's (1996) description of various recognition of musical status, provide useful analytical perspectives in making these comparisons. Furthermore, Habermas' (in Månsson,

2003) suggestion of three main societal interests; a technical interest, a practical or a communicative interest, and an emancipatory interest was essential for the data analysis.

Within this study, the aspects of school and family influences are considered as part of the student-teachers' socialisation phases. Lamont's (2002) identification of the impact of the school environment on a person's development of musical identities, together with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theoretical model of the Ecology of Human Development, and Borthwick & Davidson's (2002) findings of the family influence on musical identity construction including the theory of family scripts (Byng-Hall, 1998) strongly inform the research design and analysis.

Stålhammar's (2006b) model of stores of experiences considers the interplay of the individual's emotional experiences with music in relation to his/her social-cultural experiences with music. This model also informs the design and analysis of this study.

This study aims to identify the student-teachers' understanding of the concept of *musicking*, as outlined by Small (1998), Elliott (1995) and recently also Lilliestam (2006), and to establish what factors influence student-teachers in their understandings of music and music education.

**The research group**

It was decided at an early stage of the research that the research group would consist of two sub-groups of student-teachers, one in a college of education in Ireland, and the other within teacher education at a Swedish university. The two groups both consisted of student-teachers who had chosen music education as an elective subject, and their aims were not to become specialist music teachers, but to teach music to children up to the age of 13 in general education. These two groups were chosen in order to ensure comparability between the teacher education systems in both countries[1]. Basic courses in music education are compulsory for all student teachers in Ireland but are elective in Sweden. However, in Ireland a further elective course is also available to students. In order to ensure comparability, students who had deliberately chosen to take courses in general music education were

[1] The system of teacher education in Ireland and Sweden has a number of similarities and differences. These are discussed in Chapter 5, 'The Research Contexts'.

selected for this study in both countries. The two sub-groups comprised existing class groups, and were relatively similar in number (30 Irish and 27 Swedish student-teachers). The most significant general difference between the two groups, at that stage, was that the Irish group consisted of 28 female students and 2 male students, whereas the Swedish group consisted of 17 female and 10 male students. A description of the context of the research and the musical background of the research group follows in the next chapter.

**The researcher's perspective**

The researcher was a lecturer in curriculum music in a Swedish university and was also a research student and a part time lecturer in an Irish college. These various experiences, provided her with a unique opportunity in conducting this particular research, as she gained access to the researched field from an inside/outside perspective, both professionally and culturally.

In this particular study, the fields of music and music education were well known to both the researcher and the informants. An assumption was therefore made that the relation between the researcher and the participants would be of shared values in relation to the research area and the research questions. This was also regarded as a strength within this research, since values, opinions and experiences stated by the participants in this subject area could be communicated in a straight forward way. In essence, a framework of practical and technical terminologies and concepts, in relation to the research questions, were assumed to be shared, which developed a sense of confidence between the researcher and the informants during the course of the data collection. A cautiousness for the intervention of the researcher's 'self' in the research was, however, kept in mind, since a researcher's own identity, background and beliefs may play a part in the data collection and in the analysis of the data (Denscombe, 2003). Wolcott (1999) argues that the researcher, relying on him/herself as the primary research instrument, is an approach which is often labelled as ethnography. Ethnography, according to Wolcott (*ibid.* p. 43), is "a preferred label for an activity that goes by many names", which are exemplified as descriptive research, naturalistic research, and field studies, to mention a few.

**Comparative research**

The researcher had a major interest in carrying out a comparative study in the area of student-teachers' and their relation to music, musicality and music education. At present, the Irish

and the Swedish societies, among others, are undergoing major demographical changes. A comparative study of this kind has the potential to inform education, and music education in particular, about significant implicit and explicit similarities and differences of social and cultural practices in relation to music and music education.

Within the area of music education and student-teachers, few national comparison studies have been carried out previously. Tate (2001) refers to some earlier comparative studies in music education. He urges, however, for comparative research to be carried out in such a way that the issues that are being compared are compatible. In relation to that, Tate states:

> Perhaps one of the greatest barriers in meaningful international and comparative music education studies is the tendency to oversimplify and make inappropriate generalisations. /.../ There comes a point when the differences between entities may be so great that sensible and meaningful comparison becomes difficult, if not impossible (Tate, 2001, p. 230).

An important aspect in this research was to investigate the influences the socio-cultural contexts had on experiences and opinions about music, musicality and music education. It was therefore essential to investigate social representations on music in these societies.

A decision was made by the researcher that Ireland and Sweden would be interesting to compare within a socio-cultural and socio-musical perspective. The reasons were that there are a number of similarities between the Irish and Swedish societies: both are European countries of previous emigration and current immigration, and both have an international profile as countries of successful popular musicians. There are, however, also various differences between the two. Sweden has launched an extensive welfare system, and maintains local art schools with a long tradition of music education. Ireland depends largely on private instrumental tuition and a graded system of exams for music education. These, and further matters of similarities and differences between the two countries, will be considered in the following chapter.

The researcher decided to follow an explorative path, and within the umbrella of qualitative methods, the approaches of ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory are all examples of methods that follow such explorative paths. Ethnography has its origin as a research strategy of social anthropologists, and its focus is to investigate how members of the

group in a culture understand their reality. Recent ethnographical studies often explore phenomena in 'our own society' which has a different focus from studies of geographically and culturally distant societies, carried out by early social anthropologists (Denscombe, 2003). Ethnography deals with understandings of things and phenomena from the point of view of those involved, and a key feature within ethnography is the element of comparison and contrast that is relevant to this study. This may also be recognised as a phenomenological approach, which focuses on how life is experienced by someone, and the researcher tries to explain things as directly experienced by people (*ibid.*).

The research design is partly influenced by grounded theory, where the researcher may deliberately move between different steps or parts of the research. While gathering a rich set of unstructured materials, the researcher follows a pathway to discover descriptive codes in the material, in order to develop conceptual understandings or links from these codes and broaden theoretical interpretations. The continuous shift between different sets of data collected and the data analysis is a significant characteristic of grounded theory. Pigeon and Henwood (1996) describe this formula as a 'flip-flop process'. In using grounded theory as a method, the researcher is often informed about an area and is aware of previous theories that might apply, and within this processes he/she searches for new factors of relevance to the area.

A useful description also for this research is 'methodological eclecticism'. Hammersley (1996) uses this concept, referring to a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods within the one research. However, it is also a term that might convey a blend of qualitative research methods, as in this present study.

**The data collection**

The research groups were accessed through the researcher's own position as a lecturer at a Swedish college and as a guest lecturer at the Irish college. The researcher assured the students in the research groups that they should not feel any pressure to participate, nor was there a risk that their grades would be in any way affected in relation to the study.

The data collection was designed to be carried out in three consequent steps and the model below shows these steps, and how they are interrelated (Fig. 5).

The first step in the data collection was to hand out a background questionnaire to all the participants in the research group. The purpose of the questionnaire was not to gather statistically significant data, but to provide the researcher with useful background information on the cultural and social contexts from which the informants came.
The second step was to ask all the participants in the research group to write individual accounts about their memories of experiences with music and music education during three steps in their childhood/adolescence. From these accounts the researcher then selected 10 Irish and 10 Swedish informants, who were asked if they were interested in participating in individual interviews. The criteria for the selection were based on a range of different and contrasting musical experiences, in order to secure a variety of approaches in the area of music and music education.

When these three steps of the data collection were finished, the researcher organised six focus groups consisting of student-teachers from six different teacher colleges, three in Ireland, and three in Sweden. The meetings with these groups were carried out to deepen the researcher's own understanding of the field, as well as to compare and contrast the data from the research group with the focus group as a verification process.

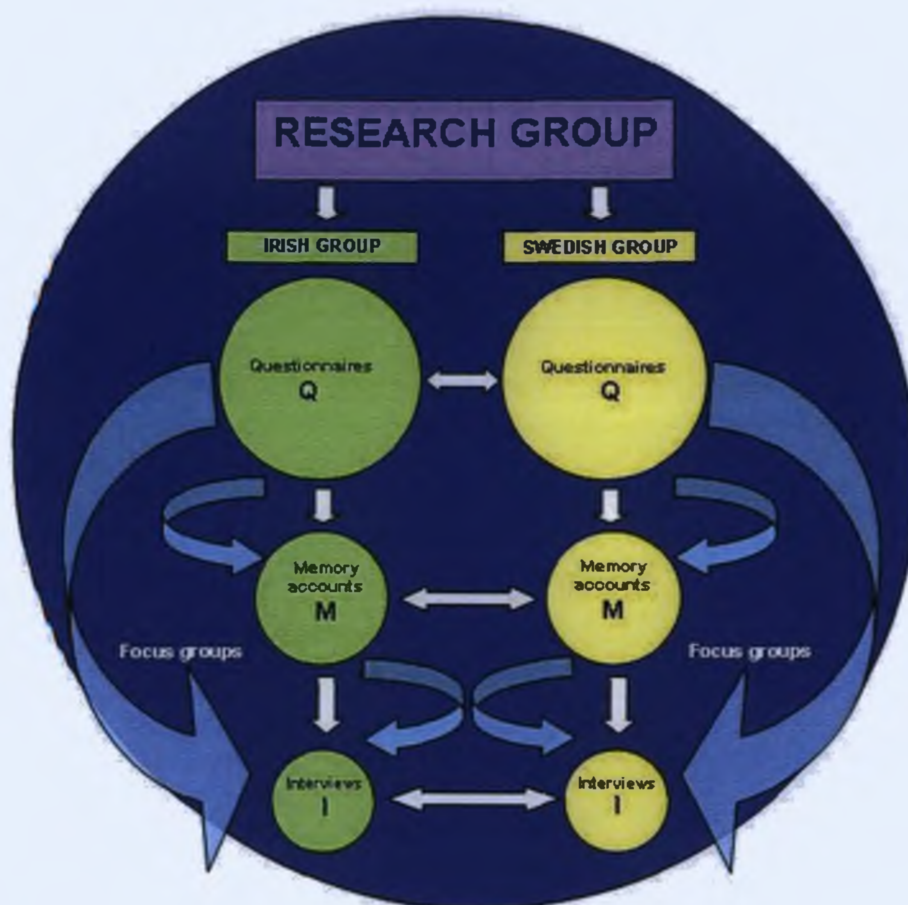


**Figure 5: Data collection design**

## Background questionnaire

The questionnaire was constructed in early November 2003, to be distributed to the Irish students (in English) as well as to the Swedish students (in Swedish) in the same month. The major aim with the questionnaire was to gain background information about the informants' musical contexts in which they were brought up. All the student-teachers were asked to fill in the questionnaire during a seminar. However, they were informed that they could either hand them in to the researcher or keep them themselves if they did not want to participate in the study. No names were written on the questionnaires. A number code known only to the researcher and/or the informants was used so that the participants' identities would not be revealed. All the students who were present in both the Irish (29 students, 27 female and 2 male) and the Swedish (22 students, 14 female and 8 male) seminars, chose to hand their questionnaires in to the researcher. The results from the Irish and Swedish student groups

provided from the questionnaire were quantified and processed into graphs and compared. These results are presented in chapter 5 and in Appendix A.

**Written accounts**

The next step of the data collection consisted of an open task. A few days after filling in the questionnaires the two student groups were invited, to write accounts on memories of music and music education from early childhood (0-6 years), middle childhood (7-13 years), and teenage years (14- 18 years). This was an individual task and as before each student-teacher was identified solely by the number code.

The writing of the memory accounts was carried out during a 55 - 60 minute session and the researcher encouraged the students to write openly about their memories of music from both within and outside the educational context during childhood/adolescence. 29 Irish students (27 female and 2 male) and 21 Swedish students (13 female and 8 male) were present at each respective session. The researcher indicated when to move from one phase to the next in their writing, in order to spend an equal amount of time on each phase. Again students were given the option of completing the task but not handing it up. All students, however, in both groups submitted their accounts.

Prior to the task the researcher carried out musical activities in the two groups and spoke about her research. It was hoped in this way to create a rapport and to encourage the students to express openly their early memories of music and music education in writing. The information given in the memory account in both the Irish and Swedish groups was processed by theme identification within each of the three phases and compared. The findings from the background questionnaire and the written accounts, laid the basis for the third step in the data collection, which was the interviews.

**Interviews**

In order to test relevant interview questions, the researcher carried out two pilot interviews, based on the findings from the literature, the background questionnaire and on the written account. The two interviewees (one female and one male) were two colleagues of the researcher, who agreed to participate. English was the first language of one of the interviewees, whereas Swedish was the first language for the other. Consequently, one pilot interview was carried out in English and the other in Swedish. After each interview, which

took approximately one hour, the researcher consulted each interviewee about issues concerning the content of the interview scheme, and also, particularly with regard to the English interview, about the verbal communication between the interviewer and the interviewee. The two interviewees were also invited to contribute with their own suggestions, in order for the researcher to refine the clarity and scope of the interviews.

The selection of the research interviewees was purposefully made in order to secure a wide range of early musical experience within the research group, as well as to ensure a gender balance among the research group. An introductory letter was sent to 12 Irish and 12 Swedish student-teachers in the research group, with the aspiration on the researcher's part to eventually fill 20 places (10 Irish and 10 Swedish). This resulted in 11 Irish and 10 Swedish students finally agreeing to participate.

The Irish participants were interviewed in March 2004 and the interviewees were 9 females and 2 males. The Swedish participants were deliberately left until they had finished the course taught by the researcher. This was so that there could be no conflict between possible grades and the genuineness of the responses.

The Swedish interviews took place between April and September 2004. The Swedish participants were 6 females and 4 males. In preparation for the interviews, an interview scheme was developed. This allowed an open format but ensured that the researcher had covered similar areas with all the interviews. A rich set of follow-up questions, with prompts and cues to follow different paths, was developed to be used by the researcher. This also allowed the researcher to use the scheme to categorise the answers within the interview at a later stage.

An important aspect of the interviews was that they were semi-structured, in order to encourage the participants to develop their reasoning on the different topics that connected the interview method to ethnographical perceptions. The participants' names were coded and they were given fictitious names.

**The verification process in the focus groups**

In order to ensure a genuine understanding of the area, which had been progressively made known to the researcher throughout the data collection, it was decided to verify the findings

through peer focus groups. Since the findings were gathered from a limited number of students it was of interest to evaluate how these were more generally applicable.

In reaching for a considerably larger population to compare and contrast the findings, the danger of losing the rich nature of the data was a concern. Therefore focus groups, drawn from students taking elective courses in music education, were set up in three colleges/ universities in Ireland and Sweden respectively. This was made possible through the network of colleagues in music education known to the researcher, both in Sweden and Ireland. The colleagues were asked to inform the student-teachers about the possibility of participating, and the researcher than visited the various student groups in order to communicate further the purposes of the focus groups.

Six groups were then set up in six different colleges, three in Ireland and three in Sweden. Each group consisted of 5-9 participants and all six groups took part in three consecutive 45-90 minutes' meetings between September 2005 and January 2006. The main aim was to talk about the discoveries generated from the three parts of the research. This was achieved through purposeful discussion of topics based on the previous findings.

Within a focus group, there was a prospect of obtaining several perspectives on the same topic within a group context. The actual interaction and the conversations within the focus groups were mutually beneficial and the participants expressed the view that the experience itself had been rewarding. An important ethical issue was care for the identity of the group members, and participants were asked to respect this. While matters and issues may be discussed outside the group, it was agreed that individual participants should not be named.
In this study the focus group conversations were primarily used to inform and confirm the researcher in the analysis of data gathered from the primary research groups.

## Data analysis procedure

The researcher's approach to handling and analysing the data collected was originally inspired by grounded theory as were the different techniques used to collect the data. The work procedure could also be described as a jigsaw puzzle (Guvå and Hylander, 2003), where new information is constantly added to, and in communication with, previous findings.

The different stages of data collection are continuously evaluated, which makes the research process interactive.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) initiated the grounded theory method in the 1960's. Glaser stated that a research problem is not there initially. It appears during the research process. Later on, however, Strauss together with Corbin (1990) revealed that grounded theory involves not only induction but also deduction and verification. They suggested that the research problem could not only be developed during the research process, but could also be either proposed, originated from literature sources, or derived from personal experiences. According to Denscombe (2003), those using grounded theory as their method are working from a base of knowledge and are able to assess and analyse the findings and relate to previous theories. According to Hammersley (1996) grounded theory was first conceived in opposition to deductivism.

The Swedish researchers Guvå and Hylander (2003) suggest that grounded theory is relevant in research in education. Its methodological frame often consists of an everyday way of working, and the relevance of the researcher herself/himself together with her/his own experiences, are considered to be significant elements in grounded theory. One of the main concerns in grounded theory is to generate and create theories from empirical data. The main point is not to organise a certain amount of data but to collect and develop ideas generated from the data collected. Another aim is to catch the complexity in the process and discern a pattern of joint processes. The data is analysed to generate new theoretical explanation models, in order to be able to understand and explain compound phenomena.
When using the grounded theory methodology, the researcher is not considered to be a mere objective bystander, but an involved researcher who is learning as well as exploring. In this particular research multiple sources of data are sourced to define, focus and ultimately achieve insight into, and gain a new understanding of, the researched phenomenon.

Since this particular study deals with a comparison between two groups from different countries, an ethnographical perspective has also been taken into account. According to Denscombe (2003), ethnography generally prefers a holistic approach that stresses processes, connections, relationships, and independence among the component parts. These typical features link ethnography well to grounded theory and a combined approach is used in the research.

One aspect of an ethnographical approach deals with the topic of understanding things from the point of view of those involved. One of the researcher's concerns has been to comprehend how the members of the groups in this study, individually and collectively, understand their reality. As earlier mentioned, a key feature in ethnography is the element of comparison and contrast. In this particular study, the comparison of experiences of memories and opinions from two different countries is an important aspect.

The researcher made a deliberate choice to analyse the descriptive sources, e.g. the data from the written accounts and interviews manually, since she was searching for a richness in expressions and statements in the collected data material, and there was a danger that this might be lost in a computer- assisted data analysis. This standpoint is supported by Maykut & Morehouse's (1994) perspective, who caution that computer-assisted data analysis may sometimes not catch the full complexity of philosophical underpinnings in qualitative research, and hence undermines the researcher's rich understanding of the findings.

**Narrativety**

The data is presented in a narrative form, and the interplay between the researcher and the participants is an important part of accessing the core of the student-teachers' descriptions of the experiences and opinions around music. This study is largely based on narrative descriptions of individuals in two particular groups of student-teachers, regarding their experiences, opinions and beliefs in relation to music and music education. In order to access the core of their descriptions of experiences and opinions, the interplay between the researcher and the participants has been important.

The research task was presented in such a way that the participants deliberately directed their narrative descriptions to the researcher. In essence, the written accounts, or narratives, were purposefully written in a way to inform a particular receiver (the researcher) about earlier experiences with music. The conversations in the interviews also developed into narratives, since they were formed by the interaction between the two partakers - the interviewer and the interviewee. As a consequence a decision was made to present the data also as a narrative, describing the interplay between the participants' statements and the researcher's reflections and comments. In editing the data collected for the data presentation of this research, Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2000) arguments were considered:

> ...editing involves getting your subject's own words grasping them from the inside and turning them into a structured and coherent statement that uses the subject's words in places and your own, as researcher, in others, but retains their authentic meaning at all times (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p.168).

Silverman (2005) highlights the value of narratives as 'cultural stories'. This can be understood, as the narratives having the unique potential to communicate a broad cultural comprehension of the participants' experiences and perspectives to the reader. This means, the reader is immersed in the field of the participants through the 'cultural stories' (narratives) presented in the research.

**The background questionnaire**

The first part of the data collection consisted of a background questionnaire, which aimed to provide the researcher with information which could be further and deeper investigated in the descriptive parts of the data collection, i.e. the written accounts and the interviews. Therefore general questions were asked about the participants' geographical backgrounds and also their family and educational backgrounds in relation to music practice and music engagement. The purpose of the questionnaire was to inform and prepare the researcher for the next phase of the data collection, but it was also one of three ways of gathering a rich set of data in this study. Another important aspect was that the questionnaire also prepared the participants for the next phases of the research.

There was no intention to establish any statistical significance by carrying out the questionnaire. However, the results were processed using the computer programme SPSS, mainly to provide the research with some background information which could be illustrated in diagrams and graphs. Those diagrams and graphs were then included in the written description of the research groups, which sets out the context for the research in chapter 5.

**The written accounts**

The written accounts were gathered for various purposes. All the accounts were first carefully read in order to identify the range of memories of music and music education that had been referred to by the informants. This informed the selection of participants for the following step of the research, namely, the interviews.

The next step was to read over the accounts again to identify themes that were most significant. Then, an identification of similar and different themes in the Irish and Swedish accounts were carried out, in order to find similar and contrasting themes between the two student-teachers groups. Following that, the accounts were read once more and typed, and the Swedish accounts were translated into English. From these transcriptions, main themes and quotations were organised into the three different age stages (0-6 years, 7-13 years, 14-18 years) and formed the basis for the descriptive analysis that can be found in chapter 6.

The analysis procedure was cone-shaped, which means that the material was gradually reduced in order to sift out and approach the main features of what had been described in the accounts as authentically as possible. Conclusions of the national comparison of memories between the different age ranges were also added to the description of the written accounts.

**The interviews**

The 21 interviews were all transcribed and typed. A similar procedure to the one carried out with the written accounts then took place. All the interviews were read, and since the interview scheme had been organised in different sections, this directed the categorisation of themes from the interviews. Then, within each theme, sub-themes were spotted, which formed sub-categories within each main theme. All key sentences and quotation in the transcribed material were then written down as quotations on different post-it notes, and the Swedish quotations were translated into English. In order to identify only the representations of opinions in the material, not the participants, the post-it quotations were organised in themes on a board without a 'sender'. From there, the researcher gathered the different opinions of music and music education expressed in the quotations, and wrote narratives on each identified main theme and sub-theme, based on the statements and quotations. Each narrative also comprised a national comparison and a conclusion.

## Trustworthiness and limitations of the study

The four concepts internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity are conventional terms which are normally applied to quantitative research. These concepts usually refer to the fact that if the research were carried out again, the same results would be obtained, that the findings were warranted from the data, and that they could be generalised from a sample to the whole population. In qualitative research focused on human beings'

understanding of their own situation, these concepts are not the most relevant or useful checks of quality (Holliday, 2002). Lincoln & Guba (1985, p. 300) suggest that the terms *credibility, transferability, dependability* and *conformability,* are more appropriate to qualitative research than the concepts mentioned above. Indeed because of the complexity of the human, which is seen as a value in this research, it may be impossible to control the field to the extent that these could be demonstrated. Lincoln & Guba (*ibid.*) also point to the importance of ensuring the objectivity and *trustworthiness* of the research. The concepts of trustworthiness may therefore replace the conventional criteria of reliability and validity in this study, as it encompasses issues concerning credibility, conformability, transferability and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cohen *et al.,* 2000). Qualitative research, however, must also include within its methods, checks and balance to ensure the rigour of its own process so that the outcomes of the study are trustworthy. It is therefore also vital that the research is a transparent process open to scrutiny. Maycut & Morehouse (1994) argue that

> A detailed description of the research process and outcomes provides readers with a basis for judging the credibility of a study (*ibid.*, p. 145).

The data was collected in three stages to ensure rich information. By collecting the data on three separate, yet successive occasions, the researcher aimed to secure trustworthiness, as the research process also operated as a verification procedure. One concern in this study was to put together a rich description of the data as this is an important aspect of qualitative research, and it is particularly essential in small-scale studies in order to warrant trustworthiness. Holliday (2002) points to the concept of 'thick description' to expose interconnected meanings in the data collected. A 'thick description' also gives the context of an experience, and it goes deep to

> ....analyse the cultural meaning of the act, to explore whether it is an involuntary 'twitch' or a socially charged 'wink' (Holliday, 2002, p. 78).

The opposite of a thick description is a 'thin description', which is described by Holliday to just report events in limited terms independent of the circumstances. In this particular study, both a rich and a thick description of the data are considered in order to ensure a valid and holistic portrayal of the research area.

In order to provide further trustworthiness in qualitative research, there are a number of considerations that need to be made. Two important aspects, which are particularly significant for this study, are highlighted by Lincoln & Guba (1985). One of the aspects is the use of *multiple methods for triangulation of data*, as it enhances the validation of the research findings. This is a substantial feature for this research, as it is designed in three steps, comprising a questionnaire, written accounts and interviews. The second aspect, particularly noteworthy in this study, is *peer debriefing* in order to establish credibility. Lincoln & Guba (1985) explain the idea of peer debriefing as useful for:

> ....the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind (*ibid.*, p. 308).

In this research, six focus groups of student-teachers (three in Ireland and three in Sweden) have served as important peer de-briefing communities, discussing and commenting on the findings from the three phases of the data collection.

A limitation of the study may be that the two groups of students were relatively small and the findings were vulnerable to any withdrawals from the research project. Such a situation, however, did not occur. Another area of concern was that the research was performed in Ireland and in Sweden. As the researcher lives in Sweden and is therefore more familiar with Swedish customs, conditions and traditions, she took trouble not to draw biased conclusions, but to make as balanced an interpretation as possible of the Irish and the Swedish context. The researcher therefore spent a considerable amount of time in the Irish educational context, both as a research student and as a teacher as she worked in a teacher education college in both countries during the time the research was carried out.

Denscombe (2003) stresses the importance of gate-keepers who may help the researcher to gain access to the fieldwork settings. As the researcher had professional contacts in Irish colleges, which included connections with both teacher colleagues and student groups, she had the opportunity to gain a fairly rich understanding of Irish education and society.

As the research was carried out in two countries, it was subsequently carried out in two languages - English and Swedish. This meant that all the data collected from the Swedish group was translated by the researcher, whose first language is Swedish. Consequently, the

Swedish findings, including quotations, underwent a process of translation, and they are therefore not authentic to the English language. However, the researcher was concerned that the translation from Swedish to English must be as reliable as possible, in order not to undermine the significance and meaning of the data collected in Sweden.

## Ethical concerns

In research involving human beings, ethical procedures are fundamental to consider, and Denscombe (2003) argues that there are three major principles to pay attention to while performing research. These are:

1. The interest of the participants should be protected.
2. The researcher should avoid deception or misrepresentation.
3. Participants should give informed consent.

Denscombe (2003) particularly emphasises the researcher's responsibility in respecting the rights and dignity of those who are participating in the research project. The researcher needs also to avoid any harm to the participants arising from their involvement in the research, and it is essential that the researcher operate with honesty and integrity.

*Informed consent* is a definition used in relation to ethical issues and research, and it can be described as the procedure where the concepts of *competence, voluntarism, full information* and *comprehension* are involved (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 51). In short, informed consent means that individuals are informed of facts about the research, facts that are likely to influence their assessment of participating or not in the study. The idea is that "responsible mature individuals will make correct decisions if they are given relevant information." (*ibid.*, p.51). Furthermore the concept of *voluntarism* needs to be considered in relation to informed consent, since it ensures that "participants freely choose to take part (or not) in the research and guarantees that exposure to risks is undertaken knowingly and voluntarily." (*ibid.*,p.51).

The Swedish Research Council (2007) defines the four objectives that a researcher must consider in relation to the ethical concerns as follows:

- To inform the participant about the purpose of the research.
- To gain the participant's agreement of participation.
- To ensure the participant confidentiality.
- To inform the participant about the context in which the information will be presented.

In this research these ethical concerns have been considered from the start, and the participants were informed of the purpose of the study, and of the contexts in which it was going to be carried out and presented. They were also informed that their participation in this study was voluntary, and a procedure was put in place whereby they could easily withdraw.

All data collected was handled with care and confidentiality, and every effort was made to ensure the participant anonymity. Individuals were made aware, however, that due to the nature of the study with a fairly small group of participants, it was possible that their identities could be worked out by those familiar with the field but that a likelihood of this was small. For this reason the responses of the small group of student-teachers interviewed are presented in a way in which gender cannot be identified.

# CHAPTER 5: THE RESEARCH CONTEXTS

## Introduction

This study investigates the musical socialisation of two student-teacher groups in two different countries. As such, it calls attention to the social and cultural contexts to which these student-teachers relate, and of which they are a part. Students, teachers and decision makers in a society all are part of their social and historical contexts, and the practice of music and music education are therefore strongly influenced by cultural and geographical factors (Georgii-Hemming & Stålhammar, 2006). The two groups of student-teachers in this study live in Ireland and Sweden, and during their teacher education they chose music as an elective subject in their teacher education. While these student-teachers were likely to have a particular interest in music, they were not preparing to become music specialists. When finished their education, their intentions were to work as general teachers within the Irish or Swedish school system respectively, teaching music as one of many subjects within a general curriculum. Most would teach children up to the age of 13 years.

This chapter presents a general outline of Ireland and Sweden. Its purpose is to highlight relevant issues in both countries to provide a context for the research findings rather than provide a comprehensive account of social structures. A brief presentation of the two education systems follows, as well as a short introduction to formal and informal music education in Ireland and Sweden. Following this, some issues in music education from each country are presented through a selection of music education publications. The chapter concludes with a short presentation of the two groups in this particular research, based on the findings from the background questionnaire. This presentation includes issues concerning the two groups' geographical backgrounds, music education backgrounds, musical experiences outside music education and their families' involvement in musical activities.

## Ireland and Sweden - a general outline

### Ireland

Ireland is the 3rd largest island in Europe, and the Republic of Ireland, which is the southern part of the island, is often referred to as 'Ireland' in English or 'Éire' in Irish. Éire was pronounced a republic in 1949, and has at present, approximately 4.2 million citizens. Roman

Catholicism has historically had a vast influence in Irish society, and still is the recorded religion of 87% of the population (CSO, 2006). Although practice is declining, social aspects in the country are still organised around religious celebrations such as Christmas and Easter.

Life in Ireland was greatly affected by poverty and emigration, particularly to America, during the 19th century, and emigration continued until the 1980's. From the 1990's the republic has undergone a most influential economic development, which is a phenomenon known as the 'Celtic Tiger', and has now become one of the wealthiest countries in the European Union (Workman, 2006).

Irish people have a long history of emigration and only recently Ireland has become a nation of immigration, which has rapidly changed the demographics of the nation and in particular the capital city Dublin (CSO, 2006). There are two official languages in Ireland: English and Irish. Both languages are taught in schools, but English is the predominantly used language throughout the country, whereas Irish is particularly represented in the Western parts of the republic in special areas known as the *Gaeltacht.* However, 42% of the population are recorded as able to speak Irish (CSO, 2006), and there is a growth in schools who educate through Irish within urban centres. The development of an Irish language television station TG4 has served to place the Irish language within contemporary culture.

Irish families have earlier been known to be large compared to other European countries, However, the current birth-rate is an average 2.2 children per family (CSO, 2006). Even if the situation has changed over the recent years, there are often strong social ties between the family members. This is particularly obvious in rural areas, where social and cultural life is strongly family oriented.

Historically there is a strong oral tradition within Irish society, which can also be traced in the Irish music tradition. Ireland is well represented internationally in poetry and literature, and Irish traditional music has become immensely popular over recent years. This is particularly significant in the storytelling song style called sean-nós, which has become a popular expression of the Irish nation and culture (Hast & Scott, 2004). The escalation of music as a cultural expression of the Irish identity may be a sign of many people accentuating their cultural identities with and through music. Traditional music is highly regarded and has a strong presence in pubs and other venues. Music groups such as The Chieftains and The

Dubliners have contributed to a revival of Irish traditional music. Ireland presents a fairly homogenous culture through media, sports and cultural events, in addition grass root volunteer organisations are part of the local culture. Classical music is represented through a small number of mostly city-based professional orchestras and semi-professional performing groups. *Music Network* facilitates a touring programme in a variety of musical genres.

An example of a media output of Irish culture which gained particular international recognition, is *Riverdance*, a music and theatrical show with its main focus on traditional Irish step dancing. The first time *Riverdance* was internationally displayed, was in the Eurovision song contest in 1994, where they performed accompanied by the Irish choral group Anúna. This occasion is regarded by many Irish people as the break-through of Irish culture internationally.

Ireland has been most successful in the European Song contest over the years. In addition, a number of Irish pop and rock bands, such as The Corrs and U2, for instance, have influenced the international music scene, giving Ireland international recognition as an influential nation in contemporary music.

**Sweden**

Sweden is a part of Scandinavia and is bordered by Norway and Finland. At present the population of Sweden is approximately 9 million, and the country has benefited from peace during the last centuries. Due to difficult living conditions, many people emigrated to America in the 19th century. Sweden has since been transformed from a country of emigration up to the end of the first world war, to a country of immigration from the second world war onwards.

The main language spoken in Sweden is Swedish, however, there are also recognised minority languages, such as Sami and Finnish, for instance. Swedish people have generally a fairly good knowledge of English since it is the first foreign language taught in school.

In the end of 2006, 12.9 % of the residents in Sweden were born abroad, and about 16.7% of Sweden's population are either immigrants or the children of immigrants (SCB, 2006).

After the Protestant reformation in the 16th Century, the Church and State were united and Swedish society was essentially influenced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Today, while becoming increasingly heterogeneous, the religious scene has somewhat changed. Now, approximately 80% of the Swedish population is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden, but the Church and the State are no longer united, and the number of members is decreasing. The church today, serves for many people as a symbol for ceremonial cultural heritage, including weddings, christenings, confirmation and funerals. Traditionally, end-of term gatherings in schools have taken place in churches. These occurrences, however, have recently been a topic for debate in Swedish society as it is considered to be an issue that concerns cultural and religious diversity in society. A small number of the Swedish population is part of various free churches. Islam, The Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Christian Churches are also well represented in Sweden (The Swedish Institute, 2007).

Sweden developed and established a social welfare system during the 20th Century which at the time, was described as a middle way between socialism and capitalism. The standard of living was known to be good, however, Sweden's economy degenerated in the beginning in the 1970's. The Swedish welfare system still remains extensive, but due to an economic recession in the 1990's, a number of reforms were introduced, particularly in relation to education and health services, which resulted in decentralisation to municipal control, rather than state control.

During the second part of the 20th century, the family structure in Sweden developed differently than in Ireland. A significant feature was that the divorce rate in Sweden increased rapidly up to the mid 1970's. Since then, however, the numbers have been fairly stable. In 2006, about 25% of all 17 year olds in Sweden had experienced a separation between their parents (SCB, 2006). In most cases though, the parents have shared custody of their children.

Music in Sweden encompasses various genres such as pop and rock music, jazz music, arts music, and an increasing interest in folk/traditional music. The Swedes are known to be a people of choir-singers and approximately 600, 000 people are active in various choirs (The Swedish Institute, 2007). In the 1970's a wave of interest in folk, or traditional, music swept through Sweden as in other European countries.

Swedish folk music has transformed in sound and form, and also now reaches outside its traditional environment. This has resulted in more young people playing folk or traditional music now than they did previously, and the gender balance among the performers has improved (Lundberg, 1998). However, folk and traditional music is not broadly considered to be a particular identity marker among the Swedes, and many would refer to folk music in relation to games and songs played at annual festivities like the Midsummer celebration in June or family parties around Christmas. There are also folk music events in the summers called *spelmansstämmor*, where folk musicians (and others who are interested in the field), meet, play along and learn tunes from each other. Presently, Swedish folk music is influenced on the one hand by a strong folk music heritage and on the other hand by an ethno-music culture. There is a clear interest among many practitioners to further develop new styles within the genre of folk music.

Some musical phenomena commonly considered to represent a particular 'Swedishness' are for instance, popular singer/song writers or balladeers performing their songs in Swedish, or the "dance-bands", which are orchestras playing particular dance-music (such as the foxtrot) in popular music arrangements. In summer, folk music festivals and pop and rock music festivals are set up in various counties, and those are popular events. There are music weeks organised around Sweden focused on one particular genre such as mediaeval, baroque, folk, jazz or pop music, for instance. During these music weeks professional musicians, local artists and amateurs collaborate around the specific topic (The Swedish Institute, 2007). A state-run organisation *Rikskonserter* arranges extensive tours countrywide in a variety of musical genres (Rikskonserter, 2007). There are also a number of professional orchestras established in several large towns and cities throughout Sweden. Several larger towns and the cities have concert halls, and there are also opera houses established in the cities.

In the 1970's, Sweden entered a new musical era in which Swedish pop music and its 'sound' gained international recognition, beginning with the pop group ABBA. Sweden is now one of the largest (pop) music exporters in the world after the US and the UK, and this phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the pop music "export industry" in Sweden (Hansson, 1998). Parallel to the progress of Swedish pop music in the 1970's was an anti-commercial music movement which influenced the music scene in Sweden.

In the end of the 1980's the 'ABBA-effect' became visible, which signified a new generation of young Swedish musicians who aimed to gain international recognition through their music. Some of those groups who successfully managed to gain international recognition are Europe, Ace of Base and Roxette.

## The education systems

### Ireland

In Ireland, the Department of Education and Science, a Department of Government, directs formal education including curricula, syllabi and national examinations. Education is compulsory between six and fifteen years of age, however, most children start school at the age of four. Education within the state educational system is free in the Irish primary and secondary schools, and also at undergraduate third-level. A number of private schools and third-level colleges also exist within the system for which fees are payable. Postgraduate Education is fee paying in all forms (Department of Education and Science, 2004).

### Education

Primary school education consists of an eight-year programme, including two kindergarten years (Junior and Senior Infants ages), followed by classes 1-6. Students typically attend primary schools between ages 4-12. Irish primary education encompasses state-funded primary schools, special schools and private primary schools (Department of Education and Science, 2004). The state funded schools include religious schools, non-denominational schools, multi-denominational schools and *Gaelscoileanna*, which are Irish-speaking schools mainly in the *Gaeltacht* areas but now growing in a number of urban areas with 122 Irish language primary schools now operating outside *Gaeltacht* areas (Gaelscoileanna Teo, 2005). In primary schools the Irish language has a special place and in order to qualify as a primary teacher you must have an excellent standard of Irish.

*Primary Education*

The primary curriculum was revised in Ireland in 1999, and it focuses on enabling wide-ranging learning experiences and providing a multifaceted approach to teaching and learning within a child-centred approach. The curriculum consists of the following main areas:

- Languages (Irish and English)
- Mathematics
- Social, environmental and scientific education (geography, history and science)
- Arts education (including visual arts, music and drama)
- Physical education
- Social, personal and health education

  (Government of Ireland, 1999).

All subjects are taught by a general class teacher as part of the holistic philosophy of primary education and teachers are seen to be educational specialists rather than subject specialists.

*Secondary education*

Second level education in Ireland generally starts at the age of twelve. It encompasses a three year junior phase, finishing with a Junior Certificate Examination at the end of the third year (age 15). The junior phase is followed by a two or three year senior phase, including a 'Transition Year' which emphasises the student experiencing an extensive variety of educational inputs, life skills and work experience. At the end of the senior phase, at age seventeen or eighteen, the Leaving Certificate Examination is taken (Department of Education and Science, 2004).

At secondary level, it is obligatory to take a minimum of five subjects, including the three core subjects which are English, Irish and Mathematics. The other subjects are chosen from arts, languages, science and other applied subjects (Coolahan, 1981).

Irish secondary-level education comprises

- *Secondary schools*, which are in the majority. These schools are state funded, but privately owned and managed, and they are run by boards of governors, religious bodies, or individuals.
- *Vocational schools* which are both state owned and state funded, and administered by local education committees.
- *Community and comprehensive schools* founded by the state and administered by Boards of Management and representatives of local interests. Community schools may also facilitate adult education and community development projects.

*Third level education*

The Irish third level education system encompasses the university sector, the technological sector and the colleges of education. They are all autonomous and self governing, but largely state funded. There are 7 universities and 5 Colleges of Education who are either independent colleges of one of the universities or whose degrees are awarded by a university and 14 Institutes of Technology (IT), many of which are regionally based. Degrees in music can be taken in 5 of the 7 universities, 2 of the Colleges of Education and 4 of the ITs . Additionally, within the umbrella of the Irish third level education system, are also private, independent colleges. Irish third level institutions can award the following degrees:

- Higher Certificate
- Ordinary Bachelors Degree
- Honours Bachelors Degree
- Graduate Diploma
- Masters degree
- Doctorate

Students typically attend third-level courses at the age of 17.
(National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2007).

**Sweden**

An important principle of the Swedish welfare-system is access to free education for the whole population throughout life, financed by taxes. The curriculum, national objectives and guidelines for the public education system are prescribed by the Swedish Parliament and Government. Each municipality then decides how the schools within the municipality will be run. By employing the approved curriculum, the national objectives and the local school plan, each principal, together with the school teachers and other personnel, compile a local work plan for the school (Skolverket, 1994/2006).

Democracy and fundamental values are vital objectives in the curriculum, and the municipalities are ultimately responsible for their application, as well as for affording students opportunities to achieve the national objectives. All education throughout the public school system is free, and there is usually no charge for students or their parents for teaching materials, school meals, health services or transport.

The Swedish public school system encompasses both compulsory and voluntary education. The education system in Sweden covers day care centres and pre-schools which are non-compulsory, and continues with compulsory school, which lasts 9 years. Upper secondary school, which most youth attend, is voluntary.

*Pre-school*

Pre-schools are open to children from the age of one year. They are opened all year around and the daily opening hours aim to match parents' various working hours. A fee is paid by the parents, which, in most cases, relates to the family's income and also to the amount of time the child attends the pre-school.

*Pre-school Class*

The pre-school class is not compulsory but all children are, by their municipalities, entitled to a place in the pre-school class once they turn 6 years. The pre-school class focuses on the learning and development of the child and is also a preparation for compulsory school education.

*Compulsory Education*

All children between the ages of 7-16 years undergo a nine year compulsory school programme, and if the parents so request, a child may begin school one year earlier, at the age of 6.

There are also some independent schools in Sweden and those must be approved by the National Agency for Education. In 2004 approximately 4% of the compulsory school students attended an independent school. The education of independent schools must have the same basic objectives as municipal schools, but an independent school may have a special profile, such as for instance, a particular religious approach or a specific educational approach. Grants are received by the independent schools from the municipality in which the student lives, and the schools are free of charge for students. In addition, there are also some international schools in Sweden intended primarily for the children of foreign nationals whose stay in Sweden is temporary. These schools are partially funded by the government (Skolverket, 2005).

The Swedish curriculum for compulsory education (ages 7-16) consists of the following areas:

- Arts
- Home economics
- Physical education and health
- Music
- Textiles and Wood- and metalwork
- Swedish
- English
- Mathematics
- Geography, History, Religion- and Civics (combined)
- Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Technology (combined)
- Language options
- Student options

(Skolverket, 1994/2006)

*Upper Secondary Education*

Nearly all students continue directly to the upper secondary school education and the majority of these students complete their upper secondary course within three years. Upper secondary education encompasses 17 various national 3-year programmes, and they cover a broad range of general education and provide basic qualifications for post-secondary education. There are also some specially designed individual study programmes offered in the upper secondary schools. Students typically attend between the ages of 16-19.

*Higher education - University and Post-secondary Education*

Higher education in Sweden is heavily tax-financed and free of charge. Funding for undergraduate courses is distributed on the basis of the number of students enrolled and the student performances. Higher education is carried out at state-run universities, university colleges and institutions of higher education, but also by independent programme providers who have an agreement with the state. There are altogether 61 universities, university colleges and independent programme providers in Sweden (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2006). During the last ten years higher education has been strongly promoted, and the number of students has increased by 50%. Outside the formal higher

education in Sweden, there are also various other forms of adult education, for instance the 'folk high schools' which facilitate a variety of courses, and in many instances these schools have a particular emphasis on music and other arts subjects. These music courses often prepare students to apply for the Schools of Music.

The difference between a university and a university college is that universities are generally entitled to award postgraduate degrees, e.g. licentiate and doctoral degrees. University colleges are authorised to conduct research in certain disciplines, and they are subsequently entitled to award postgraduate degrees only in these particular research disciplines.
Swedish higher education institutions can award the following degrees:

- Professional degrees
- Bachelor degrees (undergraduate)
- Master degrees (undergraduate)
- University Diplomas (undergraduate)
- Licentiate degrees (post graduate)
- Doctoral degrees (post graduate)

(Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2006).

Students typically attend third level education from the age of 19, however, many choose to start studying at third level later on in life, after acquiring work and life experiences.

## Formal and informal music education

### Ireland

Music education in Ireland is recognised as occurring in formal or informal contexts. This encompasses: formal school music education, formal instrumental education, informal community based education, which includes music transmission of traditional, choral, jazz and rock/pop music.

*Primary level*

In primary school (ages 4-12), music education is compulsory and it is free for all. The class teacher, rather than a music specialist, teaches music as part of a holistic curriculum. The new curriculum (1999) is organised around a set of 8 musical concepts, and is taught through the activities of listening and responding, performing and composing. The curriculum in practice is largely song based, with the inclusion of classroom percussion instruments, for accompaniments and composing activities. Music recordings are used for activity based listening. The emphasis is on learning in music activity and the curriculum does not include music history. The goal is music understanding rather than gaining music information or performance skills on any particular instrument (Government of Ireland, 1999a; 1999b).

*Secondary level*

In Irish secondary schools, music is not compulsory, but an optional subject which is free for all. Those who teach music in secondary schools are mainly music specialists with a music degree and higher education diploma.

In secondary school, the syllabus for examinations requires students to prepare work in the three areas of performing, composing, listening and responding, each are 25% of their course. They may take a further option in one of these areas making it 50% of the course. Many students choose performing, making the secondary music course a very practical rather than a theoretical course. While many group performing activities are taught in school, individual lessons are not generally provided. These are taken privately by students who pay a separate fee.

*Third level*

Music at third level institutions consists of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in musicology, including BA, BMus, taught postgraduate MA and postgraduate degrees by primary research at masters or doctoral level. While performance is often an examination requirement within undergraduate musicology courses, in most colleges this is not provided as part of the course but gained through private tuition.

