

The Denniz PoP Model: Core Leadership Skills in Music Production as Learning Outcomes in Higher Education

David Thyré, Jan-Olof Gullö, and Peter Schyborger
Royal College of Music, Stockholm

This paper was presented at the [2020 International Summit](#) of the
Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association
October 2-3, 2020

<https://doi.org/10.25101/20.32>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUfZfrHIXPU>

Abstract

Over the last two decades, many Swedish songwriters and music producers have been internationally successful. During this time, more and more students in Swedish higher education have studied music production and other courses with music in combination with design and new media technology. In this research project searching for *Sophia in music production* we study how various aspects, including the development of the music and media industry as well as individual initiatives, have contributed to the growing Swedish export of music. The term Sophia refers to ancient Greek knowledge typology and is used to summarize the theoretical framework of the project. Sophia is understood as wisdom, or sagacity, and can be described as the ability to think and act using knowledge, experience, understanding, and reason. Previous research clearly shows a variety of competences that are demonstrated and needed among musicians, music producers, and others active in the art of music production. Leadership is a very important aspect of music production and that's why we explore what we can learn from Denniz PoP's (1963-1998) leadership when he collaborated with his closest colleagues, and multiple award-winning songwriter/producer Max Martin. The empirical source material includes interviews as well as radio and television programs, literature, and an extensive inventory of Swedish music industry and consumer magazines. The results include a seven-step model for music production but also indicate that Denniz PoP's true expertise was his ability to make others in a team grow and perform well. That which best characterizes that form of expert knowledge can certainly be described in many ways. Core characteristics appear to be thoughtfulness combined with both creative ability and perseverance as well as a sense of order

and discipline, aspects that may be very challenging to fully implement as learning outcomes in music production education.

Keywords: Denniz PoP, higher education, leadership, Max Martin, music production, songwriting, Swedish music

Introduction

Although Sweden is a small country with just over 10 million inhabitants, Swedish music exports have been very successful for many years (Burnett and Wikström 2006; Portnoff 2015; Musiksverige 2018; Norberg and Wiberg 2019). There are several factors that have contributed to the export successes and over the few years we have been working in the research project: *Searching for Sophia in music production*. We study how various aspects linked to music production have contributed to the Swedish music industry international achievements.

Educational programs in music production are available in Swedish higher education since the early 1980s (Gullö and Thyré 2019). Since then, major changes have taken place in the surrounding society including how music is produced, distributed, and consumed. Higher education has also changed a great deal through various reforms, e.g., the adaptation to the Bologna Declaration (1999) which has been of great importance for higher education in many European countries. In all education, there are many different traditions, i.e., ideas of customs, different views, languages, and values for how education is to be carried out and what values are part of the cultural and social heritage that is consciously or unconsciously handed over to new generations of students. In professional activities, such as songwriting and music production, different forms of knowledge transfer between people also takes place in a similar way. Although there is a reasonable difference between how such knowledge transfer takes place in formal and informal learning situations, it is of great interest, for us researchers interested in learning about artistic activities in music,

to study how learning and knowledge transfer takes place among professionals.

In the *Searching for Sophia in music production* project a team of researchers study various formal and informal learning processes connected to education in higher education in artistic aspects of music in general and music production specifically. Previous research clearly shows a variety of competences that are used and needed among musicians, music producers, and others active in the art of music production (Burgess 2013, 2014; Frith and Zagorski-Thomas 2012; Gullö et al. 2015; Gullö et al. 2019; Gullö and Thyrén 2019; Gullö 2020; Harding 2010, 2020; Hatschek and Beseda 2014; Hepworth-Sawyer and Golding 2011; Howlett 2009; Zagorski-Thomas 2014). Many Swedish music producers and songwriters compose and produce songs for international artists. Furthermore, many Swedish artists have followed after ABBA's international breakthrough in the mid-seventies. Over the last decades several Swedish artists and producers have succeeded internationally, for example Roxette, Ace of Base, First Aid Kit, Swedish House Mafia, Avicii, and Max Martin (Norberg and Wiberg 2019). Our own previous studies show that many of the Swedish and Nordic international successful songwriters, musicians, and music producers have more of an informal background than a scholastic formal education and many of them also show well-nurtured leadership qualities. Therefore, it is especially interesting for us to study those who have succeeded in the music industry without formal education.

