

CHAPTER 6

Early Music in an Interdisciplinary Artistic Production: The Project Pluvinel's Academy

Randi Margrethe Eidsaa

Professor of Music Education, University of Agder

Abstract: This chapter explores the previously completed interdisciplinary performance project Pluvinel's Academy by investigating the production process, aesthetic dimensions and educational relevance. Early music repertoires and historical narratives are the core elements of the performance concept, which is inspired by the American musicologist Kate van Orden's book *Music, Discipline, and Arms in Early Modern France* (van Orden, 2005), and the article "Komponisten som smisket med Solkongen" by Rolfhamre (2017). Pluvinel's Academy was a pilot project which presented a combination of artistic expressions and equestrian sport, developed in an educational environment and presented in a riding hall. The participant group included fifteen music performance students, professional guest performers and a group of riders and their horses. The various aspects of the project will be presented and discussed in relation to artistic research perspectives and the early music objectives presented in this anthology, primarily related to pedagogy. The chapter highlights creating new works of art, the Pluvinel's Academy performance, and suggests that early music is valuable as material in an interdisciplinary performance concept in pedagogical settings.

Keywords: early music, artistic research, interdisciplinarity, collaboration

Prelude

Music was not just a pastime that was solely about beautifully realising a work of art. Music was also about taking part in social life to develop contact with others. Moreover, even more important, music was a tool for creating emotions and relationships. (Rolfhamre, 2017)

Citation: Eidsaa, R. M. (2022). Early music in an interdisciplinary artistic production: The project Pluvinel's academy. In R. Rolfhamre & E. Angelo (Eds.), *Views on early music as representation: Invitations, congruity, performance* (MusPed:Research No. 4, Ch. 6, pp. 149–175). Cappelen Damm Akademisk. <https://doi.org/10.23865/noasp.157.ch6>
Licens: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

The above vignette provides a glimpse into music philosophy in the early 1600s, which through the exploration of the completed artistic project Pluvinel's Academy, expanded my knowledge of early music performance. My interest in early music and Renaissance culture was sparked in 2010 during an encounter with *Trollspeilet*, a group of riders who promote medieval equestrian tournament presentations at cultural events in Norway. Some years later, I met the riders again at the Monteriggioni Medieval Festival in Siena, Italy.

At the festival, I experienced how visitors of all ages enjoyed participating in music, dance, pantomimes and other activities in a Renaissance environment.¹ Inspired by the medieval equestrian show presented by Trollspeilet at the Italian festival, I searched through historical sources to create a "history play" for riders and dancers. During the production process, I discovered *The Maneige Royal* a book written by the French riding master and military commander Antoine de Pluvinel, as well as historians' descriptions of his work and the institution he established in Paris in 1594, *Academie d'Equitation*, referred to as Pluvinel's Academy.



Figure 1. Medieval Riders From Trollspeilet in the Performance "The History of Horses" in Kristiansand, Norway

Photographer: Roger Svalsrød. Used with permission of the photographer.

1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJeymUTheFQ>

American professor, Kate van Orden, has done an in-depth study of French culture and the educational philosophy which characterised the Pluvinel's Academy project. This chapter presents how research on early modern France (van Orden, 2005) and early music (Rolfhamre, 2017, 2019) generated aesthetic outcomes that were studied in retrospect through artistic research (Borgdorff, 2011; Correia et al., 2018; Holgersen 2019; Leavy, 2018).

Introduction

Pluvinel's Academy was designed as a practice project for fifteen Bachelor of music performance students at the University of Agder in Kristiansand, Norway. This chapter revisits the work process, including two artistic performances, in 2016 and 2017. To re-examine a completed project, I have adapted methodological tools related to artistic research or "arts-based research" to "gain new insights, to show multiple meanings, discover interdisciplinary connections and to produce research which may have an impact in an educational context" (Leavy, 2018, p. 9). Pedagogy was the driving force behind the creation of the Pluvinel's Academy practice project. However, the re-examination of the 2016 and 2017 performances also aims to reflect academic, pedagogical and artistic research perspectives.

In the introductory chapter, the editors state that early music performance in this anthology happens through pedagogy. They refer to the broad capabilities early music performances appear to have: the ability to present, enact, re-enact, live and re-live, concretise and fantasise a historical past. This chapter is one of the explicitly pedagogical contributions to the anthology, and early music is portrayed not only as "an instrument to be used within an educational setting ..., but also as something primarily pedagogical in its formation and re-formation" (Rolfhamre & Angelo, 2022, p. 12). Consequently, it highlights how early music repertoires have been combined with historical narratives and equestrian sport in a performance concept. The research questions are

- In what ways were early music repertoires and early music aesthetics used in concretising a historical past in artistic practice in a pedagogical setting?
- What was the knowledge production in the Pluvinel's Academy project?

Context

The educational context that made it possible to develop the Pluvinel's Academy project was the 5-credit course, musical communication, in the Bachelor program in music performance at the University of Agder.² The Bachelor program was a three-year pilot project from 2015 to 2018 that highlighted creative approaches to music performance and aimed at preparing students for their future careers as musicians. The performance idea was based on my general interest in exploring musical repertoires in educational environments, especially genres defined as classical music or art music.

