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A 'fourth moment' for music education? A response to Chris Philpott's sociological critique of music curriculum change

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The catalyst for this paper is the ongoing debate concerning formal and informal approaches to pedagogy within the music education literature. I utilise a chapter by Philpott (2010) as a means to continue discussion about the apparent dialectic between formal and informal approaches to music learning and the case Philpott raises for radical change in 'three moments' of music education history. In engaging with the concerns in Philpott's chapter I also seek to bring to a wider audience the ideas developed by a group of sociologists of education who draw on the work of Basil Bernstein (2000) and critical realism (Moore, 2013) to argue for a realist theory of knowledge. I utilise these social realist *ideas as a means to engage with the theme of access to what Michael F.D. Young has recently termed 'powerful knowledge' (Young, 2012). As Bernstein (2000) suggests we must have an understanding of the recontextualising principles that come into play whenever the classification of knowledge undergoes change, as ideologies shift and change. I argue for a balance between powerful forms of pedagogy* and *powerful forms of knowledge based on an awareness of the essentially differentiated nature of knowledge.*

Introduction

The interest in the transformative potential of informal learning associated with popular music is increasingly prominent in the music education literature (Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2008; Feichas, 2010; Finney & Philpott, 2010; Philpott, 2010; Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010; Davis & Blair, 2011; Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012; McPhail, 2013a). Most recently, Cain (2013) has noted 'as a teacher-trainer, I encounter schools where student teachers rarely observe or undertake formal music teaching because informal pedagogies have supplanted formal ones' (p. 75). Furthermore Jenkins (2011) asks 'if informal learning is so pervasive, why is there a need for formal learning? Under what circumstances does a society need a systematic approach to knowledge acquisition?' (p. 181). This paper focuses on one answer to these questions by taking one step back from pedagogy to draw attention to the epistemological implications of recognising informal and formal *knowledge* as distinct and differentiated forms. Derived from Durkheim's sacred and profane categories Bernstein (2000) terms these knowledge distinctions horizontal and vertical and Vygotsky every-day and scientific (Vygotsky, 1986). If we accept such a distinction at a deep societal level then there are implications for the contexts, content, and pedagogical approaches of teaching and learning. However, consideration of these epistemological aspects of differentiation of knowledge forms is largely absent from discussion in the music education literature which tends to focus on pedagogy. For example Karlsen and Väkevä (2012) in the introduction to their edited volume suggest four theoretical frameworks for exploring the informal-formal nexus, none of which deals explicitly with the epistemological concerns raised here. For exceptions in the literature see Lamont and Maton (2008) and McPhail (2012, 2013a). It is a key purpose of this paper to bring the idea of knowledge as structurally differentiated into the discussion.

Muller (2006, 2009), Moore (2007, 2009), Young (2008a, 2008b), Wheelahan (2010) and Young and Muller (2010, 2013) build on Bernstein's (2000) concepts of vertical and horizontal discourse to argue that knowledge is irreducibly differentiated: 'Knowledge is structured, in part independently of how we acquire it, and knowledge modes differ in their internal coherence, their principles of cohesion, and their procedures for producing new knowledge' (Young & Muller, 2010, p. 15). In other words formal and informal knowledge are 'structurally differentiated – they are based on different forms of social organization, in all societies' (Young, 2008, p. 7). Drawing on Durkheim, Bernstein, and Vygotsky Young (2008a, 2008b, 2010a) has clarified this idea of knowledge differentiation arguing that there is a vital distinction to be made between context-dependent and context-independent knowledge modes. Context-independent knowledge (also known variously as theoretical, conceptual, disciplinary knowledge) 'is not tied to particular cases and therefore provides a basis for generalizations and making claims to universality' (Young, 2008, p. 15). On the other hand while context-dependent knowledge (social or every-day knowledge) is vital for all sorts of social functioning it 'provides no reliable basis for moving beyond particulars' (2008, p. 15). It lacks the integration of concepts characteristic of deeper systems of meaning. Context-independent knowledge on the other hand is 'codified, tested, and elaborated by specialist communities' (2008, p. 15) giving a certain degree of situated objectivity. Young and Muller (2010) suggest the closest we have to objective knowledge ('truth') is the result of 'a stable relationship between the objects of study and an informed community of practitioners' (p. 21). While the historical conflation of formal (context-independent) knowledge with ideology and power has resulted in restricted access to some forms of knowledge, this is not a problem with the knowledge itself (Alperson, 2010). As Popper (1978) argues, humans do create knowledge that transcends time and context, in other words various forms of knowledge may come to exist independently of the knower and in this sense can have a degree of universality. This knowledge is in a sense *real* as it exerts causal influences well beyond the site of its origins. Bereiter (2002) suggests this knowledge is 'there for the taking, by anyone who has access to it and who can make something of it' (p. 61).

