

Danish music education and the 'rhythmic music' concept: some aspects

Peder Kaj Pedersen

Aalborg University, Department of Culture and Global Studies, Denmark

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Abstract: In Danish state schools from elementary to upper secondary school music has been part of curricula at all levels. It has been widely accepted that both individuals and culture benefit from art subjects, creative activities etc. This type of motivation was sufficient support for maintaining music as a subject in the educational system from around 1960 to around 2000. This tradition dates back to the 1920s, when the first Social Democratic government in Danish history (1924-26), with Nina Bang as minister of education (probably the first female minister worldwide), in the field of music made an alliance with innovative concepts of music as a subject rooted in 1) 'folkelig' ('folksy') music (a term associated with the Danish Folk High School movement and musically with composers as Carl Nielsen, Thomas Laub and others) and in 2) the establishing of music as a university subject founded on up-to-date paradigms in European musicology in the early part of the 20th century. When jazz entered the (musical) life of young Danish (high)school-children around 1930, it also changed the agenda of discourse in professional and academic circles engaged in music. Students, composers and performers caught interest in this new genre of music, and in Denmark this interest manifested itself in attempts to integrate jazz in the musical education of the youth. A unique genre, the so-called 'jazz oratorios', was created by the composer Bernhard Christensen (1906-2004) and the librettist Sven Møller Kristensen (1909- 91), and endeavors to establish courses in jazz in the public educational system were made by Bernhard Christensen and others as early as 1934. The term 'jazz' was avoided and the Danish term 'rytmisk musik' ('rhythmic music') was invented to emphasize the didactically qualified educational content of the activity and to avoid what was associated with jazz, especially by its opponents. The article aims at taking stock of the situation in Danish music education during the last decade and at specifying the situation of 'rhythmic music' within this context.

Keywords: Music education. Danish music. Jazz.

Educação musical dinamarquesa e o conceito da 'música rítmica': alguns aspectos¹

Resumo: A música tem feito parte do currículo das escolas dinamarquesas do fundamental ao secundário em todos os níveis. A ideia de que tanto indivíduos como a cultura em geral se beneficiam de assuntos artísticos, atividades criativas etc., tem sido amplamente aceita. Esta motivação foi suficiente para manter a música como disciplina

¹ Tradução de Ingrid Barankoski.

integrante do sistema educacional desde aproximadamente 1960 até 2000. Esta tradição se iniciou na década de 1920, quando o primeiro governo social democrata da história da Dinamarca (1924-26), com Nina Bang como ministra da educação (provavelmente a primeira mulher ministra do mundo), determinou um direcionamento no campo da música com conceitos inovadores baseados em: 1) 'folkelig' ou 'folksy' (folclórico) (termo associado ao movimento das escolas secundárias populares e, musicalmente falando, com compositores como Carl Nielsen e Thomas Laub) e 2) no estabelecimento da música como uma disciplina da universidade, com base nos paradigmas da musicologia europeia do início do século XX. Por volta de 1930, o jazz entrou na vida (musical) dos alunos dinamarqueses do ensino secundário e mudou o discurso dos círculos acadêmicos profissionais e acadêmicos ligados à música. Discentes, compositores e concertistas se interessaram por este novo gênero musical, e isto se manifestou em tentativas de integrar o jazz na educação musical dos jovens. O chamado 'jazz-oratório', um gênero único, foi criado pelo compositor Bernhard Christensen (1906-2004) e pelo libretista Sven Møller Kristensen (1909-1991). Desde 1934 foram feitos esforços para a criação de cursos de jazz no sistema educacional público por Bernhard Christensen e outros. O termo 'jazz' era evitado, e o termo dinamarquês 'rytmisk musik' (música rítmica) foi criado para enfatizar o conteúdo educativo e pedagógico. O intuito era também evitar que a ideia fosse associada com o jazz, especialmente pelos oponentes. O artigo pretende avaliar a situação da educação musical dinamarquesa durante a última década, e mais especificamente a situação da 'música rítmica' neste contexto.

Palavras-chave: Educação musical. Música dinamarquesa. Jazz.

