

## **“We are some strange Moomins”**

A study of the work profiles of rhythm musicians in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland

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## MASTER'S THESIS

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The purpose of this study is to explore professional rhythm musicians complex work patterns by showing the diversity of different career models that musicians have created for themselves as a way to make a living as a rhythm musician in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland.

The leading questions in my work are: Which pathways have musicians chosen career wise and how are they linked to the working conditions for live musicians that exist in the Swedish-speaking regions in Finland and the musicians interest in music teaching? What different types of musicians can be identified based on the choices and positions chosen by the musicians and how can these be described?

The study is based on a qualitative research with semi-structured interviews. The informants are active rhythm musicians based in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland.

The conclusions show that it is possible to earn a living as a Finnish-Swedish rhythm musician on different premises in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland and several different musical identities are highlighted in this study.

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## EXAMENSARBETE

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Meningen med denna studie är att nyansera bilden av professionella rytmmusiker som en komplex arbetsidentitet genom att visa mångfalden av olika karriärmodeller som musiker har skapat för sig själva, som ett sätt att försörja sig som musiker i de svenskspråkiga delarna av Finland. Syftet är att belysa hur olika musikidentiteter kan se ut, vilka karriärstigar man valt och hur de avgjorts för den Finlandssvenska minoriteten av aktiva rytmmusiker.

De ledande frågorna i mitt arbete är: Vilka vägar har musiker valt karriärvis och hur är de kopplade till arbetsvillkoren för live-musiker som finns i de svenskspråkiga regionerna i Finland och hur är musikernas intresse för musikundervisning? Vilka olika typer av musikidentiteter kan identifieras utifrån de val och positioner som musikerna väljer och hur kan dessa beskrivas?

Studien bygger på en kvalitativ forskning som undersökts genom halvstrukturerade intervjuer. Informanterna är aktiva rytmmusiker baserade i de svenskspråkiga regionerna i Finland.

Slutsatserna visar att det är möjligt att försörja sig som Finlandssvensk rytmmusiker på olika premisser i de svenskspråkiga delarna av Finland och flera olika musikidentiteter lyfts fram i denna studie.

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Språk: engelska

Nyckelord: musik, rytmusiker, svenskfinland, finlandssvensk musik, musikidentitet

## Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Theoretical framework.....	5
2.1	The culture of Finnish popular music and its market .....	5
2.2	Music culture and identity in the Swedish- speaking part of Finland .....	7
2.2.1	The difference between Finnish and Swedish in music.....	8
2.3	Music spheres in Swedish Finland.....	9
2.4	Language and lyrics in Music.....	11
3	Methodology .....	14
4	Presentation of the results of the interviews .....	15
4.1	The Informants.....	15
4.2	A multi-tasker or niche musician? .....	18
4.3	Linguistic limitations.....	22
4.4	Differences between Swedish-Finland, Finnish-Finland and Sweden.....	23
4.4.1	Language and repertoire in music in the Finnish-speaking parts of Finland	25
4.5	Teaching in music and other jobs beside freelancing.....	27
4.6	Say yes to everything and be true to yourself? .....	29
4.6.1	Writing original music.....	31
4.7	Grants and financial support from the Third Sector .....	32
4.8	Making it as a musician in Swedish-Finland.....	35
4.8.1	Networking in the “duck pond” .....	35
4.8.2	Visibility.....	36
4.9	Is the music teacher a second-rate musician?.....	37
4.10	Discussion .....	38
5	Conclusions .....	39
6	Personal reflections.....	43
7	References .....	45

Appendix: Consent of participation in research

## 1 Introduction

Over time, a relatively mean myth has flourished among musicians: A real musician does not teach. If you have chosen a course that primarily concentrates on a teaching role, you are considered a failed musician who has not been able to reach a certain level of craftsmanship and knowledge that a “real” musician possess. The claim is, of course, somewhat provocative. The reality is not this black and white, especially if you try to make it as a musician in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland, as a part of the Swedish-speaking minority of Finland. “Finnish-Swedes” (the Swedish-speaking minority of Finland) constitutes a population of about 5,2 % of Finland’s citizens, approximately 288 000 people in 5,5 million (Statistics Finland).

However, the questions raised are interesting. The music profession is often associated with a certain calling or identity as well. One does not even need to have a degree to call oneself a musician. What does it mean to be a “real” musician, to have an “musical identity”? Which choices and career strategies are hiding behind it and how can one profile oneself as a musician to make a living in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland? The idea of these things has intrigued me since I started my college studies in music in 2007: should I become a musician or a music teacher? I chose the latter. Perhaps partly due to uncertainty; how sustainable is it really to live on freelance work in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland? Are there enough jobs? Can I be my own boss? The questions were many to consider.

However, I had a strong desire to teach and had dreamed of a career as a teacher since I was a child. Why shouldn’t I be able to be both a musician and a teacher? When I started my university studies, I had already freelanced small-scale for a couple of years, had my own band and had no difficulty collaborating with other musicians on concerts and various events. Should I stop being a musician because I become a pedagogue? Perhaps, this thought pattern may sometimes exist among students as well nowadays: if your own music career should fail, you have a plan B, which includes a qualification as a teacher. Sometimes you can get the impression that the student scan ready out to the teacher qualifications, out in case you fail as a musician. With all this said there are many people that make a living out of music – musicians – working in Swedish in Finland. I consider myself one of these, even though most of my income comes from teaching.

Making a living as a musician is not easy. The organization for professional musicians in Finland, The Finnish Musicians Union, has a membership of approximately 3600 people, who are active in 23 different industries. The organization highlights that a two-thirds of it's members are musicians active in the entertainment, restaurant, jazz and rock industry (Suomen muusikkojen liitto ry, 2018). In their sub-organization, Freelancemuusikot ry, over 1000 members can be found, who are active as live and studio musicians in the rhythm music industry (Suomen muusikkojen liitto ry, Freelancemuusikot ry, 2018).

Behind these figures, a large number of people are probably also hiding as not all musicians and freelancers necessarily register as members of organizations like this.

For the year 2019, a data collection was made on the economy of the Finnish music industry. Head of Research was Merja Hottinen and Researcher Tuomas Virta from Music Finland. Hottinen also compiled the report, which was published on Music Finland's website (Hottinen, 2020). Since the last 1.5 years have been affected by the Corona pandemic, I deliberately chose to highlight a survey from the previous years.

It notes that domestic income from the music industry and exports in 2019 was marked by steady growth and domestic income was particularly evident in the live music and audio sales sectors. They note that from 2018 there has been a steady increase of about 5% and that the Finnish music industry generated about 1 billion Euros. 512 million Euros came from the highest-earning sector of live music and 99 million Euros came in from domestic music publishers and copyright organizations, and the fee for the sound sector was 89 million Euros. In addition to these areas, public and private music aid, whose income was 29 million Euros, is also included. The income from music education was about 270 million Euros. (Hottinen, 2020).

If you follow up on my claim that living as a musician in Finland, especially in the Swedish-speaking parts, is not so simple based on these figures, you can see that Finland's music market has quite a large turnover in Finland domestically, considering size of the area and the population. By this I mean to say that it is possible to live as a freelance artist/band musician in Finnish in Finland. However, in my work, I will try to shed light on the reality of Finnish-Swedish rhythm musicians and what the market looks like in Swedish-Finland, the Finnish-speaking part of Finland and the Nordic countries, for musicians living in Finland with Swedish as their mother tongue.

In this thesis, I want to investigate what it is like to make a living as a rhythm musician in Swedish-Finland, and also in the Finnish-speaking part of Finland. There are many relevant issues to consider, as the Finnish-Swedish market is small, geographically and in terms of population. If you want to work in Swedish or in a Finnish-Swedish context, it is a completely different reality compared to the Finnish market, since Swedish-Finland do not have a "real" music industry, with record labels and media channels reaching out to the large masses throughout whole Finland. There does not exist a self-sufficient market for Swedish-Finnish music, still there are a lot of people working in the music business. According to music researcher Johannes Brusila (2020, 78) a Finnish-Swedish music industry has never existed and this is as a result of Swedish-Finland's small population. The fact that there are Swedish-Finnish musicians working in an industry that maybe doesn't even exist intrigues me.

I believe that there is a need to identify and highlight different musical identities which can include for example teaching or even working in another branch. A lot of it is about entrepreneurship and how a freelancer can create and develop his/her business, perhaps also your own job opportunities and how it financially provides livelihoods. With the different musical identities emerging, I wish we could stop talking about "real" musicians and instead stick to the aforementioned terms, such as music identity and discuss which choices musicians with Swedish as their mother tongue working in Finland have made and why.

### 1.1 Aims, goals and research

The purpose of this thesis is to explore professional musicians work patterns by showing the diversity of different models that musicians have created for themselves as a way to make a living as rhythm musician in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland. I wish to highlight the reality that freelance rhythm musicians find themselves in and the reality of working in Swedish-speaking regions in Finland. The aim is to embrace how you can view different musical identities and how paths may have been chosen or decided, and concretely investigate the possibilities for freelance working in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland as a Swedish-speaking rhythm musician, and how it may appear for

“Finnish-Swedes” to be working in the Finnish-speaking parts of Finland and internationally.

The questions I'm looking to answer are:

1. Which pathways have musicians chosen career wise and how are they linked to the working conditions for live musicians that exist in the Swedish-speaking regions in Finland and the musicians interest in music teaching?
2. What different types of musicians can be identified based on the choices and positions chosen by the musicians and how can these be described?

Because I am active both as a music teacher and as a freelance musician, I know that being in the music industry can be seen in a lot of different ways and musical identities can vary a lot. There is a huge diversity in musicians and their craft, that may not always be so easy to describe or to identify exactly what the differences are.