Artistic practices are always positioned and embedded, and “artistic actions acquire their meaning in interchange with relevant environments” (Borgdorff, 2011, p. 56). In this case, the point of departure is a pragmatic one since practice projects were mandatory in the musical communication course, in order to help develop students' skills relating to collaborative activities with non-musicians outside campus environments. Thus, the Pluvinel's Academy project was developed for the purpose of education in an academic and pedagogical setting. However, an additional environment, in which the artistic expressions referred to in this chapter gain their meaning, namely the equestrian centre, was the venue for the final presentations. Since I am involved in equestrian sports as an after-school activity for children and young people in the local community, a collaboration between the university and a local riding school was possible. Small-scale shows and presentations were inclusive components in the riders' preparation for competitions in show jumping and dressage. Consequently, the Pluvinel's Academy project was at the intersection between art practices and sports activity. This chapter sheds light on how the project became an encounter between participants from the disciplines of music performing, and equestrian sports dressage.

2 <https://www.uia.no/en/studieplaner/topic/MUK173-1>

Methodology

This chapter refers to revisiting a completed project, a research process inspired by Holgersen (2019). The explorative process differs from conducting a research procedure parallel to activities in an ongoing project. In this case, to revisit Pluvinel's Academy means to study project intentions, the students' project reports, performance photos and videoclips, and to reflect on my process when transforming ideas into various artistic expressions, and merge them into an aesthetic performance concept. Thus, the chapter reflects how artistic research may unite aesthetic and academic approaches in "broadening and deepening our knowledge and understanding of the discipline or disciplines in question" (Borgdorff, 2011, p. 54).

Ethical issues and critical reflections

The revisited artistic project is part of a bachelor course module highlighting creative approaches to music performing and collaborative concepts. In this case, the revisit implies looking back on a past artistic project. The project was also part of a Bachelor programme that had already been explored (Eidsaa & Schau, 2021). This programme was a three-year pilot project, Bachelor in music performance, funded by the University of Agder from 2015 to 2018. The programme focused on contextual thinking, student-centred artistic concepts and cross-aesthetic perspectives on performance. After explorative investigations involving students and teachers, the programme was revised in June 2018 (Eidsaa & Schau, 2021).

Revisiting the Pluvinel's Academy project investigates a practice in which I was personally involved, which may generate challenges connected to questions about the researcher's insider or outsider roles and perspectives (Balsnes, 2009). However, since the Bachelor programme was already defined as a pilot project, the students were informed that the curriculum, the methodological approaches and their responses to the project's design by the module teachers would be objects for exploration and critical reflection, and an arena for data collection. Thus, as participants in a newly developed educational programme, they knew that their

perspectives in discussions and reflection reports would be used to shed light on, correct, and adjust the new bachelor programme curriculum.³

Warren (2014), who discusses music and ethical responsibility, argues that since music is an activity of relationships, ethical issues will arise in situations where individuals meet to be involved in music or other artistic practices (Warren, 2014, p. 24). During the Pluvinel's Academy work process, few controversial issues seemed to emerge. However, the students were concerned that the number of hours spent on the performance workshop resulted in fewer hours of solo instrumental rehearsing.⁴ An additional ethical concern was related to designing collaborative projects with outside campus groups. Collaboration between university students and partnership institutions or freelance performers, should always be beneficial to both parties. An artistic project may appear as an intrusion in the partnership group's daily life if not carefully prepared. In his article "The Infectious Outsider: Towards a Pedagogy for Artist Educators", Owen (2005) reflects on collaborative partnerships where individuals from different cultural backgrounds "meet and interact in particular points of space and time" (Owen, 2005, p. 9). The Pluvinel's Academy project was intended to be a meeting place enabling interaction, and for this reason it was essential to conduct the project with respect for all participants, thus defining each group's role and responsibility so that the project became clear and transparent (Hallam, 2011). As guests, the music students and we as teachers and instructors, needed to follow the routines of the equestrian centre to avoid our project being reduced to an intrusion in daily activities.

Artistic research

This revisiting of the Pluvinel's Academy project through artistic research perspectives aims to unveil an artistic practice like a complex web, where multiple elements and circumstances constitute each other (Beech et al.,

3 As responsible for the Pluvinel's Academy project, I was in dialogue with the students about using their reports, performance videos and photos when evaluating the project in the course module musical communication (MUK173).

4 The music performer students and their perspectives on main instrument modules are discussed in the article "Higher Music Performance Education in a Changing World. Towards a New Curriculum? A Report from a Pilot Project" (Eidsaa & Schau, 2021).

2015, p. 18). In this case, the elements referred to are “materials”, such as music, narratives, collaboration and equestrian sports presentations, and “actions” of the various participant groups. Data collection includes observation notes, sound recordings, video recordings, students’ reports and photos.

Even though this exploration was done in retrospect, the research process for Pluvinel’s Academy could be defined to have started when the idea was born. Correia et al. (2018) assert that artistic research takes place when the artist starts “establishing new relationships with materials and with degraded environments promoted by myths, allowing for the emergence of new ones” (Correia et al., 2018, p. 14). Borgdorff (2011) describes every process of creating art as research, claiming that:

Every artist does research as she works, as she tries to find the right material, the right subject, as she looks for information and techniques to use in her studio or atelier, or when she encounters something, changes something or begins anew in the course of her work. (Borgdorff, 2010, p. 44)

Thus, revisiting Pluvinel’s Academy is an exploration of early music performance in a pedagogical setting, the use of historical documentary sources in artistic presentations, the relationship between the music students, outside campus participants and professional performers. Furthermore, it is about merging aesthetic expressions and equestrian sports in artistic presentations, and the relationship between the human participants and the horses. In this study, the creative process formed the pathway through which new insights, understanding and products came into being (Borgdorff, 2010, p. 44).

