

RETHINKING 'THE VALUE OF MUSIC IN ITSELF' - IN TIMES OF PLURALITY AND CHANGES

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Both in a historical perspective and today music educational activities very often are advocated for by referring to the usefulness of the teaching and learning of music concerning a number of ends of personal, general pedagogical and/or political character. Music education is a means for something else than experiencing and making music (Varkøy 2007). Today this way of thinking mostly is connected to economical- and/or health-discourses. A term like 'the value of music in itself' has more or less disappeared from the field of music education – at least in the Nordic countries.

However: If we in music education no longer are able to relate to the idea that the musical experience has some kind of value in itself, I think we are facing an acceptance of a technical rationality and an economical way of thinking embracing all fields of life today (Varkøy 2012). We will then join the common kneeling in front of modernity's tendency of worshipping instrumental reason. According to Hannah Arendt this includes a denial of human freedom, and may open up for constructions of totalitarian ideologies.

This paper will present a research project in philosophy of music education focusing this situation by exploring the following questions:

1. How is it possible to talk about 'the value of music in itself' in a meaningful way today?
2. Why is it important to relate to this kind of idea in times of plurality and changes?

These research questions have been discussed connected to Hannah Arendt's discussions concerning the oblivion of the human (social) activity called *action* – as we in modernity mainly are focusing *labor* and *work* (Arendt 1958), as well as Christopher Small's concept *musicking* and his ideas about *musicking as action* (Small 1998).

References:

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