Recently Young has coined the phrase 'powerful knowledge' in an attempt to highlight the potential importance of context-independent knowledge and to distinguish it from the negative delineations with which it is often coupled when described as 'knowledge of the powerful':

> The fact that some knowledge is 'knowledge of the powerful', or high status knowledge as I once expressed it . . . tells us nothing about the knowledge itself. We therefore need another concept in conceptualising the curriculum that I want to refer to as 'powerful

> knowledge'. This refers not to who has most access to the knowledge or who gives it legitimacy, although both are important issues; it refers to what the knowledge can do – for example, whether it provides reliable explanations or new ways of thinking about the world. (Young, 2009, p. 14)

Moreover Young argues (2009) that access to this knowledge in a systemised and engaging pedagogical form (through considered selection, sequence, pacing and evaluation) is generally not available in the home and therefore it is a matter of social concern that schools should provide this epistemological access for all students.

There has been some discussion over Young's use of the term 'powerful' to describe context-independent knowledge (Young, 2012; Beck, 2013; Young & Muller, 2013) and in this paper I utilise his general meaning derived from the question 'What is it about certain forms of knowledge that gives power to those that have access to it?' (Young, 2010a, p. 11). Most often this is conceptual knowledge collectively regarded as foundational within a discipline but also generative of new knowledge creation in that discipline (Moore, 2013). In the field of western art and popular music, for example, this knowledge would include understanding and utilising the ways in which musical materials become structured and made expressive within particular genres or 'music worlds' over time. The knowledge worked out and ordered in the disciplines is recontextualised in schools but increasingly the boundaries between this more formal knowledge and informal conceptualisations of learning (in relation to both content and pedagogy) have begun to be questioned, particularly so in music. Where once experiential dimensions of music making were underemphasised in the curriculum, there is now a growing sense in which it has become unfashionable to also conceptualise experience through the wider theoretical knowledge of the discipline. This is representative of a global shift towards attribute-centred approaches to knowledge rather than disciplinarity (McEneaney & Meyer, 2000). Bernstein's (2000) complex term recontextualisation allows us to begin to see how such shifts in discourse undergo dynamic re-shaping in various fields at various times and he argues that we must have an understanding of the recontextualising principles that come into play whenever the classification of knowledge undergoes change, as ideologies shift and change. Currently the recontextualising principles within education in most western countries are dominated by epistemological relativism (Carey, 2005) (and in music's case aesthetic relativism), and 'instrumentalism and relevance, rather than systematic access to structures of knowledge' (Wheelahan, 2010, p. 104).

Democratising the curriculum, the blurring of knowledge boundaries, for example in establishing a curriculum utilising students' informal largely pre-existing procedural knowledge, can have unintended consequences (Young, 2010a, 2010b; Wheelahan, 2010; Rata, 2012). In the longer term, some forms of realisation (e.g. performance only) may in fact limit the potential for students to contribute more deeply within the parameters of the discipline should they wish to, for example where vital aspects of content are missing or the content's sequence is disguised in outcomes-based curricular models (Muller, 2006). Muller and Gamble (2010) suggest that 'structural forms of a particular knowledge field place distinct limits on effective curricular structure' (p. 509). Moreover Wheelahan (2010) argues that 'a focus on 'knowledge in use' may result in students being given access to contextually specific applications of disciplinary knowledge but *not the* *system of meaning in which it is embedded and made meaningful'* (p. 119, emphasis added).

