



### **Reflection-based Artistic Professional Practice**

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## Culture of Pedagogy

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## Imprint

### Authors

Evelyn Buyken, Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany  
Carla Conti, Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia, Rome, Italy  
Darla Crispin, Norges musikhøgskole, NMH, Oslo, Norway  
Sybille Fraquelli, Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany  
Ivar Grydeland, Norges musikhøgskole, NMH, Oslo, Norway  
Jonathan Impett, Orpheus Instituut Ghent, Belgium  
Johannes Kretz, mdw – Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, Austria  
Theodore Parker, Eesti Muusika- ja Teatriakadeemia, Tallinn, Estonia

### Editors

Evelyn Buyken, Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany  
Sybille Fraquelli, Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany

### Co-Editor

Stella Louise Göke, Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany

### With contributions from

Peter Dejans, Orpheus Instituut Ghent, Belgium  
Michelangelo Galeati, Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia, Rome, Italy  
Stefan Gies, Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)  
Kristel Pappel, Eesti Muusika- ja Teatriakadeemia, Tallinn, Estonia

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## LAB 1 | OSLO

Developing Critical Reflection  
in Artistic Research

March 2021 at Norges musikhøgskole,  
NMH Oslo, Norway (Online)

### Culture of Pedagogy

The Lab was built on the premise of sharing and engaging in each other's processes. In our view this asks for a flattened hierarchy. Participants from different research areas and with different levels of experience, from MA levels to PhD candidates and Professors, gathered in groups seeking to share thoughts and reflect on the experiences and outcomes from the Lab workshops and presentations – all the time with their own research interests as points of departure. Each breakout-group included members from the faculty, which acted more as moderators than teachers.

The workshops were experimental in their nature and asked for participants to share and unfold *processes*, **reflection as processing**, opposed to *finished results*, which can put the contributors in vulnerable situations. Precarity, risk and failure are also key factors in the projects that were presented as material for preparation before the Lab – in the *Critical Reflection as Exploring* phase and were important premises in all the Lab workshops. Furthermore, the open-to-public “process canvas” on Research Catalogue, had to be established as a safe space that would allow for contributions of unfinished process material. Teachers and staff were collaborating alongside MA students and PhD candidates in this vulnerable sharing of processes. It was an important factor in creating a safe space that the collaboration was across levels of experience, and that the sharing involved, to a degree, stepping into uncertainty for all the contributors. The design of the process canvas was also flat hierarchically, as well as deliberately “messy” to support that reflection also can be inconclusive, messy, and confusing.



## LAB 2 | GHENT

Developing Cognitive Skills for  
Artistic Research in Music

September 2021 at Orpheus Instituut,  
Ghent, Belgium

### Culture of Pedagogy

The selection of faculty is crucial in the success of this project. Each faculty member brings a different approach – one suited to the subject in question – and substantial teaching experience. Teachers developed and shared their intended approaches in a series of preparatory meetings exploring the ethos of the ‘bootcamp’ project. This allowed teachers to reach a common understanding as to the ethos of the project, and ensured parity in terms of the trajectory, intensity and workload of the subjects. It was agreed, for example, that each would give a brief introduction to their subject, its broader contemporary relevance and the particular teaching strategy. The project leader gave a brief general introduction to students at the start of the week, to establish consensus as to the strategy and conduct of the project.

Two particular aspects must be emphasised: preparation and responsiveness. Calibrated and incremental course materials were prepared in advance, and distributed day by day according to the particular learning processes. These materials rendered note-taking unnecessary, so that students could engage fully with the teaching and discussion. In all three subjects, teachers took students through a series of practical exercises, constantly monitoring problems and questions that arose. The sense of ‘safe space’ and the absence of assessment or external observation are important for the cultivation of an environment in which students feel entirely comfortable sharing the progress of their learning and their insights as to the implications and potential of the topics being taught. This is complemented by the ability and willingness of experienced teachers to engage with a group of wide-ranging interests and experience, of intellectual maturity and independence of thought.

