



CENTER FOR MUSIC IN THE BRAIN – HIGHLIGHTS 2015

The Danish National Research Foundation's Center for Music in the Brain (MIB) was officially opened June 5, 2015, with a grand ceremony in the Concert Hall, Aarhus. This celebration featured performances by the prize-winning Swedish piano player Lars Jansson, the Cello Ensemble of the Royal Academy of Music Aarhus/Aalborg (RAMA), a lecture and musical performance by neurologist and flautist, professor Eckart Altenmüller from Hannover and speeches by Liselotte Højgaard, Chairman of the board of the Danish National Research Foundation, Brian Bech Nielsen, rector of Aarhus University (AU), Claus Olesen, principal of the Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus/Aalborg (RAMA) and Peter Vuust, director of MIB.

MIB is off to an excellent start. During the first half year we have established ourselves with a core group of senior and junior researchers and an extremely experienced administrative staff. We have hired Tina Bach Aen as centre manager, research secretary Hella Storgaard Kastbjerg and student worker Signe Hagner. The administration has successfully implemented a number of administrative procedures for MIB and been responsible for dealing with the many new appointments at MIB.

MIB has been able to attract researchers from all parts of the world. Elvira Brattico has moved to Aarhus from Helsinki with her family, Morten Kringelbach and Lauren Stewart are partly situated in Oxford/London, partly in Aarhus bringing a number of international students and researchers for shorter and longer research stays. Morten Kringelbach has brought his large ERC CAREGIVING grant and three postdoc researchers: Tim van Hartevelt (the Netherlands), Henrique Fernandes (Portugal) and Joana Cabral (Portugal). This project aims to understand the development of the parental brain and synergizes on many levels with the aims of MIB. We have hired Christine Parsons, formerly at Oxford University, as assistant professor and agreed to carry on Maria Witek and Bjørn Petersen in assistant professorship positions. We also jointly chose Boris Kleber, formerly at Tübingen University, among 20 candidates for a postdoc/assistant professor position.

The first half year of MIB has been focused on attracting excellent young researchers and starting up new projects and collaborations. In the spring of 2015, we advertised internationally for four PhD positions using open calls within the field of music and brain. We had 39 applicants for the PhD positions and the four PIs jointly agreed to hire Maria Celeste Fasano (Italy), Patricia Alves da Mota (Portugal), Ole Adrian Heggli (Norway) and Suzi Ross (Scotland). We then assigned them to the four groups of the centre, where they each developed PhD project plans supervised by two or more of the PIs, and subsequently they were all accepted for admission at the Graduate School of Health, AU starting December 1st, 2015. This procedure ensures the employment of the best possible international candidates and spurs collaboration and synergy between the four MIB groups. In addition to these recruitments, we obtained full funding for an additional PhD position for Stine Derdau Sørensen from the research committee of the Ministry of Culture, RAMA and the Graduate School of Health, AU as well as funding for additional costs from TrygFonden (390000 DKK), which also gave funding to Kira Vibe Jespersen's PhD project (625000 DKK). We also obtained 1/3 stipend from the Graduate School of Health, AU for Suzi Ross.

This internationalization of the MIB centre has further been strengthened by the talks given by the many international guest speakers at our seminars, which fertilize new research collaborations and enrich the research education. To benefit optimally from these visits we have created a routine where the invited speakers attend speed talks given by MIB researchers allowing them to give expert feedback on their projects. The interest we have witnessed from international visitors supports MIB's aim to become a global hub for interdisciplinary research in music and neuroscience.

In 2015 MIB has published 39 peer-reviewed articles of which 21 are Open Access.