What is 'professional musicology' – and does it have a future?

Linda Maria Koldau

Introduction

What is professional musicology – and does it have a future? This was the title that almost immediately came to my mind when professor Lars Bergman, Chair of Musicology at Uppsala University, and Chairman of the Swedish Society for Musicology (Svenska samfundet för musikforskning), invited me to deliver the Norlind Lecture, which is the traditional keynote lecture to the annual meeting of the Swedish Society for Musicology. What is professional musicology – and does it have a future? The double question of this title is based on my personal experience in the discipline of musicology in various countries and on various continents, covering a period of more than 25 years – a period in which our discipline has undergone incisive changes that, in turn, go hand in hand with the more general development not only of the university system, but also of society and its organization as such.

For me, it was a special honour to be invited to give that lecture – not least, since the 2016 meeting of the Swedish Society for Musicology was not just any annual meeting, but the meeting celebrating 100 years of musicology in Sweden. This seemed indeed the right occasion to draw some conclusions – the conclusions of a scholar's journey from being a full-blood musicologist via working as a cultural historian to becoming an expert in veterinarian anatomy and alternative methods of medical treatment for animals. Strange as it may sound: my schooling in musicology is still of great use of me when I teach anatomy to students of veterinarian medicine and physiotherapy – due to the firm basis of professionalism when I studied musicology and wrote my Ph.D. dissertation in the 1990s. It was this question of professionalism that I wished to take up in the Norlind Lecture in Växjö.

This essay follows the structure of this lecture, yet offers an extended version, since the initial question 'what is professional musicology today – and what are its future chances'

Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning vol. 98 2016 – Swedish Journal of Music Research Vol. 3 2016, pp.71-98.

in fact demands that an entire chain of subjects be discussed: not only the general question of professionalism in musicological research (or, more generally, in humanist research at large), but above all, the development of the discipline on the background of the general development of academic education in the past fifty years. This, in turn, encompasses a critical survey of academe as work place and a discussion of the incisive changes that have transformed the public sector since the 1980s. Eventually, the initial question has lead to a cultural historical examination of our discipline with a focus on its recent development and future perspectives.

Since the scope of such a complex examination clearly goes beyond the scope of a publication in a printed journal, the editors of STM-SJM have agreed on a rather unusual solution: the original essay has been turned in an e-book that contains additional material such as testimonies from other scholars and several appendices.[1] Here, the reader will find a shortened version of the examination with reference to additional chapters in the e-book.

Part 1: What is 'professionalism' in musicology?

What is professionalism in musicology – not only in general, but also under the specific conditions of current academic development?

The answer to this complex question is in fact simple and can be applied to any other discipline, too: professionalism is to work on a sound fundament of knowledge, methods and tools – professionalism is to know your discipline and its basic skills, just as in any profession, whether academic or not. Professionalism in musicology is knowledge, paired with experience – and, due to the nature and function of music in human culture and society, combined with knowledge and experience in several other disciplines and cultures. Accordingly, musicology is inter- and transdisciplinary in its essence.

1.1 What is 'a sound fundament of methods and tools in musicology'?

I do not claim that a musicologist must be able to analyse a Mozart symphony in order to be called a professional musicologist. However, I do claim that a professional musicologist must – as any professional in any field – have a sound knowledge and ample experience in the basic methods in their field. In the case of music this is:

- musical literacy
- knowledge to and experience in the analysis of musical structures and forms that have been vital to the development of a musical culture

1 Linda Maria Koldau, *What is 'Professional Musicology?' – And Does It Have a Future?*, Amazon Kindle Publishing, 2016. I am grateful to Jacob Derkert, Tobias Lund and Erik Wallrup for our agreement on this solution.

- knowledge to a large repertoire of music in the culture studied
- knowledge of socio-historical contexts in the culture studied

This culture need not be the Western art tradition, that – according to the development of the past two decades – no longer is *en vogue* in academic studies. It need not be Mozart and Beethoven: ethnomusicologists are 'professional' if they know how to understand the functions of music and to analyse the musical structures and forms in the culture they study – including musical cultures that are *not* based on musical notation.

Accordingly, the ability to read musical notation may be of a lesser significance in certain fields of ethnomusicology or even in systematic musicology (for example, if you focus on acoustics and sound studies, or on popular music). However, those who claim to be a professional musicologist, yet are not able to read musical notation, and who simultaneously claim that they do not see any necessity for this ability, will have a hard stand to defend their professionalism, not only within the discipline, but especially against the questions of the public (who, after all, finances musicologists' work with their tax payments).

Despite the recent development of musicology not only in Denmark, but also at many Anglo-American universities, I therefore retain a basic claim to musicology: a musicologist must be able to read musical notation, whether notation plays an important role in their field of specialization or not.[2] Musical literacy does certainly not do any damage to musicologists who choose to focus on oral musical traditions – but without musical literacy a student of musicology will not be able to learn the fundamental techniques of the discipline.

Just as a footnote: Have you ever heard of expert in literature who is not able to read and who claims that the alphabet has no significance for his work?

The same is valid for musical analysis, which in musicology is just as fundamental a technique as musical literacy. Analysis need not be the analysis of Western art music – the ability to see, analyze, understand and explain structures (or just as well the explicit denial of structure) in a piece of music is just as fundamental in any other musical culture as well as in the large field of popular music.[3]

2 The reason why I emphasize this claim is given below in Paragraph 2.2.

3 Just as a footnote to the bashing of the Western art tradition that has become so much *en vogue* in today's musicology: I have never heard any of my colleagues in ethnomusicology or systematic musicology say that their ability to analyze the form of a sonata or a Baroque concerto has done them any harm in the development of their professional qualification.

1.2 What is meant by 'interdisciplinarity'?

Professional work in musicology does, of course, also demand that you read several languages – not only English and your mother tongue, but any other language pertaining to your field of specialization, such as Italian, French, Spanish, Latin, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Japanese or Arabic. This knowledge of other languages – and, concomitantly, cultures – goes hand in hand with the through-and-through interdisciplinary character of our discipline.

Music as a subject of professional investigation always demands in-depth knowledge of the culture in which it is used as human expression – accordingly, a musicologist not only has to study other languages, but also a broad gamut of related fields, such as political, social, and cultural history of the region and period in question; theology or philosophy; history of technology; film studies; theatre studies; dance studies etcetera. To delve into these fields demands an interdisciplinary approach – interdisciplinarity in its true sense, namely an effort to achieve expert status in any of these fields, wherever the understanding of the music in the respective period and context demands such expertise.

Interdisciplinarity is not the 'tværfaglighed' as I met it in Denmark: 'a superficial butterfly dance from one discipline to the next, without ever getting to know any of the individual disciplines – that is, a game where one examines how many superficial connection can be constructed without the necessity to immerse in a specific discipline', as I once defined it in my book *New Public Managements sprog – DJØF-dansk og bullshitkulturen* (The Language of New Public Management – DJØF Danish and a Culture of Bullshit).[4] Interdisciplinarity means that you, a musicologist, also have to become an expert in certain fields of theology or ethnology, or of film technology, or literature – namely in all those fields that are linked to your musicological object of study.

Of course, interdisciplinarity does mean exchange and cooperation with scholars of the other disciplines – after all, you as a musicologist cannot live up to their in-depth expertise in their discipline, though you may well reach expert status in a limited field of this other discipline. Exchange and cooperation with colleagues from other disciplines are necessary and highly fruitful, as several international projects have shown where representatives from several disciplines work on one common subject and produce new insights and understand due to their close cooperation.

