

# Can We Buy Virtue? Implications from State University Funding On Musical Instrument Performance Teacher Mandate

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**Abstract:** Recent world developments have put a strain on the humanities in general, and higher education music performance study degree-programmes in particular. In an educational system currently promoting consumer-product relationships where the music performance teacher is very much accountable for the students' development into professional musicians and, recently, also sustainable world citizens, we must give more attention to what, whom and why we educate? This chapter is an armchair analytical philosophical continuation of a paper published elsewhere (Rolfhamre, 2020). Taking the lead from Julia Annas' (2011) virtue-as-skill, I will, here, elaborate on what implications the Norwegian state higher education funding system may have on the higher education music performance teacher's perceived mandate from the perspectives of music pedagogy, rhetoric and virtue ethics. First, I pursue three different usages of the verb "to buy" to exemplify why I find the chapter's title to be relevant and valid. This sets the premises for the following turn to rhetoric to highlight the starting point's persuasive functions and incentives. Subsequently, I briefly relate the argument to Butlerian performativity to emphasise its relation to normativity, inclusion-exclusion and the theoretical possibility of "breaking free". From this position, I draw on Aristotelian *phronesis*, mainly through the position held by Hansen (2007) to sketch up an ecology in which I ask how this all affects the teacher's mandate?

**Keywords:** higher education, music performance, teacher's mandate, virtue, rhetoric, pedagogy

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Recent world developments have put a strain on the humanities in general as neoliberalist policies, and new public management incentives result in the education of ethical values (such as compassion and morality) becoming somewhat secondary to economic growth and value creation (Nussbaum, 2010). The UN's blueprint, sustainability goals to "achieve a better and more sustainable future for all" clearly put an expectation on the world's nations to deliver results. "[I]n order to leave no one behind, [they have it,] it is important that we achieve them all [i.e. all defined goals] by 2030" (United Nations, 2020), and, as the common metaphorical expressions have it: "time is money", "time is of the essence". The Norwegian state, for instance, is obligated to contribute to realising these goals and, naturally, impose on all state-funded operations and institutions to act and produce accordingly. The national education curriculum, at all levels, are no exception (Regjeringen, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; Rolfhamre, 2020; United Nations, 2020; Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). When the Norwegian state further defines itself as a "knowledge economy" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2016), we begin to understand that there are pressing matters here to discuss concerning the future of music performance from the perspective of recruiting, educating and sustaining a traditional craft professionally and what function we, as teachers, will end up having down the road. To give the following argument here some sort of focus, I will theorise within the domains of the Norwegian state in general and the Norwegian state higher education in particular, because this is what I am familiar with and am qualified to speak of as a university Professor and "higher education native", so to say. The argument I propose, however, is intended to be relevant for a broader context and, as such, I will speak in general terms whenever I can. When I speak of higher education degree programmes in music performance, I think particularly of those studies where the one-to-one relationship between the student and the musical instrument performance teacher makes up most of the study programmes implementation and where other types of teaching are considered supplementary to the main instrument activities (Angelo et al., 2019, p. 87). From this perspective, the primary responsibility (or a burden depending on whom you ask) to educate future sustainable citizens – in addition to being brilliant, sought after musicians

– rests with the main instrument teacher. Where most of these teachers are hired professionals from symphony orchestras and from the freelance market, which is the case at my home institution, we see that the new state policies, to them, may seem alienating and unrealistic. “Am I not just supposed to teach them how to play an instrument?” the crafts-teacher might rightfully ask from the perspective of the conservatoire tradition from which most of us teachers come. This phenomenon can be considered a direct effect from the accelerating (particularly from 2015, onwards) academisation and centralisation of music performance studies where earlier conservatories became subjected to the same university standards as physics, mathematics, health care, engineering, etc. (Angelo, et al. 2019; Rolfhamre, 2020).

