



The drumming in music education and gender-specific aspects

ABSTRACT

“.....” A lot of people might still feel the same way that the mother of 20th century drummer Bridget O’Flynn does: Drums continue to be stereotypically identified with male musicians. As a (male) drummer myself, I have noticed this gender-based identification throughout my musical career and have kept asking myself: Why do still considerably fewer women play drums?

This thesis explores possible reasons of a gender-based attribution that connects drums with male musicians. The analysis took historical, music pedagogical, and gender-specific (gender-theoretical??) aspects into account. Furthermore, an empirical study helped to investigate to what extent gender-specific attributions regarding drums still have an impact on contemporary musicians. The interviewee group consisted of children and teenagers between the ages of 10 and 18 years, who were all instructed in at least one musical instrument at the time. The study was conducted with the help of a survey consisting of partially standardized questions.

The study’s results suggest that the reasons for the drums’ gender-based attributions are twofold: On the one hand, an identification of drums with male musicians is derived from a historically traditional connection between percussion instruments and men. Furthermore, we can assume that the development of a connection between certain musical instruments and women for the bourgeoisie of the 18th century still proves valid today. These historical attributions of musical instruments have had great influence on several entities of musical socialization and have therefore persisted throughout several generations. Media influence has to be identified as one important factor within musical socialization; the project pays special attention to this element and also takes several academic publications on the phenomenon into consideration. The interviews with drummers and non-drummers reflect that the perception of drums as an instrument is fundamentally shaped by gender-typical attributions.