

## **Music Education Technology in Finland**

### **– past achievements and future prospects**

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**Music education technology (MET) is gradually becoming an established feature in music education in Finland. The concept covers both the teaching of music technology and the use of technology in music education. In scientific terms, MET is a cross-discipline field that contains elements of musicology, education and technology studies.**

The history of MET in Finland goes back some 25 years. In the early 1980s, there was a compulsory course at the Department of Music Education at the Sibelius Academy entitled ‘Methodology of new music’, taught by Osmo Lindeman (1929-1987). His successor, Otto Romanowski, has been teaching the use of IT in music to music education students at the Sibelius Academy since 1985. The first continuing education course on the use of IT in music was organized at Orivesi College in 1987. In the early 1990s, the music education curriculum also included an introduction to music studio technology.

### **From CAL to TeknoDida**

From the first beginnings in the 1980s, technology in music was seen not only as a tool for the music teacher, but also as a means for enriching and supporting music lessons at school. The term then used for this approach was computer assisted learning (CAL). However, the computers and equipment required were very expensive at the time, so opportunities were few and the organizing of teaching was difficult. Not many teachers explored the potential of CAL.

This began to change midway through the 1990s. The first training seminar on MET, TeknoDida, organized in Orivesi in 1995, attracted a considerable number of music educators interested in the pedagogical and educational possibilities of technology. The seminar has since established itself as a regular major forum for MET, and this year it is being organized for the eighth time.

### **Six years on the MOVE**

Finland is a country of long distances, and accordingly towards the end of the last decade the agenda of TeknoDida included music education by distance learning. This was significant in that it laid the foundation for the MOVE project (2001-2006). In accordance with the information society strategy drawn up by the Ministry of Education, virtual university projects were set up in Finland, and MOVE (Music Education Online) was taken on board for a period of six years.

MOVE is a virtual university project set up by three universities (the Sibelius Academy and the Universities of Jyväskylä and Oulu). The project has involved promoting the production, introduction and study of online music education on a national level and the development of new study environments for music teaching with the aid of information and communications technology. This includes real-time distance learning and tools for contact teaching, multiform teaching and distance learning.

MOVE also constitutes a national network compiling and coordinating knowledge and expertise in the field. Thanks to an extensive range of partners, MOVE is oriented to serve the needs of the field as a whole, not just the needs of the universities running the project. In practice, MOVE is divided into four component areas: education, research, joint projects and pilot communities.

The operating strategy adopted in MOVE is to create a local pilot service before aiming for national coverage. Thus, in the first half of the project the research and development focused on the city of Kuopio and the town of Kuhmo in eastern Finland. The second half of the project has been mostly taken up by scientific research and the writing of *Musiikkikasvatusteknologian käsikirja* (Handbook of music education technology). The book, containing over 50 articles, will be released in the autumn of this year. After 2006, the work of MOVE will be carried on by the Music Education Technology Society.

### **Present position and future challenges**

In recent decades, the domain of rhythm music has expanded to include much more than just jazz, Latin, pop and rock. Technology has brought new forms of expression to rhythm music and helped raise its status. For example, the function of DJs in hip-hop and the use of samplers have enabled efficient adapting of existing recorded music for new purposes.

With the evolution of techno, it has become clear that creating and consuming rhythm music no longer require the composition, rehearsing and performing that bands traditionally do. Digital music technology has become lighter in weight and cheaper in price, and it is now possible to produce music at home. The computer is no longer an exclusive teaching tool as it was in the 1980s. The simplest personal computer can be equipped with software which is adequate for a wide range of functions in creating and recording music and which is available for free. There are also numerous informal online communities where the use of such software is discussed. All this offers interesting prospects for music teaching — and further challenges for music teacher training in Finland.

Indeed, the music education curricula are in a constant state of flux. The first music technology teacher training programme began at the Pirkanmaa Polytechnic in 2003. All music students at this school have compulsory courses in music technology, and this clearly points the way for all music education in Finland. The Sibelius Academy has determined, in its new action plan on information and communications technology, that all students will be given an introductory course in music technology. This is a significant policy step, given that the Sibelius Academy is the largest music education institution in Finland, and the only university-level one.

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### **Articles on music education technology in Finland:**

<http://media.virtuosi.fi/users/pdonner/>

<http://personal.piramk.fi/matti.ruippo/articles>

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