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Music Education as Dialogue Between the Outer and the Inner

A jazz pedagogues philosophy of work¹

“The aim of this jazz education is for the students to *become* themselves” (JP, interview)

In this paper I will present the study of a leading, Norwegian jazz pedagogues philosophy of work, I call him JP (short for Jazz Pedagogue). The above quote denotes a philosophy of music education recounting a kind of *becoming*, through a dialogue between the outer and the inner in music and human beings.

The study of JP contains various data, gathered through a micro-ethnographical approach (Fetterman, 1998, p. 29). Through *narrative* thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008), on cross of these materials, I have denoted three conflicting/binary *pivot points* named; *Tradition/ Liberation, Music as Heard /Music as un-heard, Pedagogue/ Performer*. These pivot points mark the leading threads in this paper. The background for constructing pivot points, as flexible and moveable analytic tool, was some fundamental frustrations in the work with this empirical material. Firstly; the discourse-oriented approach, inspired by Michel Foucault's philosophy was my original optics (Foucault & Schaanning, 1999). Sadly enough, this standpoint did not seem to fit the potentials in this material very well. The existential perspective seemed deeply fundamental in JPs practice, and I could not do this justice by remaining on a discursive level. So, I started

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reading other types of philosophy, and turned towards Martin Heidegger's philosophy about art and human beings (Heidegger & Gadamer, 2000) and Christopher Small's work about music and humans (Small, 1998). Secondly, the themes that I found were both deeply paradoxical – and, at the same time- completely inseparable. Pivot points then, with *conflicting poles*, emerged as an advantageous tool that dynamically and flexibly was employable in a philosophical perspective in motion between an inner being and some outer power². I'll return to these pivot points, and JP's philosophy of work, but first I will present this jazz pedagogue for you, and show you a small video from his teaching practice.

JP

JP is one of the founders of the first institutionalised Jazz education in Norway, the quite recognised "Jazzlinja" in Trondheim. Last year, he was honored with a price for his work of bringing jazz into the system of higher education in Norway, and for forcefully and passionately progressing this education. "Jazzlinja", was established in a conservatory environment, where classical music and church music had strong traditions. There were quite some *negotiations* and reactions in founding jazz as a formal education, and this skepticism came both from the institution, - with their established premises, and from the jazz environment, - outside any institution. This process has required JP to reflect upon, and *articulate* philosophies of his work, - for himself and for others, something that is beneficial for me in this study.

The purpose of "jazzlinja", as JP puts it, is *for the students to become themselves*, something that emphasizes *the existential focus* in his work. The *becoming* that JP refers to is realized in the practice as a kind of dialogue, between the outer, discursive, and the inner, existential. F.ex *ear training* is a fundament in his practice; this is not only about

² This philosophical standpoint is elaborated on in another paper, in progress for publishing; "Being and Power - a new revealing in music philosophy applied to instrumental music teaching" (Angelo & Varkøy, 2011). In this paper, Martin Heidegger's philosophy, that seeks an authentic being within art, and Michel Foucault's discourse-oriented philosophy are seen as two contrasting standpoints (Heidegger 2000; Foucault 1999). In a bid to resolve this dichotomised reasoning, similarities in Heidegger's and Foucault's work are discussed, especially emphasising Foucault's later writings (Foucault, 1982; Rayner, 2007). Inspired by Derrida (1974), and also Latour (Latour, 2005; Latour & Myklebust, 1996), it is suggested to juxtaposition Heidegger's and Foucault's philosophies, through a *narrative* approach, which crosses, and intersects between academic borders and philosophical standpoints. The study of JP's philosophy of work is conducted within this philosophical frame.

hearing the *outer, measurable, sounds* of music. It is, also, about listening inside *the other person*, to recognize what she/ he hears. “I can’t hear what you hear” JP says to his first-year students “I don’t know you well enough yet”. “Your whole life is in your ear. What you’ve heard and how you have experienced this”, or, -when he comments the early Jan Garbareks’ play for his students: “I can hear that he *hears* right, he just doesn’t get it right on the horn”. Ear training is also about listening *inwards* in oneself, and to sensitively become aware of what one hears, how one experiences this, and realize personal *essences* latent in one self.