Those studying for professional performance degrees have traditionally gone abroad to study, as few undergraduate or post graduate degrees in performing were offered in Ireland. The Institutes of Technology have continued to develop this area with degrees in performance now available from Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) and Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT). The inclusion of traditional music within academic music performance degrees is a recent development. An interesting instance is the University of Limerick which has courses in Irish traditional music at undergraduate level and string performance.

In two of the teacher education colleges (St Patrick's College, Dublin and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick) as part of their BEd degree, students may take a degree level course selected from a range of subjects in Humanities, including music. These are in addition to their Education courses and are described as 'Academic' courses to distinguish them. The Academic Music degree course is based in musicology and includes musical techniques (harmony and counterpoint) and the study of music works in musical analysis criticism and history. A practical instrumental examination is also a requirement of the course although tuition is gained privately. All BEd students regardless of their academic subject also take separate courses in music to prepare them to teach music at primary level. These are described as 'Curriculum Music' in order to distinguish them and are workshop based and focused on students gaining hands-on experience of music teaching activities. Students take a compulsory course in Curriculum Music over 2 years and in the third year a small number elect to take a further course. Student-teachers participating in this research were taking this elective course.

*Formal private instrumental education*

Formal instrumental tuition in Ireland is often carried out on a private basis, either one-to-one or in groups, and tuition fees are charged. There are also a number of schools of music for instrumental tuition, such as in Dublin there are The Royal Irish Academy of Music, The DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama and The Leinster school of Music. It is common that instrumental tuition is carried out locally on a private basis. Students are taught in the teachers' homes, or in private local music schools, where the teacher is not required to have any professional qualifications, although most now would.

Formal instrumental tuition in Ireland is focused on exams similar to those constructed by the UK Associated Board. This focus is linked to the fact that students may identify their formal musical knowledge and 'status' in terms of grades, such as 'grade five' or 'grade seven', for instance. There are few regular performing opportunities connected to instrumental tuition in private homes, and therefore performance experiences can be infrequent.

To facilitate instrumental tuition for children in different parts of Ireland, a countrywide music service has recently been proposed. The Piano Report (O'Conor,1996) noted the lack of a countrywide instrumental music service and the consequences for limited opportunities for students in geographically remote areas to learn an instrument. In 2003, Music Network carried out a feasibility study on the development of a nationally provided, locally based, financially accessible music education service, which provides music education in a variety of music genres such as classical, traditional, jazz and rock (Music Network, 2003). The structure recommended is currently in a pilot phase.

*Informal music education*

*Ceoltas Ceoltoiri Eireann* is a countrywide organisation for traditional music and it is run on a voluntary basis. Its aim is to preserve and nurture the rich tradition of Irish culture in music. In the rural areas of Ireland in particular, traditional music is a shared social experience within the communities. The practice of traditional music is consequently largely community based, and mainly occurs within the social settings where people of mixed age ranges meet to learn Irish tunes from one another. These settings usually allow many informal performing opportunities, and may also serve as a route to the formal 'fleadh' – competitive local and national competitions.

With regard to the areas of pop and rock music, the *Irish federation of music collectives* is a resource organisation that facilitates community based support. The activities supported by the organisation are, for instance, garage bands and local youth groups, battle of bands in the local parks or recording and performance venues (FMC, 2007)

*Opportunities for music within school and community*

Music is an important part of religious celebrations in Ireland such as communion and confirmation. The National Children's Choir is a yearly event for Irish schools and there are also various choir festivals arranged. A traditional social and musical feature in Ireland is to

have a *singsong* when each person is expected to have and perform 'their song' (Flynn, 2006).

### A discussion about music education in Ireland

Written sources discussing issues on music education in Ireland are not extensive. Many of the publications available stem from a report carried out in 1985 on the state of music education in Ireland, *Deaf Ears?* (Herron, 1985). The authors of these publications also contributed to the Music Education National Debate which resulted in the MEND report (Heneghan, 2001/2004). This has recently been available through Music Network. To provide a background for this study, six particular sources were accessed which were the *Journal of Music in Ireland* (Quinn, 2003), *Passing It On* (McCarthy, 1999), *Waterford Music Report* (Music Network, 1999) *The Kerry Music Report* (Music Network, 2000), *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century: Report of the Working Group on Primary Pre-service Teacher Education* (Government of Ireland, 2002) and *A National System of Local Music Education Services: Report of a Feasibility Study* (Music Network, 2003). There is a current discussion in Ireland on how Ireland as 'a musical nation' matches this expectation in its formal music education. In *The Journal of Music in Ireland,* Quinn (2003) criticises the poor efforts at providing [formal] music education for all children in Ireland compared to other European countries. This, despite the fact that Ireland is musically well represented internationally, particularly for its strong folk and traditional music practice. Quinn implies that children will naturally experience music outside an educational context. There is another implication in his critique which is that if little significance is paid to music education for all children, this may be a matter of injustice. He states:

> The fact is that some children are privileged, either geographically, through their parents having money, or through having music in their home already, and some aren't. So what about those who are left out? It is not that they don't receive any form of music education, not only because primary and secondary schooling make some allowance for it, but also because they will naturally experience music in their lives, and the form this experience takes will 'educate' them 'musically'. However, that parallel music education, which children receive from the earliest age, can be more commercial intrusion than anything else and signifies the type of education in store for them if more serious music educational provision is not made in their schooling and outside it (Quinn, 2003).

McCarthy (1999) reports on the transmission of music in Irish society and the dual influence of Ireland's long colonial history and the Gaelic- Irish influences in Irish music and music education. Historically, the Catholic Church had a significant role in the Irish education system and music was connected to the idea of 'high culture'. During recent decades a new approach in music education has been acknowledged in Ireland as in various other Western countries, were many genres of music are taken account of.

The Kerry Music Report (Music Network, 2000) suggests that Music Education and Music Tuition are conceived as separate entities in Ireland, as *Music Education* in the report, relates to the formal education sector, whereas *Music Tuition* deals with the private and community sectors. It was found that teachers expressed good will towards music, however, many teachers conveyed that they lacked confidence in teaching the subject and did not find they had been:

> effectively equipped with the skills, back up and resources necessary to enable children to listen, appreciate and experience with music (Music Network, 2000).

It was also found that community groups and music organisations in Kerry cautioned that inadequate music education and poor resources in schools undermined the development of music in the county.

It was suggested in the report, that if primary school teachers brought music from outside the school into the classroom (particularly traditional music) this could enable a good quality musical encounter for the children. It was found that regardless of social background, all students in the country should have access to music tuition.

In the Waterford Music Report (Music Network, 1999) it was found that the levels of music education and activities differed significantly between the schools in the county. It was also found that music education was considered to be dependent on "a particularly committed music teacher, musician or music enthusiast" in the school. Frustration was expressed by interest groups contributing to the report about various national and local factors which undermined music education. It was also found that music education was often seen as an add-on subject rather than a core subject. A requirement was that all primary schools should access proper equipment, such as instruments and audio equipment and music rooms.

Subsidised music tuition in the schools was also suggested. The report emphasised that more specialist skills were required, as well as connections with musicians from outside the schools. However, there was little emphasis put on in-career development for class teachers in primary schools.

In *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century: Report of the Working Group on Primary Preservice Teacher Education* (Government of Ireland, 2002) arts education in the primary school curriculum is discussed. In the report it is considered that music and the other arts subjects have previously been neglected in many schools. As a consequence, a large number of students have very little experience of the arts subject when they enter college, and consideration needs to be paid to providing sufficient education for all students. This encompasses the content and relevant pedagogical knowledge and skills, but also the aim that personal development should be taken into account in the design of the course.

In discussions with representatives from the colleges participating in the study, concerning the current provision for arts education, it was found, that the courses had now gradually become based on the revised curriculum, and that classes and workshops were to a large extent practical. Furthermore, students were supported in exploring and enjoying their own creativity within their arts education, as well as prepared to teach the arts. Elective courses in music and visual arts were also available in two of the colleges.

In the report *A National System of Local Music Education Services: Report of a Feasibility Study* (Music Network, 2003), prepared by Music Network, the creation of Local Music Education Services is discussed. The proposal is that the state should begin to provide a local music education service to ensure that music education is consistent and locally available and that a combination of curriculum-based music education and extra-curricular music tuition will be complementary.

**Sweden**

As some of the Swedish participants in the research group are intending pre-school teachers, music in relation to the pre-school curriculum is also considered in this section.

*Pre-schools*

At this level music is not taught as a particular subject but is considered to be a vital part of a child's development. In the curriculum for the pre-school, the following aspects are considered with regard to music activities;

> Creating and communicating by means of different forms of expression, such as pictures, song and music, drama, rhythm, dance and movement, as well as spoken and written language make up both the contents and method to be used by the pre-school in promoting the development and learning of the child (Skolverket, 1998).

**Formal music education**

*Compulsory music education*

In the general curriculum for compulsory education (ages 7-16), music is referred to in general terms such as the schools' responsibilities for ensuring that the student will be able to

> develop and use their knowledge and experience in as many different forms of expression as possible covering language, pictures, music, drama and dance (Skolverket, 1994/2006, p. 10).

As another general issue it is also mentioned that the students should be able to develop

> their ability to express themselves creatively and become more interested in participating in the range of cultural activities that society has to offer (*ibid.*).

Music in the early years can be taught by either the class teacher, by a general teacher at the same school (formally or informally) specialised in music, or by a music specialist.

At present, music is often brought in as a part of thematic work in education. It is also emphasised that the content of music in education will be of interest for the children, and they are often encouraged to 'bring in' their own musical preferences into the music lesson or the thematic work. Historically, music in primary education has been connected to song singing, and it sometimes still is. However, such focus may have expanded in many schools today due to a more holistic approach to education.

In the early years of compulsory school, the emphasis on music education is as an integrated part of a holistic curriculum. The syllabus in music, which is linked to the curriculum,

prescribes the general aims and goals of music as a school subject as well as its role in education.

In the national evaluation of music in compulsory school from 2003 (Skolverket, 2005) the curriculum development over the last 40 years is described. In the curriculum launched in 1962, music education focused on an aesthetic fostering of the child and was largely based on reading music, singing songs in harmonies and developing knowledge about Western music history. When the next curricula in music were launched in 1969, music education moved towards a more experimental approach including sound exploration and improvisation, for instance. Music teacher education was significantly reorganised in the end of the 1970's with consequent changes in the following 1980 curriculum. During this period, music education in schools gradually changed from being 'school music' to 'music in school', meaning that music education gradually went towards a significant inclusion of the students' own musical experiences and preferences in the music classes (Georgii-Hemming & Stålhammar, 2006). At this stage, music education encompassed a wide range of different genres, and the focus was on the student's need to express him/herself creatively as well as to relate to the surrounding society and the rest of the world, through music.

In 1994 another curriculum was launched, where a clear focus was on musical practice, musical understanding and musical knowledge. The reasons given for music being a part of general education were expressed as supporting historical and cultural traditions but also because of the particular characteristic of the subject, as well as its qualities of interplaying with the current and dynamic music and cultural life in the society.

The music syllabus was revised in 2000, and the stress was put on personal development. The practical aspects of music and creativity were highlighted in addition to the foundation of music as part of general education. From the aims and goals for music education described in the curriculum, four main categories or concepts of music education can be identified (Skolverket, 2005). Those are practical aspects of music (performing), listening, musical knowledge (interpretation and/or knowledge about music) and music creating (composing/ improvising).

Each subject in the compulsory schools has been allocated a certain amount of time, which every school can distribute in various ways. It is difficult to make a general outline

concerning the distribution of hours throughout the compulsory school years. Traditionally, for instance, at the time when the participants in the research group were students in compulsory school, music education often changed character when they moved over to secondary education (at age 13). From that stage their teachers were mainly music education specialists. Today, however, due to a recent revision of the (music) teacher education programmes, there is a wider variation of teachers' formal musical competency between different school levels. Current music teacher education is often designed to prepare teachers for a larger range of ages than previously.

The curriculum does not prescribe fixed ways to carry out music education. Usually, it has been up to each teacher, or team of teachers, to interpret the aims and goals of music education in formal education.

**Higher education in music education and music**

Initially, music education specialists in Sweden were educated at the Royal Music Academy in Stockholm, Sweden. In the 1960s an intensive cultural-political debate was taking place in Sweden. The focus shifted from earlier ideas of preserving the established culture in society, to new objectives which entailed a broadened cultural environment in Sweden. Such broadening consisted of an intention to reach out to the whole population instead of a particular 'cultural elite'. It was therefore decided that the established music and theatre institutions would became mobile in order to reach also the rural areas of the country. Another cultural-political aim was to promote 'non-commercial' art and culture. Concerning music teacher education, the courses were influenced on the one hand by already established and traditional ways and ideas of passing on a musical tradition and on the other hand, by the fact that creativity grew to be an essential feature of the new music teacher education, and the teacher or student-teacher's personal musical development and learning processes became more central in their education than they had been earlier (Olsson, 1993; Gustafsson, 2000).

Higher music education is presently offered in six Schools of Music in Sweden (Arvika, Gothenburg, Malmö, Piteå, Stockholm and Örebro). These are all part of regional universities, except for the Royal College of Music in Stockholm which is an independent university-college (Landh, 2004). Teacher education in Sweden was reformed in 2001. Previously, the focus in music teacher education had been on various music skills and practices, but the new teacher education programme ranges from studies in pedagogy and

education, 'in-service' education as well as music studies. The idea is that all intending teachers in compulsory schools will develop a common basis of knowledge in general teacher education within their programmes.

There are two main specialisations in the music teaching programmes; one is for teaching music in general education and the other is mainly for instrumental and vocal education. The range of elective courses in music teacher education increased extensively in the revised teacher education of 2001 (Landh, 2004). This has resulted in the music education programmes becoming fairly flexible, and it allows the students to design their own individual music teaching profile within the larger framework of the music education programme.

The duration of the music teacher programme is 4 ½ -5 ½ years, depending on the student's choice of elective subject. The diploma awarded upon completion of the music teacher education programme illustrates each graduate's particular specialisation and competence which may range from the areas of pre-school to upper secondary schools (*ibid.*). Prior to the revision of the music education programme, music education students mainly graduated to teach music in secondary compulsory education or the municipality music schools.

Primary music education is often taught by the class teacher, or another teacher at the school with a specialisation in music. Sometimes music education in primary schools has been performed as a partnership between the primary school teacher and a municipality music school teacher. Music specialists employed by the municipality music schools, have also travelled to various schools in the municipality and sometimes carried out music education in primary education.

For teachers of general education most universities and university colleges provide optional music education equivalent of 6-12 months full time studies. Student-teachers participating in this research were taking such an optional course.

In Sweden there are also undergraduate and post graduate programmes for performing musicians of various genres, composers and conductors in various schools of music/ universities. Furthermore, musicology is also a well represented subject in a number of universities.

*Municipality music school*

The establishment of municipality music schools expanded in the 1950's. The original foundation for these schools was the demand for musicians in the local community orchestras, and some schools had already started on a small scale basis in the 1930's. In the 1950's, however, the municipality music schools became more widespread, and many municipalities introduced instrumental music tuition, mainly taught on a one-to-one basis. Gradually, the music schools also introduced group sessions and ensemble lessons.

In the 1970's a music teacher partnership system was introduced in some Swedish compulsory schools. The key idea was that the class teacher and a music specialist teacher from the municipality school were to collaborate, and that they would have a complementary function in class. Such collaboration also operated as a 'promotion' for the municipality music schools, as many pupils gained an interest in instrumental tuition in the music schools through the teacher partnership.

The municipality music schools provide good opportunities for performance experiences, since every year or semester often finishes with a concert arranged by the music school in which their students perform. There are also other performance occasions during the year, when groups, bands and orchestras in the music schools perform within, and also outside the municipality or county. In the 1980's, group sessions increased in the music schools both due to pedagogical ideas of the time but also for financial reasons. There was also a shift from (individual) instrumental tuition, to activities with a broader approach to music and interrelated areas. In the 1990's many municipality music schools were modified into arts schools or 'culture schools' in which dance, drama and visual art were also included. Just like music education in the compulsory schools, the idea at this stage was that the education in the music, or cultural, schools was to mirror music as a societal phenomenon (Georgii-Hemming & Stålhammar, 2006). There is a deliberate interplay between music education in compulsory schools, music education in the municipality schools, and music teacher education, and this has shaped the design and content of the current music teacher education in higher education in Sweden (Stålhammar, 1995; Svenska Kommunförbundet, 1984).

The municipality music schools are funded by each municipality, which means that the extent and range of music education, and the profile and ambition of each school, can vary

significantly between different municipalities. The tuition fees also vary, however, the original idea was that tuition would be free of charge or at a very low cost, as one fundamental idea with the municipality music/arts school was that it would provide music education accessible for all.

*Informal music education*

Outside music education in compulsory schools and the music schools, other forms of music experiences and music education are also going on. There is an extensive interest in playing together and forming bands, which is an activity encouraged in local youth centres (Economou, 1994) or by local study centres. These activities sometimes also result in performances opportunities. Instrumental and/or singing tuition offered in groups for a reasonable fee to adults are available in many local study centres countrywide.

Choir singing is known in Sweden to be one of the most frequent hobbies among Swedes. At present this is true mainly for adults, but there is still a strong tradition of choir singing, represented for instance in children's choirs and youth choirs in churches.

*Opportunities for music within school and community*

Within the school environment there are some particular musical events which engage more or less the whole school community. End-of-term gatherings are significant events as students in choirs, classes or groups often perform then. The *Lucia* celebration on December 13$^{th}$, acquires considerable attention. Lucia is celebrated by children and youth singing in a procession, in schools, pre-schools and in the wider society. The Swedish Institute portrays the Swedish Lucia celebration like this:

> Named after a Sicilian saint, the Swedish Lucia does not have much in common with her namesake. She is celebrated in a variety of ways but the most common is the Lucia procession consisting of a group of young girls and boys singing traditional Lucia songs .On her head, the girl playing the part of Lucia wears a wreath of lingonberry sprigs with holders for real candles (battery powered ones are sometimes a safer option) to give the effect of a halo. She also has a white, full-length chemise with a red ribbon round her waist. Her female attendants are dressed similarly and the "star boys" wear white pointed hats decorated with stars. Lucia processions are held in various places, ranging from kindergartens and schools to Churches and the Swedish Parliament (The Swedish Institute, 2007).

Municipality music- or culture schools provide important opportunities for music individually, in groups and orchestras outside, as well as in connection to schools. In addition, the local youth centres provide opportunities for music, usually based on peer-interaction on an informal level. Similar to Ireland, the churches in Sweden often afford opportunities for music, often in choirs, but also in organised children's activities like the 'church children's hours'.

**A discussion about music education in Sweden**

Sources regarding music education in Sweden considered in this study are various contemporary PhD studies, research articles, as well as a major national evaluation report concerning music as a subject in the Swedish schools, distributed by the National agency of education (Skolverket, 2005). Furthermore a report published by the Swedish Research Council [Vetenskapsrådet] is considered in which researcher Ove Sernhede (2006) discusses the relationship between school and popular culture.

According to the national evaluation of music education (Skolverket, 2005) there is a current discussion about music as part of young people's 'life projects', which highlights an idea of music as an important representation of a person's identity. In relation to the teaching of music in schools, there is an emphasis on the relationship between music outside the school context and inside the school. There is a clear indication of influences from the local youth culture, highly influenced by media, having a strong impact on students, which is a vital part of their everyday lives. Due to such reality, music education needs to consider this aspect and not present and perform music education as an isolated school phenomenon, but instead relate to the various aspects of musical and cultural expressions that are represented in society as such.

Since the 1990's, in particular, students in Sweden have been encouraged to influence and voice opinions on both content and practice in education, and naturally this also includes music education. Claes Ericsson (2002) points to his experiences of music teaching in Sweden, and highlights a particular tension that can be found in the relationship between student and teacher in music education. He suggests that this tension may occur as students' knowledge and understandings of music are largely developed outside school, and therefore their personal musical preferences are often strongly held. Ericsson suggests that the students' motivation for music learning increases if they perceive that they have a say in the

content and practice in the music class, and that the teacher's role is to facilitate the students with what they themselves consider they need assistance in. Ove Sernhede (2006) approves the idea that school and education need to be part of, and to understand contemporary society. Furthermore, school and education need to recognise and develop knowledge about what is going on in young peoples' cultures and lives. However, Sernhede questions whether young people's cultures, in this case various forms of popular music, should be the prevailing source of influence in education. Are young people's experiences, based on their 'every-day culture' or popular culture, the predominant influences in school and education? If so, Sernhede cautions students might not develop an openness and interest to alternative ideas and experiences, which is one of the undertakings school is required to expose them to. An important task for education is to display various ideas, experiences and music practices in such a way that students become accustomed to relate to new and unknown phenomena. Eva Georgii-Hemming (2005) argues that a requirement for democratic processes and aspects in music education is that the subject encompasses a multiplicity of artistic expressions. In addition, music education needs to be represented by a diversity of independent actors.

In *Fotnoten*, a Swedish journal for educators of music dance and drama, there is an ongoing discussion concerning music education issues. Among the researchers who participate in these debates, Christer Bouij for instance, is concerned that aesthetical education, (including music), is acknowledged and carried out in a shallow way, which reduces music teaching and learning. Bouij also speculates whether the comprehensive competency of music specialist teachers might not be fully employed and understood within schools (Mogensen, 2004).

**Findings from the background questionnaire**

The research group consisted of student-teachers in Ireland and Sweden who were undertaking a course of music as an elective subject in their teacher education. The variety in age ranges between the Irish and Swedish group were different as the Irish students were all between 19-21 years old, whereas as in the Swedish group the ages ranged between 19-40 years. The majority of the Swedish participants, however, were in their early or mid twenties.

The first part of the data collection in this study was the background questionnaire. One of its main purposes was to serve as a preliminary study, investigating which areas would be relevant to further examine in the following two parts of the data collection. So, the findings

from the background questionnaire intended to provide a first picture of the research group, and some major findings will be presented below. The questionnaire distributed to the participants can be found in the appendix as well as the numbered figures (and related tables) referred to below.

The results draw the following outline:
There was in total 51 student-teachers who participated in the questionnaire including 29 Irish participants (27 female and 2 male), and 22 Swedish participants (14 female and 8 male). The gender imbalance represented in this study has a general significance within teacher education in Ireland and Sweden. The demographic distribution over each country showed that most of the Irish participants came originally from rural areas, and actually none of them came from the city centre, whereas the Swedish distribution was more spread with an emphasis on villages and small towns.

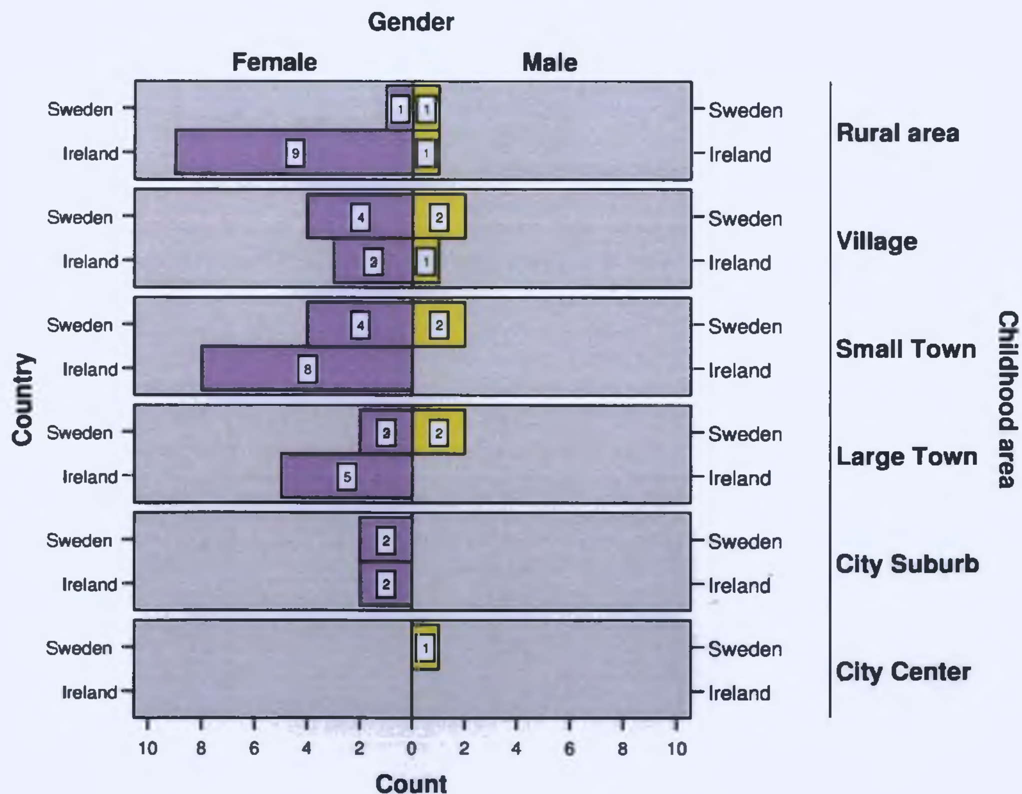


**Figure 6: Gender, country and geographical area**

The involvement of family members in music activities showed that there were many similarities between the Irish and the Swedish groups. Generally the participants' mothers in both countries were those of the parents who were perceived to most frequently carry out various musical activities. These activities were singing, playing instruments, dancing or a combination of those (see Appendix A, Figures 14-17).

Regarding accessibility to musical instruments in the participants' homes, it was found that nearly all participants have had access to instruments, however, the type of instruments represented varied between the two groups. In the Irish group traditional Irish instruments such as tin-whistle, fiddle and accordion as well as the piano were most mentioned, whereas the guitar, the recorder and the piano were perceived to be most frequent ones in the Swedish homes.

Most of the participants in both the Irish and Swedish group wrote that they actually also played instruments as children.

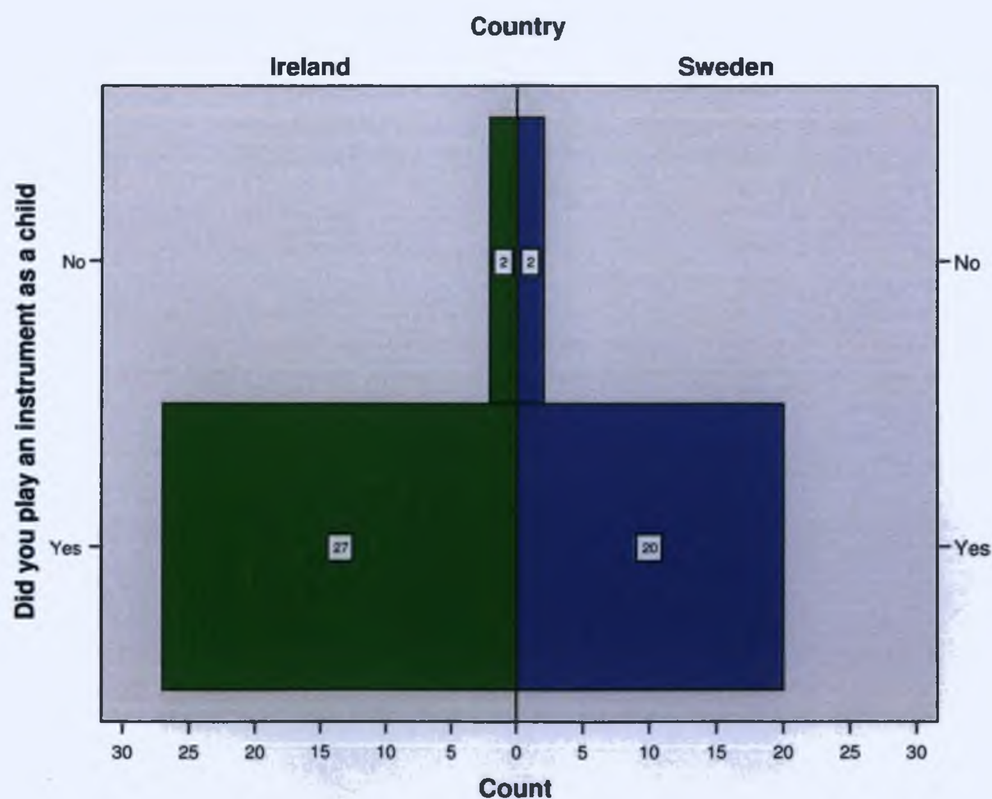


**Figure 7: Playing instrument as a child**

The participants were also asked if they participated in musical performances as children, and their replies showed that a higher number of Irish than Swedish students had performed as children. However, if expressed as percentages there is little difference 93% as opposed to 90.9 %.

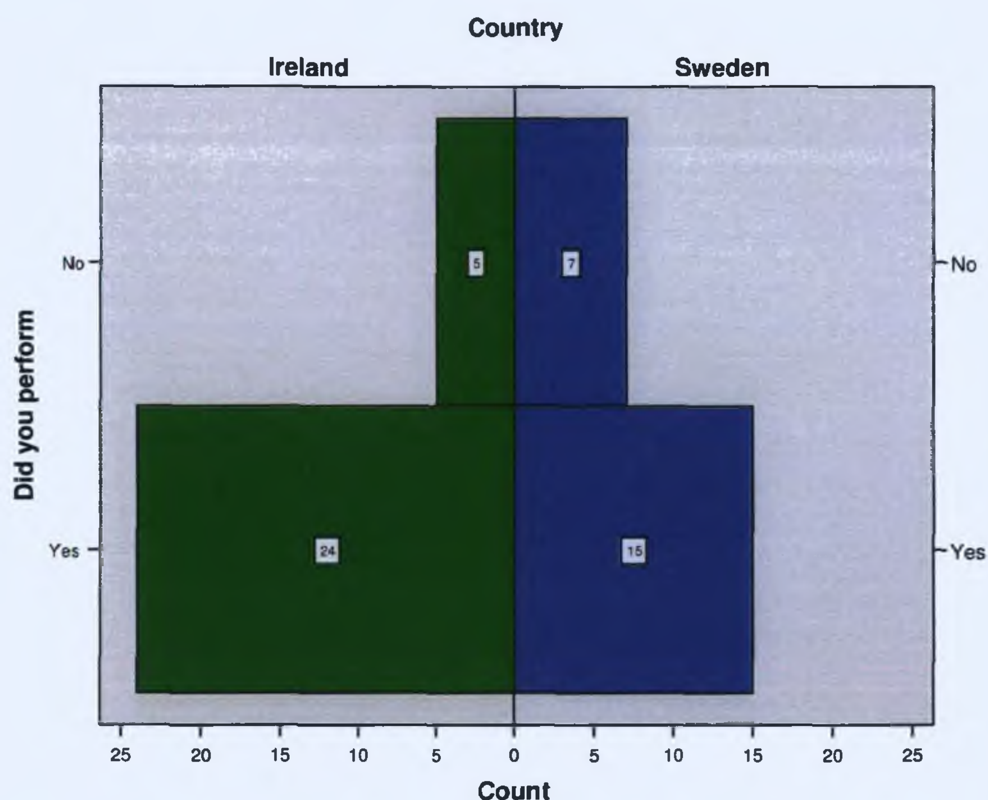


**Figure 8: Did you perform as a child?**

In relation to music education, most participants in both groups conceived that they had had music education in schools, however a very small number (see Appendix A, Figures 18 and 19) answered that they had not had music education at school. This might indicate music education was not represented in their schools, maybe due to the size or the situation of the school.

Concerning music education outside the school/classroom, the distribution between the two groups showed that the Irish student-teachers were more frequently involved in choirs and orchestras than the Swedish (see Appendix A, Figures 18 and 19). The Swedish participants

seem to have been more involved in other musical activities outside school, which may have been in local youth centres, or perhaps in relation to the municipality school.

The majority of both the Irish (20 out of 29) and Swedish (15 out of 22) groups went to voluntary music classes, which indicate that this had an influential importance for their musical socialisation at that time.
An interesting finding was that more Swedes than Irish perceived that they had frequently been to live music events. When interpreting the data the different number of Irish and Swedish respondents must be taken into account. However, what is particularly interesting is the clustering of the Irish responses and the wide spread of the Swedish responses.

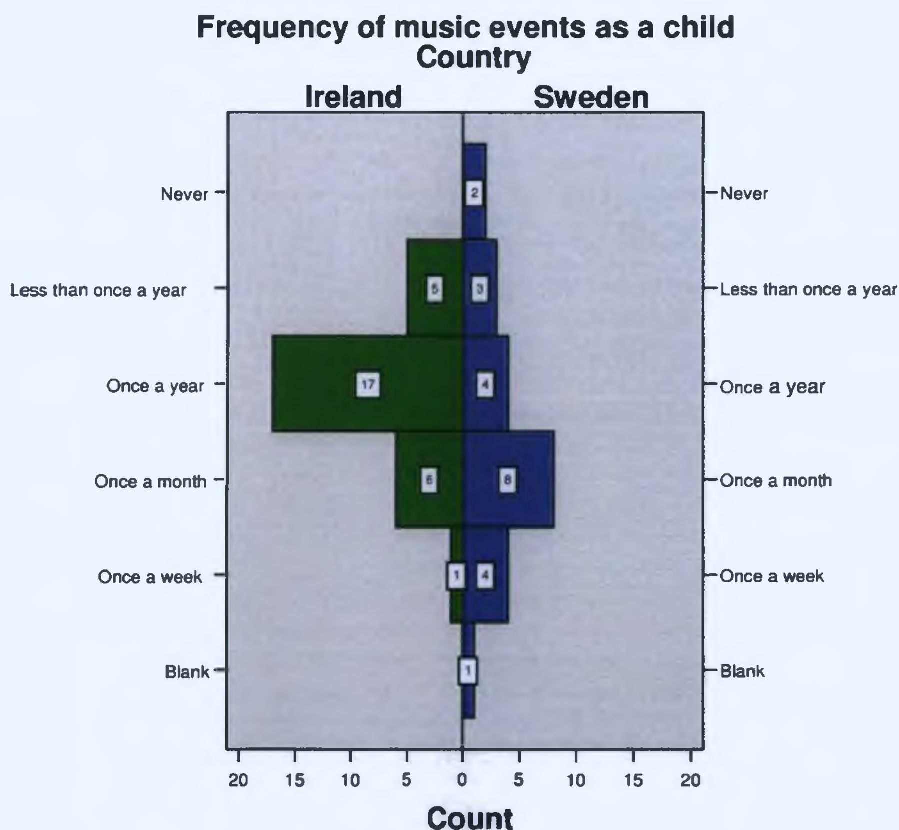


**Figure 9: Frequency of music events as a child**

One explanation might be that the Swedish participants generally lived in more densely populated areas at the time, and therefore had more accessibility to various music events. Another possibility may be that the Irish participants may have considered live performances

to be more formal events like concerts or musicals, and did not include informal music sessions or events. In relation to this finding it must also be considered that the range between those who never went and those who often went to live music events was larger in the Swedish group than in the Irish.

**Discussion**

This chapter presented a backdrop to the participants in this research. Particularly the comparative aspects (Tate, 2001) were highlighted in the areas of general education, music education and societal life in Ireland and Sweden. In relation to the musical socialisation of student-teachers, this chapter presented various aspects of family life in the two countries. The Irish participants came from large families, often including a vivid interaction between family members, whereas the family structure for the Swedish group was different and much smaller. In relation to music education outside school, the Irish participants were dependent on fee-paying tuition, which makes participation in extra-curricular music education dependent on financial means. The Swedish participants grew up during the peak of active municipality music schools. An issue raised in this context, is whether extra-curricular music education in municipality schools is 'taken for granted' in the Swedish school music context? If that is the case, it may affect the design of music education in schools, which, on a collective level, often requires some particular musical skills from students developed in the municipality music schools. As an example, the class plays a tune arranged by the teacher which requires a skilled guitarist and drum-player. From participation in the municipality music schools there might be some students in the class who will manage this task while the other students sing. Sound-wise the result becomes good, however, the result of students' unequal musical participation, may affect music learning and development in class.

While comparing music education between the two countries, the Irish curriculum is mainly constructed around the strands of performing, composing and listening and responding, while the Swedish curriculum encompass wider aims, and to some extent relates to popular and/or young people's culture and music, which is commented on by Sernhede (2006) in particular. Music teacher education varies quite extensively between the two countries. For instance special music teacher education in Sweden is well established in third-level education, and all primary school teachers in Ireland study curriculum music, which is not the case among Swedish teachers of general education.

Findings from the questionnaire reveal that there are many similarities between the two groups, such as early family involvement in musical activities, accessibility to instruments and participation in music education (compulsory and voluntarily). One of the differences between the two countries is that a strong concentration of Irish participants come from rural areas and small towns, whereas in Sweden the population is more widely spread. Performance opportunities seem to be more frequent in the Irish group and it is shown that they have participated more in choirs and orchestras than the Swedish participants. The Swedish group, however, have been involved in other voluntary music activities.

# CHAPTER 6: THE WRITTEN ACCOUNTS - MEMORIES OF EXPERIENCES WITH MUSIC

## Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the second part of the data collection, the written accounts. All the participants in the Irish and Swedish groups of student-teachers were asked to write about their previous experiences with music and music education from 3 phases of childhood: early childhood, middle childhood and teenage years. Prior to this task, they had filled in the background questionnaire, which operated as a preparation for this task.

The accounts were written by each student as an individual task during a music education class, and they were handed to the researcher at the end of the class. All students wrote about their previous experiences of music and music education. However, the student-teachers were reminded that it was voluntary to hand in the accounts to the researcher or to keep them themselves. Everybody in the two groups opted to submit their accounts to the researcher. The accounts were identified by a student number and no names were attached to the accounts.

The analysis of the data began with the researcher reading all the accounts on numerous occasions. The first task was to become aware of the various themes of experience that arose in the accounts, and then identify the range of experiences among the participants. The data was then analysed through these themes and the emerging results were related to the research framework. 5 questions were addressed:

1. What representations of musicality are reflected in these accounts? Do they change from phase to phase?
2. What representations of music practices are reflected in these accounts? Do they change from phase to phase?
3. What representations of the range of ways in which music is perceived to function is reflected in these accounts? Do they change from phase to phase?
4. What representations of the way in which music is valued in an educational and societal context are reflected in these accounts? Do they change from phase to phase?

5. Is there evidence of 'stores' of individual and socio-cultural experience and an interaction between these?

Furthermore the accounts were studied through the theoretical lens, presented in chapter 2, covering three perspectives, and the following issues were considered:

1. How do the accounts relate to a *relational* or *categorical* perspective on music?
2. How to the accounts relate to a *comparative* perspective on music?
3. Is there evidence in the accounts of the respondents being located in *'the space between'*?

A secondary function was to select candidates for the interviews that reflected a range of responses. A representation of both male and female students was also considered in this selection. The researcher selected 12 Irish and 12 Swedish accounts that represented a wide range and variety of experience with music and music education. The selection included both male and female candidates as well as a range of geographical areas. Each of the writers of these accounts was invited to participate in the interviews by letter. The results of the interviews may be found in Chapter 7.

The analysis of the written accounts that follows is presented in three sections corresponding to the three childhood phases: early childhood, middle childhood and teenage years. Within each section the findings from the Irish group and the Swedish group are presented separately, followed by a concluding part where the experiences from both groups are summarised, compared and analysed. Each of the three sections is divided into themes identified by the researcher. Quotations from the accounts are used to illustrate the ways in which the students wrote about the themes. The writers are identified by the following code, I for Irish or S for Swedish responses, M or F for male or female, and an assigned number. So for instance: Swedish, female, number 3 = SF3.

Some general issues concerning the research contexts need to be kept in mind when considering the findings in this chapter. As most of the Irish students began primary school at the age of 4, a part of the first phase (4-6 years) is related to their school age. The Swedish students, however, mainly stared school at the age of 7 (during the second phase) and their accounts of the first phase mainly relate to pre-school or other forms of child care, and the

homes. It should also be mentioned that in the second and third phase of the data presentation, the reader may find the findings from the Swedish group more extensive. This may be due to the fact that the Swedish accounts were generally more quantitatively comprehensive, although the time distributed in writing the accounts was the same for each group. From the researcher's perspective, these differences probably depend on a difference in writing styles, connected to the ways in which each language conceptualises different phenomena in writing. Another reason may be difference of age range between the two groups, as the age range in the Swedish group was larger and perhaps life experience may have influenced their wider variety of responses. Many of the findings in this chapter relate directly to the findings of the literature review. Where this is so, a reference to the relevant author is included in brackets.

## Early childhood 0-6 years

### The Irish group

In the Irish written accounts describing musical experiences from the ages of 0-6 years, one of the most apparent themes is the musical role models present within the family sphere. Evidence, in essence, of the musical impact of significant others. This theme is frequently related to the ideas of assigned rather than earned musical competency (Lundberg & Ternhag, 1996; Merriam, 1964). This often appears in the accounts in such terms as coming from a 'musical family'. The memories of music experiences from early childhood often consist of music as a form of play and entertainment, and also as an accompanying activity. Some examples are, for instance, to make up movements to a piece of music or getting to know an instrument by improvising on it. Music is also portrayed as a social activity engaged in a playful way together with other family members. In pre-school/school, music is mentioned as a learning tool, such as learning numbers or words through a song. The access to musical instruments and audio/visual resources in the homes seem to be of great importance for the development of an interest in music. A further aspect that is particularly evident in the Irish group is the considerable interest in traditional music. Finally regarding the first years in school, the students provide both positive and negative memories. Further details of each of these representations of music are discussed below.

*Musical role models in the families*

Both fathers and mothers seem to have provided a musical environment in the homes, and at times, served as musical role models. Siblings, particularly brothers, are also mentioned by a number of participants as musical role models. This is expressed in terms such as "My older brothers played the piano, I used to hear them practising in the house." [IF1] or "My older brother would have begun learning the tin-whistle./.../ I would also have started to learn the tin-whistle myself from the age of 5." [IM5].

One participant described how his/her brother began to play the guitar and sing in a band, and had a strong memory of the band practising in the brother's room or in the garage.

There are substantial early memories of musical interaction with parents, which for instance, is described in terms such as "Since I can remember, my parents sang to me." [IF2]. One participant points towards the transmission of a musical orientation between generations. Referring to her parents she wrote, "They love music and they have shared that love." [*ibid.*]. Her parents' use of music for tranquilising purposes is illustrated in "They sang to me going to sleep and I remember my journey in the car involved singing." [*ibid.*].

Grandparents seem to have had a strong input in their grandchildren's musical worlds. This is particularly described in terms of singing and instrument playing, for instance "My grandmother used to entertain us on the piano." [IF4], or as another person mentioned "I have been told that, as a baby, my mother, father and granny sang to me as they bounced me on their knee." [IF8]. Furthermore, a participant says: "Granny used to play the accordion for me." [IF9]. Some grandfathers also played a role in their grandchildren's musical development, as illustrated in the statement "My grandfather had a popular showband." [IF12], or "I also liked to dance to any type of music at weddings, parties or even if my grand-dad played the accordion for me." [IF17].

There are a number of different ways in which students describe how this musical interest and variety of musical practices were passed on within the family context. The mere presence of a parent humming, singing, dancing or whistling seems to have had a significant impact, which is described in terms such as:

> My father does not play an instrument, but used to sing all the time at home and whistling to various tunes. He taught me how to whistle and hum from a very young age and I have memories of myself standing in front of the mirror practising my whistling skills. To this day I still like humming along to tunes [IF18].

Some of the ways in which students express themselves appear to relate to 'assigned musicality' as an understanding of musical competency (Lundberg & Ternhag, 1996). This is particularly so in relation to the family context. In the following example, the concept of 'a musical house' is mentioned. This expression can be interpreted as an understanding of *assigned musical competency* as the respondent assumes that the home environment provides a musical basis for the family members.

> Grew up in a fairly musical house where my mother was in a band and played the piano and sang. As a result of this, I was very much involved with music from an early age where my mother would constantly have music playing in the background and would sing me to sleep every night [IF12].

Being a part of a large [musical] family seems to have encouraged music learning, and one participant described it like this:

> [There are] a lot of singers in my family. I would have heard a lot of singing of my parents etc. My parents would have sung to me and taught me simple tunes from a very young age. I have been told that I loved performing these songs for other members of my family and friends [IM5].

*Play, entertainment and accompanying activities*

Music is often mentioned in the accounts in connection to play and entertainment. Musical play from birthday parties is mentioned and so also is playing with toy microphones and tape recorders on different occasions.

Various everyday uses of music are mentioned quite frequently, such as music as an activity which accompanies other events. This is exemplified in terms of the whole family singing along while driving the car, for instance. This is mentioned in a number of accounts. In relation to these car journeys one participant remembered, that she was not particularly fond of her father's singing voice, and says that he was "always singing in the car so there was no escape." [IF1]. Another memory in connection to 'car-singing' was described like this:

> I do remember my mother singing to me especially when we were in the car driving to places. Like when we went on holidays to Galway one time, my whole family and I would sing on the journey [IF6].

*Access to musical instruments and audio/ visual resources in the homes*

The fact that musical instruments were present and accessible in many homes, seem to have been an important factor for both aural and physical exploration and interaction with instruments. This is for instance, described in terms such as "My mother played the piano, recorder, tin-whistle, and just anything she got her hands on." [IF2]. "There were many musical instruments around in our house." [IF1]. To have had instruments near seems to have been an encouraging factor for music learning:

> I was always amazed at the greatness of music because we had musical instruments in our house. I was always playing around with them. I started Irish dancing around the age of 4 and got a real feel for traditional Irish music because of this [IF10].

The opportunity to explore musical instruments, seems to have been important to many participants. One of the participants recalled that: "My dad had a mouth-organ and I remember finding this and having great fun in trying to play it." [IM16].