Østern (2017) defines *artistic research* as “a meaning-seeking process where the researcher uses a wide range of formal language as well as various modalities”. The exploration of the completed Pluvinel’s Academy project uses traditional verbal texts and other written formats such as vignettes, manuscript excerpts and quotations from students’ reflection reports, and assessment papers. Performance photos and video clips exemplify various components of the project and are essential modalities for documentation.

This retrospective study of Pluvinel's Academy was an investigation of how early music can be adapted into artistic concepts and be used pedagogically.⁵ The study includes analysis of artistic activities and objects, and of the pilot project's Bachelor programme in music performance, 2015 to 2018. This chapter also mirrors how traditional academic research, clarified through written arguments, sheds light on practical-artistic work (Correia, 2018, p. 14 f.). In the concluding section of the chapter, there is a reflection on early music as a core element in artistic productions in educational settings.

Project presentation

Pluvinel's Academy was a multifaceted practice-based project, and the themes explored in this chapter have been limited to interdisciplinarity, music repertoires, concert dramaturgy and collaboration.

Interdisciplinarity

Pluvinel's Academy was an interdisciplinary project using multimedia communication tools such as live music performance, recorded music, costumes and stage lightning, horses and narratives. The apparent interdisciplinarity aspects are the aesthetic expressions that appeared when components from the arts and sports disciplines were transformed into practical actions and put together on a stage. However, the interdisciplinary dimension exceeds the tangible result, since the project is deeply rooted in history and philosophy. Consequently, Pluvinel's Academy could be understood as a project that reflects a transdisciplinary pedagogy, a theme-based interdisciplinary approach (Bolstad, 2020, p. 4).⁶ Finley (2018) refers to multi-methods arts-based research when two or more art forms are used in a multimedia presentation. She uses the American musical *Hamilton* as an example:

⁵ <https://www.uia.no/en/research/kunstfag/remp>

⁶ Bolstad (2020) presents a four-level model of interdisciplinarity, ranging from intradisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity to transdisciplinarity.

In the instance of *Hamilton*, multimodal arts have been used to analyse information and to enhance the qualitative methods of biographical research – art is not only used as an analytical tool for understanding existing information but also generates new and exciting ways of thinking about data/information.

(Finley, 2018, p. 478)

The Pluvinel's Academy project was a small-scale concept compared to the elaborate Broadway production of *Hamilton*, but it reflects some of the same ideas, such as: using aesthetic expressions as spaces for different voices; and re-telling ways of thinking closely connected to politics in a defined historical place and time (Finley, 2018, p. 478). I have included two examples which show how multimodal perspectives became artistic expressions.

Example 1: Transdisciplinarity. Van Orden (2005) states that the sixteenth century saw a revolution in public schooling in France, and one of the most famous places was Pluvinel's Academy in Paris. Antoine de Pluvinel was the school manager, and the core curriculum was related to cavalry disciplines. Despite this, the military institution's educational thinking was rooted in Greek philosophy programs that juxtaposed military activity with other disciplines, such as music. Van Orden explains:

The grouping of music with sport and arms may seem unusual given the disciplinary boundaries that placed music in the scholastic quadrivium of mathematical sciences. However, the formulation came from the Greeks and enjoyed significant currency in the sixteenth century. In both the *Laws* and the *Republic*, Plato treated gymnastics and music side by side, maintaining that the best training in gymnastics would resemble music training. Like other physical activities proper to a nobleman, music developed adroitness and agility. (van Orden, 2005, pp. 38–39)

The reason for bringing in music as a subject side by side with military exercises was that music created the soul's well-being, just as physical exercises were well-being for the body. By teaching the young men activities, such as music, dance, painting and literature, they would learn to behave meaningfully in social situations, since noblemen lacked

competence in socialising in non-violent environments. Van Orden refers to their “need for training in politeness, civil conversation and even skills in social dance so that they could become gentilhommes” (van Orden, 2005, p. 42).

Example 2: Historical sources as performance content. In equestrian sports environments, Antoine de Pluvinel is a well-known historical person because he was one of the first authors to promote humane training methods of war horses. He was associated with “good horsemanship”. The term “horsemanship” usually refers to the art of riding, handling and training horses (Encyclopædia Britannica). Pluvinel was the teacher of King Louis XIII and the author of books on equestrian training. His book *Le Maneige Royal* (1626) became famous for treating the horse with humane training methods and not as an unwilling slave. Pluvinel focused on the rider’s friendly and kind approach to enhance the horse’s natural movements, which he tries to regulate and make more pronounced through training without any loss of the animal’s natural charm.⁷ Famous quotations from his book were selected for the performance narrative, among them the following text:

I go further and claim that it is unnecessary to beat the horse at the beginning, the middle, or the end (if one can help it), as it is much more necessary to train him by gentleness (if there are the means) than by harshness since a horse who works with pleasure moves much more gracefully than a horse who is dominated by force.

If possible, one must be sparing with punishment and lavish with caresses, as I have already said, and I will repeat it in order to make the horse obey and go out of pleasure rather than discomfort. (Pluvinel, 1626, pp. 29 & 47)⁸

7 <https://www.dressageandsporthorse.com/dressage-history>

8 <http://imh.org/exhibits/online/legacy-of-the-horse/xenophon>



Figure 2. The Professional Rider Rozemarijn Keuning and her Horse Gesto Ram in a Re-Presentation of Pluvinel's Training Principles During the Pluvinel's Academy Performance in 2016

Photographer: Anders Martinsen. Used with permission of the photographer.

