

## Book Reviews

**Musicianship in the 21st Century: Issues, Trends and Possibilities** edited by Sam Leong. Sydney: Australian Music Centre, 2003. 336 pp, no price given, paperback.

This book comprises 25 chapters all written to the same brief, which is to 'examine diverse perspectives of what a musician should/might be in the twenty-first century' and to 'offer your assessment of and perspective/s on the notion of musicianship that you consider to be relevant... to the music education of children and youths, and in tomorrow's schools, conservatoires and universities' (p. 7). Although over half of the authors are from North America and Australia, there are also contributions from the Far East, Europe, South Africa and South America.

As might be expected from so many writers writing on the same theme, there is some repetition of content and the quality of the writing is variable. However, most chapters repay the time invested in reading them. The organisation of the book, however, is not very reader-friendly. The chapters appear in alphabetical order by author, which is a system that might have worked had there been fewer chapters. However, with this large number of chapters, the reader would have benefited from some kind of thematic grouping. For example, the authors tend to tackle the brief from one of three broad perspectives – philosophical, geographical or musical genre/culture – and these themes could, perhaps, have provided an organisational template for the book.

From a music education perspective, most authors' writing is underpinned by a philosophy of inclusiveness in terms of both musical genres and participation. Fundamental to such inclusivity, so it is argued, is the need for teachers to: forge

strong links between music in the classroom and music in the outside world; understand that musical meaning is dependent upon context; avoid evaluating all music from a Western art music perspective; and recognise that the increasing use of music technology means that traditional ideas about music and musical experience need to be revisited and redefined.

The chapter that most effectively crystallises these themes is Victor Fung's 'Possibilities for Music Education as a Result of an Expanded Musicianship'. Fung begins by arguing for cultural sensitivity when engaging with music of other cultures. He contends that whereas it is critically important to be aware of the culturally different ways in which music is experienced, it is impossible 'to achieve comprehensive knowledge, skills, practices and insights in all world music cultures' (p. 71). By studying just a few contrasting musical traditions he suggests that we can develop an understanding of 'the divergence of musical possibilities and differences' and gain a respect for music of other cultures. He concludes that having a more than superficial knowledge of musical differences leads inevitably to 'a new breed of knowledge, skills, practice and insight' and to a 'deeper understanding and adaptation of varied aesthetic values'. Following a perceptive analysis of the impact of music technologies on music and music-making, he suggests that what can occur is an expansion of musicianship which includes 'four new breeds of musical knowledge, skills practices and insights' (p. 73): broadened musical content; musical sensibility to a range of musical traditions; the ability to select music technology which enhances music-making; and digital literacy.

Michael Hannan's 'Future Musicianship and Training for Popular Musicians'

discusses the implication for education of these new breeds of knowledge. He argues that a willingness to train young people in digital technology is sometimes undermined by 'a reluctance to give up traditional notions to make room for new areas of study' (p. 99). Drawing on a memorable quote from Frank Zappa, he argues that traditional musicianship training is sometimes too much about 'writing exercises proving you are capable of accommodating the entertainment needs of deceased kings and popes', and that music teaching must include 'teaching techniques relevant to today's and tomorrow's audiences'.

Nicole Carignan ('Thinking about Music: For a Construction of Meaning') explores the ways in which music depends on social context to construct its meaning. Her illuminating chapter compares and contrasts the creation, re-creation and reception of an example of Western art music (Brahms's First Symphony) with Balinese Gamelan. In an autobiographical chapter ('Humanising the Music Curriculum: Cross-cultural Experiences from Northern Australia'), Scott Trendwith takes up this theme, describing how his growing understanding of the cultural context of aboriginal music has enriched his music-making and teaching in his own cultural context. His description of how he draws on the characteristics and protocols of aboriginal music in his instrumental teaching provides a good model for moving away from traditional technique-based, one-on-one teaching and, more importantly, how barriers between different musical traditions and cultures can be broken down.