Radios, tape recorders and CDs have been important resources for musical interaction in the family context at this phase, and some participants remembered that their singing efforts were recorded by the parents. Radios and CDs also served as accompaniment for everyday purposes in the homes such as "My mum always had it on when she cooked" [IF2], or "There was always music on the radio in the car or house." [IF19]. For those families who did not play musical instruments, radio and TV-programmes and CDs were mentioned to have been purposeful for music learning outside school.

*Traditional music*

Within the Irish group, there was clear evidence of involvement in traditional music from an early age, and several Irish participants also went to traditional music classes. These traditional music classes were remembered as enjoyable and important for a number of reasons. For instance: "I began Irish dancing classes at age 5. I remember enjoying the Irish traditional music and that it really developed my sense of rhythm." [IF8].

Listening experience including radios and CDs were mentioned in relation to traditional music as in "I can remember my parents listening to CD's at home, mainly traditional music." [IF18].

*Music in school*

Formal music education in early primary school does not seem to have left any strong impressions on the participants. One student recalled "I don't remember much about music in the classroom from this period" [IF26], or "Don't remember doing much music at school (4-6 yrs) maybe the odd Irish action song or rhyme."[IF19]. Some memories showed how music education supported other skills in primary education: "I also remember singing in school /.../ just simple rhymes about country, alphabet etc." [P18].

According to their descriptions, it seems obvious that several participants have developed other skills through music: "I remember singing many songs at school – both Irish and English songs. We used to do actions to the Irish songs and this helped us learn what the words meant." [IF8].

One participant mentioned how music education in primary school had not been very satisfactory and gave this example:

> My early years of Primary school would have involved singing mainly, we just learned the songs, sang through them a couple of times and then they were forgotten about. No positive memories of music from my early schooling. No use of instruments, often learned songs from tape recordings [IF15].

There are, however, some positive memories from early primary music education and they seem to be connected to special events and performances such as:

> When I began primary school at age 5, I remember singing with our teacher songs for special occasions e.g. Christmas. I always remember the principal was big into music and he would do extra music in the morning [IF20].

Memories of music experiences from play school were also mentioned, and one significant experience mentioned, was singing together with other children for the first time.

A connection between the music learning that was going on in school on the one hand, and within the family on the other hand, was emphasised by one participant: "We learnt songs in school and then my mother would ask me to sing them when I would come home." [IM16].

## Early childhood 0-6 years

### The Swedish group

In the Swedish memory tasks describing memories between the ages 0-6 years, the most evident themes, similar to the Irish group, are the importance of parents' presence in musical activities (Borthwick & Davidson, 2002). In the Swedish accounts the relationship with music at this stage is shown in access to, and exploration of instruments, the copying of and improvising of songs or dances, and the impact of recorded music, either on tapes, records or the radio. Since most Swedish participants were still in pre-school until the age of 6 years they had not yet experienced formal music education but music was part of the integrated pre-school curriculum (Skolverket, 1998). A fairly large number of participants had experiences of musical activities facilitated by the various churches, such as *kyrkans barntimmar* (The church's children's hours) or children's choirs. Lucia[2] and Christmas celebrations were also mentioned as vivid musical experiences at this age.

_Musical interaction with parents_

The memories of experiences of music with parents are either related to singing, playing or listening together with one parent as mentioned in: "My dad played the guitar and sang with me."[SF19], or "...my mum used to play and I was standing by the piano singing."[SF12]. Memories of parents singing 'goodnight-songs' at bed time were also strong. There is evidence in the accounts that the parents' personal relationships to music were early registered by their children. One example of this is how a participant recalled that "my mother did not consider herself to be a good singer." [SF16].

The fathers are often mentioned in relation to musical activities at this stage, yet mothers seem to have been the more musically influential ones. The family in general, is mentioned

[2] Lucia, a traditional Swedish annual celebration. See Chapter 5, 'The Research Contexts' for a further explanation.

with regard to how the participants' musical interests were encouraged in the families as a central activity. (Borthwick and Davidson, 2002). Still, the close relationship on a one-to-one basis with one parent seems to have had a significant impact on the memories of musical experiences from early childhood. Other family members were occasionally mentioned too and their influence is more directly stated than in the Irish group. One participant refers to his developing musical taste, "my brother had a big impact on me during my upbringing, I would say he has been a role model to me/.../ I always liked what he liked..." [SM9]. Another example of a musical relationship based on a shared practice with other family members is "my brother and I sang together with dad who played the guitar." [SF19]. One participant had strong musical experiences from her grandparents' home: "My strongest memories are together with my grandmother, listening to her playing the piano and singing." [SF4].

This particular grandmother is also described as encouraging the participant to play on a violin that hung on the wall in the house. This experience highlights the importance of the presence and accessibility of musical instruments, which seems to have been a key experience among many of the participants.

*Access to instruments*

The piano was described as having a significant importance and function for both musical improvisation on an individual level and for musical 'togetherness' with another member of the family, or with several family members:

> We [the family] have always played instruments together and had a laugh and fun/.../ Dad played a tune on the piano and we had to figure out which song it was, and the one of us who heard which song it was first had to start singing it [SF5].

A musical toy piano was also mentioned: "My dad taught me a song on a small toy piano/.../ I was often at my nanny's house trying to figure out songs on the small toy piano." [SF19].

For those who may not have had a piano at home, an [accessible] piano or other instruments at the pre-school was important in allowing musical involvement and practice. In the homes, the piano seems to have been the place where both individual and shared musical experiences have taken place. This is for instance described like this "Since my mum has always played the piano and sung, I often sat on her lap by the piano and we played and sang. /.../ I used to

like playing on the piano." [SF11], and "I learnt early on how to play the piano and I liked to play it by ear."[SF12], or "At the age of 5 I discovered the piano and I was improvising on it on my own now and then."[SM1].

Percussion instruments, drums in particular, seem to have been interesting and enjoyable for the participants in early childhood and some of them particularly remember the excitement of the percussion instruments in pre-school. One participant (who later on became a semi-professional drummer) described how he at the age of 4-5 years, made his own drum-kit at home out of tin jars.

*The impact of the radio and of recorded music on tapes and records*

Listening, as well as responding in different ways, to recorded music, is something which is mentioned frequently as strong musical experiences from childhood, particularly in connection to a rhythmic and bodily expression to music. These memories were often connected to films and popular music and were described in various ways such as "I was standing on the couch in the living room swaying along with the music." [SM20], or "When I was in my Nanny's house I used to start the tape recorder and then I ran in circles in the room. That was my dance." [SF3].

Listening to music seems to have been most enjoyable for many participants in early childhood. Pop and rock music in particular is described as influential in listening and responding to recorded music. One participant recalled how his father at times had brought him to a record shop were there were lots of pop and rock music records: "My father knew the local record shop owner, and once he told me to choose a record in his shop - any record." [SM2]. Another participant stated: "At an early age I started to mime and sing along with my parents' records." [SF17].

Music on its own was not the only important component in listening activities at that time. Music as an accompaniment or integral part of a story seemed to have been attractive in early childhood: "I enjoyed listening to stories on the tape recorder because sometimes there were beautiful songs in the stories." [SF18], and "I listened to tape recordings, mainly to fairy tales but also to music." [SF15].

The presence of recordings seems to have been musically significant, particularly if music was not a shared activity in the family in other ways: "We had loads of records with children's music that we played over and over again and we did sing along with them but never together with our parents." [SF16].

*Copying and improvising songs or dances*

For some participants, musical role models outside the family sphere and the pre-school context, were recognised already in early childhood.

> My first record was a Michael Jackson record and it was a very good album. Michael Jackson was my idol and I wanted to learn to dance like him. I practised in front of the mirror; the dance steps, the lyrics and the rap and I knew it so well, and still remember it today [SM13].

It is evident in the previous comment that movement and visual impressions were also important in connection to pop music. One participant says: "I also remember that I had an idol when I was about 5 years old. As soon as I watched her music video on the TV, I approached the TV and started to sing and move like her." [SF7].

There seems to have been a clear musical openness in the pre-schools towards the children bringing and playing their favourite music in the pre-school. One participant specifically remembers how "I brought a tape with 'Twisted Sister' to the "pillow room" in pre-school, and we listened to it a lot. It was really good and we danced until we became all sweaty." [SM9].

A memory of the exploration of musical instruments in pre-school was recalled like this:

> There was a piano at the play school that we could play on if we "behaved well". I used to sit by the piano, trying to figure out little tunes.../../ The [play school] teachers often helped us in doing that [figure out songs] as well [SM10].

*The church's children's hours*

Outside the family context, music seems to have been experienced either at pre-school or as musical activities for children organised by the churches at *Kyrkans barntimmar* (the church's children's hours), or Sunday school: "Well, I was in Sunday school in our church and I am sure we sang a lot but I cannot really remember what the songs were." [SM10].

*Kyrkans barntimmar* seems to have provided for an important musical encounter in a social context, and this was the source of positive memories of an early musical engagement. One participant comments: "My mum used to bring me to *Kyrkans barntimmar* where we sang and played a lot. I don't remember what we sang, but remember that it was enjoyable." [SM10].

Another participant states: "I also went to *Kyrkans barntimmar* where there was a lot of music and singing." [SF4]. A third and a fourth participant remember: "I was in the scouts in church and I also went to *Kyrkans barntimmar*" [SF15], and "I also remember singing and listening to music at *Kyrkans barntimmar.*" [SM20].

The church was also remembered in the accounts as a place were music was often present, particularly around Christmas. This was mentioned by three different participants: "I sang in church at Christmas and I remember it to be enjoyable and exciting." [SF15]. "I have vague memories of going to the church and singing in the choir." [SF17]. "We went to church for Christmas and then we sang the hymns." [SF11].

The Lucia celebrations also feature at Christmas time. This is a significant part of the tradition of musical culture for children in Sweden. Many participants have memories from pre-school from the "Lucia parade" or "Lucia procession": "I also took part in the Lucia celebrations and we performed different songs and I remember that it was enjoyable and exciting." [SF18].

Musical memories are generally vague from this early stage in life, yet memories from Lucia celebrations are still vivid: "I don't remember very much from that age, but [I remember that] I was taking part in the Lucia procession at playschool and I have seen photos from those occasions." [SF15].

One participant remembers the music practice for Lucia, but also other concerns:

> We were going to have a Lucia performance for our parents and we were preparing ourselves by practising the songs and planning how we were going to organise the procession... I was concerned about the fact that not everyone was singing. My mother mainly remembers that I just

a few days earlier had lost two front teeth, so I had a giant gap between my teeth when I was singing in front of everyone [SF12].

Another person recalls:

I have photos from Lucia and Christmas. The pictures from Lucia are when mum, my little sister and I are celebrating Lucia for my dad, I think I was about 4 and my sister was a baby [SF11].

## Musical experiences from early childhood - a conclusion

The family context has had a significant influence on the early musical experiences for the participants in both groups. There is, however, a difference between the two groups in the sense that the musical interaction is often described as taking place in the larger family context in the Irish accounts, whereas the Swedish participants more often describe their musical experiences with the family on a one-to-one basis, e.g. with one parent at a time or together with a sibling.

Both groups, implicitly or explicitly, describe how positive values in relation to musical activities have been transmitted by their parents, grandparents or older siblings. They describe how the ways in which music was practised in the homes made a strong impression on them, for instance, how a father was always whistling or humming tunes, or a how a grandmother was playing the piano.

In both countries, the musical impact from both parents are described, however, there is a slight tendency to mention the mothers' involvement in shared musical activities more frequently than the fathers'. An extensive difference between the two groups is that concepts such as "a musical house" or "musical family" are mentioned in the Irish group only. The equivalent is not mentioned in the Swedish accounts. This difference might point towards an understanding of musical competency as an assigned ability in the Irish group. The Swedish group may be more oriented to view musical competency as an earned skill.

Access to instruments in the homes and/or in the pre-schools/schools, seem to have been of vital importance for strengthening an early musical interest. Numerous accounts mention how their experience of instruments triggered their curiosity for musical exploration and

improvisation. This finding is particularly interesting since traditionally, song singing has been emphasised in young children's music education. The excitement of gaining access to a wide range and variety of instruments is highlighted particularly by the Irish group, whereas the main instruments mentioned by the Swedish group are either the piano or various percussion instruments. The findings also reveal that their memories of experiences with instruments have had a much more significant impact than their memories of singing. A possible explanation of the excitement expressed about music instruments, is that at this age singing is interconnected with other everyday activities for the child, like talking and running, for instance, whereas musical instruments represent a new exiting area to explore. The encounter with musical instruments seems to be clearly connected to a perception of what counts as 'real' musical practice.

Radios, tapes and CDs are perceived to have been an important part of the participants' everyday occurrences with music, and sometimes for recording purposes. What is most significant in relation to this, particularly in the Swedish group, is the physical response to recorded music that is experienced at this age. This is described as running around in circles to the song on the tape recorder, or listening to a rock song in the "pillow room" at pre-school, getting all sweaty by intensive dancing. Interestingly, media influences such as tapes and CDs with regard to musical preferences seem to be clearly apparent in the Swedish group whereas the musical influences from the extended family seem to be stronger in the Irish group. An example of a strong difference between the two groups is the genre of music encountered at this early stage. Traditional (Irish) music is frequently mentioned among the Irish participants, with some of them also describing traditional music or dancing classes. Traditional music is hardly mentioned at all among the Swedish participants. Instead, quite a few mention the impact of pop and rock music from their early childhood.

The Irish participants have memories of experiences of music from school, but these are mainly remembered as supportive to other school activities, like rhymes about the alphabet, or Irish songs with actions to learn the words. The Swedish respondents were still in pre-school and so music activities naturally had a holistic focus. A societal representation of musical function, as well as value for children in early childhood in both countries, seem to be the use of music as a learning tool or for wider personal development.

Music is experienced as an activity for particular occasions in both groups such as Christmas celebrations. Music seems to have an important value for the pre-schools/schools in the celebration of various festivities and holidays. An interesting finding is the description of singing in the school at this stage as the first time singing together with other children is experienced.

A significant finding was that many of the Swedish participants mentioned how their early music experience took place at the church's children's hours. These activities arranged by the various churches nationwide, seem to have supplied the children and parents with access to musical group activities in early childhood. These activities seem to have been an influential experience of music practice as a social and collective activity together with other children. Another vital experience among the Swedes was the musical celebration of Lucia. The celebration contains not only singing, but is also connected to other exciting elements for a child. The candlelight processions in white dresses maybe a reason why these occasions are remembered vividly.

In general the memories of experience with music from early childhood are presented as explorative, uncomplicated and accessible. The experiences are often also described as influenced by a relational approach to musical encounters and activities.

## Middle childhood 7-13 years

### The Irish group

In middle childhood (7-13 years), the experiences among the participants in the Irish group have a different character from those of their early childhood. The areas that were most significant at this stage were instrumental tuition and graded exams. The influence of, and an attraction to, traditional music was also suggested in the accounts and concerts and competitions were described as being strongly influential on their musical experiences with that genre.

Parents and other relatives were still important as significant musical others, and teachers were described as musical role models in some of the cases. In other instances, however, the teachers were referred to as sources of musical restraint on their students. A sense of being selected, or rejected, for a musical task in formal education affected the developing musical

identity of many of the participants, and as adults they still expressed strong memories of such situations.

According to the accounts, music education, and instrumental tuition in particular, demanded a certain amount of perseverance from the student. However, this in turn was connected to gaining a sense of achievement.

The memories of experiences of music education at school were generally quite enthusiastic, but criticism was also expressed. The music lessons were often described as consisting of song singing, and a restriction in the use of musical instruments was commented upon. As opposed to that, some participants did report that tin-whistle education was sometimes part of the class room music practice.

The influences from church-going and being part of a congregation was also musically influential in many instances, and several accounts expressed how school work had been intertwined with the Catholic traditions and celebrations.

Choir singing appeared to be very popular, and the social and musical importance of being part of a music group was described as a developing experience. In some cases, the choir served as an opportunity for musical self-expression. It was mentioned that the choir provided a secure musical environment for people who were too shy to sing solo parts. The choirs' social 'togetherness' seem to have been strengthened by participation in choir competitions and concerts.

Pop music was only referred to occasionally and, except for a few cases, it was mentioned as informal listening or dancing activities outside school.

*Instrumental tuition and graded exams*

The age of 7 seems to have been the starting point for instrumental tuition for many of the participants in the Irish group. Particularly the piano, but the recorder and the violin were also popular instruments at this stage. One participant expressed with enthusiasm how "[I] started music lessons when I was 7 and I loved it." [IF19]. Others described how lots of instrumental classes were available in one school, whereas students in other schools had to go to private tuition.

With regard to instrumental tuition, graded exams were frequently mentioned. This was described in terms such as, "I completed 3 examinations..." [IF1], and "I started learning the piano in 4th class and I really enjoyed this. I found it difficult at first and did not practice enough. I completed 3/4 examinations..." [IF18]. A further participant commented "[I was] completing exam grades up to grade 8 in piano ..." [IF24].

*Influences of traditional music*

In some cases, music education at middle childhood, consisted of collective tuition on the tin-whistle in class. This is described as an opportunity to play with a group, and also an opportunity to learn "Irish songs and Irish airs" [IF21]. One participant recalled how "There was a huge emphasis put on music, especially Irish traditional music in my class. In the beginning we were all taught to play the tin-whistle." [IM5].

*Concerts and competitions*

Concerts and competitions in music, were also remembered as having an impact on the musical learning experiences from middle childhood:

> When I was about 7 years old, I joined a youth choir in my home town. I remained part of the choir until I was 15 years old. Over the years we participated in numerous concerts and competitions where we achieved considerable success [IF3].

It was evident that the component of success with regard to taking part in a competition, was generally highly valued among the participants and described as, "We entered competitions every year and were very successful." [IM5]. Perhaps part of the sense of success in competitions was the joint musical effort together with peers as suggested by this participant: "I joined a town band when I was 9 years old. I really enjoyed playing in it as I was in a large group of musicians. /.../ We had many public performances." [IF4].

*Significant musical others*

Encouragement from parents and siblings were still essential at this stage. Traditional Irish music in particular, was often part of the family life as a described by one participant:

> My parents always brought me to different places to hear Irish music as they had a big interest in this too. After my sister and I started to play it /.../ [I] got great encouragement from my relations to continue playing music, learning the banjo or developing skills on accordion [IF19].

One participant described the get-togethers with relatives, and how everybody played instruments at the end of the night. Participants also described how parents bought recorded traditional Irish music to encourage their children when they noticed how easily they picked up tunes from listening to it. Siblings and parents were sometimes the inspiring factors for music practice as some participants recalled:

> My brothers played the accordion for a few years so he helped me in my motivation to practice the piano occasionally [IF18].

> It was around this age I started taking a big interest in music, singing in particular. Because my father sings and plays the guitar, I did the same [IF10].

*Teachers, selection and rejection*

In this phase, the teacher played a more evident role than earlier as an additional 'significant musical other'. Participants describe how they looked forward to, and enjoyed the teacher's tuition as illustrated in this account:

> I began my first instrument at age 7 when I was in first class. I remember this clearly as we were taught by the principal and it was a smallish group. I remember always looking forward to this and enjoying it [IF20].

One participant described how

> My 6$^{th}$ class teacher had the biggest influence on me in relation to music. She gave us a chance to experiment with instruments and we also did a lot of rhythm clapping [IF15].

However, there were other participants in the group who recalled musical experiences with the teachers connected to a sense of anxiety. One respondent explicitly points out that she was not considered to be a musical person by her teacher. Nevertheless she was aware of having a certain musical competency:

> When I was in third class (age 8) the teacher was picking a group to sing - the best singers, and then some one shouted my name, the teacher said 'no, she can't sing', - and as a result I don't

> ever sing! However, I could always tell what notes others were singing/.../ but could not actually sing them [IF19].

It is also stated that a lack of musical encouragement on the teacher's part affected the students' musical self-confidence, which one participant portrayed like this:

> I was never told I was brilliant at singing like other people in my class. I think the lack of encouragement and affirmation as a child at school with regard to singing has made me wary of my singing talents [IF18].

This issue is also stressed by another participant: "However, relationships with the teacher are important and encouragement on teacher's behalf can make/break." [IF24].

*Formal musical teaching and learning*

In contrast to the early childhood some participants describe the music lessons in primary school as remote from exploration and play. This is defined in such terms as being taught mainly from text books with no musical games involved.

A particular recognition of students playing musical instruments (which they had often learnt outside school) was sometimes emphasised by the teacher in class. One participant recalled how: "In primary school I was the only child that had played an instrument and I often had to bring the accordion to play for the class." [IF19].

There were, however, multiple concerns for a primary teacher to consider, and instrumental tuition in class was sometimes described as having unpredicted outcomes:

> Once she [the teacher] gave us percussion instruments but she took them back because we made a racket with them she said. /.../ In 4th class we learned how to play the recorder. I enjoyed that. We used to get in trouble for playing them during other subjects though. Our teacher was always afraid that we'd fall on them and stab ourselves with the recorders which was quite funny really [IF6].

*Perseverance and achievement*

In middle childhood, music learning seemed to be connected to a sense of mastering (or failing) a skill. At this phase, (7-13 years) skill-mastering is possibly a vital aspect of various

learning process that the child experiences. In connection to instrumental music learning (often outside school), one of the participants gave a fairly detailed account in relation to skill-mastering:

> When I was 8 years old I began to learn to play the piano/.../feeling a great sense of achievement when I had mastered the piece/.../ I think with my perseverance and determination and love for music I mastered the pieces to perfection and I was happy with my results [IF4].

In their accounts the participants compared their own efforts to their peers', and they also assessed their own dedication and discipline in connection to music practice.

_Singing for multiple purposes_

The main classroom musical activity in middle childhood, seemed to have been song singing. The singing of songs in the class room served various purposes, such as musical purposes like working with musical form ("...rounds and canons..." [IF8]), language practice ("... particularly Gaelic songs..." [IF10]), and for religious practice. The latter is mentioned in numerous accounts and some samples of this are:

> For first Holy Communion and Confirmation each year a number of the students would sing in a choir for these celebrations, I enjoyed taking part in these [IF17].

> I sang as part of a choir for my first Holy Communion and really enjoyed that [IF18].

> At the age of 9, I joined the school choir. We sang for weekly Masses. At the age of 11, I began to play the organ for the choir [IF21].

> Songs for communion and confirmation as part of my Catholic upbringing and also a member of the school choir [IF22].

> We learned many religious hymns. The teacher was very religious and used to have mass for the whole school in our classroom at least once a year [IF9].

> We also sang quite a lot in school, either religious songs or songs for the annual concert [IF1].

Generally, choir singing was described as a popular form of musical practice at this age. Participants described how enjoyable they found "singing in the choir, especially songs with

nice harmonies." [IF1]. The National Children's Choir is mentioned on various occasions, and some participants mention that they were chosen to sing in the choir. Choirs were generally considered to provide a safe musical environment, and for some participants it was perceived as a collective means of musical growth.

*Pop music and informal learning*

The practise of pop music was rarely mentioned in the Irish accounts from middle childhood, and it is particularly noticeable that it is barely mentioned at all as part of music education. Comments on pop music were instead made in relation to a personal interest outside the school context, and then often in connection to either listening or dancing. Some examples are: "I began listening to the radio and became interested in pop music and watched music shows on TV." [IF1], "I also remember listening to some of the pop songs of the time and developing dance routines with my friends and brothers and sisters." [IF24] or "[I became interested in] pop music/music in the charts/.../ at the age of 9-10." [IF7]. There was, however, one participant who specifically commented on popular songs in music education and recalled: "I began lessons [instrumental], it was so enjoyable. Lessons started with popular songs being taught." [IF15].

## Middle childhood 7-13 years

### The Swedish group

For the Swedish group, the memories of musical experiences at middle childhood also differ in character from those of the previous phase. The areas that are most vivid from this phase involve musical role models, peer identification (Lamont, 2002), instrumental tuition and choir singing. Another significant area which is often mentioned, deals with media impact of different kinds, such as records, films and TV productions. Media influence seems to have been the source of a generational perception of the 'right kind of music'. This presents 'common-sense' knowledge of what children and young people normally listen to during a particular era.

The memories from (formal) music education, were generally fairly vague, at least those from the first years in primary school. The most significant musical experiences from school were as the music practice for school gatherings such as Christmas and summer breaks.

There was a tendency within the Swedish accounts to recall the memories from mid/late primary education (ages 10-12) as boring or unpleasant. Some of the participants testified that the atmosphere in the classroom had been poor and that students had experienced a frequent change of music teachers which was perceived to have had a negative impact. The music classes were described as lacking a sense of impact, especially in relation to the materials and methods of music practice. Music classes from that time were often regarded as consisting of singing songs from books.

When starting secondary education, however, a number of the participants expressed their delight in getting access to musical instruments and being able to play on them during music classes.

The municipality music schools appear to have had a significant impact on the participants' encounters with musical instruments, as well as on their participation in various musical activities and contexts, such as instrumental ensembles and different types of orchestras. Music practice in middle childhood, seems to have had an important social function as well as a "skill-developing" function. A certain amount of shyness in connection to performance was also highlighted among the participants.

*Multiple learning processes*

During this phase in education, a child is involved in multiple learning processes. Being a pupil demands multi-faceted learning skills, and the learning processes are often interconnected and/or operate in layers. In the area of musical learning and musical development, it was noticeable how the formal and informal learning processes were described to often intertwine by the participants. A colourful example of this is portrayed below by one participant in the Swedish group:

> In 2nd class all the pupils at my school participated in a music workshop. Various teachers from the music school came to this music workshop to demonstrate and present different musical instruments to the pupils; the violin, the cello, the clarinet, the saxophone, the horn, just to mention a few. I really enjoyed the fact that in 3rd class we could choose any instrument that we liked to play/.../ It was a very hard choice, but finally I decided to go for the violin. What made me make that decision was the cool sound of it. /.../ At this stage I also started to get interested in hard rock music such as Europe and Bon Jovi since these songs were often played on the tape

recorder in class room parties./.../ I went to a special music class which was one of the first of its kind in our county. In order to begin there, we had to do particular theoretical and practical tests. This stage [the music class] was very important for my musical development and its continuation [SM1].

*Musical role models and peer identification*

Musical role-models were still important at middle childhood, and there were numerous comments from the participants that emphasised this. The teacher was an important source of inspiration to some students in their developing interest in music, and one participant described it like this: "In class 3-6 we had the class teacher as our music teacher and he inspired me to learn how to play the guitar." [SM20]. Some participants in the Swedish group explicitly expressed their satisfaction with their musical relationship to the music teacher:

When I began primary school, we had a class teacher who really enjoyed singing and playing. She mixed music and other subjects, for instance we learnt old traditional songs while in a history class. She also provided a lot of listening to music as I recall. She presented different musical styles to us/.../ I remembered our graduations to be [musical] reviews of what we had done during the [school] year, like in 1st class we sang songs about the alphabet, the numbers and words to our parents [SM10].

Another participant recalled that: "I sang in a choir in primary school, and I think my primary school teacher was the conductor. This was enjoyable because it felt a bit professional to be a member of a choir." [SF15].

One participant refers to the encouragement of the guitar teacher in the music school like this: "I had a very friendly and helpful teacher and we mainly played the kind of music that I liked to listen to." [SM14]. The encouragement from the teacher's part is also evident in the following statement: "The teacher encouraged those of us who were particularly interested in music and we started to sing in harmonies at an early age." [SF8].

Peers and their siblings are described as having a clear impact on instrument playing and a participant describes how he/she used to play the piano together with a friend in the friend's house and how music was also practised by other members in that family:

> Her brother played the clarinet and I enjoyed watching him play and the instrument was very nice with the silvery buttons. I tried to play the clarinet but it was very hard, but I was really interested in the clarinet and her brother was so good at playing it [SF18].

Musical occurrences outside the home, together with significant adults were also mentioned, and one participant recalled how "My dad's girlfriends taught me how to play a rhythm [on the drum kit]." [SF19].

*Media impact*

Not only were family and friends important musical role models at this stage, the media and the 'music industry' had a significant impact too. It was mentioned on several occasions how pop-idols and popular music films at the time, like 'Fame' for instance, influenced the participants musical behaviours and tastes. One participant who already in early childhood had developed a liking for dance, and specifically disco and hip hop, descried how idols and opportunities for dancing competitions affected musical practice at that age. It is also suggested by the same participant that dancing helped general concentration in middle childhood.

> Michael Jackson was my idol /.../ I started to practice hip hop and disco when I was 7-8 years old, and I remember it to be enjoyable. We went to different competitions and shows in Sweden and this was good for me since I had a problem in just sitting down quietly [SM13].

Another participant recalled an important musical experience connected to media impact: "My cousin and I went so see the film 'Fame'/.../ and the film really impressed me. I asked my mum and dad if I could have a tape with the soundtrack from the film." [SF11]. A similar memory was expressed by a peer: "The TV series 'Fame' was very popular in the 1980's and it really inspired me and I was singing and dancing along with the songs." [SF8].

*'The right kind of music'*

A few participants mention how a sharp contrast between informal music learning including the media musical world and the musical world in the classroom, sometimes led to disappointments and disagreements:

> When I began school, I remember I was really looking forward to the music lessons. /.../ I was really disappointed when a tired and angry old woman came to the class and sat down behind the piano and told us to sing. She made all the decisions on what to sing. None of the songs were

> good and none of the pupils sang, and it just got boring. The same thing happened in mid primary school. The teacher was stuck behind the piano and the pupils were supposed to sing along. This was as far from Kiss, Twisted Sister and Alice Cooper as it possibly could be [SM2].

*Music rehearsals and performances at school*

Memories from music education in the early years in primary school are generally described as fairly vague. An interesting aspect is how school gatherings for summer breaks or Christmas celebrations are strongly connected to memories of practical musical engagement, whereas the contents and methods in formal music lessons throughout the school year, seemed to be recalled as hazy. One participant commented: "I don't really remember any music education from early primary school. The only thing I remember is that we rehearsed intensively for every graduation[3]." [SF4].

*Music lessons with little sense of impact - boring or unpleasant*

Memories of musical experiences in school from a later stage (10-12 years), were often quite negative and communicated a sense of distance and a lack of participation. These experiences might be due to the fact that the Swedish curriculum generally highlights a democratic and a child-centred approach in education. Their experiences of music education in school, might not have been perceived to entail the same democratic and child-centred dimensions as other school subjects. Another reason may be that music learning also played a significant part on an informal level in the students' lives outside the school context. It was a difficult task for teachers, particularly non-specialist music teachers, to match their students' expectations of musical outcomes within the class room. There are indications that non-specialist teachers' lack of confidence and/or competence in music teaching is communicated to the participants or pupils (Hennessy, 2000; Holden & Button, 2006; Young, 2001). The following examples are illustrative of the dissatisfaction students had:

> We had many different music teachers at mid primary school, which was a pity. We were a noisy class and the teacher[s] could not really handle us. I remember the music classes as boring... When everybody sang together it was fine, but when we had to play instruments I did not enjoy it, maybe I was too shy [SF18].

[3] Graduation refers in this case to end-of-term gatherings for the whole school.

> The music lessons in mid primary school were rather awful/.../we were only singing the songs from top to bottom, never in harmonies or as rounds [SF15].

> Music education in mid primary school was awful! We had a new class teacher who was not interested in music at all and the music teacher we had was no better. I think we had 4 or 5 different music teachers during 3 years [SM10].

One participant described the teacher from mid-primary school as mainly interested in some 'non-musical' aspects of music education. He mentions "training the pupils' 'confidence in failing'" meaning a willingness to take a chance. In this case produce music from plastic pipes. These activities were not received with enthusiasm by the pupils and this is described as "90 % of the students did not care during the class, which was a pity." [SM14].

Not only was the discrepancy between the pupils' aspirations and the teacher's perspective on the contents of music education significant. One participant also described how musical development was inhibited by the music teacher:

> At mid primary school we had a terrible music teacher. He was very clear about what he considered to be good singing. Unfortunately I did not live up to his standards at that age./.../ Therefore, in order not to spoil the singing, I had to play an instrument instead of singing [in class]. This experience has resulted in me preferring not to sing in front of other people and I really lack the confidence regarding my singing ability [SF16].

It is interesting, however, to consider how this participant whose self confidence in singing was restrained at such an early age, still decided to learn to play the flute. She says of this: "I began to play the flute at the age of 9. I thought it was enjoyable and became rather good at it."[*ibid.*]. This comment may indicate that singing and playing an instrument was considered by the young student to be two different skills. The singing might have been more connected to an idea of innate 'talent', whereas instrument playing was more connected to a skill that could be developed.

One participant described how the only music education he/she remembered from primary school was the class teacher playing the piano. This was regarded as limited in comparison to other ways of teaching music especially by a music specialist:

> I don't think we had any other particular music education in the school than our [class]teacher who sang and played together with us. There was a music teacher in the school, but she did not come to our class since our [class teacher] sang and played together with us/...../ Those [classes] who had the other music teacher, had many more opportunities to play the musical instruments than our class had. I remembered that we were really happy if the music teacher ever came, since we knew it would be slightly different from having the class teacher [SF17].

*Encounters with musical instruments and performances in the classroom*

A general sense of enjoyment and delight was expressed in relation to gaining access to musical instruments. This was particularly described by a participant who considered how he/she first got access to the drums at the school:

> In school some of the other kids and I got the opportunity to practice on the drums. I seriously don't know if this was because we were noisy [and this was a distraction] or because we had shown an interest. I enjoyed playing the drums and later on I began to play the drums in the music school [SM9].

Small performances in the class room context seem to be well remembered by some participants, especially if they contained a new or unique dimension:

> There were some Spanish speaking students in my class who originally came from Chile and Argentina. We learnt Spanish songs [in class] and one evening when our parents were invited to the school, we sang the Spanish songs for them [SF17].

'Musical-making' and performances in the class were described as a frequent and popular activity:

> I remember that in the 5th class I took part in a musical too. Those of us who were interested in participating had an audition for a director and I was chosen to do one of the main parts [SF12].

Yet in another class the musical had a different function:

> I remember a musical that we made in the 4th class, and we made a journey through Sweden. We made songs about the different counties and then we made a story [SM6].

*Social and personal functions of music in middle childhood*

The significance of recorded music and its influence on the individual, or of a situation, were mentioned occasionally:

> I used to go to the local youth centre after school and there was quite a lot of singing and fun, also a lot of radio and tapes. I remember us singing a song about the local sports club since our youth leader was a player in the soccer team. We liked it since we liked soccer./..../ We [my older brother and I] used to go fishing a lot by car/.../ in the car there was loud [hard rock] music, which was cool [SM9].

Other participants remember that "I got my first CD player at Christmas Eve" [SF18], and "I had my first tape recorder and I could listen to my favourites." [SF17].

Peer influence is evident when it comes to music listening at this stage. One participant states:

> Some of the other children had CD players when we were in mid primary school, but I did not, so the music I listened to was the same as the people's that I used to see, and sometimes I recorded their music [SF15].

Music has many functions, (Merriam, 1964) and music as a means for self expression and reflection was mentioned in the accounts:

> I bought my first records and began to listen to the new music channels on the radio. I could just 'dream away' to the music. I imagined I was somebody totally different and that I was somewhere totally different [SF3].

Another participant described the personal importance of writing songs about significant aspects in life:

> I remember I used to sit at home listening [to pop music] so intensively that my ears nearly 'began to bleed'/.../ I used to learn the lyrics and then I imitated this style of expression in my own writing/.../ I am happy that I still keep those songs since they made me strong during a difficult time in my life [12 years old] [SM6].

Various aspects of peer influence on musical behaviour and musical taste were described on different levels in the accounts. Sometimes music practise and friendship were closely connected. Such as in the statement "My friend had a piano at home, and she knew how to play a bit/.../ She taught me little short songs. We used to sit by the piano a lot, and it was pleasant." [SF18].

In other cases students express the anxiety that they will not understand music in the same way as peers, and hence fear exclusion. For example "Some time in 3rd class I think I realised that the music that I listened to at home was different from the music that my friends listened to." [SF5].

Nevertheless, participants describe musical activities which are independent of such influences. One participant described a situation like this:

> Unfortunately, I was in a class that generally did not like singing./.../ However, a friend of mine and I did not take any notice of that, so we sang anyhow. We also sang loads of songs during the breaks, especially when we were on the swings [in the school yard]. I remember us singing so loud that it could be heard over the whole school yard and the ladies in the canteen looked out through the windows to see what it was all about [SF3].

The localities for the practice of music education, was in one case explicitly mentioned as discouraging:

> In mid primary school we had the music classes in a dark basement room with brown walls and small windows./..../ the sound was never really great in that room. We sat 4 by 4 at each desk and song books were distributed to us. We just sat there and were asked to suggest the songs that we liked, found in the book [SF4].

The comment above also reveals a concern for learning during a music class, not just simply being occupied.

*Choir and Lucia*

There are, however, also many affirmative memories from mid/late primary education, but those are not necessarily from the formal music education context. Some examples of those memories are connected to play; "My friends and I often made our own song contest for parents and friends." [SF19], or for choir participation:

I joined a choir and we always performed at Lucia/.../ We also went on a singing camp for a weekend. We always sang in harmonies./..../ We did a musical in school and some had solo parts. Those who wanted a solo part got one, but I was too shy and had absolutely not the courage to do a solo part [*ibid.*].

The annual Lucia celebrations in December seem to have played an inevitable role in every school. It was described as an important [musical] experience for many participants and one participant recalled: "I also remember the Lucia celebrations at school, it was really pleasant. Everyone was waiting for us parading in the canteen and there were candles on the tables." [SF18].

*The municipality music school*

The municipality music school was perceived to have been an important provider of music education in the Swedish context. For many students the municipality school was the only option for instrumental tuition, and it is described as an important aspect of their music learning:

When I started [primary] school, my musical behaviour slightly changed. I was still singing and doing music at home but I started to take lessons from a piano teacher and started to learn the notes [SF12].

Another participant describes her encounter with the music school like this: "I went to a singing class in the music school together with 4-5 other girls in the same age." [SF19]. The accessibility of musical instruments were mentioned occasionally and appeared to have been an important motivational factor in beginning to play instruments in the municipality music school:

In the 5th I class started to play the flute in the [municipality] music school. This was decided after an earlier visit to the music school [with the class] when we were allowed to try different instruments [SF17].

Sometimes parents were allowed to visit the instrumental music lessons and some teachers might have considered that to be beneficial for their students' music learning. However, this

was not always perceived as the case and one participant described how adult involvement in the music learning could be disruptive: .

> I started to play the violin at the age of 8. My mum came along with me to the lessons and the teacher talked to her about what I needed to consider while I was practising at home, i.e. keep my wrist straight. This was something she was always reminding me about when I practised [the violin], and it annoyed me since I did not like her to nag on me. I got fed up and gave up playing the violin. I don't know why, maybe it was difficult [SF15].

Another description of a discouraging aspect of instrumental learning at this age, was learning to read music notation as shown in this comment:

> At this age I started to play the violin and three girls and I took after-school violin lessons. At the beginning it was fun, but then we had to start reading the notes and I got bored and found it too difficult and stopped [SF18].

Conflicting views on music practice and music learning was also expressed in the accounts, as in this statement:

> In the local youth centre I was lucky to meet youth leaders who were interested in music./.../ One of the youth leaders encouraged me to develop my ability to play by ear. My piano teacher, however, did not think this was a good idea [SF12].

*Musical formation in orchestras*

The municipality music school seemed to have been an influential factor for the formation of orchestra members and ensemble musicians. This is also described as an enjoyable socialisation process, and one participant describes how important that kind of schooling was for his musical and social development:

> I played in the music school/.../ e.g. in brass bands, in jazz bands and in a mini symphony orchestra. This was really enjoyable, and many of my friends played there too [SM10].

To be gradually musically schooled in a collective context as in an orchestra, is also referred to by another participant, who described a gradual development of an understanding and sense for beat and rhythm by participating in an orchestra:

> I started to play in an orchestra after I had been playing for about a year or at least a semester. /…./ When I first started, I had no idea about "keeping the beat" e.g. to be aware of the pulse and tempo. I just listened to what it sounded like and followed [SF15].

*Music and Christmas*

The emphasis on musical celebrations at school at Christmas time seems to be evident, particularly for a person who had just arrived in Sweden:

> When I was 9 I moved to Sweden/…/ we sang quite a lot, and very much around Christmas. Some parents were responsible for the class' Christmas celebration, and we had a lot of fun when we went to each others' houses to practise the singing and that was really nice. Everybody enjoyed themselves and we were praised for our accomplishment [SF16].

*To be somebody special*

In the accounts a certain pride connected with being part of a musical context was described, and also the importance of being "good" at playing an instrument (Brändström, 1997). This sense is particularly articulated in connection to performances:

> When I was in mid primary school I was quite proud because I was asked to go to the secondary school and play the drums in their Lucia parade or at their graduations [SM2].

> At graduation in the 6th class (12-13 years) I was performing together with others. I must admit that I felt a bit special to be in the orchestra and everybody was watching [SF17].

Sometimes intrapersonal opposing reactions in relation to performances were described such as "I was always awfully nervous but very proud afterwards." [SF11].

Compared to the Irish accounts from middle childhood, it was particularly interesting to note that musical encounters with family members were only rarely mentioned, and traditional music is mentioned as part of the musical experience from this stage on just one occasion.

## Musical experiences from middle childhood - a conclusion

For many participants in both groups, middle childhood was the starting point of instrumental tuition. In the case of the Irish students, instrumental tuition was often connected to graded exams. Their experiences of instrumental tuition were consequently attached to achievements

and perseverance, perhaps because the progression they made in their music learning was perceived to be quantifiable and graded. In the Swedish group, however, the municipality music schools were perceived to have had a significant impact during middle childhood. There were no graded exams as part of their tuition, yet personal achievement and a sense of perseverance were also mentioned as factors leading to a musical learning process.

Group learning was an aspect of both groups' experiences of music learning. Within the area of traditional music tuition, the Irish students also experienced models other than individual tuition with graded exams as part of music practice and music education. For instance, a class in tin-whistle playing at school was described as both enabling an opportunity to play in a group, and also to learn more about the Irish traditional music. In the Swedish group there was an understanding that participation in an orchestra allowed individual development in a collective context.

Hands-on experiences with musical instruments in class were important and enjoyable experiences, and opportunities to perform in class were also mentioned in positive ways. The fact that such ways of carrying out music education were highlighted, points towards the likelihood that the respondents relate music education to the concept of *musicking* (Small, 1998; Elliot, 1995; Lilliestam, 2006). In short, their perception of music education was inspired by the idea of participating in musical performance in various ways, such as practising, listening and dancing, for instance.

It is obvious in the accounts, that this age (7-13 years) signifies the entrance of a phase when conscious learning in many shapes and forms are significantly interesting for the child. Student-teachers in both Ireland and Sweden mention perseverance and skill development as important factors of their encounter with and development within music practice. This idea might be the result of students actively learning new skills in numerous areas as part of their primary education. In connection to this view their perception of musical competency at this stage may be oriented towards an idea of *earned* musical competency, as they assume that achievements and hard work pays off also in a music context.

The teachers of music play a significant importance at this stage and they are often musical role models to the students. According to Burland & Davidson (2002) a friendly relationship with the music teacher is an important factor for children in their early musical development,

and the participants in this study, express experiences that agree with these ideas. If a friendly and encouraging environment in music education is not provided, and if there is a lack of affirmation of the students on the teacher's part, this is described as undermining a person's musical development. It is consequently suggested in the accounts that students have gained models of musical practice from their teachers, which encompasses teaching methods, enthusiasm and an awareness of the effect a positive atmosphere in a learning situation can have.

At this phase, parents still have an important role as providers of musical development, for instance, by financial support of music tuition in the Irish case. In both groups, however, parents are also described as important providers of instruments and encouragement in the child's music practising. Parents' involvement in formal music learning is perceived by some as restricting for the child. Such a description suggests a wish for musical development outside the zone of primary musical socialisation. The student is ready to reach outside the sphere of his/her first significant others, which is a significant feature of middle childhood in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model.

Singing is an activity that, particularly for the Irish participants, has been strongly intertwined with religious practice as in its use in the celebration of Holy Communion, Confirmation or weekly masses. In the Swedish accounts singing is frequently mentioned as part of celebrations at school, including rehearsals and performances before Christmas or summer vacations. For some students these occasions were actually the only memories evident of music practice (including music education) from school. This indicates on the one hand that the actual performance aspects of music practice were important for the child. On the other hand it also suggests that music education as such, were not highly valued at the school where they studied. The function of music practice (education) in schools described above, were often as one-off events connected to entertainment or celebration. These functions were sometimes replacing other aspects of music education, and the subject was not always educational or considered within a progressive and developmental approach. This is particularly interesting as the understanding of what counts as music and music practice in middle childhood, presented in the accounts, encompasses a requirement for skill development and 'musical achievements'.

When student-teachers start their teacher education their individual 'stores of experience' with music from school can be expected to be quite varied. This is affected by the representations of how music is valued within their previous school context. The student-teachers' wider socio-cultural 'stores of experiences', including formal and informal music learning, may sometimes contradict the representations of the status and value of music education found in their school environments. When the student-teachers consider these aspects during teacher education, it may situate the student-teacher in 'the space between' the value and functions of music education. During middle years there is a conflict between representations of music within school and in the wider social world. Music is represented as of modest value in school but of much value outside school. The function of music in school and for the individual as a means of personal expression or development of skill is also at variance during the middle stage.

Concerts and competitions were mentioned as important music and social experiences for the Irish group. There was also a degree of competitiveness expressed in the accounts, and "successful achievements" in various competitions seem to have been strong and important motivational factors for participating. Music education at the age of 10-12 years, seem to have been quite disappointing for some of the Swedish participants. An interesting finding was that they experienced a lack of influence on the content and practice in the music class. Again this illustrates a conflict between the representation students have of music and how it is represented in school. This leads to dissatisfaction with music as their expectations are higher than the realisation.