Nevertheless, such cooperation can never substitute the great challenge of interdisciplinarity, namely that you, a scholar of musicology, must learn the methods and approaches of literary analysis, Biblical exegesis, liturgical studies, film analysis, sociology,

4 https://www.saxo.com/dk/new-public-managements-sprog-djoef-dansk-og-bullshit-kulturen_pdf_97887404472851, cf. the chapter on interdisciplinarity in academic work on pp.105–112.

philosophy, etc. etc. – and all that at a high academic level. No colleague from another discipline can disencumber you from this demand if you intend to be a practitioner of true interdisciplinarity and not just a stakeholder of unprofessional 'tværfaglighed'.

1.3 The challenge of the humanities: Individualism in method, approach, and perspective

Becoming a professional musicologist is a lifelong process – just as professionalism in any field of the humanities. You have to become an expert in a great gamut of methods, approaches, modes of thought, disciplines, and languages. There is no 'genius' in the humanities such as the twelve-year-old geniuses in chess or mathematics: humanities, the discipline of the human mind and human action, builds on knowledge and experience that have to grow and ripen throughout a human being's life span.

I say: a great gamut of methods and approaches. Anyone who insists on using 'THE theory' or 'THE method' for analysis and thought is a charlatan – human culture is too complex for one single method or one single theory. Just have a look at medicine (see also subchapter 1.4 below): there is never one single method only to cure a disease. Nature has provided us with a multitude of methods, as well as with a multitude of individual reactions of the organism to these methods. There are common intersection – after all, a certain medicine does help a great number of individual patients –, but there is never, not once, one single method only. The same is valid for the humanities: it is the charm and the challenge of human existence that we neither live by instinct only nor function like machines that have been programmed to work in one mode (i.e. according to one single theory) and cannot think and act in individual ways.

How should a piece of music, a musical period, a film with its music or whatever other subject in musicology then be approached? How do you find the adequate method to examine it, and which theories may well support your examination? Take the basic steps of professionalism:

1. The precondition for your work is a sound basis of knowledge and methodology: You must be able to recognize a phenomenon, put it into its context, judge its significance and consider adequate methods of treatment (be it a patient with a specific health problem or a piece of music you want to understand). This ability builds on year-long study, accumulation and processing of knowledge in your discipline.
2. Hand in hand with your basis of knowledge, you need to have experience – the more you have worked with concrete objects in your field (be it pieces of music or medical patients), the easier it will be for you to see interrelations, discern specific traits, and judge their significance.

3. You must never – never – get stuck in one single approach or one single method, helpful as it may have been in the past. Every object is an individual, and it is your job as an expert to set the individual into its larger context, discern typical features and unusual traits, and make sense of their interplay. There is not one method of analysis or one method of interpretation – every single piece of music forces you to consider a spectrum of methods and approaches that is adequate to this very piece (due to the context of its period and culture). Every piece of music will challenge you to devise a set of methods and approaches that is adequate to this individual piece – and only then, on the basis of sound scientific knowledge, method, and judgement, will you obtain an understanding of and relevant perspectives on this object of investigation. Take the example of medicine once more: any doctor who invariably applies one single method to patients who happen to have resembling symptoms, without taking the time and effort to carry through a proper anamnesis, is unprofessional in his discipline. His patients may be lucky in that he hits the right medicine (and they survive) – but the treatment may just as well stridently fail because it is not adequate to the individual in question.

In short: Professionalism is knowledge, experience and openness to the enormous variety of phenomena in human nature, culture and society.

1.4 An illustrative comparison

Having worked in several other professional fields for the past ten years, I have come to appreciate the technique to compare academic disciplines with other fields of work. These illustrative comparisons are helpful for the following reason:

- They help to create a distance to your own field, giving you the opportunity to relate developments in your own discipline to corresponding developments in other fields – which you, not being involved in these other fields, can more easily perceive in their overall character.
- The insights gained from such a comparative 'look out of the box' will then help you re-evaluate the developments in your own discipline.
- In many cases, absurdities in recent developments become more easily apparent in comparison – cf. the issue of musical literacy discussed above. In literary studies, the claim that the students no longer need be able to know the alphabet in order to qualify with a Master's degree, would seem absurd, just as absurd as a claim in Medicine that students from now on no longer need to know anatomy in order to qualify as medical doctors.

Of course, illustrative comparisons have their limits – after all, every discipline and every field of work has its own, specific preconditions, so that illustrative comparison often must stop at a basic level. Furthermore, they can easily lead to misunderstandings, since the visual presentation of the comparison must necessarily be quite reduced, so that details that are important for a differentiated evaluation cannot always be discussed.

Despite these shortcomings, I appreciate the tool of illustrative comparison, not least because of its eye opener effect in a discussion of complex developments. Thus, a comparison with the field that now has become my main field of professional work (veterinarian medicine) may be of some help.

Illustration 1

Medicine as academic discipline has undergone dramatic developments in the second half of the 20th century. Since the 19th century, future medical doctors in Western culture have had to go through a clear-cut academic programme in order to become qualified. The first years of this programme are dedicated to the fundaments of the discipline: anatomy, physiology, pathology, and, based on the knowledge in these fields, the techniques of anamnesis and diagnosis. On the basis of this fundamental knowledge about the human (or animal) organism and its functions, medical students then learn about the broad spectrum of therapies that can be applied, and they eventually specialize in a field of their choice. The basis is the same in veterinarian medicine, but the fields of specialization are fewer than in human medicine (hence the need for further education if a veterinarian wants to treat animal species that are not part of the academic syllabus). Not only specialized doctors, but also numerous other professions work on the basis of the fundamental knowledge in anatomy, physiology and pathology: no anamneses and

diagnosis, no therapy would be professionally convincing if a doctor or a therapist lacks this knowledge.

But academic medicine is not all. In the second half of the 20th century, an increasing desire for alternatives to academic diagnosis and treatment has arisen, going hand in hand with the disillusion of Western belief in technology. With this desire, age-old techniques of treatment have been re-discovered or transferred to Western culture, such as acupuncture and other methods from traditional Chinese medicine. Homeopathy, too – ever since its development in the 19th century a highly disputed medical approach – became more popular and has in consequence been taken more and more seriously, also by doctors trained in academic medicine. This more open and holistic approach to medicine – named CAM in professional discussion (complementary and alternative medicine) – does not at all repudiate the fundament of academic medicine: if practised in a professional way, alternative methods are a complement to academic medicine, uniting and applying the best of both. In turn, practitioners of academic medicine have increasingly integrated and applied approaches of complementary and alternative medicine into their classical repertoire of treatment. This has led to new branches of medicine that combine a highly qualified scientific approach with a more holistic view of diseases and the reaction of (human or animal) organisms to them.

In addition – and interaction – with these new currents in medical knowledge and treatment, further techniques and fashions in healing have entered the large field of medicine. In contrast to CAM (complementary and alternative medicine), practitioners of these techniques do not always acknowledge the need for the above-named fundament of knowledge; some even regard such knowledge as an unnecessary or detrimental burden. Some of these approaches and techniques rely on long-term practice and knowledge from other cultures, such as Yoga or meditation (which also has a long-standing tradition in Christian culture), others are newly invented fashions that are inspired by various non-Western cultures. To use these approaches and techniques may be beneficial and advance healing processes – but in case of many health problems, they are not sufficient to reconstitute health or to fight a specific disease. A dogmatic belief in fashionable methods and techniques, combined with a repudiation of the knowledge and training in classical medical knowledge and method, may therefore turn out to be highly irresponsible.