The inclusion of horses in stage productions demands carefully exposing the horses to stage lighting, sound volumes, musical instruments, note stands and the ensemble's movements.

In an equestrian venue, these are intrusive objects and disruptive actions. Consequently, the equipages' function as aesthetic elements in the Pluvinel's Academy performances was balanced against animal welfare concerns and ethical principles. These issues will be commented on in the chapter summary.

Example 3: Costumes. In artistic presentations, costumes may create moods that contrast with everyday life, and spark the ensemble's motivation to act and communicate. The music students considered costumes to be valuable, as one student commented: "When we started the project, I must say that I was very motivated. Much of the reason was the costumes which we borrowed from Rosegården" (Student 1, project report, 3 November 2017). Even if the costumes were not historically correct, the outfits were professionally designed and complemented

the overall visual concept. The director of the costume department addressed students during a workshop and challenged them to reflect on their stage identity:

Why do we bring in costumes at a concert? Is it to take up your time or to make you look funny? Not at all. There are two questions all performers should think about when entering a stage: Firstly, how will I present my identity? What does my costume reflect? Secondly, am I a member of a group, or will I be presented as a soloist? Musicians tend to think that they are invisible and that the audience is only watching their instrument. However, the audience is watching the performer. They ask who that person on the stage is and their story. (Interview, 25 February 2018)

The costume director's rationale for using costumes in the presentation was to enhance the students' awareness of how colours, shapes and textiles become aesthetic expressions, which facilitate both the performers' and the audience's entrance into imaginary settings and historical pasts.

The music

The repertoire for Pluvinel's Academy included Renaissance and Baroque compositions, which were supplied by film music compositions. The music was performed live or prerecorded for the students' duplication on stage. Besides, published orchestral works were adapted for the equestrian parts, and played through the venue's sound equipment.

The 2016 repertoire included "Come Again" by J. Dowland (1563–1626), the French folksong "L'aïo dè Rotso" re-arranged by J. Canteloupe for the work *Chants d'Auvergne* composed in 1923–1930, "Lascia ch'io pianga" by G. F. Händel (1685–1759) and "Sweeter Than Roses" by H. Purcell (1659–1695). The songs were accompanied by a baroque guitar, violin or keyboard and interwoven between narratives presented by the singer, who also appeared as conferencier, exemplified in *Pluvinel's Akademi Fransk folkeviser*.⁹ In this performance, a Master student's recorded music was an

9 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scFTvPt22fc>

essential component. The repertoire was based on his Bachelor exam concert and included “Tocatta Arpeggiate” (Kapsberger, 1580–1651), “Folias Gallegas” (de Murcia, 1673–1739), “Zaraband Espanola” (Sanz, 1640–1710), “Etude 3 Opus 60” (Carcassi, 1792–1853), and “Lagrima” (Tarrega, 1852–1909). The pieces were recorded by four students who played the guitar, harmonium, violin and percussion instruments, and accompanied various equestrian presentations, such as shown in *Pluvinel Tocatta Espanola (del 2) Gesto*.¹⁰

The 2017 performance included well-known pieces such as “Ave Maria”, “Badinerie”, “Air on the G String” by J.S. Bach (1685–1750), and “Let Us Wander” by H. Purcell (1659–1695). One of the students created a brief drama sequence accompanied by a live keyboard version of “Hedwig’s Theme” by John Williams (b. 1932) from *Harry Potter* (2001) to activate the youngest children. When the ensemble gathered on stage for the “café scene”, they duplicated the recorded songs “Dame Tartine” and “En Passant par La Lorraine” (*Pluvinel Forestilling 2*).¹¹ The lutenist played “Chaconne” by de Visée (1650–1725) and “Vittoria, Mio Core” by Carissimi (1605–1674) in a duet with a specialist in early vocal music. An excerpt from the movie *Le Roi Danse* (2000) accompanied a dance sequence.¹²

Recorded music by J.S. Bach, J.B. Lully (1632–1687) and the French film music composer Alexandre Desplat (b. 1961) was used during carriage driving, pas de deux dressage and quadrilles. The riders prepared their parts in accordance with the music’s dynamics, tempi, timbre and moods. Thus, the music repertoire functioned as connective lines between the music students and the riders as they shared a “momentary space for interaction” (O’Neill, 2011 p. 183).

10 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgLrzi2X2sk>

11 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbwiwAeYITo> The example includes a pre-recorded excerpt played by the lute player who took part in the performance.

12 The movie portraits King Louis XIV and the aristocrat’s companion, the composer Jean-Baptiste Lully. Themes related to music, society and politics may easily be delineated from *Le roi danse*.



Figure 3. The Lutenist and the Singer Present Early Music in the Pluvinel’s Academy Performance in 2017

Photographer: Anders Martinsen. Used with permission of the photographer.

Concert dramaturgy

In this chapter, the term “concert dramaturgy” is used to describe the content of the artistic performance, including the musical repertoire, lyrics and narratives, the movements on stage, the aesthetic moods and additional art forms. The term comes from Greek and is defined as “the principle of dramatic composition” (Chambers 20th Century Dictionary, n.d.). Sønning (in press) explains dramaturgy as the theory of “how to structure, compose any performance or play, with all communicative codes and tools considered consciously, from start to end”. In the Pluvinel’s Academy performance, solemnity, jollity, anxiety, elegance and overconfidence were acted out as “communicative codes and tools” to mirror a spectre of emotions and atmospheres (Sønning, in press).