The Swedish participants also seem to have been concerned with peer identification at this age range, which influenced their musical preferences. The Irish accounts at this stage, however, suggest a somewhat surprising lack of influence on students from the commercial/pop scene. The media impact, particularly on the Swedish students, seems to have been extensive, and this has significantly influenced their personal engagement with music. Finally some of the participants acknowledged that they gained attention for their involvement in extra curricular activities in music and through performances. This can also be recognised in Brändström's (1997) conclusions on the connection between musical involvement and skills and being admired for being "good at something".

In relation to music education, it is interesting to note that a sense of personal discouragement in a music class was often related to singing, whereas a hard assessment of their performance on musical instruments did not seem to have affected the student at that phase so strongly or personally. This might imply that instrumental skills are more connected to an *earned* musical competency whereas singing is considered more of a personal, *assigned* or innate skill. In middle childhood there is an awareness of a dual view of a relational and a categorical idea of musicality within their social context. This is particularly mentioned in connection to the teachers' opinions and their teaching methods. A focus on musical development is also more clearly articulated at this stage. On a comparative level, extra-curricular music tuition is financially and socio-culturally encouraged on a societal level in Sweden as children have access to the municipality music schools. In Ireland, though, children were dependent on the support from parents and/or musical involvement in their local community.

## Teenage years 14-18 years

### The Irish group

The accounts written by the Irish group concerning memories from their teenage years, revealed some interesting contrasts. On the one hand, music education was described as a school subject among others, where marks or grades were achieved. On the other hand, music was also understood as a skill, or an expression which may be independently applied by the individual outside an educational context. This is particularly interesting as it points towards Stålhammar's (2006b) theory of individual and socio-cultural 'stores of experience' with music, and the interaction between those. In secondary school, the students have the choice of selecting music as a subject for their Junior Certificate and/or their Leaving Certificate. The consequence of this is that music is perceived as an essential part of formal education in secondary school for some, whereas it is hardly present at all for others. In many cases, musical involvement outside school have had a considerable impact, either as extra curricular music education or as a hobby. The practical and the theoretical aspects of music education were more explicitly described as opposing at this age than at earlier stages.

Participation in bands, choirs, or even musicals in schools represent important interactions with music during these years. Numerous accounts mention the importance of team work and the social aspects of participating in these activities. The involvement in music

competitions escalate at this stage and these are often connected to choir or band activities. In relation to instrumental tuition, some participants regretted the fact that they had too much school work during secondary school, and had therefore not the time to practise on their instruments. College studies in music were mentioned in some of the accounts, and they seemed to either represent a broadening involvement and understanding of music or a slight disappointment.

Musical activities as "confidence strengtheners" were mentioned. A central aspect in the accounts was also that several participants regarded themselves as having 'a musical function' in a social and societal context. This was suggested in such terms as playing the organ with the school choir, or performing in hospitals or old people's homes.

Musical taste appeared to have broadened during this stage. In relation to this, there was also a growing interest in buying musical CDs and tapes that represent a personal music taste. At this stage the teachers, were often described as significant musical others, and the combination of a teacher's musical and communicative skills and qualities are particularly emphasised. As Burland and Davidson (2002) point out, the focus on the teacher's own musical capacity is significant at this stage. However, the respondents suggest the teacher's musical skill is only considered to be really valuable if it is communicated in an encouraging and sound pedagogical way.

*Music - a school subject among others?*

At this age, exams and marks in school, seemed to have influenced the way in which the participants thought about music as a school subject. References to the Junior and Leaving Certificate exams place emphasis on the music as a practical activity rather than the study of theoretical knowledge. The memories that were recalled from music education were in terms of "For my leaving cert, I chose my practical exam to be worth 50% of the marks." [IM16]. Another participant remembered:

> [I] did music for the leaving cert. (age 17). As my practical (which was worth 50% of the marks) I played the accordion (4 sets of tunes) and the tin-whistle. The best part of this subject was having an exam in something you actually love doing [IF19].

Instrumental tuition, which was fee-based and not connected to the curriculum, was also described in terms of achievement in exams and grades, as a measurement of the students' knowledge/skill on their respective instrument. This was described in the following terms: "In secondary school I started doing piano exams and completed 6 grades." [IF26], or "I continued to get piano lessons and at age 15 I did my grade 8 exam." [IF21]. An achievement of good grades were, however, often connected to a genuine joy in music-making as expressed by this participant: "I chose music for both my leaving and junior cert and achieved brilliant grades. I always remember looking forward to music." [IF20].

*Musical experiences outside school*

Music was described as representing much more than a school subject to most participants in the Irish group. This was illustrated both by encouragement from other family members: "My parents encouraged me the whole way, bringing me to lessons and courses during the summer." [IF2], or as individual choices, for example:

> Music played a very important part in my life during these years. I continued my organ/ keyboard lessons and enjoyed playing and trying to work out the melodies and chords of songs I heard on the radio or television [IF17].

Peers were important at this stage and several participants described how they went to concerts and music festivals together. Also pop and rock music became central to some participants, as described in this account:

> As I started to go out with friends - discos etc, dance music and dance of different styles influenced me. However, I still continued music lessons choir practice and music in school [IF24].

An interest in various musical styles seemed to have developed during the teenage years: "Outside school, I listen to a lot of various styles of music. My brother influenced me a lot as he had a lot of CDs and tapes." [IF6].

The interest in various musical styles was either described as a personal development, or influenced by siblings and peers, less frequently it was presented to be a result of music education in school: "Influenced by friends' choices of music at the time but also liked the music at home." [IF22].

*Theoretical and practical aspects of music learning*

Theoretical and practical characteristics of music education, were described as conflicting aspects by some participants during this age. One participant explained it like this:

> Unfortunately these years of my musical experience were mainly negative as they included studying hard for the Junior Cert and Leaving Cert examinations. We were studying different set works i.e. Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet Overture. There was no fun in this as we were just learning off information supplied to us by our music teacher. The preparation carried out for our practical examination was very enjoyable for me. We were performing in groups, using harmonies and it was our choice on what song we wanted to perform. I sang and played the pieces for my exams [IF15].

The value of a practical engagement in music education, particularly with regard to performance aspects, was mentioned in connection to both formal and informal music education:

> There was a school musical bi-annually which I took part in and I also took part in school talent shows and performances. I took music as a Junior certificate and Leaving certificate subject [IF26].

The scope of musical practice and learning was described, and one participant recalled how

> I usually play classical music but I went to a summer course in Irish traditional music three years in a row, which I enjoyed. I took part in a musical 'Whistle down the wind' when I was 14 years old. This involved a lot of singing in parts, which I really enjoyed [IF8].

*Participation in bands, choirs and musicals at schools*

Participation in the local music life now became evident and several participants were part of local bands or choirs. One participant recalled these experiences well and wrote:

> At the age of 14 I joined a local own band. I really loved being a member of this and I played with them until I was 19 years old. We practised twice a week and we performed either in concerts or competition at least once a month [IF3].

Another account said:

> In the local community, I participated in choirs and variety shows in which I sang, danced and played music./…/ I also developed a taste for different types of music during the years such as pop music, r' n b, hip hop etc. [IF17].

Other ways of participating in the local music life was to play traditional Irish music in the sessions in the pub, which was an important musical expression for one participant in the Irish group: "During these years, I continued participating in music sessions in pubs and over the summer, my sisters and I used to get jobs playing music at nights or evenings." [IF19].

Some of the other participants recalled memories from within and outside school:

> In 4th year, a number of my friends and I wrote a song during a music workshop, the teacher helped us to add the music and accompaniment and we recorded it onto a CD. We also experimented with musical software on the computer and created our own song [IF17].

> We did lots of shows but I always stayed in the background as my singing voice was not very strong. Outside school I was very busy completing Irish traditional music concerts and sessions and competitions [IF9].

*Social aspects of music learning*

In this age, the social aspects of music were emphasised. A sense of being part of a music group or a team was something which was described with great affection:

> We [the band] practised twice a week and we performed either in concerts or competition at least once a month. As a result of being a member of the band I made friends and travelled all over Ireland. We also went to other countries [IF3].

Even though the performance aspects of music practice were frightening to some participants, performing as part of a group seemed to have eased a performance anxiety: "I used to dread most concerts as I got very nervous before them. But, at the same time, I enjoyed them as I felt part of a group, a group of young musicians." [IF8].

Also in formal music education in school, teamwork in music was remembered as an important experience with music. School music seems to have been perceived as a social rather than personal activity. One participant expressed a particular joy about this aspect of music learning and recalled:

> We also did a musical for the school which was my best experience of music and the most memorable event of my secondary education. To work together as a team to produce the musical was an unforgettable experience [IF10].

Music competitions were described as an important feature of music life for young people in Ireland, particularly in the teenage years. Several of the participants in the Irish group had an extensive experience of these events from their adolescence. The competitions signify how music as performance has been an important way in which these respondents have experienced musicianship in the wider society.

*Encounters with music education in college*

At the end of the teenage phase, college studies began for the participants in this group. Some of them described how some aspects of their music studies had provided important personal experiences or insights with music. The encounter with unfamiliar music practices in curriculum music courses was particularly mentioned:

> I really enjoy the multi-cultural aspect of music education in [the college]. In general the music programme here is great and I have really enjoyed the various aspects from listening and responding to performing [IF18].

For another participant the varied approach to music in college in the academic courses had been somewhat disappointing since the expectations of involvement in traditional music had been high.

> Music as an academic subject [in the college] was not very satisfying for me. Only small emphasis was placed on Irish music. I don't have an awful lot of interest in classical [music], even though it does contrast the traditional music of Ireland [IM16].

Another aspect in relation to music education in college, is that all the Irish student-teachers' in this study do educational music studies, however, many of them also take music within their academic degree courses. There may be conflicting representations of music in the different college courses preparing them to teach music, which might be puzzling for their individual perception of music and music education.

*Musical performances as 'confidence-strengtheners'?*

During this phase, general self-confidence is described as being strengthened by participating, performing and interacting in musical activities in the local communities. Choir singing and participation in variety shows have been important experiences in that sense.

*Having a musical function in the social and societal context*

A striking finding in the accounts was how several participants established a role, as a 'musical resource' in their communities. They also gave an impression of being fairly confident in these roles which may indicate that they had gained a stronger musical confidence and autonomy than earlier. At this stage, probably due to extended experiences of music learning, several participants have also developed their own identities as musicians. At this stage in life they also found that they can contribute to their society with their musical presence, which may be interpreted as a wish to practise an active citizenship in their community/society.

Several participants described how they sang in choirs or played in bands with adults. Musical activity is thus a step towards adulthood. The communication of music to other people was described in new terms at this stage, and it is suggested that musical performances can have various societal functions:

> Sometimes [I] used to visit old people's homes, or hostels for people with special needs or hospitals and used to play music for the people there. The sense of gratefulness was always most noticeable in these places [IF19].

*A broader musical taste*

The range of musical preferences appear to have broadened during the teenage years, which was described as the result of a combined influence of education, peers and family. (Lamont, 2002; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A combination of a liking for traditional Irish music, pop and rock music and classical music are mentioned by a few, musicals and light opera are also mentioned, and an interest in multi-cultural aspects of music and music education in terms of world music are also mentioned by some participants.

*The music teacher*

At this stage, the relationship to the music teacher was generally described as satisfactory, and the teacher was often portrayed as a musical 'enabler', and a source of inspiration. Some examples of this are these two descriptions:

> In secondary school I had the advantage of having a great music teacher. He taught us theory of music and opened our minds to a wide variety of styles and genres/.../. Having a good music teacher influenced my perceptions and experience of music [IF10].

> My teacher made us study a huge range of music types and really showed us how to appreciate music. We also joined in many musical activities e.g. shows, musicals, performances, choral groups, orchestras and choirs. In school we did all types of music and from all areas e.g. composing, conducting, accompanying, performing etc. I think it was my teacher who really gave me my love for music, which I still have today and hope I have forever [IF20].

## Teenage years 14-18 years

### The Swedish group

The most evident themes in the Swedish written accounts between the ages of 14-18, concerned the perception of music education in school as more relevant, and the contents and methods seemed to correspond better with the students' interests and requirements at this level. However, there were also some descriptions that suggested that music education still had a fairly weak role in the curriculum.

'Real' musical instruments were facilitated in the classrooms at this stage, such as the drum-kit, the guitar and the bass. To the majority of the participants, this was regarded as a straight connection to the music they often preferred themselves, such as pop and rock music.

A striking finding in the written accounts was that the role of music now appeared to have become different in the participants' lives compared to the earlier stages. It was not so much about "learning" a skill any more, but about participation and autonomy in a musical context.

At this age, participants seem to have been more willing and more prepared to make their own independent decisions about participating or not in various musical activities. They also

seem to have regarded themselves as more experienced and competent in singing and playing instruments. Among the male participants in particular, this phase was described as the stage where they developed personally through informal music education, and it was mentioned by three male participants how they had either actively formed (rock) bands or how they had been asked to join already existing bands. For other participants (predominantly female) their interest in musical activities, diminished in their early teens and then, for some of them, returned a few years later. For some of the female participants, choir singing appeared to be the focal part of their musical practice, particularly in connection with the school context. In some schools, the choir activities more or less represented the content of the school's music education. These were described as a strong concentration on choir practising for Christmas, summer graduations and Lucia processions.

An important transformation process occurred when the participants started upper secondary school (age 16-19). At this stage, they had to make a decision on a specialisation/national programme. In this particular group, the Arts programme (music) and the Child and Recreation programme seemed to have been the two most frequently chosen. A clear distinction between these two programmes with regard to music education, was described in the accounts. The Arts programmes seemed to emphasise the personal musical development, whereas the Child and Recreation programme appeared to apply music as the means for the child's general development, hence the students studied aspect of music that was considered purposeful in a child-centred context.

The teenage phase seemed to be a stage towards (musical) adulthood, and the participants described how they had joined church choirs, orchestras (with mainly adult participants) and how they had taken other various independent musical decisions. Music on a personal level seems to have become more important and apparent at this stage, and some participants mentioned how they began writing their own songs, which can be considered to be one sign of personal musical expression.

In the two previous phases (early and middle childhood), the participants' personal musical taste was more connected to an identification with family, peers and to media. Now, they listen to music which they identify with on a personal level, which appeared to have had a strong impact, and along with that, the purchase of records, CDs and tapes increased. Music related to various emotional impressions and expressions was also mentioned.

The relationship with the music teacher was generally described as important, and the experiences of such relationships were mentioned on a number of occasions, mainly in positive ways.

A career option in music was not generally considered by the participants, but it was mentioned as a possible objective by a few. It seems to have been important to perform the music that had a personal meaning for the individual. Having an emphasis on musical "belonging" or identity, such as being part of a special music class or selected group of music students, had both positive and negative implications. These implications were either as a development of a positive musical self identity, or a sense of pressure and competition among peers. However, some participants expressed that less emphasis was now put on other peoples' opinions about personal musical ability, which was implicitly mentioned as a normal part of a personal growth. Live concerts (with live pop stars) were mentioned as part of the musical attraction for a teenager.

*Music education in secondary education*

For some participants music education in secondary education signified a musical "relief" after years of tension and discontent in primary school. This appeared to be connected to the combination of the teacher now being considered to be a representative of 'real' music by the students, as well as the contents of music classes being more appealing to the students:

> When I began secondary school we got a great music teacher. Music in school became fun again, compared to how it used to be in mid primary school. We played instruments and did great many things in class, both theoretical and practical, and we played loads. We played a lot of rock songs and we could then choose between playing the electric guitar, the bass guitar the piano/synthesiser, the drums or to sing. I remember I thought this was very good - choosing between playing instruments or singing. In mid primary school we were forced to [sing or play], now we could make our own choices [SM10].

The students were now given more responsibility and independence in class, which seemed to have been appreciated. This is described by a participant:

> During 9th class we had music again and we were allowed to try different instruments which were thoroughly enjoyable. I then had other teachers than in class 7. I sang in the school choir for one semester and found it very enjoyable and developing [SM20].

*'Real music' in music education*

In secondary school music as a subject appears to have acquired a clearer identity one participant stated:

> In secondary school I thought music was the most enjoyable subject of all and I continued singing in the "big" choir. I started to think about music or dance as a career possibility for the future [SF8].

A sense of influence and participation in the music classes was essential to many participants which was expressed like this:

> In secondary school I finally learnt something in music education. We were allowed to play the kind of songs that we liked ourselves and we learnt about the history of rock music, about Bach and Mozart and many other things [SM2].

"Free" musical activities are appreciated, and they seem to have given the students a strong sense of accomplishment:

> In the 9th class, our class had a musical project/.../ We first listened to the record and then we made the script together with our teacher. The play was great and we had a huge audience - a memory for life. During this stage, I really enjoyed myself [SM1].

*An agreeable context for music practice*

The music teacher was described as the key to a friendly and accepting atmosphere in the class room: "I enjoyed the music class much more /.../ and my class teacher was a very understanding and open person, and this made me motivated again." [SM1].

The status of the music subject in the curriculum seemed to have improved in secondary school and this was noticed by one participant who had already earlier on (in middle childhood) shown concerns with regard to the music education environment. "Music changed once we moved to the secondary school. We had a music room with big windows, lots of space and good acoustics." [SF4].

*Specialisations in upper secondary school*

The Arts programme (music) in upper secondary school was attractive to many students. This programme had a professional approach, and the students were taught by specialist music

teachers. Being a student at this programme had a high status among peers interested in music. The enjoyment of having been accepted to the programme is highlighted in the following statement:

> I was very happy that I was accepted as a student at the Arts programme (in music). I had the opportunity to try different musical genres, learn how to read and write music, ensemble, ear training etc. The more I learnt, the more I realised how much more there was to learn [SM14].

Another participant however, described an internal competition among those who were selected for the Arts programme:

> In the upper secondary school I choose to do the arts (music) programme There were three very enjoyable but tough years. The level of the music education rose drastically compared to secondary school, and it was much harder. I really had to work hard to keep pace with the rest of the class. One learnt a great deal. We had good teachers and good opportunities to play a lot, but I felt it became too much [pressure]. There was a tacit competition at the school and it was important to be the best one. You had to achieve so much that I finally lost interest in music and in playing. But after graduation, however, I regained my interest when I could do things the way I wanted to do, but at my own pace [SM10].

For those who did not choose the Arts programme, music was still available in the school context in different ways, and it also played a significant part in their lives outside school:

> At upper secondary school I had music as an elective subject, and our teacher played the flute as his main instrument. I started to take flute lessons from him, and regained my enthusiasm for playing./.../ Meeting this music teacher in upper secondary school was the best thing that could have happened to me [SF5].

Music was still present in school in yearly celebrations: "In secondary school I was always part of the Lucia parade since I enjoyed singing." [SF17].

*Music education?*

While many participants expressed content with music education in secondary school, not everybody, experienced this positive development of music education, and in some cases this was mainly connected to the teacher:

> From [music education in] secondary school I mainly remember our music teacher. I did not like him at all. He explained everything very poorly which made the class not interesting at all. You could not call it a music class really. I think we only had a music class once a week, ... maybe twice a week [SF18].

In other cases there were just no vivid memories from music education, only that music was performed at assemblies and graduations:

> In upper secondary school I did not play any instruments at all. We did not have any music classes, there were only theoretical subjects, except PE. At Christmas and summer graduation, though, one could join the choir in the church. I was in the choir during my final year [SF17].

One participant even stated: "I don't remember us having much music education at all."[SF16].

*Musical confidence*

For some participants there was awareness that musical possibilities had been available in secondary school, however a lack of [musical] confidence seemed to have restricted their participation. In addition, peer identification was sometimes perceived as rather demanding. One participant remembered that:

> Music education in secondary school was quite painful. As a matter of fact I rather enjoyed playing on the percussion instruments, but since I knew what my class mates thought about my musical taste, I did not dare to reveal that I enjoyed percussion playing during the classes [SF5].

Another participant recalled:

> In secondary school we had music classes in the 7th and 9th class. There we tried to play the drums and we also learnt a few chords on the guitar. I mainly sang though, but it was difficult to be heard among all the instruments in the small music room [SF3].

*Musical autonomy*

An evident transformation at this stage, is that the participants now seem to have taken charge of their own informal music education and development. This is exemplified in the statements below: "In the end of the 6th class three friends of mine and I formed a band and we played dance music for three years." [SM20]. "I realised I had better not care about what

others thought about my singing ability./.../The most important thing is that you enjoy it and that you do as well as you can." [SF16].

Some participants express how important it is that music is meaningful to a person when performing:

> I became the singer in the band, so I both sang and played the drums at the same time which was quite unusual. After this, some of my friends moved to other places and some started to play with other bands. Only one of the guitarists and I remained, so I started to play the guitar, and we formed a duo./.../For the first time I was paid for performing music. After a few years I got bored playing Credence Clearwater Revival songs at company parties. I did not enjoy playing a kind of music that did not represent me. I never listened to that kind of music myself, but it was the kind of music [we] were expected to perform. From then on, I promised myself not to deal with the kind of music that I did not agree with [SM2].

Others struggled with lacking musical confidence: "I stopped taking singing lessons because my teacher wanted me to start singing solo parts and duets. This was too much for me since I was so shy, and then I stopped." [SF19]. And for some people performing on an instrument attained a new significance:

> My grandmother died when I was 17 and at the funeral I played a tune on the flute although I had stopped taking lessons and playing. This was done on my own initiative and it was appreciated by everyone [SF17].

Various other experiences connected to a more autonomous relationship with music were: "I taped my singing in order to listen to it and develop my voice." [SF19].

> I think I was 14-15 yrs when I started to play the piano. I wanted to learn an instrument so I could accompany my singing [SF17].

> At the age of 17 I travelled to Gambia, which has been a very important encounter with music and dance for me [SF8].

> I started to record music with friends and took part in a CD project at school, for example an old punk-tune. I spent a lot of time making music by the computer, everything from dance music to guitar based music. I bought a lot of cables and stuff and made my own (primitive) studio [SM13].

During this stage I slowly realised what I personally liked listening to without minding what my peers' musical taste was [SF5].

*Music - a generational issue?*

In the Swedish group, musical activities were described as tightly connected to identification with the peer generation. At this stage, however, there was also a step towards mixing with the 'adult world' in certain musical activities. This was exemplified from a local context by one participant:

The people in the village made a cabaret together when I was 14-16 years old, and then I met people who I would have known from before - who I, however, did not connect with music, dance and theatre. This was an amateur production but it was really enjoyable! My friends and I had the opportunity to decide ourselves what we wanted to perform, and we did a medley from Fame the musical, which seems to have had a big impact on us [SF8].

The impact of values and tastes shared by the same generation, were still very strong at this age, and therefore most musical activities seem to have been carried out in relation to people in the same age. One [male] participant described his non-formal musical arenas at that stage like this:

I started to play the electric bass as my second instrument. This led to being asked to join different bands, since there seems to be a demand for bass-players. I also started to sing in a band [SM14].

Another participant recalled a different experience with music which had been an important experience for the formation of a musical identity in his teens:

As a 14 year old boy I went with a girl friend of mine to listen to punk gigs in the neighbourhood. It was fun and we met peers who had the same interest and we bought records at a good price. In our little place there were no others into punk at the time/.../ I started skateboarding around that time and discovered a new kind of music [SM9].

*Music and the individual*

There were numerous personal musical decisions taken at this age. Some participants wrote their own songs, others listened to music on their walkmans' often in relationship to before going to sleep. One participant remembered:

> During these years I was not in a choir and I did not play any instruments either. I had made up my mind that I did not want to sing in a choir. I still loved to sing, but when I was singing I wanted people to clearly hear my voice. Unfortunately I was too shy to sing a solo part, or with only a few others [SF3].

An emotional development in relation to music listening is described occasionally and one participant described it like this:

> At this age I was still listening to pop music, but now I started to enjoy and listen also to slower songs. I think the reason for that was that one fell in love and that appealed to deeper emotions. The slow pop songs were nearly always about love..... /.../ Music was a way for me to express my feelings, and at this stage I listened more to music than I had done earlier [SF7].

*Musical participation - a gender issue?*

There was a tendency described by the female participants, for some of them to lose their interest in musical activities in their teens. This is expressed in such terms as: "I only played the piano for a short while though. There were so many other things that happened and were part of one's life at that stage and one had also other interests." [SF17]. Another participant explained how it was more interesting to meet peers than practise instruments. "In secondary school I played mainly because I ought to. It was more fun to be at the youth centre and together with friends." [SF15].

Even if there were many other interests or distractions at that time some participants maintained their musical practice for various reasons. One participant who had urged the parents to buy a piano in middle childhood described it in this way:

> I still played the piano but my interest in it had disappeared, since there were so many other things that were more enjoyable, such as meeting friends etc. However, I continued playing the piano, mainly because I did not want to disappoint my parents, since I earlier had persuaded them that I wanted to play [SF16].

For some female participants, the interest of meeting friends and boys seem to have taken over from other activities at this stage. One male participant also remembered that "at this stage music was not so much in focus for me. I played football and it took all my time." [SM6]. When his interest in football diminished and his interest in girls increased he,

however, started to make songs about his emotional experience. Equivalent experiences are not mentioned by the female participants, though. Nevertheless, some of them described how they got their musical interest back after a while. One participant describes her personal experience and involvement in various musical arenas like this:

> I regained my interest in playing again and went to the upper secondary Social science and Music programme. I also joined a marching band with adult musicians. This was not an orchestra that was joined to the music school which the others had been. From then and onwards I learnt music more and more comprehensively, and I was part of four different ensembles [SF15].

## Musical experiences from the teenage years - a conclusion

The most striking finding in the teenage phase is the autonomous relationship to music which is described as escalating at this age. The participants in both groups recall that music had a strong personal value at this stage. The reasons for this 'musical independence' are many. One is that the respondents have found a social context for music practice which is dependent on the interaction between themselves and others, which can also be interpreted as evidence of an interaction of individual and socio-cultural 'stores of experience'. Another reason may be that at this phase they have acquired a musical craft-ship and skill as a result of their previous experiences with music education and musical participation. This in turn has led to the development of a sense of (an earned) musical competence. A third reason may be that music has come to have a broader and deeper personal meaning to the participants as a vital part of their identity, in the sense that it encompasses both a means for self expression, social interaction and skill development.

A fascinating finding is that the teenage phase has several similarities to the first phases (0-6 years) in the sense that their relationship with music is explorative and not primarily focused on skill development. However, at this stage a conflict between the theoretical and practical aspects of music and music education is expressed.

Musical performances and competitions (in the Irish context) are considered to be experiences which often have the function of identifying who somebody is, or what somebody knows. In essence, a part of a socio-musical identity a person obtains in a society.

Among the Swedish accounts in particular, music education at this phase, matched the students aspirations and expectations to a much greater extent than earlier. They recognise that music education gained a higher value and status in the schools, and furthermore, music education also achieved a higher value to themselves. They express that they at this stage experienced a sense of a musical context, by what they perceived as a meaningful form of music practice in class. This seems to match Small's (1998) definition of *musicking*. The 'increased value' of music education was connected to the fact that they found that the (specialist) teachers had the competence and resources to facilitate an appropriate music education for their age group. However, some people were afraid to fully participate in some musical activities due to lacking musical confidence. This might be due to the fact that they have come across dual and contradictable representations on who is entitled to engage musically in their society, which affect their own musical self-perception.

For the Irish participants the discrepancy between formal education for the Junior and Leaving Certificates, and their personal and/or informal musical development was highlighted. For some this is not perceived as a gap or a conflict, but others expressed that it might be a difficulty. The musical participation in the local community, however, seems to generally have had a complementary function to music education in school.

There is an interesting distinction between the Irish and the Swedish group in relation to a generational division. The Swedish participants may be more accustomed to a generational division in music as well as in other areas of life, than the Irish students are. The Irish experiences indicate that musical activities were more frequently carried out on a cross-generational basis in the Irish context, whereas the Swedish accounts suggest that the participants normally carried out various activities together with people in their own age range. This, however, may also be due to demographic and organisational matters, and can differ within each country. However, in relation to the generational issues mentioned above, the teenage phase seems to be a stage in which the teenagers mix musically with older people both in Ireland and in Sweden, which can be understood as a way of being located in 'the space between' adolescence and adulthood. This may probably be considered to be a way of being socialised into the adult music life in a society. Another aspect in this phase is that the participants expressed how their music taste expanded and they experienced other and new aspects of various musical genres.

Particularly in the Swedish group, (perhaps visible because of a better balance between female and male participants) a pattern was traced that indicated that boys and girls develop differently in informal music contexts. It seems that boys to a greater extent developed their own musical interests and formed groups, particularly within the area of rock music. An indication might be that the boys had a more developed informal music network, whereas the girls in the group were more inclined to participate in formal music education and formal choirs. This is an interesting matter for further investigation beyond this research, as there seem to be evidence of a gender difference in music participation and practice at this phase within the accounts.

Finally, teacher education or the Arts programmes and upper secondary school seem to have had an essential impact on the student-teachers attitudes towards music and music education in both countries. Particularly for the Irish group this is evident in the teenage phase as they start teacher education in their teens (17+). The respondents may at this stage show signs of being located in 'the space between' different representations of music and music education. Some may also consider themselves to be beyond this 'space' as their previous opinions have been changed.

The Irish and Swedish groups' key experiences with music and music education presented in this chapter, could be summarised as in the table below:

| The Irish group | | | The Swedish group | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Early childhood** | **Middle childhood** | **Teenage years** | **Early childhood** | **Middle childhood** | **Teenage years** |
| The family context (extended family)<br><br>Musical instruments (traditional)<br><br>Exploration<br><br>Musical media; Radio, tapes, CDs and TV<br><br>Traditional music and dancing classes<br><br>Music a supporting activity in school | Learning new skills<br><br>Teacher - role model<br><br>Parents - the supporters<br><br>Instrumental tuition - graded exams<br><br>Concerts and competitions "successful achievements"<br><br>"Being good at music"<br><br>Tin-whistle classes | 'Musical autonomy'<br><br>'Musical craft ship'<br><br>Various purposes of music (Personal expression-social interaction - skill development)<br><br>Exploration<br><br>Musical participation in the wider society<br><br>Competitions and social experiences<br><br>Conflict between practical and theoretical aspects of music education.<br><br>Significant impact of teacher education<br><br>Broader musical taste | The family context (one-to-one basis)<br><br>Musical instruments (piano and percussion)<br><br>Exploration<br><br>Musical media; Radio, tapes, CDs and TV<br><br>Pop and rock music<br><br>'The church's children's hours'<br><br>Lucia and Christmas celebrations | Learning new skills<br><br>Teacher - role model<br><br>Parents - the supporters<br><br>The municipality music schools<br><br>Performances at school assemblies (Christmas and summer)<br><br>"Being good at music"<br><br>Music education in class perceived to be boring<br><br>Peer identification<br><br>Media impact | 'Musical autonomy'<br><br>'Musical craft ship'<br><br>Various purposes of music (Personal expression-social interaction - skill development)<br><br>Exploration<br><br>Musical participation in the wider society<br><br>'Appropriate' music education and resources<br><br>Gender difference in musical activities?<br><br>Impact of upper secondary school |

**Table 2: Participants' key experiences with music**

## Key representations of musicality, music practice, music function(s) and value found in the written accounts

Key representations of **musicality** at the age phase of 0-6 years show that music is generally understood to be accessible to all, and is mainly connected to play. However, the Irish group particularly relates music and musicality to the family sphere, while this tendency is not as obvious among the Swedish group. At the next phase (7-13 years), musicality is frequently connected to various technical aspects, such as the achievements of learning a musical instrument. Interestingly, a distinction between singing (which is often understood as an *assigned* musical competency or an innate quality), and instrument skills (which are generally understood an *earned* musical competency) is suggested. During the teenage years (14-18 years), musicality is often understood to be connected to 'craft-ship' gained by experiences within music education and other forms of musical participation.

**Music practice** in early childhood (0-6 years) is often described to happen in the large family context in Ireland, while in Sweden music practice is mainly described as happening on a one-to-one basis with a family member. Concerning music in pre-school/school, both groups find that music is used as a learning tool. Within their socio-cultural contexts, the practise of traditional music is important to the Irish group, while the Swedish participants often refer to the impact of pop and rock music. At the age of 7-13, concerts and competitions are described as vital forms of music practice in Ireland. Graded exams were an important feature for music learning among the Irish group whereas several of the Swedish participants were introduced to music practices through the municipality music schools. Within music education in school, the participants highlight aspects of hands-on experiences with music and the way in which teachers act are described to have been influential in various respects. At the teenage phase (14-18 years) the interaction between the participants and others is illustrated as central in music practice, and music exploration is particularly mentioned. The Arts programmes in upper secondary school in Sweden, and also some of the secondary schools in Ireland, are considered to provide important experiences of music practice to the participants. In essence, music practise is often referred to as musical exploration in early childhood, skilled-based music learning in middle childhood, and again musical exploration and an independent relationship with music during the teenage years. A clear distinction is made in both groups between what is real music practice and what is merely theoretical information.

Concerning various **functions of music**, music as play, entertainment and as a learning tool is highlighted in early childhood. In the next phases, (7-13 years) religious practice is expressed as an important function of music among the Irish group, particularly with regard to singing. Peer identification in relation to music is said to be important for the Swedish group, who also place an emphasis on the impact of media influences on musical taste at middle childhood.

Regarding the **value** music is ascribed by various groups in society the musical celebrations in pre-schools/schools are highly valued within the school context, from early childhood to teenage years. In addition, music is also found to have a high personal communicative and emancipatory value to the individual through the three age phases, as a personal expression and for social participation and bonding. Exploration of music on a personal level is highly valued, in particular in early childhood and in the teen age phase. However, technical aspects such as skill development and achievements seem to be considerably valuable aspects of music in middle childhood. There is an indication that music is perceived to have a variety of **functions** in education. It is a subject in the curriculum, a form of entertainment and recreation, a means of marking school celebrations and an expression of community and togetherness. It can also be a means of developing skill and excellence. The **value** placed on each of these **functions** can differ from school to school and individual to individual and is a potential source of conflict in representations of musical value.

# CHAPTER 7: THE INTERVIEWS - OPINIONS ABOUT MUSIC, MUSIC EDUCATION AND MUSICAL CONTEXTS

## Introduction

In the third part of the data collection, the interviews, 21 participants were asked to take part. These 21 participants, 11 Irish and 10 Swedish student-teachers, were selected from their responses in the second phase of the data collection - the written accounts. The researcher included participants who represented a broad variety of opinions and themes. The interviews were semi-structured and followed a scheme of topics. Each interview lasted between 1-1½ hours, and the interviews were all carried out during the spring and summer of 2004. Each interview was recorded and transcribed.

This chapter presents an analysis of 7 core themes that emerged from the interview transcriptions. From each area a number of sub-themes also appeared. The sub-themes had different strength and importance for each group, mainly due to socio-cultural and educational differences. Within each area, some of the sub-headings are similar for both the Irish and the Swedish group, but others are particular to one group. Considering the nature of this particular research, where a range of opinions and approaches are represented, the organisation of the data into themes appeared to be the logical method, since it reveals both collective and individual commonalities and differences between the groups as a whole.

The method selected to present data is a form of narrative. Silverman (2005) and Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) document the strength of this method as a means of actively presenting data, and capturing the essence of the participants' spoken responses. Each of the 7 areas includes two subsets, consisting of the Irish and the Swedish results presented individually, followed by a summary of overall findings.

The areas of examination are:

1. Perceptions of musicality.
2. Reasons for choosing music as an elective course in teacher education.
3. Reasons for the inclusion of music in education

4. Definition of good music education.
5. Definition of poor music education.
6. Influences on opinions about musicality and music education.
7. Music as part of an Irish/Swedish identity.

Student-teacher responses are presented and analysed under these headings. Responses from the interview transcripts were organised under these seven headings and a narrative constructed from these to reflect the overall response of both groups. The words in italics are taken directly from the interview transcripts. Each section begins with an introduction and is followed by a narrative under the identified points. As the account is, to a certain extent, designed as a narrative, the participants' statements are interwoven in the text. These statements are direct quotations, with some adjustments for the flow of the narrative. It must be taken into consideration that the Swedish responses have been translated into English. Nevertheless, the essence of the contents has not been affected. By putting the quotations into prose, the researcher attempts to illustrate the ways in which the various issues were expressed and commented on by the interviewees, thereby strengthening the reader's sense of the opinions and approaches represented in the description.

## 1. Perceptions of musicality

### The Irish group

Among the participants in the Irish group, 4 aspects were frequently mentioned in their description of a musical person. They suggested an understanding of musicality that includes an innate musicality deriving from a talent, but also a description of musicality as inherited, or gained from being in a musical environment. The connection between musicality and skill in playing an instrument was strongly emphasised, and there was an awareness that their understanding of musicality may be derived from their experience in teacher education. Representations of musicality arose under the following headings:

- 'A musical ear'
- The family environment
- Teacher education and its influence on the idea of musicality
- Musicality and instrumental skills

*'A musical ear'*

A musical person is described as somebody who can respond to music and *pick it up quickly*, somebody who has a *musical ear.* He or she can *remember tunes and sing back tunes.* An awareness of the *musical elements* seems to be essential as well as being *exposed to music* or *sent to lessons.* The ability to *interpret* a piece of music and the ability to *read music* are also suggested as signs of musicality. Somebody who *notices that something is out of tune* and somebody who *can sing in tune* themselves are also considered to be musical. To have an *interest* in music is another description of musicality as well as to be someone who *likes listening to music.* It is also suggested that a musical person has to have a background in music but this would not mean that they have taken *any examinations*[4]. A musical background includes family involvement in musical life and activities.

*The family environment*

There is a strong belief in the Irish group that music is *passed on* within families. Some of the interviewees suggest that music is *inherited,* but it can be *developed* depending on how influential your parents are at a young age. *If you grow up with music* you become musical. It is also suggested that *music runs in families.* If children are used to hearing music at home and in school and are encouraged to play music, they expand in musical abilities. Parents who are interested in music pass this interest on. That your *musicality* is shaped in *early years,* and therefore influenced by your environment, is implied in this. Even *a little early experience of music at home and in playschool helps a lot.* When you are younger you get a *sense of rhythm and of what sounds right or not.* You are *born* with it... or you *know it from your childhood* is a statement of one participant in the study.

*Teacher education and its influence on the idea of musicality*

One participant says that if the same question had been asked three years ago at the beginning of the course, he/she[5] would have said of a musical person that someone who is *able to sit down and play the piano would be evidence of musicality,* now musicality has become a much broader concept for him/her. Such a perception indicates that the student-teacher's opinions about musicality are shifting and are located in 'the space between'. The

[4] Examinations in this context are the instrumental grade examinations such as those of the UK Associated Board.

[5] In order to protect confidentiality of the interviewees, the form he/she is used throughout the presentation of the findings from the interviews. See Chapter 4, 'Methodology', Ethical Concerns.

participant says that *we could all be as musical as each other if we had the same opportunities*, just *given the chance of development.* Still, he/she admits, a part of him/her thinks that being musical is being able to play an instrument. However, another opinion is that you are musical if you can *respond* to music and *composing* music is reported to be the ultimate way of being musical. One participant comments that when you *hear people playing in the street* sometimes *you stop and listen* but for other performers *you just walk by.* To simply play an instrument is not enough. There must be something extra that makes people want to stop. One issue connected to the particular situation referred to, is whether an assessment of musicality is connected to the skill in music *appreciation* of the listener or to the skill in *musical performance* of the performer. Perhaps musicality is only apparent if you are aware of what you are listening for. There is still some hesitation in the group regarding the possibility of everyone having a level of musicality. The following two comments could be described as a categorical perspective on musical development: One participant in the group said that you *either grasp the idea of music or you don't.* Another person in the study says that there are definitely people *that can't play music, can't co-ordinate moving the fingers for example.* Would they be considered not to be musical? This question is further examined in the next section.

*Musicality and instrumental skills*

There is ambiguity among the participants as to whether *singing skills* and *instrumental skills* are true evidence of musicality. A musical person is someone *who can sing*, or who *plays musical instruments... a lot more than performance is part of it,* is another opinion. A similar belief is that you are musical if you play an instrument or sing or *have knowledge of music.* There are other persons in the group who believe that *somebody who plays an instrument is not necessarily musical.* One participant refers to himself/herself as not being musical. He/she *just plays instruments fine*, but *can't sing* and his/her *rhythm is rather weak.* In this case the participant hints that his/her own musical ability is 'set' and rather inflexible, which could be referred to as a categorical view on musicality. A third person says that a musical person is not automatically a person that can sing or a person that can play an instrument. It is the *ability to go further and interpret* that is significant for musicality.

**Summary**

Musicality is perceived by the Irish participants as a 'quickness' in musical response including picking up tunes, perceptive listening, and a 'musical memory'. There is a belief

that musicality is developed through exposure or lessons, and there is an emphasis on a family background in music. It is also mentioned that the ability to play an instrument does not always equal musicality. This suggests an understanding of musicality as not purely innate. While you may be born with a disposition for music, it requires a musical environment or lessons to develop. This reflects the understanding from the written accounts that there is a point at which music becomes more specialised and requires the development of skill and dedication. In short, you have to do something to develop musicality, it won't just happen to you.

There is a strong sense expressed that both the family environment and school environment have a significant importance in a person's musical development, but that you can tell from an early age that someone has a musical disposition. Early encouragement of this in both environments is considered to be important. However, a further representation of musicality evident in the responses is that if a person with a musical disposition does not find him/herself in a nurturing musical environment, it may remain latent and undeveloped. There is a suggestion that after a certain age it might be harder to develop musically. On the other hand this may reflect their understanding of the way in which society is organised. If you don't get the chance to develop musically in the early years, where will you find the time and tuition to develop it?

Musicality is described as recognisable in skill, but the person who is attracted to music and who enjoys it is also considered musical. Musicality is also shown in sensitive interpretation of music. Interestingly a musical family background also confers recognition of musicality. The issue of whether musicality is an innate quality or not, is a significant feature in the responses. There is a strong sense expressed, that both the family environment and the school environment have significant importance in a person's musical development. Additionally, it is suggested that the participants' understandings of musicality have broadened or changed since they began teacher education in college. However, there is definitely a sense of the respondents being between two opinions of what the term musicality represents. The concept of the 'space between' is clearly indicated here with a tension between the sense of musicality represented in teacher education as a combination of nature and nurture and previously experienced representations of musicality as an inherited talent.

**The Swedish group**

In the Swedish group, 4 similar aspects to those suggested by the Irish group, were highlighted. A broad understanding of the concept of musicality was suggested within all 4 areas, and the relationship of musicality to self-confidence was mentioned as a significant concern. As in the Irish group, playing a musical instrument is perceived as a skill, but also a motivational factor for musical development. For the Swedish group it seemed that their understanding of musicality may also be partly influenced by their experiences in teacher education.

Representations of musicality arose under the following headings:

- Musicality as a broad concept
- Motivation
- Teacher education and its influence on the idea of musicality
- Musicality, confidence and self-esteem

*Musicality as a broad concept*

An opinion among the Swedish group is that the concept of musicality entails a diversity of musical experiences and musical knowledge. Musicality is sometimes described as something very individual and can be closely connected to *emotions and communication.* Another opinion among the participants is that *all people are musical*; *because it is there somewhere... they just have to be able to access it,* which indicates that the participant perceives musicality from a relational perspective, one which is open to development.

*Motivation*

Like the Irish group, there are ambiguous ideas in the Swedish group concerning musical ability and skill, and there is evidence of shifting opinions located in 'the space between'. Maybe you are *born with it?* Perhaps you are *either musical or you aren't?* A contrasting idea is that a combination of *environment* and *friends* will awaken and develop a musical interest, which highlights a perception of learning occurring in strict generational categories among the Swedish participants. An interesting opinion is expressed by a person who refers to himself/herself as a musical person. According to him/her a musical person is someone

who likes *to learn instruments and who has the ability to learn.* For this person musicality requires both a disposition towards music and ability.

*Teacher education and its influence on the idea of musicality*

Some people in the study say that they have *changed their opinion* regarding their perception of musicality since they started the *music course* in college. There is a tension between different representations in the area. Before the course their opinions of musicality generally entailed being *good at singing and playing.* Now a person who can gain enjoyment from music is considered to be musically skilled. *To keep the beat, recognise different musical genres and instruments* are some examples. This recognition of the change in their opinion shows that participants are not only in the 'space between' but moving beyond this 'space'. One participant expresses that *after the music course* he/she *considers more people to be musical* than the participant *used to* earlier. Another participant says that his/her earlier opinions with regard to musicality, was shaped by an *inferiority complex* in music. The participant brings a comparative perspective into the picture and evaluates him/herself against the other students in the music course in college. The participant has realised that he/she *is not worse musically, than anyone else.* Before the course musicality was understood as concerning the technical aspects of musical performance such as being able *to sing in tune* etc, but now the participant realises that *music is more* than this.

*Musicality, confidence and self-esteem*

An inferiority complex in music has affected some participants' musical *self-esteem.* Within the group, various opinions of musicality arise from the students' growing confidence in their own musical ability. One participant suggests that a person is musical *if he/she dares to try.* Another criterion for musicality is to have an *ability to listen, to hear if something sounds right or wrong and have knowledge of how to correct it.*

**Summary**

The strongest representation of musicality from the Swedish group is of musicality, or more accurately musical competence, as an *earned* rather than *assigned* competence. The participants in the Swedish group report that, their concept of musicality has broadened due to the influence of music education in college as do the Irish group.