In order to explain how different musicians in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland make a living from music and what their musical career and entrepreneurial creation look like, I have chosen to use the concept of musical identity, because it can include, for example, different orientations in crafts and genres, different approaches, and professionalism from both an economic point of view and attitude. In order to be able to research this, I will do a qualitative survey based on semi-structured interviews. The conclusions drawn are informed by relevant theory on the Finnish and the Finnish-Swedish music industry and culture, with a special focus on popular music.

In the following chapters, I will highlight existing essential literature. However, it should be mentioned that popular and rhythm music are similar concepts, but I have decided to use the term rhythm music in this study. The term rhythm music is more linked to musical content and different genres, styles and music cultures, such as latin, jazz, (progressive) rock, pop, funk music. These are genres most commonly perceived as “popular”.

However, these umbrella terms also include niches of music that are not so commercially successful. It should also be mentioned that the only Swedish music education in Finland on university level, found in Jakobstad, Ostrobothnia at Novia University of Applied Sciences, prefers the term rhythm music which is also an argument for me to use this term.



## 2 Theoretical framework

The studies carried out on the Finnish and Finnish-Swedish music industry will be presented in this chapter. In the Finnish-Swedish sphere, there is not a lot of research available, but what is available and relevant to the subject I have chosen to highlight here. First, I will give a general outline of the Finnish popular music industry and its developments.

### 2.1 The culture of Finnish popular music and its market

In the foreword to the edited book *Made in Finland -Studies in Popular Music* (Karjalainen & Kärki, 2021) the editors Toni-Matti Karjalainen and Kimi Kärki point out, that for decades there has been a lively music scene in Finland. The population has been offered all different styles such as pop/rock, iskelmä (“finnish schlager”), electronic music and heavy metal, amongst several other genres. In Finland, karaoke competitions, the World Air Guitar Championships, and metal fairs held in churches, and several major music festivals have been arranged. Combined with the Finnish language and the cultural and geographical location we find ourselves in, a peculiar mix has been created and a special way for Finns to express themselves. (Karjalainen & Kärki, 2021a, xi). The nation's historical heritage, such as the fact that Finland has belonged to both Sweden and Russia, has also left its mark and characterized Finland's cultural heritage (ibid, 1).

Fast-forwarding the musical history of the 1950s iskelmä -period to the stronghold of rock in the 1960s and 1970s, when in the music industry, for example, the record label Love Records (1966) and other organizations that can be considered supportive of Finnish popular music emerged (Karjalainen & Kärki, 2021b, 1). Karjalainen & Kärki highlights (2021b, 2) that during the 50-60-70's the Finnish language dominated music in Finland and in order to establish oneself as a musician you needed to sing in Finnish. However, it was noticeable that some bands and styles began to embrace the English language and target the international market more in the 70's and early 80's, then moving on to Suomi rock established in the 1980s (Karjalainen & Kärki, 2021b, 4–5). This specific genre called “Suomi rock” is clearly linked to the Finnish language, as in singing in Finnish (Skaniakos, 2021, 33). In a similar manner rapping in Finnish is often called “Suomi-rap”. After the 80's

globalization took more place in the 1990s, into the new millennium (Karjalainen & Kärki, 2021b, 6–8).

Karjalainen & Kärki highlight (2021b, 8) that music has changed its shape all these years, from first targeting the domestic market to starting to establish more internationally, but that there have always been Finnish musicians who have had a strong focus on the Finnish-speaking market and who have sung in Finnish.

The authors notes that over the past 20 years, the Finnish market has had a big boom with Finnish hip hop, where for example, the artist Cheek has been found, although the market has become more globalized. Nevertheless, the Finnish music industry has not achieved the same level of music exports as our neighbor Sweden in popular music. Until about the 1990s, Finnish musicians had mainly targeted the domestic audience, but since then a lot has recently happened in the industry. Among those who have targeted more internationally, and achieved a successful career are Boomfunk MC's, HIM and The Rasmus (Karjalainen & Kärki, 2021, 7–8). Namedropping newer artists, for example Alma, who are one of Finland's few contemporary international stars (Riihimäki & Pääkölä, 2021, 187).

Music Finland was established in 2002, but then under the name Music Export Finland. Their purpose and activities include international networking and marketing, and to help musicians and artists with this (Karjalainen & Kärki, 2021b, 7). If one looks at the revenue generated by music export sales during 2019, the total amount was 81.7 million Euros in 2019. Here, live music is also the sector with the highest profit with 14.5 million Euros. The report notes that the success of music exports has been achieved over several years, for example from technology, services and applications that have a connection to music (Hottinen, 2020). Thus, the domestic market generates a relatively large amount of money, but internationally the market is quite small, and not particularly export-oriented, yet.

Karjalainen & Kärki highlights that despite the international broadening, there are megastars in Finland, which fill large stadiums and have a huge fan base in Finland's population (2021b, 8). They sing only in Finnish and among them can be mentioned, for example, Jenni Vartiainen, PMMP and Antti Tuisku. Furthermore, the authors write that although there have been international bands, whose mother tongue is Finnish but who make music in English and have become famous in Finland too, it seems that the Finnish language still has a strong foothold in the Finnish music industry and may have become

even stronger. It is noted that in order to succeed in Finland, you have to sing in Finnish (Karjalainen & Kärki, 2021b, 8).

## 2.2 Music culture and identity in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland

Music researchers Johannes Brusila, Pirkko Moisala and Hanna Väätäinen writes (2015, 21) that music in Swedish-Finland is a core field of different identifications, cohesions and constructions of stereotypical images, distances, etc. However, only a part of the diversity in Finland is related to Swedish music in the clearly defined Finnish-Swedish sphere. The authors further point out that music, which has had a strong influence on the Finnish-Swedish identity, has often been hidden compared to the research that is based on social science, folklore-related and historical theories and research questions regarding Finnish-Swedishness and its culture, and therefore it is important to also examine the music, which can add something to the other aspects (2015, 21).

One often talks about one's own identity as something obvious and understandable, although one may not have often given a thought to how one's own identity is constructed. To briefly discuss the complex idea of "identity" one can start with two perspectives of identity: One point of view is defined by how you are seen by another, and the other from a point of one's own perspective. However, these two always influence each other (Ahlsved, 2017, 24). Ahlsved building on Stuart Hall (1996), states that our own identity is not inherited but is created and adapted in a continuous interaction with the outside world (2017). Identity is not something you are, but what you become depending on the choices you make (2017, 25).

Brusila highlights an interesting aspect about Finnish-Swedish identities, which is explained in more detail later in this study, i.e. Finnish-Swedishness is a social construction that can be related to this:

*"The self-identification of the Finland-Swedish minority is constructed through a positioning of the self in three major "others", that is: Finnish majority culture, the culture of Sweden, and what*

*might be summarized in the concept "international culture", which, in the case of popular music, is concretized in the use of English language."* (Brusila, 2021, 84)

Perhaps the most comprehensive study on the music culture of the Swedish-speaking population in Finland is *Modersmålets sånger* (Eds. Brusila, Moisala & Väättänen, 2015). In the introduction section of the book the writers quote professor John Rosas (1943) who sums up the problem of investigating the music culture of the Finnish-Swedish (Swedish speaking) population:

*"To draw up exact boundaries between Swedish and Finnish in Finland is a difficult task. There are numerous people, who belong to one ethnic group, but have their roots in the other. It is even more difficult in the musical field to divide our country into two main groups. After all, music is a language which, unlike other languages, is not surrounded by any definite boundaries."* (Own translation. Rosas 1943, in Brusila, Djupsund, Nyqvist, 2015, 27).

The authors further state that the research conducted in the field of music has mainly concentrated on folk music, but in recent times there has been more focus on the field of popular music (2015, 29). In the 1990s, the first scientific studies on popular music and Finnish-Swedishness emerged in Finland (2015, 37-39). Because the lack of studies around rhythm musicians and artist living in the Swedish-speaking parts in Finland, I found it necessary to highlight and dig deeper into that specific field. But to get a more understandable view on how everything works and happens, I will first present more theory.

### 2.2.1 The difference between Finnish and Swedish in music

The Finnish majority culture, and the culture of Sweden and International culture, Johannes Brusila explains as a combination of the Finnish-Swedish; as a mix of three different components (Brusila, 2021, 84).

Brusila further writes that when you talk about the Finnish-Swedish culture, you often start from the Finnish culture as an alter ego that you project yourself in relation with. Here, however, Brusila points out that in popular music, it's just as justified to see Swedish and International culture as similar opposites to Finnish-Swedishness. (Brusila, 2021, 84).

Brusila highlights (2015a, 109) that the structure of the music often has to symbolize more than an auditory sense of community:

*“One of the strongest musical perceptions of the cultural differences between Swedishness and Finnishness in Finland is the idea that the Swedish-speaking population sings in a major key, while the Finnish-speaking population's melodies are in the minor key.”* (Own translation. Brusila, 2015a, 109)

For the Swedish speaking population in Finland, the positive-sounding major key is characterized and stands for a common mentality, while the majority population is characterized by a gloomier, or sad, mindset (ibid). It seems unreasonably likely that these opposites have taken shape over time in research and it has come to characterize common perceptions of ethnicity and tonality, despite the fact that, for example, similar melodies are found as in Finland and also internationally, although the cultural context can vary greatly. Cultural and social constructions are linked to stereotypes and ethnicity, and are about community. (Brusila, 2015a, 114–115).

The fact that people living in Finland also have different mother tongues, or are bilingual, means that you are influenced to a certain extent in different ways, and it can then be extremely difficult to pinpoint what can really be classified as Finnish and Finnish-Swedish differences in music, even if there are generalizations.

### 2.3 Music spheres in Swedish Finland

Brusila (2015a, 116) has discussed the music culture in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland through a schematic picture containing The Core (*Ankdammen*), Middle Circle (*Brackvattnet*) and Outer Circle (*Horisonten*). This can be related in a musician's life in a variety of ways, such as geographically and linguistically, or in a minor/major mode.

