

CHAPTER 1

A Mozart Concert or Three Simple Chords? Limits for Approval in Admission Tests for Swedish Specialist Music Teacher Education

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Abstract: Against the background of problems with unarticulated concepts of quality and assessment criteria when assessing music, this article concerns how the limit for approval is constructed and legitimised by jurors when assessing entrance auditions to Swedish specialist music teacher education. The data comprise video documented auditions, focus group conversations, and stimulated-recall based interviews, involving jury members at four music education departments. Social semiotic theory is used to study how jurors assess applicants' knowledge representations in main instrument tests, what is considered decisive for an approval, and how this set limit is legitimised. Four approaches have been constructed: the demanding education and profession, the supposed capacity of the applicant, the flexible admission situation, and the care of the applicant. What is considered to be the minimum requirement for approval in these constructions differs markedly, which shows a striking difference between the views of jurors within and between institutions on

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how the applicants' musical performances on a main instrument should be assessed. These findings are discussed in relation to two possible scenarios of revised admission tests.

Keywords: admission tests, assessment, music teacher education, social semiotic theory, video observations, interviews

Admission tests with specific selection requirements have long been used as a sorting tool for both specialist music teacher and music performance educational programmes. However, the design of these tests has varied between different educational institutions and programmes as have the skills, knowledge and attitudes tested (Jørgensen, 2009). The eight specialist music teacher programmes in Sweden qualify students to teach a variety of music subjects including instrumental courses at upper secondary schools. To enter any of these programmes, the applicants' have to demonstrate skills on a) a main instrument; b) singing to own accompaniment; c) interplay and musical leadership; d) music theory and aural skills. In every test, juries listen to and assess the applicants' performances based on common criteria and standards communicated by the institutions. In the main instrument tests, the applicants are also ranked for selection to available places. Although the performance at admission tests, and what is recognised as sufficient for approval, seem decisive for accessing applied education, the area is largely unexplored, and there is a great need for research, especially regarding the assessment procedure. In addition, previous research has reported that assessment criteria and norms in higher music educations are not always clearly conceptualised (Harrison et al., 2013; Olsson & Nielsen, 2018). If unarticulated perceptions of knowledge and quality in music are common in higher music education, the credibility and value of assessments in tests for admission to higher music education programmes may be weakened. In Sweden, as in many other western countries, universities must strive for strengthened societal democracy by promoting broadened recruitment. From this perspective, it is important to review various selection methods, not least given the lack of positive results in a recent Swedish experimental study of aptitude testing and assessment procedures for access to teacher education (Universitets- och högskolerådet, 2018). Hence, the interest in

this article, which is part of a larger project about assessment of entrance auditions to Swedish specialist music teacher education financed by the Swedish Research Council, is what is considered decisive for approval on main instrument in entrance auditions. The purpose is accordingly to *critically examine jurors' views of the limit for approval in main instrument auditions to Swedish specialist music teacher programmes, and to problematise these with regard to issues of transparency and broadened recruitment.*

Assessing Music

Entrance tests with performance auditions on a main instrument are reportedly the most common requirement for both the bachelor of music programmes in Europe (Tomatz, 1996) and the music teaching programmes in USA (Payne & Ward, 2020). Assessments of performance auditions regarding main instrument are reported to concern technical skills, artistic expression, knowledge of music styles, and communication (Olsson, 1997; Sandberg-Jurström et al., in press). However, assessments of music skills can be seen as complex and problematic, for both applicants, evaluators and institutions, due to lack of transparency regarding what is assessed, how judgments are made in different practices, and how criteria are used and interpreted (Olsson, 2014). The need for greater clarity was called for in a study of ensemble playing in a bachelor of music programme, where teachers' unfamiliarity with documents and procedures, and students' problems with the grading process resulted in confusion and lack of transparency about how to assess ensemble playing (Harrison et al., 2013). Although sharply articulated criteria were used for technical proficiency in music bachelor courses, the assessments of sense of style, expression and communication used fuzzy criteria with lack of appropriate concepts (Olsson & Nielsen, 2018). Also, non-musical aspects, such as personal traits fitting to teacher profession, are assessed in instrumental tests to specialist music teacher education (Sandberg-Jurström et al., in press), despite lack of such criteria on the institutions, and despite leadership skill tests in other parts of the admission tests.