Unfortunately, not all the chapters are of the calibre of the ones just mentioned. Meki Nzewi takes a very imaginative approach to his chapter ('African Musicianship in the Global Thrust: Redemption for Disorientating Pulse'), but his writing is so loaded with

metaphor that its meaning at times becomes incomprehensible. Derek Bond ('Teaching Musicianship to the Triple Threat Actor') seems to suggest that only 'literate' musicians really 'understand' music, and he accepts unquestioningly the notion of 'music-as-language', drawing dubious parallels between notation and the written word. Tony Gould's polemical chapter (one of two that bear the title of the book) contains interesting insights, but is so structurally diffuse that his argument is difficult to follow and appears at times to be contradictory.

Other chapters begin well by establishing sound principles. However, the 'gravitational pull' of Western art music becomes too great and the examples of practice or pedagogy they use to exemplify these principles are rooted in the least satisfactory aspects of conventional practice. Steven Laitz's chapter ('Paths to Musicianship') looks at ways of developing traditional musicianship skills such as keyboard harmony and dictation. He rightly criticises the unmusical and abstract nature of traditional dictation/aural training exercises, and his 'four axioms', which emphasise the need to integrate musicianship skills and relate them to real musical contexts, are excellent. However, he never really addresses the fundamental question, which is, why do we make students do these exercises? In an attempt to bring some humanity to the process of music dictation, his suggestions for 'educated guesswork and odds playing' (p. 134) fall into the trap of seeing the 'test' as an end in itself, rather than as the means to greater musical understanding. Furthermore, his ideas for focusing on 'the norm' when improvising result in the kind of stylistically neutral music he warns against in the early part of the chapter. Similarly, although Helen Stowasser ('Musicianship and Motivation') tries to provide pragmatic answers to motivating

children in the music classroom, and identifies an overemphasis on notation as a prime demotivator, her suggested activities are either not musical ones (constructing a musical instrument) or implicitly value music readers over aural learners.

As I suggested at the beginning, however, the strong and often inspirational chapters outnumber those about which I have reservations. In addition to those already mentioned, Bresler makes a strong case for bringing into the classroom the 'cross-fertilisation of genres and disciplines' so characteristic of 21st-century artistic activity. Hentschke and Souza's discussion of the training of music teachers in Brazil identifies one of the great challenges for all teacher trainers, which is how to equip teachers to cope with the 'social/cultural reality of . . . schools' so that the diversity of musical experiences of school pupils does not become a threat to them. George Odam and Jonathan Stephens, in very different ways but with equal elegance and wit, place the present state of musicianship and music education in a social and historical context and provide ideas for ways forward.

For me, however, the most cherishable chapter is Bo Nilsson's "I can always make another one": Young Musicians Creating Music with Digital Tools'. Nilsson's writing communicates the tremendous sense of joy children experience when given the opportunity to work with musical materials on their own terms. The focus of the chapter is on not imposing upon children a particular model of what composing or a composition is, but rather respecting what their composing means to them. Nilsson concludes that in these terms, a composition can be defined as a 'piece of music that its creator experiences as meaningful' (p. 214). A moving description of children talking about their composing shows that at a young

age it seems to them the most natural thing in the world to do.

The best chapters in this book provide a model of music and musicianship that might enable children to retain this sense of musical empowerment rather than draining it from them through the imposition of outmoded and, to them, often irrelevant models and practices. For this reason alone, this valuable and often stimulating book is worth reading.

GARY SPRUCE  
Open University

**Toward a Global Community: The International Society for Music Education, 1953–2003** by Marie McCarthy. Nedlands, Western Australia: ISME, 2004. 258 pp, US\$ 60.

The 50th anniversary of the founding of the International Society for Music Education (ISME) in 1953 was recently celebrated at the 26th World Conference in Tenerife. In this volume, Marie McCarthy tells the story so far, as well as providing at the end a listing of all ISME officers and related material. The volume is dedicated to the memory of the late Sir Frank Callaway, a driving force within ISME, who contributed a 'Greetings' to the history shortly before his death in 2003.

McCarthy makes clear in the Introduction that the book is addressed not only to members of ISME but to the greater music education community. After all, ISME aims to serve as 'the voice of music educators worldwide' (p. 150). Her aims are appropriately ambitious: to devise a study of the relationships between music education and political history, social and cultural developments and economic trends. She is straightforward in establishing the boundaries of the study: it is a top-down history, relying upon interviews and

correspondence with the leading figures of the Society, as well as consulting documentary sources. Furthermore, McCarthy locates herself as an insider of Western ways of thinking, therefore she has checked her own interpretations of the sources against those of others from different cultural backgrounds.