Brusila (ibid.) describes The Core as the central spot of Finnish-Swedish music culture.

One can say that the majority of the major tonality has come to symbolize the core of this sphere, through the territorializations that have taken place in history. In The Core, the language-ethnic personality is often integrated for the musicians in their profession. It's a territory that artists and musicians negotiate, and the choices can change a lot during

their career (Brusila 2015a, 139). Being in this sphere means that you quite often receive grants from the Third sector and that the activities are small scaled, making music in Swedish and producing it on your own (Brusila, 2021, 85–87).

This is an extremely interesting aspect that is very relevant and can be seen from several different angles. In my opinion, having a small-scale business can also mean doing entertainment and restaurant gigs, for example as a troubadour. It does not make major headlines in the newspaper, but from an economic point of view it can be seen as a relatively lucrative area.

Further explained (Brusila, 2015a, 116–117), the Middle Circle is where bilingual and/or Finnish Swedish-speaking musicians have entered. It can be about music material aimed at both language groups, but also about the music industry that was bilingual for a long time. According to Brusila many professional Finnish-Swedish musicians are working in this specific area. This sphere is located between The Core and the Outer Circle (*Horisonten*), which can be explained as representing the three “others”: *the Finnish, the Swedish* and *the International* sphere and can for musicians be a career goal to enter (Brusila, 2015a, 115–116).

For many Finnish-Swedish musicians, it’s a common phenomenon in the area of The Core, to have to change one's identity in music. For many musicians in popular culture, the composition in this sphere of Finnish-Swedish musicians, The Core can be a bit off the road in their everyday lives. It's sections have also been weakened within The Cores functions. Brusila further points out that what he describes as the Outer Circles fixed points (The Finnish, International and Swedish strata) can be a more obvious situation for some musicians. The Outer circle can actually be a goal for some, even if The Cores connections is still strong. (Brusila, 2015a, 139–140).

Brusila (2015a, 115–118) points out, however, that it should be remembered that The Core as a construction is not the core of the “Finnish-Swedishness” and the Finnish-Swedish languages in Finland. These cultural phenomena are often changeable and alive in nature. Regional boundaries and different dimensions of politics and geography also have an affect. Briefly explained: “*Finnish-Swedishness is a composition that is in*

*itself created in relation to the fixed points, but which despite these dimensions are heterogeneous and constantly changing.*" (Own translation. Brusila, 2015a, 118).

As a conclusion, Brusila writes (2015a, 132), that those who have been most successful in creating a bigger audience base, both in Swedish and Finnish-speaking part of Finland, are bands that have remained most neutral in their music (i.e have not been drawn to major or minor tonality) and have mainly performed at events of a private nature, such as birthday parties, weddings. They have succeeded best in getting a bigger audience and often their repertoire consists of covers, and the ensemble adapts to the wishes of the festivity. It's often likely that the musicians haven't published their own music or established themselves in the media. (2015a, 132)

Despite this, there are also a number of "Finnish-Swedes" who have specialized in dialectal music and moved to Sweden and have recently received a lot of attention in the Swedish music market. However, even if they have succeeded in Sweden it does not have to mean that a success would have been as great in Swedish-Finland.

## 2.4 Language and lyrics in Music

Music researcher Marko Aho (2007, 124) points out that regardless how lyrics or text and their specific form are created, there is one aspect that is common: there is always a sentence in a text, both for the creator and the consumer.

The different nuances found in music can appeal to people in different ways. For one, it can be of greater importance how a song is shaped purely musically, while others are more attracted to different moods. But lyrics can also be the most important thing in music, for both the composer and the listener, even if everything in the musical composition creates a holistic picture together with the lyrics.

Qurrotul'Ain (2013, 10) refers to Hornby (2002) when she points out that poetry and lyrics in a song are personal and expresses the writer's thoughts and feelings. Although the author might have personal relationship to the text created, the listener can, in my opinion,

also form his/her own personal connection with the lyrics, which does not need to be met with the author's.

Brusila highlights that the nuances of language can have an impact on the structure of music (social, ethnic and aesthetic), how it's accepted and understood, as well in an industrial spread and its potential, and that's why it is such an important choice which language one prefer to write in or listen to (Brusila, 2015b, 9).

The most popular music in Finland have been sung in Finnish. It means that artists and musicians, in search for an international career, have been adapting the English language in their music, since record companies and the Finnish music industry have tried to persuade the lyrics being in Finnish. The Swedish language doesn't seem to have any market success at all. Therefore it's quite usual that artists, wanting a career in Swedish, have moved to Sweden, to search luck. Only a few Swedish-speaking musicians in Finland have gotten a record deal with any of the bigger companies in Finland (Brusila, 2015b, 13).

In the study, which is based on the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, Finnish-Swedish musicians, Johannes Brusila presents three factors directly related to the use of language in music.

1. Communication: It's about expressing yourself and to communicate with the audience in a language understood both ways. It is also a choice about framing both the career opportunities: an international career (using for example English language) or a national career (using mother tongue or Swedish and Finnish). (2015b, 10).
2. Aesthetic dimension: To express yourself, words can be a tool for your own personal creativity, or it can be used to for some kind of beauty, or other expressions. The creation of lyrics and language choices are followed by artful patterns that are historically, cultural and socially based. (2015b, 11).
3. Social lives: Generalizing, language is a more component factor of social lives (2015b, 11). Brusila (2015b, 11–12) refers to Wei (2000) in his text and points out that for people with mutual mother tongues, the choice of language can affect the identity, to keep boundaries of the ethnic band together, or to change them. It can



also be in a wider historical, economical and political relation forming “self” and “others”. (Wei 2000, in Brusila, 2015b, 12).

If you want to analyze the schematic picture in language and lyrics, one can point out that Brusila observes (2015b, 16) that many “Finnish-Swedes” who are in The Core, especially Ostrobothnians, are strongly influenced by Sweden, and this may cause the Finnish language to not be of sufficient quality to be able to pursue a career in the Finnish parts of Finland. Moving on to the Middle circle, Brusila highlights (2015b, 18) that here the artists and musicians position themselves between Finnish-Swedish, Finnish, Swedish or English. The musicians can adapt themselves to what is more successful (2015b, 22). However, quite a big mass of the Finnish-Swedish musicians collaborate around this area linguistically and in different genres (2015b, 13–14), and it can seem as though the artists and musicians have double identities, changing between languages (Brusila, 2015b, 22). Working in Finnish in Finland, in English internationally abroad and in Swedish in Sweden means that you are in the sphere of the Outer circle (Brusila, 2015b, 23). Especially for those who have been following media in Sweden, it hasn’t been a big step moving there to work as a musician and for those who speak Finnish or Swedish equally fluently (or maybe Finnish a little bit better) the step towards the music industry in Finland is small. Singing in English, is the most natural choice for the artists and musicians wanting an international career. (Brusila, 2015b, 23–26).

Moisala (2015, 171) points out that language is a big part of where you are going. For monolinguals, the choice is easy, but with bilingualism the options are greater. You’re shaped by the language environment you are living in (influences of eg bilingual co-musicians) and for a musician the market can be larger and wider if you also market yourself and give concerts to the Finnish audience. (2015, 171).

However, changing language is linked both to genre and identity but also questions about authenticity. In all honesty, it is not entirely credible if a Finnish-Swedish artist sings in bad Finnish. There is an opposite that is a much more introverted reaction to this, singing in dialect. Artists such as b.la KAJ, Frida Andersson, 1G3B, Vasas Flora och Fauna, Iiris Viljanen and Richard Eklund have made dialectical music more widely visible and more appreciated, especially in Swedish-Finland.

### 3 Methodology

In this work, I have chosen to use a qualitative semi-structured interview form. According to Trost (2010, 25), qualitative interviews are characterized by the questioner asking straight and simple questions and this in turn generates very versatile and rich answers by the informant. After a completed interview, there can be a great amount of interesting material where opinions, events and patterns can be highlighted (Trost, 2010, 25).

The informants participating have been contacted each one by one and given information at the early beginning of this Master's Thesis. Every participant received information about this work and signed a form, where they gave their consent to participate in the study. Personal information such as name, age, geographical location has been removed to secure the anonymity of the informants, simply because Swedish-Finland is such a small community, especially in musician circles. I deliberately searched for an open dialogue, so I pointed out at the first contact that the informants in this work would be anonymous, hoping that the dialogue would proceed without inhibitions.

I decided to have a couple of questions that were consistent in each individual interview. It also allowed me to raise different questions if needed, or lead the discussion on other tracks if it felt relevant to the investigation. Karin Widerberg (2008, 16) points out that qualitative interviews are used in a direct meeting between the researcher and the informant and provide a unique dialogue, where the interviewer wants to highlight the respondent's own stories and experiences.

Due to the Corona pandemic, it was necessary to conduct the interviews online on different platforms. The length of the interviews varied between 45 minutes up to two hours, became recorded, then transcribed and analyzed. The recordings and transcriptions are in my possession only.

The chapter below contains the results of the interviews. My aim has been to gain insights from many different contexts and therefore in-depth interviews with six carefully selected musicians have been conducted, and that also framed the following chapters. The reason I have chosen to use the following layout and headings depends to some extent on the discussion topics, but has also been formed after reading and coding the transcription material.

## 4 Presentation of the results of the interviews

In this specific chapter, I will present the informants who participated in the study, the semi-structured questions and the informants answers that were highlighted during the conversations.

### 4.1 The Informants

The informants consist of six musicians around Swedish-Finland. The informants chosen for this study have been actively freelancing and making music for at least one decade, but have also been teaching music or had other careers alongside music. In order to get as good an overall picture as possible, the gender quota is even and the informants live in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland. I have chosen my participants for their long experience in the music industry, to get as wide an insight as possible on the realities of working as a musician. Most of the informants included in this study regularly teach music or have a permanent position in another industry. No permanent positioned full-time musician has been interviewed.

