

Editorial

In this issue, we witness different ways in which to illuminate the changing relationship between music education research and practice and how that relationship is understood. In studies drawn from as far as afield as Belgium, USA, Canada, and including the UK, authors locate current debates about practice within a range of theoretical frames of reference (including Foucault, Marx, Piaget, Vygotsky) and relate their work to a range of contested areas. The articles move between self-reflection (in rehearsal contexts) to teacher reflection (on teaching composing and movement) to reflective research techniques which look at how children make sense of their musical listening through figurative representations or musical mapping tasks. We are also invited to consider afresh Orff and Kodaly from critical theorist standpoints.

The articles draw on diverse data generated via in-depth interview methods, document analysis, observation and accounts of musical experiences. The general messages are how cherished practices can too easily become habitual and that deeply embedded in the contemporary lexicon of music teaching and learning are the prominent themes of musical engagement, and how both teachers and learners benefit from reflection on the experience within and beyond the context of school learning.

Situated from within a Canadian context, Benjamin Bolden reports a case study of an experienced teacher of composing working with high school students in a large urban centre in Ontario, Canada. From here he explores the extent to which infusing their work with personal knowledge, experiences, and interests enhances meaningful learning and engagement amongst young people who are otherwise alienated from school learning.

Reporting from the context of the UK, Mark Pullman's article '*Seeing yourself as others see you: developing personal attributes in the group rehearsal*' provides an interesting perspective on a topic which has generally received less attention than it warrants. This article usefully couples peer assessment with a popular music learning context, and offers a critical look at reflective practice which is too often presented as an individual, privatised experience. Here, the author explores the educational potential of reflection and peer learning in group rehearsals of popular music. The focus on applications within popular music provides considerable interest in developing Higher Education courses in countries which promote group learning strategies.

Kathryn Woodward offers a US perspective on another compelling topic of great interest and importance to those involved in music education. '*Recovering disembodied spirits: teaching movement to musicians*' addresses the issue of movement in instrumental playing. In particular it expounds on a theory of a body map, its role in motor skill acquisition as a mediator between perception and action, and its potential as a tool within tuition. This article constitutes a personal enquiry and reflection on the experience of teaching. It prompts us to reflect on our own experience as instrumentalists and teachers which, we suspect, will be largely consonant with what is expressed in the paper.

Writing also from a US context, Deborah Blair offers us a compelling and detailed exploration of student learning. In a study where 'students used and developed strategies that enabled their own success while listening to, performing, and creating music it became evident that they were proactively seeking musical understanding and growth in their

own musicianship'. The role and importance of learner agency is evidenced by learners' affirmation and valuing of self and others; all of which is theoretically linked to Vygotsky's *zone of proximal development*, amongst others. Musical representations take the form of musical mapping which are used as a dynamic strategy underlying the students' experiences of music listening. In this study, the role of confidence and emotion in learning through music listening is also emphasised.

Children's use of graphical notations features in a report of two studies where over 400 children were exposed to a music listening task. With fieldwork conducted in Belgium, Mark Rebrouck, Lieven Verschaffel and Sofie Lauwerier draw on a wide range of literature in framing what is a fascinating study of '*Children's graphical notations as representational tools for musical sense-making*'. The emergence of 'global' and 'differentiated' notations are related to age and other variables, from which the study addresses the relationship between musical *semantics* and "sense-making", with reference to Piaget as the underlying key developmental theory.

Using Marx as lens through which to challenge and interrogate Orff and Kodaly, Cathy Benedict from the US offers up a provocative, engaging and critical debate about 'the process of alienation' when music teaching methods become doctrines. With a critique of ordained methods of Orff and Kodaly, exposed as ideology, Benedict asks that rather than the free play and creativity Orff and Kodaly intended, teacher and student find themselves alienated from the very means of musicking 'in which the method becomes more real than the music itself'. The paper tackles issues of legitimacy, power and reproduction, drawing on Foucault, amongst others, to sustain an argument which is fluent and concise.

What we should notice here is how research informs ideas of good practice in music teaching and how theoretical and philosophical frameworks enable us to gain a greater understanding of these practices. It is these two parallel functions that lie at the heart of and *raison d'être* for, journals such as the BJME.

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