The founding of ISME was inspired and driven by Charles Seeger and Vanett Lawler, and Callaway's reminiscence of a dinner party with Seeger in 1949 is a delightful first-hand account of the planning and the thinking that was already in process. The theme of the conversation was 'wouldn't it be a wonderful development if we could have regular meetings of people coming from different countries, properly organised?' (p. 3). ISME was founded in 1953 during an international conference in Brussels. Initially described by Seeger as 'an interest group', today it represents and serves members in over 70 countries.

The development of ISME witnessed the move from a post-Second World War climate in the 1950s, through a post-Cold War era in the late 1980s, towards a single globalised marketplace and village (which, as McCarthy points out, can be simultaneously empowering and coercive). The ideals of ISME stem from its location within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Music Council (IMC), namely political, social, educational and cultural democracy. The narrative traces the development from a society rooted in First World values and assumptions to one which gradually incorporated into its thinking perspectives that reflected the global diversity of music, and to a lesser degree that of music education. This global diversity and consciousness have also been facilitated by the unprecedented developments in communication, particularly in the last few years.

McCarthy's method is to take each of the five decades of ISME's history in turn. Her chapter headings summarise the main drift of each decade: 'Roots and Beginnings'; 'A Society in Search of Identity and Structure'; 'Expanding Geographic, Intellectual and Structural Frontiers'; 'A Time of Reappraisal and Change'; 'A Time of Redefinition'. She places her introduction, 'Setting the Global Context', and her conclusion, 'Democracy, Diversity, Dialogue: Recurring Themes on the Journey toward a Global Community', as bookends for the study.

It was in 1964, at Budapest, that the present biennial format of conferences took shape. Since then the ISME conference has been a significant date on the music education calendar. Major breakthroughs have been made regarding the location of conferences, with the first meeting in the southern hemisphere in the Australian city of Perth (1974), and a return to Asia in Seoul (1992). McCarthy points to Latin America and Africa as regions in which the Society achieved considerable impact and presence in the 1990s. Inevitably there have been the difficult moments when political events intruded: the occupation of Czechoslovakia, which coincided with the conference in Moscow (1970); the choice of Tunisia as a venue in 1972, which created problems for relations between Arab and Jewish members; the tensions over the Falklands War in 1982, which affected the meeting in Bristol. There were also internal divisions and conflicts, to which McCarthy alludes but understandably does not elaborate upon: the controversial figure of Egon Kraus, an early influential President and Secretary General; the tensions between those who felt the conferences were too big and those who had a wider vision; the controversial move of the International Office from Reading to Utrecht to Perth.

By 1982 all the present seven commissions, which many believe to be the

heart of the movement, were in place, embracing Community Music Activity, Early Childhood, Education of the Professional Musician, Music in Cultural, Educational and Mass Media Policies, Music in Schools and Teacher Training, Music Therapy and Music in Special Education, and the Research Commission. In each chapter McCarthy points to significant developments within conferences and commissions. A recurring theme throughout the book is the relationship between the centre and the periphery of the ISME, and this gives rise to much valuable discussion concerning the Society's finances, its constitutional reforms and its publications, including the *International Journal of Music Education* from 1983, and more recently *Music Education International*.

For McCarthy, the greatest achievement of the Society was 'to expand the geographical, structural and intellectual frontiers towards the ideal of a global community' (p. 182) That ISME has established and maintained an effective international dialogue with music educators is apparent throughout this narrative. Greater cultural and linguistic diversity have demanded a more comprehensive view of music and its transmission, and a sensitivity towards local traditions. For example, McCarthy points to the significance of recent conference themes that have drawn upon indigenous cultural concepts, including 'Ubuntu' in Pretoria in 1998 and 'Samspel' in Bergen in 2002. This is symptomatic of the influence on ISME of the multicultural movement in education. Of particular note are the joint efforts of music educators and ethnomusicologists in tackling the challenge of world musics, which led to the setting up of the Panel for World Musics in 1994, and the adoption of the subsequent policy as the official position of the Society.

