

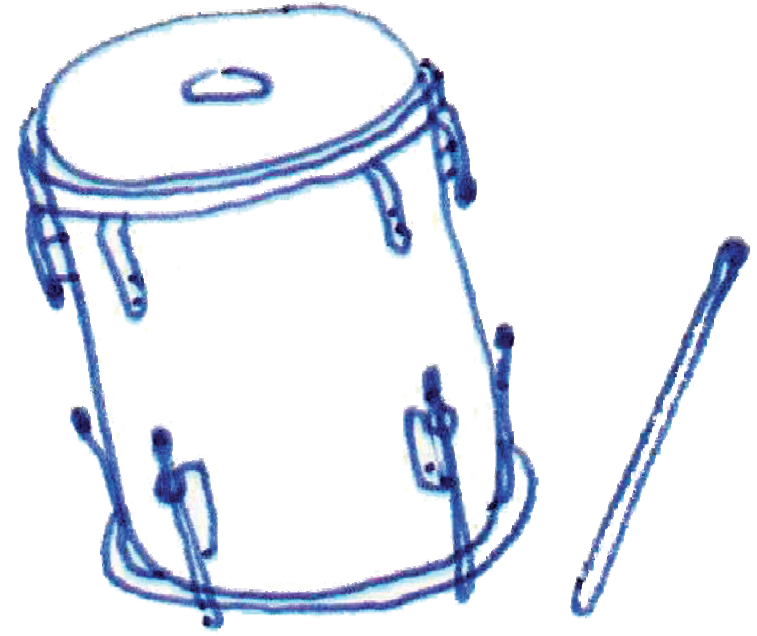
# MUSIC LESSON

## AS A SOURCE FOR WELLBEING AND LIFELONG INVOLVEMENT WITH MUSIC

The focus of this poster is to present factors which may promote or prevent music lesson in general education school to be or become a source for wellbeing and lifelong involvement with music.



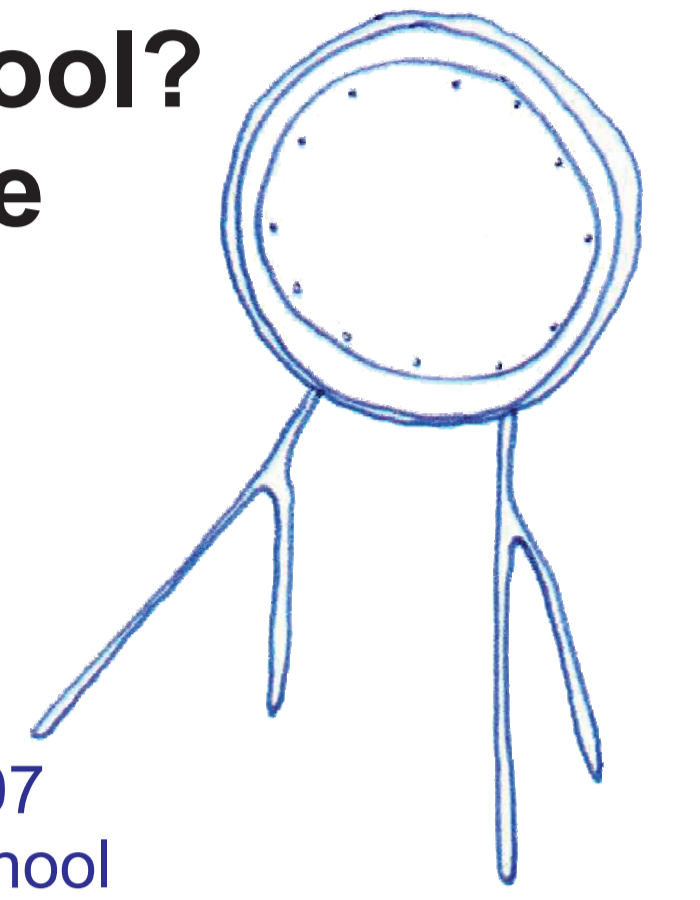
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Music has so much to offer - an opportunity to be together, to hear, feel, perceive, visualize, explore and discuss. As well the power to express the inexpressible in words (Hodges, 2005) and its therapeutic properties help regulate mood (Argyle, 1999). Frequent engagement in musical activities gives pleasure, enjoyment and new experiences which provide individuals with a sense of wellbeing and coherence and make them feel good about themselves (Laiho, 2005).