This model of co-existing approaches to medicine in present-day medical practice can, with some modification, be applied to the discipline of musicology in its most recent development:

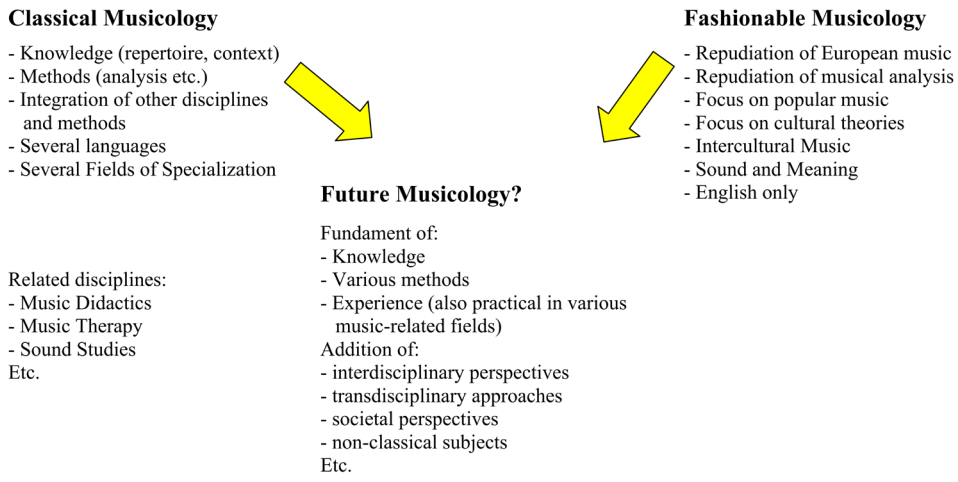


Illustration 2

Just as academic medicine, classical musicology has always built on a broad fundament of knowledge and methods. As mentioned above, the very object of the discipline demands knowledge to several languages and other cultures, resulting in an essentially interdisciplinary approach. In many countries, the fields of specialization still follow the German tradition of the discipline, namely the division into three branches: historical musicology, systematic musicology and ethnomusicology, with each of these branches using its own methods and approaches. Nevertheless, the fundament of these fields of specialization is the same, just as in medicine.

In the past decades, however, as part of a more complex cultural historical process, musicology has decisively changed and become much more differentiated. This is a most welcome development, since classical musicology indeed focused far too much on a European master narrative. Since the 1980s, new approaches and research interests have been introduced, one of them – namely the study and analysis of popular music – quite distinctly in Sweden, namely by Philipp Tagg at Gotenburg University. By now, musicology has become a much more diversified discipline, integrating entirely new fields such as sound studies or research into film music.

In many cases, though, there is also another side of the coin. Basically, the opening and diversification of our discipline is a very positive development. In many cases, though – not least due to great resistance or even animosity on part of an older generation of musicologists –, the turn to new approaches and new ways of thought has been far too radical, being linked with a strict repudiation of anything 'classical'.[5] This has led to a re-

5 Classical can here be understood in a double sense: classical as in 'classical music' and classical in the sense

pudiation of the very fundament that our discipline builds on – the fundament of knowledge, methods, of general musical education and the tools we need to work with music from any culture. Paragraph 2.2 below will offer some examples of the absurdities to which such enthusiastic embracement of the 'new beginnings' in musicology has led. Unfortunately, the situation I describe for the Danish department I worked at in 2009–2012 is not a unique aberration in a very little country – similar trends and similar departments are found at countless universities especially in Anglo-American context, but also in other European countries. It is this approach to our discipline that I call 'Fashionable Musicology', in correspondence to fashionable trends in medicine, such as spiritual healing or a superficial flirt with shamanism: here, the very fundament of the discipline has been repudiated, resulting in 'academic' work that is little more than fraud – studies that build on arbitrary choices, fleeting ideas and results that have neither a palpable relation to the object of study nor to society as larger context.

Please do not misunderstand me: the right-hand column in Ill. 2 stands for 'fashionable musicology' and thus for scholarship of a kind that has renounced the very fundament of the discipline. Many representatives of this sort of musicology do indeed focus on popular music and cultural theories – for the simple reason that such a focus does not necessarily require skills in complex analysis or source studies. In turn, this does certainly *not* mean that any scholar working in the field of popular music, film music, gender studies etc. lacks a fundament of sound musicological study. In fact, the diversification of our discipline has opened up for new fields of specialization such as popular music or sound studies as part of a highly qualified, well-founded scholarly culture of musicology.

The right-hand column therefore refers exclusively to those musicologists – and I am afraid to state that there are not few of them at universities worldwide – who believe and preach that 'modern musicology' no longer demands a sound fundament of knowledge and skills in our own discipline. It is colleagues working in this way who undermine our discipline and its reputation, thus causing great damage to musicology as such.

Is there, corresponding to the column 'Complementary and Alternative Medicine' and its interaction with Academic Medicine in Ill. 1, a 'happy medium', uniting the best of both?

Yes, there is. What I so far have described as 'professional musicology' could be such a happy medium and simultaneously a way out of the dilemma between a far too conservative musicology and a fashionable musicology that has thrown the very fundament of the discipline to the wind. Such a 'future musicology' would still build on the sound fundament that has been developed throughout the 150-year tradition of our discipline:

of academically established musicology.

knowledge, method, skills, experience, in combination with several languages and the knowledge to other cultures and disciplines. Yet it would – as individual scholars already have been doing during the past 40 years – also integrate fresh approaches, new perspectives, and other narratives than the traditional European master narrative. Interdisciplinarity would not only be a by-product of musicology, but its very agenda, building up a cooperation not only with disciplines from the Humanities, Theology, and Social Studies, but also from the Natural Sciences, Medicine, Law, and Business. The result is – as individual achievements with such an approach already have shown – transdisciplinary in the best sense of this concept: leading to entirely new results that one single discipline remaining within its limits never could have achieved. Finally, the overall perspective of such a 'future musicology' should be more oriented towards society – the very society that pays for our work. Thus, this future musicology should encompass themes of relevance to today's society and regard the cooperation not only with public institutions (opera houses, museums, film companies, rock festivals etc.), but also with private companies as integral part of musicological work.

Managers in the education and foundation business would rejoice: such a musicology would indeed be 'modern' in the best sense, since it offers all that is asked for in present-day academic business. If the fundament is there and present-day perspectives and needs are heeded (keyword: 'innovation'), such a 'future musicology' would offer highest quality and scholarly experience, it would be inter- and transdisciplinary across the academic faculties, it would be strictly international and intercultural as well as society-oriented both in its themes and its cooperations. The rich fundament of the discipline's knowledge would be combined with open perspectives (constituting an attitude of 'life-long learning' even in established scholars), and the professionalism in the choice and use of methods would lead to a hitherto unknown efficiency and impact of our work as musicological scholars.[6]

Is this a vision only, or could such a 'future musicology' that unites the best of the present-day situation become reality?[7]

The preconditions for such a 'future musicology' are those already named above: a sound basis of knowledge and methodology, experience in research and interdisciplinar-

6 Why would managers of the academic business rejoice over such a description? All the key words of academic managerialism are found in this description: innovation, quality, inter- or transdisciplinarity, society-oriented (or 'impact', which is the key word used in the United Kingdom), efficiency, life-long learning. In contrast to many web sites and brochures, though, these key words are indeed linked to a reality of sound scholarly work and experience, thus giving an idea of what musicology could offer to present-day society.

