

Singing and making in society – ambiguities and musician competence?

Based on a phenomenological way of thinking, this paper aims to describe singing and making in society based on experiences among conservatory students, music theatre students and their teachers. Earlier research has stated the need for conservatory education to more thoroughly prepare becoming musicians for a dynamic and changing society. Ongoing research in European conservatories has found that the preparations for, and student's thoughts on, future working life vary greatly between departments. For example, percussion students seem to be prepared for and willing to work as musicians in soloistic, chamber music, and orchestral situations, with contemporary improvisation, as well as in NGOs and creative music schools. While voice students, on the other hand, primarily are more directed toward specific soloistic roles in operas and operettas, combined with taking on HME teaching on the side. A reason given for this is an idea of singing, where "more varied" singing activities is seen as affecting the voice instrument negatively. The same view of voice competence traditionally pervades musical theatre education, where different voice characters are developed within the master-apprentice tradition, with specific musical theatre roles in mind. A project that challenges this tradition is *Sammankonst (Together Art)* driven by a municipal arts organisation in Sweden where students at a musical theatre program at folk high school level collaborate with intellectually disabled adults. Throughout three years the participants collaborated in the creation and performance of their own musical theatre. To come close to the lived worlds of voice students, interviews were made with six conservatory students, 15 musical theatre students, and two of their teachers. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed in a phenomenological manner. The results show ambiguities when it comes to what voice students should be prepared for and how the choice of preparations influence the view of singing and musician quality competence.