Hence, there are many challenges in assessing musical performance fairly and reliably, for example the degree to which a single performance is indicative of the performer's "true" ability. This includes the evaluator's ability to draw reliable conclusions about this ability from a single performance, and intra-rater reliability, for example the effect of previously made assessments on an adjudicator's subsequent evaluations (Bergee, 2007). Analytic criteria, through the use of rubrics and rating scales, are said to be effective by articulating specific aspects of performances (Bergee, 2003; Stanley et al., 2001) and describing what constitutes acceptable performances (Latimer et al., 2010). Analytic assessment has also been a way of addressing both inter- and intra-rater reliability (Bergee, 2003). Several studies have found that analytic assessments result in higher inter-rater reliability than holistic assessments, especially if the holistic assessment is only communicated through a grade (Ciorba & Smith, 2009). However, as Jonsson and Svingby (2007) notice, there is a risk that "the essence" of a performance can be lost in the pursuit of highly reliable analytic scoring. Likewise, Eisner (2007) argues that judgments in the arts need to bring out the subtle and significant and therefore require refined sensibility narratives and not only the use of measurement. Although analytic criteria provided useful focus during assessment at a tertiary conservatory, examiners preferred fewer criteria and greater focus on subjective responses (Stanley et al., 2001). In spite of using a 30-item rubric for evaluating solo instrumental performances in secondary school, the jurors still made holistic judgements, especially when the assessments were set in the cut point between different achievement levels (Wesolowski et al., 2018). Also, different results depending on the assessment strategy used have been noticed in bachelor of music programmes. Evaluators using analytic criteria gave higher ratings for technical skills and lower ratings for musical expressions, while the opposite was the case when using own personal criteria (Iusca, 2014). However, Sadler (2015) questions the idea that pre-determined criteria are necessary to make fair and reliable qualitative judgments. He claims that judges can make trustworthy assessments "backwards", by starting from holistic appraisals of a performance and then analysing the criteria (qualities) and standards (degree of these qualities) that are most critical or decisive

for the overall quality of the assessed artefact or performance. Standards clarified and instantiated by a selection of works or performances can, according to Sadler (2014), enable mutual “tuning” among the assessors. Also, Sadler (2017) points out that the passing grade, the minimum level of achievement, “should represent satisfactory and suitably competent (not marginal) achievement” (p. 93).

Although previous research reports what is assessed, how assessments are made and the effect and questioning of rating resources, little is known of limits for approval. The standards for approval on main instrument at most of the institutions involved in this article are formulated using only two criteria: technical competence and artistic performance, thus opening for fairly holistic assessments. Hence, the main issues in the study are (a) how standards for approval are articulated and interpreted and (b) how the set limit for approval is legitimised.

Theoretical Considerations

The theoretical framework used in this article is designed to capture how instrumental/vocal skills are represented by applicants’ in auditions for specialist music teacher programmes, and verbally articulated and assessed by jurors. Using a *social-semiotic* approach, individuals’ meaning-making activities can be rendered visible through their choice and use of historical and socially available semiotic *modes* to represent and communicate their understandings of, attitudes to, and interpretations of various phenomena in the social world (Kress, 2010). In this regard, *multimodal meaning-making*, is seen as the realisation and articulation of particular aspects of the reality in ways appropriate to the interests of social actors in specific contexts. This implies that semiotic modes, such as speech, images and gestures, offering variations of resources, let individuals represent what they regard as knowledge of the world. In such processes the term *transduction* is used to signal a re-articulation of meaning from one mode to another (Kress, 2010). In the present study, this approach provides the opportunity to see and hear how applicants transduce pieces of music into music performances by using instrumental, vocal and bodily resources as well as musical resources such as dynamics and timing. It

