

Report from the 8th Annual Conference in Association with the Royal Irish Academy of Music

The 8th Annual Conference of Society for Music Education in Ireland was held from the 2nd to 3rd of November in Dublin. This year the lectures were focused on the subject of a place where theory and practise meet in music education. The conference was organised by the Society for Music Education in Ireland (Cumman Ceol Oideachais na h'Eireann) at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. The participants of the annual meeting were hosted from around the world in the charming interior of Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin.

The conference was opened by two simultaneous sessions focused on Assessment (Session 1) and Pedagogy (Session 2). In the first session Jessica Cawley (University College Cork) greeted the guests and introduced her topic: "A Reconsideration of Music Competitions: New Fieldwork from the Fleadh Cheoil na h'Eireann" which touched the case of assessment during the most famous music festival in Ireland. The next speaker, Rachael Jacobs (Western Sydney University) talked about "Shifting Borders in Creative Assessment: The Teacher as Curator and Critic". The second session which focused on the pedagogy in a broad sense was represented by three specialists: Aoife Chawke and Gwen Moore (Mary Immaculate College) presented speech "Breaking tradition: Investigation theoretical applications of alternative pedagogies in the piano lesson". The last one in this session was Gemma O'Herlihy (Cork School of Music) with her speech "Developing Ear-Playing Skills in Beginner Pianists in the Piano lab".

After the short tea-break the third and fourth also simultaneous sessions started. Sessions 3 was dedicated to Teacher Education and Admissions. The fourth one was a workshop held by Julia K. Hagan (The University of Hartford) about "Inclusive Music Education: Teaching Transgender Students in the Choral Classroom". In the third session there were four speeches widely focused on teacher's music education. Dale Misenhelter (University of Arkansas) presented speech "Relevance and Recall: Experiences Cited as "memorable" in tertiary Teaching Methods Course". Marita Kerin (Trinity College Dublin) and Margaret O'Connor (Department of Education and Skills) delivered speech "A school-university coteaching music partnership: the scholarship of reciprocity". Gwen Moore (Mary Immaculate College), John O'Flynn (Dublin City University), Frances Burgess and Jayne Moore (Stranmillis University College) gave a speech "Exploring provision, attitudes and values in initial teacher education in music in Ireland and Northern Ireland". The last one in this session were Joshua A. Russell (The Hartt School, University of Hartford), Neal Humphreys and Claire Paik (University of Hartford) who presented speech "Sales or Substance: Examining in the Admissions Process through the Music Educator, Admissions Officer, and University Music Faculty Lens".

During the long lunch break there was the time for question and answer poster session. The following researches presented their posters: Jakub Adamczewski (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań) *The Finnish way of music making. A typical day in early years music education in Vasa Övningsskola*, Mary Amond O'Brien (Aspiro Choir and RTE Cor na nÓg) *Operation Singing Nation: no child left behind*, Giovanna Carugno (Giuseppe Martucci Conservatory in Salerno) *Teaching music history at the primary school: notes*

from the project "Meeting Domenico Scarlatti", Aoife Chawke (Mary Immaculate College) *Pedagogical approaches in piano: An investigation into their role in students' perceived learning experience and skill attainment*, Paul Clesham (University College Cork) *Considering influences of musical pathways/enculturation in composers and arrangers of Irish traditional music and Western art musical traditions*.

On the same day, four more plenary sessions were held, addressing different important issues in modern music education. In the fifth session Joshua Emanuel (New York University) conducted a workshop about "Easy Computer Music Programming with Scratch". The next plenary session was devoted to the Culture. Ellan Lincoln Hyde (The Melbourne Conservatorium of Music) delivered speech "Teaching Chinese Mainland Students in a Western Environment: An Analysis of Ethnographic Interviews of Chinese Students with a History of Musical Education". Aibhe Kenny (Mary Immaculate College) presented "Welcome notes? Exploring the Musical Lives of Children living in Direct Provision". Casey J. Hayes (Franklin College) presented "Safe Classrooms: A Fundamental Principle of Democratic Practice". The seventh and eighth sessions were planned as workshops: Sylvia O'Regan (Royal Irish Academy of Music) with "The Secret of Breathing – the Final Piece of the Puzzle", Vanessa L. Bond (The Hartt School, University of Hartford) with "From Pre-notional to Advanced: Research-Based Sight-Reading Strategies for All Singers".

At the end of the first day of conference Deborah Kelleher (Director of Royal Irish Academy of Music) delivered a welcoming speech and officially opened the 8th Annual Conference in association with the Royal Irish Academy of Music. The very interesting and fruitful day ended with a Professor Brian Irvine who as the first keynote speaker delivered an interactive speech "Adventures in Composition".

On the second day of the conference, the sessions were held in the same ambitious and well-organised way. The first two morning sessions were planned again simultaneously: Session 9 which focused on Primary School Music Education and Session 10 dedicated to the idea of Creativity. During the ninth session the following speeches were delivered by: Simeon Smith (University of Limerick) "Towards a Community Music Percussion Curriculum for Primary Schools in Ireland", Jayne Moore (Stranmillis University College) "The value of Music in primary schools in Northern Ireland" and the last one Aisling Beecher (Mary Immaculate College) "Facilitating interlanguage development through music: A critical review of the literature". In the next session, speeches were given by: Luca Marucci (Trinity College Dublin) "The 'process music' approach: A study on risk-taking and playfulness in music education", Eldad Tsabary (Concordia University in Montreal) "Getting it done" in electroacoustic studies: The effects of deadlines and structured guidelines on the creativity and motivation of electroacoustic music students", Jakub Adamczewski (Adam Mickiewicz University) "The Finnish way of musicmaking: new way of music education".

After the short break, there was a time for another Keynote speaker, Professor Aaron Williamon who delivered a lecture "Better practice: The case of promoting health and wellbeing in music education and the profession". The section ended with Honorary Life Membership Ceremony accompanied by Accora Accordion Orchestra performance. On the same day there were four last plenary sessions and workshops. Session 11 conducted by Rachael Jacobs (Western Sydney University) with workshop "Dance, diversity music

and movement: Embodied approaches to cross cultural music”. Session 12 organised by Fearghal Ó Conchubhair (American Kodaly Institute) was a workshop “American Kodaly Institute: Incorporating Music Learning Theory to Kodaly Methodologies”. Session 13 was delivered by Sr. Bernadette Sweeney, Seamus Doyle (St Agnes Community Centre for Music & the Arts) and Joanna Crooks (Scoil Una Naofa Violin & Orchestra Project) “Encouragement, Inclusivity, Community – Yes, We’re talking about music!”. The last workshop (Session 14) in the whole conference was held by Rachael Byrne (Dublin City University) “Playing with music: Play-based activities for music education in Irish primary schools”.

The 8th Annual Conference in association with the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin was the best global meeting of theoreticians and practitioners of music education I was able to attend. The numerous groups of music teachers, community workers, dancers and musicians gathered in Dublin with the need of exchanging thoughts and experiences from their research and practice. The presented issues and ideas during the plentiful plenary sessions and workshops were incredibly interesting and engaging. Many of them appeared to become my inspiration to the future pedagogical practice and research. And since the conference ended, I have been looking forward to the next 9th edition of it.