The performance manuscript. The Pluvinel’s Academy manuscript narrative was based on fictional, dramaturgical and pedagogical considerations. Selected items from van Orden’s research (van Orden, 2005) and extracts of the most famous quotations from Antoine de Pluvinel’s

book *Le Maneige Royal*, published in 1625, were combined to create the plot and the verbal sequences of the Pluvinel's Academy performance. Since family audiences were the primary target group for the presentations, ideas from the Harry Potter chronicles were added to the historical sources.

The various components were merged into monologues, dialogues, quotations and storytelling. When exploring the writing process in retrospect, the development of the complete stage manuscript could be understood as a “fictionalising process”, described by Leavy (2018) as “a marriage between the real and the imaginary”. Leavy explains the process as taking “identifiable items from social reality, importing them into a fictional world” (Leavy, 2018, p. 195). In this case, the elements that reflected history were names of places and events, and references to early modern French education philosophy. The historical elements were “translated” into a fictional world that was created to communicate with the participants and the audience. The writing of texts demanded being conscious of themes and motifs, language style and tone, and characterisation, which is “the creation of those who people the story” (Leavy, 1998, p. 198). In the 2016 performance, Pluvinel's voice was “peopled” by the professional singer. In the 2017 performance, the narrative reflected correspondence, through letters, between an academy student and his mother.

Example 1: The lute playing. The Pluvinel's Academy performance parts were structured in sections with school schedule headlines such as: Riding, Marching and Gymnastics, Fencing, Political Discussions, Literature, Dance and The Playing of the Lute. The example below reflects how van Orden's historical research was interwoven with imaginative elements:¹³

¹³ van Orden (2005) explains that the young aristocratic students at Pluvinel's Academy hurried between the lectures. The illustration *Figure 2.1*. “Abraham Bosse, Cavalier playing the Lute” in *Music, Disciplines and Arms in Early Modern France* shows a lute player with his riding boots and spurs on. According to van Orden, the music teachers seemed to have been lutenists. To play the lute was counted as a skill among gentlemen, she says that “many fathers believed their sons had learned nothing if they did not take it up” (van Orden, 2005, p. 45).

Every morning there is a riding lesson, and after this follows training in the use of a weapon and then fencing. Moreover, every student *must* play the lute. The lute teacher arrives every Wednesday at noon. We need to rush from the fencing lessons to the music room without having time to change clothes! (Excerpt from Narrative 1, Pluvinel’s Academy performance, 2017)



Figure 4. Riders Carrying the Music Students’ Guitars During the Pluvinel’s Academy 2017 Performance

Photographer: Anders Martinsen. Used with permission of the photographer.

As a dramaturgical tool, a group of students arrived at this stage in the performance, followed by riders on foot, carrying guitars. Parallel to their entrance, a professional lute player entered the stage and performed two early music compositions. The music students acted as pupils in a lute lesson and practised the composition “Arie di Firenze per la C”, inspired by Ensemble Kapsberger and Rolf Lislevand (Alfabeto, 2001). The students’ acting as a group of indifferent spectators and lute players, the use of guitars as aesthetic objects, and the professional musician solemnly rapturous as the “lute teacher”, reflected a satirical mood that seemed to communicate effectively with the audience, who were mainly individuals with little knowledge of early music.

Example 2: Performance elements. Based on former research, ensembles' search for musical repertoire, narratives, and artistic concepts to use in creative performance concepts is time-consuming and demands extensive scaffolding (Eidsaa, 2015, 2018). Decision-making processes in groups are complex, and the participants need the freedom to experiment and take risks (Fautley & Savage, 2007, p. 64 f.).

For this reason, the instructors and professionals pre-selected the artistic content and discussed each component with the ensemble. Consequently, ensemble tasks were focused on developing the participants' aesthetic, music-technical and interpretative skills and enhancing audience communication, mentored by the professionals. One of the students commented:

It was smart that the teacher gave us a fixed repertoire at an early stage of the project. Consequently, it was easier for the students to understand their tasks from the beginning of the project. A professional choir director was hired for the rehearsal of the songs. Her instruction worked nicely. However, it was challenging for students in their 20s to sing French folk songs from the seventeenth century, but the choir director played an essential role in the success. (Student 8, project report, 20 November 2017)

It was not only the music that was fixed. The student ensemble worked with a manuscript from the very start of the project, since verbal texts were essential and functioned as a dramaturgical frame throughout the performance.

The verbal content demanded the presentation of various moods, among them the notion of humour. The professional singer in the 2016 performance coloured Pluvinel's quotation with an exaggerated French-British intonation.¹⁴ The actor developed this humoristic element further during the 2017 performance. He adopted nonsense language into the students' parodic imitation of military commands and noblemen's conversations in the new social groups in Paris salons during the early 1600s (van Orden, 2005, p. 101). The actor's theatrical experience

¹⁴ The pronunciation joke was received as "funny" as shown in the video *Pluvinel Introduksjon*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXMB9lGMvGA>

influenced the music students and enhanced their confidence on stage. One commented, “I never thought that me and my fellow student would have taken the risk to create a nonsense language dialogue on the spot, during a performance” (Informal talk, student 9, 20 November 2017).

Another student mentioned that despite being illiterate in French, he became confident on stage since he knew that in this case, to have the correct intonation was less important than communicating the phonetic sound of the language. The student commented: “To sing in French was complicated. However, due to the concept, I could use nonsense words when I forgot how to pronounce French correctly” (Student 5, project report, 20 November 2017).