also provides the opportunity to see and hear what understandings of music style and practice the applicants' express and communicate in their performances. According to Kress (2009), knowledge assessment in an institutional context is intended to recognise signs of learning, i.e. to see the result of a meaning-making engagement. This implies how jurors see, hear and understand the applicants' communicated representations of skills and understandings in order to recognise required knowledge, and how jurors transduce their own multimodal experience into descriptions and evaluations. Thus, the focus in this study is mainly on jurors' verbally expressed values and assessments of the applicants' knowledge representations, and how the jurors legitimise their statements.

Participants and Analysis

For data collection, video documentation illustrating the use of semiotic resources (Jewitt, 2006), focus group/individual interviews addressing specific themes (Wibeck, 2000), and stimulated recall method for comments on video recorded situations (Calderhead, 1981) were used. The data comprise video documented entrance auditions and audio or video documented conversations with jury members. Some of these were structured individual conversations, while others were focus groups with two to four participants. In all, 59 jury members from four Swedish institutions offering music teacher education programmes participated. The institutions were chosen from a total of eight institutions offering specialist music teacher education programmes, and the selection was based on variation in institutional background, current organization, teacher programme profile and musical genre. Most of the interviews were conducted within two weeks of the entrance auditions, and a few within two months. The jurors were invited to select videos of the auditions they assessed and were asked to comment on the quality of the applicants' performances. They were asked to use the videos to remind themselves of their thoughts and evaluations at the time of the auditions, and the few jurors who were not present at the auditions were simply asked to comment on what they saw and heard in the videos. They were also asked to reflect on entrance auditions for specialist music teacher education in general.

In *the first step of analysis*, in order to understand what is going on in the performances, parts of the selected video-recorded sequences were transduced by the researchers into musical scores illustrating what is visible and audible in the applicants' music playing. In the presentation of the findings these transcriptions are visible as well. Furthermore, this step also concerned the researchers short analyses of the transcriptions. *The second step of analysis*, includes codifying of the jurors' detailed descriptions of what they could see and hear in the applicants' performances, as well as the qualities and skills that caught their attention in the representations. *The third step of analysis*, concerned distinguishing and categorising variations in the jurors' meta-reflections about what was communicated and recognised as acceptable knowledge and skills in the applicants' representations. In addition to identifying constructions of the acceptable limit for approval, the jurors' rhetorical strategies to legitimise these constructions were also analysed, and what seemed to be at stake when deciding the limit for a pass.

The Swedish Research Council's guidelines regarding information requirements, de-identification, voluntary participation and consent were followed for both jurors and video-recorded applicants. For ethical reasons and the risk for recognition, de-identification has been made without references in the quotations. In presenting the results, no statements or categories are attributed to specific institutions, juries or individual jurors. When a dialogue between jurors is cited, a dash is used before each statement. In the block quotations, deleted passages are indicated with ellipses.

Approaches to the Limit for Approval

In the analysis of what is considered decisive for an approved main instrument test, and how limits of approval are legitimised, four approaches have been constructed: the demanding education and profession; the supposed capacity of the applicant; the flexible admission conditions, and the care of the applicant. In the following, the researchers' transcriptions and short analyses of excerpts from the auditions are followed by quotations from the jurors' comments on the applicants' performances and the researchers' analyses of jurors' statements.

The Demanding Education and Profession

The construction of the demanding education and profession is based on the view that the applicants' knowledge representations, and the limit for approval, must be at a level that ensures good or very good potential for development and prospect for managing the education and the future professional life.