There is still much to achieve. For example, there are countries in South and

South-East Asia, the Middle East and Polynesia whose voices have yet to be heard within ISME. Furthermore, in the post-9/11 era it is noteworthy that the 2004 conference in Tenerife revisited one of the Society's cherished aims, music as a medium for developing peaceful relations among people and nations.

Writing an official history is difficult if it is to be more than a self-inflating and self-obsessed account: it is all too easy to provide a false sense of inevitable progress. It is even more of a challenge when dealing with an international organisation devoted to music, tied as music is 'to cultural values and belief systems, and with education which is equally embedded in socio-political and cultural values' (p. 59). Within the constraints of her task McCarthy tells a complex, compelling story full of intricate and intriguing detail, framed most convincingly within the broader concerns of internationalism and globalism. Through her detailed historical investigation of the international connections in music education across and between cultures, and her analysis of the recurring themes of democracy, diversity and dialogue, she has produced a splendid book, both scholarly and accessible. It is a major contribution to music education scholarship.

GORDON COX  
University of Reading

**Choral Conducting: Philosophy and Practice**  
by Colin Durrant. New York: Routledge,  
2003. 204 pp, £16.99, paperback.

This is a most accessible book that is likely to be helpful to a wide readership, including conducting and education students as well as anyone who sings in choirs and wants to know what is going on in the head of the person out front. In many ways, it is autobiographical in approach, Durrant exemplifying the highs and lows of choral

conducting from the viewpoint of his own experience as practitioner, singer, university tutor, adjudicator, workshop leader, examiner and coach. This is achieved alongside thorough allusion to the research literature on group psychology, voice development, non-verbal communication and pedagogy that has flourished in the UK and America during the last decade or so.

By his own admission, Durrant is an inveterate employer of metaphors to encapsulate the ineffable features of musical experience, and the book steers clear of the nitty-gritty of beat patterns and rehearsal techniques in favour of a reflective practice style that assumes the reader is already familiar with these basics. There are problems in this assumption: on the one hand, a really good book on the basics is precisely what is missing from the shelves at present; while, on the other, the use of metaphor can sometimes take on a life of its own. For instance, a theme runs through the book comparing making progress in conducting to learning to improve one's swimming. While this provides a starting point for considering the book's topic – many of us learnt our conducting by jumping in the deep end and seeing whether we sank or swam – it begins to imply that we really ought to address our front crawl if we are to get better results from choirs. I am not sure that research evidence would support this impression.

A strength of the book is its illustration that the practice of choral conducting draws on so many aspects of knowledge, understanding and communication. It thus represents a useful introduction to and commentary upon wider reading – the psychology of Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi, the analysis of voice maturation of Cooksey and Gackle, the analysis of human communication of Mehrabian and Hibbard, the vocal pedagogy of Haasemann and Thurman. A weakness is

its exclusive focus on the Western model of the choir, singing from notated resources: some coverage of the choral traditions of African group vocal music and its influence on Gospel might have made a useful contribution to the potential of the choral director to lead improvisation as well as presiding over the learning of notes. Indeed, the extension of conducting gestures that can be built in this way can transcend the emphasis on keeping time that is the obsession of the inexperienced practitioner, while the dependence many choral conductors have on teaching by rote rather than working with singers who can read music would also have been worthy of examination.

As Durrant explains, the acquisition of conducting ability is an elusive subject. A firm advocate that such skills, including those of rehearsal and voice development, can be taught, he nevertheless admits that there are exceptions to many of the assumptions on which one might build a model of choral conducting success. This is, perhaps, what makes this so fascinating a topic, and this book makes a timely contribution to what promises to be an unending discussion.

NICHOLAS BANNAN  
University of Reading

**The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra**  
edited by Colin Lawson. Cambridge:  
Cambridge University Press, 2003.  
297 pp, £45 hardback, £15.95,  
paperback.