The Swedish participants also discuss whether musicality is an innate quality or not. As part of this an argument is made that musicality is a universal characteristic, and the task is to be able to develop it. This is interesting as this point is also argued by Welch (2005). Participants express the view that all people are musical if they are only given the opportunity to access their musicality. This is an expression of a relational or a relativistic view of musicality. Some participants talk about musicality in ways that indicate that they are located in 'the space between' an absolute and a relativistic view on musicality, whereas others clearly declare that their opinions have moved towards a more relativistic view of musicality during the college course.

While the Irish group spoke about the transmission of musicality between generations often within families, the Swedish group spoke about developing musicality with peers or friends within the one generation. Some participants talk about how their musical identities have been strengthened during the college music course, and it is said to have been the result of an affirmative comparison with peers. In the responses musicality is related to a person's self-confidence and the courage to try. Moreover, the ability to make musical decisions is also perceived as a vital major sign of musicality.

Singing in tune and keeping the beat are regarded as signs of musicality, but also the knowledge of different musical genres and instruments. Significantly musicality is suggested as related to emotions and communication skills, and it is also said that musicality entails the competence to learn an instrument.

**Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden**

The statements from both groups give an impression that many of their present opinions about musicality are shaped during their teacher education. Both groups express a sense of shifting opinions about musicality and musical ability that are located in, or beyond, 'the space between'. In several aspects, it is suggested that college music education has broadened their present views on the concept of musicality. There is an idea in the two groups that people might be born musical, but the encouragement and nurturing of a musical environment from an early age, can also 'make' a person musical. The family influence and its impact on musical development is presented as considerable in the Irish group, whereas the family as a musical setting, is only mentioned occasionally in the Swedish group. One of the Swedish participants mentions that it *would have been helpful to have been brought up by*

*musical parents or to have taken lessons in the municipal music school.* Then again, it is said among the Swedish group that musicality is developed through the combination of an encouraging environment and friends. Other noticeable differences between the two groups were that the Swedish participants' often connected musicality and musical ability to earned musical competency, which was not really highlighted by the Irish group. The Swedish group emphasised the communicative aspects of musicality whereas the Irish participants often draw attention to technical features of musicality and musical ability.

## 2. Reasons for choosing music as an elective course in teacher education

### The Irish group

Numerous aspects were mentioned in the Irish group's arguments for choosing music as an elective course in teacher education. It was suggested that the college music course provided development both personally and also for the task of teaching music. For some participants music was an 'unquestioned' choice, since they already had a strong musical identity and they selected courses they felt they were good at. For others, the choice was related to an aspiration to develop further confidence in teaching music. The participants refer to teachers who have inspired them to practise and hence teach music, but also that opposing experiences of poor music education have motivated their choices, since music and music education is perceived to be generally good for children and students wish to ensure that they are capable of providing this.

Reasons given for choosing music as an elective course in teacher education arose under the following headings:

- Belief in education
- Music courses to increase the creativity and confidence of the student-teacher
- An established musical confidence
- A musical family
- Teachers as engaging role models/ Experiences of school as a musical setting
- For the sheer enjoyment and a personal interest in music
- Music for the benefit of children
- Lack of musical competence in schools – Memories from school

*Belief in education*

A good number of the Irish student-teachers are convinced that the college courses in music contribute to their musical development as teachers. Some participants know that they *can play music and like it,* but they *are not so confident in teaching it.* The college course helps *to bring you down to the children's level.* Some of their own previous experiences of music education are mirrored when they comment that they wish to *get kids to enjoy it as much as they have enjoyed it,* which reveals a desire to pass their good experiences on to their own students. Concerning music in school, there is an opinion among the participants that there is a need for a wide group of teachers to practise it. They say that *the more people that do music in college, the better they can bring it out into the classroom.* Music is a purposeful choice for the participants since they believe it can be an *asset in the classroom* and they *just want to learn more about it.* One participant emphasises the fact that *there are no exams in the end of the year in the course.* However there are practical assessments throughout the year. This reflects the practical nature of the subject and the understanding of music as praxis.

*Music courses to increase the creativity and confidence of the student-teacher*

There is a belief that the music course provides an opportunity to develop creativity and musicality, beneficial for their future engagement with pupils. The experience of creativity is considered to be an important asset for intending teachers, since *music gives the students a chance to be creative and allows talents to develop in kids that might not be very academic.* Student-teachers value aspects of the course such as hands-on experience, and *playing together with a group* as developing a musical confidence as a teacher.

*An established musical confidence*

Some student-teachers already feel confident within the area of music. They identify this as a strong reason for choosing the course since *music has always been* their *stronger subject area.* Additionally, they often refer to *having a very strong background in music.* Others mention that they have always *loved music ... singing... and playing instruments,* and that they are *really interested in it.* This indicates that their early musical socialisation significantly shaped their musical identities.

*A musical family*

The choice of the elective course in music also stems from continual involvement in music in a family context. Some participants mention that *there has been traditional music in the*

*family at home* since they were young. This suggests a belief that if a person is a part of a musical tradition at home, it entitles him/her to refer to himself/ herself as musical. However, it is often described in collective terms, such as *being a very musical family*, or *that music is a very strong interest for the whole family.* The actual practical application of a college music course in the family context, is referred to in terms of *ceoil* [Irish for music] *would be useful to the family situation.* This indicates that the musical experiences from college would be socially useful within the family.

<u>Teachers as engaging role models / Experiences of school as a musical setting</u>

One participant says he/she picked music because he/she *liked the lecturers*, but would have an interest in music anyway. Somebody else's *favourite teacher was a teacher that sang a lot and played the guitar, and it created a good atmosphere in the classroom.* One person says:
*I had my own primary experience. I loved the way we were taught music. I love to continue that on the way I was taught in primary school. Particular teachers reinforced music in me and I would do the same for children that I would be teaching.* School *bands* and *musicals* were musical experiences that were thoroughly enjoyed by many participants. For some student-teachers the choice of music in teacher education was because they *found music easy in school.* First-hand experiences with music and an engaging music teacher are described as important sources for choosing music as a part of their education. These accounts imply again that there is a strong aspiration among the participants to pass on their own affirming experiences of music to their future students.

<u>For the sheer enjoyment and a personal interest in music</u>

To have a personal interest in music seems to be vital when teaching the subject, and a number of people express this view in terms of *having an interest in music from an early age. I am not brilliant in music, but I just enjoy it,* says one person. Others say *it is very enjoyable to teach music* or *I love performing, which is probably the main reason why I chose it.* For one person the wish to teach music is very strong, and the participant says that he/she *has a real interest in music, but never went far in music but I have a real interest in teaching.* In order to teach music, there is a perception that a person also has to have a strong personal interest in music. However, according to their own perceptions, the student-teachers mainly consider themselves as teachers first and musicians second. This is an interesting finding as Roberts (1991) also points out that music is often represented as special within education and

some kind of a musical identity is required of the teacher. This does not appear to be the case for other subjects.

_Music for the benefit of children_

The student-teachers all agree in their views that *music is a subject that kids always enjoy.* Since they consider music to *be important to children,* the participants state that they want to be *really good at teaching music to children.* There is a strong mission expressed in the group to work for the best benefit of the children, and music is described as an important way of providing for the child's well-being.

_Lack of musical competence in schools - Memories from school_

Student-teachers frequently comment that they have come in contact with a completely *different approach to music education in college* compared to how they were taught in school. There is a concern in the group that music education is not valued enough in the schools. Student-teachers say this was their own school experience, as well as their present experience from teaching practice. There is a sense among the participants, that schools *need more input and more ideas in how to teach the children music.* They therefore stress the importance of *going to the elective to learn more ways to look into music in the classroom.* Moreover, there is a view among the participants that they *don't think there are enough teachers out there with music experience to bring into the classroom.* There is an awareness expressed that music education needs to be developed for the wider good of education, which seems to be a strong motivation for choosing music as a part of teacher education.

**Summary**

According to the Irish group, one of the key reasons for choosing music as an elective subject is the wish to develop their ability and confidence in teaching music. This is an interesting finding as the literature suggests that a lack of confidence as a musician is often seen to be a barrier to music teaching. This group of teachers recognises the dual skills required in music and music teaching and understand that these are separate. These teachers seek to be more confident in the music teaching role, although some of them acknowledge that they are already confident as a musicians.

There are a range of reasons for wanting to teach music: a positive personal experience with music that they wish to replicate, personal enjoyment in engaging in music practice, or an

understanding of the benefits for pupils. Some refer to their own enjoyment in performing music, whereas others stress that the interest in teaching music is greater than musical practice at a personal level.

A very interesting finding is the willingness of this group to be ambassadors for music. There is a perception in the group that there is a lack of musical knowledge and competence in schools, and that both the quantity and quality of music education need to be improved. It is interesting here that although some have had poor experiences of music in primary education, it does not prevent them from engaging in music education. In fact, this seems to be a reason for their engagement with music. Rather than avoiding music because of their experience they are attempting to do something about this, in order to ensure that future students receive a better music experience. Musical socialisation is not deterministic in this context. It is possible for students to act outside their experience; a poor experience of music in school does not necessarily result in replicating that poor experience as a teacher. A further interesting finding is that music is perceived by these student-teachers to entail different qualities than other school subjects. As an active, practical, creative and often non-verbal subject it has an important function in the pupils' wider development in a holistic education. (Skolverket, 2000; Government of Ireland, 1999a; 1999b). Music has uses and functions *within* and beyond education unlike most other subjects. One further aspect of choosing music as an elective course, is the idea that the musical knowledge developed in the college music courses, can be brought (back) to the family music context.

**The Swedish group**

There were 5 chief reasons for choosing music as an elective in teacher education among the Swedish participants. The pre-dominant reason was a personal interest in music and it is suggested that this is vital in order to teach music. A second reason is that the music course in college is open to anybody, and there is no selection of students connected to previous musical knowledge and ability. One perceived attraction in the music course, is the fact that the participants have the opportunity to learn to play the guitar in the course. Furthermore, it is mentioned, as in the Irish group, that music is an important part of childhood and also of education, and an important means of expression. The participants also comment that they search for in-depth knowledge in music in order to improve music education in pre- and primary schools.

Reasons given for choosing music as an elective course in teacher education arose under the following headings:

- Music - a personal interest
- Accessibility
- To be able to play a musical instrument
- Music for the benefit of children – Memories from childhood
- Lack of musical competence in pre-schools

*Music - a personal interest*

It is a shared opinion among the Swedish participants that it is vital that your *personal interests* influence your choice of *electives in teacher education.* A majority of the Swedish participants state that they initially chose music because of their personal interest in the subject. Some describe how they have always loved singing or how they have a wish to learn to play an instrument during the course. Some students consider the connection between a personal interest and a teaching career to be important, and one of them says that music is his/her *personal* interest as well as his/her *professional interest.* This echoes the findings of Bouij (1998) and Roberts (1991) reported in the literature review. The participants often refer to finding the balance in the dual role of the music teacher, where neither the role of musician nor the role of music teacher, is perceived as the predominant one.

*Accessibility*

One student-teacher refers to the fact that he/she had earlier applied for a special music course but was rejected, as enrolment was by an audition. The respondent expresses his/her enjoyment of being able to attend a music education course without having to do any particular musical tests in order to be accepted. This statement illustrates the way in which access to music courses is generally represented in his/her society. Earlier rejection from enrolment in music courses has affected the respondent's musical confidence and self-esteem. By gaining access to and participating in this particular music course his/her musical confidence is said to have strengthened.

A large part of the participants say *they take this course mainly for their own musical interest.* It seems to be important that the elective courses in their teacher education are connected to personal interests. One person states it was mainly because he/she *loves singing*

*and played a few instruments earlier* that he/she *invested* in this course. Moreover this person believes music education is an important part of teacher education. A female participant says it is a *'girl dream'* to be involved in music.

*To be able to play a musical instrument*

As playing the guitar is part of the Swedish music course, some student-teachers declare that this is a strong reason for their choice. They thoroughly enjoy learning the guitar, and they say they will continue playing it in the future. The participants express personal satisfaction in playing an instrument and they believe they get more pleasure from playing an instrument now as adults, than they did when they were younger. One participant explains it like this: *Now I play more in my own pace, before it was mainly focused on homework.* Personal satisfaction is therefore the motivation for selecting this course. Even though a personal music interest seems to have been the original reason for choosing music, some participants describe how their focus has been modified during the course. *Initially the course was not important for me from a teaching point of view, but during the course I have realised that I have also gained lots of knowledge in that area.* A further student-teacher describes how he/she *really loves music and have found the music courses very interesting* in the context of gaining new knowledge in the field of music education during the course. In this case personal interest in music also expanded to a professional one. It is interesting that the respondents clearly emphasise the dual aspects of music teaching. It is strongly represented in the accounts that in order to teach music, a personal musical interest and skill is also required.

*Music for the benefit of children – Memories from childhood*

Like the Irish group, many of the Swedish student-teachers hold 'teacher-oriented' values concerning music, in the sense that they perceive music to be an important part of the development of the whole child. It is said *that children really appreciate music,* so they find it important to *learn more about it.* On those grounds, they refer to their own, often encouraging, musical experiences from early childhood and primary school. As music is not language based it is considered to have an important complimentary function in education. An interesting view in this respect is that *music is a way of getting your voice heard if you are otherwise very quiet,* which indicates that music is seen by the Swedish student-teachers to have an important democratic dimension in education.

*Lack of musical competence in pre-schools*

There is an eagerness among the participants to learn more, and in a more in-depth way, about music. Since some of the Swedish participants are becoming pre-school teachers, they have a particular concern *that there is not enough musical knowledge among the pre-school staff.* Some of the student-teachers indicate that they have chosen music since they believe that for a pre-school teacher it is truly important to have a good knowledge in the area. This again, reveals values of music as important for the whole child.

**Summary**

The participants in the Swedish group show a strong connection between music as a personal interest and music as a professional interest. Their understanding of music education is not just a job, but something that requires the music teacher's personal interest. Some of the participants consider the college music course to be a personal 'investment', referring to their genuine personal interest in their own musical development. Their own musical experiences as adults during the course, are important educational encounters which they find to be a useful preparation for future musical learning processes in their own classrooms. There is recognition among the student-teachers of music as a personal interest for children as well, and there is a desire to understand this. On the personal level, also there is an indication that the course is viewed as a chance to 'catch-up', take opportunities they have been denied earlier, and now, re-engage with music.

Some of the participants explain that their reasons for selecting music have shifted during the college music course. From an initial interest in personal musical development, they have begun to recognise the importance of music for the development of the child. This is a good example of student-teachers being located 'in the space between'. Some have now moved beyond this 'space' and fully taken on new understandings in the area.

Music is perceived as an important means of expression, particularly for children, and the participants perceive that their choice of music will contribute to the wider good of education, providing knowledge and expertise that is lacking. It is pointed out that knowledge in the area of music education generally needs to be improved and developed in schools.

**Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden**

There are a number of reasons why these student-teachers have chosen music as an elective part of their education. An important aspect they refer to is the link between a personal and a professional interest in music. This point is stressed by both groups, it seems, however, to be a particularly strong representation in the Swedish group. There is also another understanding represented within the two groups that a teacher who teaches music is required to have a special interest and skill in the area. However, a skill as a musician is not considered to be enough to teach music as this must be integrated with a teaching skill. The respondents share the idea that they as future teachers will be working for the wider good of education and music within education.

Both groups explicitly state that music is a creative, active and expressive subject, and they believe it plays an important role in a holistic development of children, and is therefore a necessary part of the curriculum. It is also mentioned that music education has benefits for pupils beyond other language based subjects. The respondents are aware of the wider application of music in peoples' lives which goes beyond education. They link it to their own personal general and musical development.

Representations of who 'is allowed' to engage in music practice is found to be different in an educational context than in a strictly musical context. There is a perception of a more general access to music in an educational context, whereas in a more specific musical context accessibility is more oriented towards a selection of the 'chosen few'.

## 3. Reasons for music education

**The Irish group**

The Irish participants understand the purpose of music as part of compulsory education in multi-faceted ways. A central issue is the importance of a balanced curriculum and a holistic education, in which musical processes are identified as taking a different approach and perspective than other subjects in education. Another issue is that music is considered to be a vital part of everybody's life and must therefore also be recognised as a part of education. Music is also said to entail emotional, social, communicative and health aspects. Finally, the function of music as a sign of status within a school is also highlighted.

Reasons given for music in education arose under the following headings:

- Diverse forms of knowledge and expressions
- Music as a part of people's lives
- The social bonding and mood altering functions of music
- Music as an important part of the school environment

*Diverse forms of knowledge and expressions*

Several student-teachers refer to Howard Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences, and in connection to this, some of them state the significance of ensuring a holistic approach in education. With Gardner's theory in mind, they claim the value of providing an all-round education in schools. Some participants emphasise the *importance of contrasts* in education. In this case, they highlight music as standing out as a contrast against the core subjects, Irish, English and Mathematics. The participants consider that *music is taught and understood differently* from the ways that the core subjects are generally taught in schools; *In other subjects you have "to do and to understand", whereas in music you can do it for yourself and there is no right or wrong.* The teaching methods of music are perceived to entail exploration, active participation, risk taking, and open-ended solutions. A sense of music being a form of *expression* may be linked to the different nature of music and the core subjects. Participants mention that *the pupils mightn't be good at other subjects and if they find that they do music and it helps them along, gives them a break from the more academic side, and allows them to express themselves, it is as important as any other subject.* They also comment that music is not an isolated or a separate phenomenon. *It can 'go up'* [ignite] *their imagination and therefore they can use it with other subjects.* Another comment is that music is an important form of personal nonverbal expression. *Children can express themselves through music; they couldn't in English, Irish or Maths.* In general it is emphasised that children should develop *that side* [their musical side] *so they can express themselves,* suggesting music as a vital means of expression.

*Music as a part of people's lives*

Some student-teachers comment that music education is a good grounding for *developing a hobby, and education allows them to build on it.* Others suggest that music education might be a basis for a *musical career in the future.* Regardless of a career in music or not, the student-teachers state that *children need some aspect of music. It is important for the children*

*to be able to appreciate music, but they don't necessarily need to develop it further after education.* These responses indicate that music education is perceived to play a crucial role for students' personal lives. Music is perceived to have multiple functions in children's lives both within and outside education. One opinion in the group is that music *is just there with children, so therefore it makes sense to develop it,* suggesting that there is a potential for music development early on in life. A student-teacher states that *for those who are potentially very strong in music, let them be strong and use it in their lives.* This statement may point towards music being an important part of people's existence, development and citizenship.

<u>*The social bonding and mood altering functions of music*</u>

An understanding that *music involves everyone and brings people together* is seen as an important aspect of music education. The participants emphasise that music is more than singing and playing an instrument. They also highlight aspects of composing, and listening and responding activities. *One may not be good at one aspect of music but at another,* meaning that music education, includes a variety of practices from performing to composing to critical listening and even within these there are a range of areas of activity. The participants regard music education as a type of learning that embodies the enhancement of well-being and enjoyment, and allows a different type of working. They say *it takes pressure off.* Another idea is that since music is not a core subject, *children see it as something relaxing.* It is suggested that music might have a profound influence on people's well-being. *Music helps people get along and changes your moods.* The latter statement might be linked to a view that *music makes people open to new cultures, and makes them accepting, because they find out new things and they know things about their own culture.* Music is also said to *be a form of recreation, but it's an educational recreation* indicating that music is an important non-language based form of thinking, acting and working within education.

<u>*Music as an important part of the school environment*</u>

Occasionally music is portrayed as having an essential role in the school environment, particularly as a status symbol for individual schools. It seems that music is generally regarded as a status marker, especially in connection to performances. This is acknowledged as an unspoken reason for the inclusion of music in schools. Students refer to attitudes such as *schools like to show off that they have a great teacher because of a choir and it is also important to show off children that can sing for parents.* They reflect a 'common-sense'

perception that *primary teaching and having an interest and knowledge of music* are connected. One student-teacher states that music [and music education] are associated with creativity, and suggests that some people would *view primary teachers as being creative or trying to be*, and *music also seems to be connected to childhood.* A participant reveals that he/she had been told that *he/she would make a great teacher because he/she was so interested in music.*

**Summary**

Music is perceived by the Irish participants to be a vital part of a holistic and balanced education, and it is described as entailing unique ways of knowing and acting in education. Music is perceived as including a broad range of practices among the group. There is also an understanding of teachers having an effect or influence on children's engagement with music. An interesting response is the variety of functions attributed to music by the respondents which has direct resonance with the literature. Merriam's (1964) definition of numerous functions of music included functions mentioned by the student-teachers such as, *emotional expressions, aesthetic enjoyment, entertainment* and *communication*, perhaps also music as a symbolic representation for the life of the school might be included in this list. However, there are also representations of educational functions of music as either changing the momentum of the class, or as non-verbal ways of understanding and of teaching. Moreover, a well-being function is suggested, referring to relaxation and recreation as important aspects within education. The participants also ascribe to music the potential to develop students' imagination and creativity. Interestingly this is considered to benefit other school subjects too. Music is perceived to have an importance beyond education. It is understood to be a potential career option, or an opportunity to build on music as a hobby that enhances the quality of life.

The social aspects of music are essential to the participants, and they particularly emphasise this as an important part of children's early socialisation. Affirmative aspects of music in education are the opportunity for children to be personally expressive. Another aspect is the idea of music involving calming and relaxing characteristics, and the possibilities it affords to develop openness towards other cultures. Music is also perceived to confer status on a school.

**The Swedish group**

For the Swedish participants there is a wide range of reasons given for the inclusion of music as part of compulsory education. They believe that music education is essential for a balanced curriculum since it often involves different approaches to education when compared to other subjects in school. The practical aspects of music education are noted as unique requirements. Music education is also considered to function as a transmitter of cultural and historical heritage. As music plays a big part in people's lives in general, it is said to be important that it is also represented in education. A school might be the only place where all students get the opportunity to be exposed to music education.

Reasons given for the inclusion of music in education arose under the following headings:

- Cultural heritage and historical aspects
- Music, existential aspects and social interaction
- Music as part of human development
- A balanced curriculum
- A sense of music being reduced in education

*Cultural heritage and historical aspects*

Some Swedish participants suggest that the reason music is part of the curriculum is to pass on a *cultural heritage.* They mainly refer to musical traditions in connection with the Lucia[6] celebration and traditional ceremonies connected to Christmas or summer celebrations. *Music is a part of history and has always been there and will always be there* is given as a strong reason for its inclusion in compulsory education. Some Swedish student-teachers believe that *music originates from the time when the church was very influential in education* and they refer to the time *when people learnt hymns as part of their upbringing. From there it was probably recognised that children enjoy music. It remained as a school subject, hence developed towards modern music.*

[6] Lucia celebrations, see Chapter 5, 'The Research Contexts'.

*Music, existential aspects and social interaction*

It is considered among the participants that music is an *integrated part of everyday life and something most people can take part in and everyone has in their homes in different ways. It is probably also there for people with a musical need ... for them to find it somehow*. Music is also said to entail particular qualities which provide good opportunities for *social interaction.* This recognises the vital function music plays in social interaction between people.

*Music as part of human development*

It is suggested that music as part of education might also awaken an interest in a person's own musical development outside school. Music education is considered as *the only practical subject really,* even though the participants at times refer to their own school days *when music sometimes was taught in a very theoretical manner.* However, the student-teachers seem to be convinced that *music is a practical subject. It is not just a matter of sitting down and doing all the theory.* These comments indicate a specific role for music in education, and that the ways in which music can be taught should represent this different educational approach. They also seem to share the firm opinion that *schools must provide an all-round education.* However, there are some opposing remarks connected to an entirely hands-on approach to music education. One participant reflects on the prospect of music education being predominantly a practical subject. This particular practical feature, sometimes results in teachers being too *focused on the actual product or result.* The participant considers such a practice problematic *since it is the process in music education that is the genuinely important part.* He/she believes as well that music is a difficult subject to measure or assess. Some student-teachers insist that music is *part of general knowledge,* and could be an enjoyable hobby to many people. They indicate that *if music hadn't been in education, many people would probably miss the opportunity to get to know about it.* A participant believes that *maybe music ought to be considered as part of human development since it develops people as human beings,* suggesting that music is an integral part of who we are as human beings.

*A balanced curriculum*

There is a strong belief within the group that *there are children who would have difficulties in other subjects but might find music accessible and easy.* The outcome of a good balance in education is explained like this: *Rhythm is important for reading and writing, and everything*

*in your body is related to pulse and rhythm.* Subsequently, *if your body is in good form, you probably achieve well in all subjects in school,* emphasising representations of health and mood modifying functions of music.

*A sense of music being reduced in education*

The participants state that recently *music has been cut down in schools*, and *fewer teachers know how to play instruments nowadays.* It is also said that music is *generally not considered to be as important in education as it used to be. Earlier there was always a piano or an organ in the classroom,* but now music seems to have become more of a *voluntary part of education both for teachers and pupils. Music used to be more important* [in education] *earlier than it is now* according to the participants, with reference to their own childhood in the 1980's. These statements show that the participants are concerned about the music provision in schools. Based on their own experiences of music in school, they take the role of providers to improve music education for children.

**Summary**

According to the Swedish group, music should be part of compulsory education due to the fact that it is part of 'general knowledge'. Music education also contributes to an all-round education of children, which is suggested as a significant reason for its inclusion as a compulsory subject in school. Some participants consider music education to have an important function in keeping and passing on musical heritage, including ceremonies representing the culture. It is also suggested that the reason why music is part of education relates back to the times when the church had a considerable impact on education in Sweden. An emphasis on music as an accompanying function in life is also expressed as it meets personal needs of social interaction. The participants strongly stress the importance of practical approaches within music education and they do not seem to consider that the teaching of music should strive to resemble the teaching in other subjects. On the contrary, they emphasise the importance and uniqueness of music education as being practical and process-centred. The social and practical aspects of music education are highlighted as having the potential to influence the learning processes in other areas of education in a positive way.

**Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden**

The reasons suggested for music being part of education is that the participants believe it is an important part of a holistic education. Music is perceived to have many functions and certain unique qualities that are not only applicable for music, but could also be transferred to other areas. In essence, other parts of education could 'learn' from music education practice. The Irish group highlights that music may be an important status marker for the schools. The Swedish participants, however, caution that music education might be declining and is being reduced in some schools. Existential aspects of music, such as its function as a natural part of being a human being, are referred to as important reasons for music being a part of education. Such ideas represent a relational view of musical involvement. The Swedish group suggests that music is an important aspect of the cultural and historical heritage and general knowledge and therefore should be part of education. Interestingly, from a comparative perspective, those viewpoints are not particularly highlighted by the Irish participants, although they generally emphasise the importance of Irish traditional music as a cultural expression and identity-marker. Perhaps a possible explanation could be that there are different interpretations by the two groups of what counts as cultural heritage and also its connection to education.

Both groups mention music as an important means for personal expression as well as for social bonding and interaction, which are important functions of music in education. This indicates that a person's individual and socio-cultural stores of experiences of music are activated in music education. Probably due to an emphasis on practical and process-centred approaches in music education in both countries, music education is clearly understood to open up creativity and imagination and also contribute to an understanding of differences, such as an awareness of other cultures. Furthermore the Irish participants suggest that music is part of education for its calming and relaxing impact on people. They also suggest that music's role in education could on the one hand be to prepare for a possible career, but on the other hand it might have an ever wider function to develop an interest outside school or a hobby for the future.

## 4. Definition of good music education

**The Irish group**

When the Irish group considers good music education they often provide examples from their own experiences. The characteristics of teachers seem to be central to this. In order to provide good music education such qualities as imagination, enthusiasm, adventurousness and creativity are emphasised and it is also perceived to be vital that the teacher is encouraging. The student-teachers seem to welcome the approaches to music education in the new curriculum since it gives opportunities for variation in music teaching and learning. The involvement of children in the processes is perceived as vital to creating a good learning climate for music.

Definitions of good music education arose under the following headings:

- Imagination, enthusiasm, encouragement adventurousness and creativity
- The importance of a varied approach to music - the three strands in the curriculum
- Child-centred music education

*Imagination, enthusiasm, encouragement adventurousness and creativity*

According to the Irish participants, a teacher of music has to be *imaginative, enthusiastic, encouraging, adventurous, creative, and also let children be creative, open, show a love for music and need to love what they are doing,* in order to provide good music education. They also *have to have an interest in what they are doing since children can be very influenced by their teacher.* The importance of the teacher's adaptability is emphasised, and so also is the idea that the teacher *will turn to all kids whether they are weak or strong in the subject.* The music teachers have to be able *to appreciate what is going on in the classroom.* Dedication on behalf of the teacher is important, and some participants give examples of how their previous music teachers used to spend extra time, giving up their own lunch breaks and so forth, in order to provide musical facilities for the pupils. These 'customs' seem to have served as vital influences for the participants; *if the teacher puts in the effort, the students put in the effort.* One view on good music education is *to provide time for practise and to take an interest, then the student is more likely to do his/her best.* This is based on a belief that *practise makes perfect.* The participant's model of teaching music appears to be significantly influenced by his/her own experiences with music education. A notion of a teacher's

extensive dedication to both music and to education is a highly regarded aspect of good music education.

<u>*The importance of a varied approach to music - the three strands in the curriculum*</u>

The participants share the idea that it is important that the *three strands*, listening and responding, composing and performing are incorporated in music education. This conviction has most likely been developed from participating in the college music course. They find it vital to provide *a variety of different ways of looking at music* as well as to offer a range of different ways of discovering the pupils' musical potentials. There is a belief that *there should be more things for children like concerts to perform, to work towards, and to do regularly.* The listening and responding strand has a particular significance *since it is not only to listen to music, you should know what you are listening for.* The student-teachers express their awareness of the *necessity of various resources* in music education as well as *having access to various instruments.* They also find it important to *expose the children to a wide selection of music and to encourage creativity and not place all emphasis on performance.* This might also reveal recently adapted values in music education, developed through teacher education. *To develop children's guidelines for composition* is another important feature in music education. *If children have an ability to compose or create their own pieces it is essential to encourage them to be creative.* Some participants state that *the performing aspects in the curriculum are very important for creativity*, and it is central then that *everybody in the group should be encouraged - everybody is musical in their own way.* To support this, *group work* is regarded as an important method, and the participants think *children can be encouraged to work together to help one other in group compositions.* This is considered to be an excellent way *of learning how to respect each others ideas* suggesting extra-musical effects on music education.

<u>*Child- centred music education*</u>

*You have to find out what their needs are before you actually teach them*, says a participant in connection to teaching music to children. Interaction within the music classes seems to be a vital aspect for many participants. *Let the children be active participants whatever the lesson is.* Hands-on activities are said to be the important vehicle to interactive ways of learning music, as well as *letting the children be able to do things on their own without help of others.* It is suggested that the teacher should let the children *come up with their own ideas and be creative and imaginative.* This approach suggests that the primary function of music

education is perceived to be for the general good of children in developing their confidence, creativity and independence.

**Summary**

According to the Irish group, the chief elements of good music education are very much connected to the teacher. It is important that the teacher loves his/her job and shows an obvious interest in it. The teacher should also encourage and include all students, not only a selected group or individuals. This point of view indicates that a relational perspective on musicality and the practice of music education is required of teachers of music. Group work, including an active approach with student input as well as teachers are said to signify good music education too. In order to develop the pupils' full musical potential, it is important that the teacher presents a variety of ways of understanding and practising music, indicating a strong influence of values transmitted in teacher education. Due to their own previous experiences of music education, there is an understanding in the group that a music teacher should represent some 'extra' dedication in his/her work, and it is recalled how some of their own music teachers used to give up their own lunch breaks and facilitate the classroom for practice. This suggests a construction of a music teacher as a person who has a particular passionate approach to his/her job, including the qualities of imagination, enthusiasm, adventurousness and creativity. The responses reveal that teacher education has had a strong impact on values and opinions about music education and these could now be described as opinions held beyond 'the space between'. Nothing explicitly is mentioned about the teacher's musical skills in relation to good music education. This might represent an understanding that other areas and aspects of music education are more important than musical skills or that a teacher's musical skills are taken for granted as part of being a 'passionate' music teacher.

**The Swedish group**

Good music education among the Swedish group is represented by a safe and enjoyable learning environment. It is seen to be important that the students have a say and influence in the music class. Thematic work is suggested to represent music education in a good way, probably due to its social and interactional features. Experience-based teaching/learning situations are regarded as developing an individual, particularly if these are extensive enough to enable students to master their musical tasks. The teacher should encourage and give feed back to the students in their efforts, and creativity is generally considered to be an important

feature in music education. An individualised approach on the teacher's part, is said to enable all students to participate. A variety of approaches to teaching and learning is recommended for music education.

Definitions of good music education arose under the following headings:

- A good atmosphere and a safe environment
- Exploration
- Educational influences from other cultures
- Participation and creativity

<u>*A good atmosphere and a safe environment*</u>

The Swedish participants emphasise the importance of the teacher putting a lot of effort into creating a good atmosphere in the group, which indicates that the music teacher needs good *knowledge of social and communicative skills.* It is important to *create an atmosphere based on a sense of belonging.* One way of doing this is *to play together in ensembles/orchestras.* It seems to be vital for the class that the teacher provides a good social context where the students get to know each other. A *relaxed atmosphere* and *no prestige* connected to the musical activities are considered to be the keys to good music education. The Swedish participants think it is important to cut the distances between teachers and students. The student-teachers believe that you should make music enjoyable and approachable at an early stage so it does not become remote to people. *A good teacher can explain in a way the students would understand.* The participants think the *music teachers have to be engaged in the subject and make music exciting and show that they enjoy it themselves.* Good music education is when music is frequently present during the school day. The participants emphasise the importance of the teacher being *open to the children's ideas* and to bring them in to contribute and assist during the class. Good structure and planning is mentioned as granting the teacher more freedom and presence in the classroom.

<u>*Exploration*</u>

The value of providing a broad perspective in music education is emphasised, for instance to listen to music from *different parts of the world* and also that it is important *to explore different instruments as well as to make or create your own instruments. Theme work* is mentioned as an important experience in order to explore music and to make *music an*

*integrated part of other areas and subjects.* Another way of exploring music would be to perform outside school and then communicate music in a different setting than the school.

Educational influences from other cultures

Some student-teachers in the Swedish group suggest that teachers should *individualise* music education in such a way that everybody in the class can take part. This may be done in a way that a class would play together as *a band or in an ensemble, but would play different parts.* One student-teacher is here referring to a shared experience of playing Latin American music together with his/her fellow college students. The participants advise music teachers to *simplify music and not explain music in a complicated way,* stressing a particular pedagogical value of the non-verbal nature of music. It is suggested that music practice should be highly shaped by learning *music by ear and to imitate.* The participants recommend that the class and the teacher would bring in multicultural music and people from outside to visit the class, in order to broaden not only the repertoire, but also the learning of music in multi-faceted ways.

Participation and creativity

Hands-on activities are said to be an essential part of good music education. *Let the students be involved, be part of a process in order to gain experience* is a comment that would summarise the majority of the participants' views. Still, *encouragement* from the teacher seems to be fundamental when it comes to developing *confidence, exploration and endeavour* within the area of music education. *Creativity* seems to be a vital *educational tool* in music. According to the participants, there is a strong belief that *motivation can be accessed through creativity.* The key to getting a sense of achievement within music seems to be *plenty of rehearsals and repetitions* so the children will be able to master the musical task. In order for the teacher to provide for musical progress, *plenty of feedback* is required.

**Summary**

For the majority of the Swedish participants, it is essential to create a good atmosphere in the class, and it should be based on a sense of belonging. This is, for instance, described as facilitating musical activities in the classroom where all students play together in various arrangements. The teacher's task is also to provide an 'exciting' approach to music and to communicate his/her own interest in the subject. Good music education is said to involve the

children's ideas and contributions. A variety of genres and a connection to other subjects are also considered to be beneficial for music education.

An exploration of various musics from around the world is suggested. In connection to that, a variety of ways of learning music is proposed, such as imitation and learning by ear. In order to develop an organic relationship to music it is recommended that students perform and communicate music outside the school context, and also that people (musicians) from outside come to the class. Finally, if students are encouraged to be creative in class, this is regarded to be an important motivational factor for musical development. Creativity is therefore said to be an essential part of good music education.

**Conclusion Ireland / Sweden**

There are a number of similar aspects mentioned by the two groups under this theme. A passionate care for the development of children's musical identities can be sensed in their statements. A variety of approaches to music, and a variety of musics in music education are said to facilitate students to discover their musical potentials, which could be considered a comparative perception of music education. These opinions are perhaps influenced by the respondents' musical experiences of various approaches to, and styles of, music during teacher education. The atmosphere in the classroom is also considered in relation to musical development, and the importance of students experiencing inclusion rather than exclusion in class on both a social and musical level is stressed. This, in turn is evidence of a strong relational approach to music education. Both the Irish and Swedish participants suggest that such inclusion will, for instance, be acquired through group work. The idea of the positive benefits of group work is based on their own individual experience combined with a socio-cultural representation of educational authorities promoting this as a useful method.

The teacher of music plays an important role in good music education, which is explicitly stated among the Irish participants, however, it is expressed in more general terms by the Swedish participants. Some Irish participants illustrate how good music teachers show commitment beyond normal expectations of teachers, in order to provide extra curricula music facilities for their students and that they will have good teaching knowledge as well as a musical knowledge. This is a reflection of their own music teachers in childhood.

Some participants in the Swedish group particularly suggest an interplay with musical arenas outside schools, and the connection of music education to more every-day musical activities in the wider society is seen as important.

A great deal of encouragement and feed back is said to be vital for good music education, and the creative side of both teachers and students should have the prospect of flourishing within good music education. This statement is evidence of the dual aspects that is often perceived to be particular to teaching music. In this context, it is mentioned as an asset and is portrayed as an attractive feature of teaching the subject.

## 5. Definition of poor music education

Opinions of poor music education are also related to the Irish participants' own previous experiences. The role of the teacher is again highlighted, and in this context the absence of involvement and enthusiasm is pointed out as causes of poor music education. Not only are teachers the source of poor music education, so also is a lack of proper equipment and resources. Moreover an unvaried or uninventive way of teaching music is said to have a negative impact on music teaching and learning.

Definitions of poor music education arose under the following headings:

**The Irish group**

- Detachment
- Isolation
- Performance anxiety for teachers
- Control and anxiety
- "Just doing the same old thing"
- Lack of identification with music

*Detachment*

Respondents focused on the role of the teacher in the descriptions of good music education. This was also the case regarding poor music. *Lack of involvement, lack of equipment and resources,* and *a lack of enthusiasm* are descriptions of teachers who are considered to hold

back music education due to their own prejudices and perhaps also a lack of a personal musical identity. Teachers *relying too much on text books*, not *allowing children to explore for themselves* or if they are not *giving a variety in the music education such as only working from books* are also considered to hold music education back. Teachers giving their own personal views such as *"I hate classical music"* could influence the children in a negative way, according to one participant. The children would think then: *"if the teacher does not like it, why should I like it?"* Another indication of poor music education *is if the only route in music education would be listening or just concentrating on one of the strands in the curriculum. If the teacher would not play the musical instruments, just leave them in a box in the cupboard,* this would be considered to be poor as well *as the teacher only telling the kids what to do.* Such practices seems to be perceived as not really genuine in the sense that following books might be considered to be 'second-hand teaching' and not really representing a teacher's own ideas and inventions.

<u>*Isolation*</u>

Some of the student-teachers' earlier experiences from school are reflected in comments on poor music education: *Some teachers don't encourage children to participate, like they would be looking down on children that would not be great at performing.* Some participants are quite distressed when thinking back on their own school days. They mean that some teachers *isolated the children, and suggest that they go on with some thing else,* rather than participate in the music activity which could *have a terrible effect on the child, definitely.* The participants are clear that isolating children musically would be to limit their knowledge and understanding of music, which gives them no possibility of developing. One scenario described by these student-teachers, is *when teachers pick on certain pupils that they know can sing to do the music and everybody else does nothing, instead of giving everybody a fair try at the music. The children would think that that is all there is to music and that they could not do that and immediately think "I can't do music".* This raises a question on a view of musical competency as fixed or open to development. Is musical competency understood only to be assigned, and in that case is musical competency something that is not given an opportunity to be earned by the student? Moving away from such 'pre-determined' approaches in music education, is recommended by the participants and they suggest that *if they do all the three strands there could be one thing that might give them* [each child] *an interest.* There are reports of some children who express a wish to sing, being told they are bad singers by their teacher. Other children in the class, who would already be considered to

be good singers, are instead given the opportunity to sing. The atmosphere in a class is affected by such selective teachers, which makes *"the lucky voices"* not want to sing, since they are picked out and have to stand out from the others. In both these scenarios described, a sense of being abandoned or isolated when selected - either positively or negatively - from the social context of a music lesson, is high-lightened by the participants. One student-teacher describes the feeling of being singled out as not being a singer like this: *You stand at the back or you become a shepherd in a play or something.*

*Performance anxiety for teachers*

Music education is often confused with preparation for performances important to the school. The performance is required to reflect the teacher in a good light, and they are in fact musical directors rather than teachers. This mirrors a 'common-sense' understanding of music in schools which is reflected in society. One main implication in this regard, is something that could be identified as performance anxiety. It is described by a participant like this: *Teachers could get too worried about how the children will perform rather than actually engaging them in music.* If there is a possibility of performance anxiety among music teachers, the consequence might be that *the class is just learning music off for performances and some children would feel forced to perform.* There is also a concern among the participants that *really traditional teachers would think that they might be wasting "the good" children's time by trying to bring the other children on.* Such an approach might cause the musical learning process to be neglected, hence music education would merely be focused on performing or quick results.

*Control and anxiety*

According to the participants, the implementation of the new music curriculum is not always an uncomplicated matter. Teachers *may be afraid of composing, that it would be too wild and not in control in groups. For some teachers, religious songs would be their singing and therefore that would be their music,* suggests one participant. The participants are fairly unanimous in their ideas that music *teachers need to experiment with different types of music, for example bringing in pop-songs. In secondary school it would be bad to just follow the books and not let children experiment with music.* Some of the concerns in connection to music teaching, are described in terms of the *teacher being afraid of noise*, or *you don't want to disturb other classes*, as well as *you don't want an inspector to walk in when a class is going mad.* There is a concern among the student-teachers that worries of renewal in music

education might lead to teachers *just doing music for the sake of doing music, taking out your book, listening to a song singing the song and colouring in a few pages or joining the dots.* The participants also emphasise the importance of listening activities, and that there is a worry that some teachers would not provide listening time for the children.

*"Just doing the same old thing"*

*Not displaying loads of different types of music just keeping to the one type of music without thinking really* is one of the descriptions of poor music education. Another reflection on a restricted representation of music is: *For kids that wouldn't have the experience of music at home they would think that this was music and they might think music was boring then.* The importance of a broad music education that will cover more than one main strand is explained as this: *You might find people develop a complex about it that they were no good at it because of only one element.* One description of a monotonous way of teaching music is if the teacher uses the same media all the time such as playing the piano, using a tape recorder and *doesn't allow for a range of media* to be used. That would be restricting and children would not become aware of the scope that music has.

*Lack of identification with music*

Finally, teachers who are described as having a "lack of musicality" are considered to be a difficulty in the schools, according to some participants. Perhaps the definition of musicality in this sense is strongly connected to each particular teacher's musical confidence. The participants' concerns could be summarised in this following reflection: *Often teachers don't give any time on music at all because they are not musical themselves. It is important for them to find ways that they could best teach music.*

**Summary**

The aspects of poor music education highlighted by the Irish participants are connected to a teacher's lack of interest and involvement in the music lessons. It is stressed that a narrow approach to music education, such as only working with one aspect of music is perceived as a reduced way of teaching.

A teacher's exclusion of certain students in a music class, due to difficulty in singing, for instance, is mentioned as an inappropriate way of teaching. It also said that general expectations of musical performance in a school, may create 'performance anxiety' for the

teachers. This may affect the content and process of music education negatively, if the students' musical performance outside class, is more valued than their musical development in class. A confusion between teaching and performance direction might lead to the teacher only asking those who are already known to be good performers to take solo parts, in order to get a good performance. This is perceived as a way of stereotyping students' musical identities (or lack of such) and would therefore not be understood as good music education.

Another aspect which restricts music education is that the teachers may have concerns about working in new or alternative ways compared to how they usually work. They might be uncertain of the students' reactions, and also the assessment of colleagues and school inspectors.

In conclusion, it is emphasised that a monotonous and restricted way of applying music education is regarded as discouraging for the students' musical development and musical understanding.

**The Swedish group**

The Swedish group identifies similar causes for poor music education as the Irish group. The teacher's approach, a lack of resources and an unvaried and uninventive teaching are all mentioned. The atmosphere created in the classroom is understood to affect the outcome of a music class and a teacher's negative assessment of a student can be disheartening for those involved.

Definitions of poor music education arose under the following headings:

- Approaches, atmosphere, rooms and resources
- Doing just one thing - no progress
- Assessment of ability and a sense of discouragement
- Influence on teaching

*Approaches, atmosphere, rooms and resources*

If the teacher has *a negative approach towards music* it becomes obvious *and boring for everyone.* If the teacher is too strict and not encouraging and only gives negative responses the music education is not likely to be motivating. The Swedish participants explain that if *you just sit down and sing and don't get any personal experience of music,* this is poor music education. Other concerns are if the children do not get opportunities to try different musical experiences, or do not get *an understanding* of music as a kind of expression. The participants state that it is important that a music teacher grasps that you can understand music from different levels and aspects.

It is not only the personal characteristics and knowledge of the individual teacher that is central in music education. Respondents also point out *that if the music room is in a bad condition, the light or/and the acoustics in the room are poor, or if there is not enough space in the room,* music education can be drastically affected. The space and the room *will not allow* the teacher and class then to do certain musical activities. This will limit the music education and hence the possibilities of musical development.

