

Ingolv Haaland

How do we create and build talented students for the future?

Students today experience a massive flow of information and technology. Still, the basic and advanced skills of an instrument are necessary to be able to express oneself fully. But, it is my firm belief that in order to survive as a musician today, a wider understanding of music and technology is expected, regardless of genre. Everyone uses smartphones, and there is a wide range of apps available for recording and learning music. As teachers our job is to know some of the tools and to use it in our pedagogic work, like laptop as a music workstation with creative recording programs like Apple Logic or Ableton Live. Scores are done digitally with the program Sibelius or Finale. It is a digital world. Embrace it. Because your knowledge and experience as a teacher are still as valuable as in the past. A machine cannot replace it. A good teacher will see the student and mentor them. Learn from the students. We do not need to know everything available, but should be able to value the pedagogic content in a tool or in a YouTube instruction video. There are literally millions of them, and many with amateurs who don't know what they are doing. It is crucial that we as pedagogic recommend the good ones.

So, you have a skilled student. Do we want to copy the masters the rest of the life, or step out of the comfort zone and encourage artistic skills towards an own sound? I'm talking about widening the range of job opportunities, from ensemble to more individual gigs. Nowadays musicians have to be more creative, and many need entrepreneur skills. This is what we embrace and teach at bachelor and master level at the Department of Popular Music at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Agder in Norway. Popular Music understood as every non-classical style, like jazz, pop, rock, world, improvisation, electronic and so on. Through hard auditions we already have highly skilled students, and we focus on developing those skills into an artistic sound because we want them to stand out and provide them with tools to survive in the ever-changing music industry. My ongoing PhD research looks further into what an artistic sound can be. I will now present some of the preliminary work since I myself are a former bachelor and master student at our department, and a product of the philosophy that now are focusing more on individual skills:

HOW TO DEVELOP A SIGNATURE SOUND?

A PERFORMER'S PERSPECTIVE

The research and my ph.d thesis are based on the development of three published music productions (CD's) with cultural fieldwork in Norway, Cambodia, Thailand, Lebanon and Palestine. I look at the process as a composer, arranger and pianist from a within perspective. My aim is to develop a signature sound, through interactions with musicians in Southeast Asia and The Middle East.

The ph.d in popular music at the University of Agder in Norway has the option of including artistic research as part of the thesis.

I use modern technology as tools and laptop as a portable studio around the world to record rehearsals, studio sessions and live performances, and Dropbox, Facebook, WhatsApp and Line as tools of communication. My main music software are Logic, ProTools and Sibelius, as well as iTalk (iPhone): a recording app for sketches and rehearsals. In addition to field notes and a descriptive log, this is my empirical data. I use a combination of autoethnographical and narrative qualitative methods and music analysis.

My cases are:



1. *Asian Flow Ingolv Haaland feat. Ouch Savy* (Khmer)

Published 10.12.14 in Cambodia and Norway, digitally worldwide.

2. *Live in Concert -Ingolv Haaland & Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra with friends*

Published 27.11.15 in Cambodia and Norway, digitally worldwide.

3. *Asian Flow Ingolv Haaland feat. Synth.* (Thai)

Published 11.12.15 in Thailand, digitally worldwide.

All the musical material are (co)composed, arranged and orchestrated as well as recorded, produced and published by me through my own record label C-Lounge Records. I have a hand in all parts of the process. The title Asian Flow are inspired by the "flow" and pace in the society in several SEA-countries.

Popular music

The discourses around sound, technology and recorded music are a part of popular music research, which focus on performed and produced music in all non-classical (western) genres from the 1960's and up until present day. This includes genres like pop, rock, electronic, world music, fusion and jazz.

Sound

Sound is a term that can be interpreted in two ways:

1. It describes a combination of arrangement, harmonics, chords, instruments and how they are played, rhythm and how it is mixed, mastered using digital tools and acoustic or electronic instruments.
2. It describes an artist who has a special, personal and recognizable voice, style of playing or style of composing and arranging: A signature sound.