The *raison d'être* and viability of orchestras have been an increasing challenge in the last 20 years: the economic future of several on different continents looks precarious, and accusations of contemporary irrelevance are familiar. In this climate, Colin Lawson's book provides both a fascinating introduction to orchestras' many facets and a stimulating set

of diverse essays which clearly illuminate their extraordinary history, idiosyncrasies and paradoxes. Lawson is careful to point out that this is a companion and not a compendium – more comprehensive work from particular perspectives is reasonably plentiful; for example, Norman del Mar's important reference volume, *Anatomy of the Orchestra* (1981), Edward Downes's *Guide to Symphonic Music* (1983), or the record of musicians' voices in André Previn's *Orchestra* (1979). A central aim of this volume, however, is that the authors, who include musicologists, orchestral managers, composers, players and educationalists, have been encouraged to write from a personal viewpoint, giving their insiders' perspectives, warts and all. In the relationship between these a vibrantly realistic picture of the symphony orchestra emerges at the turn of the 21st century, both dedicated to its heritage of repertoire and searching for a significant continuing cultural role.

The book is divided into 15 chapters, ranging from the history of the orchestra to orchestration and composing, from the revival of historical instruments to training orchestral musicians and recording. Tim Carter and Erik Levi's opening chapter, 'The History of the Orchestra', weaves together a fascinating tapestry of both musical and sociocultural factors that have dominated orchestral developments from the 'house ensembles' before 1800 to the birth of the 'modern symphony orchestra' at the end of the nineteenth century. They also describe the advent of recording and its effects on the particular sound characteristics of different orchestras. Robert Barclay presents an informative overview of 'The Development of Musical Instruments', attributing many developments not so much to composers' and professional players' ideas as to the craftsmen building instruments for amateurs who were constantly on the look-out for new ideas and easier instruments to play. Here, as

in many of the chapters, there are plentiful significant references which provide an excellent starting point for further investigation.

Four chapters cover orchestral repertoire from different angles. Peter Laki surveys the development of the symphony from the earliest *sinfonias* in operas to the 21st century. His style is immediately accessible, yet he cleverly packs detail into the broad sweeps through history. Richard Rastall takes a more didactic approach in 'From Notation to Sound', and presents the fundamental skills of score reading with clear examples. Julian Rushton's style in 'The Art of Orchestration' is denser, but his analyses of the instrumental palette in *Idomeneo*, and of the complexities of texture in the 'Prague' symphony, for example, are subtle, and the accompanying extracts from the scores bring his illuminating ideas into sharp focus. Robert Saxton's chapter, 'The Orchestral Composer', presents an interesting twist on this topic, as he deftly traces the pioneering work of key composers, even comparing Schönberg's Chamber Symphony with Einstein's Theory of Relativity in 1905; but then he comes to some depressing conclusions in relation to contemporary orchestras:

In the United States there is no question that there exist composers who, on account of the present set-up, are prepared to serve up old wine in the 'orchestral museum bottle'; the work becomes a product, aiming to satisfy an audience very different from that which heard Haydn's mature symphonies and a far cry from the post-Beethovenian symphonic orchestral work as a living cultural force. Still less is it a vehicle for research and imaginative leaps in the deepest and best sense. (p. 237)

The scope for contemporary composers to write for orchestras in current climates must

indeed be a key thread in the debates about the future of these organisations.

Jeremy Siepman takes on 'The History of Direction and Conducting' with entertaining details on the way – Haydn directing operas and substituting new arias of his own composition where he found things lacking, witty description of early batons in the form of white handkerchiefs or mechanical arms. In 'International Case Studies', Jon Tolanski compares the development of four important symphony orchestras. To complement this, Clive Gillinson and Jonathan Vaughan outline 'The Life of an Orchestral Musician'. Here they make some bold and provocative statements: 'Artistic creativity lies primarily with conductors and soloists' or 'An orchestra is a microcosm of society and a cross-section of people from all kinds of social backgrounds' (p. 194), and whilst both these chapters give valuable insight into the demands of a gruelling orchestral schedule, they would also benefit from a comparative look at the worlds of chamber and opera orchestras, so providing a more rounded picture of the orchestral scene, and hence of its future possibilities. On this tack, it is perhaps also disappointing that although Appendix 1, 'The Constitution of Selected Orchestras, 1670–1865', clearly demonstrates the slow and less than linear developments of orchestras in a variety of artistic contexts, Appendix 3, 'Orchestras Founded in the Twentieth Century', omits opera orchestras altogether. Including them would undoubtedly add considerably to the volume of the book, but they have had an integral role in overall developments, and arguably continue to do so.