The informants involved in this study are all born and resident throughout Swedish-Finland, from the Ostrobothnian coastal strip in the west, down to Helsinki in the south.

Now follows a presentation of each informant:

*Informant A's* music career began in the mid-1990s and they have since then been a frequently engaged and hired musician with solid work experience. *Informant A* is a real multi-tasker and is engaged, for example, as a musician, conductor, soloist and participates in various projects, studio and TV recordings, as well as composing their own music and commissioning work. They have a university degree in music and teaching and teaches alongside freelancing. Their mother tongue is Swedish.

*Informant B* started performing and taking music lessons at an early age, but has no university degree in music. They have extensive work experience in the entertainment industry and have been active as a freelance musician since their teens, but are nowadays

also working part-time in another field. *Informant B* is very engaged as both a musician and soloist, mainly in a live context, but is also hired as a M.D for other artists, some studio work and different projects. *Informant B's* mother tongue is Swedish.

*Informant C* has been active in the music industry since childhood but does not have a university exam in music. They are educated and work in a completely different field and earn a full-time living in the field of education, but have nevertheless been an active musician and soloist, and have also worked to some extent in the music theatre.

*Informant C* is engaged in live, TV and studio contexts, various projects and have recently also started composing their own music. The mother tongue is Swedish.

*Informant D* has had an active career as a freelance musician since the late 1980s, is and has been engaged in several different projects, mainly as a band musician, but they are also composing their own music. They have actively been touring with different constellations or artists, composing commissioned works and been hired for studio/TV productions. *Informant D* is educated in music and teaching and has also taught music alongside freelancing. The original mother tongue is Swedish, but the informant also speaks fluent Finnish.

*Informant E* started as a self-taught musician in their early teens composing and arranging own music, and early on found a clear direction in music. The informant has gotten a music teacher-exam, but also has a learned cutting-edge knowledge in a certain field of music. They mainly work as a freelance musician through concerts, live contexts, are involved in various projects and make many own productions. The informant has sometimes taught music and been giving workshops, but freelancing has always come first. *Informant E* is bilingual, speaking fluent Swedish and Finnish.

*Informant F* became active themselves as a freelancer during their studies of becoming a music teacher and have since ~2010 mainly made living as a freelance musician, sometimes with teaching in music or other part-time work on the side. They perform and gives concerts actively, mainly as a soloist but sometimes also as a band musician, does some studio work and sometimes composes some commissioning work. They started their career mainly with cover music, but in recent years have found a more specific direction and the focus has been on composing their own music. The informant's mother tongue is Swedish.

Below is a table for a more transparent summary:

<b>Informant</b>	<b>Bilingual</b>	<b>Music and teacher education</b>	<b>Working in another industry</b>	<b>Composing own music</b>	<b>Live musician</b>
<b>A</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>B</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>C</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>F</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

#### 4.1.2 Discussion topics

As I did semi-structured interviews, I had a few ordinary questions, which could develop into other interesting questions, according to the informants answers and their background. The main discussion topics were shaped by these questions:

- *Briefly state your background in music*
- *When and how did you start working with music?*
- *How do you support yourself mainly in music?*
- *Are you making your own music, playing covers, where do you perform?*
- *Do you also support yourself with other work?*
- *Geographically, where is your field of work?*

- *What's your mother tongue?*
- *In what language do you work (Swedish, Finnish, English)?*
- *Have you been limited by your mother tongue?*
- *How do you distribute your music?*
- *How are your connections to media channels, and which channels in particular?*
- *Where does your music generate interest?*
- *Have you applied for support from funds/organizations for making music?*
- *Would you manage financially without support from the third sector?*
- *Do you see any differences working in the Swedish part of Finland/ the Finnish part of Finland/ Internationally? What are the differences, and where would you rather work?*
- *Where is your audience base?*

In order to make the answers and information that arose during the interviews visible, I have chosen to divide them into different headings. Doing so clarifies various similarities and differences that may exist among the informants, but also highlights essential information that should be broken down, although it can often be intertwined in other aspects. In order to understand and create an image of different musical identities, a clarification is required.

#### 4.2 A multi-tasker or niche musician?

Although the informants are similar in many ways, there are also some points that differentiate them regarding musical competences and profile, which I will present next in more detail:

Four of the informants have an education in music and music teaching, and have been active as teachers, while two of the informants do not have a formal education in music. Despite this, they are all established rhythm musicians in Swedish-Finland.

All of the informants have been making original music in some ways, although the amount and purpose vary. In a simplified way, it can be said that *Informant A* and *D* have been working in most various ways and have many strings to their bows: working and touring with different constellations/artist, making solo albums and composing commissioned works, and have also been teaching music for a very long time. They are involved in all kinds of different projects, are busy musicians and has performed in everything from small churches to big galas, all kind of jazz clubs to TV productions and theaters. What should be mentioned about these two informants is that although they are versatile and very knowledgeable, they also have their specialist areas that, for example, come to light when composing their own music.

*Informant B* and *C* are similar in that way they don't have a formal music exam. Both of the informants have been working with different types of musicians, artist and also as soloists, and done a little bit of own original music, but mostly been playing cover gigs, or backing up other artists in different ways. They haven't been teaching music either. If we then add *Informant F*, who has an exam in music and been teaching on the side during their freelancing career, started to build up a music base with covers and then later began to form a musical profile, focusing more on writing their own music. *Informant C* have also during the later years started to write own music, while *Informant B* focus mostly on cover gigs and party music, which means that *Informant B* often performs at e.g. corporate events, weddings and various public and private events. It can also be pointed out that the informant worked for a quite long period as a professional music entertainer for a large company.

*Informant E* is in a way the one who has most specialized in their career and with a distinctive focus, from a young age. The informant has their roots in rhythm music and was during their teenage years, strongly influenced by a certain genre of music, something that has left its mark on their own compositions and the cutting-edge skills that they possess today. It can be said that this same informant has developed in two different directions, although the directions are strongly rooted and connected to each other. There is a particularly suitable niche market for *informant E* in Finland and abroad in specific arenas, although the music also can appeal to the broad mass.

I would like to state briefly: Being versatile and having a broad knowledge does not necessarily mean that one has to give up certain specific genre orientations, and I want at the same time to highlight that someone who has focused more on, for example, party/entertainment music can also possess a certain cutting-edge skill. Since party/entertainment music often is international, musicians who have adapted in this area may also find it easier to cross linguistic and cultural barriers that may occur.

#### 4.3 Working as a musician, geographically

From a strict geographical perspective the coastal strip between Helsinki and Ostrobothnia, commonly called "Svenskfinland", seems to have been the main region of work for all informants. This does not necessarily mean that the music performed has been in Swedish, but is more associated with Finnish-Swedish contexts and a Finnish-Swedish audience, although the music may have been performed in Swedish, English or Finnish.

When analyzing the discussions with the informants more closely, I could also see that geographically there has been some activity in the Finnish-speaking part of Finland for all informants, and a little bit internationally for some informants. Where the international activities are or have been varies among the informants, but the Nordic countries are mentioned, especially Sweden and Norway. Other countries include, for example, Germany, Italy, Spain, the US and the Baltics.

There is no exact common pattern as to why and how the informants have moved geographically, for example in the Finnish parts of Finland, so I have chosen to shed a detailed light on what it has been like for each individual informant:

*Informant A* highlights that they have been active in all parts of Finland, playing in most all jazz clubs available and touring around in different cities, both in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland, and in the Finnish-speaking areas, both as a soloist and also as a band musician. They have also been working a bit internationally, mostly in Sweden. And for now, with a developed technique, much of the work is made in their home studio. *Informant D* has like *Informant A* played a lot in the Finnish part of Finland, but also in Swedish-Finland. Early in their career *informant D* made music across the whole country,



touring with domestic artists and performing basically in all places where music was played. Nowadays a lot of music happens in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland, and when *informant D* was asked to put the areas mostly active (Swedish-Finland, Finnish-speaking parts of Finland and internationally) in percents, the division became 98 % in Finland and the remaining 2 % internationally.

*Informant B* highlights that they have been working mostly in the coastal strip between Helsinki and Ostrobothnia, mainly Ostrobothnia for now, but for a few years internationally in a party/cover band and as a band musician with different artists. *Informant B* has also been touring a bit in the Finnish-speaking part of Finland. For the sake of simplicity, you can divide the work areas by percentage like this: 80 % in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland, 10 % in the Finnish-speaking part of Finland and 10 % in the rest of the Nordic countries, according to *informant B*.

Similar to *Informant B*, the next informant (*C*) tells that their main area has been in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland, mostly Ostrobothnia and Uusimaa (southern part of Finland). *Informant C* has not been working internationally, but has been playing music in the Finnish part of Finland, both as a solo artist and with different artists. When I asked *Informant C* about the percents, they told me that 80 % was in the Swedish part of Finland, and the remaining 20 % was in the Finnish part of Finland.

And as for *Informant E*, they replied the same as most of the other musicians; the area is mostly based in Swedish-Finland. *E* tells me that they are working all over the country, but mostly in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland, and a bit in the rest of the Nordic Countries, where they have started to become established. The coastal strip, the capital region and the eastern Swedish-speaking parts of Finland are the main area. 70 % in Swedish-Finland, 20 % in the other Nordic countries and 10 % in the Finnish part of Finland, were *informant E's* answer about the percents. *Informant F* has a strong Finnish-Swedish geographic base, but has also been establishing a strong base in the capital region, both in the Finnish and Swedish languages/areas. The informant has been able to build a strong network both in Ostrobothnia and Helsinki, and has also been performing a bit in Sweden, the Baltics, USA and Europe (for example Spain, France). *Informant F* claims that it's a 50/50 percent, working both in the Swedish and Finnish-speaking parts of Finland, and then sometimes performing abroad, internationally.