According to JP, being a pedagogue and being a performer are the same thing; “Being a jazz musician or a jazz educator, that’s really no difference. That’s just two sides of the same coin”, he says. In this sense he is both *playing* and *educating*, in the teaching contexts at the conservatory, as well as on the stage, when playing with his students – as he often does. JP says about his practice: “I don’t pretend to be a pedagogue – this is my life”. And, as I have spent time with the materials, I have gradually become aware that this is actually what he means. It’s not just the intensity of his work; it is his way of *becoming a jazz musician*- that unfolds in his teaching/ and in his playing. JP has no formal jazz education; this didn’t exist when he was young. He has one jazz-course, though, from when he was 16 years old, with pianist George Russel. This was a frustrating encounter for JP. He didn’t really get the Lydian scales and concepts presented, and was scared to death. He recognized though, that Russel actually *heard* the theoretical systems, and the scales, -in his inner ear. This became a deep motivation for JP to *teach himself to learn* what George Russel heard. As a result of this, JP began to develop his own “pedagogy”, so to say. He bought several jazz records, and learnt to imitate excellent musicians such as Stan Getz, John Coltrane and Lee Konitz by ear, as precisely as possible. JP calls this an “extremely time-demanding and accurate work, still – crucial!”

The aim, though, isn’t barely to *reproduce* good musicians styles of play, but to draw some *essence* from this- and to create something new, something personal, that no one has ever played before (these aims were extremely challenging to articulate in a formal curricula, when “jazzlinja” was established, yet *decisive*, JP says; “if the education wasn’t to become completely re-actionary”. JP tells me how his first meeting with Lee Konitz,

might illustrate this. All of a sudden, at a concert stage in the countryside of Norway – just because some jazz club manager would like to hear them together- Lee Konitz, and JP was on the same stage! This was a historical moment for JP as he had been studying Konitz for years. Of course Konitz soon recognized that, and played in a way (ironically, and exaggerated) so that JP clearly understood that Konitz didn't like him to be a copycat! Konitz wanted him to express something *personal*, something *new*. Reproducing famous musicians solos and styles of playing, is not good enough. JP's teaching practice also pivots to liberate one self from the learnt codes and use these to create something new.

Before the discussion about the pivot points, I'd like to show you an example of JP's work, a short videotape. This is from an ear-training lesson, with a group of first-year students at the Jazzlinja. JP has put on an interview with Tony Williams, where Williams comments upon a performance with Miles Davis band (imitating, with voice, sounds and verbal expressions like "he ended it, you know" "he's responding to Miles" "No one else could ever think of that"). JP comments upon Williams comments, and underlines for the students that Williams is not a "singer, but an *ear-user*", He is "constantly *in* the music, he goes in and out of the rhythmical, in and out of the melodical, harmonical etc". JP brings this interview to the lessons sometime, to illustrate for the students that here, it is *this* way that one listens. Williams's expressions, that comments a kind of communication, illustrates this way of listening.

(videotape)

Back to the pivot points, and JP's philosophy of work:

Tradition/Liberation

A main task for JP as a jazz educator is to "convey humility for tradition, and to continuously search *deeper* into good musicians' play" (by copying them a hundred percent). At the same time, the purpose is to free one self from this copying, and to create something new. Sadly enough, many musicians remain in the "copying- phase" and never progress. A way to transform the imitation into personal styles, if one has fastened, is to bring the "musical language" into different aesthetic frameworks. For example, JP tells me how one of his students was "stucked" in the be-bop style, he was so

frustrated about this, and sick of himself because everything sounded the same. A solution then, was to work with Messiaen's music, and reveal the codes of be-bop through an imitation process in completely other frames.

Tradition and liberation as a pivot point comprises both the *content* in the education, and the *ways of working*. Influential musicians' styles, such as Miles Davis, Jan Garbarek or Eric Dolphy are main parts of the *content* in JP's teaching. Such history-making musicians' expressions seem to be regarded as 'mandatory' in *this* jazz environment, and something that students need to succeed, both epistemologically (to gain knowledge to climb in the hierarchy of recognised musicians), and ontologically (to gain insight in human beings), and thereby to reveal the immanent, unique potential in oneself. *How* this is learned, is also part of a 'tradition' in JP's practice. F.ex there exist no music scores in this context; instead music is to be learned through *listening, imitating and recreating*. And, these are processes that continue, always - f ex JP tells me how *he* still works this way, in his 60s, striving to copy good musicians, perfectly, and Lee Konitz as well, and he is in his 80s.

