Call for Papers

CREATIVE IDENTITIES IN TRANSITION:
HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION & EMPLOYABILITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

27–29 February 2020
University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna
Austria

Organisers: Rosa Reitsamer, Rainer Prokop
www.musiksoziologie.at

Keynote speakers:

Christina Scharff
King’s College London, UK

Dawn Bennett
Curtin University, Australia

Higher music education institutions aim at helping students to acquire skills and knowledge and to develop specific personal attributes to negotiate the initial stages of their careers as musicians and to attain employability and life-long learning. However, the learning cultures and practices of artistic valuation at music universities and conservatoires are hardly explored and employability is poorly defined and hard to measure, especially in the face of changing relations between study and work. These changes include, for example, individualisation processes, a growing number of music graduates competing for work and a decrease of publicly funded orchestras in many European countries. The process of becoming a musician is thus not simply about sequentially passing through particular stages of development. Rather, it entails the negotiation of significant and complex rites of passages increasingly associated with a heightened responsibility for constructing one’s own career and identity. Moreover, transitions from study to working life are shaped by gender, race, class and sexuality and include dilemmas in weaving together established normative and personal meanings. As a result, career trajectories remain, in many cases, “permanently transitional”.

For musicians, pursuing creative pleasures and advancing a career also means to develop various strategies to respond to the precarious character of musical labour and to negotiate established notions of achievement and success set by academia and the wider community
of musicians and audiences. These strategies include, among others, the promotion of the neoliberal ideal of the entrepreneurial self, extensive social networking and the holding of multiple jobs to sustain livelihood and cultural production. However, musicians and artists have also established initiatives such as “Help Musicians UK”, #MeToo, “Time’s Up”, “We Have Voice” or “art but fair”. These initiatives encourage discussions around musical labour, fight discrimination and exposure to racism, sexism and homo-/transphobia and aim at bringing about social change within music labour markets and in broader society.

The conference seeks to address the following three thematic streams and welcomes proposals from any perspective and using any methodology. Topics include but are not limited to:

**Higher Music Education**
- Progressive developments of curricula and study programmes in response to the ever-changing music profession in the 21st century
- Learning cultures at higher music education institutions, including skill and knowledge acquisition
- Valuation of music performances at entry exams and recitals
- (Re-)Production of musical hierarchies among students and staff
- Gendered career aspirations of music students
- Persistence of racialised and classed notions of musical talent and excellence at higher music education institutions
- Post-colonial and feminist/queer initiatives at music universities and conservatoires that address the effects of colonialism, practices of exclusion and ambivalent inclusion at the level of students and staff and create spaces for discussion and cultures of solidarity

**Transitions**
- Transitions from study to work, rites of passages and employability
- Career trajectories that remain “permanently transitional”
- Agency, identity work and developing musicianship
- Strategies to combine study, work and creative pleasures
- Transitions of music students and graduates in the context of recent migration movements
- Non-normative rites of passages embarked by music students and graduates

**Music Labour Markets**
- Trends within music labour markets (e.g. western art music, jazz, rock/pop), including horizontal and vertical segregation
- Dimensions and demands for developing diverse forms of careers (e.g. portfolio careers, DIY careers, stable careers)
- Musicians as entrepreneurial subjects
- Self-representations of musicians in digital space
- Networking and self-promotion in the context of post-feminism and post-racialism
- Queer practices of musical labour, including alternative career trajectories
- Political struggles against precarious working conditions
- Anti-racist and feminist/queer activism fighting inequalities
Abstracts should include theoretical framework, conceptualisations, methodology and show reference to the conference topic. Please also include a key word line.

Please submit your abstracts (max. 300 words) for papers and panels, including a short biography (max. 100 words) and institutional affiliation, in English language until **6 October 2019** to Rainer Prokop, prokop@mdw.ac.at.

Decisions on the acceptance of proposals will be announced at the beginning of November 2019.