The bootcamp thus also becomes a course – in this case, an object lesson – in pedagogy: in how to prepare and present material, how to relate to students individually and as a group, in how to deal with particular instances of obstacle to learning and in group dynamics. The students are presented with the three different high-level examples in a compact and intense framework, and at the same time experience the learning processes of themselves and their colleagues.

While development in the three specific areas was the immediate goal of the bootcamp project, a wider aim was to contribute to the students’ further thought and research in more general terms. Assessment in terms of technical or relative ‘success’ was not a topic – this would have constituted a distraction. Indeed, the notion of ‘mastery’ would be antithetical to the ethos of this project. The careful calibration of teaching, homework, and access to individual tutorial

sessions with teachers ensured that all students completed the week with a sense of having assimilated the teaching. Nonetheless, we were keen to investigate the impact of this experience. There are no simple quantitative metrics; we therefore engaged a social scientist to research and report on the immediate and subsequent reactions of participants.

It is important to stress that the particular pedagogical strategy, as well as the rationale, motivation and relevance, must be specific to the subject and teacher concerned. However, for illustrative purposes we include here the initial presentational texts for the three topics of the September 2021 project:

### **Critical Reasoning**

**Marianne Talbot | Oxford University**

*Are you rational? Is your cat rational? Is that radiator rational? Most people would answer 'yes', 'maybe' and 'no' respectively. But why is a radiator not rational? We can think*

*of it as wanting to keep the room warm and believing that a certain temperature counts as 'warm', so why not as coming to the conclusion that it should turn itself on when the temperature drops, and as its turning itself on as an act performed for a reason? And why are you so sure you are rational? The empirical evidence is mounting for the view that we are nowhere near as rational as we think we are. Could it be that we are not actually rational at all? During the sessions on Critical Reasoning we will reflect on what it is to be rational, consider what being rational enables us to do, particularly in our pursuit of musical excellence, and finally we'll look at how, if we are rational, we might get better at reasoning.*

### **Sixteenth Century Counterpoint**

**Markus Roth | Folkwang University of the Arts, Essen**

*Why study counterpoint? — The concept of this workshop not only follows the idea that the training of contrapuntal thinking in contexts of Sixteenth-Century Music is a perfect school of combinatory skills and therefore for composition and 'creative thinking' in general: In addition, the engagement with both musical Practise and Theory of the Cinquecento can offer fascinating impulses for our own today's musical experience and thinking. Themes/aspects amongst others: The hexachordum as source of inspiration, Learning from Isaac, Creativity and oblige, A Madrigal in a nutshell, Canon techniques, The 'Open Partition', Praise of the paradoxon.*

### **Programming in the arts: practice and reflection**

**Magno Caliman | Orpheus Institute, Ghent**

*Computer code can be seen, at first glance, as a cold and deterministic layer hidden behind our everyday digital devices. A strictly defined set of rules (the infamous algorithm), optimized and carefully designed to achieve well defined goals such as posting a picture on Instagram, or calculating a missile trajectory. In this workshop we will subvert that view, by treating code as*

*a plastic and malleable entity, an object to be speculated with by the artist, and therefore embedded with creative potential. While programming experimental instruments capable of sound generation and manipulation, the fundamentals concepts of computer science — such as functions, variables and control structures — will be presented, discussed, and experimented with. From those 'hard science' topics, broader conceptual discussions will be proposed, where we abstract computational principles in terms of a conceptual model to help us understand the world around us. Regardless of whether your area of research is HIP, electroacoustic music, or anything in between, you will see in this workshop how the practice of programming can provide you with tools to help you reflect upon your artistic and intellectual practice.*