7 To my knowledge, such an integrated musicology, combining the best of all, does not exist at any university yet. Colleagues worldwide mainly give testimony of conflicts between the various approaches and of the desire to at least work in a sort of co-existence, yet the preconditions for such a co-existence are basically lacking. Most important, however, are the obstacles discussed in Part 2 below.

ity, and open-mindedness for other perspectives and approaches – all these resulting in a well-reflected individualism and pluralism of method, approach, and perspective, that are chosen individually and as adequate to the research object in question. This sounds like quite a mouthful – but it is simply the essence of what constitutes professional scholarly work.

Hence, there is indeed the chance for a 'happy medium' and an excellent way out of the discipline's dilemma – leading to a musicology that could be (I use the words of a colleague) a 'murbraekker' (breakthrough) for scholarship in musicology.

There is a chance for such a 'future musicology' – *and there is not.* The second part of this essay will explain the many obstacles that so far have made it impossible to establish such a new approach to and practice of our discipline.

Part 2: Does 'professional musicology' have a chance in our academic system?

The above description of a professional 'future musicology' is not a pipe dream. It can indeed be a reality, as efforts and cooperation between individual scholars of musicology worldwide have shown. However, it is next to impossible to establish such an integrated, future-oriented approach to musicology in the academic system. The main obstacles are:

- Conservatism and dogmatism within the discipline
- The strong tradition of inbreeding (preventing innovation and quality)
- The specific Scandinavian development of the humanities (especially in education)
- The institutional power and aggression of the representatives of 'fashionable musicology'
- The imperatives of the present-day academic system (the 'New Public Management University')

In this essay, some of these obstacles – the specific Scandinavian development of the discipline, the long-term consequences of systematic exclusion and aggression amongst the two 'camps' in the discipline, and universities under New Public Management – will be described in detail. For a discussion of the other obstacles the reader may turn to the extended e-book version of this essay, where they are described in chapters of their own.[89]

8 Chapter 2.1: 'Conservatism and Dogmatism: The Recent Development of Musicology in Germany and the USA' ; Chapter 2.2: 'Inbreeding: The Coffin Nail to Academic Quality'; Chapter 2.4 'The Power and Aggression of the Representatives of "Fashionable Musicology" '. In addition, the e-book version of this essay contains testimonies from colleagues, students and former students from Aarhus University as well as other Danish universities that confirm the description of the state of the discipline as it is given in chapter 2.1.2 below.

9 The summary of these experiences, combined with a cultural historical analysis of the system behind my individual case, is offered in my trilogy *Jante Universitet* (Hamburg: tredition, 2013, cf. https://tredition.de/autoren/linda-maria-koldau-9824/jante-universitet-papeback-28801/). Cf. also https://janteuniversitet.

2.1 The specific Scandinavian development in humanist education

In the past decades, the Scandinavian countries have been subjected to radical changes in teaching and education, going back to the 1970s and intermingling with an ardent passion for radical Marxism. The result of this marriage has been fatal, leading to a spectacular decline in the quality of education.

It cannot be my task to outline the development of Scandinavian education since the 1970s in this essay, but will describe what I witnessed as professor at Aarhus University in 2009–2012. This experience has been supplemented with telling insights into corresponding problems at universities in Sweden and Norway (both first-hand experiences and reports by colleagues working at universities in these countries).[10][11]

2.1.1 An education based on unreflected theories

During my years in Denmark, I experienced the appalling consequences of an educational strategy based on the official rule 'What not all can learn, nobody is to learn'. I became witness to the long-term consequences of an absurd educational ideology that used catch-phrases from Marxism and applied them to a society and historical context that had nothing to do with the context in which Marx wrote his *Capital.* As a cultural historian, I could easily discern which turn this ideologist aberration had taken in 1989/90, when Marxism suddenly no longer was politically correct. The late 80s and early 90s: out with Marxism and welcome to the cultural theories from the arch-enemy of Marxist paradise – welcome the cultural theories from the US-American academe. After 20 years of naïve belief in Marxist ideology, the 'new' cultural theories were applied in the same way as the Marxist catch phrases: a catechism of theorems that had to be learnt by heart and applied to any object of investigation – and woe to those who dare develop their own ideas and conclusions.

At Aarhus University, I witnessed the appalling consequences of blind belief in theories. Two months after I began my work as a professor there, I asked the Director of

---

wordpress.com/.

10 In public discourse, this principle is generally ascribed to Ritt Bjerregaard, Danish Minister of Education, 1975–1978. Bjerregaard, however, denies that she should have declared this principle during her term of office as Minister of Education. Whether she did so or not, the principle has generally formed the concept of education in Denmark until the present day. Several colleagues at Aarhus University admonished me that our teaching should always take the 'lowest common denominator' as general standard.

11 'New' is put into quotation marks, since most of the theories the students at Aarhus University (as I observed in 2009–2012) had to learn by heart and apply to any object of investigation were French theories from the late 60s, the 70s and, most recent, from the 1990s. Likewise, Adorno's postulations – developed in the context of cultural life in the USA of the 1940s and 50s as well as in the socio-cultural context of Germany in the 1960s – were uncritically taken as 'truths' to be applied to Danish society and culture of the 2010s. None of the theories the students learnt were actually 'new' and adequate to their socio-cultural context – but none of the students and certainly none of the lecturers and professors teaching these theories ever put a question mark to this fact.

Studies at my department how it could be that the students only were taught 'theory'. Her answer was surprisingly honest: She maintained that there was no time to impart knowledge to the students. Instead, we should teach them theories with which they 'could handle the whole world'. I saw the result of this 'handling the whole world': The students repeated the same theories again and again in their papers and in the class room – theories they did not understand, since they had no idea of the fundament of facts and observations that had led to the formulation of these theories. They did not understand these theories, and thus, they were not able to understand that these theories were outdated, inadequate, or simply wrong. They learnt French theories that had nothing to do with the Danish socio-cultural context of the 2010s, but they believed that these theories were the one and only tool to explain the mechanisms of their society. They had been brainwashed with a narrow set of 'up-to-date' theories, and they repeated them like parrots throughout their educational programme, in any thinkable context.

I soon perceived the absurdity and fatal consequences of such a failed educational strategy. But, being a foreigner to the country and its educational system, I sought exchange with the society in which such an educational strategy had developed. Could it be that it was I who saw everything in the wrong light, coming from a country with another educational tradition? In 2010 and 2011, I visited high-standing representatives of cultural life as well as leading businesspeople in Copenhagen and talked to the Human Resources Officer of one of Denmark's largest international companies. Their statements were shockingly open and unanimous: according to their experience with graduates from university, humanistic university education is a waste of money and human resources.

University education of such a kind has become worthless – even detrimental. In Denmark, the wave of postmodernist theories from the USA fell on a very special educational, cultural and socio-political ground, due to the socio-political development since the 1970s. The result is a perversion of academic education – with long-term consequences for society. No society can afford to educate generations of young people into an absurd pipe dream of theories.

A few truly gifted students detested the academic brainwash they were subjected to. But they had no chance: Anyone who deviated from the dictated structure for a course paper – 1) introduction, 2) presentation of the theory on which you base your work, 3) analysis of one single piece of music that confirms the theory, 4) conclusion confirming the theory – would be punished with a bad grade: just as in the German Democratic Republic, just as in the Soviet States, just as under National Socialism, where academic papers and articles had the same structure. The students who realized that they were being cheated by their teachers and the university system had no chance. If they started to ask questions, if they spoke up against the lack of true teaching in their course, if they

dared develop their own ideas and build their own lines of argumentation in their papers, they were bullied – not only by their fellow students, but above all by the academic staff.