Educación musical danesa y el concepto de 'música rítmica': algunos aspectos²

Resumen: La música ha sido parte del plan de estudios de las escuelas danesas desde la primaria hasta la secundaria en todos los niveles. La idea de que tanto individuos como la cultura en general se benefician de las cuestiones artísticas, actividades creativas, etc., ha sido ampliamente aceptada. Esta motivación era suficiente para mantener a la música como disciplina del sistema educativo desde aproximadamente 1960 hasta 2000. Esta tradición comenzó en la década de 1920, cuando el primer gobierno social demócrata en la historia de Dinamarca (1924-1926), con Nina Bang como Ministra de Educación (probablemente la primera ministra mujer en el mundo), estableció una dirección en el campo de la música con conceptos innovadores basados en: 1) 'folkelig' o 'folksy' (folklórico) (término asociado con el movimiento de escuelas secundarias populares y, musicalmente hablando, con compositores como Carl Nielsen y Thomas Laub) y 2) el establecimiento de la música como una disciplina de la universidad, con base en los paradigmas de la musicología europea de inicios del siglo XX. Cerca de 1930, el jazz entró en la vida (musical) de los estudiantes daneses de la escuela secundaria y cambió el discurso de los círculos profesionales y académicos relacionados a la música. Alumnos, compositores e instrumentistas se interesaron por este nuevo género musical, y esto se manifestó en intentos de integrar el jazz a la educación musical de los jóvenes. El llamado 'jazz-oratorio', un género único, fue creado por el compositor Bernhard Christensen (1906-2004) y el libretista Sven Møller Kristensen (1909-1991). Desde 1934 se han realizado esfuerzos para crear cursos de jazz en el sistema de educación pública, por Bernhard Christensen y otros. Se evitó el término 'jazz' y se creó el nombre 'rytmisk musik' (música rítmica, en danés) para destacar el contenido educativo y pedagógico. El objetivo era también evitar que la idea fuese asociada con el jazz, sobre todo por sus opositores. El artículo pretende evaluar la situación de la educación musical de Dinamarca durante la última década y, más específicamente, la situación de la 'música rítmica' en este contexto.

Palabras clave: Educación musical. Música danesa. Jazz.

² Tradução de Bryan Holmes.

The aim of this article³ is to introduce and discuss the Danish concept “rytmisk musik” (“rhythmic music”); what is the meaning of this concept, what has been the context of it, and which role has it been playing in the Danish education system from its emergence in the early 1930s and to the present agendas of music teaching and music education in Denmark? It is not intended as a survey – and certainly not an exhaustive account – of the history of music teaching in Denmark. The intention is to show a unique concept in music teaching, developed in a Danish context and influential in music teaching in Denmark for decades, that might be of interest in a broader international perspective. Whether it still has a role to play is difficult to determine or to predict, due to the fact, that it is difficult to have a clear overview of the current state of affairs in Danish music teaching right now. In August 2014 the most comprehensive school reform in modern Danish history was started.⁴

The background of the reform was a political agreement between the Danish government and a majority of the opposition as well on “an improvement of standards in the Danish public school (primary and lower secondary education)”, as it was labelled, signed on 7. June 2013.⁵ In this reform a shift of focus as far as music and other arts subjects are concerned is emerging: from music and arts in their own right as sources of personal growth they tend to be seen as activities instrumental for productivity in the Danish society and consequently as sources of economic growth. If the students’ academic level and the academic level in the public school are to be improved, then it is crucial for all students to get the opportunity to unfold their potential fully and for Denmark to be able to compete successfully on the increasingly international market, was the argument. All students shall have a longer and more varied school day with increased class hours and new and more diversified teaching methods. As regards to music the Agreement text argues that the practical subjects/art subjects shall contribute to the development of the academic standards and the standards of the other subjects in the public school, especially Danish and Maths. Simultaneously, the number of music lessons will be increased by one weekly lesson for form level 1 and form level 5. In certain cases, the principal of a school

might permit a student to fulfil his/her compulsory education by music lessons at the municipality’s music school or by exercising their elitist sports in a sports club – instead of i.e. choosing electives. Municipalities can apply to the Ministry of Education for an authorisation to establish talent classes in music as pilot projects. It is difficult to evaluate the consequences in the first year of implementation. Possibilities, potentials on the one hand but severe challenges on the other. And as suggested a showdown to basic elements of Danish education, formation, “Bildung”, and replacing tradition with more functional, performance management oriented view of the tasks and purpose of public school.

In a historical perspective reaching back to the 1920s Denmark is a small Scandinavian social-liberal welfare society, today with a population of 5 mio people, with a tradition of including music as part of the curricula at all levels of the publicly financed school system, from primary to upper secondary level. It has been widely accepted since the 1920s that both individuals and culture benefit from art subjects, creative activities etc. Teaching music and including it in education has been considered a public matter and financing it a public task. Impulses for the developing of music as a subject, however, have been occurring from outside the system. The concept of “folkelig musik”, which played an important role in the school system from the 1920s and for half a century, is an example. It originated in the folk high school movement. The concept of “rytmisk musik”, which is the main issue of my article, is another.

In the Danish education system teachers for the primary and lower secondary levels are educated at teacher training colleges, in professional bachelor programs including music as a possible elective. Teachers for the general upper secondary level are educated at universities in MA programs within the humanities consisting of two subjects, one major and one minor. The Danish conservatories and academies of music educate musicians, and music teachers – of course – but they do not educate teachers for primary, lower secondary or upper secondary levels. It is a Danish tradition that teachers should be seen as generalists more than as specialists, or at least that they teach more than one subject, no matter the subjects they are teaching. That goes for music teachers as well.

