

The graphic features several overlapping, organic shapes in bright colors: a large pink shape on the left, a yellow shape on the right, an orange shape at the top right, and a teal shape at the top. A black wavy line weaves through these shapes, connecting the text elements. The words 'Liberty', 'Equity', and 'Creativity' are written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, following the curve of the line. 'Liberty' is positioned on the pink shape, 'Equity' is on the yellow shape, and 'Creativity' is on the pink shape, appearing to be part of a continuous path.

Liberty

Equity

Creativity

Innovating and inventing music in the classroom

30th EAS conference — 9th European ISME Regional Conference



CONFERENCE REPORT

From May 24 to 27th, 2023 the 30th EAS Conference and the 9th ISME Regional European Conference took place at University Lumière Lyon 2, France. You will find below a short resume of the keynote speakers, 20th student forum, 7th doctoral student forum, and an overview of the events and discussions throughout the conference.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

GERT BIESTA: DEMOCRATIC MUSIC EDUCATION

Chaired by Isolde Malmberg (EAS president), Gert Biesta's (Centre for Public Education and Pedagogy at Maynooth University, Ireland, and Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh, Scotland) opening keynote set the tone for the entire conference asking the big questions and starting with "what if" in relation to music education and the world. While the presentation challenged the larger philosophical questions dealing with our understanding, reality, and existence, it also provided concrete guides for how to advocate for democratic creative learning. Biesta began with Hannah Arendt's idea of "trying to be at home in the world," before dismantling hierarchies inherent in phrases like "art is useful". As Biesta pointed out, art is a goal in and of itself. "Where's the research that shows that mathematics makes children better musicians?" he asked jokingly.

He went on to highlight the mistake of categorizing education as the production of *things*, and offering that we might instead ask what education *makes possible*: opening doors to the world and to one's self. Drawing on the work of Philippe Meirieu, Biesta argued that in order to fight "fast, personalized learning" we need interruption, suspension, and sustenance. Among the questions that followed were how Biesta works with those who make curriculum (reminding them that learning outcomes are not the goal) and the location of musical skills and traditions in the conception of existence.

HEIDI WESTERLUND: WHY SHOULD CHILDREN COMPOSE?

In Friday's morning keynote presentation, Heidi Westerlund (Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland) conversed further on democracy and artistic freedom noting again the importance of composing music as adhering to the democratic ideal of living responsibly in the world. She emphasized that students are not simply vessels for skills and competencies, and that art advocacy should be driven by more than a student's future economic potential. She went farther into the compositional process, explaining the importance of the collaborative process for children learning to relate to one another. The achievements of students are not based on linear learning outcomes, but from the behaviors that acknowledge collective responsibility - the "shift from global competition to global collaboration".

LAËTTIA PANSANEL-GARRIC: A COMPOSER'S POINT OF VIEW

The EAS conference's last keynote was by the French composer Laëtitia Pansanel-Garric (University Lumière Lyon 2) who composed, in 2020-2021, a work for 150 children in the series *Les Chantiers de la création*. It was remarkable to hear the reflections of an active contemporary composer following so much discussion on composition in the classroom. Pansanel-Garric took the audience through her meticulous process, which began in September 2020, when she didn't yet know her future collaborators: teachers, students, and musicians in schools. Her detailed explanation of how her orchestral arrangement background aided her compositional plan was put into contrast with the differing processes of the musicians who helped the children compose. One teacher used a

choreographing notation system to create a Hakka; another's stark gestures and movements were key to inspiring both the children and the composer; yet another worked with students to set haikus. Creating these musical and choreographed lexicons was key to the success of the premiere of the piece alongside the countless hours that the teachers put into the project.

OVERVIEW OF CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS, PRESENTATIONS AND SYMPOSIUMS

It would be foolhardy to say that it is possible to make a resume the hundreds of conversations, presentations, workshops and pedagogical moments that occurred during this conference. This resume will attempt to provide an overview of the ways in which presenters and participants connected to the larger theme of "Liberty - Equality - Creativity".

DEMOCRATIC APPROACHES TO CHILDREN'S COMPOSING

Many of the points made in Biesta's keynote presentation were developed in the presentations addressing inclusion, safer spaces, and composition as collaborative practice. From the SiME workshop led by Schaumberger, Wolf, and van der Sandt who mentioned the need to shift terminology such as 'men' and 'women' to the technical vocal name for sections (ergo: 'soprano', 'tenor', etc.) to the doctoral thesis on safer spaces presented by Janßen. Inclusion no longer means that good intentions are enough, as mentioned by O'Flynn's presentation: we need to "move beyond the feel-good factor". Although it may feel as though music educators are including a population, she noted evidence where the target population does not feel included possibly highlighting marginalization.

