

Unwanted discourses and the provocation of the aesthetic in international music education

There are currently at least three topics in international music education about which it is risky to talk: classical music, aesthetic education and criticizing music education for social change. While music educators who do not dismiss classical music might be assumed to be elitist, supporting inequality in society (Regelski, 2015), arguing in favor of the aesthetic is equally suspect (Elliott et al., 2016). Even though these topics are closely connected to the North American Elliott (1995) - Reimer (1970) - debate, they have become a significant part of global music education discourses. At the core, this debate has been about music education for social change or music education for its own sake – including the fact that the aesthetic dimensions of music education have been discredited. It is today almost impossible to argue in favor of the aesthetic since it stands for a Bourgeois, elitist approach, favoring classical music and music appreciation, supposedly not being interested in social transformation (Regelski, 2015; Elliott et al., 2016). Although scholars in international music education have been used to this dichotomy for decades, it is not something we have to take for granted. First, because it is a North American standpoint promoting an oversimplified meaning of the aesthetic; second, since in other parts of the world such as China, Norway or Germany, there are different perspectives on the aesthetic and aesthetic music education. In view of the further formation of the global music education community as culturally sensitive community (Kertz-Welzel, 2018), it might be time to reconsider seemingly unwanted discourses in international music education such as the discourse about the aesthetic. Music education has a societal responsibility, but also aesthetic aspects. It might be time to reunite both dimensions of music education (Kertz-Welzel, 2022) - and thus, to overcome at least one unwanted discourse in international music education.

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