In Figure 1, an applicant's use of vocal and bodily resources are highlighted where the end of an improvised part in a jazz song switches to the regular melody:

Figure 1 is a musical score for a jazz performance excerpt. It consists of a vocal line and four piano accompaniment staves (Gaze, Feet, Right hand, and Left hand). The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line includes lyrics: "da bi dn da bi dn da bi dn da bi dn da ba da ba do bi dap do da ba do bej ___ And all at". The piano accompaniment staves are annotated with descriptions of the performer's physical actions:

- Gaze:** Score, Score, Jury, Pianist, Score
- Feet:** Wiggles on the right shoe's toe cap, A small step with the right foot
- Right hand:** Hand at shoulder-high moves with the pulse, Hand moves to the microphone, Hand is holding the microphone, Hand at shoulder-high
- Left hand:** Open outward palm raises upwards, Palm at waist high, Palm is lowered, Palm raises to shoulder-high, Arm is hanging down, Hand is holding the microphone

Figure 1 Excerpt from a singer's performance

How the applicant used the voice, intonated and articulated the tones shows signs of some vocal technical skills. The applicant's gaze and the movements with hands and arms can be seen as a communicative act directed both to the pianist in the band and the jury, although the gaze is only directed in these directions a few times during the excerpt. The applicant's use of bodily resources and way of transducing notes and chords into improvised singing can all be seen as a genre-based interpretation. A juror verbalises a similar understanding of the applicant's skills:

I also listen to the feel for rhythm, the timing, and he is very distinct ... What you can hear is that he may not be so much into jazz ... he is not especially

free rhythmically in his phrasing, but he sings very accurately ... you hear that he is musical ... I think one should sing without the music [in front of him], which he does not, and I would like to see a little more expression ... but he opens a little and communicates with the audience, that is, us ... what mainly makes him approved is that number one, he sings in pitch, he nails the notes, he has a free [sound], he has a very good technique ... he is totally relaxed [in the body].

What is recognised as approved knowledge in this statement is that the applicant has developed good technical and performing skills. It also is suggested that an approved level does not necessarily require much expression, clear bodily communication with fellow musicians, good knowledge of jazz or knowing the music by ear even if this is considered desirable. Necessary representations of knowledge are legitimised as follows:

If you haven't worked so much with shuffle, that is triplet phrasing, then it would be, because we have so much jazz in the education so you need some of that ... it's part of the tools that must be in place to get through ...

It's rhythmically improvised music ... the whole package should be there. It must be anchored rhythmically in the bodies, in the music making, otherwise it will not work.

The requirement to be able to use jazz-related music resources is related to the possibility of managing a five-year music teacher education with focus on the jazz field, which is not seen as feasible without adequate skills. Within this construction also the limit of approval is legitimised through adaptation to the structure of the education, especially with regard to the demands of the ensemble courses, which according to some jurors define the high level:

Yes, and they usually have the ensemble, and it kick-starts. It is not [organised in] ability groups, it is also mixed ensembles and then you look at, will this one manage to get started in this ... has [the applicant] the knowledge to solve or problematise the songs and learn them.

In the symphony orchestra with XX they play very challenging repertoire. Sometimes it's Beethoven ... It's original stuff.

The proficiency level needed for participation in the institution's orchestras and smaller ensembles, and the capacity to solve problems that may arise in the repertoire, is taken as arguments for requiring a high level of skills and knowledge. The limit for approval is also legitimised by the small number of instrumental lessons that are provided. Accordingly, the limit for approval is based on adaptation to the structure of the education to ensure quality linked to the education requirements.

The construction of the demanding education and profession is also based on assertions suggesting that the applicant's performed knowledge representations should be at a very high level, equal to the approved limit demanded for admission to a bachelor of music. Since very high instrumental or vocal skills are required in order to cope with the high demands of both the studies and the coming profession, a demand for well-founded technical and interpretative knowledge representations is therefore strongly emphasized. The importance of such skills is exemplified in the statement below:

Now this is university studies and you know what the first year is like. It's pretty tough. There is no time for ten hours a day practicing the violin, so [those skills] must already be at hand, so we need to set a level where they are so skilled that they have time to tackle other subjects the first and second year ... we want those who are self-propelled ... So, for me there is no difference ... the level ... should be at least as high for music teachers as it is for musicians because it is the same profession. And the students we send out from here should be able to take care of all different kinds of children and young people and talents, and be able to help them to become amateur musicians or have great fun in groups or those who want to be able to apply here. And then they have to know a lot.