Music as heard/ Music as un-heard

"You must listen *deeper* into your ear," JP repeats, and indicates that the ear has a depth. This search, to the deeper levels, is done through body and voice, thoroughly, before the music instruments appear, in ear-training lessons, as well as in the one-to-one lessons.

Early in our collaboration, JP tells me that his work might resonate with Christopher Small's philosophy about music, and suggests for me to look into this. When JP talks about a depth in the ear, this not only point to a depth in the art object, but in fact deeper into the human nature – into one self, or the person that one is listening to – something that resounds with Smalls' thinking. Music then, is not only to be considered as palpable objects, stored in MP3 files or music scores – but also *participation*, in an "ideal society, which musicians and listeners have brought into existence for that duration of time", as Small puts it. And it is in this duration of performance that "we can feel that our sense of identity, our sense of which we really are, has been strengthened" (Small, 1987, p. 69).

JP often makes statements like "Great! I can hear that you hear, but that you do not land in your hearing. Nice search!" something that implies that he, as a third person, can experience a communication between a performer and a listener. This communication then, is not limited to one piece of music, and one human being, but includes several of those present in the same musical event. This *collective* perspective is emphasised in Small thinking, for example in the way that he underlines the search for *relations* as interwoven in musicking. (As we heard in Small's paper yesterday morning). This is not only about relations between human beings, but also relations to the inside of one self, to cosmos, the supernatural, or even to relations that one could *wish* existed (Small, 1998, p. 50)³. This intersects Small's thinking about music education, with Heidegger's philosophy of Being- where insight into one's own 'being', and also into the greater 'Being', is considered as the relation that man most dearly longs for (Heidegger & Gadamer, 2000). In Heidegger's thoughts, art has a unique relationship to truth, a relationship that is not spelt out, but can be revealed through a sensitive presence and careful attention to the 'tone in the tone, the colour in the colour, or the shape in the shape' in artworks, as Heidegger puts it (Heidegger 2000 p.11). Those seeking insight into their own being must be present in work of art, *sensitive tuned*, to overcome the subject-object distinction to 'truly' experience, and thereby understand their being, or becoming (German: *Worden*) (the active form of *being* in JP's practice). Heidegger's notion of 'the work of art' sometimes is misinterpreted as referring to a notion about art-objects. In this paper it is important to underline that it is not, although Heidegger also writes about the 'thing-ness' and the 'use-ness' of art objects. The origin of the art, though, resonates with Aristotelian thinking, and with Aristotelian terms like "techné" and "poiesis" –and conceptualizes art as contextualised process connected to the revealing of truth (Heidegger 2000). As Christopher Naughton so precisely put it, in his discussion about Samba performance illuminated by Heidegger's thoughts;

By seeing both inside and outside the experience, the object is understood according to *techné*. The making is not then notes that are played, or in samba, the beats that are

³ "Musicking is an activity by means of which we bring into existence a set of relationships that model the relationships of our world, not as they are but as we would wish them to be, and if through musicking we learn about and explore those relationships, we affirm them to ourselves and anyone else who may be paying attention, and we celebrate them, then musicking is in fact a way of knowing our world – not that pre-given physical world, divorced from human experience, that modern science claims to know but the experiential world of relationships in all its complexity" (Small, 1998, p. 50)

played, but the process and the recognition of how those beats and those drums are played, by whom, when and how (Naughton, 2009, p. 169)

JPs practice pivots insights in *what* one has previously heard, how one has *experienced* this, and – with this as a point of departure, how to create something *new*. This might be considered as a process of *awakening expressions that still doesn't exist*, but who are latent in the persons (as some unconscious facets of ones own life) – through education in the true (authorizing) codes in this context. In curriculums for basic music education in Norway, *musicality* (musikalität), and *ear training* (gehör) appears as fundamental aspects of music education. The recent curricula for music in school also emphasises “music experience as aesthetical experience (ehrfahrung)”, as Varkøy elaborates on (Varkøy, 2010). Such terms seem more of a “glitter speech”, than terms with an actual content. In JPs practice, *musicality* might be recognised as concerning the sounds of music (the outer perspective), and revealing the inner ear, the latent, personal expressions. Or, to employ Frederik Pios terms, as something heard as well as something un-heard (Pio, 2007). (JPs philosophy of work is gestalted within the ‘truths’ of one, specific jazz horizon)

Pedagogue/ Performer

JP states, “I don’t pretend to be a jazz educator. This is my life!”.