## LAB 3 | COLOGNE

Embodied Reflection  
in Artistic Practice

May 2022 at Hochschule für Musik und  
Tanz Köln, Germany

### Culture of Pedagogy

Conservatoires, schools, and universities are often loaded with expectations: skills, mastery, competition, qualifications. In deconstructing this “old-conservatory-thinking” we ask: how can we overcome concepts of mastery? How can we un-learn how to learn? How can we create an awareness for making self-determined connections between practice and (individual, social, political) context? While focusing on the following parameters, we propose a shift to research as a process, in which the abilities of students and future artists can unfold:

#### 1. Whole person

Strengthening bodily perception as a moment of reflection and as a research technique, offers a view on researchers not only as bodies of knowledges and skills but as well as human beings. How am I doing in the learning formats proposed? In which settings and group constellations am I open and willing to transgress my own habits and to go personal? What would I like to change?

#### 2. Failures

While setting up the formats and rhythms of the different teaching units, we considered our planning only as a skeleton, in which the concrete experiential and embodied doings and sayings of the participants can develop. In this open but not loose concept, failures are not seen as something that should be avoided but rather as thick and rich experience in the process of discovery of the known and the unknown. Failures are not seen as something wrong but as a welcome variation of an already known idea of a sound or a movement. As Bell Hooks points out clearly:

“When everyone in the classroom, teacher and students, recognizes that they are responsible for creating a learning community together, learning is at its most meaningful and useful. In such a community of learning there is no failure. Everyone is participating and sharing whatever resource is needed at a given moment in time to ensure that we leave the classroom knowing that critical thinking empowers us.” (Bell Hooks, *Teaching Critical Thinking*, 2010, 11)

### 3. Intuition

Artistic research offers possibilities to get closer to intuitive and implicit knowledge structures, which are often hidden and as sociologists would call it “under closure”. In this Lab about embodied reflection practices, we encourage a perspective on intuition that describes its discovery not as something random but as systematically approachable. The Lab offers multisensory methods towards hidden assumptions, artist researchers have not been aware of: Sensing space (Workshop part 1), taste and smell as research categories (Workshop part 2) and embodied knowledge (workshop part 3). In this sense intuitive knowledge can be considered as deeply grounded in trained sensory practices, which can be researched in and on through explicit methods.

### 4. Trust

Maybe it is all about trust and learning to trust?

### 5. Flat hierarchies: One community of practice

One of the core decisions of the Lab faculty was to create one common community of practice with students and teachers. There were classroom situations where teachers showed their expertise and led workshops, but most of the time all members (teachers and students) were invited to experiment on new learning settings, which were unfamiliar for all of us.

We decided that teachers and students should work together in one community of practice, while being aware of how difficult it is to implement flat hierarchies and how easily they come back in a subversive way. Our ethos was that trying out new learning settings can only work, if we consider us all as a learning community and leave our comfort zone. For this it is not sufficient to let the students act, and for the teachers look from the back of the classroom at the “guinea pigs”.

In focusing on the awareness of our body and asking how our body is leading our reflections, we invited the participants to lose their own comfort zone and their own daily routine: How far can we let ourselves go from our own practice but still stay in touch with it?

We created intense and trustful situations of learning in different learning environments: We had been in public, in public spaces like the Cologne Cathedral, the Cologne train station, in a rehearsal room of the centre for early music, in our department in Wuppertal and of course in the dance studio.

And we designed settings in which each participant has time. Time is one of the crucial parameters we were dealing with: it allows us to get into deep contact with new practices and into collaborations with the others. Following Donna Haraway’s concept of “practices of companions” (Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, 2016, 10f), in which the original meaning of the Latin “cum-pane” is in the centre – of breaking and having bread together – we created time frames for letting these companionships emerge among the participants, between their stories, practices and materials.