The term “Rytmisk musik” cannot be translated to, or is not in use in, other languages. It does not make sense to talk about *rhythmic music*, *musique rythmique*, *rhythmische Musik*. It can only be translated more indirectly, for instance as referring to more ‘serious’ or more ‘authentic’ parts of popular music, for which other languages have no specific term except genre labels such as rock, jazz,

³ The original version was the paper ‘**Rhythmic Music**’ in **Danish music education**, read 30 May 2011, at University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada: <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/lme/May30/Program/11/>

⁴ Information about the implementation of the Reform can be found on the webpage *The Local. Denmark Edition*, Published: 11 Aug 2014, <http://www.thelocal.dk/20140811/denmarks-public-schoolchildren-enter-a-new-era> visited 4-11-2014

⁵ The agreement text can be read on the webpage of the Danish Ministry of Education, http://eng.uvm.dk/~media/UVM/Filer/English/PDF/131007%20folkeskolereformaftale_ENG_RED.pdf

world music etc. (cf. Michelsen 2001) In my neighboring country, Sweden, the term afro-american music has been preferred. The Danish concept 'rytmisk musik' is a speciality which originated in Danish discourse in the 1930s. I shall return to the origins and functions of the concept a little later.

The tradition of including music in the education system as a subject and an activity in its own right dates back to the 1920s, when the first Social Democratic government in Danish history (1924-26), with Nina Bang as minister of education (probably the first female minister worldwide), in the field of music made an alliance with innovative concepts of music as a subject rooted in (1) "folkelig" music (a term associated with the Danish Folk High School movement and musically with composers such as Carl Nielsen, Thomas Laub and others) and in (2) the establishing of music as a university subject founded on up-to-date paradigms in European musicology in the early part of the 20th century, and with a broad contact to progressive cultural currents in the arts, in politics, and in the whole way of life.

The concept of "folkelig" ("folksy" but referring to a semantic field including aspects of both the national, the popular, the homely, and the plain and simple) originated in the thinking and views of NFS Grundtvig (1783-1872) and was associated with the folk high schools that he founded. Lectures – the spoken word as opposed to literature studies, dull grinding etc. - and community singing, not of actual traditional folk music but of composed music in simple idioms designed for community singing, were important elements of Grundtvig's concept of the folk high school. The intention was not to qualify students for specific trades or jobs, but to educate young people, mainly from rural regions of the country, as human beings living in and rooted in Danish culture.

In the process of editing the first broad and inclusive collection of melodies with harmonization for use in the folk high schools (published in 1922), the concept of "folkelig" music in practice was developed in a collaboration between the leading Danish composer since around 1915, Carl Nielsen (1865-1931), the leading church musician Thomas Laub (1852-1927), and two younger musicians, composers and teachers associated with the folk high school movement, Thorvald Aagaard (1877-1937) and Oluf Ring (1884-1946) (cf. Clausen 1958).

The collection of melodies included both ecclesiastical and secular songs grouped according to function and thematic content of the texts. It was a new repertory of tunes: most of the tunes were composed by the four editors (Aagaard 90 tunes, Ring 74, Laub 83, Nielsen 50; the numbers quoted

from the 2nd edition 1940) and a few other contemporary composers according to the ideals of simplicity and objectivity contained in the concept of "folkelig melodi". The renewal was rooted in the pre-romantic tradition: a large number of traditional Danish folktunes (ballads and other types) were included as well (129 tunes). The new musical ideal was in direct opposition to what was considered romantic style and subjectivity, and the new collection included very few already existing tunes.

When the Social Democratic government came to power in 1924, the issue of reforms of the state school system was raised (cf. Faurholt 1997). It was the policy of the Social Democratic party that all children should be educated according to their individual potentials and wishes, with no concern of the wealth, class or beliefs of their parents. Furthermore, education should involve no expenses for the pupils. The school should be the school of the people and it should be under public influence with participating of parents and other stakeholders. The Danish term "folkeskolen" refers to this concept, and it includes the municipal primary and lower-secondary school.

The debate on reforms targeted at legislation on improving the education of teachers at the teacher training colleges and on reforming the way schools were managed locally. Also the education of teachers for the upper secondary level, at that time solely taking place at the University of Copenhagen, was discussed. A university student studied one main subject and two secondary subjects, and as a rule it took a student up to eight years to graduate. In discussions between Nina Bang and the faculty of humanities in Copenhagen, the faculty recommended a curriculum with one main subject and only one secondary subject. Bang agreed on the recommendation, this basic structure was implemented and has been prevailing ever since.

An important issue concerning the management of the individual municipal schools throughout the country was the role of the church. Bang and the Social Democrats wanted a school totally free of ecclesiastical influence and interference. Instead she wanted the parents to take part in the administration and life of the individual schools. More generally and on the national level: the people should take over the school.

