Rich intermedial metaphoricity and mirror reflectivity in the arts:

Previous, current, and future research

The phenomenon of intermedial conceptual loans is central to our understanding of the time-based arts. In my master thesis (published at Malmö Academy of Music in 2010) I investigate how the concept 'musicality' is used as a prestige word in discourse on spoken theatre. It is entitled *Att agera musikaliskt: musikalitet som norm och utbildningsmål i västerländsk talteater* (Musicality in acting: musicality as a standard and an educational goal for Western spoken theatre) and is available here: http://www.lu.se/lup/publication/1761292


The PhD thesis focuses on the usage of the term 'storytelling' with regard to jazz improvisation. The aim of the investigation is to clarify how this concept is used by Swedish jazz practitioners.

The framework of the study includes theories of narrativity and of metaphor as well as educational and sociological perspectives. The study aims at an exploration of a multivariety of perspectives. Accordingly, the analysis of the empirical study – which consists of qualitative interviews with fifteen jazz musicians – as well as of relevant previous writings is carried out by means of a broad inclusionist hermeneutic approach. Throughout the multitude of issues thus explored, qualities of openness, wholeness, and listening stand out as crucial to jazz improvisation and to musicians' understanding of it as 'storytelling'. The quality of temporality permeates any improvisational activity; the results of the study are structured in accordance with this perspective.

The study points to several implications of the usage of the concept storytelling regarding jazz improvisation. From a theoretical point of view, the results exemplify the bidirectional function and relevance of rich intermedial metaphoricity on a conceptual level. Artistic implications of the usage of 'storytelling' in jazz contexts include the dynamics between structural and communicative aspects of the music, as well as the dynamics of different kinds of authenticity: on one hand, authenticity regarding the tradition in which the improviser is situated; on the other, authenticity regarding the improviser's own individuality. With regard to educational issues, the multivariety of required artistic skills in the improviser arguably calls for a rich learning ecology framework including collective, experiential, and exploratory approaches to improvisation. From a sociological point of view, the storytelling metaphor is shown to function as a kind of exclusionist counterdiscourse employed by an older generation of musicians against a younger one, by an autodidactic musical culture against an educationalist one, or by advocates of authenticity against technical proficiency.

In conclusion, the concept storytelling as a rich intermedial metaphor is shown to be significant to the practice and reflection of performing artists through its ability to mediate
holistic views of what is considered to be of crucial importance in artistic practice, analysis, and education.

In sum, I view the master and PhD theses as exemplifications of how art forms tend to mirror themselves in each other in order to understand themselves better. In future research projects, I aim at further explorations of these issues in which the notions of *rich intermedial metaphoricity* and *mirror reflectivity in the arts* will be employed and further developed. This may provide relevant knowledge about artistic practice and education through explorations of different perspectives on how the borderland between art forms can be conceptualized. Much current practice in music and theatre tends to focus on explorations in the borderland between the traditional art forms. The study of rich intermedial metaphoricity opens up possibilities for new theoretical and practical insights in this area. It may provide new and relevant knowledge, understanding, and conceptualizations regarding the interrelations between the arts. It thus may have implications on theoretical perspectives in the arts as well as on artistic practice. In my future research projects, the relevance and importance of these theoretical perspectives to artistic practice will be in focus. In particular, this research will provide a deepened understanding of the bidirectionality between scholastic and artistic knowledge through explorations of the outcome of prolonged artistic/reflective engagement with conceptualizations as well as with artistic practice.