“Can we buy virtue?” is a provocative, eye-catching title. It is easy to respond: “of course not”, or (from a successful, mischievous business manager’s perspective) “why not?” by reflex and discard it as a nothing more than a rhetorical provocation. I argue, however, there is more to it than that, and that it is not only valid as a rhetorical effect, but is indeed a relevant question to ask in today’s educational climate. This chapter is an armchair analytical philosophical continuation of a paper published elsewhere (Rolfhamre, 2020) where I argue that educational quality in higher education is very much a rhetorical matter. In a context based on frictions between managerial quality assurance and classical musical instrument performance education, I pinpoint a consumer-product relationship that affects all parts of the study programme: from recruiting new students to nurturing their competence (professional and otherwise), to judging their development in the end where the teacher is somehow always at stake. The student-teacher relationship is central to how we judge quality in Norwegian state higher education study programmes, and what is offered is not alone a matter of artistry and performer integrity, but of funding mechanics where there is an intricate complexity where funding, generalisability and the particular is in constant inter-dependence. In sum: classical musical performance degrees are, in a sense, commodities and the performance teacher is a service the university offers its students to get their “money’s worth”. As I argue there, we should dedicate “... more focus on enabling managerial processes and quality work

nurturing role-models for lifelong learning and dynamic employability than for merely satisfying current market demands from quantitative reasoning” (p. 114).

Taking the lead from Julia Annas’ (2011) virtue-as-skill, further placed within a phronesis-ecology drawing on Hansen (2007), I will, here, continue one particular aspect of this perspective to elaborate on what implications the Norwegian state higher education funding system may have on the higher education music performance teacher’s perceived mandate. From the perspectives of music pedagogy, rhetoric and virtue ethics, I will offer an intervention within a complex discourse with no beginning and no end, to propose that ethical perspectives (here, virtue ethics in particular) deserve more attention, not only in the philosophical realms but also in didactics, on-the-floor pedagogy and in nurturing future generations of main instrument teachers. In doing so, I hope to offer a small contribution to the ongoing debate of who the teacher and student should be and what they should learn and why. In particular, how classical tradition-bound competencies should both relate to, and make themselves able to develop on their terms within, a neoliberalist, policy-driven society.

A fundamental perspective to this argument is how Julia Annas articulates virtue in her *Intelligent Virtue* (2011). On her account, virtue is something that we can work on to develop and improve as long as we are doing so intentionally while aspiring to a particular ideal. As Seneca reminds us, for us to be motivated to cultivate virtue, there must be some possibility of it ever becoming a reality. Virtue, then, must be something that we can conceptualise and utilise as a personal, achievable goal (a state of being, acting, etc.; Seneca, 1917, p. 22). From an Aristotelian perspective, we can divide the virtues into those about the *intellect* (theoretical and practical) and *character* (temperance, courage, compassion, etc.). Traditionally, the music performance departments have perhaps been readily associated with the first, the intellectual side of virtue, by design (e.g. bachelor’s and master’s theses, aural analysis, music theory, performance technique, etc.). In the light of the more recent trends to impose on higher education to cultivate transcending values (the UN sustainability goals above), however, we see a new need also to address more carefully how we relate to the second category: the virtuous character.

This is where phronesis comes into play as it takes its starting point in practical and theoretical knowledge and systemises a way to actively seek to transcend (Socratic *Eros*), aiming for the unattainable, divine wisdom (*Sophia*). One apparent conundrum here, is to what conception of virtue we should aspire? Should it be those portrayed by the UN or the national state? Should it be that of the student or the teacher? Or should it be something completely different? In this present context, however, I am not so much interested in the *what*, but what it means for us to pursue the *how*. That is the implications on our mandate from the definition of it to be something we should convey to our students in some way.

First, I pursue three different usages of the verb “to buy” to exemplify why I find the chapter’s title to be relevant and valid. This sets the premises for the following turn to rhetoric to highlight the starting point’s persuasive functions and incentives. Subsequently, I briefly relate the argument to Butlerian performativity to emphasise its relation to normativity, inclusion-exclusion and the theoretical possibility of “breaking free”. From this position, I draw on Aristotelian phronesis, mainly through the positions held by Hansen (2007) and Kristjánsson (2014) to sketch up an ecology in which the final segment of the present argument can unfold: how does this all affect the teacher’s (actual or perceived) mandate?