None of these reforms were decided or implemented in the short period of Bang's office, and it was not until the 1930s that changes were made in the two areas mentioned. But the thinking and policies that Nina Bang formulated and proposed politically in her two years of office as minister for education came to be the foundation of the Danish state school system from the 1930s until the 1970s.

Music – or singing – as the subject was called – was there, but it does not seem to have been specifically addressed in the debate on the reform of the teacher training colleges or the reform of the management of the individual schools.

But Nina Bang put her fingerprint on the subject of music in another way. In 1926 the young church musician, choir conductor and scholar in musicology Mogens Wöldike (1897-1988) was appointed for the office of State Inspector for Singing in the schools (“Statens sanginspektør”) (cf. Sørensen 1974). The minister had noticed Wöldike’s remarkable achievements as a founder and conductor of the so called Palestrina Choir (1922), performing classical vocal polyphony.

Furthermore, Wöldike had recently (1924) become the leader of the newly established Boys Choir of Copenhagen. As a student with both Carl Nielsen and Thomas Laub, Wöldike was familiar with the principles of “folkelig music” expressed in the edition of “Folkehøjskolens Melodibog” (1922).

Wöldike’s 12 years of office (1926-1939) actually provided the new orientation that Bang had wanted. Factuality was a keyword for Wöldike’s efforts. The issues were not argued in terms of tastes or ideologies, but in terms of knowledge and factual insight. Wöldike stimulated, and contributed to, new editions of music, songbooks, radioprograms etc. He inspired and animated new publications, new curricula, repertorys, and expanded on an academic level the teaching of singing, in the teachers’ educations and in the schools.

Now: how about the more popular aspect of musical culture? In 1925 the Danish weekly family magazine *Hjemmet* printed an inquiry on aspects of popular music, including jazz (“Jazzmusik og Revysang”) (cf. Wöldike 1925). The editors asked composers and other people from musical life about their views on current popular music.

Carl Nielsen was among the interviewed composers and he was quoted for the following statements:

I have nothing against jazz as such when only it is appearing on the right spot at the right time. I do believe, however, that jazz music will die out by itself. The fact is that it has no content and it has no roots in our culture. It is dangerous when it spreads and gains power so that people do not bother to listen to anything else. One has to view jazz as a small part of contemporary music that has to stay in its place! At present it is spreading and inducing bacteria of putrefaction into the higher

music. All musicians, both the conservative and the most modern, react against this process.⁶

A member of the young generation of Danish composers, Knudaage Riisager (1897-1974) found that Jazz music could not be rejected without further arguments:

[Jazz] can be tacky and in Denmark only jazz of low quality is known. [...] The genuine jazz, being rooted in primitive traditions of the negroes and expressing their childish feelings, includes certain aspects of value for developing our music.⁷

According to Riisager, music should provide mental, if not spiritual (“åndelige”), values. Popular music did not, in his opinion, include the essence of the culture of the people. On the contrary: the refrains of the popular ballads implied the essence of stupidity.

Wöldike in his statement praised the values of the ancient Danish ballads. He had hopes for this genre in the present cultural context:

If the ballad could be revived among the people of our time, our whole culture of music would benefit from it. The ballad possess the musical style of a bygone past: the church modes, being rooted in medieval church- and folksinging, and if, through the revival of the ballad genre, the people could again become familiar with this style, the road would be open for a more thorough knowledge and appreciation of music from the great period of music culminating in the music of Palestrina. This music provides such great values that it should be listened to and understood to a higher degree than is the case at present. But unfortunately people are not unprejudiced enough to appreciate those values; you have to teach them to the children! If

⁶ Jeg har i og for sig ikke noget imod f. Eks. Jazzmusik, naar den bare kommer paa rette Sted og i det rette Øjeblik. En anden Ting er, at jeg tror, Jazzmusiken vil dø hen af sig selv. Den har jo nemlig intet Indhold, og den har ingen Rødder i vor Kultur. - Farlig er den, naar den breder sig og faar Magt, saa Folk ikke gider høre andet. [...] Men man maa betragte Jazzmusiken som en lille Del [af den moderne Musik], der skal blive paa sin Plads! Den er ved at brede sig og sætte Forraadnelsesbakterier i den højere Musik. Mod denne Proces reagerer alle Musikere, baade de konservative og de mest moderne. (Wöldike (1925), p. 8)

⁷ Den [jazz] kan være tarvelig, og herhjemme kendes kun den dårlige jazzmusik. [...] Den egentlige Jazzmusik, der har sin Rod i Negrenes primitive Traditioner og udtrykker deres barnlige Følelser, indeholder visse Momenter, som kan være af Værdi for Udviklingen af vor Musik. (Wöldike (1925), p. 8)

you do so, there is hope that the next generation will possess the right understanding.⁸

This strategy is interesting: adults tend to be prejudiced, a strategy of improving musical culture is a long term project that must begin with the children. This strategy was to be adopted by the jazz oriented people as we shall see a little later.