The extremely naïve, blind belief in theories is quite obviously a Scandinavian phenomenon, a special path in the educational development, linked to the specific socio-political context of the 1970s and 80s. I have not worked regularly in Sweden, but cooperation and exchange with several Swedish colleagues as well as a few guest lectures at Swedish Universities have shown me that the development has been quite similar in Sweden (though, fortunately, musicology in Sweden has not been hit as hard by it as other humanist disciplines). And there is ample evidence that the humanities in the rest of Scandinavia are not in a significantly better state. Maybe things are not just as extreme as in Denmark – but the long-term consequences of an educational system that substitutes knowledge and sound methodology for abstract theories are the same. They are devastating.

2.1.2 Musicology in Denmark

Let us return to the development of the discipline itself. Given the special premises in the Scandinavian countries, it has become clear why the principles of 'New Musicology' were met and absorbed with unequalled enthusiasm and intensity at the Danish Departments of Musicology. I have not studied the development of musicology in Denmark in detail. I know that there is more to it than the work done at the university Departments of Music (or Musicology; a differentiation between the two disciplines is often relinquished).

Yet to assess the future development and chances of the discipline in Denmark, it was sufficient for me to witness the consequences of the development since the 1970s throughout my three years at Aarhus University and to put my observations into the larger context of Danish culture and history since the 1970s. At the Department of Musicology at Aarhus University, I observed the following basic traits:

- contempt and suppression of historical musicology (or, since my colleagues rejected to differentiate a designation of specialization within the discipline, contempt for a historical approach as such);
- refusal to accept that specialization does exist and makes sense in the discipline of musicology ('The differentiation of historical and systematic musicology is out of date. We are all musicologists and can all learn from each other.');
- an absurd cocktail of musicological topics and branches within one single educational programme (which both in the B.A. and M.A. education only takes 2 years at Aarhus University);

- a clear suppression of historical approaches and methods in the above-named programme, leaving those among the staff who work with these methods no room to teach according to their qualification;
- abandonment of the basic skills and methods of the discipline, going as far as the manager's dogma that the teaching staff are not allowed to demand that M.A. students of musicology learn to read musical notation;
- fear and silent resignation on part of colleagues who work with historical approaches or with practical music (historical musicologists, teachers of musical analysis, teachers of voice, piano and other instruments);
- manipulation and intimidation on part of colleagues who represent the 'modern' cultural theoretical approach to music (working with cultural theories taken from sociology and cultural studies and abandoning methods that stem from musicology itself);
- censorship of exam papers and PhD projects according to approach (any project proposal with a historical approach was rejected and exam papers for which students had chosen a topic of classical music received bad grades);
- bullying and exclusion of colleagues who dared speak up against manipulations and lack of openness for a variety of approaches and specialization;
- bullying of students who desired to work with historical subjects or to develop their own ideas and approaches in their exam papers.

You may wonder what I mean by 'an absurd cocktail of musicological topics and branches within one single educational programme'. According to the 'consensus' (or, in reality, dictate) at the department, the two-year bachelor education in musicology included training in voice and instruments (both pop music and classical as obligatory part of the syllabus, though the department director aimed at extinguishing the classical part form the syllabus), a six-week course in music history that simultaneously had to cover the introduction to academic methods and use of libraries, several 14-week courses in 'Music as Cultural Field' and 'Music as Cultural Practice', two six-week courses on music in the 18th and 19th centuries and music in the 20th centuries (including the history of Jazz), and several 6- and 14-week courses on cultural theory, theory of science, and theory. Altogether, the students were expected to get through a programme within two years that in a more professional academic context would have been differentiated in at least four different programmes lasting 3–4 years each.

Of course, the contents of the courses in the Aarhus programme did not offer the depths and breadth of knowledge and methodology that is taught in professional programmes. A telling – and in fact dismaying - example of the absurdities that resulted out of the ambition to offer everything to all students regardless of their specific interests and musical literacy is given in the e-book version of this essay.

Such a development of education in musicology is a perversion of academic standards. Of course, this level of 'academic' work was not confined to musicology: it was 'the state of the art' at the entire institute where I worked (at that time called 'Institut for Æstetiske Fag', comprising the Departments of Drama, Literary History, Art History, Musicology, and Asthetics and Culture).

The quality of the educational programmes corresponds to this approach. Today, Aarhus University produces Masters of Musicology who are not able to read musical notation and have never heard a single Beethoven, Mozart, Mahler or Schubert symphony (music which they detest as 'gammeldags' and 'of no use to modern society'). These academically educated 'musicologists' are entitled to become music teachers, and some of them do indeed make a living as music teachers at primary and secondary schools in Denmark.

I suggested to my colleagues at Aarhus University that they might give their educational programme a more fitting name: 'Studies in Popular Music', or – as an American visiting professor suggested – 'Production and marketing of present-day pop music'.[12] My colleagues rejected this suggestion, claiming that their programme covered 'all of musicology'. All of musicology – with altogether 45 minutes to 'Schumann, Brahms, Bruckner, and others' in the one single lecture course on 19th-century music that was conceded to a five-year academic education in musicology.

Of course, the discipline of musicology need not focus on the classical Western tradition. If, however, this tradition is no longer regarded as 'up-to-date', it is necessary for the representatives of the discipline to make a clear statement about this – and to substitute the outdated branch of the discipline by work that is *professional*. This does not only refer to the quality of research, but especially to the concepts and practice of education. [13]

2.2 Long-term consequences of the 'cultural turn' in musicology[14]

It is an age-old principle at universities worldwide that intellectual provocation – extraordinary qualification, new ideas, innovative approaches – are met with distrust and

12 This claim was officially repeated by professor Jeffrey Kurtzman (professor of Musicology at Washington University, St. Louis), who spent one month as visiting professor at Aarhus University and had a very close look at the Aarhus syllabus for Musicology and the consequences it had for the education of the students. Cf. the newspaper article 'Det subtile barbari' (by Jeffrey Kurtzman), in: *Weekendavisen,* 17 June, 2011, p. 12f.

13 This is a shortened version of the Chapter 'The Power and Aggression of the Representatives of "Fashionable Musicology" ' in the e-book version. It is necessary to reflect this 'human factor' in the development of our discipline, since it has – as summarized here – incisive consequences for the discipline as such.

14 Kenneth Westhues, 'The Unkindly Art of Mobbing', in: *Academic Matters: The Journal of Higher Education* 2006, pp.18–19, http://www.kwesthues.com/unkindlyart.htm. For testimonies of how mobbing has been used and experienced in humanist disciplines at various universities worldwide, cf. the extended version of

rejection. With the 'cultural turn' both in musicology and in other humanist disciplines, the mechanisms of this principle have become more patent, but also more powerful, going hand in hand with the general development of academic life and organization, which mainly is a question of power and control (see Paragraph 2.4 below). As has been pointed out by experts on bullying in academe, disciplines where standards and objectives cannot be easily defined – such as literature or music – have become most vulnerable to the use of systematic bullying.

In interdisciplinary and international comparison, musicology can certainly be pointed out as one of the disciplines, where mobbing has been flourishing. Since the 1990s, bullying has especially been used against colleagues who work 'traditionally'. that is, in historical musicology and on subjects that no longer are *en vogue* in a discipline that increasingly focuses on cultural theories and the popular side of music culture.

- Some of the long-term consequences of aggressive and exclusive strategies in musicology can already be clearly seen:
- Less and less positions for historical musicology are announced worldwide.
- European music (history and analysis) hardly plays any role any longer in job announcements – and will thus lose its significance in musicological programmes of education. Since this development also encompasses teacher education programmes, knowledge to and interest for European music will increasingly die out.
- Music history and European music are strongly reduced or entirely deleted from the syllabus of teaching in the musicology programmes – resulting in an overall lack of knowledge on part of students.
- In the discourse within the discipline, historical musicology is generally denounced as 'conservative' or 'out of date'.
- Musicology – whether classical or postmodernist – plays no role in present-day society (cf. Part 3).[15]

2.3 The imperatives of the present-day academic system: The 'New Public Management university'

This development of our discipline – as it is practised and represented within the academic system – goes hand in hand with the large-scale remodelling of the public sector on a global scale. There are many names for this remodelling, which has taken place

this chapter in the e-book version of this essay (cf. footnote 8 above).

