

Grytsje

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Dear students,

My name is Evert Bisschop Boele. I am professor (in Dutch: ‘lector’) of Arts Education in the research group of this conservatoire, a research group called Lifelong Learning in Music. In the research group, several of your teachers work on various research projects. Often, students are involved as well. Our research is about your future. About, as our Dean puts it on the front page of our website: ‘musicians who can make a difference in our society’.

I invite you to come with me to an ordinary day of an ordinary person called Grytsje. [sings:] “Wednesday morning at five o'clock as the day begins” she gets up, or, as she will later write in her diary: [sings] “Woke up, fell out of bed, dragged a comb across my head.” She then eats breakfast, listening to the news alternated with not-too-interruptive pop music on the radio. Then she drives to work in her car playing one of her favourite car CDs. At work she talks with some colleagues about the Voice of Holland which she saw last Friday, over lunch she reads a bit of gossip about the breasts of Miley Cyrus, and in the evening she watches a Hugh Grant/Julia Roberts feel-good movie with a highly syncretic music score. She falls asleep, as every night, with Andre Rieu playing on her alarm clock in slumber mode, and dreams about having an affair with Ed Sheeran.

Grytsje, you will have understood by now, leads a highly musical life, as nearly everyone in this beautiful country called the Netherlands. So never believe people who are pessimistic about the role of music in our society. Music is more present than ever before. And that is an opportunity.

The fact that every average week in the city of Groningen alone, one hundred and fifty public music concerts are organized of which two thirds is accessible for free should not make you pessimistic. Your concern should be how to hook up with all those music makers and music lovers out there, to figure out what your personal place is among them, to join forces with unexpected allies, to contribute to this dazzling musical world we live in.

That is a very personal quest, and something your teachers can not teach you.

Keep in mind that if you spend more time in this building than outside of it, and more time on your own than with other people, something is very wrong.

I hope you will develop into musicians musician who, each in her own very individual way, wants to be meaningful to Grytsje and many others. I hope we, the conservatoire, may contribute to that in some way, and I hope that the work of our research group may generate examples of meaningful musical practices for times to come.

Remember to make sure that this building does not become your world, but that the world turns into your building, your home.

So: welcome in this building. But especially, in spite of the extensive and expensive renovation of this building, I would like to say to you: welcome **outside** of this building. Share your talents, and move this world that so desperately needs you.

I wish you a pleasant and fruitful year.