

Olli-Pekka Martikainen:

Music education for new needs

by **Ann Werner**



Olli-Pekka Martikainen is the Secretary General of the Association of Finnish Music Schools, an umbrella organization that includes 97 schools. He has a doctorate in music and he previously worked as the vice dean of the Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki. Apart from leadership in higher music education Martikainen has worked as an orchestral and chamber musician and as a teacher at the Sibelius Academy. Martikainen holds the first artistic Doctoral degree in the field of percussion music in Finland. Ann Werner asked him questions about higher music education in the Baltic region with her own research on nation and gender in higher music education as background.

ANN WERNER: What are the current issues at stake in HME and in classical music in the Nordic/Baltic region, Easter Europe and Europe at large?

OLLI-PEKKA MARTIKAINEN: One issue in Higher Music Education (HME) is how the internationalization and targeted recruitment of students from all over has ensured high quality among students. In some instruments nowadays there are only international students. I think this is true across the region. Unfortunately many of them will not stay in Finland after their studies. That impacts nationally many ways, for example a lack of professionals in the future to educate the next generation. There is also a lack of musicians in some instruments, like reed instruments, low brass, viola and double bass. Common interest to start studies of classical instruments is weakening. Further, the immigration of students and musicians has challenges and possibilities. How do we integrate new people and especially children to be part of society and part of local peer groups? Music and Art give us many tools to integrate new people. Nowadays very busy lifestyle affect families. There are no time to stop and give children enough support with such patient hobbies like music. Parents' capability to prioritize is lost.

AW: How has The Sibelius Academy approached questions of nationhood and gender during your time in leadership?

O-PM: We have organized various discussions and shared a lot of information about these topics. We believe that an open and accepting attitude manifested in practice at daily basis is important. We have also established a new programme: Global Music. This programme is open to everyone despite their national or musical background. The whole idea of this program is to combine musicians from different cultures and backgrounds. There are various types of support at the Sibelius Academy for those who come from abroad. We work really hard to enable grouping. In official committees we make sure all genders are represented as the law requires.

AW: What do you think should be done to promote inclusive music education and music life?

O-PM: There should be music and art studies education for small children reaching everyone already in the ages of 3–5. This should be organized and done by professionals and it should be funded by the state. It should, further, be possible for everyone as an adult to come along and sing, dance, play an instrument – a kind of low threshold service. It doesn't matter if you have experience or not. This could be largely funded by local businesses. ❌



Olli-Pekka Martikainen.
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