This “pedagogy” of lived life becoming a jazz musician is a fundament for what is considered teaching and learning in this context. The process of listening, imitating, reproducing and creating – is JPs own way of learning that has turned in to a formal education. The autonomy in JPs profession performance is not given by a distinct education, but from his “lived life” as jazz musician and jazz pedagogue.

He underlines that “being a jazz pedagogue /jazz musician, that’s no difference, that’s just two sides of the same coin”, and *erases* the distinction between education and performance. Tendencies across the materials point towards this performing-pedagogy as both directing outwards- to a society, and discursive acknowledgements of *what is considered as education*, (according to the ‘discursive polices’ rules, regulating which thoughts and actions about education that gains acceptance as truths, as Foucault might

have put this, (1999 p.21)), and inwards; to an uninterrupted process of becoming. In some educational contexts, the subject “pedagogy” is regarded as fundamental to provide teachers with capacities to educate (from *Bildung*) younger generations, as individuals and societies. With departure from JPs practice, it’s indistinguishable what authorises ‘*Bildung*’ in this philosophy of work, -the area of music, or the area of education. Reasons for this, of course, are mainly because of the blurred lines (if lines at all) between musicking and education.

Anyway, JP values that most jazz students supplements their music education with *teacher* education, as this might provide tools and terms to reflect upon the processes that goes on. He underlines though, that music teacher education need to relate to the exact music that is to be taught. Because “the life of being a jazz musician / jazz educator is fundamentally different from the life of being a church musician / church music pedagogue; Teacher education needs to reflect that to draw upon its potentials!”. This challenges of course, the model of music teacher education in JPs context, where *music* and *education* is divided in two different institutions. With reference to Foucault (1999), it is the education institutions that *formalises* knowledge, or, to say it with Latour (1996); that *upgrades* knowledge from biases -that needs reasoning and legitimacy, to *Science*, -which might be referred to as facts. Through formalising Jazz into an education then, within existing frames for what is *considered* as education, this type of knowledge is accepted as “science” (in the same way as other music styles, anyway..)

Conclusionary

Music education as dialogue, in this paper, is discussed in a philosophical frame inspired by tensions and interdependencies between the outer, discursive, collective, and the inner, existential and individual⁴. This discussion is informed by the philosophies of Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault, and Christopher Small. In JP’s philosophy of music education, the action of performance and the action of pedagogy are inseparable. The first cannot be separated from the other, without them both losing their meaning. Similar to the other pivot points discussed, the inner and existential is undividable to the outer and discursive. Tradition and liberation is *as equally dependent* as music as heard/ music as not-heard are. Subject

⁴ In this paper, the collective is seen as the outer, and the individual as the inner. This perspective in other cases might also be opposite, and recognise the society as the inner, and then the individuals as an outer perspective.

cannot be divided from object, as little as musicking can exist without any objects of music- and the opposite around; even when these concepts in *analytical contexts* obtains meaning through being the others opposition. JPs practice, is about a *dialogue* between such dichotomies, a *sensitive tuning*, or ‘Stimmung’- to employ Heideggers term (Heidegger, 1996), that is neither properly accentuated as “epistemological” nor “ontological” – but perhaps better articulated as an uncertain form of knowing. This philosophy of work provides *one*, distinct position from where to discuss how to lead music education, and – following this, how to deal with central aspects in the curricula for basic music education, in Norway, such as; ear (gehör), musicality (musikalität) and music as existential experiences (ehrfahrung). Such aspects are emphasised intentions in the curricula, but imperceptible and hard to grasp. JPs philosophy of work provides one understanding of what music education is about, and his practice shows us how this, distinct philosophy is revealed through active listening, imitation and creation, through enframed dialogues between the inner and the outer.

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