15 On the essential mismatch between NPM's market approach and the mechanisms and premises of the public sector, cf. Linda Maria Koldau, *New Public Management. Sådan forvandler det vores samfund* (New Public Management: The Way Society Is Being Changed), Copenhagen: Saxo, 2014, http://www.saxo.com/item/20143787, pp.26–40.

since the early 1980s. I have chosen to use the term 'New Public Management' (NPM), though in the academic discipline of Sociology, New Public Management is regarded as a finished phase in public administration, historically linked to the 1990s.

This sociological view, however, does not correspond to facts of present-day society: As a cultural historian and a person with twenty-five years' experience in the public sector (namely the system of higher education in several European countries and in the USA), I can perceive New Public Management as a phenomenon that has prevailed and that only now begins to unfold the uncanny consequences of a model of thought that applies inadequate theories to a sector with needs whose diversity corresponds to the complexity of human nature.[16]

I have published amply on New Public Management and its consequences for the educational system and, especially, the quality of education at present-day university.[17][18] Here, I will present the main theses in cue words and relate them to the development of musicology within the more general development of higher education.

New Public Management is the application of free market principles to the public sector. Its basic traits and consequences are:

- Combination of free market rhetoric and intensive managerial control practices.
- 'Bullshit'[19] discourse parasitizing the meaning of the words and turning them into empty shells:
  Word shells like 'efficiency', 'accountability', 'quality', 'excellence', 'creativity', 'transparency', 'marked-orientation', 'customer-orientation' etc., used as formulas without any connection to the reality they describe.Quantity instead of quality.
- Enormous increase and significance of the administrative body.

16 Cf. my trilogy Jante Universitet (cf. Footnote 9) and my series of books on New Public Management, with ample documentation from Scandinavian countries (https://www.saxo.com/dk/soeg/boeger?query=Koldau).

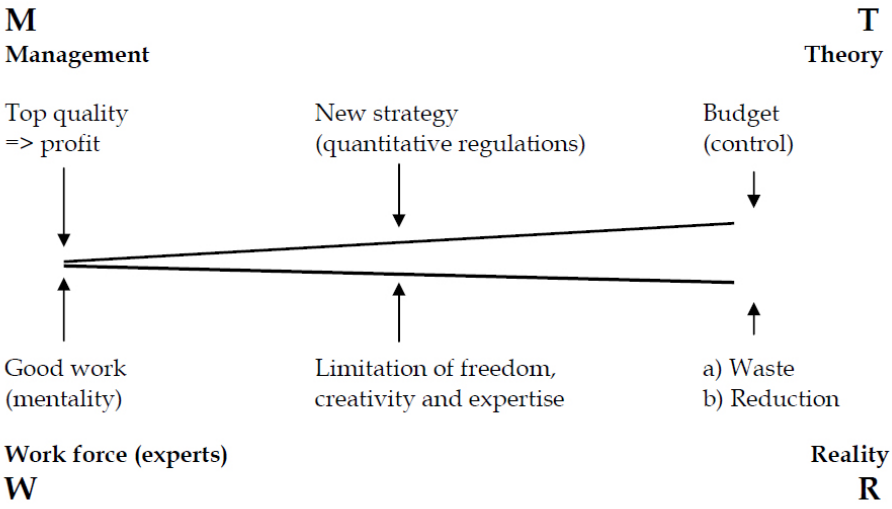
17 It is noteworthy that the principles that have been taken from the private sector and transformed the public sector since the 1990s stem from the 1980s and are regarded as out-dated in present market economics.

18 For more background on these issues, cf. a small selection of publications and the literature is quoted there:, Mathias Binswanger, *Sinnlose Wettbewerbe. Warum wir immer mehr Unsinn produzieren,* Freiburg 2010 (2nd ed. 2012). Maciej Zaremba, Den olönsamma patienten, 4 parts, in: *Dagens nyheter,* Febr. / March, 2013. Chris Lorenz, 'If You're So Smart, Why Are You under Surveillance? Universities, Neoliberalism, and New Public Management', in: *Critical Inquiry* 38 (2012), pp. 599–629. Aviezer Tucker, 'Bully U. Central Planning and Higher Education', in: *The Independent Review* 17 (2012), pp. 99–119. For further study, cf. also the literature quoted in my New Public Management book series (cf. Footnote 21).

19 On the significance of 'bullshit' as rhetoric vehicle of New Public Management thought, cf. Linda Maria Koldau, *New Public Managements sprog – DJØF-dansk og bullshit-kulturen* (The Language of New Public Management – DJØF Danish and a Culture of Bullshit), Copenhagen: Saxo, 2014, https://www.saxo.com/dk/new-public-managements-sprog-djoef-dansk-og-bullshit-kulturen_pdf_9788740472851.

- Increasing gap between the non-professional management and the experts who do the core work of the institution in question: experts have nothing to say; expert knowledge is suppressed.
- The NPM definition of education ignores the most important aspects of the education process (relation between teacher and student; acquirement of knowledge; nature and function of knowledge).
- A so-called 'audit culture' versus the notorious suppression of true debate.
- Brutal suppression of critical questions and dissenting opinions.
- Bullying and dismissal as normal management tool.
- Denial of responsibility (accountability), with the 'consultant method' as a favourite tool.[20]

These aspects go hand in hand with an increasing gap in the work of the public institutions (and many private companies), a phenomenon that I have chosen to call 'hazardous gap':[21]



20 'Consultant method' means: whenever there is a problem at a public institution that no longer can be ignored or suppressed, the management calls in one or more (well-paid) 'external consultants' who are given the task to 'examine' the reasons for the problem. These consultants usually have no experience in the work field they are to examine – and often, they receive instructions for the desired result together with their order. The management thus has given the responsibility to 'solve' the problem to an external 'consultant', – while the essential rule in the consultancy sector is that 'we never take responsibility for what the customer does with our work'. (Statement of a professional German consultant on 20 June, 2012). Accordingly, responsibility – the most problematic and shunned aspect of public and private administration in the NPM culture – is efficiently dissolved in the process of 'solving a problem'.

21 On the mechanisms of the 'hazardous gap' process, cf. Koldau, *New Public Management* (cf. footnote 15), pp.9–15.

The model illustrates the process and consequences of what is being called 'professionalized management' in the language of New Public Management.[22] The so-called professionalization of the management has led to a caste of 'managers' who no longer are trained in (or have long since lost connection to) the work they administrate. Though the intentions are good – symbolized by the starting point where the management's desire for top quality goes hand in hand with the work force's pride in performing well in the work they are trained in –, there will in most cases soon develop a clear gap between those who do the basic work of the institution in question (be it nurses and doctors at a hospital, policemen, or academic teachers) and those who focus on the administration and management of the institution. A typical phenomenon – going hand in hand with societal, economic, and cultural changes in the 1980s and 90s – is the increasing pressure on the work force, demanding an increasingly absurd degree of documentation of the tasks performed and ever-increasing demands on their performance. Typically, this overall increase of pressure and work is laid down and cemented with a 'new strategy' worked out by newly-appointed administrative officers and their increasing number of sub-officers and other administrative staff. As it has been amply documented for the police and health sector in Sweden as well as for the academic sector, this development has led to an incredible waste of time and resources and to a constant decline in the quantity and quality of the actual work done.