In this paper we have chosen to focus on the leadership skills of the successful Swedish music producer Denniz PoP (Dag Krister Volle, 1963-1998) and what typified in his leadership when he collaborated with his closest colleagues, including multiple award-winning song-writer and producer Max Martin. The main reason why we have chosen to focus on Denniz PoP is that the working methods and attitudes he had in his work as a music producer, which he also passed on to many of his colleagues, indeed may have contributed to the success of Swedish music exports. Furthermore, we also have found that most of his music producer strategies, including leadership skills, working methods, and attitudes are mainly unknown to most of those who did not have a direct insight into the music production activities of Denniz PoP. In addition, many of the methods and attitudes that Denniz PoP introduced during his short but successful career, also seem to have worked well for the next generation of Swedish music producers, several of whom have achieved great international success.

The purpose of this study is therefore to analyze how Denniz PoP's music producer strategies, including leadership qualities, can contribute to new knowledge and a deeper understanding of the Swedish music exports and how different experiences from the results of this study can be applied

in higher music education with a focus on music production. Our overall research question in this paper is: *How can music producer strategies, including leadership qualities, that can be identified among professionals such as Denniz PoP be transferred into valid learning outcomes in higher education with a focus on music and music production?* Other research questions we have used in this study are: *What are the similarities and differences between Denniz PoP's working methods and what is described in previous research and other relevant literature?* and: *What significance did Denniz PoP have, during and after his lifetime, for Swedish music exports and how and to what extent are the working methods and strategies that Denniz PoP established still used among now active Swedish music producers?* In this paper, however, we have chosen to focus on the first research question, and since this is an ongoing project, we will return to the second and third research questions in more detail in future work.

Theoretical Considerations, Methodology, and Disposition

Teaching in higher music education, as in many other educational contexts, is targeted at an overall level for the students to learn and thereby change through genuine knowledge development. This can be done in many different ways, such as changing the perceptions of the learner and helping the learner to see new perspectives (Bruner 1996, 2009). However, artistic education, including education in music production, often include training skills where extensive practice is required before the learner achieves genuine knowledge development and the ability to see new perspectives (Holgersson 2011). Therefore, it can be challenging to find theoretical models that can be used to analyze education based on artistic practice.

Learning occurs through interaction and dialogue between people but also with the help of mediating tools (Vygotsky 1962, 1978). The term mediating tools stands for the mental and physical tools that people use in their relationship with the surrounding world to solve problems, to remember, to perform duties and to think. Musical works as well as curricula are good examples of mediating tools. Whether these tools are tangible or intangible they are created by people and executed. The meaning and function of a tool depends on the context in which it occurs. And, in this project, we aim to identify mediating tools in music production activities related to the research questions posed.

We also use a model based on three main ways of analyzing learning and teaching in higher education (Biggs and Tang 2011, 16 ff.). The first way is to focus on who the students are, the differences between students and to investigate whether they are good or not. Pedagogy is characterized by this approach of conveying knowledge and in-

formation and by evaluating how good the students learn and when students don't learn is it due to something the students are lacking? The second way is to focus on what teachers do. Then, according to Biggs and Tang, there is a risk that a lot of attention will be paid to what methods are used in the teaching, while the teacher then becomes solely responsible for whether the teaching really works or not. A third way can instead be to focus on what students do and how they relate to teaching: what is it that the students are to learn and what are the intended or desirable outcomes of their learning? Another important question is: what does it mean for students to "understand" content in the way that is stipulated in the intended learning outcomes? With such an approach, the teacher's task will be to support the students in their learning by asking what kind of teaching and learning activities are required to achieve those stipulated levels of understanding? These three questions frame why this, the third step in Biggs' and Tang's model, has been particularly valuable in the analysis of the empirical material in this study.

Music production education that primarily focuses on an individual based perspective may be problematic. Instead, previous research show that networks, culture, and teamwork are important explanatory factors for successful music productions (Gullö and Thyren 2019). An entrepreneurial skill, that concerns the leadership conducted in music production, is how different aspects of leadership result in good teamwork and how groups interact and strive towards set up goals (Goleman 2011). Previous research indicates five factors, proposed by Edmondson (2012), that can be identified in a strong team: 1) *psychological security*, where members present ideas and know that their mistakes will be accepted; 2) *reliability*, where members trust each other; 3) *structure and clarity*, where the goals, roles and planning are clear in the team; 4) *meaningfulness*, where all members of the group feel that their contributions as individuals and as a group are important to the result; 5) *make a difference*, where members truly feel that their work contributes to the common good of the team. This theory has also been important for the analysis of the collected empirical material in this study. Our interpretation of such processes in strong teams is that individuals who belong to a strong team, e.g., a songwriting and music producer team, firstly, are likely to stay in the group. And secondly that they through their teamwork, have acquired a well-developed ability to listen to others' ideas. As a result, the team receives good responses from clients and other people outside the team.

