

THE SCHOOL I'D LIKE!

27th EAS Conference
7th European ISME Regional Conference

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Malmö | Sweden

Theme

“The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child’s choice.” (Article 13 §1 Convention on the Rights of the Child)

“To help kids shape their identity, we’ve got to awaken them to their own questions and encourage them to shape their identity, we’ve got to awaken them to their own questions and encourage them to create their own projects. They don’t really learn unless they ask.” (Maxine Greene, 1995)

“We don’t need no education

We don’t need no thought control

No dark sarcasm in the classroom

Teachers leave the kids alone...

All in all you’re just another brick in the wall” (Pink Floyd, *The Wall*, 1979)

In 2001 and again in 2011 the British newspaper *The Guardian* launched a competition called “The School I’d Like”, in which young people were asked to imagine their ideal school. In 2003 and 2015 Catherine Burke and Ian Grosvenor presented material drawn from that competition, offering a unique snapshot of schools in UK, in two books *The School I’d Like: Children and Young People’s Reflections on an Education for the 21st Century* and *The School I’d Like: Revisited: Children’s and Young People’s Reflections on an Education for the 21st Century*. Already in 1967 a nation-wide contest, conducted by *The London Observer*, hundreds of children were asked to write about their reactions to and ideas about school. The most prominent and powerful message throughout all the entries; 1967, 2001 and 2011 was that “it proves yet again that young people are not a problem that needs to be corralled and curfewed, but an incredible rich resource of wisdom and creative thinking that we should learn to listen to.” (Burke & Grosvenor, 2003, p.162).

Inspired by the strong voices of the children and the excellent theoretical pieces on education in these previous projects, this conference ask you to imagine your ideal or perfect school, or rather we ask you to tell us about the music education of your dreams. Our hope is that this conference will provide a powerful platform for new perspectives on school reform and music education and that it will be essential for all those involved in music education including; music teachers, researchers, students, artists, policymakers and anyone who believes that children’s and young peoples’ voices should be heard.

To facilitate, enhance and encourage discussions, debates, activities, future plans and projects we have introduced new submission formats where music teachers, researchers, students,

artists and policymakers can create a vibrant setting for future steps together. We strongly urge you to submit papers and sessions that merge different perspectives in, on and through music education where a diverse set of people present together; music teachers, students, music teacher educators, researchers, policymakers, heads of schools etc.

Parallel to the submissions of practice and research papers and sessions to the conference we are on a quest to highlight the voices of children and young people, students at all school levels, around the globe. We are sending out an open call to all music teachers, researchers, students, artists and anyone that can tap into the daily experiences of children and young in music education. We will create a website, as a creative hub, where we encourage entries in any form - videos, pictures, photos, poems, raps, drawings, architectural plans, collages, essays, songs etc. Placing students views, ideas, reflections and experiences in the centre of the debate, this conference will display all entries during the conference in a variety of ways. Please join us in this quest of illustrating how the learning environment within music education is experienced by today's' children and how music education could or should be experienced in the future. Together with the children and the young we ask you to pose questions about the reconstruction of music teaching and learning for the 21st century. Let us know about your dreams and visions!

Maxine Greene's (1995) vision for the future school was one where teachers enable, even "provoke", students to find their own voice, to remain open to the voices and perspective of others, and to engage in conversations about what "might be". Greene says that the emphasis and focus on vocational and technical training must be counterbalanced by an emphasis on the release of the human imagination and the cultivation of new visions. The arts play a key role in building understandings across differences and in stimulating the capacity to break with the habitual and the taken-for-granted -- counteracting the sometimes pervasive sense of futility that overwhelms many of our youth. Music provides a conduit to meaning-making, a way of making sense of the world. What does a school look like that encourage students to expand their imaginative capacities in music education? If we let the students tell the story about music education what would it sound like? Are we willing to listen? Should we?

Students voices in music education provide a Pink Floydian-metaphor of the wall which students 'break through'. The idea of music education is to challenge the wall, not passively walk away - to take risks, to ask questions, to be willing to engage. We invite you to describe processes where you have enhanced and cultivated students' visions and voices through the application of imagination and music, where you used music as a tool for opening minds and for breaking down the barriers to imagining the realities of worlds than our own familiar cultures. Creative thinking and robust imagining are keys not just to an individual's lifelong learning but to the flourishing of a democratic society. What if students could be taught and encouraged to engage the world not just as it is but as it might otherwise be?

So, what do children and teenagers really think about the music education and the schools they attend, sometimes many hours every week? Supposed they could design the curriculum, school campus, classrooms, instruments and arrangements themselves - what would music education look like then? We invite you to share your stories of engagement with students. A story that might start: Once upon a music education...but how does it end? Let us write the next chapter in the story on music education together! In Malmö 2019!

The 27th EAS Conference/7th European ISME Regional Conference will take place in Malmö, a fitting site for our focus on music education meeting the needs of the children and young people today. Malmö is located in the south of Sweden with the waves of the Baltic Sea and Öresund embracing our coastline and a connecting bridge towards Denmark, Europe and the rest of the globe. Malmö has been the gateway through which immigrants over the years, from many lands, have entered Sweden, displaced and fleeing hatred and persecution, impacts of climate change and people's fights against environmental racism all in search of a safe haven or new possibilities. In Malmö 178 different countries are represented giving a vibrant and promising exclamation mark to the old expression "If you have seen Malmö. You have seen the world!". Malmö represents the composite nature of society with its challenges to form a union of diverse peoples. It represents hope in new possibilities and renewals, as well as loss - of culture, land, nation, and names, for those seeking a better world. Malmö is at once connection and separation, crowdedness and isolation, gentrification and neighbourhoods, poverty and wealth, individualism and solidarity. It is a beautiful patchwork of culture and language, of experimentation and activism.

Hence, lifting and highlighting students voices and views are embedded in stories from around the globe. Respecting the particularities of cultures, times, and places, how can we learn sensitively from students contemporary experiences and stories? How can we contribute to building the necessary wisdom, commitment, and capacity for meeting the challenges of music education?

At the 2019 EAS Conference we will come together to share insights and analyses of efforts past and present, which make the impossibility of music education possible. We ask of the EAS community to hope radically, imagine creatively, and act inspirationally to build knowledge and take enlightened next steps for music education. Tell us about the music education you would like!

Cordially,

The 2019 EAS Conference Team