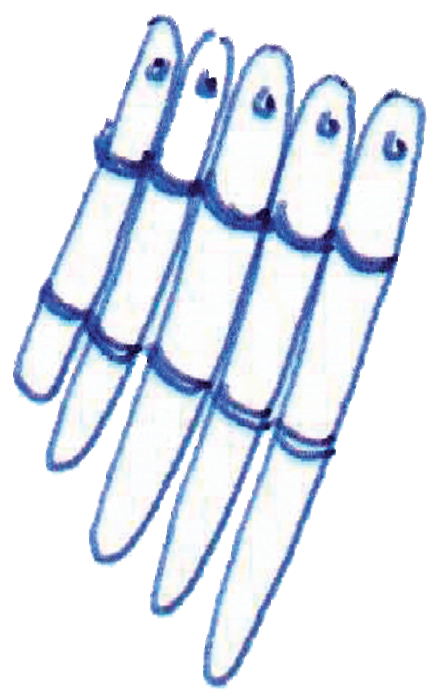
But does it apply to compulsory music lessons at school? Is a music lesson in general education school a source for wellbeing and lifelong involvement with music?



**Method.** This article brings together data from two studies, which are marked as follows:

**Survey A:** Retrospective qualitative research among university students (n = 20, 10 females and 10 males aged between 19 to 28) investigating school's music lesson climate, teacher's role in that process and its effect on involvement with music in adulthood (Möistlik, 2009);

**Survey B:** School inquiry investigating pupils' (n = 227, 120 girls and 107 boys aged 13-14) creative activities (including music) in relation with school climate, personality and creativity indicators carried out by Rütel, Möistlik, Liiväär, Heinla in 2010 (Möistlik & Rütel, 2011).



### WHAT PROMOTES?

#### Involvement with music since childhood

- supported by their family who has also been involved with music
- attended music school or received private tuition on playing an instrument
- active participation in the school choir/ ensemble has played an important role
- the importance of music in their life was continuously assessed very highly

#### Music teacher's favourable attitude

- because of the music teacher(s) pupils had discovered their musicality and developed a wish to actively participate in music (e.g. as singers in a choir).

#### Reasons for staying involved

- Continuity.** The students currently actively involved with music joined university choirs right after they had been admitted to the university, since that represented a value in itself they did not want to do without.
- The experience of beauty.** Active music-making provides an opportunity to experience something aesthetically beautiful while being a part of that process.
- Academic benefit.** Male interviewees underlined the academic benefit - an opportunity to receive credit points for singing, which (at least at the moment of joining the choir) had been a great motivator for them. As time progressed, the importance of that factor faded.

#### Singing

Singing is a very frequent component in music lessons (although it seems to be less so in the upper secondary school) and an appreciated activity among the interviewees who sing in university choirs. **Singing is also the most frequent association with music lessons in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.** As advantages of singing in a choir, the following circumstances were listed: good company, a meeting point, joy of music making, stress relief, entertainment, success experience, but also a habit of singing in a choir, which began at general education school.



#### Positive attunement

16% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders looked forward to music lessons and went with a good feeling.

### WHAT PREVENTS?

#### Being distant from music

- scarceness of involvement with music at home
- did not make contact with music as a subject at school and that caused reluctance
- the lack of involvement with music and the absence of the habit of expressing themselves through music by the family members at home

#### Music teacher's critical attitude

- due to their teacher's critical attitude in music lessons pupils did not find that they were musical or that it would be appropriate for them to open themselves through music.