*Doing just one thing - no progress*

Like the Irish group, the Swedish participants state that it is important to vary music education. They give examples from their own experiences when *just singing from books* is considered to be a monotonous activity. It is essential for pupils to experience *a sense of progress.* The student-teachers think it is crucial to teach music in a way that pupils can acknowledge progress in what they are doing. An example of poor music education in this context would be *to just sing the same song over and over again.*

*Assessment of ability and a sense of discouragement*

To be assessed by others is generally a complicated issue, and negative assessments within music education often tend to have a considerable impact. It is said that *if a pupil would have great expectations in the music lesson and the teacher would tell the pupil that he/she would not be capable of doing it, you would get an inferiority complex and find the lesson boring as well as discouraging.* To *study music history out of context and not understand what it would connect to* is also understood to symbolise poor music education. Other examples are if *the teacher makes the tasks too difficult and not achievable.* The participants think it is upsetting

if a *teacher would have an opinion on somebody's voice and corrects their singing*. It is considered to be *so personal like if you were commenting or criticising not only the singing but the whole person*. If they only let *those who already know how to sing and play do it*, a general knowledge would develop in the class concerning who would be the 'good' and chosen ones. This is an *"efficient" but lazy approach of the teacher* which might be very focused on the musical result and the final result. *If the teacher only picks out the ones that sing well to do the solo parts, it will make the rest of the group discouraged, and they would find it unfair.*

*Influence on teaching*

If the teacher does not let the *children have an impact on the contents of the music classes*, the participants believe that the pupils would lose interest, as it may not be music they enjoy. It is also stated that if music teachers are too stressed, music education becomes too shallow and the children would not get a musical experience from it.

**Summary**

The Swedish participants think that a lack of encouragement on the part of the teacher communicates a negative approach towards music education to pupils. Lack of understanding of the expressive potential of music and no opportunity for students to engage in this way is also viewed as poor practice. As with the Irish participants, the Swedish participants emphasise that a monotonous way of teaching music is poor, which is also the case if the students do not experience a sense of progress. Furthermore, music education is perceived to be a subject in which students may easily feel let down if their musical competence is questioned by the teacher. Musical tasks made too complicated by the teacher, is a further issue that they warn about. The school environment may not provide for a varied music education. Moreover, the Swedish group also cautions that information about music should not be taught out of context. They have concerns about the music teacher labelling people, as musically capable or not. The teachers who are engaging in this type of teaching, are considered as lazy and perhaps unadventurous. Finally, it is expressed that if the students experience that they have no impact on the contents of the music class, they may lose interest, which is a sign of poor music education.

**Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden**

Concerning poor music education, it is clear that the two groups share fairly similar opinions. A lack of encouragement, or even worse, discouragement, are aspects they have serious concerns about. Furthermore, both the Irish and Swedish group agree that a monotonous way of teaching music, as well as a restricted range of musical activities and experiences, may affect music education in a negative way. Another aspect which is considered to be poor by both groups, is if the teacher, either due to 'performance anxiety' in front of colleagues or just out of habit, carry out music education in 'safe' and unadventurous ways. According to both groups, this is a sign of teachers' lack of care for the development of their students' musical identities and it may also be a lack of identification with music for the teachers themselves. This in turn, may result in a narrow representation of music to the students. Furthermore an opportunity of developing or 'earning' a musical competency is not being communicated as available to the students. The respondents imply that poor music educators are those who hold a categorical view of musicality, with fixed opinions on who is musically able or not, and they do nothing to develop general musicality in the class, but simply turn to those who are already considered to be musically skilled.

Interestingly, the two groups highlight different aspects of poor music education which might be expressions of the social representations regarding education in their society. A difference between the two groups is that the Swedish student-teachers stress the importance of students' influence on the contents of music education, while the Irish express the importance of covering varied aspects of music in music education. If this is not done, they consider the result will be poor music education.

## 6. Influences on opinions about musicality and music education

### The Irish group

Concerning influences on opinions about musicality, parents are, without any doubt, considered to be the main influences in the Irish group. They are also the people who financially provide for their children's musical development and thereby give them access to certain musical areas. Siblings are also mentioned as important musical peers and role models. Individual teachers are referred to as considerable influences, mainly for their combined qualities of musical knowledge (musical skill) and the ability to encourage their students (teacher skill). Music education in college has been influential in the sense that it has

displayed 'new' ways of looking at music in education. It seems to have been important to some individuals in the group to have been selected for a music task as young children. This has significantly increased their perception of themselves as 'musically important'. One participant points out that it is the actual *musical* experiences with music that has influenced his/her opinions about music and music education. Others point out that by adding one personal musical or socio-musical experience to the other, a person develops opinions in the area of musicality and music education.

Influences on opinions about musicality and music education arose under the following headings:

- Parents - the enablers
- 'Brilliant teachers'
- Music education in college
- Being chosen as good at something
- The experience of music
- Accumulated personal experiences

*Parents - the enablers*

When considering what factors had shaped their opinions and relationship to music, nearly all the Irish participants mention their families, and especially their parents as influential. They *are the most important to have* and it is said that *if they don't finance you learning music* or *if they have no interest in music,* it is hard for a child to develop a musical interest on his/her own. It is also mentioned that while *growing up, music was always a positive thing in my life* referring to a strong encouragement from parents to *take on instruments.* Watching the other family members involvement with music is said to have been an important factor for the formation of their own relationship with music. *My dad plays an awful lot of instruments and sings and my sister and brother also.* However, the parents had also an important role as practical enablers of music tuition it is said that they *started me going to music lessons.*

*'Brilliant teachers'*

The teachers from secondary school and also some from primary school, are perhaps those persons who have had a real role-model function for some of the Irish participants. These teachers were described as having had a significant musical function in the school and also outside the school. They were for instance coordinators of *competitions* or the person who *conducted all the orchestras in the musicals* and were *involved in choirs outside school.* These teachers musical competence were assessed in terms such as *great at music* or *brilliant at music.* Maybe the most important thing was that the teachers exposed their students to wide areas of music, and a participant particularly remembers how *my teacher was really big into music and she introduced us to loads of different types.* Most important though, seems the encouragement from the teachers and their ability to *get the whole class involved* or on a more personal level when the student felt that the teacher *encouraged me.*

*Music education in college*

It is mentioned that the music education in college has had an impact on opinions about music education, where not only the teaching task has been the centre, but the course has also allowed the student-teachers to experience music in various ways themselves. In addition, lecturers are mentioned as having promoted music *in a way that is fun and interesting for kids.* It is also mentioned that *you add on the ideas that you get* in the college to your previous experiences of music as a child.

*Being chosen and good at something*

To have an experience of being chosen for a musical task seems to have been influential for a continued engagement in music. This is important for the development of a musical identity. One student-teacher remembers, *my first class teacher picked me out to sing for the communion, so that really made me feel "maybe I can sing".* Another participant describes one of his/her most influential experiences with music when going abroad with an Irish dancing group: *I'm kind of representing my county over there.* It was perceived as an important experience to be *picked to go,* on the one hand been selected or chosen for a musical task and on the other hand be representing your culture and country.

*The experiences of music*

The actual physical encounter with music is said to be one of the most influential factors that shapes a person's opinions about musicality and music education. One participant says that

anybody who learns music will *have a first hand experience of what it is to learn or what it is like to have to play music and all the feelings that goes with that.* This indicates that there are strong practical and non-verbal aspects that shape a person's opinions of and relationship to music.

<u>*Accumulated personal experiences*</u>

Various experiences with music shape the opinions of the individual in relation to music education. Student-teachers' perceptions of being located in 'the space between', is also evident. For instance a student-teacher comments that although you learn new things in the area in teacher education *you* adopt them but *you don't take everything word by word* instead you will *adapt them to your own needs and the classroom situation that you're in.* Experiences with music as a child is considered influential in a teaching situation as *you'll just place yourself back where the kids are.*

**Summary**

The Irish participants highlight the perception that their parents have been the vital sources of influence in their relationship with music and their opinions about musicality and music education. Therefore their primary musical socialisation seems to have been a significant phase. Parents need to have an interest in music in order to support their children's musical development, particularly in relation to fee-paid music tuition. An attitude to music is passed on by their actions. In other instances the mere presence of musical instruments and family members practising on them is a source of influence. Within a musical environment students pick up understandings about which music is valuable and what music practices are acceptable.

Teachers at school are said to have been significant sources of influence in the secondary musical socialisation phase. It seems that the combination of the teachers having a musical role both in and outside school, together with an ability to encourage and include their students, have been important influential factors.

In relationship to music education, college music education is said to have widened their perspective on how to engage with music in education, which can be described as their tertiary musical socialisation phase. A particular stress in college music education has been on a personal exploration of music. The experience of once having been chosen for a musical

task, has been an influential event. This consideration points implicitly towards the importance of an external confirmation of musicality in the development of a musical identity.

One participant particularly stresses that first hand experience with music is the major influence in the formation of a relationship with music. This is also underlined by another participant who suggests that all personal experiences with music interact, and particularly in music education it is important to refer back to the experiences of being a child/student oneself.

**The Swedish group**

Among the Swedish group, numerous areas were mentioned in connection to their perception of influences on their opinions about musicality and music education. Family involvement in the area of music was said to have contributed to shaping attitudes and developing a relationship with music, but in some cases it had communicated contradictory opinions about [their own] musical ability.

Music teachers' enthusiasm and encouragement or negative responses, were also mentioned as influential factors. Some participants even suggested that in view of, or despite negative experiences from school, they had come to develop a broader understanding of musical ability and musical interaction. Others, however, testified that the inspiration and encouragement of music teachers had been a vital reason for their further development in music. College music education was said by some to have greatly influenced and reshaped their opinions about musicality and music education.

The municipality music school was described as an important source of a musical foundation and therefore a vital influence on opinions and beliefs. It was also mentioned that music presented through the media had been influential in students identifying with music and forming opinions about it. Finally, it was suggested that the combination and outcome of various individual - positive and/or negative - experiences with music, contributed to the formation of opinions about music and music education held on a personal level.

Influences of opinions about musicality and music education arose under the following headings:

- Musical relationships within the family
- The teacher makes it or breaks it
- Music education in college - an encounter with new attitudes
- Peer influence, social identity and self-esteem
- The municipality music school - a societal asset
- Media influences
- Learning by taking personal pathways

*Musical relationships within the family*

There is a sense in the Swedish group that parents and other relatives support their children's musical interest. In several cases, however, the parents are said to have very little interest in music themselves, yet, as one participant says in relation to musical activities in general, *my parents have let me try what I'd like to try and they have never stopped me from doing that.* This comment is similar to *my parents have always been aware of my interest in music, and this has never been considered a problem, they have always supported me in this. It never felt like they wondered "why are you doing this when there are better things to do?" No, it has never been that way.* The same participant suggests that due to his/her own musical interests in particular musical genres, the parents have come to consider these genres differently from what they did before.

Two participants express ambivalent views on their own musical capability. It is suggested that this might derive from their parents' 'musical role- taking' in the family. *Mum always said "I don't know how to play, it is dad who knows how to play" even though I know she was playing along, she always said, "no, I can't, I cannot do this nor that"...* A similar experience concerning musical role-taking within the family, is told by another interviewee. Within his/her family, the father was also considered to be the 'musical member' whereas the mother was not. The interviewee thinks that both parents influenced his/her understanding of his/her own musical ability, and remembers that *my parents were very different, really.* The father is described as having been teaching him/her that you have to sing in tune and to have demanded a *perfect singing performance,* whereas the mother had communicated to the participant how well he/she always did everything and also how well he/she sounded while singing. Finally, in connection to parental influences on opinions, one participant states, *my parents, my upbringing, have taught me how to show respect to other people,* which refers to having a generous attitude towards other people's musical achievements and expressions.

*The teacher makes it or breaks it*

In general, the participants refer to music teachers in a positive sense. However, there are participants in this group who have negative personal experiences of music teachers' attitudes: *The teacher told me to be quiet* while attempting to sing in the primary school choir, and further; *the teacher told me I was not musical.* Positive memories of attitudes delivered by teachers are how some music teachers encouraged the whole class to participate in musical activities on different levels. Such practice of music education was regarded as contributing to musical development in the class on a collective level as well as an individual level: *I had an extremely good music teacher who was great in individualising* meaning that music lessons were designed to be meaningful to all students in the class.

*Music education in college - an encounter with new attitudes*

For some student-teachers, school and college provided different representations of music and music education. Particularly for those who had negative, or indifferent, experiences of music education from school, the encounter with music education in college is expressed as having a significant influence. This includes attitudes and beliefs towards musicality and musical practice conveyed by teachers as well as peers. Referring to personal, as well as peers' reflections on participating in college music education one participant says. *...it is here we have had the opportunities to practise and to try out things, and sort of felt that we were really capable.* One participant reflects on his/her long-lasting lack of confidence in singing. During the music education course in college, the participant developed his/her courage to sing in front of the others in the group, and was surprised that *nobody laughed and then I thought, so what..., it felt very good and since then I have continued doing it.* Insights into how the *children's own ideas and understandings of music* should be sustained, is also discussed in relation to influential opinions derived from college music education.

*Peer influence, social identity and self-esteem*

Peers influences on opinions of musicality and the value of musical activities are mentioned occasionally. This highlights a vulnerable musical identity, particularly in the secondary socialisation phase. When opinions from adolescence are described, peer influence is particularly important: *you are affected by everybody who says things around you, your friends and everything.* In particular negative assessments by peers on personal musical ability are influential, whereas later on in life positive feed back will increasingly be considered. It is said that musical taste is also influenced by peers, particularly in

adolescence: *In secondary school I met others who were into the same things as I was, and we had an exchange in which you really discovered music, such as : "Oh, really do you think so too..." and all that.* In relation to extra-curricular music education, mainly meaning music as a hobby in this case, a group of friends is very important. *It is more attractive to play instruments if you know that your friends are playing too.*

*The municipality music school - a societal asset*

It is implicitly mentioned, and explicitly by some, that the municipality music school has been extremely influential with regard to a general societal musical involvement, particularly for young people. One participant suggests that the municipality music school has had a significant importance in the foundation of his/her own interaction with and understanding of music. He/she considers the municipality music schools to be a *great asset* to society, and criticises at the same time how the compulsory school of today deals with music as if it was a *secondary subject.* This statement presents conflicting representations of the importance of music education in a society.

*Media influences*

In the interviews, it is sometimes implied that media and well-known music performers represent significant ideals, and therefore influence opinions about music. One participant is quite direct about the fact that media has had an impact on his /her opinions about musicality and musical practice. He/she declares that his/her musical preferences *surely have something to do with the big musical artists*, emphasising the formative aspects of media influences on the individual's opinions and attitudes.

*Learning by taking personal pathways*

Although it is generally understood that other people and particular circumstances significantly shape individuals' beliefs in relation to music, it is also argued by some participants, that they *have just formed their own opinions.* While further investigating this issue, both positive and negative experiences are perceived to shape the understanding and approach to music and music education. Particularly within the practice of teaching music, it is believed that *the mistakes you make will teach you a lesson.* In relation to musical practice one participant says *I have followed my own paths and I have become the one I have become.* An interesting point in relation to these two statements is that these two participants

independently and explicitly declare that they have a desire to inspire others to discover their own musical ability or find their own musical pathways.

**Summary**

Parents have also had a significant impact on the Swedish participants, although this impact is described in a different way to the Irish group. In some cases the parents are influential in supporting their children's 'personal choice' of interest. This interest in music is perceived as coming from the child him/herself and the parents just let him/her do what he/she enjoyed. Interestingly a *child's* individual musical interest is perceived as possibly developing an interest among his/her parents. The musical relationship between family members is also influential. This relates to the connection between the theory of family scripts and a development of a musical identity.

Influential experiences from school have contributed to the shaping of opinions in this matter as well, and teachers are perceived as either great sources of inspiration and encouragement, or to have obstructed or disabled a possible musical development. In both cases this has affected the students' personal relationship to music practice and music education. Music education in college is primarily described as reinforcing or developing a musical self-confidence among the group.

During childhood and teenage years the identification with peers is said to have been most central, and that has also been evident in a shared understanding of music, musicality and music education. The municipality music school, finally, is described as a significant source of influence which has a particular significance for children if music education in compulsory school fails to be satisfactory.

**Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden**

The Irish participants mainly mentioned positive influences as factors in shaping their opinions about musicality and music education, whereas the Swedish participants described both positive and negative influences. In the Irish context, the family interest and involvement seem to have been most central to the child's relationship with music, whereas in Sweden this is described more as a personal choice or interest of the child him/herself. This is an interesting comparative finding which seems to result form a common-generational interaction in the Swedish society, and a more family oriented interaction in the Irish context.

Both groups highlight the importance of the teacher as a musically engaging role-model. Furthermore, the finding that college education has broadened their understandings of musicality and music education reveals an insight into the respondents' individual and socio-cultural stores of experience of music education and the interaction of those. It also indicates that they have developed more of a relational view on musicality and music education.

An interesting distinction is that music education outside school is dependent on the parents' good-will in the Irish context since it needs to be financially supported by them, whereas the municipality music school seems to be a factor in a more individual engagement with music for the Swedish children/students. Peer identification in relation to opinions about musicality and music education is rarely mentioned by the Irish group, however, it seems to have been fairly important to the Swedish participants. A person's individual experiences with music together with his/her socio-cultural experiences, point toward a multifaceted foundation of opinions in the area of musicality and music education.

## 7. Music as part of an Irish/ Swedish identity

### The Irish group

In the discussion on traditional music, it is seen to be valued as an expression of Irish culture, as a store of cultural knowledge, as an expression of community, and as enabling social 'togetherness'. However, there is a sense that this music is not valued by all, and that this is a generational and/or an urban-rural issue. There is also a concern about the misrepresentation of traditional music as a tourist product. It is also implied that traditional music does not fully represent all Irish society and that it is best practised by those who have a connection to it. There are issues of authenticity and understanding of the music here that might be related to representations of musicality and musical competence. It is seen on the surface to be an open music arena where anyone can join in, but in reality it is suggested that there are networks of friends who know one another and their playing abilities. Other types of music are seen to sometimes better represent Irish culture which is known for a range of Folk, Traditional, Rock and Pop music with particular groups seen to be internationally influential.

Among this group there is an understanding of music functioning as a social marker, and they indicate a hierarchical representation of music with classical music at the top in terms of a status marker and its representation in education in their society.

Representations of music within definitions of an Irish identity arose under the following headings:

- A genuine or touristy musical Irishness
- A generation shift?
- Traditional music versus classical music
- 'Ethnomusicalcentricity'
- The Irish Pride
- Music arenas

*The genuine or touristy Irishness*

There is a strong sense in the Irish group that music is an important catalyst for collective identification or social cohesion and that it represents Irish culture and spirit. Some participants mention that Irish songs are rich sources of knowledge of history. A participant says *there's such a rich history and there's such a story of the country in the songs that you know everybody kind of has a habit of pride in being able to say well I have a collection of songs that I know, and I can tell. I mightn't know as well the history books but I know it in the songs....* This outlook may suggest that an important function of Irish music is to tell a story rather than convey a musical experience. The engagement in traditional music also seems to have a strong connection with Irish speaking areas. It is also mentioned by the participants that there is a clear link between a revival of the Irish language and traditional music. After many years of what is described as 'linguistic oppression', views such as *we love to hear our own culture being performed* are being expressed. It is also said that *we think it's important to have our own identity. Also, it's very much part of our social culture. I don't know how much or to what extent it would be in other countries. I know that here it's very much part of our social culture.*

The participants refer to the fact that Ireland is a small country and that the music *binds us together.* Traditional music is not generally perceived to be an individual performing art. It is more associated with social events. Several participants refer to a somewhat stereotyped

impression of Irish people, and say that the Irish are renowned for their *Music, the Craic and the Guinness* as well as the *diddly diddly dum kind of music.* The traditional music scene is perceived as connected to pubs and a drinking culture. Some participants comment on the fact that alcohol is an approved part of the musical/social events. For some, this is perceived as a problematic issue, but at the same time it is mentioned that this has a historical origin. Others say that *after a few pints everybody sings along*, and point out the relaxing input of alcohol in a socio-musical context.

<u>A generation shift?</u>

There seems to be a convention that involvement in traditional music is strongly connected to a sense of togetherness. This is true for the music which is performed in pubs. It is also true for those open events in which people can join in. However, it is mentioned by the participants that this openness is built on the people who come to the pubs all knowing each other and *it's a way of getting around and meeting people.* There seems to be a generation shift, in the musical preferences as well as involvement in musical activities. One participant expresses it like this *I think the younger generation would be more interested in popular music, more so than traditional or classical. I think the generation before us, they were more exposed to traditional music, you know, all the time. It was used at all social, kind of, events and gatherings.*

Societal changes may influence the general music preference in a culture. Ireland had until recently a fairly homogeneous population. This has now changed to a more multicultural society which is particularly noticeable in the cities. *Dublin's a city and there's just much more people up here, bigger population and there's a huge variety of different musical things to do and, whereas at home it's more the weekends and there isn't such a big population so, it just depends who you know and what group you're in at home as to what music you'd be in, you know, do at the weekends. I just usually go out to the local club but then I have friends that go and play Irish music in pubs.* One of the student-teachers compares the city to the countryside and says that in the city *there's such a vast range of cultures, like, not everybody, you know, wants to hear.... traditional music, whereas, in the country, you just have Irish people. Like, here [in the city] you would have so many different cultures that it's just, so many different types of music going around. Whereas in the country you're more exposed to one kind of music.*

Perhaps geographical factors influence the impact of and the connection to traditional music. One student-teacher from the east part of Ireland says this: *If you go to the west, you will experience a lot of traditional music and then maybe on their side, they have more festivals, music festivals. I'm just interested in folk music and singing but there's some of the girls [in the college] who just don't have an interest in Irish music and they find it boring and even listening to the music, they don't appreciate it. But then there's others who have grown up in a traditional Irish music background, they know more and they appreciate it more...mainly traditional music is played in areas where culture is Irish culture and language is at a high-level and I just feel that they... they have some sort of connection with the music when they're playing.* Another participant from the east shows no interest in traditional music and states in a rather definite way that ... *traditional music is kind of... dying...* The same participant refers to his/her holidays abroad where the traditional music of the country is performed for tourists, and the participant doubts that the same music has relevance for people in general in the country, or in music lessons in the national schools. The participant thinks Irish traditional music has got many similarities to that touristy approach to music, and therefore questions its authenticity.

Finally, for the people who are seriously involved in Irish traditional music, there seems to be a change in attitude concerning musical performance. A participant refers to a relative who has had a great impact on his/her musical involvement. The participant says: *Well, he's not really a great performer... he thinks everybody that plays an instrument, "Oh wow, excellent, fair play" and he admires them, whereas I'm like "yeah great" but I want to get there, I want to .... I think I'm a bit more ambitious.. Yeah, I like playing with musicians at my standard and you know, people who would not be pulling you down.* The participant continues by telling us that he/she finds his/her relative a very fair person who probably considers a musical activity something that should be a shared experience. When the participant says he/she is looking for a musical challenge, his/her relative rather says *no, you have to bring people with you,* while the participant states *I want to make myself better, I want to be playing even [beyond] my own standard....*

*Traditional music versus classical music*

The majority of the participants in the Irish group come from rural areas and it has to be taken into consideration that the contrast between musical involvement in the cities and in the countryside might vary considerably. For some of the student-teachers they were first

exposed to classical music when they came to the college, and one of them says in reference to the academic music courses that *I think classical music is kind of important in the college. More so, maybe, and musical history, do you know, the classical and baroque and... those areas of music.* Another participant says *I don't really know anyone in college from Dublin that plays an instrument, you know, traditional music, you know, so that's quite interesting, whereas everywhere in the country, people would have learned, you know, there'd be, always new teachers for traditional and classical, but I'd say in Dublin the majority is classical...* The same student-teacher makes a comparison between the English and Irish language and classical and traditional music. He/she suggests that music and language are class markers and equates classical music and the English language in the sense that they would both be considered more elite and therefore more valued in the city-life of Dublin. Irish music and the Irish language would instead be more connected to the general population and the countryside. *I would say...it's like even the Irish language, I mean, that is the peasants' language. English was the elite language to have and the same I suppose [for] Irish music in Dublin, that it's kind of peasant music.*

What could be perceived as a political statement, or a post-colonial experience, is expressed in relation to a perceived polarity of classical music and traditional music. One participant considers traditional music not to be *a spotlight thing, whereas then you have the classical side of it then, even if you play classical music, or a classical instrument or something like that, it is seen more as middle to upper class. There's a class distinction thing there. Traditional can be across all facets, and would probably be considered lower to middle than higher.* The participant continues *...In a disadvantaged area, right, and there wouldn't be anyone who plays a musical instrument, well, I've only senior infants, but I can say for sure, let us say, in the sixth class from that school, there might be one or two people in the whole class that would play a musical instrument. My friend has a 6th class, in county Dublin and it's a much more well to do area, and she said every single one of them plays an instrument...* The participant discusses financial issues connected to music education, and thinks that traditional music is mainly taught in group classes whereas classical music is taught through costly individual lessons .... *Instruments of the orchestra cost a lot to buy. A tin-whistle costs maybe €10... not even. /.../ I'm sure that accordions are probably expensive, but they're often kind of handed down from families and different things like that...there's a huge range in violins or fiddles, of what price you can pay, like, so you could get... for starting especially, you could get a fairly cheap fiddle. If you are starting traditional music... and then the*

*classes for traditional music tend to be grouped classes as well, so they wouldn't be as expensive. Whereas then you have your classical instruments which cost more and they... they're very like lessons can be very expensive.*

*'Ethnomusicalcentricity'*

It is noticeable that a fair number of the participants seem to have a quite clear knowledge as well as an awareness of the role that the traditional music plays in their own country. However, their awareness of music outside the Irish context seems to be more hazy. When the participants were asked about the role and function of music in other countries the replies are often in terms of *I don't know very much about other countries and their music* or *I don't know very much about music in other countries now to be honest with you.* One person says *I think, compared to England, our traditional music has a strong hold on the culture, you know, very intertwined, I don't really know about other countries, France or Germany, I wouldn't really know what, what they're into, but I do think in this country, it's very strong.* One participant says *Music in Ireland is very important, music in Africa is even more important you know that sort of way, music is important in every country, really.*

A number of participants stress the importance of music as an Irish identity marker, and one of them says maybe because we're such a small country, that could influence that... we think it's important to have our own identity. Also, it's very much part of our social culture. I don't know how much or to what extent it would be in other countries. I know that here it's very much part of our social culture. This idea is also verified in the following statement connected to the role of traditional music: I feel that we're rediscovering music again, rediscovering it for the first time, and we have, like, we have a renewed energy because we are just rediscovering it again like, we were, maybe I'm just talking from my own opinion like, like maybe because I was lost and now I'm found. The "lost–and–foundness" becomes rather obvious when mirroring Irishness in other cultural contexts. One participant says we'd more notice our Irishness if we go foreign. One person exemplifies the importance of music as an identity marker like this: If you stand in an American street and you sing a few Irish songs, you're going to stop people and people are going to automatically realise, well this is an Irish person. Another example is: We'd notice more our Irishness if we would go foreign go to a pub and sing out all our songs. So what about identifying the cultural characteristics of the people standing in Grafton Street and singing a few songs? Well, this phenomenon is

acknowledged in terms of the buskers on Grafton Street....people from all over the world actually will come together on Grafton Street but you wouldn't really see 'Irish' Irish music.

<u>The Irish Pride</u>

It is apparent that Irish music, not only traditional music, is considered to be of great importance for "national pride". Riverdance, the Eurovision Song Contest and U2 are mentioned as important examples. In all these three cases, music is considered to have awoken an international interest for Ireland as a nation. One participant expresses it like this: *if you think of Riverdance... remember Riverdance from the Eurovision, however many years ago that was. Like, that gave such fame to Ireland that, it wasn't just traditional people, it wasn't people who were just involved in traditional music who were proud of that, the whole country was... the whole country claimed it as its own and the whole country was proud of it and felt that it was important.* Another participant says *Riverdance, had a huge impact on the whole Irish culture, I mean, I went back to Irish dancing after Riverdance...* The participant states that Irish people in general *were so proud of Riverdance and they were so proud to be Irish.* Another participant says it is known to people outside the country that Ireland is one *of the countries that is doing well like, in the Eurovision ...* A third person suggests that everybody was very proud about the fact that Ireland was doing well in the Eurovision song contest three years in a row. He/she continues *...it came along around the same time as Riverdance came along, so for those three years, I think, everybody in Ireland thought, wow, we're amazing, so I mean, there was a huge hype about that in Ireland, the Eurovision, had a huge part to play, I think, in Irish music.* The participants point at the variety of the Irish music that has been launched in Ireland; ..., *you've got your traditional... the Chieftains, the Dubliners, but you also got the likes of U2, the Corrs, I mean they're all quite influential.*

The importance of U2 in addition to an identification with the members of the group, appears clearly in the following statements: .... *U2 are worldwide known and, like, they're such a great band and it's... known... people in Ireland are very proud of them for what they've done... as well....... just, kind of, firstly, kind of happy for them, that they were working class Dublin people, /.../[I] feel kind of happy for them then kind of, also proud or happy that ...that Ireland has got so much attention from that, you know. That you can say, oh they're my band like... they're U2.*

*Music arenas*

Although the focus in this particular section of the research has been on traditional music and the Irish "music export", there are several other arenas with reference to a general music practice in Ireland. The Church seems to be a significant musical arena, and there are church choirs for people of all ages. *...for big, you know, occasions, Christmas, Easter, whatever like, choir's always the big thing, it would always be the big talk and it brings everyone, the youngest no, but all older, eh, a lot of older women from the community together, it's a big social thing to go to choir practice....* There are several participants who state that musical participation on a community level could often be involvement in a choir in the local church or being part of a folk group. One participant says he/she is quite involved in folk music played in church. He/she explains the music like this; *It's not... it's not traditional, it's not church music where you have... how can I describe it, you know real church music... it's more of a guitar you know than a group with a big organ.* Music is considered to be an important part of saying Mass where there are hymns sung and *lot of people, even older people, members of the country, they'd always be in a church choir.*

The local radio stations are mentioned by one participant to be an important promoter of mainly traditional music. Folk music and folk singers like Mary Black and Christy Moore are mentioned as important individuals in this respect. The Billy Barry School is mentioned as a city-phenomenon: *...this group in Dublin where a lot of kids in Dublin would go to it and it's all performance and singing and dancing and all that sort of thing. A lot of the stars like Samantha Mumba and a lot of Westlife, they would have went to this Billy Barry school.*

And then last but not least, there are the traditional Irish music competitions, which are strongly connected to the traditional scene. During the summer there are also various *open -air concerts, like Slane, which would be catering for your kind of, the rock and the pop side of music.*

**Summary**

Irish traditional music is understood to express and exhibit the 'Irish nature', and it is often referred to as part of a significant image of an Irish person. It is mentioned though, that the significant strong social ties that have been part of traditional music characteristics are diminishing, partly because the young generation have been exposed to other music and have

broadened their musical preferences. As Ireland, and particularly Dublin, recently has become increasingly culturally diverse, the variety of music in Ireland has increased. This may influence musical behaviours, musical preferences and patterns of musical activities. Still, traditional music is perceived to be very influential in the western part of Ireland, where the Irish language is also practised to a large extent. Interestingly, what used to be an activity open to all, seems to have become a more specialised skill, and different representations of traditional music as skill or an expression of community are held by different generations. Irish traditional music is not the only significant music genre in Ireland. Some of the Irish participants, who mainly come from sparsely populated areas of Ireland, describe how they were first introduced to classical music when they came to Dublin and began teacher education. A distinction is made between what the English and Irish languages are perceived to represent. This is equated to a distinction between classical music (representing the English culture) and traditional music (representing the Irish culture). Classical music may be regarded as representing the 'elite', whereas traditional music is said to be understood as the music of the 'peasants'. This distinction probably reveals reflections connected to identity and belonging in the society influenced by Ireland's colonial background, also highlighted by McCarthy (1999). It may also be an indication of the connections between social class and music practice and preferences. This issue is further discussed in terms of children's access to music tuition as a financial issue. Music tuition on traditionally 'classical' instruments, is connected to fees and individual tuition, whereas traditional 'folk music' is often taught and learnt in groups in a collective context.

In this particular group of student-teachers, there is a strong link to Irish traditional music practice, and it is frequently mentioned how important Irish music is to them. However, it is also mentioned that the participants' understanding and interest in music from other countries is not very extensive. According to the participants, Ireland is a small country, and it is therefore important to have an identity of its own so that the rest of the world will identify and recognise Irish people through their music. The range of music spoken about is noteworthy The Eurovision song contest, Riverdance, traditional music and U2, for instance, are examples given of good 'promoters' of Irish culture.

Music practice in relation to the Church is frequently mentioned by the Irish group as a perceived part of the Irish musical identity, and has been significant to these particular student-teachers' musical formation.

**The Swedish group**

In the Swedish group traditional music is not perceived as a marker of a Swedish identity. What would be understood as traditional Swedish music is not something that the participants really identify themselves with. Instead they imply that traditional music is something practised by a small group of people with a special interest in music, and it is not really the people's music nowadays. However, after a second thought they realise that music connected to particular celebrations such as games at Christmas and Midsummer often entail old singing games and dances which could be labelled as traditional music. It is also mentioned that instruments which are often connected to traditional Swedish music such as the violin affect them emotionally on some occasions, in other words they relate to that particular sound on particular occasions. Some Swedish participants regret that [Swedish] people generally seem to lack a relaxed relationship to and confidence in their own musical ability

Nature is regarded to be a vital part of what could be described as a Swedish identity by the participants and music is also connected to outdoor settings. The participants believe that Swedes love music that is related to summer, in the sense of being outdoors and part of nature. This can be traced in the traditional music but it is also an important part of Swedish popular music.

The Swedish group assume that pop music is an important part of a Swedish musical identity and refer to Swedish composers and bands that are renowned for their music abroad.

Representations of music within definitions of a Swedish identity arose under the following headings:

- The Swedish summer and nature
- The Swedish (lack of) musical confidence
- ABBA and pop music
- Music and multicultural impact
- Music arenas
- A generation shift?

*The Swedish summer and nature*

The participants in the Swedish group generally find it difficult to relate to Swedish traditional music. One participant thinks traditional music is *dying out* and equates traditional music to other musical genres that have their peaks and then die out. There is a sense in the group that traditional music has gone from being the people's music in general, to becoming more exclusive, and is now only practised by a small sub-group of people with a particular interest and knowledge in the field. However, there is a certain kind of traditional music in Sweden which is tightly linked to annual celebrations in the country, and the participants do feel much more accustomed to this type of traditional music. This category of music consists of songs, dances and games sung and played at Midsummer's eve[7], for example. It could also be songs with lyrics referring to summer and to Nature. This category of traditional music also encompasses songs with lyrics that refer to a general sense of togetherness during the summer celebrations. In relation to this, one participant says: *you do get a specific feeling when you listen to the sound of the fiddles at Midsummer because you feel very Swedish and sort of a bit historical.* When the participants were asked where you may find Swedish traditional music, some of them are uncertain where, whereas others referred to *spelmansstämmor*[8] which are gatherings for traditional musicians during the summer. Those events generally take place outdoors, and they also attract listeners who particularly enjoy the atmosphere as well as the music and the gatherings. The *spelmansstämmor* are often annual summer events, particularly in the countryside in mid Sweden.

Dance-bands, so called *dansband*[9] are mentioned as a typical Swedish phenomenon. The *dansbands* are here mentioned in relation to a summer context, as an important feature in popular outdoor events. However, one student-teacher implicitly suggests that different music is perceived to have different value, when suggesting that the dansbands' music is not thought very highly of as a musical experience, neither is it considered to be politically correct when discussing musical preferences in certain groups. The participant says *in a group of new music [college] students it would not be all right to be a dansbands' lover, I would say. It is not considered to be something positive in this country.*

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[7] Midsummer's eve, see Chapter 5 'The Research Contexts'.

[8] Spelmansstämmor, see Chapter 5 'The Research Contexts'.

[9] Dansband (dance-bands), see Chapter 5 'The Research Contexts'.

*The Swedish (lack of) musical confidence*

A participant thinks that out of shyness or lack of confidence, Swedish people do not generally take an active part in performing musical activities. Instead they often take the role of a spectator or listener. In the context of Midsummer festivities especially, people in general often want to join in the songs or musical activities. One student-teacher says of this: *It seems like when people had a few drinks at Midsummer's eve, they take out their guitars and all of the sudden they seem to enjoy playing and singing their songs after all. However, it seems like they have to add something to the picture [alcohol] in order to get there...* Another participant conveys a well-known and stereotyped opinion of the population as *the Swedes have to drink in order to be able to relax, sing, have fun and show their emotions.* One participant expresses his/her concern for traditional music being marginalised in Sweden he/she says: *Unfortunately I think we have let go a bit too much on our particular music/.../ music seems to come easier for others [people from other countries] than for us, we organise to meet on particular days or to celebrate specific things. It is just not that you go to each others' houses for having a cup of coffee and start singing together.... No, it is not like this here.*

There is a recognition in the group of what might be considered to be the 'real' traditional, or folk music traditions in Sweden. These are musical expressions they are merely familiar with by name such as *kulning* from mid Sweden or the Sami *joik.* Both forms of musical expression are in different ways connected to the element of nature, and neither of them are perceived by the participants as musical expressions that are representative for this particular group of student-teachers. Nevertheless the terms *kulning* and *joik* are mentioned and would be regarded by the participants to represent aspects of Swedish musical identity.

*ABBA and pop music*

When the student-teachers were asked what they consider to be typically Swedish with regard to music, the pop group ABBA was an important topic. More recent Swedish pop groups like the Cardigans were also mentioned. Having in mind that these student-teachers were either very young or not even born when ABBA had its great success, this is quite remarkable. However, the kind of pop music that ABBA represented, somehow introduced a shift in the musical canon or musical standard in Sweden. Through ABBA, pop music was "legalised" in society, and their music attracted a vast spectra of the population. Pop music has nowadays a big impact on both formal and informal music education in Sweden. It is also

well represented in media and the music industry. The fame of ABBA also contributed to make Sweden known to the world. The participants consider the members of ABBA as good ambassadors for Sweden, and their music was a good export. Some participants believe that a fair amount of modern international pop and rock music is composed and produced in Sweden, and they mention some producers. When the participants were asked about music in Sweden one of them said: *our image to the world is that we are good in pop music.* Another participant said: *what people might know best [about Sweden] might be the well-known pop stuff, if we generalise...but there is traditional music as well. There is not only rock or hard rock but also some other stuff that is more connected to the nature and the landscape.*

<u>*Music and multicultural impact*</u>

There seems to be a strong belief in the group that people from other countries have a more easy-going approach to music than people in Sweden generally have, particularly if they come from a non-Western context. One participant refers to a friend who originally comes from East Africa, who argues that music is much more a part of the school context there than it is in Sweden. Another participant refers to a friend who lived with a family in Southern Africa for a year. The friend was amazed by the ways in which music was part of everyday life in the homes and how the whole family was joining in. A third person refers to African countries again, and says that there seems to be *quite a different approach to music in Sweden and over there.* In Sweden, the participant says, music is strongly connected to aspects of performances (and an audience), whereas in Africa music has other functions and people seem to sing, play and dance more for their own sake and pleasure. A fourth person describes a similar opinion like this: *I think in Sweden the big dream is to become somebody in music. You notice this in all those TV shows, honestly. But in Cuba or in an African country I don't think these kind of dreams and aspirations are so big or important to people/.../ It is a lot of this in Sweden and with Swedes, like it is very controlled and regulated in a way, even when it comes to music and how you express it. It [music] is sort of emotional and not controlled and people might find it a bit strange in a way... People are afraid of expressing themselves in a way, like if you walk in town and you are humming, whistling or clapping your hands, people would look at you in a weird way, whereas I am not too sure this would happen in other countries.* Some participants refer to the situation described as probably similar in most countries in the Western world, and the real difference both materialistically and musically, would be if they compared themselves to other societies outside the Western context. One participant says that there are so many new rhythms and

instruments we don't know of in Sweden and it is important to have a curiosity for the unknown, especially when it comes to integration matters. The participant thinks so many things *are in one direction* when people from other cultures come to Sweden, *it is very much one-way, like if only one part has to learn some thing new...they have to learn our language but we can also learn from them, particularly when it comes to music.*

<u>Music arenas</u>

*The municipality music schools*, which were recently converted to *Cultural schools* in many regions of Sweden, are described as an influential musical foundation of the Swedes. They also seem to have an important function in reaching out to everybody, and not only a financially strong group. One student-teacher says: *I think we are quite lucky to have the municipality music school compared to other countries, even if it has been cut down lately.... /.../ Everybody has a chance to learn an instrument and you don't need to buy an expensive instrument since you can borrow it from the music school.* One participant says that the municipality cultural school is also available for adults and states: *Some Cultural schools have initiated groups for adults if they have resources and time, but children are always prioritised. However, as an adult you can always join an evening class as well".* The evening classes [studieförbund] offer courses in various areas, where music in different forms, practical and theoretical, represent a vital part of the activities provided.

Some participants refer to a huge interest in choir singing among Swedish people. The person who earlier referred to music as a means of intercultural exchange, comments on musical activities in Sweden ... *well there are the church choirs for example. ..... but there are not many choirs with movements and dancing involved... well, when they sing gospel music perhaps... but there is not too much of that, I believe...* When talking to the participants in the group, one comes across a variety of divergent ideas concerning the approach to music in the rural areas and in the cities. One participant from the city says: *I was in a small place in the north of Sweden last summer, and I noticed that my limited musical skills were quite a lot to many of the people there. Maybe there are higher musical demands in the cities... well I don't know, maybe it was just the way I grasped the situation...* Another participant thinks there is a different mentality towards music and performances in the countryside compared to the city that he/she comes from. The participant thinks there is a more relaxed attitude towards who is 'allowed' to practise music in the countryside, however, the participant thinks there is a risk that the relaxed attitude towards musical activities becomes idle and does not

develop the persons involved. A third participant who was born in the countryside and later on moved to the city has this comment: *I noticed when I moved from the country to the city when I was 20, that I had a different taste and approach to music than my peers had from the city. They had had another access to music than I had, and it took longer for things to reach the countryside. Nowadays this situation seems to have changed...*

*The open-air festivals* during the summer seem to have an important function as a music arena for many people, and the festivals represent different musical genres. *Jazz concerts* and *Music cafés* are mentioned by some participants. These performances take place all around the country, particularly in the local community places. Buskers, particularly from other countries, seem to be increasingly a part of the street picture in the bigger cities, according to the participants. *Ungdomsgårdar*[10] for younger people and teenagers, are said to be important arenas in some areas, where musical activities are being carried out in different ways.

A more private or personal involvement with music is also suggested as a vital aspect of music and music practice. There is a concern that many people in Swedish society are perceived to have a need to express themselves musically, yet they might suppress it. It is suggested that this notion is related to representations concerning who is 'allowed' to practise music in society. One participant says; *I mean, there are so many 'shower singers' and such ...and karaoke and stuff is immensely popular among many people, especially after they have had a few beers... They think it [karaoke] is lovely when they get the feedback and when they sing but they would not dare to sing on another occasion, even if they would like to do it..... I think it [society] is becoming more and more like there is just a small group who is considered to have the skill and the knowledge to do music well and they are regarded to be good at it [music]. I think this attitude is accentuated by media and society in general, especially if you look at the message that different TV programmes deliver. There are competitions in who is the best musician and that sends a message to younger children.*

<u>*Generation shift?*</u>

Some student-teachers mention that different approaches to music might be connected to different generations. Nowadays it seems to be important to *be recognised for one's music.* The participants suggest that the quantity of music is so much larger today, and more people

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[10] *Ungdomsgårdar* Local youth centres.

have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument or to sing, and they also know where to get education or tuition. This was different 50-60 years ago, they think. Music has a huge impact on people's lives today, and it has *entered people's living rooms* through TV and other media. It is suggested that people who grow up today have another approach to music than the older generations. The young generation takes for granted that music is available to everyone and that anyone is allowed to try. Things are more individualised today, and a person may try out things in his/her own way. Earlier on, you were more restricted to a particular field. One student-teacher says that this is true for most musical genres but not for classical music. The approach to classical music has not changed drastically.

A participant points out the social aspects of belonging to a particular "music generation". He/she thinks that the music you listen to at a young age is something you have in common with your age group. This can be observed, the participant says *when they play certain songs in restaurants or pubs, those who grow up with that music, enjoy themselves and sing out, and they experience a certain togetherness. People in the same place who are not familiar with that époque, would not recognise or understand the music the same way as they do.* Finally it is suggested that you can notice a different musical bond between generations in the countryside than in the cities. This is again considered to be due to less concern for musical perfection in the countryside than in the cities, and perhaps more of a focus on the social aspect of music instead.

**Summary**

In the Swedish group, Swedish traditional music is not perceived as particularly significant. On the contrary, it is suggested as representing a small group of musicians with a particular interest in the area. However, a more 'celebration-oriented' type of folk music, including fiddle music, traditional games and dances, is mentioned as practiced by a wider range of people in the Swedish society.

There is a high value placed on those who know what is considered genuine traditional voice expressions such as the practitioners of *joik*, which is part of the Sami tradition, or *kulning* which refers back to the time when Sweden was an agricultural country. However, these expressions are considered to be particular (musical) skills that only some people would be able to carry out.

When considering people's general music preferences, 'dance-bands' are mentioned as an expression of a specific modern music style that attracts a broad range of Swedes, primarily for dancing, but also for listening purposes. However, this is said with a slight irony involved, as dance-band music is often considered to have a light status as a musical expression in 'influential circles' of people with a music interest. A hierarchy of musical value can be seen to be operating here.