The percentages presented in this chapter are the informants own estimates of where they are mainly active geographically and it can be concluded that even though all the informants in some way have worked in Finnish-Finland, or internationally, it is clear that the majority have established themselves most in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland, at least at the present time.

### 4.3 Linguistic limitations

It's no surprise that this aspect has not caused inconvenience to the bilingual informants, while communicating in Finnish has created more headaches for some informants with Swedish as their mother tongue.

As it turns out, the Finnish language has been a restriction, not being able to communicate as freely as they would like to in Finnish, in one way or another.

The Swedish-speaking informants highlights that there need not be difficulties in booking or arranging concerts, but difficulties can occur, for example, in the contemporary interaction with an audience, while doing a fluent interview in Finnish media or to have coherent discussions while socializing with Finnish-speaking musicians.

One of the informants said that they have been able to communicate properly in Finnish while booking gigs and talking with different organizers, but at a concert, small talking between songs might not feel comfortable. *Informant A* highlights that they have found a way of doing it and does not hide the fact that they are Finnish-Swedish, offering the audience small talk in poor Finnish while making a thing out of it. The informant tells that it actually has been working really well in that way and that it has made the listeners laugh with them. Another informant is on the same track, saying that rehearsed shows are okay to do, as you can think about and rehearse the talks before the show, but extemporised concerts/gigs where you have to interact with the listeners all the time, feels limiting to do in Finnish.

Being able to interact with Finnish-speaking musicians as a "Finnish-Swede" means that one must at some point break the barrier, dare to talk in Finnish and not feel embarrassed when word choice becomes incorrect, something that *informant C* and *F* highlights.

Creating a career in the Finnish-speaking part of Finland, felt very challenging at first for *Informant F*. There are also still some challenges they say, to work and create a way forward in their music career in the Finnish parts of Finland. *Informant F* tells that work situations go well spoken in Finnish, but small talking with other musicians sometimes feels limiting and a lot of time is spent on formulating thoughts and further highlights that it takes energy to express oneself in another language than your actual mother tongue. Even so, *informant F* does not find it difficult to interact directly with an audience and does small talk in Finnish, sometimes interspersed with English, when performing in Finnish-Finland.

A simple conclusion is that bilingual “Finnish-Swedes” are finding it easier to act as musicians throughout Finland in terms of social interaction with fellow musicians and the audience.

#### 4.4 Differences between Swedish-Finland, Finnish-Finland and Sweden

Since all of the interviewed musicians have been playing, in some form, in both Swedish-Finland and Finnish-Finland (and a bit internationally), I was curious if they had encountered linguistic limitations. As already pointed out, Swedish is the mother tongue of four informants, while two of the informants are bilingual, speaking both Swedish and Finnish fluently. All informants considered themselves able to communicate in English.

In this chapter, I would like to highlight the informants thoughts on differences that may exist between Finnish-Swedish, Finnish-speaking and Swedish musicians, regarding musical and social aspects. I have chosen to include Swedish-speaking musicians because all the informants have pointed out how Sweden has influenced “Finnish-Swedes”, especially Ostrobothnians, through national Swedish media, such as TV, radio, newspapers and music.

Trying to clarify and explain the differences that may exist requires gross generalizations and it should be pointed out that one cannot apply this to an entire group of people.

#### 4.4.1 Musical differences

The fact that Finnish musicians are skilled at their instrument are often highlighted in this study. Several informants highlight this and also point out the fantastic note-reading ability that Finnish-speaking musicians possess, but they also shed light on a dependence on written music from this aspect and point out from their own experiences that this can also be inhibiting. The experience has often been that Finnish musicians are more faithful to arrangements and do not dare to go on feeling and create music in the moment compared to Swedish musicians, who may not necessarily be as skilled technically, but who are more rooted in a free creativity, which also requires a great musical skill.

Asking of the differences between Finnish-Swedes and the Finnish-speaking population, in musical aspects, *informant A, C and D* who have all worked in many studio and TV productions, have quite similar thoughts. *Informant A, C and D*, points out that at least in the past, and perhaps to some extent still, even though this may have changed a lot nowadays, Finnish musicians are more note-bound, especially older musicians. *Informant A* thinks that it's a little more strict, a little more planned with Finnish musicians, and this may be due in part to greater competition, than between Finnish-Swedes musicians. *Informant C* goes on to say that Finnish musicians are very skilled and reads notes and sheet music fantastically well, but creating in the moment and the joint making of music doesn't feel as strong in Finnish musicians, as in Finnish-Swedish. Also *informant A and D* highlight what *Informant C* pointed out, further telling that in Sweden, the musicians are more feeling-based, and may be less controlled, for example, with arrangements, but that also demands greater skills of the musicians, to be able to create together and deliver in the moment. *Informant A* points out that Swedish musicians may not be quite as technically skilled as Finnish musicians, but dare to use their creativity more. Both *Informant D and A* make the assertion that Finnish-Swedes, especially in Ostrobothnia, may be somewhere in between the musicians in Sweden and the Finnish part of Finland in this particular aspect. *Informant C* highlights another interesting aspect regarding Finnish-Swedish musicians. They say that the big trap with Swedish-Finland is that it is a duck pond and that you may get too comfortable in what you do and think that things are good enough. They say that it is important to keep the bar high, as also highlighted by *informants A, B, D and F*. The product you offer should be of high quality and you should be professional and confident in your cause, *Informant B* tells.

#### 4.4.1 Language and repertoire in music in the Finnish-speaking parts of Finland

As a Finnish-Swedish cover musician, having to change the repertoire for a Finnish-speaking audience may in some cases be true, but it is mainly about bringing more Finnish-language material into their repertoire and adapting it according to the listeners wishes.

*Informant B* thinks it's possible to perform gigs in same ways (as in Swedish-Finland and Finnish-Finland), because *B* is not identified with original music, but tells that it probably requires a certain change in the repertoire, if you want to establish yourself in Finnish-Finland. To reach out to the broad Finnish-speaking mass with original music as a "Finnish-Swede", requires one to perform the music in Finnish, according to several informants. Both *Informant C* and *Informant F* and also *Informant A* emphasises, that if you want to become established as an artist and be famous in the Finnish music market, you have to create music in Finnish. *Informant C* further thinks that at least it was that way before, because Finnish is such a strong emotional mother language, but of course, the genre can matter here. *Informant E*, on the other hand, thinks that language shouldn't matter, wherever you are, as long as the music is good and talks to you.

*Informants A, C, D* illuminates the differences as a band musician versus the artist/soloist. All of them agree that it is much easier to enter the Finnish market as a band musician than as an artist, because the language does not limit such as a musician, there it's more about your network and contacts, plus the good work you do. *Informant A* further tells that as an artist/soloist it is a bit more difficult, since the job opportunities becomes narrower, there are more prejudices and rules and one should appeal to the audience, unlike for musicians. *Informant C* is on the same page, telling that is much harder to succeed as "the star" than as a musician.

In several aspects, it may matter how the use of language in the Finnish-speaking parts of Finland is adapted in music and repertoire. There are variations in several different aspects, on one hand whether one is primarily active as a band musician or as an artist and whether one performs covers or original music.

#### 4.4.2 Communication and societal differences

Because the society among “Finnish-Swedes” is so small and can sometimes feel very familiar, it is quite easy for “Finnish-Swedes” to understand, communicate and feel connected to each other.

In communicative and social aspects, Finnish-speaking musicians (in a Finnish-Swedish aspect) can feel more introverted, strict and withdrawn compared to Swedish musicians who are often considered open and happy. Social interaction can then be significantly different in how one communicates with each other.

A few of the informants highlight the social interaction. *Informant F* who has been involved with Finnish musicians, often hear “*you are so open and happy*”, and points out that it is somewhat different socializing with Finnish musicians, because it often feels a bit socially closed and withdrawn, you may have to be a little more straightforward since many Finnish people can be a little “harsh”. *Informant B* says that artists from Sweden are often more positive and happier, compared to Finnish artists. Swedish artist likes to socialize before and after the concert, while Finnish artists handle the job professionally, and then leave. Maybe this also is a language issue, *informant B* reflects. *Informant C* highlights another interesting aspect, telling that to be “too good” at your musical skills in the Finnish part of Finland is to show off, and that’s not an appreciated attitude.

Something that should apply to everyone, regardless of which language you speak or in which circles you move, is what *informant B* and *F* highlight in different terms. *Informant F* says by being a happy and nice person you will get far, and *informant B* continue saying:

*“You can't be a complete asshole. You need to be able to communicate with the organizer and communicate to the audience and give a good impression of yourself, so that they feel that you are a person they want to work with several times.”*

#### 4.5 Teaching in music and other jobs beside freelancing

What should be mentioned from the very beginning of this chapter is that at some stage during their music career, all informants in this study have taught music or worked in another field. As previously pointed out, *informant A, D, E and F* have a university degree in music teaching, while *informant B and C* do not.

There are some similarities, but also major differences that separate the informants in this particular chapter. I have therefore chosen to highlight very carefully how the informants have experienced this personally.

*Informant B* has mainly made efforts to make a living as a live musician with party/cover music as the main activity. They have made a living as a musician for a long time, but have also made a living with other things part-time for about a decade. Family and children are the simple reason why the informant has also chosen to do other things, due to the unwieldy logistics freelance work often brings with it long journeys and a lot of time away from home. Having another part-time job means that the musician's work is still possible, but also provides financial security.

*Informant C* has always worked in music, but is educated in another field and gets their main income through this. They point out that it has always been financially safe to do things like this, because the informant has a family to support. Due to flexible full-time work, it has been possible for the informant to also work as a freelance musician, and in some periods the music has actually become more of a full-time job. At the same time, the informant highlights an extremely interesting aspect from the life they find themselves in:

*"I think I'm fighting with that identity, too. am I a musician, or is it just an active hobby?"*

Precisely because the informant does not work as a full-time musician, it can sometimes incite identity crisis, but the informant points out that being able to balance working life in this way has been good for them.