## Buying<sub>xyz</sub> Virtue

When looking up the verb “buy” in the *Cambridge Dictionary* (2020), we find three main entries: (1) “to get something by paying money for it” (*buyx* below); (2) “to pay someone so that they do what you want or do not cause you any trouble” (*buyy*); and (3) “to believe that something is true” (*buyz*). Here, I will make a short note on each of the three possibilities to build a cumulative understanding of the word as an unlocking mechanism for the argument to follow (*buyxyz*).

### Buy<sub>x</sub>: Paying for it

In private tuition, the consumer-product relationship is easy to identify. We pay for classes to become better musicians. It may not be a cheap

matter, so we scout different teachers and judge their competence, profile, price and availability before we make our decision. Although higher education in Norway is “free of charge” (Act Relating to Universities and University Colleges, 2005, §7–1), it is not to be overlooked that it is a substantial personal investment. We may have to move to somewhere closer to campus and pay for rent, Internet, TV, food, transportation, insurances, literature, musical scores, instruments, student organisation registration fees, etc. Further, we invest time that we could have used to do something else, elsewhere.

### Buy<sub>y</sub>: Paying for it (reversed)

To pay someone so that they do what you want or do not cause you any trouble is a classical narrative leading to corruption. Often associated with a sort of cynical, intimidating power-relation – “if you do this for me, I will provide you with opportunities to become professional, but if you do not ...” – we soon think of the twenty-first-century #metoo phenomenon, the impeachment of Trump in late 2019/early 2020, spy or mafia-films, etc. However, it does not have to be big, loud and bold. It could be a simple thing as compassion and kindness returned overtime to build allegiance based on free loyalty. It could be a milder, more fuzzy version of *buyz* below where I convince my students through praise, inclusion and acceptance that my way is the way to go. I award them with inclusion so that they believe in my cause and speak well of me over others, to become my fans, in a way. This goes beyond them accepting my knowledge offer on their terms to become a situation where I directly invest in them to make them do what I want in a manipulative manner (mostly in a negative way, but not always).

### Buy<sub>z</sub>: Believing it

When I believe an argument presented to me, I can *buyz* it. It is part of a rhetorical transaction where someone’s intended act of persuasion succeeds and leads to a state of conviction, an acceptance of the truth or, at least, seems logically sound. The epistemological opportunities that this

offers can, of course, be explored far beyond what fits the scope of the present paper, but let it suffice, for the present being, to say that conceptions of truth, knowledge and to know are three very different things. Now, more than perhaps ever, are we questioning what truth is and what consequences it has on society as a whole. Lee McIntyre (2018) informs us that parts of the new developments are related to a shift from individual conviction to a collective rejection of so-called objective facts, leading to alternate realities which – in a global political climate – leads us to devastating collisions. Using alternative facts to assert “political dominance” is not only a matter of science, but of rhetorically constructing the world, resulting in, what I like to call, *puto ergo recta* (I believe; therefore I am right) and, or *sentio ergo recta* (I feel; therefore I am right). What matters is whether we are at the right time and place to set it about. So, in what sense are we *buyingz* virtue?

## A Note on Rhetoric

Rhetoric, here then, is not the only key to quality assurance (Rolfhamre, 2020), but also the acceptance of truth and worldviews in general (at least in this simplified argument). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) differ between conviction (the absolute, an end) and rhetoric (an action, a process). Rhetoric, accurately, represents an activity to stimulate a willingness to act. The educator, supported by their position, holds a particular position where those enrolled to the study programme are already “willing to act” and willing to be convinced if they can *buyz* the arguments presented to them. The rhetoric of the teacher can, then, be influential in promoting whatever. From this perspective, we can, for instance, speak of (1) a rhetoric of virtue’s importance (who says virtue is essential and why? That is, the power of definition); (2) a rhetoric *as* virtue itself (being a competent rhetor); (3) rhetoric as an agent in promoting other virtues (to persuade why we should all become moral, compassionate beings), and rhetoric’s basic operationality (*logos, ethos, pathos*) in forming the virtue being conceived. With the latter, are we, for instance, in a political debate, good at presenting solid facts (assuming that we understand them sufficiently), or blaming the others (for

something or anything)? Do our arguments contain actual content, or are we submitting ourselves to rhetorical pyrotechnics? Are we convincing just because of who we are? Moreover, with whose content are we trying to persuade others? (There are, of course, other possibilities omitted here for the sake of space.)