The excerpt shows how the applicants' knowledge representations are related to, above all, the high demands on skills in the main instrument tests in bachelor music programmes, with the suggestion that the musician and the specialist music teacher require the same high instrumental skills. The demand for a very high level on the main instrument already at the start of the programme is legitimised by the high pace in the studies and the time competition with other courses included in the music teacher programme. Very high demands are also argued for with

reference to the education's university status as well as to the necessity to secure the future music teacher's need for high instrumental skills. Similar reflections are made by other jurors, for example:

This training programme, at least in our house, requires an awful lot of prior knowledge because you don't have much time for your own instrument ... are we talking about reality or what we want? We want something completely different. We want a Mozart concert, just like the musician programme ... You have to know how the instrument works at that level, having nailed the basic technique, and the left hand speed and position changes, all that.

This statement suggests that the very high requirements for instrumental skills are not always met in the applicant's knowledge representations, but rather constitute a wishful thinking. In other statements, past specialist music teacher educations are highlighted as exemplary, with higher quality requirements and significantly more instrument lessons. This construction thus signals that a change has taken place over the years and that there now is a need for higher demands on the applicants, which in the jurors' statements shows a desire not only to adapt the requirements to the current educational programme, but also to a historical context.

The Supposed Capacity of the Applicant

The starting point for the construction of the supposed capacity of the applicant is conversations about an absolute lowest, marginal limit for a pass. This construction is based on jurors' reflections on applicants whose knowledge representations are judged to be mostly below the jurors' suggested limit for approval, and therefore between fail and pass, but that are nevertheless being recognised as acceptable. Here, in spite of an applicant's lacking qualifications, the jurors hope that he or she will be able to learn the skills that the education and the profession require.

Figure 2 illustrates an applicant performing their own composition in which music-related resources, such as singing and guitar accompaniment, and bodily resources are used:

$\text{♩} = 95$
 Em D G Em D7 G Em D

Voice: Does he love you like I did? Does he love you like I did? It is o - key if he does.
 The voice is relatively in tune, fairly straight and sharp, slightly pressed on the high notes

Guitar: (Simple rhythmic accompaniment)

Gaze: At the floor At the fretboard Half-shut eyes At the fretboard

Head: Movement to the Right M to R Movement to the Right and a small grimase Movement to the Right and Left

Figure 2 Excerpt from a guitarist's performance

The applicant shows some instrumental technical skills with the voice, as well as with three simple and rhythmically played chords on the guitar. Head movements and directed gazes coordinated with accentuation on certain words can be seen as signs either of genre-based interpretation, difficulties in singing higher notes or attempts at communicating intensity to the listeners (bars 1, 3 and 4). The jurors evaluate the applicant's skills as follows:

Yes, it's only three chords for a very long time and the melody is, yes, it is unbelievably plain. The text is horrible.

The guitar playing, monotonous, without variations, just the typical pop chords everyone plays, nothing original. He doesn't contribute with variation in the accompaniment there, mediocre ... it's exactly the same level of energy, no change.

The applicant's knowledge representations are obviously not recognised as acceptable. The jurors wish for resources such as more interesting text, more chords, originality, varied accompaniment and variations in energy levels. They also miss chords other than those associated with the pop genre, despite the fact that a pop focus is prioritised in this test. In the argumentation about the applicant's communicated skills, there are considerable doubts about an approval:

He feels very unaware of what music can be, like form, dynamics, phrases, directions, it is just like a single, it is very unaware, very immature and then, he is not really young and the question is, how much can this guy develop given he has not come further at 22 or whatever? How much more can he improve, and should he teach high school students at the high school where all kinds of individuals are studying, including future world stars too. Should they have him as a music teacher?

