

Focus Area(s): **Music education and new approaches to pedagogy.**

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**“I HEAR WITH MY LITTLE EAR”:  
A POLITICAL APPROACH TO MUSIC TEACHING AND LEARNING.**

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Music education has been slow to recognize the potential of music teaching and learning to emerge “through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (Freire, 1993, p. 53). This paper aims to examine music education as a socially and politically defined action able to boost music teachers’ confidence by providing them with musical experiences that are forms of both their and the children’s personal “narratives,” participating in an ongoing process to democratize music education’s “bare life” (Agamben, 2005).<sup>1</sup> The paper reports on a Dutch and a Greek project that are based on a “learning community” approach to music creativity.

The aims of the Dutch project are, next to the sheer pleasure it gives to create music and play it with professional musicians: a) to provide children of different cultural backgrounds with a common musical framework where none of the cultures are favored and b) to offer them experiences about soundscapes and listening in order to enable them to interact with their aural surroundings. The Greek project involves trainee music teachers who ‘adopt’ a class of their choice in ‘neglected’ schools in order to help students share their ‘truths’ through music. For both the Dutch and the Greek project the schools have a predominately multicultural student body that do not have easy access to music education.

The projects appear to help both students and trainee music teachers prepare themselves to become aware citizens, confident self-directed music learners and creative individuals. Finally, both European projects show how moving away from a teaching environment that is loaded with ideologies about the nature of music creativity, can help students immerse themselves in learning experiences that respect their intuitions, search for their individuality, and place emphasis on creative freedom.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Giorgio Agamben (2005), bare life exists in a ‘polis’ (city) where politics is epitomized by the ‘banning’ of the citizen from the polis itself.