But how does one develop a signature sound? When do the musician or singer become an artist?

I will now present the process of two tunes from idea to full composition, from fieldwork in Cambodia, Norway and Lebanon.

Case One: "No More Tears" Ouch Savy, Cambodia

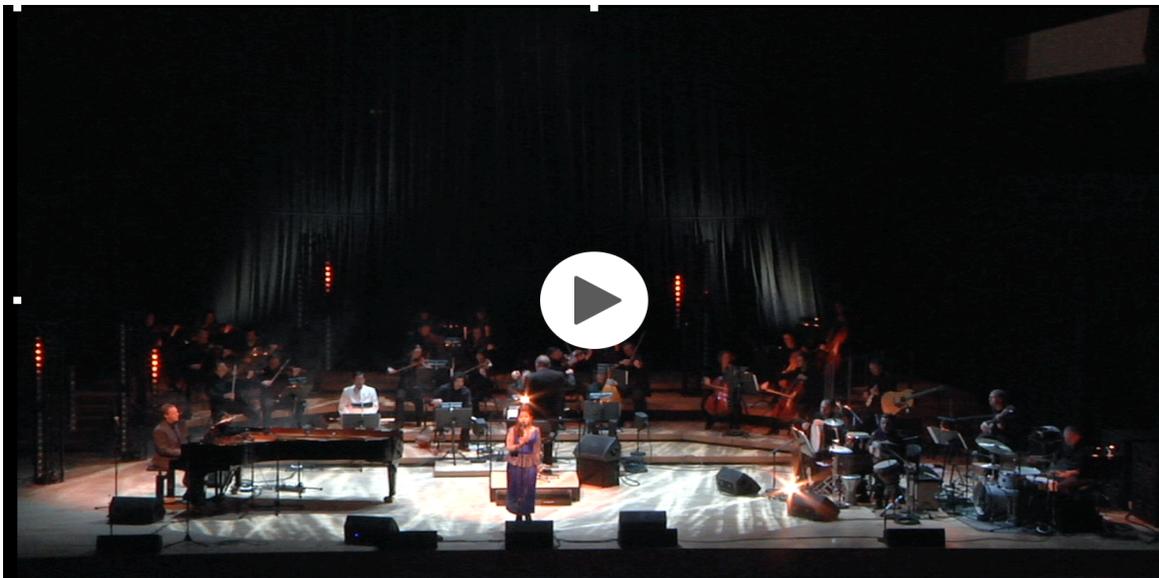
The idea for the verse came to me in Ramallah, Palestine, when I was waiting for a meeting in a room with a piano. Later in Norway the refrain came along. I emailed the sketch to Khmer traditional singer Ouch Savy, and she wrote the lyrics, drawing from her own life experience. Let's listen to the first rehearsal of the refrain piano/vocal only:

(Audio example 00:40)



The idea for the refrain is a circle with no clear ending, where the chords Am-Am/C-Em/G transposed down to Gm-Gm/Bb-Dm/F and transposed back up again creates a tension and harmonic variation with the melody, even with basic chords. Working further on the harmonies and scoring it for full orchestra, the refrain sound like this, adding a guitar solo at the end, over the same harmonies.

(Video example live performance 01:20) Full performance available on [YouTube](#).



As you heard, there is a lot happening on several different levels now:

1. A groove section: Bass, drums and Arabic percussion

The tune signature is 6/8, but can easily be interpreted as 12/8 or 4/4. It is polyrhythmic and intentional since a lot of the rhythmical figures works as 4 against 3. The bass is closer to 4/4, the drums closer to 6/8.

2. Harmonies: Strings (and piano/guitar)

I use classical arranging techniques but with jazz harmonies, played in a loose pop style groove. The melodic lines are active and move through a range of scales within each harmony.