The suggested lack of musical skills and understanding, the age of the applicant and the development possibilities are related to the opportunity to, within five years, teach music in a high school where some students can be on a very advanced level. However, the applicant was approved, albeit below the very limit for approval, and due to a single, narrowly passed test on another instrument. In jurors' statements, the phrase "benefit of the doubt" is often used, suggesting that inadequacies could somehow be overcome during the education. In this construction a lack of skills on the main instrument can be compensated by skills on other instruments or by competencies shown in other parts of the admission tests. Although the jurors show signs of doubt about an applicant's capacity to cope with the education, may still be admitted if the skills are likely to be developed so that the applicant can become a "decent" teacher. It is also suggested that the tests can be seen as diagnostic rather than excluding, implying that applicants with low skills are suggested to have possibilities to learn enough during five years given the right support. Thus, the "door is slightly open" for these applicants, which might call for institutional adaptation to applicants rather than the opposite.

The Flexible Admission Conditions

The construction of the flexible admission conditions is based on the idea that the limit for approval does not necessarily have to be fixed, but can be changed depending on contextual and institutional conditions. The view of what is recognised as acceptable skills is considered as dependent on available education places and the number of applicants at the time of application. Also the jurors' views of what to be assessed as well as the

absence of clearly stated standards are considered to affect the limit for approval.

One applicant drummer's use of the drum set and the body as resources, when playing with a guitarist in a jazz song, is illustrated in Figure 3:

Figure 3 Excerpt from a drummer's performance

The applicant's transduction of the original song to the drum set takes place with a steady and simple drum pattern (bar 1–3) with some added rhythms on the snare drum and the cymbals (bar 4–5). Some communication with fellow players through gazes is visible (bar 1–3). The volume is the same throughout the song, the applicant's body is rigid and the playing is rhythmically static. In the jurors' reflections, several depreciating metaphorical linguistic resources are used:

For the present it is a pass, obviously, but it is puppyish ...

Yes, it is.

But also, the fill-ins, I mean these digidigi, that is. It feels very quiet, aah, young-ish and a bit, unmusically is the wrong word, but like.

Almost unstructured or nearly careless.

Like, slapish ...

He is banging himself through it rather than playing, in my opinion.

Interviewer: But what makes him approved, nevertheless?

Well, but he keeps it together, so it doesn't fall like a house of cards ... we're like still standing. It's okay, but he hasn't really added anything. It is very inside, it is very, like, eh, simple stuff and equally thick and bad dynamics, quite uninteresting.

In the juror's dialogue, the low technical level, the dull performance, the rigid body movements and immature performance seem to be redeemed by the playing holding together. Not only is the performance approved, but an even lower level could have been accepted. Also, the applicant's instrumental skills are not considered decisive:

It will nearly always be alright, no matter what level they are at. It's just to take it where they are ... he has the water surface here, you know (points under his nose) ... but he survives, so to speak. It is not here (points over the nose), so it would work in an ensemble situation, though a bit on the border ... but I could actually accept someone doing it even worse. I just want to know, well just feel that it is not completely like black.

Here it is implicated that it is entirely possible to learn what is required during the five-year education provided that the applicant can function in different ensemble situations. What is recognised as crucial is, if anything, the ability to develop further with a teacher's support despite few technical and interpretative resources represented. However, the final decision for approved is legitimised on the basis of institutional and contextual conditions:

Again, it's a bit about how, how broad the line-up is (a dry laughter). This year he probably would have been [accepted], when they are five applicants ...

Interviewer: But do you change the limit for approval depending on how many the applicants are?

Well it's about the competition, sort of. Like, we have to have something, so at the end we have to set the bar on the basis of this year's applicants.

