

## Transformation Music Mediation as a Game Changer

With the fourth issue of the International Journal of Music Mediation (IJMM), we turn our attention to a topic that has gained increasing urgency in recent years: transformation. Across societal, cultural, technological, and political domains, profound changes are reshaping not only the ways in which music is created, performed, and experienced, but also the roles of musicians, institutions, and audiences. Against this backdrop, music mediation is increasingly discussed as a practice that does not merely accompany change, but actively contributes to it on artistic, organizational, and societal levels.

The contributions in this issue are rooted in the international conference Transformation – Music Mediation as a Game Changer, held in 2025 at the Bruckner University in Linz (Austria), complemented by further submissions responding to the open call. Together, they explore transformation as an open-ended process that unfolds across micro, meso, and macro levels, connecting individual artistic experiences with structural developments in cultural institutions. Rather than approaching transformation as a goal-oriented or measurable outcome, the contributions emphasize its contingent, emergent character and the role of collaborative practices in enabling change.

- Nina Paul and Gina Emerson open the issue with a research article on "unconventional" concert formats in classical music. Based on qualitative interviews with artistic directors and managers, the authors provide insight into how such formats are conceptualized and implemented. Their analysis reveals a "friendly revolution" and highlights festivals as innovative players in the field of classical music.
- Beat Fehlmann, Lydia Grün, Annemarie Mitterbäck, Irena Müller-Brozović, Hans Georg Nicklaus, Anke Schad-Spindler, and Norbert Trawöger present a reflection on practice that documents a panel discussion on future scenarios for the music sector in 2035. Drawing on perspectives from artistic practice, academia, and cultural policy, the contribution addresses questions of structural change, digitalization, diversity, and resource allocation. It positions music mediation as a fundamental attitude that can shape institutional cultures and foster resilience in times of transformation.

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- Beat Fehlmann further develops these considerations in his individual contribution on change management in orchestral contexts. Based on his experience in organizational leadership, he proposes a participatory model that focuses on co-created structures, shared responsibility, and transparent processes. Music mediation is conceptualized here as a strategy for intra-organizational transformation, influencing decision-making processes, concepts of quality, and organizational culture.
  - Manuela Kloibmüller, Judith McGregor, and Dagmar Schinnerl address transformation processes in music schools. In their jointly authored reflection, they discuss how music mediation can contribute to the further development of music school practices in response to changing expectations. Their exchange highlights the importance of hybrid professional roles and emphasizes the potential of music mediation to act as a catalyst for innovation within music education institutions.
  - Esther Adrian focuses on higher music education and academic continuing education as sites of transformation. Her contribution examines boundary-spanning practices that connect different professional fields and institutional logics. By analysing specific programs, she shows how music mediation can facilitate shifts in professional identities and practices while also pointing to structural limitations.
  - Nazfar Hadji explores participatory music mediation in the project Sound of Silence, which centres on empowering women through collaborative artistic processes. The contribution highlights how collective creation, self-expression, and shared authorship can foster agency and inclusivity. At the same time, it demonstrates how music mediation can create spaces for dialogue and social engagement that extend beyond the artistic process itself.
  - Katharina von Radowitz introduces Escape Music Mediation; an interactive workshop format developed within the conference context. Using a game-based approach, participants are invited to collaboratively address challenges in the music sector and to reflect on their own potential for action. The contribution illustrates how playful and experimental formats can open up new perspectives on transformation and support creative problem-solving processes.
  - The issue concludes with a book review by Nina Paul, who discusses *Kompetenzzentrum für Musik: Ein Zukunftsmodell für professionelle Orchester* by Beat Fehlmann. The review situates the publication within current debates on organizational transformation and highlights its relevance for both research and practice in music mediation.
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Taken together, the contributions in this issue foreground music mediation as a practice that connects artistic processes with structural change. They show that transformation in the music sector is not limited to the development of new formats, but involves a broader rethinking of relationships, roles, and institutional frameworks. In this sense, music mediation emerges not only as a field of practice, but also as a perspective through which ongoing transformations in music and society can be critically examined and actively shaped.

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