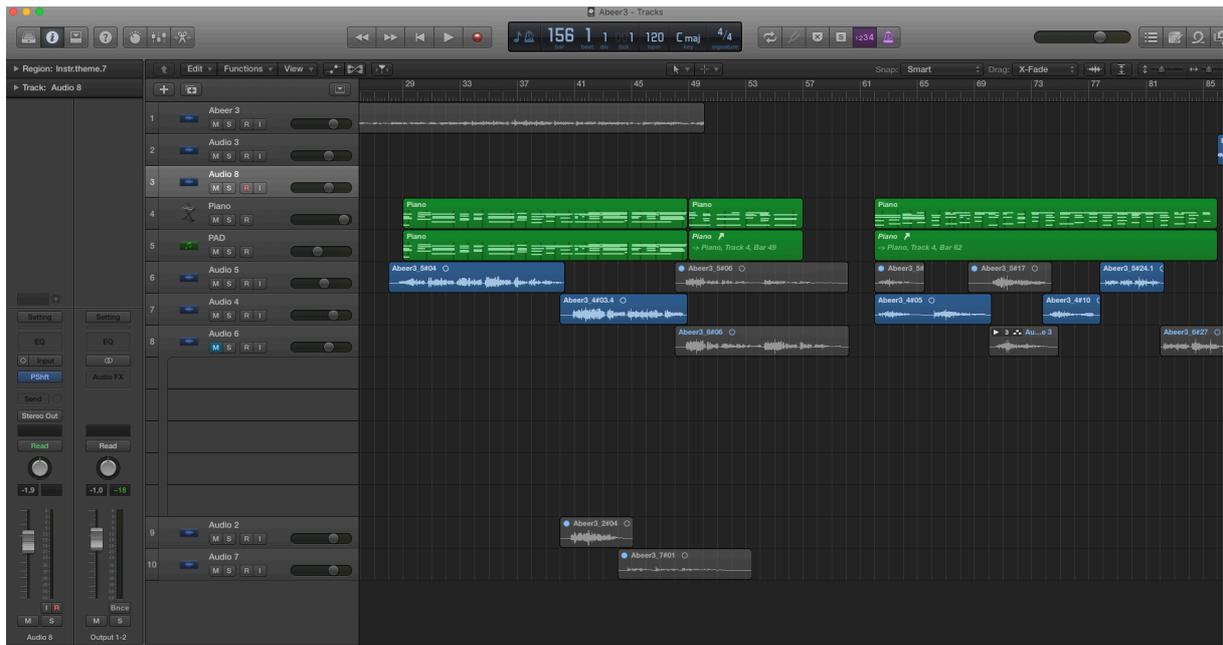
Case Two: Ya Tara - Abeer Nehme Lebanon

Arabic music has always fascinated me. The ornamentations, the melancholy in the call for prayer from the moské, and at the same time the rapidness and temperamental playing in the Oud and other Arabic traditional instruments. I've been working in Lebanon with different projects, and always wanted to collaborate with the Lebanese Grammy-Award-winning traditional vocalist Abeer Nehme, who sings in 25 different languages in a wide range of styles.

We met in a small studio in Jounieh, on the coast of Lebanon, improvised together, and communicated through music, not words. When she sang the melody that later became the main theme I intuitively harmonized it on the spot. It was one of those rare moments when there is an instant creative flow. Listen to the recording (iTalkApp) from the rehearsal:
(Audio example 00:30)



I edited the audio in Logic sequencer, cut a long recording into smaller parts and moved it around, as a puzzle. It is a great program to use as you can add and play additional instruments and tracks, so one can listen to how the different ideas will work:



The final arrangement and harmonies sounds like this:

(Video example 03:40) Full version available in [YouTube](#)



My research is ongoing, and I believe it can take years to clarify a signature sound.

Nevertheless, I do feel that I am on a path that reflect my music personality, and are eager to learn more about music in ASEAN-countries and are looking forward to collaborate with both musicians and academics in the region the following years. Thank you.