The participants regret that there is much shyness connected to music practice among Swedes in general, and explain this as a lack of musical confidence. There is a strong identification with pop music in the group, and the participants seem to be fairly confident of the perception of Sweden as a pop nation with an international reputation. The international outlook in relation to various music practices, is significant in this group of student-teachers. They refer to their own musical experiences in connection to other countries and cultural expressions, as well to what they have heard from friends and media.

The municipality music school is something that the participants have gradually come to consider a unique feature in Swedish music life. The municipality school is mentioned as an important provider of equal opportunities for children in their contact with music education. Choir singing is referred to as a characteristic Swedish music activity. Community centres and youth centres are also mentioned as significant facilitators in Swedish music life. The participants also mention the differences between music practice in rural and urban areas in Sweden. Finally, music practice in Sweden is reported as often a generational issue, meaning that it is common to share musical experiences and preferences with people of the same generation, however, this is mainly referred to in relation to pop music and ballads.

**Conclusion Ireland/ Sweden**

In the Irish group, traditional music is perceived to represent the cultural history of the country, and is therefore also an important feature of an Irish identity. This identity marker might be particularly important, due to the perceived language and cultural oppression during Ireland's time as a colony under English regime. From a comparative perspective it is interesting to note that the Swedish group does not seem to have such strong bonds to traditional music. Neither do they explicitly mention that Swedish traditional music particularly identifies who they are and where they come from. In the Swedish group, however, there is an admiration expressed towards those who know the traditional music

expression of the Sami and various Swedish traditions, but they do not recognise this as general musical areas that most people know of.

Ideas of 'togetherness', which are connected to traditional music in Ireland, can also be traced in the Swedish group when they mention various celebrations in the summer particularly, involving fiddle music and traditional music games. Another aspect of 'togetherness' is mentioned when considering generational commonalities in music taste and music practice. In the Swedish group this is often mentioned in relation to popular music, whereas in Ireland this is described in connection to traditional music. Interestingly, both groups express that their musical identities have been influenced by success in Eurovision Song Contest.

An interesting aspect is the different approaches towards the practices of traditional music between generations, highlighted by an Irish participant. This indicates that traditional music practice has moved from a very inclusive approach to a more developed connoisseurship among some of the younger practitioners. Perhaps the vast range of music exposed to the young generation in such 'specialised' societies (Wallin, 2002) as Ireland and Sweden, shape a common-sense idea of the importance of being particularly skilled and professional in any specific musical area.

Concerning a polycentric representation of music and music education, the Irish participants mentioned how they have increasingly broadened their music taste, and several Swedish participants express an interest in the music practices of other cultures, and compare this to the practice they are familiar with. Some Irish participants say they have a good knowledge of their own [traditional] music, but do not think they know much about music from other countries. Regarding experiences of musical participation, the influence from Church has had a significant impact on their musical experiences at special occasions and celebrations, which could be connected to an Irish identity issue. In the Swedish group the municipality music schools are highlighted as an important source for general musical development and participation, and furthermore various kinds of choir singing are perceived to be an important musical hobby among many Swedes in all ages.

Both groups are concerned about children's equal opportunities to learn music through education. In the Irish group it is suggested that the form in which traditional music is taught

and learnt (often in groups) provides a more accessible form of music tuition than individual lessons. Individual lessons are also perceived to be connected to specialised tuition on 'classical' instruments. The latter is also described as a serious matter of financial means, since it is really only accessible to those who can afford it. The Swedish group again put an emphasis on the municipality school as a forum which facilitates opportunities for most children to participate, both for its geographical situation and for its economic policy. Consequently both groups share a relational view on who should have access to musical participation whether it is connected to financial means or to representations of various music practices. Music is considered to have various functions in a person's life and is an important part of a person's individual and collective identity and the interaction between those.

**Conclusion of interviews**

An interesting finding from the interviews reveals that the participants' opinions and beliefs about musicality has been modified over their various musical socialisation phases (Froelich, 2007), and there is a clear indication of participants' defining themselves as in, or beyond, the space between their previous and current ideas. It is fascinating that a relational view on musicality, and particularly on music education is shown to gradually have been established during teacher education. There is an emphasis on musical development being connected to an encouraging environment, such as family, friends and the school environment. This may be related to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of the Ecology of Human Development. The way music is described by the participants indicates an understanding that music contains both technical and communicative aspects. They also perceive music to be an important dimension of being a human being, as a means for personal expression, which underscores the emancipatory (Habermas, 1972; 1974; Månsson, 2003) and autonomous aspects of music.

A finding which confirmed previous research (Roberts, 1991; Bouij, 1998) indicates that in order to teach music, a personal interest and skill, together with a professional interest and skill are understood to be required. Music education is perceived to be a creative, active and expressive subject. In addition, music is understood to have unique qualities, and should therefore have a strong position in education. Interestingly, it is highlighted that an important task for a teacher of music is to apply the full potential of music. This may for instance, encompass an awareness of music education operating on two interacting levels: an individual level and a more collective socio-cultural level. Additionally, a varied approach

within music education is recommended, possibly to cover the wide-ranging technical, communicative and emancipatory spheres of music that is suggested by the two groups.

Concerning the role of a teacher, the importance of inclusion of students, rather than of exclusion, in music education is strongly emphasised. The participants stress the importance of the teacher's attitude, and the necessity of feed-back, encouragement and commitment from the teachers' part. An important finding is that a teacher's 'performance anxiety', symbolising a teacher's concern to concentrate on the musical product rather than the process, is questioned, and so is also a categorical view on music education. Teachers who consider music to be an innate talent, or only turn towards a few 'gifted' students in the class, are generally perceived as inadequate educators of music. Additionally, those teachers who just consider one aspect of music, and rather reproduce music than work creatively, are commonly understood to represent poor music education.

An unexpected difference was shown between the two groups in relation to their views on musical competency. The Irish group refer to being part of a 'musical family' which may be an expression of musicality being regarding as an assigned competency, while the Swedish group often connect musicality and musical ability to earned musical competency. However, some student-teachers might be 'in the space between' these two conceptions of musical competency, and there is a striking accord among both groups for equal opportunities of music education to all. Interestingly, family influence is described as a significant feature of musical development in the Irish context, while the Swedish group more often referred to common-generational aspects of musical development.

Music as a school subject is an experience all participants share, however, the subject has different strands and focal points in the Irish and Swedish curricula. Nevertheless, the value of group work in music education is highlightened as a supplier for students' social and musical development. It is curious that in the Irish group, music signifies an expression of the Irish culture, whereas such cultural identification is not particularly pronounced among the Swedish group. Music is, nonetheless, understood by both groups to represent unique qualities and to have an important function in bringing people together both on a national and international level, such as at various kinds of celebrations.

# CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS – TOWARDS A THEORY OF MUSICAL SOCIALISATION

## Introduction

This study investigated the musical socialisation of student-teachers in Ireland and Sweden. The research used a conceptual framework and a review of literature to focus and shape the gathering of data on musical experiences, opinions and beliefs in two selected groups of intending non-specialist music teachers. A key purpose of the research was to examine the linkage between the student-teachers' earlier musical experiences, and the musical socialisation they undergo throughout teacher education. Moreover, the influences of their socio-cultural environments were also considered. A comparative aspect was also a key feature in this research. The study showed how the participants' opinions on music and music education were multifaceted, shaped by their personal experiences with music, as well as by the interaction with family, peers, teachers, schools and by society in general.

Data was gathered to answer the following questions

- How do the student-teachers describe and value their musical socialisation phases from early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence?
- How do the student-teachers describe and value their experiences in their teacher education programme?
- How do student-teachers describe their perception of formal and informal music learning in their respective communities?
- How do these three dimensions of musical socialisation interact, and hence shape the opinions and beliefs of the student-teachers in this study?

A conceptual framework informed the analysis. This was used to examine representations of the following within student-teachers' written accounts and interview responses:

- Musicality (i.e. who is seen to be musical and what types of behaviour are accepted as evidence of musicality).

- Music practice (i.e. how is music practice understood, including music as an inclusive social activity or music as 'high art' with skilled performers and a well-informed audience).
- Music value (i.e. the perceived status and function of different musics within a society or culture).

Related to these are three conceptual perspectives on how people interact with their world and music within this. These are:

1. A relational versus a categorical perspective on musical competence.
2. A comparative perspective on music and music practice.
3. An 'in the space between' perspective where opinions and beliefs about each of these are shifting.

**Findings from the literature**

In reviewing the literature, Stålhammar's (2006b) model of 'stores of experiences' proved to be a major source of influence to this study. Stålhammar's concept illustrates the interplay between the individual's accumulated experiences; on the one hand deriving from his/her socio-cultural environment, and on the other hand from his/her subjective emotional experiences. The model of 'stores of experience' portrays a learning process which takes place in a social context in the interaction between the individual and his/her society, and it is an influential parameter in the design and analysis of this study. Furthermore, the literature revealed how general opinions about various phenomena in a society, such as music, are constructed by the influence of the cultural heritage and media. The theory of social representations indicates how individuals in a society form collective ideas between themselves about their reality which can also be described as 'common-sense knowledge' (Chaib & Orfali, 1995; Moscovici, 1995; Israel, 1995). Additionally, Blacking (1973) suggested that the value a society gives to music is mirrored in the way it which its people relate to music and their musical development.

A number of issues emerged from the review of literature which had a direct bearing on the research. Brändström (1997) identified a cyclical process within music specialist teachers' musical socialisation, which had significance to this study. Brändström's study highlighted

the probability that music student-teachers may hold contradictory views with regard to musicality, defined as an absolute or a relative view of musicality. Merriam (1964) and Lundberg & Ternhag (1996) considered social recognition of musicality and musical competency and their definitions of *assigned* or *earned* musical competency found resonance within this particular research. Wallin, (2002) and also Bjørkvold (1996), pointed at particular features of a *specialist* versus a *generalist* musical society, which were categories which informed the interpretation and understanding of findings in this study. In relation to Wallin's findings, Welch (2005) discussed definitions of musicality and assumptions around how musicality is developed, whereas O'Flynn (2005), particularly considered issues related to musical value as reflected in a musical hierarchy and stratification. These findings mentioned above, were relevant for the construction of the conceptual framework in this study, including the three theoretical lenses through which the findings of this research was considered.

McCarthy's (1999) consideration of transmission processes of music and music education within a culture, and Merriam's (1964) discussion on the various uses and functions of music in a society or culture, contributed to the comparative perspective of this study. As the participants generally found that they were exposed to a broad concept of music and musical practices, Taylor's (1994) concept of 'politics of recognition' proved to be useful and transferable to a musical context. The issue of recognition of various musics was particularly discussed by Thorsén (2002), Folkestad (2002), Kwami (2001) and O'Flynn (2005) and they referred to various aspects of the necessity of providing a broad understanding of music and musical practice in music education. In addition, the concept of musical diversity as a "rich variety of cultures" or as "a collage of cultures" were discussed by Lundberg, *et al.* (2000, p. 40 ff.).

Jorgensen (1997) and Georgii-Hemming & Stålhammar (2006) illustrated the distinction between the concept of socialisation and enculturation, and Froelich (2007) defined the various socialisation phases, which was of particular relevance to this study. The findings from the written accounts clearly highlighted various characteristics of the respondents' different socialisation phases. This study investigated the relationship between socialisation and music and music education, which has also been considered by for instance, Kwami (2001) and O'Flynn (2005). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of the Ecology of Human Development informed this study as aspects of school and family influences were evident as

part of the student-teachers' *socialisation* phases. These aspects were also considered in the literature, by Lamont's (2002) identification of the impact of the school environment on the development of musical identities. Furthermore, Borthwick & Davidson's (2002) findings of the family influence on musical identity construction, including the theory of family scripts (Byng-Hall, 1998), added a further perspective to this research.

Concerning the three conceptual perspectives introduced in Chapter 2 in this thesis, the *relational* versus *a categorical perspective* was influenced by the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning (ICF), as it deals with recognition of environmental factors as preventing people from full participation. Welch's (2005) and Wallin's (2002) findings concerning factors influencing various perceptions of musicality, such as, for instance, an enabling and disabling environment were also considered. Wallin (2002), Sundin (2003) and Swanwick (1999) particularly informed this study concerning the *comparative perspective*, which is also a central feature of this particular research as it focuses on student-teachers within two different cultural contexts (Tate, 2001). The *in the space between perspective* was particularly highlighted by Swanwick (1999), and Blumer (1986) pointed at the process in which an individual takes part in an intra-personal interaction. An intra-personal interaction indicates that a person is not only responding to outside factors, but also reflecting upon his/her own experiences. This is a significant feature of an *'in the space between perspective'*.

This research identified the student-teachers' perceptions of the concept of *musicking* albeit none of the participants actually used this term. However the way the concept of *musicking* is outlined by either Small (1998), Elliott (1995) or Lilliestam (2006), seems to match their ideas of what contemporary music education should encompass.

Lundberg & Ternhag's (1996) description of the recognition of musical competency and status as assigned or earned, provided a useful analytical lens within this study. Moreover, Hargreaves' (1996) description of 'high' or 'popular' music competences was informative. In relation to teachers' musical competencies, Young (2001), Hennessy (2000) and Holden and Button (2006) findings showed a low sense of musical self-confidence among non-specialist music teachers, and Bouij (1998) and Roberts (1991) consider the 'common-sense' expectation in society of teachers of music having a competency as a musician rather than a (music) teacher competency.

Student-teachers' concept of themselves as musically able or not is an important matter in the challenge of teaching music. Ryner (1995; 1999) reported on the connection between non-specialist teachers' early memories of music education in relation to their development of a musical self-confidence. Ryner's studies highlighted the issue concerning student-teachers' conceptions of general music education as a consequence of their own previous experiences with music education.

## Findings from this study

In this section, a summary of findings from the written accounts is provided in order to encompass the significant discoveries of this research. From a comparative perspective, some global similarities were found in relation to the Irish and Swedish student-teacher perceptions of music, music education and music as part of their society. Local differences were also found, which derive from particular social representations of music in Ireland and Sweden respectively.

Data was gathered in four main areas in order to answer the research questions. These were:

- Socio-cultural influences and the contextual settings.
- Experiences of music and music education.
- Experiences from teacher education.
- Opinions about music and music education.

### Data derived from the written accounts relating to representations of musicality, music practice, function(s) of music and value of music

The written accounts (presented in Chapter 6) concentrated on the student-teachers' memories of experiences of music and music education from early childhood, middle childhood and teenage years. These informed the research concerning representations found among the research group under the headings of *musicality, music practices, function(s) of music* and *value of music.* Data related to 'stores' of individual/emotional and socio-cultural experience (Stålhammar, 2006b) were also located in these accounts. Furthermore, the written accounts were considered through a theoretical lens consisting of a *relational* or

*categorical* perspective on music, a *comparative* perspective on music, and an *'in the space between'* perspective.

**0-6 years**

Representations of **musicality** from early childhood were often perceived to be an assigned rather than earned competency (Lundberg & Ternhag, 1996) by the Irish group, in terms of coming from a 'musical family', for instance. The Swedish group was generally more oriented towards an understanding of musical competency as an earned skill. Despite this however, at this age it was generally perceived that all could participate in musical activities. In early childhood the main representations of **music practice** were as a form of play, entertainment, or an accompanying activity. It was also represented as a social activity, particularly in the family context (Borthwick and Davidson, 2002). Music practice was often described as taking place in the larger family context in Ireland, whereas in Sweden representations of music practice within the family were often illustrated as on a one-to-one basis. Music practices from pre-school/school, was by both groups remembered as having been appointed the **function** and the **value** of a learning tool. The access to musical instruments and audio/visual resources were considered to have been important stimuli for music practises both in the Irish and Swedish groups. In the Irish group traditional music represented an important musical and cultural value, and was also perceived to be a popular form of music practice. The Swedish participants often mentioned the impact of pop and rock music from their early childhood. Among the Swedish participants, activities at 'the church's children's hour' represented an experience of **music practice** as a social and collective activity together with other children. Music was considered to have had an important **function** as well as **value** for pre-schools/schools in the celebration of various festivities and holidays (Merriam, 1964). Memories of experience with music from early childhood were generally illustrated as uncomplicated and accessible by the research group both from an individual and emotional perspective and a socio-culturally perspective (Stålhammar, 2006b). There is strong evidence in the written accounts that the encounter with music and music education at that stage was influenced by a *relational* approach to musical participation.

**7-13 years**

At this age, **musicality** or musical competency, was often represented as encompassing achievements and the perseverance in learning an instrument. A distinction between singing

and instrument skills in relation to musical competency was traced as instrumental skills were often described to be a form of *earned* musical competency, whereas singing was regarded to be an *assigned* competency (Lundberg & Ternhag, 1996). Musical engagement was also skill-related at this stage, and a sign of "being good at something" both on an individual and a collective level.

A conflict was found between representations of music within school, where music was often represented as of little **value** to the students, and outside school where music was described to have a high value. Participation in concerts and competitions were mentioned as important **musical practices**, as well as influential social experiences. The student-teachers recalled that hands-on experiences with music (also defined here as *musicking*) was significant for enjoyable **music practices**, and from that time, some participants mention that they gained models of **musical practice** from their teachers. Group learning was often the way that music practice took place.

Concerning various **functions** of music in life and in a society, religious practice played an important part in the Irish context, where singing was particularly well represented. To the Swedish participants, music had an important value and function as a form of peer identification, and media influences were comprehensive at that stage. In the school context, music was assigned an important function as well as value at various school celebrations, which may be described as the function of music as entertainment (Merriam, 1964, p. 223).

**14-18 years**

At this stage, a strong representation of **musicality** was based on musical competency and musical 'craft-ship' gained by experiences within music education and other forms of musical participation. **Music practice** was often represented to include the interaction between the participants and others, and musical performances and competitions were generally understood as confidence-strengthening activities. Arts programmes and upper secondary school were said to have contributed to important experiences with music practice. The interaction with more specialist music teachers at this stage of their education often indicated a high **valuing** of music and music education.

There was a tendency among the accounts to view theoretical and practical aspects of music and music education as conflicting. Sometimes the participants' personal involvement with

music was portrayed to be explorative, and it was expressed how their music taste had expanded during this stage, involving new aspects of various musical genres. In school, music education was considered by many to be more meaningful at this stage, than it had been earlier, and the participants' particularly mentioned the effects of a good interplay with the teachers of music. Concerning informal music practice, boys and girls, especially in the Swedish group, were described to have engaged in different ways.

The **value and function** of music was often considered from a common-generational perspective by the Swedish group, whereas the Irish group more frequently mentioned a cross-generational dimension. A certain independent and personal relationship with music was also described to have had an important function in bringing a particular value to their lives at that age.

From the written accounts a number of key findings emerged, such as the shift between assigned and earned musical competency during the different age phases, as the participants interacted with various expectations of their society. Moreover, it was suggested that a shift took place in a person's relationship with music between three age phases. This was exemplified as musical exploration in the first phases, to skilled-based music learning in the second phase, to return to exploration and a more independent relationship with music in the third phase. The written accounts suggested a conflict within the representation of music as entertainment or learning and sometimes also a conflict between representations of music within and outside school. Some differences emerged between the Irish and Swedish group such as music practice within or outside the family context. Among the Irish group, family music practice was often included as several family members being involved, whereas in the Swedish accounts it was mostly described as on a one-to-one basis. Another interesting difference was that the Swedish participants often referred to musical taste while mentioning the importance of common-generational identification, whereas this was not particularly mentioned in the Irish accounts. An identification with pop and rock music was obvious in the Swedish accounts whereas the identification with traditional music was a key feature in the Irish group. Religious practice in relation to musical participation was highlighted by the Irish group whereas this was not a significant feature in the Swedish accounts. The connection to church was mainly described as musical activities in the church's children's hours in he Swedish accounts.

**Data derived from the interviews**

The findings from the interviews considered opinions and beliefs among the research group and seven main themes were discussed during the interviews. The themes were:

1. The participants' perceptions of musicality.
2. The participants' reasons for choosing music as an elective course in teacher education.
3. The participants' ideas about reasons for the inclusion of music in education.
4. The participants' definitions of good music education.
5. The participants' definitions of poor music education.
6. Influences on the participants' opinions about musicality and music education.
7. The participants' view on music as part of an Irish/ Swedish identity.

**Representations of the research group identified under each theme-heading**

*1. Perceptions of musicality*

- A considerable part of all the participants' opinions about musicality were shaped during their teacher education.
- There was a clear indication that their opinions were located in, or beyond, 'the space between' as it was expressed that their opinions had changed from 'before' till 'now', and college music education had broadened their views on the concept of musicality. Particularly in the area of their understanding of musicality and the breadth of musical practice.
- Both the Irish and Swedish participants believed that people might be born musical, but the encouragement and nurturing of a musical environment from an early age, may also 'make' a person musical.
- Family influence and its impact on musical development were considerable in the Irish group, whereas the family as a musical setting was only mentioned occasionally in the Swedish group. Instead, the Swedish participants emphasised that musicality is developed through the combination of an encouraging environment and friends, which indicated a common-generational influence.
- The Swedish participants' often connected musicality and musical ability to earned musical competency, which was not as consistent in the Irish group.

- The Swedish group often emphasised the communicative aspects of musicality, such as a means for communication and self-expression, whereas the Irish participants often draw attention to technical features of musicality and musical ability, for instance singing skills and instrumental skills.

*2. Reasons for choosing music as an elective course in teacher education*

The two groups seemed to have similar motives for choosing music as an elective course. Those were:

- They found the music education course to be a link between a personal and a professional interest.
- There was a perception that a teacher who teaches music is required to have a special interest and skill in music.
- It was expressed that a skill as a musician is not enough to teach music, as this skill must be integrated with a teaching skill.
- The student-teachers intention to work for the wider good of education and music within education.
- Music was found to be a creative, active and expressive subject, and they believe it played an important role in a holistic development of children and had therefore a necessary role in the curriculum.
- Music education was perceived to have benefits for pupils beyond other language based subjects and also to have a wider application for music in peoples' lives which goes beyond education.

*3. Reasons for the inclusion of music in education*

- The participants believed it is an important part of a holistic education.
- Music was perceived to have unique attributes that are also transferable to other areas in education.
- Existential aspects of music were mentioned as part of being a human being. Furthermore, music was understood to be a personal expression. These ideas may represent emancipatory aspects of music or a growing musical autonomy.
- Music was understood as a means for social bonding and interaction.
- Music education was perceived to open up creativity and imagination.
- Music was said to develop an understanding of differences, and an awareness of other cultures.

- The Irish group highlighted that music may be an important status marker for the schools.
- The Swedish participants were concerned that music education might be declining and being reduced in education.
- The Swedish group in particular, mentioned that music is an important aspect of the cultural and historical heritage and 'general knowledge', and therefore it should be part of education.
- The Irish participants considered music's role in education can be to prepare for a possible career option or have a wider function to develop an interest outside school.

*4. Definitions of good music education*

- A variety of approaches to music, and a variety of music genres in music education were said to facilitate students to discover their musical potential.
- Good music education meant that students were experiencing inclusion rather than exclusion in class on both a social and musical level.
- Group work was considered an important feature in good music education.
- Encouragement and feed back (from the teacher's part) was said to be vital for good music education.
- Good music education was understood to have the qualities to open up the creativity of both teachers and students.
- The Irish group emphasised that the teacher of music plays an important role, and good music teachers often show commitment beyond normal expectations of teachers in order to provide extra curricula music facilities for their students.
- The Swedish group particularly stressed the interplay with musical arenas outside schools. The connection of music education to every-day musical activities in the wider society is seen as important as part of good music education.

*5. Definitions of poor music education*

- A lack of encouragement from the teacher's part was a sign of poor music education.
- A monotonous way of teaching music was not considered to be developing.
- A restricted range of musical activities and experiences was perceived to be poor music education.

- Music education was perceived to be reduced when the teacher, due to 'performance anxiety' in front of colleagues, carry out music education in 'safe' and unadventurous ways.
- Teachers' lack of care for the development of their students' musical development was not appreciated among the participants.
- When music educators hold a categorical view of musicality, music education is considered to be disabling and restricting.
- Teachers who only turn to those who are already considered to be musically skilled were perceived to carry out music education in a poor way.
- Lack of students' influence on the contents of music education was, particularly by the Swedish group, regarded be poor (music) education.
- The Irish participants expressed the importance of covering varied aspects of music in music education. If this was not done, it was considered to be limiting. Such opinions were representing music as not simply performance based but also including composition and listening.

*6. Influences on the participants' opinions about musicality and music education*

- In the Irish context, the family interest and involvement in music is central.
- The Swedish group often described their musical influences either as a personal choice or deriving from the interest of the child him/herself or in connection to common-generational interaction.
- The teacher as a musically engaging role-model was considered to be an influential factor.
- College education was perceived to broaden students' understandings of musicality and music education, which was an interesting finding of a different representation of music in society and in teacher education.
- In the Irish context, it was emphasised that music education outside school is dependent on the parents' good-will since it had to be financially supported by them.
- In the Swedish context, the municipality music schools were described to be a vital factor for engagement with music, accessible to all.
- Peer identification in relation to opinions about musicality and music education was rarely mentioned by the Irish group, but seemed to be important to the Swedish participants.

*7. Views on music as part of an Irish/ Swedish identity*

- For the Irish participants, traditional music represents the cultural history of the country, and was therefore considered a central feature of an Irish identity.
- The Swedish group did not experience any strong bonds to traditional music. Nor did they mention that Swedish traditional music particularly identifies who they are and where they come from.
- Ideas of 'togetherness' were connected to traditional music in Ireland. In the Swedish group these features were considered in relation to various celebrations in the summer particularly, involving fiddle music and traditional musical games.
- When considering generational commonalities in music taste and music practice aspects of 'togetherness' was mentioned. In the Swedish group this was often mentioned in relation to popular music, whereas in Ireland this was described in connection to traditional music, however, groups like U2 for instance was mentioned to represent Ireland in a good way. Also the practice of traditional music between generations was mentioned in the Irish context.
- In relation to teacher education, several Swedish participants expressed an interest in the music practices of other cultures, and compared this to the practice they were familiar with in Sweden.
- Some Irish participants said they have a good knowledge of their own [traditional] music, but did not think they had a good knowledge about music from other countries. Many acknowledged that they have increasingly broadened their music taste during teacher education while being exposed to different musics.
- Music in church was an important feature of musical experiences connected to important occasions and celebrations in Ireland.
- The municipality music schools were said to be influential sources for a general musical development and participation among the people in Sweden. They considered the municipality school as a forum which facilitates opportunities for almost all children to participate, both for its geographical situation and for its economic policy.
- Choir singing was perceived to be an important musical expression among Swedes in all ages.
- The Irish group suggested that the form in which traditional music is taught and learnt (often in groups) provided a more accessible form of music tuition than individual lessons.

**Data derived from the interviews relating to representations of musicality, music practice, function(s) of music and value of music**

Concerning the participants' perceptions of **musicality,** there was a general idea among the participants that people might be born musical, but encouragement and nurturing from a musical environment from an early age, could also 'make' a person musical (Lundberg & Ternhag, 1996). The participants seemed to have developed *a relational* view on musicality during teacher education. Some participants though, implicitly expressed that they were in *'the space between'* two opinions. The Swedish participants' often connected musicality and musical ability to *earned musical competency,* while the Irish group often referred to influences from a musical environment, such as for instance, a 'musical family'. They also emphasised the communicative aspects of musicality and musical ability, whereas the Irish participants often draw the attention to technical features such as a 'quickness' in picking up tunes and a 'musical memory'.

With reference to **music practice**, the most significant practice considered in the interviews was music as a compulsory school subject. In terms of instrumental education, private fee-paying instrumental tuition was mentioned in the Irish group and the municipality music schools (see Chapter 5) were described to have a central position for children's access to music learning in Sweden. Competitions were described as a vital part of the Irish (traditional) music life, in which music groups meet and compete regularly. Sessions in pubs as part of traditional music life were also mentioned in relation to an educational context for music learning. Churches were described to have been a forum for music practise in both countries (McCarthy, 1999).

In Ireland music had an important **function** with regard to religious services and the celebration of first Holy Communion, whereas in Sweden the 'Church children's hours' and children's and youth choirs were mentioned as significant occurrences. Various celebrations and festivities inside and outside an educational context were also highlighted as important functions of music. A significant finding in the interviews was the representation of music being perceived as a personal expression for the individual. Music was also generally considered to function as an important tool for social bonding and interaction between people. Furthermore, music was portrayed to be linked to creativity and imagination. Music was also implicitly and explicitly described to have the function of a transmitter of cultural heritage.

Group work in music education was assigned the **value** of social and musical inclusion and interaction. Music was also appointed a particular value as part of collective celebrations in a culture (Merriam, 1964: Nettl, 1983, McCarthy, 1999). Particularly in the Irish context, it was said that music may signify a status marker for the school. There was a general understanding among the participants that music signifies 'togetherness', and has the quality of bringing people together. Additionally, music was described as a means of developing an understanding of differences and an awareness of other cultures.

From what we can see from the above, the findings reveal that there are broadly common opinions and beliefs about music and music education among the Irish and Swedish participants. Both groups believed that teacher education had affected their attitudes in relation to music and music education in a significant way. They also shared the idea that music, and therefore also music education, is a multi-faceted phenomenon, which has a unique potential to enrich the individual and education in a momentous way. The two groups identified various interdependent areas within music and music education, which could be defined as a technical sphere, a communicative sphere and an emancipatory or autonomous sphere. All participants were fairly in agreement on what factors constitute good or poor music education. Furthermore, they also found that early engagement with music within the family sphere have had an impact on a developing interest in music. The access to various musical instruments in childhood was also described to have had bearing for further musical involvement. There were, however, some differences among the two groups, mainly affected by their previous experiences within their general socio-cultural environment. Particularly, the different educational systems in Ireland and Sweden, together with the organisation of extra-curricular music education were shown to influence how music and music education were valued and understood in the two countries.

## The musical socialisation of student-teachers

The following section will draw on the findings presented above, and suggest a model which can explain and help us to better understand the musical socialisation of student-teachers. The three theoretical perspectives presented in chapter 2 (a *relational or categorical perspective*, a *comparative perspective* and an *in 'the space between' perspective*), operate here as theoretical lenses through which we can interpret how the participants' musical socialisation operate.

**A cycle of influence?**

Findings from the literature (Brändström,1997; Bouij, 1998) lead to the assumption that music teachers tend to teach music the way they were taught themselves. A cyclical process is then suggested, in which a teacher transmits a certain orientation to music and music education to his/her student. It is often assumed that the next generation of music teachers will hold similar understandings, values and beliefs as their own teachers, and that they will transmit these further to their own students in a self-replicating cycle which may have a restraining effect on methods, attitudes and beliefs concerning music education.

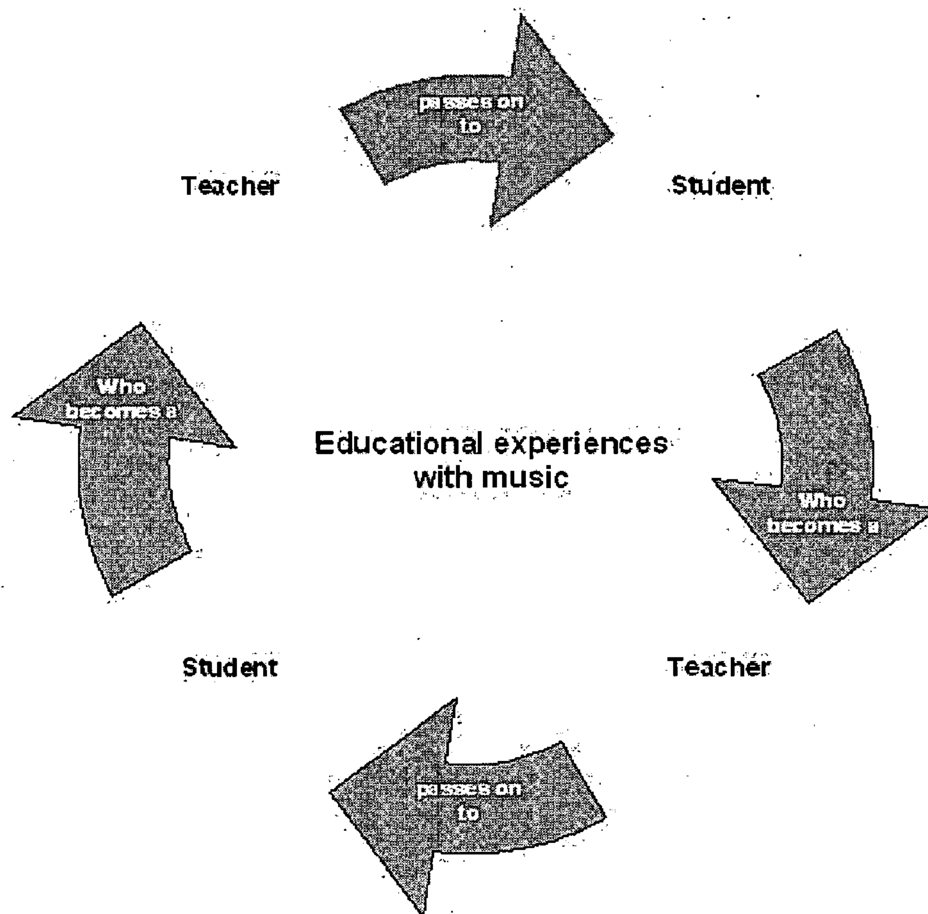


**Figure 10: A cycle of musical socialisation?**

The findings in this study suggest a widening of the idea of a cycle of influence, as there are factors identified in the findings that suggest a breaking of the cycle. An important aspect of this is when educators conscientiously and deliberately provide a diversity of music, methods and aspects of music to their students, encouraging them to experience and develop their understandings of, and relationship to music within their own 'spaces between'. Because of

the limits on their own music education experience, students consciously strive to get beyond these limits.

Previous studies relating to music teachers and a cycle of influence, have mainly dealt with student-teachers who will become music specialists (*ibid.*). These student-teachers often have a similar background, in respect to gaining recognition and encouragement for their musical achievements by their environment. They may also have developed a strong musical identity before commencing their teacher education. This present research dealt with a group of general teachers who were taking an elective course in music, and the findings turned out to illustrate an alternative, broader and more complex picture of the cycle of influence. The reasons this research group might have had a different orientation to music from a group of music specialists, were that these persons identified themselves as educational professionals rather than music specialists and/or as future music professionals. Another reason may be that in this study, a heterogeneous rather than homogenous group of student-teachers were in focus. Some of them had had encouraging experiences from music and music education, while others had either had poor individual and emotional experiences of music and music education, or had observed such occurrences. A key finding was that poor experiences of music and music education were understood by the research group to be the result of a *categorical* idea of musical participation in their society. They described how they had gradually come to regard poor experiences of music and music education as a lack, and part of their socialisation in college motivated them to compensate for this lack. They perceived their musical socialisation in college to be influenced by a *relational* idea about musical participation. Due to their interacting stores of experience from before and present, they developed a broader conception of the possibilities of musical engagement for themselves and for their students. In addition, the interaction between the participants (and their previous varied experiences of music) in the college music education course, was identified as an influential factor for the musical socialisation process too. The process of interacting experiences as part of a socialisation process indicates an awareness of the richness and abilities of human beings instead of individual simply being hostages to experience.

**Layers of musical socialisation?**

The findings suggested that the musical socialisation of these student-teachers seemed to take another shape than a cyclical form. It was not only educational aspects that had been influential in the musical socialisation of this group, but also more general aspects of social

life and society, as well as the personal relationship to music. Brändström's (1997) findings pointed at the prospect of a student-teacher holding two contradictory opinions about musicality, which influenced the idea of a layer-shaped model of musical socialisation. The researcher's primary analysis of the data indicated that the socialisation of student-teachers appeared as a horizontally multi-layered parallel pattern where personal, educational, media and societal experiences of music were co-existing but separate. These parallel experiences of music, lead to the development of different sets of opinions and beliefs about music within the four areas, which would either cohere or contradict each other but could often be held simultaneously within the different areas. Thus opinions and beliefs about music developed through societal experiences might conflict with opinions and beliefs about music gained in education. An individual might hold both these beliefs in these separate areas and not experience a contradiction.

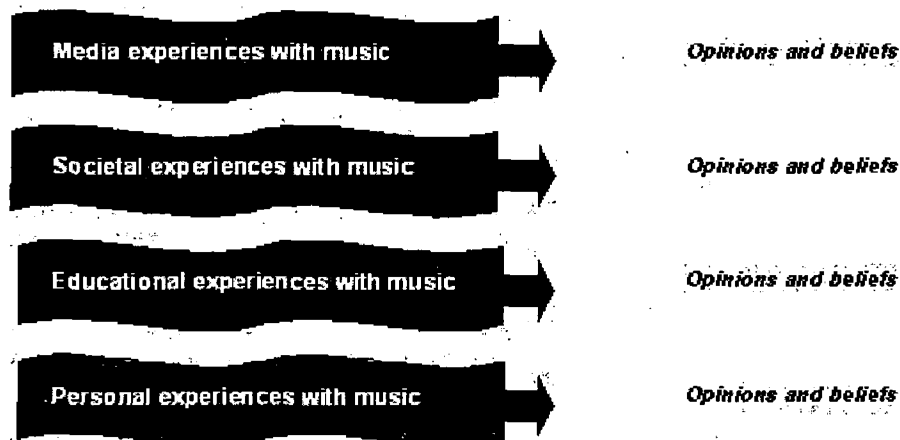


**Figure 11: Layers of musical socialisation?**

The researcher, however, gradually revised her model of these layers, as a significant factor was missing. Based on the understanding that individuals could be 'in the space between'

this factor was related to the interplay, or interaction, between the different layers of experiences, which proved to be a significant characteristic of the complexity of the participants' musical socialisation.

**Webs of musical significance – a way of describing musical socialisation**

Each student-teacher has stored individual/emotional and socio-cultural experiences of music and music education already from their early socialisation (Stålhammar, 2006b, Froelich, 2007, Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Both the individual/emotional and socio-cultural experiences have been affected by local and global representations of musicality, music practice, functions of music and the value of music in their societies. This complex pattern has influenced each individual's micro-sociological world of music, and therefore his/her musical socialisation. Thus, while considering the complexity of a musical socialisation process, the researcher pictured that it had the shape of a web of interacting occurrences, experiences, influences, opinions and representations of music. In addition, these factors were considered on a personal, an educational and a societal level. Consequently the theory of 'Webs of musical significance' was developed as a metaphor to capture the student-teachers musical socialisation.

A web is constructed of strong and thin threads, and there are spaces between these. The strong threads may constitute a border or restraint where new smaller, thinner threads will not be allowed to develop. Alternatively, the web can be described to be in a constant state of transformation. The strong threads will then support the web, and allow thinner threads to develop. These may expand, become stronger or tear apart. A web will always have openings or 'spaces between' the strong and thin threads, which sometimes expand, diminish or even vanish, and new threads may occur in the spaces between.

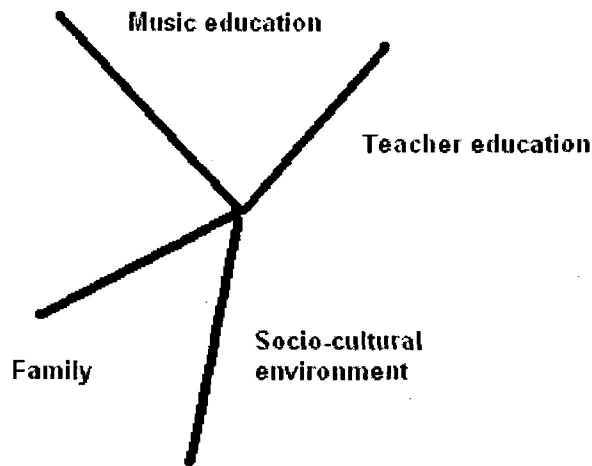


**Figure 12: Supportive threads in the web**

In a web of musical significance the *strong supporting threads* represent stable factors such as family, music education and teacher education which are significant for the student-teachers' various socialisation phases. Furthermore, the individual's socio-cultural environment may constitute a strong thread in the web such as Ireland and Sweden in this case. The strong threads can on the one hand represent security in a person's life, thus enabling a person to develop. The strong threads may also stand for inflexibility, which disables and prevents the individual from finding new ways and breaking patterns. *The thin threads* symbolise influences internalised by the individual, for instance, unique experiences with music and musicians, one-off occurrences, involvement in temporary (musical) groups or classes, observation and/or participation in various cultural contexts. *The spaces between* the threads represent rooms for development in which the individual student-teacher plays an active part in internalising, shifting or developing understandings, attitudes and opinions about music. This space also represents the dual aspects of safety and experiment; an opening in which the individual can learn new things and develop his/her musical stores of experiences. The spaces are framed by the strong and thin threads, and sometimes reframed by new developing treads.

The patterns and shapes in a person's web of musical significance are rarely fixed, but in a state of transformation while the individual is part of a continuous flow of experiences with music (Swanwick, 1999). A web has the significant feature of being expandable, which represents a learning process shaped by accumulated experiences with music that an individual comes across during his/her lifetime. It is important that educators elucidate the co-operating layers of influences to their students. In addition, they need to provide opportunities for students to weave threads between these layers, and thus become aware of the complexity of influences of personal, educational and societal experiences.

**Figure 13: Threads and spaces in a Web of Musical Socialisation**

## The significance of this research

Music plays a significant part in people's lives and it is therefore a vital societal matter. As such, music plays an important part in both the individual's life and of the life of a society, it is important to consider how people engage with and relate to music and which various

values and functions music has to people within a society (Blacking, 1973; Lilliestam, 2006; Merriam, 1964).

The professional tasks of teachers of music are, among others, to situate music into a context, to relate to democratic values, and to display a diversity of music and musical practices to their students. This may be acquired when a teacher's understandings of the structures and mechanisms within the interwoven relationship between music, educational factors, societal aspects, and the interaction between their students and themselves are obtained.

Jørgensen (1995, p. 25 ff.) discusses how music education research has changed its focus over the last decades. From a major interest in studying teaching and learning 'efficiency', and the transmission of knowledge in/of/through music, the attention is now directed towards an investigation of how such knowledge is constructed. As music has a general significance in the individual's life and in societal life, a person develops a broad repertoire of musical experiences. The issue is whether music education considers and incorporates such comprehensive palette of musical experiences?

One of the researcher's objectives was to encourage the participants to critically consider their own relationship to music, including educational factors, societal aspects, previous teachers and their future students. The participants' experiences, opinions and beliefs about music and music education were voiced in a successful way and reflected upon by the participants, which portrayed a rich picture of their musical reality within and outside education. The research identified a conflict between the representation of music in general society and in teacher education which has located the participants 'in the space between'. This finding indicates the necessity of continued support provided in their professional life as they continue to shift within the 'space between'.

Nielsen (1997, p.165 ff.) illustrates how the nucleus of music education is the interaction between learner teacher and educational subject-matters. These agents are in turn shaped by various frame factors such as, historical, geographical and socio-cultural influences. Thus, in order to describe the relationship between personal, educational and societal aspects of musical socialisation, the researcher obtained a sociological perspective in this study.

The research findings illustrate how on the one hand a person's opinions and beliefs were constructed on a *diachronic* level, including a historical dimension where we could follow how development and changes took place over time. The research also highlighted a *synchronic* aspect, focusing on opinions and beliefs held at a specific time including a certain age range, or specific occasions within the participants' musical socialisation phases.

The theory of *'Webs of Musical Significance'* helps us to extend our understanding of how processes within student-teachers' musical socialisation operate. The findings also elucidate the relationship between music and human beings on a general level. This study considered music as part of general education. Curricula in various subjects tend to be shaped conformably, in order to fit into an educational context. It is essential to reflect upon whether music curricula correspond to the significant qualities, uses and functions which music and music education are specifically perceived to entail, as particularly voiced by the participants in this research. Historically, school was regarded as an authority to the individual, and one of the purposes of music in education was to maintain traditions, transmit cultural heritage or to teach the students about 'high arts'. Sernhede (2006) considers how school once had the indisputable task to transmit cultural heritage and codes of morality to the students. These were critical issues related to the individual's enculturation into, and identification with, his/her society. Today, education has another focus, and one important educational undertaking is to mirror the society as a whole in education. Society no longer represents a homogeneous culture to 'enculturate' into, and the area of music has expanded into many shapes and forms. It is therefore important to learn how people orient themselves within the various musical arenas and the diversity of music. Consequently, the curriculum needs to relate to the present reality of music in people's lives, and this reality includes diverse musical practices, functions and cultural expressions. Music education must introduce students to the unfamiliar, and address the culturally diverse environment in which people currently live. It needs to provide a broad representation of musical value and communicate a wide scope of music practices and model a variety of possibilities for recognition of musical ability and competence.

Musical diversity and an inclusive musical context are important factors in music education. If this is lacking, music education will be negatively understood and reviewed by students and by society in general. Furthermore, the curriculum should ensure that the three interests in musical knowledge discussed further in the following paragraph, are an integral part of

music education. As a consequence of this, one of the major implications for teacher education is not only to develop student-teachers' skills and understandings in teaching music but to develop their own significant and personal relationship with music. This is not accomplished by direct means, and careful consideration should be given to let student-teachers develop and weave new threads in the spaces of their *webs of musical significance*.

The research findings show clear evidence of music being considered to represent multiple kinds of knowledge. These can be described as *technical*, communicative or *practical* and *emancipatory* aspects of musical knowledge. German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas (Habermas, 1972; 1974; Månsson, 2003, p. 317) considers these three aspects of knowledge as general societal interests, representing three "spheres" of human life. These aspects transferred to music and music education may be presented as *technical* musical knowledge representing people's skill-oriented interest to control, master or predict music. Communicative or *practical* knowledge of music may represent people's wish to understand each other and collaborate musically. It may also be a means of personal expression. *Emancipatory* aspects of music and music education may signify the individual's (or the collective's) unique, creative and frameless relationship to music, where disabling 'musical oppression' from family, friends, education or society is not tolerated. According to the findings of this research, these three aspects or spheres interact in a web of musical significance, and therefore this is a significant finding for music education and for teachers of music and their own musical development.