Wöldike practiced the strategy. He began with the children, on an elite level with the Copenhagen Boys Choir, on a general level with the initiatives and efforts he took in the office as State Inspector.

In the enquiry Wöldike did not directly address jazz.

The newer, sadly popular, music of revue shows is not an independent element of a musical style. It is a sort of musical garbage, borrowing certain basic idioms from good music, putting those idioms in focus without any sense of their internal coherence and – which is worse – cheapens them. The only aspiration of this kind of music to individual independence is a sometimes rather subtle treatment of rhythm which can be titillating. Moreover, these melodies thrive on the fact that even the most unmusical person can catch the refrain, a fragment of music having a nonsense, but at times witted, text.⁹

A shift of focus was under way in European musicology and in Danish musicology as well, from an interest mainly focused on the history of the (great) composers and on biographical methods a turn took place towards an interest focused on the history of the musical works and on style-analytical methods. From 1915 a master's degree in the

history of music was established and Mogens Wöldike was among the first to complete it, in 1920. From 1925 it became possible to study music ("sang") as a secondary subject within a school teacher's education aiming at teaching at the upper secondary level. The wish among students to get the opportunity to do so had been formulated as early as 1918, and in 1922 a commission established by the ministry of education recommended the appointment of a teacher for the more practical elements of the study. From 1938 and on it was possible to study music as the main subject of an MA.

As we have seen in the quotations from Nielsen and Riisager, jazz was considered to be inferior, to be culturally low, and the idea that it could provide something of value in music education was not immediate. However: in an environment like the music department at Copenhagen University several new trends were introduced and discussed. The idea that jazz was not *per se* inferior, and a more modern view of European culture appeared, which opened the agenda transcending culturally conservative prejudices, romantic leftovers etc.

A unique genre, the so-called 'jazz oratorios', was created by the composer Bernhard Christensen (1906-2004) and the librettist Sven Møller Kristensen (1909- 91), and endeavors to establish courses in jazz in the public educational system were made by Bernhard Christensen and others as early as 1934.

It was in this context that the idea of avoiding the culturally provocative term 'jazz' arose and the Danish term 'rytmisk musik' ('rhythmic music') was invented to legitimize the didactically qualified educational content of the activity and to avoid what was associated with jazz, especially by its opponents. And the didactic potential of jazz was seen as the possibility of developing an improvisational and rhythmic-bodily musical culture.

Young Danish musicians travelled to Germany in the late 20s and were highly impressed by pedagogical views and practice in Germany of the Weimar Republic. The work of Fritz Jöde (1887-1970) was well known in Denmark, and the organizations of young Danish composers and musicians, the Department of Music at the University of Copenhagen, leftist cultural periodicals etc. provided forums for critical debate.

The central figure connected with jazz was the young church musician and student of musicology Bernhard Christensen (cf. Pedersen 1999, Pedersen 2000, Wiedemann 1988).

Jazz was a craze in student circles and there was a need for introduction, information, and guidance in this

⁸ Hvis den [folkevisen] kunde blive genoplivet hos Folket i vor Tid, vilde det være til største Gavn for hele vor Musikkultur. Folkevisen tilhører nemlig en svunden Tids Musikstil: Kirketonearterne, som har sin Rod i den middelalderlige Kirke- og Folkesang, og hvis man nu igennem Folkevisen igen blev fortrolig med denne Stil, vilde vejen staa aaben for et nøjere Kendskab til og Nydelse af hele den store Musikperiodes Værker, som kulminerer med "Palestrinamusikken" [...] der er saa store Værdier at hente i den Musik, at den burde baade høres og forstaaes langt mere, end Tilfældet er nu. Men Folk er desværre ikke fordomsfri nok til at tage imod Goderne – man maa lære Børnene dem! Saa er der Haab om, at næste Generation vil have den rigtige Forstaaelse. (Wöldike (1925), p. 8)

⁹ [D]en nyere, saa sørgeligt populære Revymusik [...] er ikke noget selvstændigt Led af nogen Stil – den er et Slags Musikaffald, der laaner enkelte elementære Vendinger fra den gode Musik, sætter disse Vendinger i Højsædet uden Sans for deres indre Sammenhæng og – hvad værre er – forsimples dem. / Den Musiks eneste Forsøg paa noget selvstændigt er en til Tider meget spidsfindig Rytmiik, der naturligvis virker hidsende; i øvrigt lever disse Melodier blot højt paa, at selv den mest umusikalske kan "kapere" Refrænet – en "Stump" Musik med en vrøvlet, undertiden slagfærdig Tekst. – (Wöldike (1925), p. 8)

new musical region. Christensen, however, decided to let actual 'musicking' on a jazz basis constitute the core of an introduction to jazz, letting young students experience in their own bodies what jazz was all about. Improvisation and rhythm became central activities, the creation of jazz tunes with Danish lyrics, as opposed to mere listening to records or reproducing existing jazz songs, was essential.