In this project, we combine different methodological approaches (Thyren 2017; Gullö and Thyren 2018, 2019; Gullö, Gardemar, Holgersson, Thyren, and Westman 2019). One important source of information is through qualitative interviews, conversations, and communication with

colleagues and friends of Denniz PoP (Dag Krister Volle, 1963-1998). This presents delicate ethical considerations, since some of the informants are sensitive towards exposure and want to remain anonymous. Needless to say, we have consented to their wishes and in consequence all informants are being anonymized in the study (Säfström 2017).

We also make good use of our transcriptions from Fredrik Eliasson's radio programs on Swedish Radio P4: *Cheiron – en Popsaga* (originally broadcast in 2008 and rebroadcast on July 5, 2015) and *Arvet efter Cheiron – en oändlig historia med Max Martin* (broadcast on April 26, 2014). Additional sources of streaming media are a *ZTV Special* documentary on Denniz PoP, which was aired in the autumn of 1998, as well as the 2017 documentary *The Legacy of Denniz PoP* by his son Daniel Volle (born 1987). Both documentaries are available on YouTube. In addition to this, we have also made good use of a documentary series that was broadcast by the Swedish national public service broadcaster SVT in 2019: *Det svenska popundret [The Swedish pop wonder]* (Norberg and Wiberg 2019).

An extensive inventory of published sources in the form of Swedish music business and consumer magazines from the relevant period and beyond is a vital part of our empirical material. The magazines examined are as follows: *Musikermagasinet* [annual volumes 1985-2000], *Musikindustrin* [annual volumes 1998-2002], *Schlager* [annual volumes 1980-1985], *Showtime* [annual volumes 1981-1990], *SKAP-Nytt* [annual volumes 1990-2000] *Slitz* [annual volumes 1986-1996] and *STIM-Magasinet* [annual volumes 1980-2000]. Beyond that, we have also examined relevant articles on Denniz PoP, Max Martin, Shellback, Cheiron, and Maratone in daily papers such as *Aftonbladet*, *Blekinge Läns Tidning*, *Commersen*, and *Expressen*, as well as Niklas Natt och Dag's article on Denniz PoP in *King Magazine*, and Jan Gradvall's exclusive articles on Max Martin and Shellback in *Café* and *Dagens Industri*.

Literature studies of various kinds are also part of the project. In the field of musicology, we mainly use the book *Made in Sweden: Studies in popular music* on Routledge Global Popular Music Series, edited by Alf Björnberg and Thomas Bossius (2017), as well as *Det svenska musikundret 75 år – Från Winter till vår tid* (Andersson and Elmquist 2001). We have also studied Jenny Berggren's biography *Vinna hela världen* (2009), which gives a valuable insight into the dealings of the enormously successful band Ace of Base.

The following report from our case study on Denniz PoP is based on the conclusions from the source material described above. The information presented has been carefully cross-checked with various independent sources. For ethical reasons, we have chosen not to report in detail on those sources that are behind each individual part of the description of

the results in the following text. After the description of the results from our case study on Denniz PoP follows a discussion where we have chosen to highlight selected aspects of the experiences we have gained and knowledge we have gathered during this study. As this work is part of a larger ongoing project, it is far from complete. And we will follow up this paper with in-depth analyzes in future presentations.

Denniz PoP – A Case Study of a Swedish Music Producer

Denniz PoP (Dag Volle) was born in Botkyrka on the 26th of April 1963. His family, including parents and older sister, emanated from Norway but moved to Sweden and settled down in Tullinge, a suburban villa town south of the Swedish capital Stockholm. It was a typical middle-class family. The father worked as an engineer and the mother was a housewife. Denniz PoP, known as *Dagge* to his friends, developed a keen ear for music early on, and he especially enjoyed British glam rockers Sweet and American funk acts such as George Clinton, Bootsy Collins, and James Brown. He soon started to build up a record collection and preferred singles rather than LP's. Denniz PoP never learned to play a traditional instrument and had no formal music education. He did try out the obligatory recorder at school but felt indifferent towards the instrument. He found it quite boring and quickly rejected it.