The central issue about the future of orchestras is signalled in different ways in the remaining chapters. Lawson, in 'The Revival of Historical Instruments', writes eloquently about the rise of interest in performance practices and argues cogently that the collaborations between scholars and

practitioners have come to emphasise the potential of historical awareness in many contexts of orchestral performing. Simon Channing, in 'Training the Orchestral Musician', focuses on the educational challenges that the changing profession currently brings particularly to conservatoire programmes. He suggests that the orchestra now needs to pursue the role of 'a resource for the community at large', more closely akin to Boulez's 'ensemble of possibilities', and he identifies key new skills such as the ability to lead a team, be self-confident and learn new skills quickly, which he considers to be important for future musicians 'who will actively lead the process of change, and act as a galvanising influence within an organisation' (p. 182). In this light he goes on to review a variety of youth orchestra and training orchestra programmes and side-by-side schemes between conservatoire students and professional orchestras, although he presents little evidence of how these nurture the key skills mentioned earlier. For anyone thinking about pursuing a career in performing, however, this provides an important point of reference.

'Recording the Orchestra' (John Rushby-Smith) and 'Historical Recordings of Orchestras' (Robert Philip) underline the far-reaching impact of the recording industry, in changing attitudes to live music and in facilitating the move towards greater homogeneity of orchestral sounds across the world. Philip, like Saxton, is forthright about the damaging aspects of this legacy:

The fact that orchestral music-making used to be so diverse, and is now, by comparison, so uniform, is surely not a trend to celebrate. The fact that orchestras were often imprecise is not necessarily something we would now wish to aspire to. But the fact that precision of ensemble used not to be the first priority in music-making, and that the taking of risks was much more a part



of a musician's life than it is today, might make one regret that the priorities have shifted as far as they have. The technology of modern recording has exaggerated this trend... (p. 217)

Lastly, Sue Knussen, the only female author in this collection, presents a clear overview of orchestral education and outreach programmes, indicating the profound effects these can have not only on people who might not otherwise engage with music emotionally and creatively, but also on the professional musicians themselves. In summing up she argues for the potential of education programmes to integrate orchestras within communities, enabling active interaction with music and its power 'to address issues of the human spirit that cannot be articulated' and to 'address the full range of emotions, from joy to sorrow, from violence to peace' (p. 250).

The final chapter then draws some of these threads together, and takes up the challenge of 'The Future of the Orchestra'. Stephen Cottrell rehearses the arguments and dilemmas surrounding different employment models, changing audiences, the balance of repertoire and new work, and outlets for personal artistic expression of the players. He concludes that both institutions and their individuals will need to be as flexible and adaptable as possible if they are to survive in the West, and ends with a plea that the orchestra is 'too important to be allowed to subside into a cultural antiquity for an ever-diminishing group of interested

historians' (p. 264). Indeed, the evidence in this book of the range of interest that the orchestra can generate would support his view. Perhaps, however, given the challenges to orchestras to innovate, adapt, make contact with diverse communities and take a cultural lead, it would be appropriate to include some bolder speculation in this last chapter, radical thinking about future possibilities, or to have sparked such thinking through more conversation between the authors. The current debates are hot ones, and without creative leaps the future looks painfully bleak: witness the latest 'Sinfonia', an electronic orchestra, which has already found its way into the West End musical theatre, directly replacing live musicians. Nevertheless, this book is a stimulating resource, and will provide an excellent addition to any bookshelf. The potential and dilemmas here will interest anyone with a passing acquaintance with orchestras. I should be surprised if even those who live and breathe orchestras do not find thought-provoking material here, as well as anecdotes to delight in.

#### References

- Del Mar, N. (1981) *Anatomy of the Orchestra*. London: Faber and Faber.  
 Downes, E. (1983) *Guide to Symphonic Music*. London: Walker and Co.  
 Previn, A. (Ed.) (1979) *Orchestra*. London: Macdonald and Jane's.

HELENA GAUNT  
 Guildhall School of Music and Drama