Making a clear distinction between curriculum and pedagogy (between 'what' and 'how') provides a first step forward; a means to theorise how apparently 'traditional' and 'progressive' content and pedagogy (informal or formal) may be able to sit together within one pedagogic discourse (McPhail, 2013b). For example there is no reason why clear conceptual progression in musical theoretical knowledge cannot underpin a student-centred 'praxial' pedagogical approach to the music curriculum. While Elliott (1995) in his seminal and influential text on music as praxis plays down the significance of formal, conceptual knowledge within the music classroom (see for example p. 62 where he states 'the acquisition of formal music knowledge is a proper but secondary goal of music education'), if access to this way of elaborating experience is not provided at school, then where might students gain access to it? This is where Young's context-independent knowledge can come into play to support informally gained experience. Such an approach retains an epistemic integrity for education in that while it begins with students' own knowledge it aims to take them beyond what they already know (McPhail, 2013c). As Dewey (1938/1997) suggests

> finding the material for learning within experience is only the first step. The next step is the progressive development of what is already experienced into a fuller and richer and also more organised form, a form that gradually approximates that in which subject-matter is presented to the skilled, mature person ... It goes without saying that the organized subject-matter of the adult world and the specialist cannot be the starting point. Nevertheless, it represents the goal toward which education should continuously move. (p. 73)

Having introduced the concept of knowledge differentiation and the distinction between curriculum and pedagogy, in the next section of this paper I engage with Chris Philpott's description and critique of three 'moments' of curriculum history and the conclusion he draws of unrealised radical change in secondary school music education in the UK (Philpott, 2010). Firstly I summarise Philpott's three moments and the key points he makes about each and relate his analysis to the similar curriculum changes in New Zealand. In the discussion section I engage briefly with three significant themes from his chapter – musical autonomy, ideology and relativism. I draw on the recent work of Michael Young to contrast the epistemological implications Philpott draws for a relativist curriculum with those suggested by a social realist account founded on the concepts of knowledge differentiation, judgemental rationality (Moore, 2013), and rights of epistemic access (Young, 2013a; McPhail, 2014a). I also utilise two vignettes (Suter, 2012) from my experiences as a student and teacher as indicative of the ideas and concepts being discussed.

Interlude Vignette 1 from the past

It is 1975 and a group of boys in a large conservative single-sex high school amble into the music room for a lesson. In such a conservative school in the 1970s, the music room and its symbolic space provide a sanctuary from the macho culture that pervades most other spaces of the school. These boys are not from particularly affluent or musical families but some of them have begun piano lessons or are learning a band or orchestral instrument through the school free lesson system. They are keen for a classroom experience to support their growing interest in music. The sight of boys eagerly grabbing great scores of symphonies off the shelves, like tomes of treasure awaiting opening, appears to contradict expected delineations concerning teenage boys and musical tastes. The class finds great pleasure and considerable satisfaction in coming into contact with this knowledge; avidly listening to recordings and learning to follow scores of music. This is my class of some thirty years ago. Out of class we participated in orchestras, bands, and choirs and out of school I taught myself to play and read pop notation on the piano and indulged my love of musical theatre. In the school music classroom I came into contact with a world of music unknown and undreamt of.

The changing classification of knowledge in the music curriculum – Philpott's three moments

The critique of school knowledge as 'knowledge of the powerful' began in the 1970s in what Philpott (2010) describes as the first of three significant moments in music education development in the UK. This first of these moments centred on the problematising of educational knowledge through the discourses of what came to be known as the *New Sociology of Education* (NSOE). Edwards (2013) notes that the NSOE 'questioned asymmetries of power enacted through the reification of knowledge and raised questions about the fairness of a curriculum that reproduced such patterns of privilege' (p. 4). Significantly for this paper, which draws on Michael Young's recent work, Young was also at the forefront of the NSOE critiques in the 1970s and 1980s (Young, 1971) and his ideas from this period remain central to Philpott's current arguments. Philpott (2010) notes that 'in music education the sociology of knowledge was typically used to show how 'pop' music was subverted by values and knowledge surrounding 'classical' music, and that success in the classroom was reliant upon embracing the latter' (p. 82). Vulliamy (1977) provided an insightful and necessary critique of the music curriculum in the 1970s from this perspective and his work revealed that engagement with classical music, as 'music of the powerful', was the only route to success in school music at that time. He focused on the symbolism of popular music as the 'silenced other', although legitimate claims might have been made for jazz and other non-classical styles, and popular music has certainly not been silenced in society generally. Nevertheless at that time and still today, popular music is seen as the music of student choice symbolising rights of ownership to the curriculum (Allsup, 2008).