The limit for approval here is very flexible, depending on the number of applicants and their result of the tests, given that it is important to fill

up the places available. It also happens that administrative staff asks for approval despite low scores due to vacant places. The lack of an absolute assessment scale is also considered to contribute to variations of the limit for approval. However, to ensure the quality, admitted applicants are considered to have at least some potential for development. As a result, the level of approval may change year by year at the same institution, and applicants can be assessed on the basis of different premises, depending on the jurors, institution and the admission situation. One consequence of these statements is that the threshold for pass is flexible and unstable with fuzzy conceptions of quality and a strong adaptation to the prevailing conditions.

The Care of the Applicant

In the jurors' conversations of what cannot be approved, a limit for approval describing what is insufficient and not recognised as acceptable skills, is also expressed. The construction of the care of the applicant is based on statements in which applicants, due to undeveloped and insignificant musical qualities in their performances, are not considered to be able to learn what is required during the course of the education and therefore will not become good enough teachers. Starting the programme with such qualifications would be far too difficult for a future student.

Figure 4a illustrates an excerpt from the original composition and 4b the applicant's use of musical and bodily resources when playing four bars from the classic piano repertoire:

Figure 4a Excerpt from the original composition

The image shows a musical score for piano and body. The piano part is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time, with a tempo of quarter note = 95. It is divided into four measures. The first measure is marked *mf* and *rubato*. The second measure is marked *rubato*. The third measure is marked *più mosso* and *a tempo*. The fourth measure is marked *a tempo*. The piano part has four annotations: 'Correctly played melody, two omitted base tones', 'Fuzzy played melody rhythm, fuzzy played or omitted base tones', 'Correctly played melody, fuzzy played or omitted base tones', and 'Correctly played melody, two correctly and some faulty played bass tones, interrupted play'. The body part is marked with 'Pedal' and has a '5' written below it. Below the body part is a paragraph of text: 'The torso is straight and fairly stiff, illustrated by the whole note in the score. The arms are slightly mobile following the music played. The hands and fingers are rather stiff. The eyes are not in view.'

Figure 4b Excerpt from a pianist's performance

The applicant's transduction from the original sheet of music to piano playing includes missing notes, rhythmic indistinctness, an unsteady pulse, relatively too much pedal and a lack of prescribed changes in dynamics and tempo. The performance is interrupted after several flaws. The applicant seems to focus on the printed music throughout the performance, and the body is fairly rigid. Two jurors reflect on the applicant's knowledge representations as follows:

She has already made two mistakes here ... it was a tie and then it was a wrong note and then it was rhythmically a bit limping at the beginning ... then it says piano crescendo and fairly obviously back to pianissimo ... and bit by bit stringendo ... it is very very clear instructions but she has none of that. Exactly the same nuances right through ... it doesn't feel that there is an idea.

There is a lot to do with her hand ... the body is rather free, but she doesn't use her arms in an organic or good way.

The applicant's skills are not considered to be at a sufficient technical or interpretative level given several flaws, such as the rhythmical problems, lack of dynamics and expression as well as improper use of arms and hands. It is considered important to understand, use and reinforce the music with the body. The consequence of insufficient knowledge representations is argued:

I imagine her in the role of piano teacher, and what kind of musical ideas will you have to give your students, eight or sixteen or whatever [age] they are.

It's troublesome if you start from a too low level, it will not be good for anyone, not the person in question, not for the fellow students, not for the students, or for the students this person will teach, and not for society at large.

You really wouldn't put them in a totally uncomfortable experience. And it's not just that it drags down the others. It can also be very disruptive for their future.

Here, a rejection of applicants is motivated by care for them. Otherwise, they should “probably have a number of tough life stories and sad people”. With low skills, it is considered difficult to learn enough to be able to mediate something essential to future students. Low skills on the instrument are also considered to impair the applicants' ability to function in interaction with other students. The level of knowledge is here legitimised as a care of the applicant, since insufficient skills are expected to result in problems both for the applicant and for future fellow students. Thus, this construction emphasizes not only the importance of securing the requirements of the education and profession, but above all the well-being of the future student.