*Webs of musical significance* is a model that illustrates that music and music education are not solely isolated matters concerning the creation or reproduction of music, or individuals' shaping their personal musical identities independently. Instead music practice and music learning happens in a complexity of interactional occurrences. The three spheres of musical knowledge presented above, indicate that *technical*, communicative or *practical* and *emancipatory* aspects all need to be considered in music education, and that we cannot reduce musical learning and participation to only one of these aspects. The model also informs various other areas of education. There is a challenge for educators to individually and collectively consider, and make students conscious of, the interplay of webs of significant influences and experiences. If students are aware of the model presented above, it may help them to expand or re-design their own webs, which is an important *emancipatory* process.

The findings in this study showed that teacher education awakened an openness and interest among students in expanding their awareness of music. In effect, weaving new threads, which point towards the importance of a multi-faceted music education, covering *technical* (skills, hands-on activities), communicative or *practical* (social bonding, self-expression), and *emancipatory* (musical identity, musical autonomy) aspects. If these interwoven aspects of music education are generally considered within music education, music has the potential to become an essential subject in general education, as a result of its educational complexity. In addition, the conditions for music learning and musical participation are likely to expand, providing opportunities and enabling inclusion for more people to engage with music in multi-faceted ways. This is an important democratic issue as it may prevent musical stratification and exclusion in a society.

This research makes a valuable contribution to knowledge within the area of music education as it illustrates significant interacting influences of the relationship between music and human beings on a personal, educational and societal level. Furthermore, it informs general education about the various and unique aspects of knowledge that music entails, and the significance that music plays in people's lives (Nielsen, 2006).

The achievement of this research is to broaden the scope of theoretical knowledge of musical socialisation. Furthermore, it adds to our understanding of teacher education in music and has a practical application in this field. The findings of this research are useful to teacher educators in the ways they conceive of, plan, communicate and understand the implications of their courses. The model of *webs of significance* illustrates the multidimensional human potential of breaking cycles of influence, and developing new knowledge and understandings in 'spaces between' what may appear as predetermined or set structures. This finding elucidates a central issue in education, and is therefore of essential importance to educators. This also creates a strong base for further research, particularly in illuminating the relevance of the web-metaphor to the wider musical socialisation of people.

Music has significance for the individual, and for the collective life in their local and global societies. As music is a significant part of people's lives, music also has a significant role in education.

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[May 4th, 2007]

## Film

Björkvold, Jon-Roar. (1996). In: Aarhus, Aslak. & Fröshaug, Ole Bernt *Skolakuten – När ögonblicket sjunger.* Utbildningsradion, AV-nr: 00617tv9

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Statistics from background questionnaire

### Frequencies mothers' activities Ireland

**Statistics**

Mothers' activities

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 29 |
| | Missing | 0 |

Mothers' activities Ireland

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Blank | 3 | 10,3 | 10,3 | 10,3 |
| | Singing | 10 | 34,5 | 34,5 | 44,8 |
| | Playing instrument | 1 | 3,4 | 3,4 | 48,3 |
| | Dancing | 1 | 3,4 | 3,4 | 51,7 |
| | None | 5 | 17,2 | 17,2 | 69,0 |
| | Singing and playing instrument | 2 | 6,9 | 6,9 | 75,9 |
| | Singing and dancing | 5 | 17,2 | 17,2 | 93,1 |
| | Singing, playing and dancing | 2 | 6,9 | 6,9 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 29 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

**Table 3: Mothers' activities Ireland**

Mothers' activities Ireland

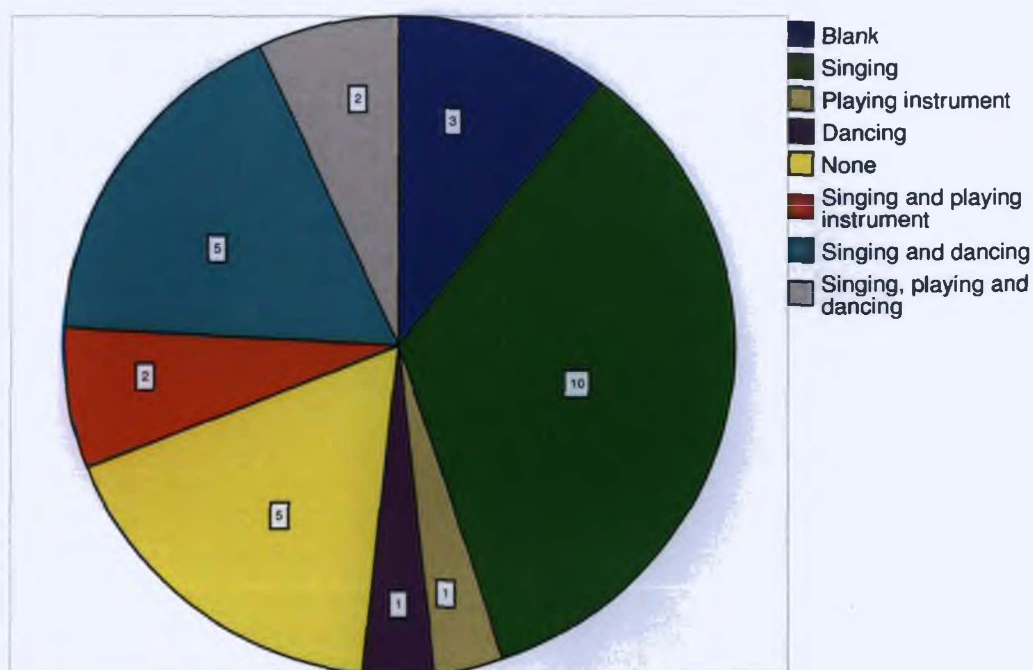



**Figure 14: Mothers' activities Ireland**

## Frequencies mothers' activities Sweden

**Statistics**

Mothers' activities

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 22 |
| | Missing | 0 |

Mothers' activities Sweden

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Blank | 3 | 13,6 | 13,6 | 13,6 |
| | Singing | 8 | 36,4 | 36,4 | 50,0 |
| | Playing instrument | 2 | 9,1 | 9,1 | 59,1 |
| | None | 3 | 13,6 | 13,6 | 72,7 |
| | Singing and playing instrument | 2 | 9,1 | 9,1 | 81,8 |
| | Singing and dancing | 2 | 9,1 | 9,1 | 90,9 |
| | Singing, playing and dancing | 2 | 9,1 | 9,1 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 22 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

**Table 4: Mothers' activities Sweden**

Mothers' activities Sweden

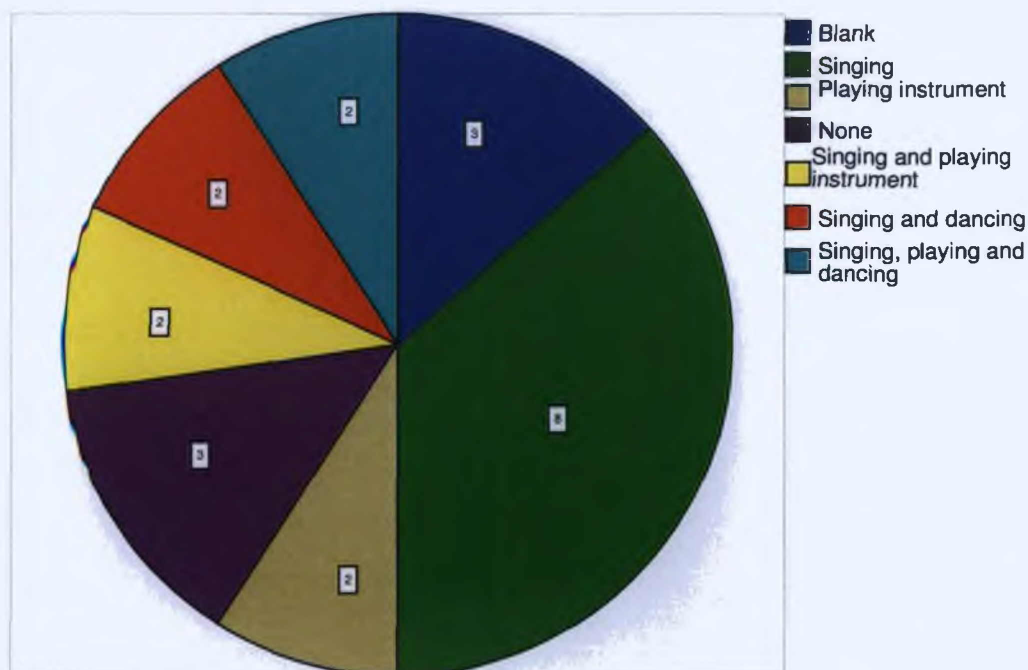



**Figure 15: Mothers' activities Sweden**

## Frequencies fathers' activities Ireland

**Statistics**

Fathers' activities

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 29 |
| | Missing | 0 |

Fathers' activities Ireland

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Blank | 5 | 17,2 | 17,2 | 17,2 |
| | Singing | 9 | 31,0 | 31,0 | 48,3 |
| | Playing instrument | 1 | 3,4 | 3,4 | 51,7 |
| | Dancing | 1 | 3,4 | 3,4 | 55,2 |
| | None | 9 | 31,0 | 31,0 | 86,2 |
| | Singing and playing instrument | 2 | 6,9 | 6,9 | 93,1 |
| | Singing and dancing | 2 | 6,9 | 6,9 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 29 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

**Table 5: Fathers' activities Ireland**

Fathers' activities Ireland

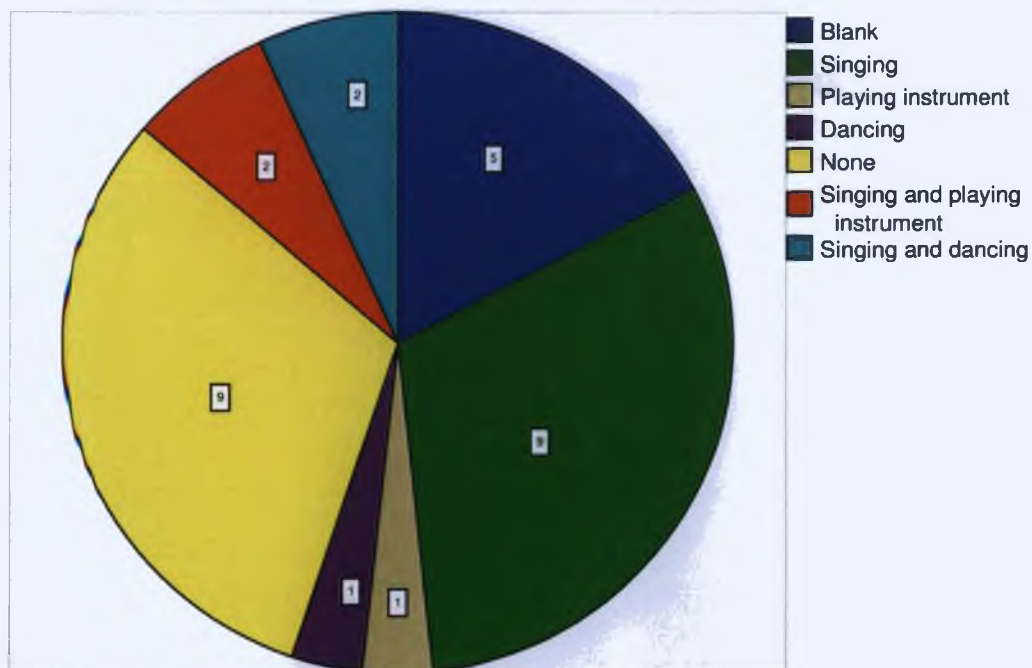



**Figure 16: Fathers' activities Ireland**

## Frequencies fathers' activities Sweden

**Statistics**

Fathers' activities

| N | Valid | 22 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 0 |

Fathers' activities Sweden

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Blank | 5 | 22,7 | 22,7 | 22,7 |
| | Singing | 4 | 18,2 | 18,2 | 40,9 |
| | Playing instrument | 3 | 13,6 | 13,6 | 54,5 |
| | Dancing | 1 | 4,5 | 4,5 | 59,1 |
| | None | 6 | 27,3 | 27,3 | 86,4 |
| | Singing and playing instrument | 2 | 9,1 | 9,1 | 95,5 |
| | Singing and dancing | 1 | 4,5 | 4,5 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 22 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

**Table 6: Fathers' activities Sweden**

Fathers' activities Sweden

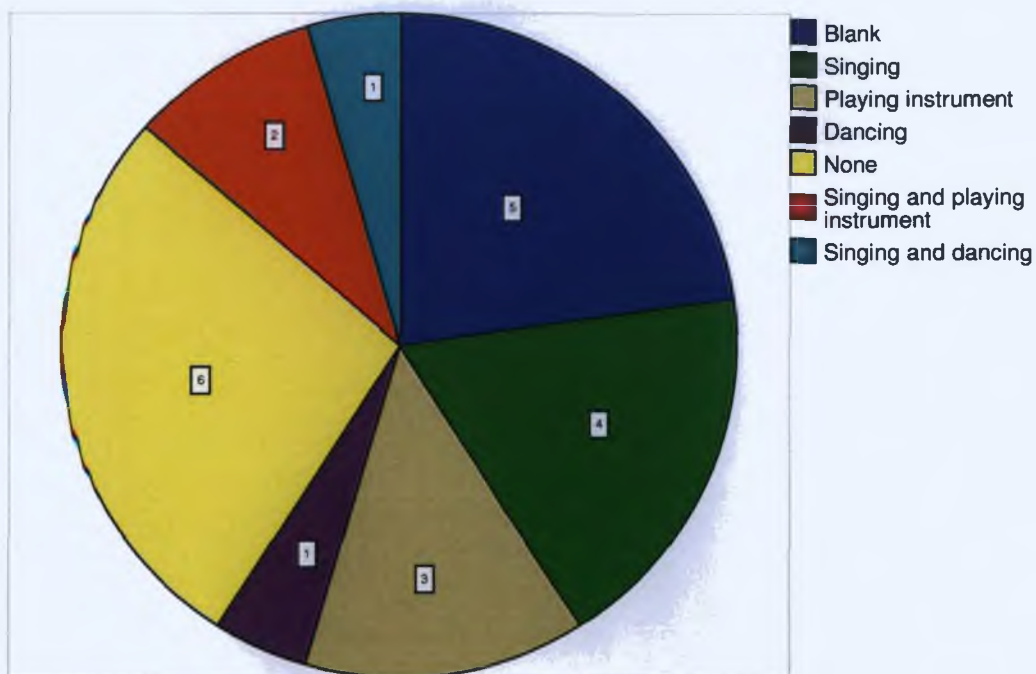



**Figure 17: Fathers' activities Sweden**

## Cross tabulation music events as a child

**Case Processing Summary**

| | Cases | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Valid | | Missing | | Total | |
| | N | Percent | N | Percent | N | Percent |
| Country * How frequent music events as a child | 51 | 100,0% | 0 | ,0% | 51 | 100,0% |

**Country * How frequent music events as a child Cross tabulation**

Count

| | | How frequent music event as a child | | | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Blank | Once a week | Once a month | Once a year | Less than once a year | Never | |
| Country | Ireland | 0 | 1 | 6 | 17 | 5 | 0 | 29 |
| | Sweden | 1 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 22 |
| Total | | 1 | 5 | 14 | 21 | 8 | 2 | 51 |

**Table 7: Cross tabulation Music events as child**

## Music events as child

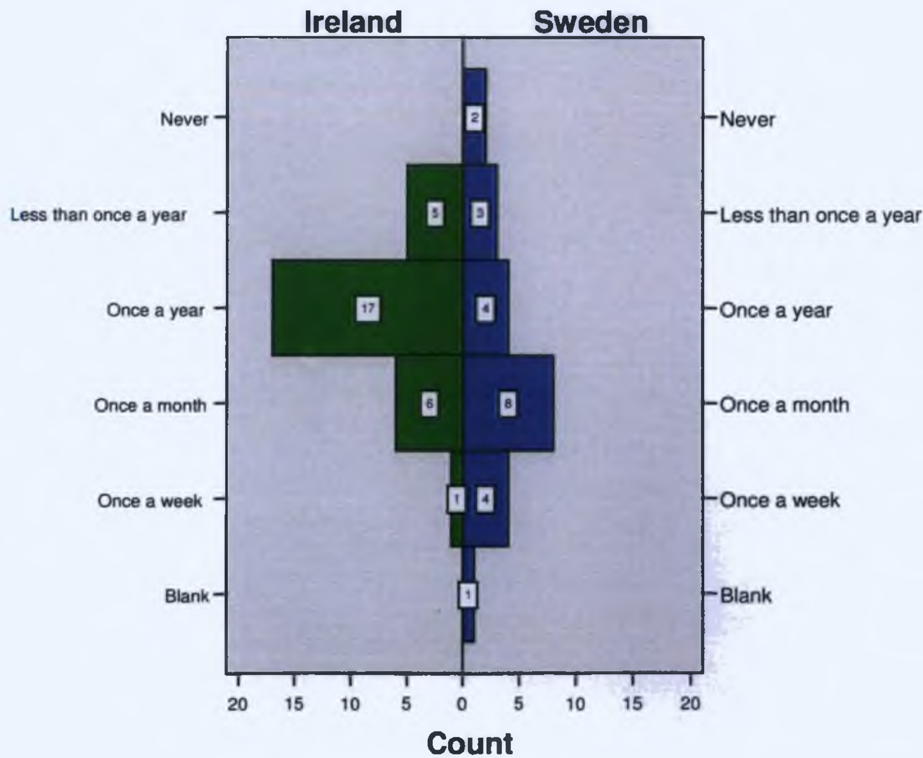



**Figure 18: Frequency of music events as a child**

## Frequency music education Ireland

**Statistics**

| | | Music education at school | Music education at voluntary classes | Music education at choir/orchestra | Music education at other facilities | Other education where | No music education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Frequency tables music education Ireland

**Music education at school**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | No | 2 | 6,9 | 6,9 | 6,9 |
| | Yes | 27 | 93,1 | 93,1 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 29 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

**Music education at voluntary classes**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | No | 9 | 31,0 | 31,0 | 31,0 |
| | Yes | 20 | 69,0 | 69,0 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 29 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

**Music education at choir/orchestra**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | No | 8 | 27,6 | 27,6 | 27,6 |
| | Yes | 21 | 72,4 | 72,4 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 29 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

**Music education at other facilities**

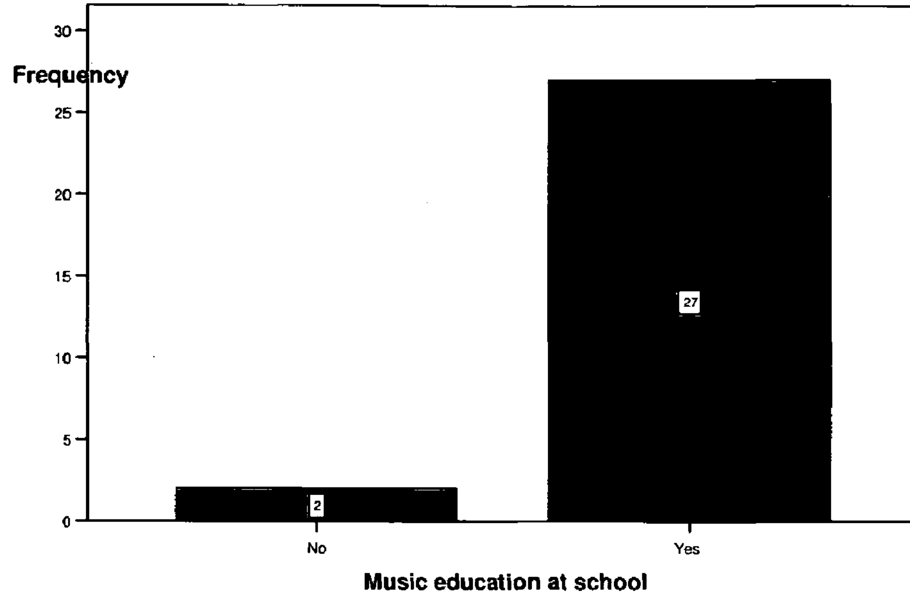
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | No | 25 | 86,2 | 86,2 | 86,2 |
| | Yes | 4 | 13,8 | 13,8 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 29 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

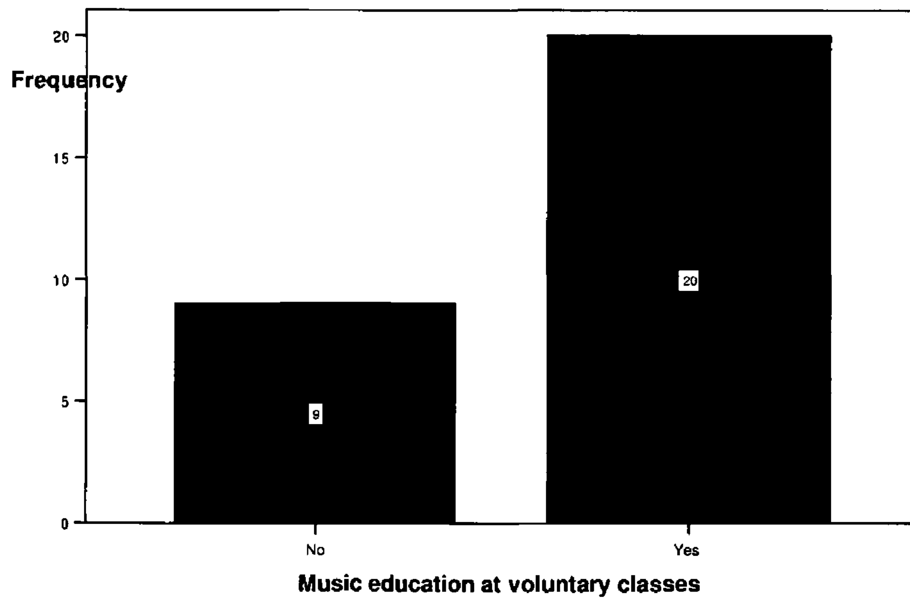
**Non music education**

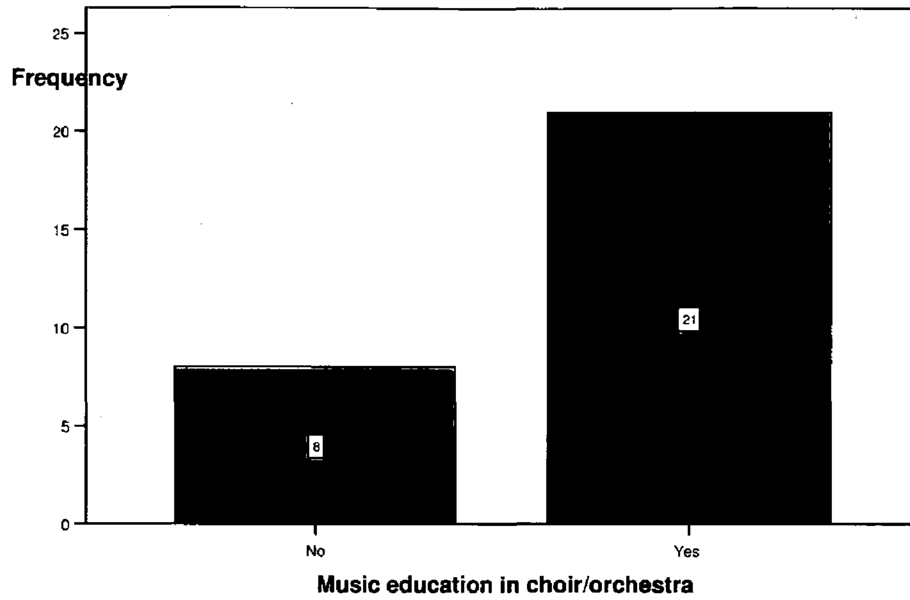
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | No | 29 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |

**Table 8: Frequency tables music education Ireland**

## Bar charts music education Ireland





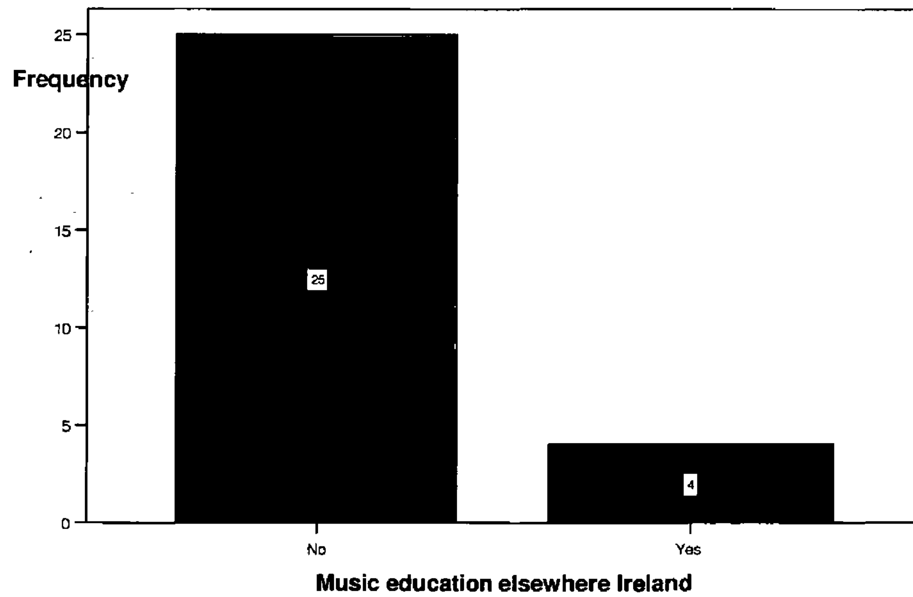




**Figure 19: Bar Charts Music education Ireland**

## Frequency music education Sweden

**Statistics**

| | | Music education at school | Music education at voluntary classes | Music Education at choir/orchestra | Music education at other facilities | No music education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Frequency tables Sweden

**Music education at school**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | No | 1 | 4,5 | 4,5 | 4,5 |
| | Yes | 21 | 95,5 | 95,5 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 22 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

**Music education at voluntary classes**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | No | 7 | 31,8 | 31,8 | 31,8 |
| | Yes | 15 | 68,2 | 68,2 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 22 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

**Music education at choir/orchestra**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | No | 18 | 81,8 | 81,8 | 81,8 |
| | Yes | 4 | 18,2 | 18,2 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 22 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

**Music education at other facilities**

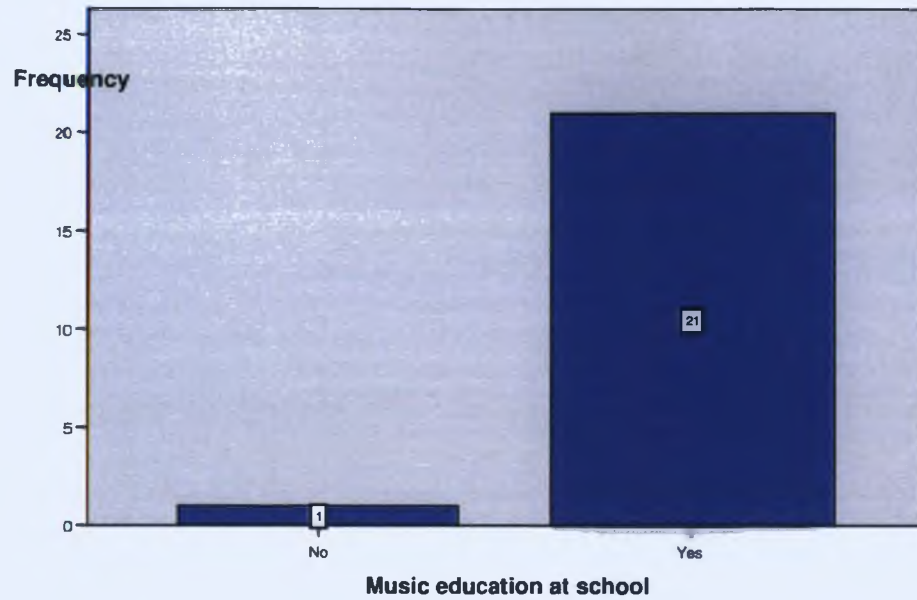
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | No | 15 | 68,2 | 68,2 | 68,2 |
| | Yes | 7 | 31,8 | 31,8 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 22 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

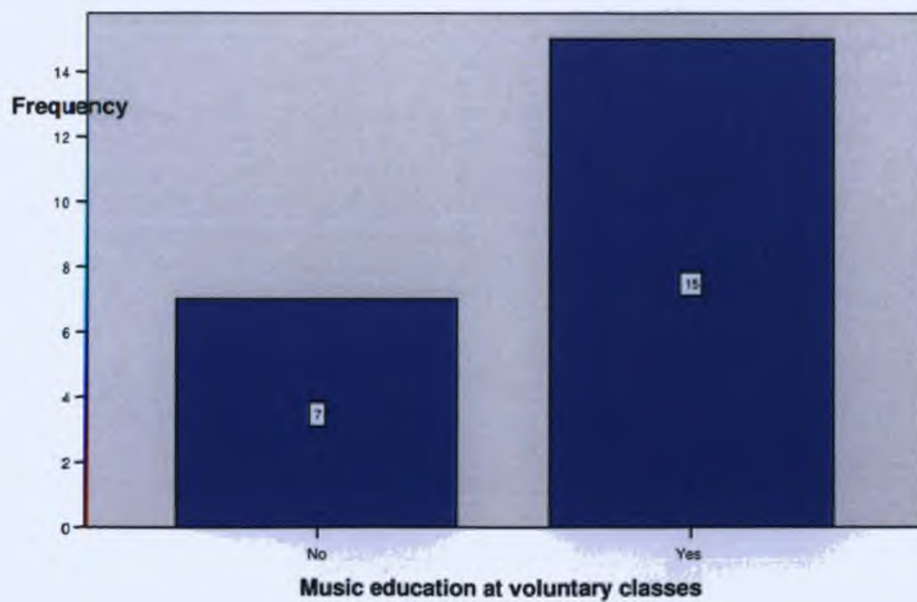
**No music education**

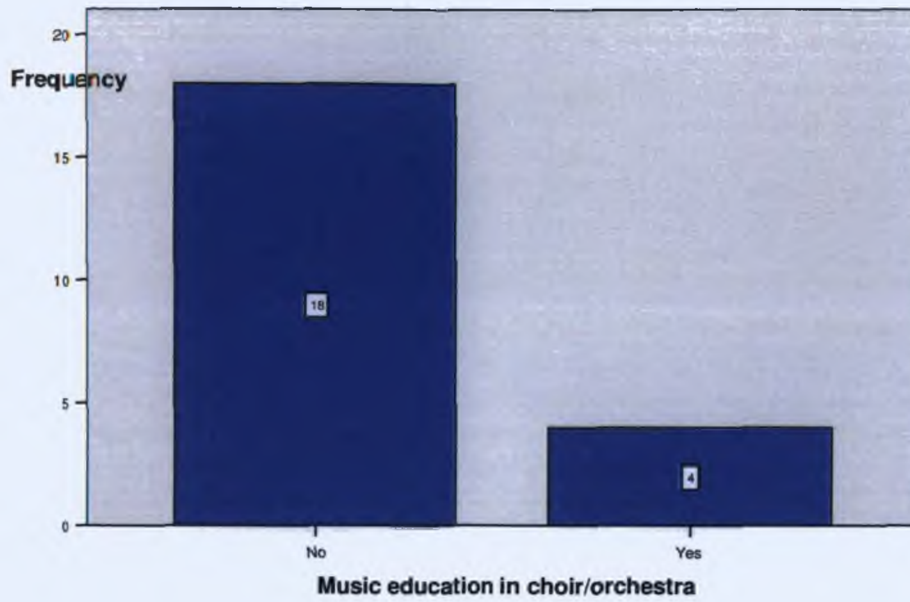
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | No | 22 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |

**Table 9: Frequency tables music education Sweden**

## Bar charts music education Sweden





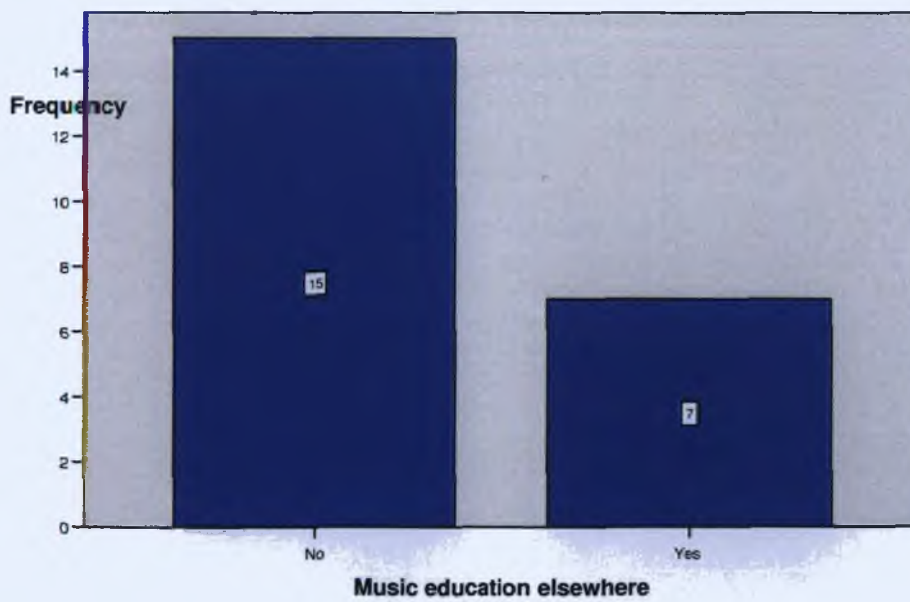




**Figure 20: Bar Charts Music education Sweden**

## Appendix B: Questionnaire

**Questionnaire musical background**

**Date ............. Student number .................**

**1.**

☐ female ☐ male

**2. Where did you live during the main part of your childhood and adolescence? (age 0 – 18)**
(Mark <u>one</u> alternative)

☐ rural area ☐ village ☐ small town ☐ large town ☐ city suburb ☐ city centre

**3. As a child do you remember any of your family singing with you, playing an instrument for you or dancing with you?**
(Mark **<u>one or several</u>** alternatives)

| | singing | playing an instrument | dancing | none |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| mother | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| father | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| sister | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| brother | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| grandparent | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| other relative | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**4. As a child did you have access to any of the following musical objects at home?**
(Mark one or several alternatives)

☐ instrument, state which? ................... ...................

☐ CD- player/ record player/ tape recorder

☐ radio

☐ other ............................................... ............................................... ...............................................

**5. How did you spend your leisure time between the age of 7-16?**
(Rank from **1 (least)** to **5 (most)** )

☐ with friends

☐ on my own

☐ with adults

☐ association or recreation centre

☐ other........................

**6. Where did you participate in music education?**
(Mark one or several alternatives)

☐ school

☐ voluntary classes, evening school

☐ choir/ orchestra

☐ other .................. .................. ..................

☐ none

**7a) How frequently did you go to live musical performances?**

(Mark one alternative)

☐ approx. once a week ☐ approx. once a month ☐ approx. once a year ☐ less than once a year ☐ never

**b)** Do you remember any live musical performance from your childhood ? (0 -18 years)

If so, mention one of these.......................................................................

**c)** Who initiated you going to this performance ? ............................................

**d)** Why do you remember this performance?.....................................................................

**8a). Did you play an instrument during childhood/adolescence?** ☐yes ☐no

**b)** If so, which instrument/ instruments? ..............................................................

**9. If you played an instrument, did you participate in concerts or other musical performances?**

..........................................................................................................................

**10. As a teacher student, what is your academic subject?**

..........................................................................................................................

*Maria Westvall. E-mail mwl@hig.se*

## Appendix C: Letter of interviews

Maria Westvall
Brunnsgatan 71B
S- 802 51 Gävle
Sweden
e-mail: mwl@hig.se

January 28, 2004

Dear third year music elective student,

Thank you very much for participating in my research on musical memories. I really appreciate the time you took in filling out the questionnaire and writing your childhood memories. A group of student-teachers from xxxxxxxxxx in Sweden also took part, and the results have been very interesting. I was particularly struck by the strength of you musical memories.

I am moving on to the next stage of my research to how early music experiences affect the way that we think about music. It is important to include teachers in this as they can have a huge influence on their pupils' developing attitudes to music. I would really appreciate it if you would be willing to be interviewed on your thoughts about music.

I will be returning to xxxxxxxxxx during the first week in March and I would hope to do the interviews then. They will only take about an hour and will consist of an individual conversation on your views on music and music education. I have asked 12 students from your group to take part and 12 of the Swedish students are also being interviewed.

You can be assured of confidentiality, and no names will be used in the final report. The findings will be used for this research and with your permission in any other research that develops from this. A copy of the final report of the research study will be distributed to the participants.

I realise that this is a very busy time of the year for you but would be very grateful if you could spare an hour. If you are happy to participate, please fill in the details below letting me know the most convenient time during that week (1- 7 March). In case there are any difficulties, my e- mail address is mwl@hig.se. If you would like to include your own contact number or e-mail, that would be very helpful.

Participation in the research would make an important contribution to what we know about and understand music and music education

I am thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

Maria Westvall

## Appendix D: Interview schedule

**Warm-up question:**
***To begin with I wonder if you could tell me some of the reasons why you choose music as an area you wanted to specialise in.***

**MUSIC AS A PHENOMENON**

***We often use the term musical when we describe persons in relation to music. For example "He is a very musical person" or "They do not consider themselves musical at all".***

**1. How would you recognise a musical person?**
**Follow-up question: Could you describe what he/she would be like?**

*Sense for rhythm, dance, melody and pitch*
*Auditory knowledge*
*Musical intelligence*
*Skill to reproduce music*
*Skill to create music*
*Someone who is emotionally tuned to music*
*Other*

**2. What makes someone musical, according to you?**
*You were born musical*
*You nourish a talent*
*It is dependent on musical practice*
*Musical education*
*Other*
**Follow-up question:** ***What qualities does he/she have?*** *So for instance when we talk about a person who deals within the area of sports, we might describe that person as athletic and then we could give examples of certain athletic qualities. Could you do a similar sort of description for a person who you consider being musical?*

**3a. How do you relate to music? Is music important to you personally?**

*It is a very important part of my life*

*It used to be a very important part of my life*

*It is a very important part of society in general but not on a personal level*

*Music is not important in life*

*It depends on what you compare music with*

*Other*

*It helps create an identity*

*To be creative*

*The company with others - a social context*

*Way of self- expression*

*A way of escaping*

*A healing process*

*Experience of that something is bigger than yourself*

*Makes life worth living*

*It is a need*

*Other*

**Follow-up question a: If music is important to you, could you give an example of how music is important to you personally?** *Describe you relationship to music in three different areas*

1) Socially

2) Emotionally

3) Personally

**b. If not, can you give an example of how music is not important to you on a personal level**

*It is not important with music in particular but with other expressive arts.*

*It is not important with music*

*Other forms of expressive art are more important*

*It is a hobby among others*

*It is important in society in general but not for me particularly*

*Other*

**4. Why do you think people make music, listen to music and dance to music?**

**5. Imagine that you were on a desert island or in another remote place where you did not have access to music. Would you miss music in your life if there was none?**

*There is always music like the wind, the rhythm of the waves, our voices, when I walk etc.*
*It would be impossible not to have access to music*
*If I did not know about music I would not miss it*
*I would not miss music*
*Function/ accompanying their lives. Too silent without*
*Other*

| ***What different situations, persons and events do you thing have shaped the way you think about music? Could you give a description of something which has affected you*** |
|---|

MUSICAL PROGRESS AND EDUCATION

**6. Could you tell me if a person could improve his/ her musical knowledge and skills? (If yes, how could a person make a musical progress? If no, why not?)** ***(Really asking the question: Is a person born musical or can he/ she become musical?)***

*Through music education (what would be in that music education)*
*By having a good music teacher (How would you describe a good music teacher?)*
*By practising on his/ her own*
*Classes (what would be in those classes?)*
*Competitions*
*Composing/ performing/ listening*
*Music activities together with peers or family*
*You cannot improve musically*
*Other*

**7. How would you define musical skills?**

*Playing instruments, singing, dance, sense of rhythm, pitch, tune.*

*Auditory knowledge*

*Knowledge of music history*

*Music theory*

*Composing / performing/ listening*

*Musical intelligence*

*Skill to reproduce music*

*Skill to create music*

*Someone being emotionally tuned to music*

*Other*

**8. Could you suggest three characteristics of good music education?**

*Knowledge of what music has done about music in the past*

*Being given bases to improve*

*Being motivated to expand your abilities*

*Link music education to what the pupils like to do*

*Being taught by a skilled person.*

*A teacher who is well prepared*

*Music theory*

*Apprehension of music in a new way*

*Involvement*

*Encouragement*

*Learning by doing*

*Streaming*

*Other*

**9. Could you suggest three characteristics of poor music education?**

*Not learning by doing*

*Too noisy*

*Not related to a musical dimension*

*Criticism from the teacher*

*Being singled out and felt like being made foolish*

*Focusing on certain kinds of music that could be difficult to relate to*

*A teacher who is not well prepared*

*A teacher who does not have skills*

*No practising, just theory*

*No involvement*

*Streaming*

*Other*

**10. Why do we have music as part of education?**

*Cultural heritage*

*In order to expand the vehicle of music*

*Self-expression/personal fulfilment*

*Creativity*

*In school we both learn how to work but also how to enrich our lives*

*Music could either be considered a subject on its own or integrate with other subjects*

*Music is important for the school society (celebrations etc)*

*Music is a perception channel*

*Music should not be part of education*

*To prepare pupils to make a living from music*

*To enrich people's life*

*Other*

**11a.**

**Motivation is an important educational tool. Could you think of three (external) factors that might influence a person to progress musically? (Any things you mentioned were external factors. What could be internal motivation for a person?)**

*Musical education/ teachers.*

*Environmental factors such as family or peers involved in musical activities.*

*Having something in common with others.*

*Being able to do music with other*

*Being part of a group*

*Aim for commercial benefits*

*Aim for appreciation*

*Family*

*Peers*

*Other*

**11b. Could you give three examples of internal motivation in order for a personal musical progress?**

*Self- expression*

*Being different*

*Being able to do music with others*

*Aim for commercial benefits*

*Aim for appreciation*

*Emotional development*

*Other*

| ***What different situations, persons and events do you think have shaped the way you think about musical progress? Could you give a description of something which has affected your opinions about*** |
|---|

## MUSIC AND SOCIETY

*Now you have told me what music and musical progress mean to you. Let us move from your understanding of music to your thoughts on what role music plays in society*

*Music and your personal society (schools during weeks, home weekends .....) Music and the general society. I am particularly interested in on your view on the role of music in the Irish society.*

**12a. Do you think music is used to identify who someone is?**
**Do you think people use music to convey who they are? If so could you give some examples (3)**

**b. Are you aware of any groups in Ireland (Sweden) who identify themselves through music?**

**13a. If somebody arrived in Ireland (Sweden) who came from another country, what would that person notice about music and musical events in your country?**

**b. There is a tourist view and a real view on how music being dealt with. If you would move that person beyond the tourist perspective and take him/her to different places to get the real experience of Irish (Swedish) music. Where would you take them?**

**14. Do you think music in Ireland (Sweden) has a different role from music in other countries?**
*Follow-up question1. Does music serve a particular use/ function to the Irish (Swedish) people?*

*Follow-up question 2. Does engagement in music differ between different parts of Ireland (Sweden)?*

*Follow-up question 3.*

*Would you notice a difference in musical engagement between Dublin (Stockholm) and the rest of the country?*

**15. It is general thought outside Ireland (Sweden) that music is important to Irish (Swedish) people. Would you think it is true? If so give three examples of how.**

*Cultural identity*

*Family*

*Belonging to a group*

*Creativity*

*Self - expression*

*Perception development*

*Being part of a context*

*Other*

**16. I am interested in how people can engage in music on a personal level, a community level and on a commercial level. Could you give me some examples? What are the differences between those levels?**

*Concerts*

*Church*

*Music education*

*Choirs*

*Families*

*Associations*

*Play*

*Pubs*

*Music industry/ TV/ CD*

*Other*

**17. Different societies have different approaches to how music should be done or the function of music. In some societies music is important for everyday life. In other societies persons who are extraordinarily skilled and specialised get the attention and support. Do you think there is a general opinion in Ireland (Sweden) about who should have more musical support than others? Is there a general opinion? What is your opinion? What factors do you think have shaped this opinion?**

*Cultural heritage*
*Intellectual approach*
*Emotional approach*
*Specialisation means skill*
*Music is important in order to enrich people's life*
*Political tool*
*The sound represents the mentality of the people*
*Music is something that should be performed to people*
*Music is something that should be shared among people*
*Music is a way to escape from hardship*
*Music is away of expressing joy*
*Other*

**18. There is sometimes a perception in society that music activities demand a high level of skill. Do you believe that anyone could take part of music, or do music activities demand things you first need to know in order to take part of it? Explain.**

*Everyone can do music*
*Everyone can do music but at different levels*
*People need special training in order to become musicians*
*You need to be able to read music before you can do music*
*Everyone is musical*
*Not everyone is musical*
*Either you have a musical talent or you have not*
*Other*

**19. Do you think the opinions about qualities in music that you have just given are different for different age groups? If yes, suggest how. If no, why not?**

*Human identity*
*Cultural identity*
*Self-expression*

*Beat and sound*

*Political tool*

*Other*

| ***What different situations, persons and events do you thing have shaped the way you think about music and society? Could you give a description of something which has affected you opinions about music and society?*** |
| --- |