Denniz PoP's Early Career as a DJ

As a teenager, Denniz PoP started to perform as a disc jockey in the local youth center in Tullinge. He enjoyed it tremendously and found it most rewarding. While his mother and sister supported this interest in music, the father was not amused and expected his son to focus on his education in order to graduate in economics or engineering. That would not be the case. Instead, Denniz PoP expanded his activities as a DJ, and worked in several clubs in the Stockholm area and occasionally in other Swedish cities. Eventually, he made a name for himself as one of the best DJ's in Stockholm and was well-known for his mixing skills, a varied and carefully selected repertoire, and his abilities to fill the dance floor. Denniz PoP got more and more prestigious commissions in clubs such as Vadel on Sveavägen and finally at the rock club RITZ, in the basement of Hotel Malmen in central Stockholm. RITZ was launched in 1981 by club owner and entrepreneur Tom Talomaa (born 1954). During the 80s, Talomaa and his team turned RITZ into the hottest rock club in Stockholm, and perhaps even in Scandinavia, with the best DJ's and live music from Swedish as well as international acts of a very high quality.

Denniz PoP Becoming a Music Producer

Denniz PoP's shift from being a DJ towards becoming a music producer and songwriter came gradually and evolved

organically for practical reasons. In 1986, he and some of his colleagues in the DJ community came together and started SweMix—a DJ and studio collective. The SweMix team consisted of Stonebridge (Sten Hallström), René Hedemyr Disteli, Emil Hellman, Johan Järpsten, and Denniz PoP (Dag Volle). Stonebridge was the most popular character at the time. Their business plan was to do special remixes and sell their productions exclusively to professional DJ's via a subscription service, for the music to be played in clubs only. The club owner Tom Talomaa supported the SweMix team and took a calculated risk when he decided to invest in professional equipment, including a Studer 24-track tape recorder for their use. The SweMix team's switch to more professional music production equipment was a very costly investment for Talomaa. But it was well thought out as he took good advice from his long-time friend and music business colleague Ola Håkansson (born 1945), who at the time held a leading position at the Swedish record company Sonet, which took care of the SweMix distribution. In 1989, SweMix expanded somewhat and started to release records commercially for ordinary music fans and consumers.

Denniz PoP soon got to work on remixes and spent many long hours meticulously cutting and slicing analog tape in order to achieve special “strutting” or “glitching” effects that often were only a few seconds long. He used that technique on his debut 12” single release *Gimme Some Mo' (Bass On Me)* in 1988. For the project he realized that he had to introduce an artist in order to promote the record. Since none other than himself were available, and he wanted to be anonymous to be able to focus on music production rather than being exposed in the limelight, he came up with the stage name Denniz PoP. The forename “Denniz” was inspired by the cartoon character *Dennis the Menace*, created by Hank Ketcham in 1951. Dennis was associated with fun and childishness, qualities that Denniz PoP manifested and liked, and Dennis also had the same kind of blonde hair and middle-class suburban background as Denniz PoP. The surname PoP was an abbreviation of Prince of Pick-ups and implied great skills with record players, as well as being a pun on his taste for mainstream pop music as opposed to more esoteric styles, liked by his fellow SweMix colleagues.

RITZ, SweMix, and Cheiron

RITZ had a very flamboyant clientele, many of whom were musicians and artists in their own right. One of them were Kayo (Kayode Maria Söderberg Shekoni, born 1964). Denniz PoP worked on the production of her first album *Kayo* (1990). He also worked with Dr. Alban (Alban Uzoma Nwapa, born 1957). The hit single *Hello Afrika* (1990) was recorded in modest circumstances, in a small shower room at the RITZ facilities. The record sold very well in-

ternationally and was a big breakthrough for both Dr. Alban and Denniz PoP. In the early 90s, RITZ closed down. There were complaints from hotel customers about loud volumes, and also Grunge came along and changed the mode and norms of the music industry. Talomaa tried to set up a new version of RITZ at Berzelii-Terrassen [BZ] but it did not really work out and instead the club closed. The focus shifted towards starting the record label Cheiron Productions (Greek for handiwork, and perhaps also a pun on Charon, the ferryman in Greek mythology who ferried dead souls to Hades).

Cheiron came out of SweMix Records and Publishing and was co-owned by Denniz PoP and Talomaa (50 percent) in collaboration with the major record company, Bertelsmann Music Group - BMG (50 percent). Denniz PoP had artistic and creative freedom and Talomaa took care of the administration. Initially, the idea was to work in many different genres, such as hard rock (enter Max Martin), and not only record and release music but also produce videos. However, Denniz PoP and Talomaa soon realized that they risked spreading themselves too thinly. It would be too complicated and too expensive. Instead, they decided to reduce and refine their business model towards what they enjoyed and were comfortably good at, namely writing songs and creating music productions as a sub-industry for other record companies and artists.