#### Reasons for not staying involved

- Lack of time.** Those who did not continue their involvement with music right after having been admitted to the university had not found time for it during the studies any more.
- Listening to music instead.** The interviews revealed a transition from active involvement with music to listening to music, which may have been even more important for the respondents than the activities at music lessons.
- Irrelevance.** Not being involved with music may be related to the fact that a person has not perceived that as an important need of his or her daily life.

#### Singing

However, singing may also be a very disagreeable activity to quite a few pupils, over-exploitation of which in music lessons can lead to a negative musical self-image and reinforce the distance between music and them.

#### Negative attunement

17% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders felt anxiety and unpleasant feelings before a music lesson.

#### Classroom environment

Attunement towards music lesson is more positive when furniture and conditions allow pupils to act and work freely.

#### Schools where students have higher positive attunement towards music lessons

**School climate**  
Pupils had higher average mark in music in the last period; had less absence from school because of disliking lessons; were more proud over their school.

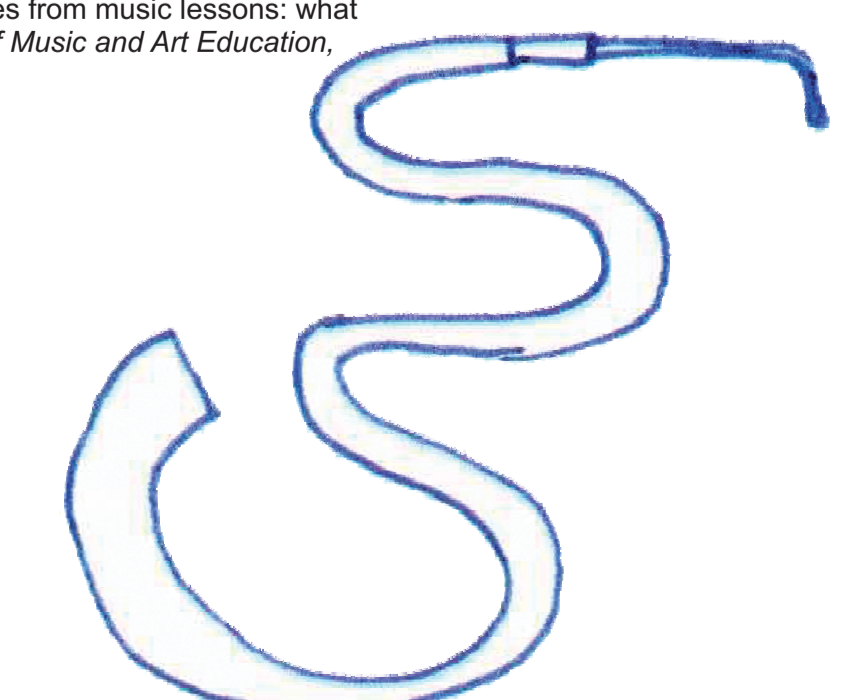
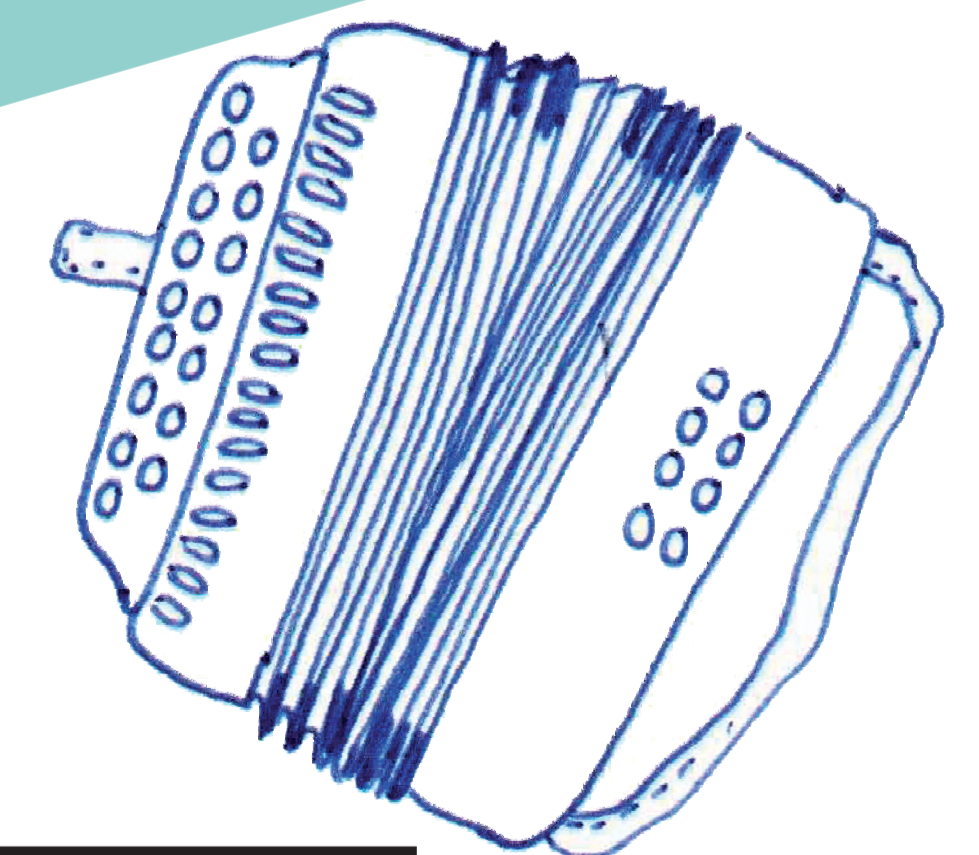
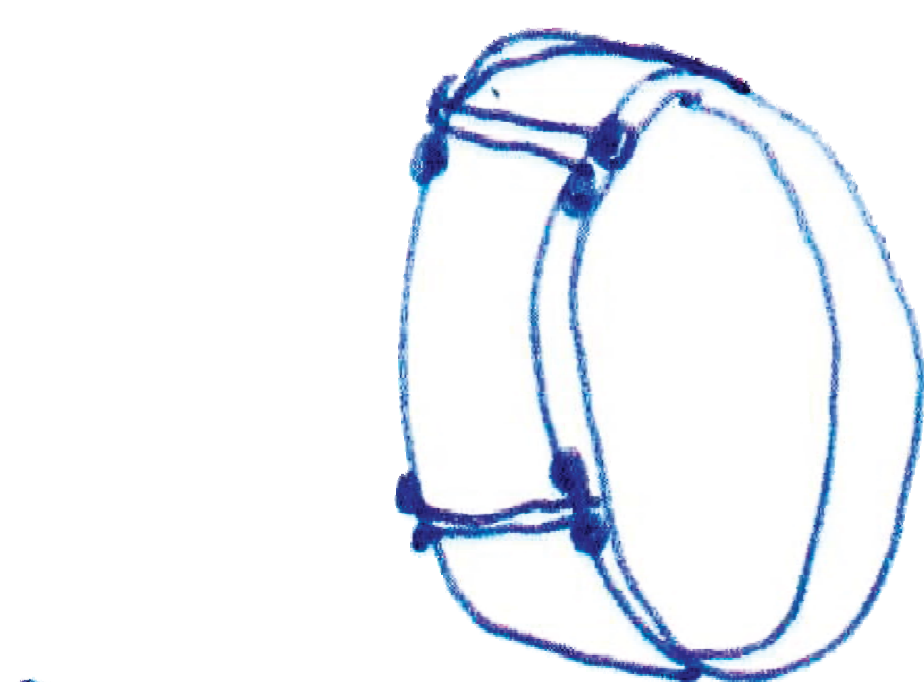
**Wellbeing**  
Pupils had felt themselves happy more frequently during last 30 days.

### Conclusion.

Key factors which may create positive connection with music (and therefore lifelong involvement with music) are musical family environment in childhood and encouragement by the music teacher. Music lessons serve the use as a source for wellbeing mainly for those pupils who have positive attunement towards music lesson.

### References.

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