The teacher's voice and strategy in making their students virtuous are pivotal for future education and suggest that we should seek the particular within the generic, rather than vice versa. In addition to the state and, or global blueprint of the virtues to be sought by global citizens, we should also ask how the educators' conception of the virtues to be conveyed and implemented holds its fort. Obviously, we are here in a close relationship between the particular and generic, the one and the other, obedience and disobedience, etc., where, taking the lead from Judith Butler, the one cannot exist without the other.

## Butlerian Performativity

As Rivers and Weber point out, rhetorical texts are never isolated (although they are often studied as such). However, they exist in rhetorical ecologies where numerous rhetorical designs representing a multitude of formats, media, applications, audiences interact to make the situation possible, one inspires the other and also produces effects after its end (Rivers & Weber, 2011). Often these texts cumulatively represent normative schemata, which manifest through culture and politics. According to Butlerian performativity, these norms and expectations are there not only to enslave us, but the very fact that we act according to them also enables them to exist in the first place. Furthermore, knowing that there are cultural "blueprints" out there, we further moderate our actions individually according to our expectations thereof with cumulative, collective results. As such, these schemata develop over time (Butler, 1988, 1990/2006). They are reinforced not only through action but also by a vast number of rhetorical formations and sensorial inputs, ranging from the poster at the bus-stop, the evening news broadcast, the coffee-break chat with the neighbour, community information flyers, etc.

In recent times, more than ever, statistics and numbers have come to govern the norm of what is “normal”. Wherever we turn we are bombarded with one in five; 40% of ...; balance; I ran faster today than yesterday; “Hi Robin, you haven’t posted [on your social media account] in a while. Post now and reach over 500 readers”; “your baby is growing too fast, or is too long ...”, and so on. In the bigger picture, when we come to health and justice, what is not within the boundaries of statistical normality is criminalised or made a disability with following rectification procedures to “help” the subject approach what is normal (Foucault, 1977/1991 1978/1998, 1965/1988; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, loc. 1241). So in collectively doing *our* conceptions of *a* virtue (both as actions, utterances, and through an ecology of rhetorical devices), we make that virtue both possible and existing.

However, what then if our collective, cumulative conception departs from the norm it seeks to respond to, that is, what the state policy demands is not precisely what it gets? Then we are establishing something else (obviously) which testifies to the “power of change” inherent in the Butlerian performativity. This is often where, I believe, policies meet difficulties. In realising them purely (crudely simply put), the mass must concur and exercise an understanding of the policy, which concurs with what it seeks to establish. However, when the mass does not necessarily concur – whereby laws, regulations and control mechanisms must be formalised and put in place to “help” those not complying to fit the norm – and something else develops which may theoretically be equally good, but different: what then do we accomplish by forcing reports, performance indicators, quality assurance systems according to the blueprint, rather than the cumulative results as they appear? This is where I find it useful to resort to phronesis, for what virtue are we thus imposing on or nurturing in ourselves and our students? An instrumental achievement of elsewhere predefined “learning outcomes”, so to say (“this is what it means to be virtuous”, the state says)? Or are we enabling our community to critically relate to blueprints of all sorts to enact possible alternatives without being the “naughty child at the back of the classroom” (whom may not be difficult at all, but neurodivergent, have a complicated background story or merely is just disagreeing with the norm for any reason)?