The Cheiron team took shape in the early 1990s. It included a few handpicked key members, such as Tomas Ljung, who worked as an engineer and publisher for over twenty years, first for Cheiron and later for Maratone. Another important character was Martin Dodd from the Danish company Mega Records. At Cheiron, Denniz PoP continued to work with Dr. Alban and also took in new songwriters and producers Douglas Carr, Jörgen Elofsson, Herbie Crichlow, Andreas Carlsson, Kristian Lundin, Per Magnusson, and David Kreuger. The working ethos has been described as a unique combination of close comradeship and healthy competition.

Denniz PoP had immediate success while producing Ace of Base, turning the demo "Mr. Ace" into the international hit "All That She Wants" first released in November 1992. The band had been rejected by several Swedish record companies and eventually been signed to Mega Records by Martin Dodd. Denniz PoP famously agreed to produce them after a demo tape had been stuck in his car cassette player. He later co-produced the follow-up hit "The Sign" (1994) with Douglas Carr and Jonas Berggren from Ace of Base. This opened up doors in the music industry internationally and Cheiron began to work with acts such as Backstreet Boys, NSYNC, 3T, Celine Dion, Bon Jovi, and Britney Spears.

Denniz PoP, Max Martin, and Shellback in Master-Apprentice Relations

Max Martin (Karl Martin Sandberg, born 1971) joined Cheiron in 1993. His band *It's Alive* recorded one album in the hard rock genre, but it didn't really take off, and instead Denniz PoP decided to take on Max Martin as a co-songwriter and co-producer. The relationship was initially like master-apprentice. As Max Martin was very musical and had some initial music education, Denniz PoP quickly grasped that they could complement each other. The pinnacle of Denniz PoP's career was when the two of them recorded and produced the song "I Need You" with 3T and Michael Jackson in 1995. With Cheiron at the height of its peak, Denniz PoP suddenly got ill from stomach cancer and died from the disease on August 30, 1998, at the age of 35. After his passing away, the Cheiron team continued to work in the same premises for a couple of more years but it gradually fizzled out. The activities finally ceased in 2000. Instead, Max Martin and Tom Talomaa started the new music production company Maratone. They were clearly in it for the long run and wanted a fresh start. With Maratone, the pun on Greek mythology was kept intact, and it was set up in a Denniz PoP'ish kind of way. Max Martin handpicked Shellback (Karl Johan Schuster, born 1985) as his apprentice and co-worker, just like Denniz PoP previously had done with him. Maratone has become extremely successful over a long period of time.

Selected Results from the Denniz PoP Case Study

Denniz PoP comes across as creative in several different ways. He is often described as extremely sharp and intelligent while simultaneously being very childish and playful. He always strived towards a fun approach as he was prone to being easily bored. He tried to prevent this boredom at any cost and was very good at focusing on finishing the task at hand, while not worrying about superfluous aspects beyond his control. He always set out to make his music to be simple without being banal, which is extremely difficult to accomplish. He was very disciplined and could work long hours at a time on minor details in order to get it just right. He was good at getting into the flow but could just as easily abruptly switch off to do something totally different, like playing computer games. He could spend considerable time on this while in the studio, indifferent to the expensive ticking-away on the studio clock. On the other hand, he developed the habit of using his spare time to do extra work on his music, like listening to mixes in different environments, often in his car on the way home after a long day in the studio, and with fresh ears on his way back the next morning. He was very imaginative and had great capacity to visualize the songs he was working on. In his songwriting and pro-

duction, he thought about the structure in a “filmic” way and is said to have been able to hear the whole of a music production in his head in advance before committing it to tape.

He realized the importance of building up a narrative in the songs and that the music should always have a signature hook or a special sound to capture the listener. He was a very inspiring team-leader and collaborator who repeatedly started new projects, took initiatives and calculated risks. He brought in young and unestablished people, made them feel welcome and inspired them to work very hard while still having fun, to create great results. He recognized and understood his weaknesses and happily delegated tasks to other team-members, primarily Tom Talomaa for economy and administration and relied on his own talent for musical collaboration.

Denniz PoP was a very innovative and skillful craftsman and he used new technology in innovative ways. He also put in the hard work and long hours necessary to create enough quantitative pathways that leads to innovation through unpredictable connections. Our source material clearly shows that he was very motivated, and that his motivation was without any doubt, intrinsic rather than extrinsic. His love for music was always the main focus. As a DJ he felt distracted rather than flattered by the attention of young and beautiful girls at the discotheques and often took his sister or his wife’s sister with him in order to clear a path and push the girls off the DJ booth. He wasn’t interested in being an artist because the exposure and media attention would distract from the creation of music. He tended to avoid the media and took a stage name in order to be able to fly under the radar. It really is amazing how little there is written about him in the Swedish music press during his lifetime, considering his achievements. He wasn’t really interested in money and let other people take care of his business interests. Even though he became extremely wealthy from his career in music production he never changed his lifestyle, he was very modest, drove an old car, etc., and invested in new musical equipment for the Cheiron studios, rather than going on spending sprees on personal luxury goods. He was very adamant about this, which gained him great respect from colleagues and associates within the music industry.

