

The world we live in

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My name is Evert Bisschop Boele. I am a professor in Arts Education and also the leading professor of the Research Centre Arts & Society; and interim professor of the research group Music in Context.

I am sure you have lost me completely by now.

So normally, I would go on to explain what all that means. How it works. I would show you some diagrams. I would convince you that it is all extremely important. But I am not going to do that. Not after such a wonderful weekend. The Dutch soccer team beat Montenegro! Max Verstappen beat the rest of the world!

Especially not because my audience is a bunch of music students. Surely you want to get on with your business: music. So let me, instead, just say something about our music 'business'. It is a business which is extremely important. I never met anyone who is not, in one way or another, occupied with music. People listen to music, sing music, play music, buy music, lend music, steal music... Just to quote a colleague: people use music while "dancing, singing (and singing along), playing (and playing along), working, persuading, drinking and eating, doing aerobics, taking drugs, playing air guitar, traveling, protesting, seducing, waiting on the telephone, sleeping... the list is endless".

The world is, literally, your playing ground. And the idea of this conservatoire is to prepare you. Not just for music, or the music business. But basically for the world. The World We Live In. Which is, by the way, also the name of a beautiful project. Started by three of our former students. It may be an inspiration for many of you. Check them out, if you can. The World We Live In.

Now this world of ours has been quite chaotic those past years. And it will remain chaotic in many ways, I guess. I am of course talking about Corona. And it is so great to be able to be together again. Because the world we live in is, above all, a community of real people of flesh and blood.

But I am also talking about Afghanistan. About George Floyd and Black Lives Matter. About gender issues. About climate change. And I just want to say to you: that is also what the music business is about. It's about beauty, about craftsmanship, about aesthetics, about quality. And it is about the big questions. About life and death, war and peace, inclusion, sustainability, dialogue. About this world we live in. And how we, as musicians, contribute to that world.

As a professor I am, with many colleagues including many of your teachers, responsible for doing research. Our research, in the research group Art Education as well as the research group Music in Context, is precisely about that. About how we, as a community of musicians, contribute to the world we live in. In thousands of ways. Just to make it a more liveable, more beautiful place.

It is great to be together again as the community of this conservatoire. I look forward to work another year, together with this whole community, for that even wider community called 'the world'. And I hope you will not forget, in between or while studying your instrument, your theory,

your didactics and pedagogics, your conducting and composing and producing, to open the windows and look out.

To remind yourself that what you are working on is not only *your* music, but also *our* world.