Figure 5. Professional Singer and a Master Student During the Pluvinel’s Academy Performance in 2016 Their confidence bolstered the students’ communication with the audience.

Photographer: Anders Martinsen. Used with permission of the photographer.

Collaboration

The new relationships developed during the Pluvinel’s Academy performance project included the professional performers and the students’ ensemble, the students and the equestrian team, the ensembles and the audience, and the horses and the people. The discussion below focuses on

collaboration between the music students and the professional performers, and the relationship between horses and participants.

Scaffolding. Two professional guest performers were well prepared and shared an open, attentive and inclusive approach towards the students, me as a project leader, and the upcoming presentations. Their professional attitude provided adequate support and kept the students' performance anxiety at a minimum. One student commented on the issue, as shown below:

When we first started with Pluvinel's Academy, I was a little sceptical about how it would all go. How could we convey something so distant to our daily life? Only one of us had been in the military, which was different to the military at the end of the 16th century. With the assistance of the actor, we understood that we needed to act out our performance roles in a severe and concentrated mood. (Student 2, project report, 20 November 2017)

Based on former research experience with collaborative artistic projects, Vygotsky's notion of "the zone of proximal development" is frequently seen in action in successful educational partnership projects (Eidsaa, 2018). Professional performers' expertise is vital for the music students' construction of meaning in obligatory curriculum projects (Eidsaa, in press). This is mirrored in the student's comment below:

The collaboration with the actor was fantastic. Everyone in the group liked him very much and quickly noticed his skills in acting. At the same time, he was serious and wanted to help to create something unique. (Student 3, project report, 20 November 2017)

The reflection above shows that when participants on different levels of ability collaborate in inclusive environments, those involved may achieve a higher level as a group, and as individual participants (Fautley & Savage, 2007, p. 61). One of the students explained:

The actor assisted us in the dramaturgical part; he told us where to move, how to use our voices, and how we should relate to the various performance elements. In particular, it was of great help that he joined us on stage, doing his own thing together with us. (Student 8, project report, 20 November 2017)

The music students performed both popular and classical music in formal concerts and informal settings. They were less experienced in collaborations with non-musicians, performing in alternative venues and communicating with family audiences. Consequently, the music students needed to rethink their performing ideas and adjust their presentations in relation to the various dramaturgical sections. The professionals assisted the students in finding connections between performance moods and their aesthetic interpretations, and how changing physical positions and movements on stage could be used to enhance communication with the audience. In collaboration with the project leader, the students also solved challenges connected to venue acoustics, technical equipment and the recording and digitalisation of selected compositions to create high-quality sound files for the playback files used on stage. The inclusion of professionals in educational, artistic performances is usually a driving force in collaborative work. Close encounters between children, students, amateur adults and highly competent individuals motivate participants on all levels.

The presence of the horses. Horses have been used in military parades, official ceremonies and artistic performances since ancient times. The inclusion of horses in artistic events can be discussed from various perspectives, such as a historical point of view, a relational perspective, artistic perspectives, and a practice-based approach. In the Pluvinel's Academy performances, the interaction between horses and humans appeared from the introduction throughout the various scenes to the performance's conclusion. Firstly, the historical dimension was evident since the performance refers to historical places and people connected to equestrian military education. One student commented that the equestrian inclusion created a feeling of authenticity, as illustrated below:

It was cool that we got to collaborate with the participants from the riding hall.

The fact that the riders were involved with us provided a more credible and fun tool for the presentation. (Student 4, project report, 20 November 2017).

Secondly, relational elements were observed through the close encounters between the equipages and the students in sequences of dance, marching parades and acting. The riding sequences demanded trust between

horses and riders, and the riders' competence in controlling the situation. Some of the students were frightened to be in the arena when the horses were around. However, after having observed the riders controlling their horses, they gradually became confident. Thus, they adjusted to "the demands of the venue" (Boyce-Tillman, 2018, p. 113). Horses on an advanced level of dressage were presented in both performances, but the movements that originated in early modern France were performed only during the 2016 performance.¹⁵ The equipage presented some of the movements van Orden describes, among them the elevated postures derived from natural movements, such as rearing, kicking and pivoting on the haunches, which were useful in battles (van Orden, 2005, p. 235–284). Such elevated postures demand close communication between the rider and the horse, characterised by mutual trust and confidence. The photo below shows the professional rider in elevated posture, one of the most advanced movements a rider may ask the horse to do.



Figure 6. Professional Rider Rozemarijn Keuning and the Stallion Gesto Ram at the Pluvinel Performance in 2016

Photographer: Anders Martinsen. Used with permission of the photographer.

¹⁵ *Baroque riding*, also referred to as *academic riding* is a genre of dressage riding based on certain historical principles. http://www.akademiskridkonst.se/om_akademisk_ridkonst/ridkonsten/

Close interaction between horse and rider was also observed when the young participants presented elementary exercises of walk, trot and canter in the arena in lines, pairs and circles. Thus, the riders adopted the roles of young military students at Pluvinel's Academy in Paris during the early 1600s, re-enacting a historical past accompanied by early music, narratives and acting. A practice-based approach is the fourth dimension in this discussion of the presence of horses in stage productions and was already commented on in the section mentioning animal welfare. The presence of horses demanded restrictions to sound volume, stage lighting, participants' movements and audience's reactions.