Denniz PoP also comes across as having possessed great entrepreneurial skills. In terms of risk-taking, he made careful decisions and took calculated risks, for example in participating in starting up SweMix, in changing direction in his profession from being a DJ towards being a music producer and songwriter, from starting up Cheiron from scratch, and from signing up new personnel. He was a great team leader and created a unique environment at Cheiron which has been described by Max Martin as having the perfect balance between healthy competition, friendship, and a

meaningful feeling of going forward at a fast pace.

The Denniz PoP Model for Music Production

Our overall research question in this paper is: *How can leadership strategies that can be identified in professionals such as Denniz PoP be transferred into valid learning outcomes in higher education with a focus on music and on music production?* To operationalize this research question and summarize and illustrate the experiences we have drawn from the data we collected during the project, we have created a model for entrepreneurship and leadership in music production that we have chosen to name *The Denniz PoP Model*.

The model is based on our analysis of what we have been able to identify as characteristic of Denniz PoP’s entrepreneurial and leadership skills expressed in the analysis of Denniz PoP. The model consists of seven aspects. We have endeavored to account for these aspects in an empathic disposition where we begin with *the love for music* that in the empirical material is shown as the most clearly motivated aspect. The model concludes with other aspects and interpretations that we want to validate but that probably warrant further investigation in future studies:

1. **The love for music:** This is a fundamental aspect that, despite feeling obvious and perceived as implied, just for this reason must be highlighted and made visible. Without a genuine love of music, the subsequent steps in this model are probably meaningless.
2. **To have fun:** This, too, is a fundamental aspect, which is a basic condition, clearly described in previous research, for fruitful activities in general and in particular in artistic activities, such as music production.
3. **Strive to do things simple—but not to be banal or trivial:** This, as well, is a fundamental aspect that has an ideological approach that goes far back in time, at least until the fourteenth century. *Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitate*: More things should not be used than are necessary. *Lex parsimoniae*, or the *law of briefness* is a design principle applied by many and often attributed to William of Ockham who was a Franciscan friar who lived in the fourteenth century. Whether Denniz PoP was aware of the historical connection to the Middle Ages is not something we could interpret from our collected data. However, the analysis clearly shows that to do things simple, but not banal—the *law of briefness*—was a principle that Denniz PoP repeatedly used in his music production work.

4. **To be driven by inner motivation:** This aspect is the one of the seven in this model that is most frequently described in previous research on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial skills. And it is very clear that inner motivation was crucial for Denniz PoP.
5. **To collaborate:** Good teamwork is a central and very important explanation for how Denniz PoP could develop creatively and create music. This is also one aspect that is clearly described in previous research and crucial for entrepreneurial development.
6. **Do what you are good at or what you are interested in:** This aspect can also act as a sub-aspect and form a larger category together with the aspect *Collaborate*. But what motivates here is that this aspect must stand for itself and be clear in the empirical material that is at its core property or main approach for Denniz PoP. Implicit in this aspect is also the ability to show confidence, e.g., to trust that others are able to do what you are not good at or not interested in. Things that nevertheless are required to sustain such activities, e.g., a music production, that needs to be completed
7. **Get ready—finish the job:** This aspect obviously has clear explanatory value for the successes that Denniz PoP received. He managed to complete his productions and get them published. This is an aspect we cannot find clearly articulated in the empirical material, other than as a consequence of Denniz PoP's actions. But this aspect is a basic precondition for many entrepreneurial activities, such as music production, and also something that is clearly described in previous research on creativity, innovation, motivation, and entrepreneurship.

Reflections on the Denniz PoP Case Study

The model we present in this work is based on the empirical data about Denniz PoP that we have collected, with various methods. The conclusions on which the model is based are well founded in previous research (Burgess 2013, 2014; Hepworth-Sawyer and Golding 2011; Morefield 2005; Harding 2010, 2020; Gullö et al. 2019). Therefore, the collected data that form the basis of the model, have been analyzed with different perspectives and theories from different academic disciplines. Despite this, the model is not to be interpreted as written in stone. This is important because the view of knowledge that we represent does not accept theories as absolute truths. No, instead we want to see theories as possible explanations for things that we want to under-

stand better. And as a self-evident consequence of this our own model, the Denniz PoP model, is of course changeable. But with this knowledge representation which is used as a starting point, we also want to emphasize that we have done our utmost to be able to present a sustainable interpretation of the collected data that constitutes the primary knowledge base for this project.