The remaining informants, as previously described, have a music degree. At some point, they have all active work as music teachers, in different ways. They may have been teaching at music schools or in primary schools, private teaching, various workshops, etc.

*Informant E* has freelance work and writing original music as their main income, but has taught music out various turns. However, it has mainly been side jobs and very small scaled, and if they look back over the years they have been musically active, these periods have not been dominant. They point out that in order to survive as a freelance musician, it is also necessary to receive help from grants. The informant works hard and actively to be able to make a living from the music within their special niche.

Like *Informant E*, *Informant F* also has their main income from music and freelance work. *Informant F* says that concert activities are the main focus and, in order to be able to make a living financially, they have been involved in several different productions and projects, with different orientations and styles. More recently, *Informant F* has wanted to invest in and develop their own music, but they also perform covers. As a teacher, the informant has taught at various rounds, both privately and at institutions. For two years during their active career, they have worked part-time jobs in a completely different industry, but the rest of the time the informant has made it financially by freelancing. Not great all the time, but still. It can also be mentioned here that *Informant F* only supports themselves financially.

Also in this regard, *Informant A* and *D* are most similar to each other. Both *Informant A* and *D* say that over the years, teaching has taken up more and more time, and in the last few years has been the main source of income. The two informants are real multi-taskers in music and compose, arrange, teach and are actively engaged as freelance musicians for various concerts and productions, in all sorts of different fields.

With the musical experience *informant A* has gained over the years as an active musician, they say that teaching makes a lot of sense, since they actually have something to give and teach, but the informant would probably have the opportunity to work less as an educator today, for purely financial reasons, since they still accept various freelance assignments. The informant goes on to say that when they were younger, they might have wanted to realize their potential and perform more, but that at present the teaching job feels satisfying.

Furthermore, *Informant A* says that working as a music educator has given them and their family basic financial security. Still, they maintain that teaching feels really meaningful, and point out that it does not just affect the economic aspect.



*Informant A* thinks that many freelance musicians in Swedish-Finland look at themselves quite narrowly, and perhaps only focus in one direction. They go on to say that the problem may be that most people place themselves in a compartment and then the field of work in Swedish-Finland is too small and it will be difficult to then work as a musician full time. If you have Swedish-Finland as a base, you should be quite broad, *informant A* summarizes.

*Informant D* points out that to some extent it may be due to age, as there is a natural generational change of musicians at intervals and some gigs begin to disappear for *informant D*. However, in the most active years of freelancing, *informant D* had around 260 gigs/year. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that they are still very active as a freelance musician. *Informant D* has also had a family to support financially over the years.

The smallness of Swedish-Finland has already been mentioned several times, but what also must be highlighted is the reality for a musician working in Swedish-Finland. It all depends on the reality you live in: one may be only providing for oneself or one may have a large family to support financially, one may have an ambition to realize oneself as a complete freelance musician and some are satisfied with freelance work as a part-time business. Maybe one is a multi-tasker in music or some are niched artists... Apart from the aforementioned aspects, health and age are, for example, other important factors that affect whether one teaches music or works in another field.

#### 4.6 Say yes to everything and be true to yourself?

When a person is at the start of their career as a freelance musician, they usually accept all the gigs on offer, in order to gain visibility and to be established in the field, although not everything may be of interest.

During our lifetime, we are constantly shaped as human beings, so in the name of reasonableness, surely what is essential in our lives, should also change to some extent along the way. The more experience one has, the more a musical identity is formed and one may start to notice in which contexts one feels most comfortable. This is likely to develop and can change direction during one's career and at some stage one might start turning down some gigs that simply are not so appealing.

All the informants in this study are at such a stage of their career that they can turn down various events that do not interest them, although the issues may vary. The discussions highlight, for example, logistical reasons: it can feel unreasonable to travel 500 km round trip for a gig; one may know that some events take more than they give; and in some cases perhaps a song you performed 20 years ago feels lyrically fake to perform. All informants formulate themselves in different ways, but the conclusion remains the same: What you do must feel right.

*Informant F* highlights that varying and customizing the repertoire for different events is fine, but the songs that are included must always be songs that they can stand for. The informant goes on to say that they do not want to adapt too much and thinks that if you do, you may lose your own personal and artistic expression and get a little lost.

*Informant B*, who has been involved in entertainment music mostly and built their entire career on giving the audience what they want, says that nowadays they probably turn down certain gigs. The informant considers themselves to be very adaptable and has no problem adapting to different styles or repertoire, as long as they have the skills to do so. They are clear that the bar must never be lowered in this case. *Informant C* has similar thoughts, even if they have started to create their own music in the last few years. Since *informant C* makes a living from other work, they also have the luxury of being able to turn down events that do not interest them. *Informant C* says that they do not accept every offer anymore, they do not want to do things that feels fake, and points out that what they have performed earlier, for example, in adolescence does not feel as relevant at the age they are now.

*Informant A* and *D* say that sometimes you might accept different events that you honestly don't want, because you have a family to support, but explains, that it's probably mostly an exception. *Informant A* highlights that an important and interesting aspect in music is to make the best craftsmanship possible and find different musical levels, but points out that even if a gig pays well, it must also give something emotionally. *Informant A* sheds light on another interesting aspect, saying that working as a band musician or soloist requires completely different approaches. As a band musician, one can wholeheartedly put focus on supporting the artist without necessarily liking the music. The same is also pointed out by *Informant C*, and they also say that being a band musician alongside the soloist is a completely different thing. As a band musician, you lift, build up and adapt to the whole.

#### 4.6.1 Writing original music

When one writes music, it can be on several different premises and ambitions: composing commissioning work, writing music for other artists or record labels, writing hit songs, or creating music to be performed by oneself.

The most essential aspect, when it comes to writing music for oneself, is for the informants, that they follow's their heart when creating music.

*Informant C* says that when writing music, the focus is not of any particular target group, or becoming famous. They want to express themselves and touch people with their music, which also *Informant D* confirms, saying that it usually comes from a need to get something out. When *informant A* composes their own music, they do it because it is fun and for their own expression. It is one's own artistry that is the focus and the idea has never been to create a hit or get a record contract. *Informant F* highlights that they have no ambition in creating a hit that generates a massive profit and fame, but the informant writes music when they think the world should hear specific things. *Informant F* further tells that becoming a superstar is not an end in itself, but strives for a more international career, because the informant think's it is magical to be able to bring people together with the help of music, and also wants to develop musically and strive for new goals. However, *informant F* may sometimes have the premise that it should be listener-friendly, so one might get some songs on the radio, because their music can reach more people then.

*Informant E* has written a lot of their own music for a long time, and points out, similar to the other informants, that what they do always comes from the heart and that they are keen to be true to themselves. The informant says that it is probably more difficult financially to make a living from their own material than covers, but they do not think about profitability and instead follow their heart and their gut feeling. It must be genuine and if you sum up *informant E*'s opinion here, you can draw the conclusion that "*I must be in everything I do*".

#### 4.7 Grants and financial support from the Third Sector

There is no doubt that Finnish-Swedish cultural workers have a large amount of financial support from Finnish-Swedish funds and organizations. In March 2021, the most influential Finnish-Swedish fund, The Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland (Svenska Kulturfonden), distributed grants to approximately 1600 applicants and the total amount distributed was approximately 23 million Euros. Of this money, approximately 10.9 million Euros goes to the art and culture sector, according to their webarticle published 19.3.2021. (The Swedish Cultural Foundation, 2021).

For musicians who are granted funding, their activities can be made possible on a larger scale, for example, it will be much easier to write, record and publish their own material, arrange tours and various events, etc. with financial support.

Without exception, at some stage of their musician career, all informants in this study have received grants or financial support from various funds. The purposes for which grants have been received may vary, but mainly it seems to be grants for recordings, tours and events, concert series, and work grants.

Neither *informant A*, *B* or *C* have had a work grant, which may be because they did not apply for it or has simply not been granted one. However, they have received support from funds and organizations for other purposes.

*Informant A* says that they have received a certain starting grant for solo records produced, but have never applied for, for example, touring grants. An interesting aspect *A* highlights is that the big events that are arranged in Swedish-Finland are mostly financed by the funds, otherwise they would not be possible, and in these *informant A* is often involved. They say that financially, their business would probably have succeeded, despite the lack of fund money. *Informant B* has received grants, mainly from The Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland, on a number of occasions during their career. It has then been about specific tours or recordings. *B* states that it is not a question of large amounts of money if you spread out the sum over all the years that the informant has been active, but on the other hand they have also not applied so often for financial support, since the business has been profitable and succeeded, largely because the informant established themselves as a party/cover artist. *Informant B* says that they are grateful for all the contributions that have been received,

but that the activities would probably have succeeded even if the funds had not financed some of the projects. *Informant C* says they have not applied for a grant very often. They have always wanted a specific project or event in order to be able to apply for support, but in the last two years have been granted support. They have also applied to a Finnish fund this year, but never have before, because they weren't aware that they could do it. Overall, it does not seem to be very common for the informants interviewed thinking that they can apply for contributions from Finnish organizations/funds. *Informant C* points out that it is also about musical identity, since they mainly work with music as a side job and receive their main income from another branch, the informant has often thought that they cannot apply for a grant/financial support and points out that since they already have a stable income, the financial support from the third sector has not been a must in order to be able to engage in music. However, this does not mean that the informant would have done just as well without the support received, as, for example, recordings can be incredibly expensive to make.

Being awarded larger grants is important, as they generate peace of mind and enable much more extensive activities for cultural workers. For example, a larger grant can be a work grant, that allows the recipient to devote themselves to their activities and not have to worry about economic aspects.