This development is dangerous (hence the term 'hazardous gap'), since it inevitably leads to a breakdown of the system, with a crash of large-scale projects or entire institutions, which in turn means a waste of resources (material and human) of unimaginable dimensions. A prominent German example for such a crash is the excruciating scandal about the airport Berlin-Brandenburg, which should have been opened in 2011, but due to an endless series of unprofessional installations and irresponsible project management will probably never function at all. Another example is the panic disaster at the Duisburg Love Parade disaster in 2010, which cost 21 young people their lives (while the responsible public managers went free of any charge).

In the past thirty years, the gap between the 'professional' management and the work force with its expertise in the work of the sector in question has increased dramatically in all institutions of the public sector.[23] Today's managers usually know very little about

22 New Public Management has developed a language of its own, which – referring to philosopher Harry G. Frankfurt's essay *On Bullshit* (Frankfurt's essay was first published in 1985, but only received ample ercognition when published as a monograph in 2005: Harry G. Frankfurt, *On Bullshit,* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005) – defined as a language that has lost every connection to reality. On the mechanisms of this language in present-day public administration and politics, cf. Koldau, *New Public Managements sprog* (cf. footnote 4)

23 The same phenomenon and its most marked symptoms can be observed in the private sector, yet in contrast to the public sector, quality can be much more easily be checked and evaluated (financial loss and the loss of

the work of the sector they are responsible for. At university, this means: institute directors, deans, and vice presidents (as well as their armada of administrative staff) are no researchers (though usually bearing a Ph.D. title) and have not published anything for a long time since. They are not familiar with the basic preconditions for research and teaching on a high level of quality, but follow and seek to realize the ideas and key numbers presented to them by politicians – who in turn have no experience with professional work at a university at all.

However, the problem is not only one of mismanagement. The sector of education has been specifically hit by New Public Management thought and its realization in its daily work on all levels. Again, I only quote the most striking traits and consequences of New Public Management practice on academic education:

- Management carried out by persons who have no or very little experience in the character and demands of academic research and teaching.
- Omnipresent administrative control.
- Omnipresence of quantitative measures, concomitant with the suppression of quality (though 'quality', 'excellence', and 'world class' are indispensable terms in the rhetoric of the management).
- Brutal suppression of critical questions and dissenting opinions (bullying, sanctions, firing, often in violation of existing law).
- Suppression of historical approaches in the humanities (since historical research is able to put present-day developments into a larger perspective of historical developments and their success or failure, it carries a vital potential of criticism).
- Preference to approaches in the humanities that
  a) work with cultural theories and suppress historical perspectives;
  b) lead to the design of 'market-oriented' courses and programmes of education, such as 'Football Management', 'Event Economy', 'Communication and Aesthetics'.
- Increasing measures of censorship: peer reviewing, bibliometry, rejection of non-conformist PhD proposals etc.
- Suppression of criticism and true debate (in contrast to the 'audit meetings' that have been described as farcical by academic staff worldwide) – in short, the abandonment of the basic character of university as a critical, reflecting institution.
- A culture of suspicion, intrigues, and exclusion.
- The prevention of continuity and teacher-student relations that are based on individualism and the development of the students' own ideas and approaches.

customers, or increasing profit and new customers), so that fatal developments quite often are stopped at an early point of time.

- Notorious denial of responsibility on part of managers and directors on all levels of administration (also in the departments).
- Increasing isolation from the true demands and needs of society – remember that education is a public good, publicly financed, and of inestimable importance to any society!

Just as in the recent development of musicology, the principles and practice of New Public Management have fallen on an especially fruitful ground in the Scandinavian countries. This is due to the specific cultural-historical and socio-political development in the North of Europe. Again, this issue is complex and described in more detail elsewhere.[24]

What does all this mean to musicology in a New Public Management context? You will easily recognize that NPM ideology perfectly goes hand in hand with the recent development of the discipline as I have outlined it according to my experiences in Germany, Denmark, and the USA. Representatives of a more professional, knowledge-based musicology are intimidated and denounced as 'out of date', those who focus on cultural theories and renounce basic skills of analysis and cultural historical contextualization determine course programmes and thus the long-term identity of the discipline. Not surprisingly, many of the latter are also found in the administrative positions at their departments – positions that do not demand achievements in research and teaching, but that give power and the possibility to determine the future course of the discipline. And this course, as it is realized by most of the representatives, leads to a discipline that certainly cannot be called 'professional' any longer. [25]

Part III: The future of our displine in today's society

The main justification of New Public Management thought in the public sector is 'the market' and its 'demands'.[26] Musicology as part of an academic system that has been subjected New Public Management thought and mechanisms must therefore offer answers to the question 'Is there a market for the product we offer?'[27]

---

24 Linda Maria Koldau, *New Public Management i Danmark: Hvordan det udnytter vores mentalitet* (New Public Management in Denmark: How It Exploits Our Mentality), Copenhagen: Saxo, 2014, https://www.saxo.com/dk/new-public-management-i-danmark-hvordan-det-udnytter-vores-mentalitet_pdf_9788740425185.

25 A seminal publication on this aspect is Mathias Binswanger's book *Sinnlose Wettbewerbe* (cf. footnote 23).

26 Pirkko Moisala, keynote lecture *(How) Does Music Research Matter?,* Sixteenth Nordic Musicological Congress, Stockholm University, 7 August, 2012.

27 A renowned chair at an English university, named after a leading representative of musical analysis in the 20th century, is now filled with a professor who has no academic education in Musicology, and, formerly an amateur critic of rock music, has coined popular music to be 'the music of our time'.

3.1 Does society have an explicit need for musicology?

In today's society, the market for musicology has become extremely narrow. When I was a student in the 1990s and was asked the notorious question, 'What kind of job can you get with a degree in musicology?' I would gladly answer: 'There is *lots* of fields where a musicologist can work: cultural journalism in the print media, on the radio, at TV stations, work in publishing houses, positions in opera houses, museums and with orchestras'. At that time, there did indeed exist jobs for musicologists in all those fields.

The general socio-cultural development in the Western countries has, however, led to a rapid decline of these fields. Only ten years later, most of the jobs I had described no longer existed. Fifteen years later, the various German state radio stations (covering regions with up to 30 million inhabitants each) had abolished their classical orchestras – musical institutions that had decisively contributed to the development of a highly differentiated culture of classical music-making and concerts in the sixteen German states. With the professional radio orchestras, the need for presentation and discussion of classical music died (and the presence of classical music in German everyday culture has dramatically declined since).

Jobs in musicology today? Forget it. Hardly anybody is interested in the product you offer, and only very few people or institutions will pay for your work.

Of course, popular music is booming, more than ever. But it is the music and its performance that are booming – not our analyses of this music, not our theories on the mechanisms of its marketing and its function in society. Almost no one who loves popular music is interested in such analyses and theories – except for a few colleagues at university and a few students who believe that by studying musicology (that is, theories on popular music) they will be able to get a well-paid job in a field that has been their hobby since their teenage days. Some of these students do indeed get jobs in the pop music sector. But they certainly do not need a five-year university programme in musicology to do their work there – they could just as well have studied marketing or media analysis.

And how many of the millions of people who love pop music would be ready to pay a salary to an academic who wants to make a living by writing on theories about the significance of this music in present-day society? Without the massive subventions of the academic system (which evenly distributes tax money to the staff of all departments), academic experts of popular music would never be able to make a living.