It is, of course, very difficult to directly translate or transfer how the leadership strategies that we have identified in the music production work of Denniz PoP, as described in the model above, can be transferred into valid learning outcomes in higher education with a focus on music and on music production. However, when we recently worked very intensively and carried out a major revision of the curriculum and all syllabi for the bachelor's program in music production at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, we included a number of learning objectives in the syllabi and learning outcomes in the curriculum that can be linked directly to the Denniz PoP model. During their education the students are expected to *develop the ability to lead others and to be led themselves and develop the ability to cooperate* (the fifth step in the model: Collaborate) and to *develop the ability to complete projects within given time frames* (the seventh step in the model: Get ready—finish the job).

In addition, students applying to the Royal Academy of Music bachelor's and master's programs in music production must undergo extensive admission tests. Every year, several hundred students apply for the sixteen places available on the bachelor's program and eight places available on the master's program in music production. And in the recently revised entrance exams, which will be used for the first time in 2021, some aspects that are recognizable from the Denniz PoP model are emphasized. Firstly, it is very important that the accepted students are driven by inner motivation (the fourth step in the model). And secondly, those who apply must submit work examples where they demonstrate their skills and abilities in music production. These samples of their work are expected to show the student's ability to create music with limited resources and the evaluation assesses their ability for clear artistic expression (the third step in the model: Strive to do things simple—but not banal or trivial). At an overall level, the prospective students' relationship to music is also assessed, and although it is not explicitly stated in eligibility requirements and test descriptions, it is very likely that students with a strong love for music (the first step in the model) are well placed to pass the tests.

In an upcoming part of the ongoing project *Searching for Sophia in Music Production*, we present a knowledge-critical analysis of interviews with two very successful songwriters in popular music: Irving Berlin (1888-1989) and Martin Sandberg (born 1971), also known as Max Mar-

tin. Sandberg was one of Denniz PoP's closest colleagues and by far his most important partner in music production. The interview with Berlin was conducted by Frank Ward O'Malley (1875-1932) and was originally published in *The American Magazine*, Volume 90, October 1920, where Berlin presented "Nine Rules for Writing Popular Songs". We conducted the interview with Martin Sandberg ourselves in November 2019, where we, among other things, asked him to assess *The Denniz PoP Model for Music Production*. The analysis compares Berlin's reflections on its own model and Sandberg's reflections on the Denniz PoP model.

For future research we truly welcome critical examination of the aspects that we have presented in this work. And even more, we want to contribute to how the issues that we highlight in this study will continue to generate new data and empirical results, and how that can be used in future research. We are far from complete with this project and will continue our research in the project period, which extends until twenty-five years have passed since Denniz PoP's untimely death, in order to better analyze and understand all possible aspects that contributed to his success in music and music production.