From 1932 Christensen worked with a group of young students with whom he improvised tunes and rhythms and wrote lyrics reflecting the everyday life of high school pupils. In this process he was soon assisted by another young jazz interested student, Sven Møller Kristensen (1909-91), a student of Danish literature and music. Møller Kristensen took part in the sessions and soon took over writing the main part of the lyrics of what became a cycle of songs

covering the happenings in the lives of young kids around the clock; this was subsequently titled "The 24 Hours".

After some months' work and the creation of a number of songs, the innovative character of the activity was rumored in broader circles, and the thought of performing the songs publicly arouse. A performance took place in late 1932, it received great public attention and it became a great, almost sensational, success. The performance had to be repeated and it was also broadcast on the Danish State Radio.

A few tracks were recorded in the summer of 1934. Among them the following example, a song called "Fri" ("Free"), which is an eruption of energy, in a fast rumba rhythm, when school is over a 2 pm. The example shows the first 10 bars of the song.

Kl. 14. Fri!
Rumba.

færdig med sin lærer Teo - si og med det denne Tyrans - si.

S. M. M. 1934

Music teachers saw a possibility of renewing choir singing with young pupils by performing this music, which had the advantage of reflecting the experience and musical taste of young people, and a demand arose for a score to study and to reproduce in performance. A point is that no score existed, the process in the jazz study circle was saved in the form of rather sketchy cue sheets and the like. To meet the demand, however, the composer and librettist chose to produce a piano score, in which the solo and choir parts were written down and provided with a piano part in a simplified notation of the jazz idioms: chord blocks on every beat. Improvised parts of the solo vocals were notated as suggestions.

Thus, out of a musical learning process, a process of 'musicking' (Christopher Small), emerged – a musical work (of art). The problem of genre arose: what kind of work was this? It is evident that it had some resemblance to the German *Schuloper*, works like Kurt Weill's (1900-50) *Der Jasager* and Paul Hindemith's (1895-1963) *Wir bauen eine Stadt*, both from 1930. The German genre consisted of didactical works intended to educate the pupils socially, to arouse their interest in contemporary art music, and, through the process of rehearsal and performance, to create a feeling of community at the schools. What made "The 24 Hours" unique compared to the *Schuloper* was, first and foremost, that the musical reference was not contemporary

art music but contemporary popular music: jazz. Furthermore, this was not opera, there was no plot, no roles, except for a parody on a teacher of geography manifesting dull adult *otherness*, there was no acting, no scenography. The composer and librettist consequently chose to label the work “*jazz oratorio*”. This choice of genre label also reflected a flourishing interest in baroque music at that time.

The concept of music teaching and pedagogy was consistent with other trends of the time and with the surroundings. But to teach in this way, using jazz as a basis, was unique. It was a thought which for the first time arose in the mind of Bernhard Christensen.



Figure 1. Bernhard Christensen teaching young people ‘rhythmic music’ around 1935.

The songs of the work about school hours were conceived as relevant by generations from the 1930s to the 1960s. A witty and sharp satire of old fashioned principles of teaching, of the offers made by the mass media to young people, of sexual intolerance etc.

It was a great success, but it was also controversial. Progressive school teachers included the new approach into the curricula, and it was performed in a great number of upper secondary schools nationwide and through decades from the early 1930s to the 1970s. Conservative circles, on the other hand, found it immoral and uncultured, and some headmasters banned performances of the work from their schools. More liberal professionals from art music circles met it with indulgence, acknowledged the freshness and originality, but saw it as a transient phenomenon, a fad to be overcome in the process of growing up.

Of course it was not jazz in any professional sense. The point was not to educate jazz musicians, nor to opt for the

easy solution of letting young people have their way by introducing the popular music on the market in the schools. The intention was to engage young people in making music as an active part of their lives and their culture.

This phenomenon did not enter the school system. But the thoughts had been thought, experience was drawn, and a “cultural island” was established, where this concept could survive and develop, rather isolated from the public school system. When popular music entered the agenda again – in Denmark in the 1970s – the experience was there, and the concept was ready.

What happened to this pioneering effort?

Bernhard Christensen taught at courses and colleges for educating pedagogues for kindergarten. But he was disappointed that it was difficult to teach adults. If a new rhythmic bodily musical culture as your model, you had to start with the children. The potential found in hot jazz music was seen in a sort of reversed racial perspective. The genuine rhythmic music was found among American negroes in Harlem. It was impossible to achieve a musical culture of that kind with Europeans, with Danes. Unless you started with the children. This was, as mentioned above, the same view that Wöldike had formulated. You had to start with the children. So, from around 1950 to 1976, Bernhard Christensen taught music to children at the primary level, not in the municipal school, “Folkeskolen”, but in a private “free” school, where he established what I refer to as a “cultural island”. He developed his concepts through several years without trying to break the rather isolated position he established. He did it with rather well to do middle class children outside the municipal school system.