## Phronesis as Ecology

The virtues promoted by the Norwegian state, for the higher education study programmes and the research activities accompanying them are generic nomenclatures at best with measurable, quantifiable results. Several of the UN's sustainability goals (2020), to which the Norwegian state subscribes, can be measured: We can, for instance, measure whether students get jobs after completing their study programmes, that is that they are employable but not necessarily virtuous. We can judge if the health-care system "works" depending on how many people get back to work (not necessarily getting rid of their illness), how much longer people live, or how swiftly patients check in or check out of diagnostics, for instance. This quantifiable mechanics is easy and comfortable to resort to and trust in value creation- and economic growth-driven society, no doubt about that. However, if this is also the way we should educate virtuous musicians, we need to think about our options.

According to Hansen (2007), at the time of writing, educational research often comes short in this respect as they promote retrospective perspectives on what *worked* rather than what *works*, where, furthermore, the researcher already at the beginning of the activity have an idea of the goal to be presented at the end. As virtuous beings, we should move beyond instrumental realisations of *poiesis* (knowing that and how) and *praxis* (acting on poiesis) to become conscious of who we are, our values and norms and acts accordingly. However, from the state perspective, we are asked to fulfil the schemata instrumentally (mimetically) to become what we should. The Aristotelian ecology that Hansen (2007) offers consists, at the bottom of the wisdom-hierarchy, of *poiesis* and *praxis*. From this, we may deduce and construct from the particular the general through *phronesis* (practical wisdom). From here, we may embark on a quest for the unattainable universal, divine wisdom (*Sophia*) through the aspirational process of Socratic *Eros* where we can pursue the existential to supply the instrumental.

As such, Hansen separates between sorts of instrumental and transcending virtues. So the question is: what should main instrument performance education contribute? Here we see how "knowledge economy" is a tricky thing for the main musical instrument performance teacher. Should we, for instance, recruit many students and have them generate

funding regardless of their finally achieved competence? (Note: in Norwegian state higher education, produced study credits reported to the state generate funds in return for the institution, which means that students have to pass their exam for the education to have sufficient finances to support its activities; [Rolfhamre, 2020].) Further, should we strive to have them excel at the level of praxis to become mainstream and widely employable to create workers (both would satisfy the UN's eighth sustainability goal in particular) or would phronesis be enough? Or should we aim at transcending instrumental knowledge and pursue Sophia? Moreover, how would we measure this in our students in any other means but rhetorical? An informing and revealing passage from the Norwegian Ministry of Research and Education about the ambitions of national education makes almost all of the above concerns apparent:

Knowledge, and the ability to apply knowledge, is the most important competitiveness of Norwegian society. The collected knowledge capital is society's most important resource. It is vital for the working life, and it is essential to be able to handle the most important challenges to society, in short as well as long term. The educational system is the government's most important instrument to influence knowledge capital. The development of the working life will very much depend on the ability to utilise new technology created outside of our national borders. ... (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2016; my translation)

Without doing justice to its rhetorical ecology, in a sense promoted by Rivers and Weber (2011), there are several reasons why these lines are troublesome (and more in line with the US critique offered by Nussbaum, 2010, than what one may initially think). Following such rhetoric, one would assume that knowledge creation serves value creation alone and that we can differ relevant research from the rest (and where does that place classical music performance, one may ask?) Research and knowledge production, as well as virtue, is, according to these standards, instrumental. It serves a defined goal. Wisdom, in the Aristotelian sense, then, falls short, and this is something of which the higher education teacher (whatever their field of study) must be aware. As Kristján Kristjánsson (2014) points out, virtue ethics in education must also seek to move beyond citing mere truisms to where it can promote *actual* cultivation of virtue.