Discussion

There is a striking difference between the views of how jurors define and argue for limits for approval when assessing applicant's musical performances on main instruments. What is considered to be the requirement for approval differs markedly from the highest level with very high requirements, such as a Mozart concert, to the lowest level with acceptance of major deficiencies, by way of singing and playing three simple chords. The jurors also judge the applicants on the basis of premises other than the criteria and standards communicated to both evaluators and applicants through the institutions' information channels. The applicants' potential for musical development, their capacity to meet the educational and professional requirements and their ability

to adapt to teachers and fellow students as well as future students, school and society is presented as essential by the jurors. Person-related evaluations of applicants' knowledge representations are also voiced, and it does not seem uncommon that the level for pass is adapted to the ratio of the number of applicants to the available places. Such lack of transparency regarding criteria used to evaluate an applicant has also been reported by Harrison et al. (2013), and by Olsson and Nielsen (2018) who have found unarticulated or fuzzy criteria in higher music education. Also, the varying views regarding competences needed for admission to the education coincide largely with ideas about what and how much is considered necessary and possible to learn during the music teacher education and what competences a future music teacher is expected to possess after completed education. The compass of expected knowledge and skills necessary for admission found in this study is thus paralleled by the scope of exit expectations, from being able to probably become a rather functioning teacher at an ordinary secondary school to becoming a highly-qualified teacher for advanced music students at a music profile upper secondary school.

In the light of these variations, we will discuss the findings from the perspective of the transparency. We also take the opportunity to suggest what to consider when developing the tests by outlining two scenarios. Scenario 1 is related to the design of the admission situations in our study, where jointly set tests and standards are common in most of the institutions. In this scenario, homogeneous specialist music teacher training programmes are strived for, where similar structure, criteria and limit for approval in the programmes require a common lowest level for admittance, here linked to the construction of the demanding education and profession. Based on this scenario, today's skill tests would need to be revised and developed so that they assess only musical skills and knowledge. Analytical criteria would be the basis here, rather than the fairly holistic criteria, with place for a variety of interpretations, that can be said to take precedence today. This type of homogeneous proficiency test has been advocated in previous research and proved effective and reliable (Bergee, 2003; Wesolowski et al., 2018). Furthermore, the joint development of a combination of verbalised and

instantiated standard for approval suggested by Sadler (2014) could provide the necessary “tuning” and harmonisation of an assessment culture. Such standards could clarify the judgement process, both for applicants and for jurors, and may deter from assessing other competencies than musical skills. Although this scenario would assure transparency to obtain a place on a specialist music teacher programme, no matter where in the country the applicant chooses to study, it could render a broadened recruitment more difficult unless the tests are opened for other traditions of music-making.

Scenario 2 is related to the findings of varying approaches of limits for approval, regardless of jurors, jury groups and institutions. This scenario is based on a completely different logic. Here, variation and pluralism are sought instead of homogeneity, and variation in requirements is seen as an advantage and not a problem. Educational institutions with differing profiles generate different criteria and standards for approval and ranking. Here, Sadler’s (2014) clarification of standards through examples can be useful both to provide consistency of grading within institutions and to clarify the differences between institutions regarding demands and profiles. Applicants can then choose a university based on their own musical profile and background, which would create opportunities for applicants with a broader spectrum of competencies to enter a music teacher programme. In this scenario, explicitly marketed variations of requirements for approval between institutions can from a national perspective be a way of widening recruitment to the music teacher profession and thereby contribute to a strengthened democracy. Regardless of which scenario is realised, however, criteria and standards for the approved level, as well as criteria for ranking approved applicants, must strive for transparency in order for the tests to be considered reliable and fair as a selection tool for music teacher education in Sweden.

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