Is there no market for ethnomusicology then? 'Applied ethnomusicology' has recently been presented as offering groundbreaking approaches for a musicology of future times. If you look at musicology in the USA (as well as most European countries), you will also perceive that this branch of the discipline is quite present in job announcements. This

might point at an increasing importance of ethnomusicology. Yet is this the musicology of future times – and can an 'applied ethnomusicology' enter into interaction with today's society?

Ethnomusicology has got an increasing importance within the discipline, and the idea of 'applied ethnomusicology' could indeed open up important paths into socio-cultural work. However, this development is very recent, so that it cannot yet be said whether ethnomusicology and 'applied ethnomusicology' can indeed give our discipline a noteworthy future within present-day and future society. So far, there is under all circumstances no general market for ethnomusicologists and the products they offer – beyond the little field of academia.

Is there no market for historical musicology either? After all, popular History Channels and History Programmes are booming, at least on German TV channels with their c. 150 millions of viewers. So there is an obstinate interest in history in general society, despite the growing contempt for historical approaches and perspectives in most humanist disciplines. Should historical musicology not profit from the tenacious public interest in history?

It certainly does not. In Germany, at least, historical musicology has done everything to eliminate itself from public awareness. The chance to offer the public what is asked for – lectures and publications on the musical aspects in larger cultural historical contexts – has been taken by very few musicologists only (who, in turn, run the risk of being regarded as 'populist' by their academic colleagues). At large, historical musicology is not present within the public awareness and public discourse.

A consequence of this 'academic reserve' against the public is the ever-dwindling interest in the main subject of historical musicology, namely the Western music tradition and its historical context. Up to the 1990s, the listeners to the classic channel in radio stations constantly constituted 2% (in contrast to the 98% who preferred to listen to popular music). Nowadays, this meagre percentage has gone dramatically down – unless you regard film music as 'classic music'. And again, of the earlier 2% of listeners, only a few were interested in *programmes* about music – that is, word-music features where musicologists (or conductors or practical musicians) talked about music, its performance and its socio-historical context. As mentioned above, these numbers have further gone down. The same phenomenon is true for the publishing business. The concert business, due to its primarily social function, is still better off; yet musicologists have traditionally played a tiny role there anyway.

So far, historical musicology has done nothing to counteract this trend – and accordingly, society is less and less aware that this discipline does at all exist.

3.2 General cultural change

The stagnation of the discipline as such goes hand in hand with two important developments in society at large: the long-term change in musical taste, and the radical remodelling of the public sector, including the educational system (the latter has been discussed in Paragraph 2.4 above).

There is almost no public interest in classical music any more. Classical music – the focus of historical musicology – becomes increasingly rare in public life, even in Germany with its long and diverse tradition of orchestras and public concerts. Thus, there is hardly even the need for writers of the odd programme note any more, and positions for musicologists at opera houses have long since been abolished.

In general, interest in Western classical music seems to be dying out – not only in Germany and the Scandinavian countries. The general public does not know what musicology is – and if they are told, they regard it as an exotic whim. Classical music is exotic and useless enough. But what do we need people for who *reflect* on classical music and write sophisticated scholarly articles about it?

Tax payers increasingly ask the question why they are to finance research and education in a discipline that seems to be so utterly useless. To them, musicology is superfluous – and every student with a degree in musicology is one more person who will soon apply for social benefits.

The situation is not entirely hopeless, though. If society has lost the interest in what our discipline traditionally offers, our discipline has to change – asking where it can meet the interest and needs of society again.

Sweden does illustrate this chance more clearly than other countries do. Music-making and musical education still play an important role in Swedish society, and the Swedish choir movement has shown what music, both classical and popular, can give to people at large. Individual music teaching, choral work, lay orchestras and musical societies as well as the enormous sector of bands, performances and events with popular music offer a rich and challenging field – first and foremost for our sister discipline music education (Musikpedagogik – Musikpädagogik), which I have not described as part of the discipline of musicology in this essay, since it is a discipline of its own, with objectives and methods that are very different to those of musicology. Nevertheless, a cooperation with this important sister is highly desirable and can be very fruitful (as I experienced myself at Frankfurt University). A new, professional musicology that takes its role in and for society seriously should thus establish a strong cooperation with musical education – after all, it is here where a demand for music and its rich cultural contexts is given.

Conclusion: Is there a future for a truly professional musicology?

Musicology could indeed play an important role in today's society. After all, music is and has ever been an important part of any human culture, any human society – and this is also valid today. But classical musicology, as it has been taught at universities until today, has not been able to open up for an integral interdisciplinary approach to its object of study. Anything deviating from traditional views and methods has efficiently been suppressed and eradicated. Attacked and intimidated by the advocates of cultural theories, the representatives of historical musicology have receded into a little niche where the discipline now is dying a slow death.

In turn, those who prefer cultural theories to cultural-historical contextualization and analysis increasingly take the positions that once belonged to classical musicology. In Germany, a great number of professorships in musicology have been abolished, while the job announcements for positions that still are retained demand an amusingly unrealistic mixture of qualifications in cultural theory and digital humanities. Professorships in historical musicology, formerly differentiated according to specialization in period, are now to be filled with scholars who are expected to do a little bit of everything – preferably on the basis of external funding. In the USA, the last remnants of a professional historical musicology form small, reclusive circles where they still work in the 'proven way'.

A professional musicology that takes its societal responsibility seriously could show a way out of the dead end that conventional musicology has reached. Integral interdisciplinarity, methodological certainty and reflection, presentation in a way that addresses a broader public than just the small circle of colleagues have already been met with great appreciation on part of colleagues from other disciplines and a general public that suddenly begins to evince a growing interest in musical and cultural historical issues if only those issues are presented in an understandable, arresting way. Such a combination of knowledge, method, interdisciplinary interest and openness for the needs of the public could indeed point to a future for musicology.

However, such a future is hardly likely under the given circumstances. Due to an academic system that still is organized according to strictly defined disciplines, and due to an academic culture where any new approach and any attempt at true interdisciplinary is nipped in the bud, such a renewal of the discipline has no chances. Time is not ripe for a sort of musicology that could be a 'battering ram' for a stagnating discipline. Time is not ripe – and should it one day have become ripe, the discipline will probably no longer exist.

As described in Part 2 of this essay, there are very strong barriers against a well-founded renewal of the discipline – barriers that have their roots both in the traditions

of the academic system (conservatism, inbreeding, exclusiveness and bullying) and in the more recent development of the public sector.

A final and lethal barrier is the fact that the funding system is exclusively reserved for scholars working within academia. Accordingly, those who have qualified themselves beyond this system, those who dare break new ground and break out of the confines of the academic tradition (with regard both to the choice of subject and to the quality of their work) will not receive funding to continue their pioneering work. According to the realities of human life this means that they will eventually stop working in musicology, since only very few people are rich enough to afford working on academic subjects without a salary or external funding.

In short: anyone who dares take another path than the present-day dead end of the academic system will be forced to stop their work due to the lack of funding. Even outside the system, the academic censorship process – here: via the lack of funding – works perfectly well.

Thus, there is little hope for a professional musicology in future times. The established academic system with its tradition of inbreeding and exclusion, with its censorship of true quality and any true renewal makes sure that necessary reforms cannot be carried through, and society's interest in the subject of our studies is next to non-existent.

Should the discipline have a future that is more than an anonymous existence within academia, a new set of parameters for professionalism as well as a code for ethics in professional etiquette would have to be developed and asserted at academic institutes for musicology worldwide. It is up to the academic representatives of the discipline to consider such a desirable reform. Will they have the courage and stamina to initiate it and carry it through?