*Informant D, E and F* have all been supported with work grants from the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland, *informant D* once and *informant E and F* twice. This means that during these years as a work grant, they have been able to make a living from music wholeheartedly. All three have also received financial support for various projects and recordings from the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland and other Finnish-Swedish funds or organizations. *Informant E* points out that they specifically would not have the same conditions, or even manage financially without contributions from funds and organizations, because they have specifically niched themselves, and do not make a living from anything other than music. *Informant E* further explains that they are seeking grants from all sorts of different organizations that are relevant for their niche.

*Informant F* claims to have received a lot of contributions from various funds over the years as an active musician, for which they are very grateful. The informant pointed out that several recordings were made financially possible with the help of third sector support,

even if they always had their own 'start-up money'. However, the contributions received have not paid the informants salary, but helped to carry out various projects. They have also received funding from Finnish funds e.g. for recordings, as well as musician contributions during the Corona pandemic. Furthermore, *informant F* says that it would hardly be possible to create music on this scale without the support of the third sector. *Informant D* says that in addition to the one-year work grant granted to them, some different project grants have also been received. In the years that they have not applied for support, the informant is almost always involved in various projects that have been partly financed with fund money.

*"I mean, if I don't apply, it's still... cultural fund money that ends up in my account."*

Since *Informant D* is a very hired and appreciated band musician in Swedish-Finland, it's natural that they are involved in other projects financed by funds, even if they themselves have not specifically applied for financial support. The informant also says that clearly The Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland and other Finnish-Swedish organizations have affected the amount of work that has been available and the job opportunities given. *Informant D* highlights that music life in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland would be completely different if the Finnish-Swedish funds didn't exist and couldn't support the cultural work. In society, there would be far fewer projects, concerts, tours, recordings and original music.

The fact that the Finnish-Swedish funds are involved in supporting culture is of course very good, says *informant A*, but they point out that it has also created a small distortion. They say that the state, the public sector and municipalities do not bear the responsibility they should for culture, because they rely on the funds to provide financial support. *Informant D* thinks similarly, about what cultural life would look like if there were a stop to finance from different organizations and funds.

All the informants are very grateful for the financial support they have received at some point over the years and say that it has been helpful in making different projects and recordings a reality. Several informants also highlight that the musical diversity and creativity that exists in Swedish-Finland would hardly be as visible, or abundant and high quality, if it were not for the Finnish-Swedish funds and organizations.

## 4.8 Making it as a musician in Swedish-Finland

In this chapter, I would like to highlight two things that have helped the informants in their musical careers, by presenting elements that have been specifically essential to them, but also general things that also apply to the wide mass of freelance musicians and that apply wherever one are, both geographically and linguistically and that have no specific genre orientation.

### 4.8.1 Networking in the “duck pond”

As I pointed out earlier, the musicians describe the Finnish-Swedish community of musicians as a small family. Still, all informants point out the importance of making connections. The music doesn't always speak for itself, so it is important to find the right contacts for further establishment or to stay on good terms with those you work with in order to be kept in the music circuit. Starting to establish contacts and working together with fellow students already as undergraduates is easy and can be worthwhile in the future, creating more opportunities. To create a network, *informant A* gives a concrete tip: if you have a specific project, dare to bring in one or two Finnish musicians, or if you are active in Vaasa, pick musicians from, for example, Helsinki. Then one suddenly has access to a much larger network of contacts among other musicians, and strategically it is also very smart because through this you also have access to the market in a different way (for example, geographically).

Since Finnish-Swedes often live in their bubble, it can sometimes be difficult to know how to get out of the duck pond. Maybe you won't find the contacts that you require and need advice on how to broaden your market or find platforms that are relevant to your music. *Informant E* highlights that there is help available as a freelance musician in this particular area through, for example, Music Finland, which can help you with these very aspects.

Sometimes life might serve you something on a silver platter, but it hardly happens to anyone for their whole life. You need to work on the knowledge of your craft at all times to maintain or improve the level and the same also applies to networking, something that *Informant E* highlights. They highlight the importance of working hard and boldly, hatching

ideas and making connections. *Informant F* has clearly done this in practical ways, by living in different places in Finland, which has been perceived as helpful in broadening the network and gaining visibility.

#### 4.8.2 Visibility

For people to know who you are and what kind of music you offer, they need to see you in different ways. You can be seen in different ways and in different contexts, and the verbal reputation that spreads between people is often very important, because it gives a picture of you, the way you work and the ways in which you can be involved, in hands-on situations. Most informants say that a well-conducted job, let's say a performance at a small club, could directly lead to two or three new jobs, because you have done a well-performed performance and people have seen your work. For simplicity, one can say that visibility breeds more work. If people are happy and satisfied with the effort that you have made as musicians/soloist, your reputation spreads and you are recommended by others, spreading ripples on the water. *Informant F* tells that, for example, jam sessions have led to involvement in other projects and *informant D* says that a simple jam session led to them being hired as a band musician for one of Finland's best-selling female artists. According to *informant A* a well-done job can often yield two to three new assignments.

Visibility is much easier today with the help of social media. Wherever you are in the world, you can be seen on any screen, or people will look you up, if you have, for example, a website, Youtube channel, or a profile on Facebook and Instagram. This makes it much easier to connect and reach out with the music, and these channels can even be likened to a CV and a business card. Of course, it takes a lot of commitment, to keep the pages up to date and to get people to find your profile. *Informant B* tells that at the start of their career they called around and booked gigs, sent out material (at the time VHS cassettes, because social media was not available as today) with an overview of the entire product, i.e. live situations with both image and sound, because organizers often want to see the big picture. The informant plus *informant E* and *F* are all active on social media, e.g. on Youtube, Instagram, Facebook and with their own website. At least for *Informant F*'s part, it has generated more visibility and establishment. It has paid off, given gigs and also created



international contacts. If you look at the situation from another decade, when social media didn't matter as much as it does at present, or where the same availability simply did not exist, *informant A* says that they had a Finnish agent, who helped book gigs in the Finnish part of Finland and get the original music out, which they found very helpful, because they did not have all the necessary contacts or knowledge to do this.

If you connect visibility with the Finnish-Swedish media, you can quite quickly see that it is relatively easy to get a record review or an article about an event in one of the existing newspapers, or get your own music on a Finnish-Swedish radio station. In Swedish-Finland, as mentioned earlier, it is relatively easy to make contacts and this also applies to the media. If you compare this with the Finnish media, you can see that it is much more difficult to get into the playlists on Finnish radio channels, for example. On the other hand, as a Finnish-Swedish musician you are usually not as established all over the country, and that means, the competition is much greater and the field is full of different artists and genres, competing for visibility.

#### 4.9 Is the music teacher a second-rate musician?

As I wrote in my introduction, this is something that I have also thought about a little, because of the "myth" that has flourished. For some reason, despite my planned interview questions, the question became sidelined and only two informants accessed it. It happened that it was *informant A* and *D* who answered the question. Nevertheless, I would like to raise the issue, because the few answers that emerged feel important and relevant. As a young adult, having to choose a direction either as a musician or as a music teacher at the early beginning of the study path can be difficult. You may not have a thought about how to make a living from music in future when you choose the direction of becoming a musician. Someone may choose to study teaching and do not have an overall picture of what is required. Life is much more complex than that and you need to understand that there can be different scenarios that can arise, from family situations to pandemics, that we have recently experienced. In Ostrobothnia, it is something of a reality that you should either work part-time with something else or teach besides freelancing to support oneself financially, something that *informant D* highlights. They are almost a little taken aback by

the question, as they have not experienced this certain prejudice before. They state that they have always taught music, and find the myth frightening. When *informant A* hears my question, they laugh and say that it may be true in some cases, but insists that life is more complex than that and says that at a certain age a family might also come into the picture:

*"If I hadn't a family and children, I wouldn't have had to teach even an hour".*

*Informant A* thinks further and asks themselves if they would have been a finer and better musician at the time, and says that you can't think like that. In Swedish-Finland, most people also work as pedagogues and the informant is clear about that they do not agree with the prejudice.

#### 4.10 Discussion

From my interviews I have gained an interesting insight into the different identities that have been highlighted, which I will present more of in this next chapter. Although the basis of the investigation is not large enough given the number of informants, I will now try to summarize my thoughts, based on previous literature that has been written on the subject, and by reviewing, reflecting and analyzing the informants answers.

To be able to work as a freelance musician and artist in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland, without support from the Third Sector, you need to have many strings to your bow, and be versatile in various aspects, meaning that your music skills have to be broad. Even if you are all that, it's seldom financially feasible, considering that you may also have a family to support financially, which means that many musicians in Swedish-Finland also often teach at the same time, to some extent, or have obtained a completely different job. You may not work as a music teacher full time, but probably in a certain percentage.

For those musicians, who have specialized in certain areas, it can be difficult to get the economy going without support from the Third Sector. All of the informants have received some kind of support from the Third Sector, and three of them have received work grants from the Third Sector, which provides for them for an entire year. If the Third Sector didn't

offer support, hardly as many high-quality productions would be available, especially in the quantity that now exists.

## 5 Conclusions

Before presenting the conclusions that have emerged during this study, it feels relevant to present the overall purpose and research questions again: the purpose of this thesis is to explore professional musicians work patterns by showing the diversity of different models that musicians have created for themselves as a way to make a living as a rhythm musician in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland, and to show how it may be for the Finnish-Swedish rhythm musicians working in the Finnish-speaking parts of Finland and internationally. The research questions are: 1. Which pathways have musicians chosen career wise and how are they linked to the working conditions for live musicians that exist in the Swedish-speaking regions in Finland and the musicians interest in music teaching? 2. What different types of musicians can be identified based on the choices and positions chosen by the musicians and how can these be described?

Trying to categorize musical identities isn't always that easy. At some stage they might merge, or musicians can shift and go between categories. However, it is important to point out that there are different ways of making a living in music and that there are different paths and orientations you can take, as well as how you act as a Finnish-Swedish freelance rhythm musician.