## LAB 4 | VIENNA

Transculturality  
in Artistic Research

May 2022 at mdw - Universität für Musik und  
darstellende Kunst Vienna, Austria

### Culture of Pedagogy

This was handled very openly by the organizers of Lab 4 and responsibility was given to the workshop leaders. Here are some comments of workshop leaders regarding Culture of Pedagogy:

**Bhagwati:** I am a practicing university teacher without studies in pedagogy, so I do probably do not have the proper terms for this, but I always favor teaching by encouraging a creative and attentive engagement with other actors (humans, animals, plants, atmospheres etc.) that share the same environment.

**Blume:** As I'm used to give workshops and lectures, I always try to focus on the act of listening, which is for me the most important part: listening to the sounds around us, listening to the other (the ones which is different), listening to existing sound pieces or to any other sounds. During this workshop, I've tried to follow this general idea, which I think can be useful for field-recorder, musician or performer. During the workshop it's always complicated to have feedback from the people, especially in a short time, and being connected remotely... but I hope that listening has been appreciated by the participants.

**Sakina:** In preparing the presentation, I concentrated entirely on presenting my own practical conclusions. I tried to show practically the methods of preserving a larynx movement, the tone in which the Dengbejs sing, by putting their hands to their ears and trying to create a resonance. I witnessed the participants watching with interest.

**Kislal:** Since my topic was "the time of unlearning", my goal was not to "teach" something but to make the attendees reflect on perspectives of making art today. Establishing a safe space in which to discuss a very sensitive topic was the first step for that. Giving a voice in the room to the new generation (students, young artists), who are more involved with such questions, brought them all into an equal status. So it was possible to get rid of the hierarchy of the professor and the student.

**Maria Do Mar:** A pedagogy that is critical of racism and is enriched with postcolonial perspectives. Points of reference for my work are, on the one hand, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's ideas on a supplementary pedagogy, which are, among other things, about rethinking one's own imperial ways of life. On the other hand, I follow critical pedagogy as represented by people like Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux.

**Erdödi:** My pedagogical style and teaching method is dialogic and fosters collaborative learning processes, to which the workshop participants can contribute with their own methodologies, experiences and interests. The exercises I proposed were experiments devised especially for the workshop. I had experience with the LITTLE BOOK OF LEARNING (see above) as a participant of Sarah Vanhee's workshop on BODIES OF KNOWLEDGE, which however convinced me that it is a relevant and interesting tool to re-visit and use on this occasion. My teaching experience is sporadic (I am not a regular lecturer at art universities, but rather a regularly invited guest to a diverse mix of conferences, workshops, summer schools), therefore I don't have a toolkit that I rely on when I hold workshops; rather I develop exercises and situations specifically for each occasion.

My observation during the workshop was that both exercises would have needed a bit more time for participants to engage with them in depth and also that it would have been beneficial to hold a longer feedback/discussion round after each, in which we could have talked about the questions and observations that arose from both situations. I always find it challenging to manage time during such workshops, and to be considerate of the energy and attention span of the participants. As my workshop was on the last day of the laboratory, I observed that the participants were already relatively tired, and in this situation what I had prepared exceeded their capacities as well the time limits of the workshop. Otherwise my expectations were met, because from the feedback I received I understood that both exercises were interesting for the participants. Perhaps my initial impulse was too wide-ranging (as I presented several works from my curatorial practice) and could have been focused rather on an in-depth analysis of only one or two projects; however I also wanted to reflect on how my experiences of collaboration have shaped my practice.