Bernhard Christensen was a musician rather than a pedagogue. He was a practician rather than a theoretician in working with this, and he was no system-builder. He published scores to jazz oratorios, small collections of songs for children, and at a later time a book, *Mit motiv. Musikpædagogik bygget på rytme og improvisation* (My Motive. Music pedagogy build on rhythm and improvisation) (Christensen 1983). Theories on the concept of “rhythmic music” formulated in short essays by Christensen, Sven Møller Kristensen and others, touched upon phenomenons like syncope and polyrhythmics, but the main point was that rhythm was seen not as a phenomenon connected to composition and notation but as a processual phenomenon connected to bodily movements. A certain touch of fundamentalism was present in their writings and in the book from 1983. On the cover-page you see a young European kid symbolically imprisoned behind the barlines of a western

art music score, actually 6 bars (146-51) from the 2nd movement of Gustav Mahler's 2nd Symphony.

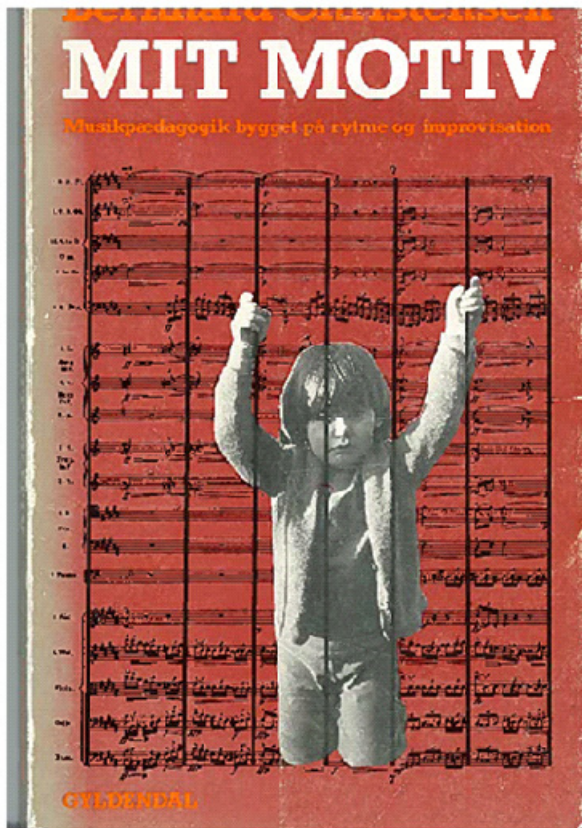


Figure 2. Cover: *Mit motiv. Musikpædagogik bygget på rytme og improvisation* (My Motive. Music pedagogy build on rhythm and improvisation) (Christensen 1983).

The cultural climate in the 1950s was not in favour of rhythmic music. The educational system changed in the 1960s and 1970s. Private students were studying with Bernhard Christensen and his pioneering efforts achieved a new status as part of the foundation for establishing rhythmic music and now as an integrated part in all branches of the education system.

The tendencies begun in the 1920s to reform and organize did continue. Viewed in the broad social perspective, large parts of the population came to be in contact with music one way or the other through reforms, legislation and public funding.

The picture changed rather dramatically from around 2000.

In 2010 a group of researchers published a survey in Danish of tendencies, possibilities and problems related to

music in teaching and education (Nielsen (ed.) 2010). In this report, two basic strategies are identified in a situation where the possible contents of a subject expands beyond the limits of what is realistic.

The first strategy is defined as a strategy of wholeness, of expansion beyond the subject (cf. Nielsen (ed.) 2010, p. 14-15). This strategy implies an orientation towards something common across the specific traits of the particular subject and thus at a higher level trying to encompass a wholeness.

The clearest example of this strategy in Denmark is found in the education of teachers for the kindergarten level. From 2007 music was included in the interdisciplinary construction UMD (EMD: expression, music, and drama). The same tendency is manifest, even if it is to a lesser degree, in the education of teachers for the Folkeskole. Music as a general subject in the 1st year is replaced by an elective, a "practical creative (praktisk musik)" course of an interdisciplinary nature.

At the institutional level, parallel tendencies are manifest. The musicological departments at the Universities of Copenhagen, Aarhus and Aalborg, have been integrated in larger interdisciplinary units, and the colleges for education of teachers have undergone the same type of development. The implication of this is that the theoretical and functional perspectives of a subject, in our case music, is removed from the horizon of the subject itself and situated in more overall culture theoretical, esthetic and interdisciplinary bodies of theory.

Of course this development could be said to add perspective to an otherwise narrow and introvert subject, but at the same time it tends to weaken the possibility of concentrated indepth studies of the specific universe of expression and meaning, characterizing music as an art form.