Presenters echoed Biesta's question 'what if' with their own iterations in form of encouragement, urging educators to trouble themselves (Fautley) with the questions of sonic-social ethics of chorality, to be composers themselves, to collaborate with others, and to discuss music from a compositional perspective (Sakadolskis and Girdzijauskiene). As the latter mentioned in the question section of their presentation, "We learn not only from our activity but from our reflection".

IMPLEMENTING COMPOSITION IN THE CLASSROOM

Discussions tackling questions of the competences, resources, and priorities in teaching composition in the classroom were frequent and fruitful. The overarching answer to this was ultimately a shift in perspective. Instead of thinking of students only as performers, think of them as composers. The lack of time needed to compose could actually be an opportunity to compose more profoundly over several weeks and without fatiguing children's attention span. Finally, composition can be used to reinforce other musical subjects such as music history or performance practice.

Fautley, Evans, and Nenadic recognized that music is not created in a vacuum and therefore cannot be value-free. In the question section of their presentation, Fautley noted “it is not how much you need to know, but how *little* the children need to know before composing”. This shift perspective was apparent in several workshops and presentations such as in the workshop given by Jiříčková and Taylor. They had participants utilizing all the senses in listening including a graphic and kinesthetic score, then collectively composing. Schenk also showed how he was able to reverse the common approach of teaching the “rules” of composition and then composing, by instead conceptualizing only after a composition is created with the aide of a computer.

Technological tools for implementing composition into the classroom were also widely discussed. Many presenters cite pop music as an inspiration for looping (Batalha, Trindale Santos) and using GarageBand (Bollack, Nenadic). Networking was discussed as a tool for students to acquire skills without formal instruction or musical pre-requisites (Hermann). Presenters urged that these tools be destigmatized and made available to all. As Nenadic mentioned in her question section, “if we give children violins to take home, we need to loan out Abelton”.

20TH STUDENT FORUM (SF)

The student forum took place from May 22-25, 2023, beginning on Monday evening with the aide of the student delegates Sara Savovic, Tom Rousselet, and professors Branka Rotar Pance, Oliver Krämer, and Andreas Bernhofer. There were 25 students hailing from 19 different countries who came together to learn from one another, exchanging repertoire, musical activities, and fruitful discussions on pedagogy. This took place at the training center for musicians in schools (Centre de Formation des Musiciens Intervenants) on their campus just outside of Lyon in Bron, France. Students enjoyed the working conditions which fostered an intimate learning environment where students felt “at home”.

7TH DOCTORAL STUDENT FORUM (DSF)

From May 23-25, 2023, the Doctoral Student Forum welcomed 15 doctoral students from 6 countries to present their work and receive feedback while creating mentoring relationships with professionals in the field of music education. Andreas Lehmann-Wermser and Eva-Maria Tralle, (of the Institute of Education Research at Hannover University of Music, Drama, & Media) led discussions and workshops centered around methodological and theoretical issues related to research in music education. DSF participants had ample time to give feedback and network with their colleagues. A second round of presentations of the doctoral posters was open to all EAS conference goers and was highly attended on the morning of Thursday, May 25, 2023.

EVENTS

Following the start of the two forums, the official EAS Conference began with remarks by President Isolde Malmberg in the Grand Amphitheater of University Lumière Lyon 2 welcoming all, giving special thanks to the hosts, and outlining the conference schedule. A decadent reception took place just after in the reception hall with lively conversation, hors d'oeuvres, and the music of clinking glasses.

Thursday was a day for multiple performances starting at midday with a performance of the piece *Anagramme* by middle school students from Bron which was a part of the Am Stram Grame project conducted through the GRAME (National center for musical creation). Stéphane Magnin, the composer, was in attendance and aided in the positioning of the students and their “gramophones” - handheld electronic instruments.

On Thursday evening, all were invited to the concert *Chantiers de la création* at the Auditorium of the National Orchestra of Lyon. This event takes place every year with the help of the Lyon Metropole and the Lyon Regional Conservatory. Karl Naegelen composed the 2023 piece with three different school classes of children aged 8-10 years old. Participants of the conference were impressed by the quality of the dramatic interpretation and the caliber of the children’s performance at such a young age. Many remarked quite simply on the beauty of the work itself based on French poetry and the elements.

Friday morning, ISME president Bo-Wah Leung present the work of the two European winners of this years’ Parsons Music Advocacy Awards: Maria Kramwi (Open University, Cyprus) & Jennie Henley (Royal Northern College of Music, UK).

Friday ended with the General Assembly, including the elections of new board members. In addition, an important cooperation agreement was signed with the European Choral Association (ECA) accompanied by videos from the association’s Secretary general, Sonja Grenier, and their President Dermot O’Callahan.

Before heading off to the conference dinner, the next year’s conference was announced to take place at the Technological University in Dublin (TU Dublin Conservatoire) from June 12-15, 2024. Directly following the meeting, everyone headed to a cultural center in nearby Villeurbanne for traditional French folk dancing and refreshments. Nothing could be better in terms of transition, as the theme of next year’s conference will be *Traditions in Transformation*.