## The Teacher's Mandate and Generic Nomenclature

Let us now conclude this exercise by turning to the centrepiece of this enterprise: the musical instrument performance teacher. Taking the lead from Elin Angelo (2017), the teacher's pedagogical activities has much to do with their perceived mandate. They may view themselves as pedagogues, craftspeople, musicians, administrators, mentors, "therapists", parents, "police officers", janitors, negotiators, philosophers, etc. Operating within frictions between personal, collective, institutional and political convictions in how they understand their profession and role, the teacher's identity (actual and perceived) sets the framework for their artistic ideal and pedagogical preferences. When further adding personal traits to the figurative equation – e.g. introversion/extroversion, sensorial preferences, technological literate/illiterate, and so on – we see not only that "professional understanding" and "teacher mandate" are exciting fields of study, but more importantly that they are a multifaceted concoction of individuals relating cumulatively to the general in their way (more or less removed from cultural norms). So why are we so often operating with the general within the public debate? That is, who are those "students", "teacher" and "researchers" we read about? In today's more or less overt click-bait rhetoric in the media (that is sensationalised hyperlink designs on the Internet to lead people to other pages, or elsewhere, preferably while also generating click-statistics for monetising adds), generalisations are overtly competing for our attention. It is not uncommon to find news articles, such as:

- "Studentene sliter med hjemmestudier" [Students are struggling with studying at home] (Svarstad, 2020) which argues that 9 out of 10 students *feel* less productive at home (which is not to say that they *actually* are)
- "Universities Should Ban PowerPoint. It Makes Students Stupid and Professors Boring". (Ralph, 2017) – particularly in contrast to "Research Reveals PowerPoint Is Not to Blame" (PolicyViz, 2019)
- "15 Things Students Really Want From Teachers" (Imafidon, 2020)

In my view, these articles say very little about educational quality and effective learning. What they do, however, is to parade the author's personality, conviction and perceived mandate (which may further be influenced by geography, demography, age, personal history, etc.). We may also ask who these generic "students", "teachers" and "professors" are? Clearly, one way of learning, teaching and researching does not fit all. Nevertheless, it is essential, I hold, that we separate rhetorical scaffolds from the actual content, that is, that we make a shift of emphasis from *how* it is said to *what* is being said.

Furthermore, through ten interviews with music education professionals focused on mandate, research and knowledge, Angelo et al. (2019) identifies a sense of reported internalised knowledge leading to an "awakening" which would suggest an aspiration for Socratic Eros. On their account, music performance, as well as the arts in general, can provide such transcending opportunities through handicraft, entrepreneurship and critical reflection (which would comply with the Aristotelian crafts-wisdom-ecology). In the romanticist sense, following the post-1730s increased search for the sublime following the pronunciation of "aesthetics" (Rueger, 2011, p. 201), arts education can arguably be particularly good at this experiential, emotive state of being. However, it remains unclear how this can be formalised as a non-instrumental virtue of character that *naturally* – not only *forcibly* through chameleon-rhetoric to defend one's existence within a policy-driven educational economy – creates focused society-building citizens who contribute actively to develop various ethical commitments for "the greater good" wherever that may lead us (an interesting account on the interrelation between emotions, politics and ethics can be found, e.g., in Nussbaum, 2001). To simplify (too much, I admit, but I aim for a rhetorical point), experiencing something beautiful which sparks the imagination and emotions is not the same as developing moral and compassion. It would seem that when policies and knowledge economy (to use state-nomenclature) ask the teacher to be instrumental for a defined end, transcending ethical perspectives becomes secondary goods operating outside of, or on parallel tracks within, "quality assured" educational frameworks. It will thus remain an unmonitored (whether that should at all