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## LAB 5 | TALLINN

Exploring Musical Identities:  
Autoethnography

September 2022 at Eesti Muusika-ja  
Teatriakadeemia Tallinn, Estonia

### Culture of Pedagogy

Two principles were kept in mind when approaching the pedagogical position of our Autoethnographic bootcamp. Firstly, that the journey taken through the Lab would be one the main instructors have also experienced and shared amongst themselves. Secondly, that the staff would function as a team during the week, not as individual teachers sharing specialized knowledge presented in lecture formats. Considering the first principle, the methods, organization of themes, pedagogical format, and spaces used were all tested out on our instructors before transitioning any themes or ideas to our actual lab. Our team met frequently to discuss our plans and experiences in an effort to put ourselves through the same bootcamp we would be recommending to other artistic researchers. By the time our Lab occurred our team was able to share our journey, our own personal experiences with Autoethnography, as a way of communicating. The nature of the knowledge sought in this Lab is centered around one's individual identity and/or culture, it would be counterintuitive for any individual teacher or lecturer to assume the kind of subjective information which may be revealed to the participant while engaging with an exercise. However, if having travelled down a path many times oneself, the teacher is more readily available to help guide the participants, revealing points of interest and/or possible errors in understanding/applying a method. Regarding the second point, it was important for our lab to present ourselves as a cohesive educational team. This meant that those who designed the Lab were not only the individuals who had already experienced many of the exercises, but were also the guides throughout the weeklong process. All instructors participated daily, were available for individual discussions throughout the week, and collaborated openly and freely in group formats. We believe it is important from a pedagogical standpoint that teaching staff members are all on the same page, agree with the general educational direction of the lab, and feel they have personally contributed to the outcome.

Additionally, we wanted our participants to experience the collaborative nature of a cohesive team. One of the necessary skill sets for maintaining a career in music is the ability to create synergy across groups of individuals. This is evident in terms of the actual discipline of music when considering orchestras and ensembles, but should be further considered beyond just the scope of music making practices. In contemporary times, careers in the arts require the ability to work alongside curators, producers, managers, funding bodies and disciplines outside of one's own area of expertise. When considering pedagogical approaches in artistic research, young artist should be presented with clear examples for what successful team structures could

look like as part of their educational environment. For our team, this was not only about sharing approaches for successful team work, but actually embodying them inside our own teaching stuff to ensure that students have a first hand experience of a functioning team orientated towards achieving a shared goal.



## LAB 6 | ROME

**Conscious Improvisation:  
A Deep and Functional Approach**

March 2023 at Conservatorio di musica  
Santa Cecilia Rome, Italy

### Culture of pedagogy

Since many of the musical experiences, especially in the western repertoire of classical music, are characterized by a strong and defined hierarchy -an example above all: the symphony orchestra with its fixed roles-, thinking about the Lab 6's culture of pedagogy, the first question was:

Are improvisers good candidates for cooperative learning models?

The tradition of cooperation in the musical world is centuries old. This is why having musicians learn to manage improvisation in a cooperative learning environment is a natural if not ideal educational solution.

The Lab 6 has been mostly based on the cooperative learning<sup>1</sup> (CL) as a pedagogical strategy concerning many aspects to improve students' learning through their own collaboration and working in team.

The first aspect is that learning is achieved by the group. This means that there should be a type of interdependence that assures the learning success of the group. All Lab 6's activities were created in such a way that each member of the group contributed equally and this is at once an aptitude that exists in an individual and also a requirement that can be insisted upon for the sake of the group.

The second aspect includes both individual and group accountability. This represents the expectations placed on each of the two components: individual and collective.

The third and perhaps most vital aspect, is that of team work. While most students have participated in some form of team activity in the course of their life, as well as in previous labs of the RAPP Lab project, team skills required to achieve a well functioning unit should be experienced. This aspect is closely related to the principle of interdependence in that team skills either facilitate or hinder interdependence.

The final aspect concerns questions of leadership and evaluation that must occur within a group in order to assure work continuity. The flat hierarchy, which is a prerequisite for developing

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<sup>1</sup> David W. Johnson & Roger T. Johnson, *The impact of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning environments on achievement*. In J. Hattie & E. Anderman (Eds.), *International handbook of student achievement* (372-374). New York: Routledge, 2013.

self-leadership, was pursued throughout the Lab 6 course. The formation of the groups was not organized by the teachers/facilitators: the groups formed spontaneously. It was not necessary to underline how necessary it was that there weren't groups made up of students from a single partner institution of the RAPP Lab project.