The music students' physical actions along with voices and instruments could be compared to the riders' interaction with their horses. From an audience perspective, the horses' size, colours, and movements, together with the students' appearance with their musical instruments and costumes, could be experienced as aesthetic impressions, like a "gesamtkunstwerk".

To conclude this section on the presence of the horses, I will briefly mention the new international interdisciplinary research field of anthrozoology, which has emerged in academia during the past decade. Anthrozoology is defined as "a modern discipline that focuses on the interaction between animals and humans".¹⁶ Research from the anthrozoologist's perspective highlights both animal welfare issues and animal-assisted therapy (AAT). However, if the Pluvinel's Academy project had been explored from an anthrozoological point of view, it would have been created differently from the very start.

Summary

This chapter presented an artistic research approach to the completed practice-based project Pluvinel's Academy. The result of exploring the

¹⁶ Anthrozoology research is an established research discipline at the University of Agder. <https://www.uia.no/en/research/helse-og-idrettsvitenskap/interaction-between-animals-and-humans-anthrozoology>

Pluvinel's Academy project, therefore, could be described by referring to Borgdorff (2011), who explains the intent of artistic research as "uncovering new facts or relationships or shedding new light on existing facts or relationships" (Borgdorff, 2011, p. 54). Firstly, Pluvinel's Academy is an artwork *in itself*. The artistic research process referred to in this chapter focuses on a completed project and a new *product*. First of all, its originality pertains to the fact that it did not exist before (Borgdorff, 2011). Secondly, the research process revealed details of aesthetic expressions and actions, as well as connections, which were developed through dramaturgical reflection, rehearsals and performances. Thus, the research process reflects personal artistic development, and may contribute to enhancing practices within interdisciplinary artistic productions in educational contexts. Thirdly, the knowledge outcome includes *facts* about early music and the late Renaissance and Baroque eras (van Orden, 2005; Rolfhamre, 2017). As a fourth perspective, the analysis resulted in a deeper understanding of multidisciplinary approaches to artistic practice projects, showing the interrelation of music performing, sports presentations, history and music philosophy.

The development of technological knowledge during practice seems crucial. The sound recordings were essential as dramaturgical tools, such as when the students duplicated their recordings on stage. The videos and the photos were used as research objects in this retrospective exploration.

Borgdorff (2011) also refers to an "acquaintance" as a form of knowledge, which is characterized by "familiarity and receptiveness to persons, conditions or situations" (Borgdorff, 2011, p. 55). Even though Pluvinel's Academy was completed without participating researchers, the revisit revealed relationships or acquaintances which could have been explored further, such as the relationship between the ensemble and the horses. As commented on in the section "The Presence of Horses", the university ensemble became acquainted with the horses during rehearsals and gained knowledge about the equestrian environment's regulations. To enhance the students' understanding of conditions, situations and venues is an essential issue in artistic practice projects in general (Boyce-Tillman, 2018, p. 113).



Figure 7. The Ensemble and a Dressage Equipage During the Café Scene in Pluvinel’s Academy, 2017 Performance

Photographer: Anders Martinsen. Used with permission of the photographer.

This study of Pluvinel’s Academy shows that early music is a relevant and inspirational point of departure for in-depth work with interdisciplinary stage concepts in educational contexts. One reason is the close connection between music, politics and society. Another reason is that the aesthetic performance principles of early music contrast with a high-level musical-technical approach, which is usually connected to classical music concerts and performances. This is commented on by Rolffhamre (2017):

Today, it is not evident that we think practically and socially about music from the past. However, by taking a closer look at early music, we may discover more about how this music can impact our lives. The early modern music concept is about using music to communicate with the people around us. We should avoid elevating early music to something supernatural, solemn and unattainable. (Rolffhamre, 2017)

Revisiting the Pluvinel’s Academy project suggests that early music repertoires are valuable in creative, collaborative and interdisciplinary contexts. One reason may be that compositions from the 1500s and early 1600s

often are well-structured, melodious and balanced. The music seems to communicate nicely to a wide range of audiences, even to listeners who are not familiar with “classical” music. Moreover, even if the music of all genres demands an uncountable number of rehearsal hours to attain an advanced or expert level, it is possible to find early music pieces that may be achievable for relatively inexperienced ensembles, or in situations with limited time for in-depth studies and rehearsals.

Concluding remarks

The old music was not merely a pastime. It was a social gathering that developed the individual’s self-understanding and social relationships between the performers and the audience. (Rolfhamre, 2017)

The vignette above illustrates that early music is connected to philosophy, society and relationships. Such a connection is expected in various art forms. Nevertheless, based on van Orden (2005) and Rolfhamre (2017), early music seems to have had a clear social, political and relational function. Even if the Pluvinel’s Academy artistic idea was based on historical events, the project was not intended to be documentarily correct. That would have been a naive approach to the past, a perspective that I discussed in depth earlier (Eidsaa, 2020). However, by shedding light on history through aesthetic expression, all involved in such a practice may catch a glimpse of art and music, philosophy, history, politics and education in a bygone time. This knowledge can broaden our understanding of how art and education have always been crucial to society.

References

- Balsnes, A. (2009). Koret belcanto: En gullgruve av empiri i min hule hånd? In Johnsen, Halvorsen & Repstad (Eds.), *Å forske blant sine egne. Universitet og region: Nærhet og uavhengighet*. Høyskoleforlaget.
- Beech, N., Broad, S., Cunliffe, A., Duffy, C. & Gilmore, C. (2015). Development of organisation theory and organizing music. In N. Beech & C. Gilmore (Eds.), *Organising music: Theory, practice, performance* (pp. 1–24). Cambridge University Press.

