Att lära av och med varandra
En etnografisk studie av musik i förskolan i en flerspråkig miljö

av

Anna Ehrlin

Akademisk avhandling

Avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i musikvetenskap med musikpedagogisk inriktning,
som enligt beslut av rektor kommer att försvaras offentligt
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Opponent: Professor Geir Johansen
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Abstract

Anna Ehrlin (2012): To learn from and with one another, an ethnographic study of music in preschools in a multilingual environment. Örebro Studies in Music Education 7, Örebro Studies in Educational Sciences with an Emphasis on Didactics 3.

The purpose of the study is to examine music’s place and function in the pedagogical activities at two music preschools. I address the following questions.

- Which factors have influenced the development of a music profile at these preschools?
- How do the preschool teachers relate to music in their profession?
- What is thought important in the preschools’ musical activities?
- How do singing and other musical activities stimulate multilingual children’s language and social participation?

The study is an ethnographic study interpreted in a hermeneutic tradition, informed by a socio-cultural theory. Fieldwork was conducted over a period of two years. The principal methods used are interviews with preschool teachers and observations of preschool children and teachers in action. The study’s findings highlight that preschool principals have great impact on the didactic choices made: they have supported all the preschool teachers in developing the musical competence to teach music in a preschool setting. This has been crucial for the development of these music preschools. The study also shows that various musical activities widen the children’s aspiration and confidence about participation. Communication with sound and motion is a form of expression that is open to all, even in times when children’s spoken language is not sufficient. At these preschools music therefore has a function of stimulating the Swedish language development. Music also creates a sense of community at these preschools. Musical activities give the children examples of how to act in various situations. Musical activities also transcend boundaries. Listening to different types of music is part of the preschools’ own culture. Finally, music has an aesthetic function that provides musical experiences. However, this function is not particularly obvious in the preschool teachers’ discussion of the didactics of the musical activities. It is more important to express the fact that the music-making itself is key. Such an argumentation will manifest the place of music at these preschools, and perhaps will also support the development of the music practice as such. The study shows that it takes time for many preschool teachers to be confident in teaching music, and since the national curriculum says that music should be a part of the preschool agenda, it is important that music should become a standard subject in the preschool teacher education programme.

Keywords: music education, preschool, language development, competence, leadership.

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