My intention is not, with these categories or the work itself, to place different musicians or their musical identity in a hierarchical relationship with each other based on an economic or cultural value. In my study, all musicians and different musical identities are valued equally highly.

The research questions I will be answering now are, in one way or another, interconnected, and in order to make it easy to understand, I will first answer question 2.

The different musical identities and profiles I have identified during this study, may look like this, although it must be a bit general and simplified:

1. **The Specialist.** This is the musician who specializes in their own music and creation, and who makes a living mainly from gigs as well as support from the third sector and various assignments from organizations/funds, that support their own special knowledge and that allows them to work within their own cutting-edge expertise. Here, authenticity and one's own creation are the focus. From the very beginning of their career, there has been a strong focus on their niche in music and creating music and their cutting-edge expertise has developed over the years. Here, the importance of being genuine and true to oneself is the aim. Makes a living mainly and perhaps only from music.
2. **The multi-tasker,** who does a bit of everything and has a broad based business that includes everything from original music, soloist and cover gigs, arranging, various projects and productions, including teaching. Is musically broad and knowledgeable and can afford to turn down things that are of little interest. The musicians active in this category can be classified both as soloists and band musicians and have since early in their career worked in Swedish-Finland, the Finnish part of Finland and a little bit internationally. As the years go by and they get older, they are mainly active in Swedish-Finland (duck pond) and that is often a conscious choice, for example due to life situations and the fact that one has already had time to establish oneself. They are not afraid to take on challenges and connect music in different ways, and also see the opportunities to develop themselves. Although they possess a wide range of musical craftsmanship, they often also have a cutting-edge expertise in some music fields. Works primarily as freelancers and as music teachers and not in any other industry.
3. **The (semi) Entertainer.** A musician who makes a living mainly from cover/party music, and who has no problem adapting to the audience and repertoire. Those people who could be placed in this category may have made minimal original music compared to the other categories, or nothing at all, mainly because it is not their main focus. They can engage with all kinds of concert activities and different projects, as far as their skills allow. Is socially gifted and finds it easy to connect with

the outside world and create long-lasting business relationships. Does not need to be a fully educated musician, but still possesses great musical skills and perhaps at some stage gains an education in music teaching. Such a person may not have any problem working with a completely different profession, part-time or full-time, because of the freelance work that is often their main focus in some cases.

4. **The one who does a little bit of everything.** This musician might do some cover gigs, makes a living from original music and participate in various projects. The person in this area is broad, but not as broad as the multi-tasker and is usually seen as a soloist in most contexts, although they can also work as a band musician. A musician active here can at the same time be seen as a mix between the three other categories. There are many similarities in this category compared to the multi-tasker, but age can be seen as variable, while the persons placed in this compartment does not have as many strings to their bows as the multi-tasker. Age-wise, it could be pointed out that relatively young musicians who build a steady career and regularly develop and create ground for their music could belong to this category. The musicians here make a living mainly from freelancing, perhaps teaching a little bit and sometimes work small-scale or part-time in a completely different industry.

If one analyzes the descriptions above, answers to the first research question are also revealed to some extent. If someone wants to work as a musician in Swedish-Finland, one cannot escape from the reality that the possibility to do only live gigs, for example, is far too limited to be able to support oneself (and perhaps a family) financially for a lifetime. This in turn leads to teaching music on the side, or working in a completely different field.

The informants in the study point out that the teaching profession is meaningful and it emerges that they also enjoy it. The myth that I raised at the beginning must be rejected after having heard the informants musical identities. As several of the informants have said or also specifically pointed out, most have had a clear view that at some stage you may need to teach or work with something else and it can be due to many different reasons; it can be for private reasons such as family, pandemics that do not enable concert activities, or the fact that Swedish-Finland is a duck pond and if you want to make a living only from

music, you may also need to teach at some stage. And as *informant A* highlighted earlier, they would not have been a finer musician without the teaching work.

It turns out that the informants in the study have positioned themselves or are positioned in Swedish-Finland, but also to a certain extent both in the Finnish part of Finland and internationally. This applies to all the above categories, and this is in accordance with Brusila's (see chapter 2.3, 10), which mentions that many Finnish-Swedish musicians have positioned themselves in what he calls the Middle circle (*Brackvattnet*).

In fact, only two of the informants in this study are striving for a larger establishment internationally. This follows Brusila's assertion, that some musicians aspire to a position in the Outer Circle that may be the Finnish, Swedish or international sphere (see chapter 2.3, 10), and I would like to refine it a little bit more since I, after the interviews and my analysis of the data collection, dare to say that many musicians are satisfied to be active in Swedish-Finland, or in a position in the Middle Circle. Not every musician aspires to be famous, many strive to touch and reach out with their music to as many people as possible. The word success (or becoming famous) can also express and involve several different aspects: one can make headlines, become famous and have a great fan base, but that doesn't necessarily mean that everyone who succeeds does. There are many extremely skilled and sought-after musicians who thrive best in the shadows, but are successful in the sense that they have a lot of work and people who want to play alongside them and can, in fact, live on the music. In my opinion it is possible to manage financially in The Core, which Brusila explains as small-scaled and with own original material (see chapter 2.3, 10). He is right in his description, but I would like to refine it a bit further since there are also some musicians making a living economically in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland (i.e the "duck pond") on troubadour and wedding gigs. However, these musicians are not heard about in the media, since they usually go under the radar and are not noticed for their gigs.

I note that it is advantageous to be bilingual in Finland. If I can make a generalization regarding the musical activity in Finnish-Finland for "Finnish-Swedes", it seems easier to get a hold in these areas if one is involved as a band musician with a domestic artist, than to try to enter the Finnish market as a Finnish-Swedish vocalist. I dare say that in such cases

music should be made in Finnish in order to be of interest to the Finnish audience and the music industry in the Finnish-speaking part of Finland.

Finally, I would argue that a musical identity can change several times in a lifetime. Humans are complex in nature, and are unknowingly affected by events that are reflected in the course of life. We are met with joy, sorrow, crises and happiness. People and encounters influence us daily and sometimes life is fraught with unexplained events, which in one way or another shape us both consciously and subconsciously.

## 6 Personal reflections

I started doing music from primary school and my first real instrument was the trumpet, with a classical focus. As I got older, I began to become more and more interested in singing, and at some stage my main instrument was replaced with rhythm singing. In high school, when you start to shape your identity more, I saw myself in a profession that had to do with music. Immediately after high school, my professional studies in music began, and I graduated as a singer/musician. What I hadn't understood in my younger years, nor in the three years I studied music full-time, was what it actually meant.

To move immediately after high school, with its tight schedule and clear structure, to a direction that is not only not your hobby, but which will also become your profession, was in many ways transformative. As a relatively immature 16-year-old, I had many advantages. Improvising, for example, I did not see as an obstacle, but happily threw myself in, to for me, the unexplored area, when a teacher asked me to do so. I found a great joy in making music and especially being able to sing full-time. But the negative aspects, for my relatively immature self, were that I perhaps did not fully understand how to progress as a musician, although of course it improved as the years progressed. When I reflect back on my three years as a student, it grieves me that I didn't get to grips with my own practice to improve my craft.

I liked the subjects in music, but since my study path started immediately after high school, I also needed to study general subjects such as mathematics and Finnish, which was done at another vocational school, and which probably went quite well. The idea was that the

general subjects would bring us benefits in our future profession and touch on specific areas for us. The disappointment was great when, as a single girl, I was in the Finnish class with 20 guys, whose major was in the construction industry. We learned how to say water ceilings, hammers and concepts that the guys might need in Finnish, but when would I, as an aspiring musician, benefit from it? My motivation quickly failed, and I did what was expected of me, but nothing more. If I had received the specific teaching I needed, maybe I wouldn't have had to work as hard to learn Finnish later?

Immediately after my 3-year education, I applied to study to be a music teacher. At this stage I was more mature, and at least knew a little about how I could set up my studies and my own practice, although it got better and better the older I got and the longer the studies progressed. But I had also discovered the competition and sometimes suffered from a failing self-confidence, which I think is very common, especially among singers, because music can be so personal and one's own voice so very private. Looking back during this time, I wish I would have known more about what it is like to be active as a musician in Swedish-Finland and what you need to think about in order to make a living from music. I did my own music and sang covers and probably already as a student had a pretty good field as a freelance musician in The Core, but had no knowledge on what is now apparent in my work.

It is by no means the fault of the educators that it did not come up much, maybe because I simply did not dare to think about it and was afraid to examine myself, and think about what I most want to do, how I wanted to work and what I wanted to achieve with my music.

At the moment, I'm really happy with how I'm doing. I get to teach and meet people, make some music of my own and also get to perform and meet listeners.

For my part, I can say that I needed to mature both personally and musically in order to form an identity in music, and that I now feel confident in what I do and do not feel that it needs to be any other way. You walk along a path and it takes as long as it takes.

With this work, I hope to help someone along the way and contribute some information about what it is like to be active as a professional musician especially in Swedish-Finland, and give some information and thoughts about which way you want to go and what your goal is.



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## Consent of participation in research

The aim on the master's thesis is to study the working conditions of a freelance musician in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland. The study is conducted as semi-structured interviews with musicians working in the field. The interviewer and author of the thesis, Christine Sten, is enrolled at Novia University of Applied Sciences (Master of Culture and Arts, Entrepreneurship in the Arts; Music, Media & Marketing) and it is a part of her studies. The thesis is supervised by PhD Kaj Ahlsved.

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed by Christine Sten and kept in her possession. No outside party will have access to the recordings or the transcriptions. The answers will be treated anonymously in the thesis, but gender, work experience and music orientation can be named. Direct quotes may be used.

Information about this master's thesis has been provided and **you hereby give your consent to participate in the study**. Participation is voluntary and can be terminated at any time, without specific reasons.

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**I agree to participate in Christine Sten's master's thesis research according to the terms presented above.**

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Name

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Name Clarification

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Date and Place