References

- Andersson, Danjel, and Håkan Elmquist. 2001. "Det svenska musikundret: [75 år] : från Winter till vår tid." *Föreningen Svenska kompositörer av populärmusik 1926-2001*. Stockholm: Ekerlid.
- Berggren, Jenny. 2009. *Vinna hela världen*. Örebro: Libris.
- Biggs, John B. and Catherine So-Kum Tang. 2011. *Teaching for quality learning at university: what the student does*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Björnberg, Alf, and Thomas Bossius (ed.). 2017. *Made in Sweden: studies in popular music*. New York: Routledge.
- Bologna Declaration. 1999. *The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999 Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education*. European Higher Education Area.
- Bruner, Jerome. 1996. *The culture of education*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, Jerome. 2009. "Culture, mind, and education." In *Contemporary theories of learning: learning theorists... in their own words*, edited by Knud Illeris, 159-168. London: Routledge.
- Burgess, Richard James. 2013. *The art of music production: the theory and practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Burgess, Richard James. 2014. *The history of music production*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Burnett, Robert, and Patrik Wikström. 2006. "Music Production in Times of Monopoly: The Example of Sweden." *Popular Music and Society* 29, no.5: 575-582. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03007760500303421>.
- Edmondson, Amy. C. 2012. *Teaming – How Organizations Learn, Innovate, and Compete in the Knowledge Economy*. Boston: John Wiley Sons.
- Eliasson, Fredrik. 2008/2015. "Cheiron – en Popsaga." In *Sveriges Radio P4*, July 5, 2015.
- Eliasson, Fredrik. 2014. "Arvet efter Cheiron – en oändlig historia med Max Martin." In *Sveriges Radio P4*, April 26, 2014.
- Frith, Simon, and Simon Zagorski-Thomas (ed.). 2012. *The art of record production: an introductory reader for a new academic field*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Goleman, Daniel. 2011. *Leadership: The Power of Emotional Intelligence*. Northampton, Massachusetts: More Than Sound.
- Gullö, Jan-Olof, Hans Gardemar, Per-Henrik Holgersson, David Thyrén, and Bo Westman. 2019. "Towards a stronger focus on entrepreneurial skills in future higher education in music." In *INTED2019 (International Technology, Education and Development Conference)*. Valencia: IATED.
- Gullö, Jan-Olof, and David Thyrén. 2018. "Searching for Sophia in Music Production Education – Twenty years ago today: a reevaluation of the heritage of Swedish record producer Denniz PoP." In *Crosstown Traffic: Popular Music Theory and Practice*. Huddersfield: IASPM UK&I; ASARP; Dancecult & ISMMS.
- Gullö, Jan-Olof, and David Thyrén. 2019. "Music production in Swedish higher education: History and future challenges." In *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning / Swedish Journal of Music Research* 101: 185-199.
- Hatschek, Keith, and Breanne Beseda. 2015. *How to Get a Job in the Music Industry*. Boston: Berklee Press.
- Hepworth-Sawyer, Russ, and Craig Golding. 2011. *What is music production? A producer's guide: the role, the people, the process*. Oxon: Focal Press.
- Holgersson, Per-Henrik. 2011. "Musikalisk kunskapsutveckling i högre utbildning: en kulturpsykologisk studie av musikerstudenters förhållningssätt i enskild instrumentalundervisning." Dissertation, Stockholm : Stockholms universitet.
- Howlett, Michael John Gilmour. 2009. "The record producer as nexus: creative inspiration, technology and the recording industry." PhD dissertation, University of Glamorgan.
- Musiksverige. 2018. *Musikbranschen i siffror: statistik från musikåret 2017*. Stockholm: Musiksverige.

Norberg, Fredrik, and Åsa Wiberg. 2019. *The Swedish pop wonder*. Stockholm: Sveriges television/SVT-play <https://www.svtplay.se/video/24064470>.

O'Malley, Frank Ward. 1920. "Irving Berlin: Nine Rules for Writing Popular Songs." *The American Magazine* 90 (October 1920).

Portnoff, Linda. 2015. *Musikbranschen i siffror: statistik från musikåret 2014*. Stockholm: Musiksverige.

Stafström, Sven. 2011. *Good research practice*. Stockholm: The Swedish Research Council.

Thyrén, David. 2017. "Shellback – en unik producent inom det svenska musikundret." In *Elva studier om kreativitet i musikproduktion*, edited by Jan-Olof Gullö, 117-124. Stockholm: Royal College of Music.

Vygotsky, Lev Semenovich. 1978. *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, Lev Semenovich. 1962. *Thought and language*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT press.

Zagorski-Thomas, Simon. 2014. *The musicology of record production*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

David Thyrén is Senior Lecturer in Music History at the Royal College of Music, Academy of Music Education, in Stockholm, Sweden. He is a musicologist and has in his research specifically focused on how the Swedish progressive music movement developed during the 1970s and the development of the exports of Swedish music in the last two decades including studies on Denniz PoP and Max Martin.



Jan-Olof Gullö is Professor in Music Production at the Royal College of Music, Academy of Folk Music, Jazz and Music and Media Production in Stockholm, Sweden. He has a professional background as a musician, double bass/electric bass, record producer, and television producer. Although he was active in sports television production for many years in the 1990s, he has mainly worked with music and in recent years also as a researcher.

Peter Schyborger is the Director of Studies in Music and Media Production at the Royal College of Music, Academy of Folk Music, Jazz and Music and Media Production in Stockholm, Sweden. He has a professional background as a jazz musician, piano/keyboard and record producer.





MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY
EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
**2020 INTERNATIONAL
SUMMIT**

OF THE
**MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT
INDUSTRY EDUCATORS
ASSOCIATION**

– OCTOBER 2 & 3, 2020 –

Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association
1900 Belmont Boulevard
Nashville, TN 37212 U.S.A.

www.meiea.org

© Copyright 2020 Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association
All rights reserved