

### *“A Brief History of the NNME*

The roots of the Nordic Network for Music Education can now be traced back for nearly a quarter-century. Initial collaboration began in 1992 with a study tour by Torunn Bakken Hauge with students and colleagues from Bergen University College (now Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Bergen, Norway) to visit Docent (later Professor) Frede Nielsen and his colleagues and students at the Danish School of Education in Copenhagen, which was the start of a long institutional cooperation. The activities initiated at that time emphasized exchange of teachers and students, but we also organized a course with the title: *Musikkpedagogikk som vitenskapsområde (Music pedagogy as a scientific area)*.

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In November 1997, eight representatives from seven institutions in Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway came together for their first planning meeting. The participants at the founding NNME network meeting were: Harald Jørgensen (Norwegian Academy of Music), Bengt Olsson (Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm), Kai Karma (Sibelius Academy), Sture Brännström (Luleaa Technical University), Gunnar Heiling (Lund University), and Frede Nielsen (Danish School of Education in Copenhagen), as well as Eiliv Olsen and Torunn Bakken Hauge, representing Bergen University College. At that first meeting we decided to organize four intensive courses with the overall title *Musikkpedagogikk i Nordisk perspektiv (Music pedagogy in a Nordic perspective)* having four host institutions in four different countries. The target group would be Master students in music pedagogy, and we would apply for grants from the Nordplus programme. These initial four years were regarded as quite ground-breaking and successful, so we continued with the same pattern for four more years, with eight courses in all on the very general theme of Nordic music pedagogy, organized over the years 1999–2007, one for each year, each of which received financial support from Nordplus. From 2008 onward we began to have 3-year projects that served as the foundation for the annual course themes, an approach that has continued through three projects, which were on the themes of (1) Democracy, (2) Sustainable Development, and (3) Universality of Music. All the institutions included in 1997 are still active partner institutions of NNME, as of 2017. However, several institutions have since that time been added, including colleges and conservatories from the Baltic countries in 2008. There have also been many replacements of responsible partner representative persons. Since 1997, all the original “founders” of the network have retired or been replaced, except for Torunn Bakken Hauge, who has managed the network throughout its existence.

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NNME is a so-called Nordplus network in the sense that it benefits financially from the Nordplus program, a joint venture sponsored by each of the Nordic national governments (Nordic Council of Ministers) and led by programme managers and coordinators Kristina

Savikurki and Kenneth Lundin. This provides financial support for cooperation between educational institutions in the Nordic and Baltic countries, based on overarching objectives defined by Nordplus. One of these main objectives is:

- *To contribute to the development of quality and innovation in the educational systems for lifelong learning in the participating countries by means of educational cooperation, as well as cooperating with workplaces, about development projects, exchanges and building of networks.* (Nordplus Handbook 2016, p. 6).

Nordplus consists of five sub-programs of which NNME belongs to the category of Nordplus Higher Education. This sub-program has the following as its special objectives:

- *To link higher education institutions (HEIs) in the participating countries, private as well as public, offering recognized tertiary level qualifications, establishing networks for exchanging and disseminating experiences, best practices and innovative results*
- *To contribute to cooperation between HEIs and other institutions or organizations involved in or having vested interests in the area of higher education*
- *To contribute to cooperation between HEIs and the labor market*
- *To facilitate high quality individual academic or workplace based exchanges for students and teachers in Nordplus countries* (Nordplus Handbook, 2016, p. 24).

On the homepage of the network (NNME homepage) one can read about its profile and mission:

*The partners in the network are among the leading institutions in the Nordic and the Baltic countries within the academic field of music education (in the Nordic countries called music pedagogy). The network comprises 15 institutions, carefully selected, and representing all the five Nordic and the three Baltic countries.*

The overall aim of the network has across all these years been:

*to strengthen the reflection and the discussion of music education, and through this contribute to its development*

As of 2017, the following fourteen institutions are active members of the network: Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts (Finland), University of Iceland (Iceland), Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm (Sweden), Luleå University of Technology (Sweden), Lund University (Sweden), Danish School of Education, Århus University (Denmark), Rhythmic Music Conservatory (Denmark), Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (Estonia), Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy (Latvia), Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (Lithuania), Norwegian Academy of Music (Norway), Hedmark University College (Norway), and the coordinating institution, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (Norway).”

- The above material is excerpted from *Advancing Music Education in Northern Europe: Twenty Years of the Nordic Network for Music Education* (a book in preparation, co-edited by David G. Hebert and Torunn Bakken Hauge).