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**10 years of Bulletin of Empirical Music Education Research (b-em)**

Editorial

Dear Readers,

10 years ago, on March 31, 2010, the first edition of the **bulletin of empirical music education research** was published. Prior to that date, what is called the “empirical turn” had reached music education<sup>1</sup>. For the first time, projects in music education were financed by the major German research agencies, the *Federal Ministry of Education and Research* (BMBF) and the *German Research Foundation* (DFG). The studies on all day-schools and the research that accompanied the *JeKi* project are milestones in music educational research because for the first time, assistant researcher positions were financed, methodological expertise was systematically acquired, and international connections were sought after. Music education was amidst a strong development.

As a result, two interdependent problems became apparent. First, the discourse of those who did empirical research was underdeveloped. There were only few forums where new questions and results could be discussed and thus stimulate the professionalization of the field. Second, there was a lack of journals. The well-known British or American journals had language

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, in the decades prior to that, there had been empirical research. However, during the 1990's and after the millennium there was a significant rise in numbers. A bibliographical meta-study showed that since then papers based on empirical studies have constituted the majority of scientific publications in music education in Germany (Niessen & Knigge, 2018).

restrictions as well as specific topics. Relevant German topics, such as e.g. tandem-teaching or the quality of esthetic classes in all day-schools, did not entirely fit in with the schema of those journals. Furthermore, specific traditions in research and editing presented hurdles for integration in other western journals.

Against this background, at the Institute of Musicology and Music Education at Bremen University, we had the idea to start a journal with four distinctive features. First, contrary to the existing practice-oriented journals, ours was dedicated to scientific results. Second, it was restricted to empirical studies only. Third, it was committed to established standards of other scientific disciplines (by means of a double-blind peer review). Fourth, it was meant to encourage colleagues of other countries to publish by making German and English contributions possible. And last, it was intended to make use of the manifold chances of the medium and internet by being open access and, thus, free of charge.

Circumstances were favorable: The *German Research Foundation* (DFG) was willing to finance the first steps, a team of doctoral students in Bremen contributed and supported in many ways, and – most important of all – people could be found who organized the editorial work, to play a part in the project and accompany the process. During the first years it was Heike Gebauer and then later Lina Hammel and Valerie Krupp-Schleußner. Moreover, the new journal stirred interest among authors and reviewers from music education and adjacent disciplines. To all of these people, we owe thanks.

The variety we had hoped for has been mirrored in the papers over the past ten years: Among them are 25 predominantly quantitative and 15 qualitative studies. There were special editions, for instance, on instrumental teaching in primary schools (2012) and musical self-concepts (2013), and authors from seven countries were published.

Much has changed over the years: for instance, the composition of the people in charge. Instead of one editor, now a team shares the work in discussing and deciding on important steps. Since 2016 Jens Knigge (Nord University, Norway) and Lina Oravec (University of Koblenz-Landau) are part of the editor group; in 2017 Valerie Krupp-Schleußner (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz) joined the team and in 2019 Michael Göllner (University of Music and Performing Arts Stuttgart). In addition, an international scientific advisory board exists that discusses important decisions. Furthermore, the layout was adapted last year, and the editorial process is now more aligned with the content management system (ojs). But most of all, the times have changed. Empirical studies are no longer in a weak position compared to those in the humanities. There are new publication series (i.e., with the Lit and Waxmann publishing company) with emphasis on empirical studies. A European discourse can be detected at international conferences (EAS, ISME) as well as the biannual European Doctoral Colloquium in Salzburg. Correspondingly, the number of internationally published studies is on the rise.

### **Future b-em**

Has the journal outlived its purpose? Of course not! For one thing, we still need a venue where projects that are not suitable for being published as a monograph or should be published promptly can appear quickly and be subject to high standards. Furthermore, research needs an intensive exchange on methods and content beyond project meetings and conferences.

In times when “science”, meant as a search for enlightenment, exploration, explanation and understanding, is not accepted as a matter of course but is discredited as “fake news”, a journal

that upholds standards and seeks out dialogue is even more important. New topics such as diversity, racism, and digitalization are on the agenda and need a forum that can discuss them quickly and with few barriers.

In the future, b-em wants to continue to contribute to the discourse in music education. We are therefore delighted that this year's issue goes online in time for the 10th anniversary of the journal. It will be filled with more papers and reviews as the year goes on.

## References

Niessen, A. & Knigge, J. (2018): Empirische Forschung in der Musikpädagogik. In: Dartsch, M.; Knigge, J.; Niessen, A.; Platz, F. & Stöger, C. (Ed.): *Handbuch Musikpädagogik*. Münster: Waxmann, pp. 451-456.

Electronic Version:

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