- Bolstad, B. (2020). Tverrfaglig tilnærming: Hva og hvorfor? *FIKS Forskning, innovasjon og kompetanseutvikling i skolen, UiO* <https://www.uv.uio.no/forskning/satsinger/fiks>
- Borgdorff, H. (2011). The production of knowledge in artistic research. In M. Biggs & H. Karlsson (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to research in the arts* (pp. 44–63). Routledge.
- Correia, J., Dalagna, G., Benetti, A. & Monteiro, F. (2018). When is research artistic research? In *Cahiers of artistic research 1*. UA Editora. Universidade de Aveiro. https://ria.ua.pt/bitstream/10773/24282/3/Cahier1When%20is%20research%20artistic%20research_.pdf
- Chambers 20th Century Dictionary. (n.d.). <https://www.definitions.net/definition/dramaturgy>
- The place for compassionate and thinking riders: Dressage history Xenophon to Antoine de Pluvinel. *Dressage and Sport Horse Magazine*. <https://www.dressageandsporthorse.com/dressage-history-xenophone>
- Eidsaa, R. M. (2020). Art-based inquiry as method in creating artistic performances based on historical narratives. In T. Smith & K. S. Hendricks (Eds.), *Narratives and reflections in music education: Listening to voices seldom heard* (pp. 207–225). Springer.
- Eidsaa, R. M. (2015). Hvem skaper musikken? En studie av musikalsk skapende partnerskapsprosjekter i skolen ut fra et estetisk og didaktisk perspektiv. Danish School of Education. Institut for Uddannelse og Pædagogik, Aarhus Universitet.
- Eidsaa, R. M. & Schau, J. E. (2021). Higher music performance education in a changing world. Towards a new curriculum? A report from a pilot project. In M. Rykowski (Ed.), *Music e-ducation in XXI-st century. New challenges and perspectives* (pp. 195–208). Akademia Muzyczna im. I. J. Paderewskiego w Poznaniu.
- Epona ryttersenter Pluvinel akademi Fransk folkeviser*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scFTvPt22fc>
- Finley, S. (2018). Multimethod arts-based research. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Handbook of arts-based research* (pp. 477–490). The Guildford Press.
- Grande Écuries Chantilly. (n.d.). <https://domainedechantilly.com>
- Holgersen, S. E. (2019). Arts based research on participation in music education. *European Journal of Philosophy in Arts Education*, 1(4), 27–53.
- Källgren, F. (n.d.). *Akademisk ridekonst. Informasjonsside om akademisk ridekonst*. http://www.akademiskridekonst.se/om_akademisk_ridkonst/ridkonsten/
- Leavy, P. (2018). Fiction-based research. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Handbook of arts-based research* (pp. 190–203). The Guildford Press.
- Leavy, P. (2018). Introduction to arts-based research. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Handbook of arts-based research* (pp. 3–21). The Guildford Press.

- O'Neill, S. (2011). Learning in and through music performance: Understanding cultural diversity via inquiry and dialogue. In M. Barrett (Ed.), *A cultural psychology of music education* (pp. 179–200). Oxford University Press.
- Owen, N. (2005). The infectious outsider: Towards a pedagogy for artist educators in theatre and education: Creating new roles for the 21st century. In N. Govas & N. Choleva (Eds.), *Athens: Hellenic theatre / drama & education network*. [Also presented at ESRC Creativity Seminar, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 2005.]
- Pluvinel forestilling 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbwiwAeYITo>
- Pluvinel Toccata Espanola (del 2) Gesto <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgLrziX2sk>
- Rolfhamre, R. (2017, September 25). Komponisten som smisket med Solkongen. *Fædrelandsvennen*. <https://www.fvn.no/mening/i/6Lazr/komponisten-som-smisket-med-solkongen>
- Rolfhamre, R. & Angelo, E. (2022). Introduction: Making history through music performance and education. In R. Rolfhamre & E. Angelo (Eds.), *Views on early music as representation – invitations, congruity, performance* (MusPed:Research Vol. 4, Ch. 1, p. 12). Cappelen Damm Akademisk. <https://doi.org/10.23865/noasp.157.ch1>
- Sønning, A. (in press). Concert production and creative entrepreneurship. About concert dramaturgy and project development for cultural programs across genres, artistic expressions and cultural borders.
- Spanische Hofreitschule. (n.d.). Welcome to the Spanish riding school [website]. <https://www.srs.at/en/>
- The Cadre Noir of Saumur. (n.d.). Official site of the French National Riding School and the Cadre noir of Saumur [website]. <https://www.ifce.fr/en/cadre-noir>
- University of Agder. (n.d.). Music performance: Western classical music. Musical Communication MUK 173 [online university course description]. University of Agder. <https://www.uia.no/en/studieplaner/topic/MUK173-1>
- University of Agder. (n.d.). REMP: Reconfiguring early modern music [website]. Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Agder. <https://www.uia.no/en/research/kunstfag/rempe-reconfiguring-early-modern-performance>
- van Orden, K. (2005). *Music, discipline, and arms in early modern France*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Warren, J. R. (2014). *Music and ethical responsibility*. Cambridge University Press.
- Østern, T. P. (2017). Å forske med kunsten som metodologisk praksis med aestesis som mandat. *Journal for Research in Arts and Sport Education*, 1 [Special issue: Å forske med kunsten, 7–27].