be desirable?) individual, local enterprise. If we then set the two strands up against each other – (1) instrumental fulfilment of schemata, and (2) unmonitored, individual yet cumulative ethical maturing and growth – what we gain is perhaps rather a growing body of critics (opposers, or disloyal policy-subjects) than actively contributing devotees. Indeed, in this post-truth society, it is not even a simple matter to agree that there is even *a* problem (cf. the ongoing global warming debate in public media: is there a problem or not?). So, figuratively, if we cannot agree that there is a problem, then how can we agree to its solution? In fact, would not the “good life” and the “greater good” somehow suggest inclusion, equality and or equity, at least from today’s Western rhetorical climate? However, to follow a Derridean line of thought, is not the stigmatisation of homophobes, racists, the ignorant, etc. also a non-inclusive operation and, thus, working against its logical paradigm: to let all be who they are? Even liberal, inclusive cultures represent a normative operation in the Butlerian sense where there exists a blueprint, upheld by its enactment. By being what it is, it excludes, or at least relate very strongly to, what it is not. As Amia Srinivasan argues in a different context, compassion is not just compassion. It relies on a specific perspective, agenda and positioning within a hierarchical relation between insider and outsider. Therefore, we must also ask who is being compassionate to whom, for what end and to what effect. Should the responsibility of inclusion, for instance, rest with the oppressor or the oppressed (Srinivasan, n.a., p. 9)? These perspectives also govern institutional cultures and what perspectives we foster, as role models, in our students. The teacher mandate thus reaches beyond what it means to be a music pedagogue. It also suggests that the teacher is a role-model citizen. Moreover, by opposing, for instance, the UN’s sustainable development relevance to the music performing profession, one reformulates, before the student, such policies as the other and thus, does not comply with the incentives for universities to meet the goals of bringing up new, (UN-) sustainable citizens. On the other hand, if the goal-delivery manifests itself too much in the educational setting, one may risk losing the presence of the long-standing tradition that makes what we do what we do (presentism over historicism, that is). This is, to further distort the teacher’s mandate, quite a responsibility

when teaching clarinet scales, or vocal warm-ups, or classical guitar nail filing. *Reductio in absurdum*, aside, what these repeated *parecbases* leave us with, is a clear demand for future research on teacher's mandate beyond the classroom and in response to the outside world, not only as professionals but as local, cultural, national, international, global and local citizens and agents. If we are to expect, as the politicians would have us do, that higher education across all disciplines (and education in general) should securely generate agents of future sustainable societies, then we must revisit the *nucleus* of the rhetorical efficacy of knowledge creation and implementation: the teacher. The main instrument performance teacher – with their historically, tradition-bound, conservatoire heritage – makes a particularly interesting case because of their very different perspective from the general neoliberalist, new public management policies they are subject to, as part of a knowledge economy.

## **Concluding Remarks and Suggestions for Future Research in Higher Education Music Performance Pedagogy**

So can we buy virtue through music performance degrees? In an instrumental fashion from *phronesis* down to *poesis* and *praxis*, perhaps: yes; but from *phronesis* to Socratic *Eros* aiming for *Sophia*, perhaps: no. From a policy-fulfilling perspective of upholding norms and blueprints, perhaps better than if we unleash the cumulative developments of the unknown (which again may form new norms and blueprints through its iterability). To conclude this never-ending excursion into all and nothing, the canvas presented above raises a multitude of important questions to pursue in future research. When enrolling in a music performance degree at a state university, for instance: are we investing (time, money, effort, etc.) in actually becoming virtuous?; or in the possibility of becoming virtuous?; or to gain the conviction that we have the possibility of becoming virtuous? That is, in investing in a degree, to what extent can we expect and demand virtue? Further, from the student's perspective: is virtuous living a primary goal or is it just a secondary matter to be considered *after* learning to play their instruments better (however one defines "better")?

Is it at all part of their scope when applying to the study? In sum: whose rhetoric makes virtue important for whom?

My position is that when operating as music performance educators according to such narrow economy driven policies (cf. Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2016, above), we must not only talk about lower-level wisdom but also find ways to educate and foster knowledge in an active transcending fashion, beyond truisms. Music's preference (at least to later history's perspectives) of the sublime, the aesthetics, the emotive, the subjective, and the experiential would suggest an attractive, natural point of departure. However, we must dedicate more thought to how to shift domains from experiencing something, to actively developing ethical perspectives. I confess I do not know how to do this effectively (I would be naïve, and perhaps arrogant to suggest that I do, at least dogmatically), but I argue that it needs to be given more attention in music pedagogy research in general. Returning to Kristjánsson, we should move towards additional aspects of *actual* cultivation of virtue beyond instrumentalism and truisms.

In the end, we should perhaps ask ourselves the following about virtue in/as/from/through musical instrument performance degree programmes: Are we *buyingxyz* it?

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