

Critical thinking through music: artistic research methods in the creation of bachelor and masters theses

Over the past couple of years I have been teaching a course in artistic research methods to bachelor and masters students at the Malmö Academy of Music, with the immediate aim of instructing the students how to make their theses. The core assignment for them is to develop aims, research questions and methods that will allow them to carry out an inquiry which is directly related to their main subject in performance or composition. The presentation will outline the main content of the course with examples from student projects, including short audio and video excerpts from documentation of process as well as representation of final productions. Through these finished individual student projects, I will argue that the development of artistic research methods - that integrate documentation, reflection, analysis with artistic production - constitutes a major contribution to higher music education. The field of artistic research in music has come to maturity and is at the verge of creating substantial change in the transmission of musical traditions in western culture. Hereby, more dynamic relations between student and teacher will emerge, grounded in an equally dynamic understanding of the musician in society.

The presentation addresses several of the questions found in the call, in particular how "the output of artistic research be used as input in teaching activities?" and outlining how artistic research indeed can improve higher music education. I will outline how method development in artistic research allows students on the bachelor and masters level to acquire new tools for a critical and individual approach to musical problems. By opening up to a wider contextual understanding of musical practice, reflective musicians can be educated within the conservatory: a development which is the direct impact of the presence of artistic research practices.

Stefan Östersjö



Malmö Academy of Music, Malmö, Sweden
Stefan.ostersjo@mhm.lu.se

Stefan Östersjö is a leading classical guitarist specialized in the performance of contemporary music. Since his debut CD (Swedish Grammy in 1997) he has released 20 CDs and toured Europe, the US and Asia. He has been part of numerous collaborations with composers, but also in the creation of works involving choreography, film, video, performance art and music theatre.

Since 2006 he has been developing inter-cultural artistic practices with the Vietnamese/Swedish group The Six Tones as a platform. As a soloist he has cooperated with conductors such as Lothar Zagrosek, Peter Eötvös, Pierre André Valade, Mario Venzago and Andrew Manze. He received his doctorate in 2008, became a research fellow at the Orpheus Institute in 2009 and is today associate professor and head of doctoral studies in artistic research at the Malmö Academy of music.