The second strategy is defined as a strategy of electives, moving from the common to the particular (cf. Nielsen (ed.) 2010, p. 15-17). This strategy implies focusing on some of the specific elements of a subject and exclusion of other elements. Typically, such a strategy is implemented at the upper secondary level, where the pupils choose between a few broader lines, and also choose between subjects within the chosen line, and, finally, choose between different levels within a particular subject. It is still possible to choose music. But in the upper secondary school music is, as of 2007, no more a general subject attended by all pupils in the first year of the three years. Now it is an elective together with three other esthetic subjects and not a subject shared by all the pupils in the upper secondary school.

In the lower grades of Folkeskolen, music is mandatory from the first to the sixth grade and an elective in the eighth and ninth grades. It is not included in the subjects of the seventh grade. The actual number of lessons is varying according to local standards and issues not related to the subject of music as such. Regarding this problem, the new reform should be an improvement.

The development of the ability to play and sing is a time- and resource-consuming process and it tends to disappear when strategy No 1 is chosen. There is no space for the teaching of singing and playing in the generalized interdisciplinary concepts. The basic musical activities are in danger of disappearing, and they are to a large degree academized end reduced as far as practical performance is concerned. But music is not an academic but an aesthetic subject, expressing itself in a specific way and in modes of activity that are distinct from those of other aesthetic subjects.

It is not possible to go in detail with reductions and cutbacks that have taken place in the most recent decades and especially after around 2000. Rather depressing it is: All important parameters at all levels of the educational system have been affected: duration of programs are shortened, numbers of pupils and students of music are reduced, numbers of schools offering music, numbers of students in the music teacher educations, and number of teachers of the subject of music in general teaching and in music education are reduced. The figures are overwhelming, and in certain areas the conditions are close to devastating, such as the education of teachers for kindergarten, and for primary and lower secondary school, affecting the vital basis of having a society where music is essential. As it has been in Denmark since the 1920s.

We still have the subject of music in the Danish education system, in a weaker position but still existing and recognizable as a subject with its own identity and targeted at the phenomenon we call music. We are confronted with severe strategic problems, and they are more far reaching than the previous problems of the choice of specific repertorys, genres and styles in music education.

What has happened to the concept of rhythmic music used by pioneers as Bernhard Christensen in the early 1930s?

It was out of use for decades but reentered in the 1970s and 1980s in a more pragmatic, political context. A dichotomy of rhythmic music as opposed to classical music was established, and this dichotomy is still current in Danish political debate. In education the Rhythmic Music Conservatory (RMC) was established in 1986 as an institution of higher music education funded and governed by the Danish Ministry of Culture.

In a report from a committee to the Ministry of Culture from 2007 recommendations are made about what is referred to as “the rhythmic growth layers” (cf. Report (2007), and in 2010 a committee published a report targeting at improving the conditions for rhythmic music (cf. Report 2010). In the latter report, the term ‘Rytmask musik’ explicitly refers to a plurality of genres, styles and cultures within musical life. The essence and manifestations of it are connected to genres and subgenres, styles and substyles, cultures and subcultures and to fusions between those parts. In this political perspective, rhythmic music in Danish debate has become a unifying concept for a number of genres not favoured in the public subvention systems for art. Genres such as jazz, rock, folk music, world music and others are too small in volume to get through to decision makers in cultural politics, but united under the label rhythmic music they have appeared to be an important factor in Danish art and culture. It has been acknowledged that the genres included in the label of rhythmic music has become an important factor in musical and cultural life and that artistic quality should be supported within those genres as well as in the high cultural forms of art.

Musical sources

Score

Jazzoratoriet De 24 Timer. Music by Bernhard Christensen. Text by Sven M. Kristensen. Piano and vocal score. Preface by Bernhard Christensen and Sven Møller Kristensen. Published by Skandinavisk og Borups. Edition No: SBM 823. 1933. Several reprints.

Recordings

Four tracks from *De 24Timer* including

- (a) 3 Rhythm Girls (Ulla Krause, Grete Hemmeshøj Frederiksen, Grete Korde (voc)) with Kjeld Nørregaard (p). “Skoletimer” [School lessons] (“Kl.8-9-10 Matematik, Botanik, Tysk [Mathematics, Botany, German]”). 78 rpm. HMV X 4285. Recorded 20.3.1934
- (b) Kjeld Nørregaard (p) with Choir and Orchestra. “Kl.14: Fri [Free, i.e. being let off school]”. 78 rpm.: HMV 4363. Recorded 22.8.1934.

Both included in the LP anthology *Dansk Guldalder Jazz* Vol I. Odeon MOCK 1006-A-1 1968 and reissued as CD: EMI 7489732 1988.

Track (a) also on Youtube: <http://youtu.be/yymfKTsFk4PY>

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