'Musical improvisation, in particular, offers rich possibilities for developing a robust and alternative pedagogy that reaches across cultural and social divides, and that enables us to imagine what it might mean to achieve social justice and a meaningful sense of participation in community [...] Improvisation demands shared responsibility for participation in community, an ability to negotiate differences, and a willingness to accept the challenges of risk and contingency. Furthermore, in an era when diverse people and communities of interest struggle to forge historically new forms of affiliation across cultural divides, the participatory and civic virtues of engagement, dialogue, respect, and community building inculcated through improvisatory practices take on a particular urgency.'<sup>2</sup>

Improvisation, inspiring and encouraging students to improve unexplored spaces or relationships of their artistic practice, can be achieved through inquiry based artistic activities and labs.

The Lab 6's experience raises students to be lifelong learners and above all to become independent thinkers.

As David Scott Ross has focus in his parallel<sup>3</sup> between the development of science in the 20th century and improvisation, according to the philosopher Steven Goldman (2004) identified six themes which are central to the scientific developments, 'the theoretical centrality of indeterminacy in current scientific views is entirely concordant with the emergent, processual nature of improvisation'.

	In 20th century science	Improvisation
1.	Relationships are increasingly perceived to be the ultimate reality, with natural phenomena seen as a system	Foreground relationship, as it is integrally grounded in the context from which it grows
2.	Dynamism - accepting change as normal and not trying to reduce it to stasis, with a concomitant focus on non-equilibrium system, which reveal nature to be self-organising	Eschews the security of stasis for flux, in which emergent phenomena are shaped and organized

<sup>2</sup> Ajay Heble and Ellen Waterman, *Sounds of Hope, Sounds of Change: Improvisation, Pedagogy, Social Justice*, at the Second Annual International Society for Improvised Music conference at Northwestern University, December 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *Improvisation-based Pedagogies Changing Thoughts on Learning*, in the Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, p. 54, vol. 28, n. 1, 2012.

3.	Information as a feature of reality	Is constructed via the dialogic exchange of information
4.	Emergence of complexity out of simplicity	Yields high degrees of complexity derived from minimal, simple constraints
5.	Recognition of subjectivity and objectivity as co-defining	Recognizes the interdependent mutability of both performer and content
6.	Science was increasingly seen as cross-disciplinary and collaborative ventures	Involves a collective exploration of borders and conventional assumption

Improvisation introduces to an exploratory way thinking that guides participants reliably within the reflectiveness and introduces them to the world outside their own artistic practices too.

The engagement in Lab 6's working group activities/performances/discussions support students to develop their collaborative skills as they interpret the performative and discursive space surrounding them. improvisational experience arises from the creation, maintenance and enrichment of an associated knowledge base, built within the combination of short and long-term memory so this is crucial not only in the artistic professional practice but in all fields of knowledge.

The Lab 6 explores the specific pedagogic culture that surrounds improvisation with the aim of better understanding the outcomes of their artistic professional practice as well as research training and the relationships with other educational prerogatives and external reference points, including the epistemological challenges of creating contexts that are relevant to their professional environment.

The Lab 6's pedagogical framework can be defined as follow:

- Contextual focus
- Exploration
- Production
- Performance
- Reflection-in-action.

Spiral working cycles of going back and forth among: Contextual focus, Exploration, Production, Performance, Reflection-in-action, both individually and together with other participants, let

participants become aware of creation and collaborate processes that in their artistic community are often tacitly known.

Reflecting on their artistic professional practice through participating in the Lab 6, students develop their metacognitive strategies too, because they consciously reflect on what their thought *processes* were and how to *improve* upon them next time.

Moreover, the Lab 6's interdisciplinary environment, increasing students' natural curiosities, improves their understanding and attitude towards research in their performative/artistic professional practice, because improvisation fosters an awareness of unexpected understanding as well as develops an array of cognitive and social skills, through the negotiation of difference.