More specifically Philpott (2010) summarises the sociological critique of the NSOE as providing 'a set of critical tools . . . including the concepts of stratification, reification, commodification, alienation and relativism' (p. 82). He argues that the deconstruction of the curriculum in the 1970s concluded that 'the upshot of a stratified, reified and commodified curriculum is an *alienated* relationship between pupils and school knowledge' (p. 83, emphasis in original). The implication of 'alienation' (what Philpott defines as a 'disjuncture' between the informal and formal contexts of music learning, p. 83) for an entire population is of course a generalisation as the first vignette in this paper sets out to exemplify. For me and many of my school friends from varied backgrounds there was no alienation but ultimately celebration (Green, 2005) although there may well have been alienation or ambiguity for other pupils. I wonder if the sense of discovery would have been as significant if our curriculum experience had been centred on the popular music that we already had some knowledge of and access to. As a teenager I had no concept of classical music as 'music of the powerful'. Along with Supertramp I found it to be powerfully moving music! Somewhat ironically given much current critical discourse it was classical music that provided me with a 'standpoint' (Au, 2012) from which to respond to the hegemonic cultural and social imperatives considered appropriate for boys at that time. In this sense it was an emancipatory knowledge. My point here is that we must be careful not to assume what knowledge and pedagogy students may find powerful and empowering, nor that informal learning and popular music will automatically lead to this empowerment (Allsup & Olson, 2012). Green (2005) argues strongly for the potential of music to cross expected social and cultural boundaries through the power of both inherent and delineated meanings.

Philpott (2010) concludes that the sociological critique in this first moment (the critique of school knowledge as 'knowledge of the powerful') 'failed to realize the radical implications for pedagogy' (p. 81), that of a relativised and unalienating curriculum resulting in a redistribution of musical success in the classroom. This may be a valid observation in relation to music education within the UK at that time, however, the discourses of the NSOE have had far-reaching consequences in terms of the acceptance of constructivism, culturalism, and relativism within the social sciences and in education in particular (Young, 2008a; Moore, 2009; Rata, 2012), and in music education in New Zealand (McPhail, 2013c). If, as Philpott suggests, the debate until recently in the UK emphasised content at the expense of pedagogy, the situation in New Zealand since the early 1990s has seen far-reaching changes to both these dimensions (McPhail, 2012, 2013b). In contrast to Philpott's assessment of the UK experience, the secondary school music curriculum now in place in New Zealand is so localised (a recontextualising principle) it now runs the risk of short-changing many of those students that the changes aimed to advantage in the first place. Internationally there appears to be a widening gap between the knowledge with which students can now achieve success at school and the knowledge they may need to achieve success out of school particularly if they wish to study further at tertiary level (Slonimsky & Shalem, 2006; Moore, 2012; Luckett & Hunma, 2013).

Philpott's second moment is identified as the period of increased curricular statutory development in the 1990s in which policy documents responded to the sociological critique of the NSOE and again Philpott sees this as a largely failed project in the UK. Statutory developments too occurred in New Zealand with the advent of national curriculum documents in the 1990s which were continually refined up until 2007 when a new lean document was mandated (Ministry of Education, 2007). The current New Zealand document is content light with an emphasis on key competencies and values. Through the recontextualising principle of localisation considerable autonomy is available to schools, teachers, and students to shape the content of the curriculum, and to choose the assessment standards and methods that suit them (Ministry of Education, 2007). In this way the New Zealand curriculum has successfully redistributed access to musical achievement via a more varied content in the classroom. Before the curriculum changes of the 1990s only classical music was studied and performance and composition were not part of the curriculum. Student uptake of music for higher school qualifications remains on the increase and comparable to drama (NZQA, 2013), unlike the problems identified with GSCE uptake in the UK (Lamont & Maton, 2008). Teachers in New Zealand have responded to the opportunity to open up the curriculum to a new and diverse range of experiences for students (McPhail, 2013c, 2014b). A long history of progressivism in New Zealand education, together with less entrenched class structures, and the direct input of teachers on the restructuring of curricula, may all be influences on this change in the classification and framing of music knowledge; in both challenging the role of powerful groups to define what counts as school knowledge (in the past this was the role of the universities) and in shifting prevailing social structures as symbolised by musical content and pedagogy (McPhail, 2013c). The concern for many teaches in New Zealand now is that the changes may have been too radical and that secondary school music runs the risk of losing epistemological integrity as a critical educational endeavour (McPhail, 2014b).

In contrast Philpott (2010) argues that the changes in the UK were more cosmetic than actual and that the ideology of the western classical aesthetic maintains its influence; 'the social and pedagogical relations surrounding the construction of musical knowledge did not change' (p. 85). For example, while popular music may have entered the curriculum it was still approached in ways that perpetuated the underlying values of the classical aesthetic, values such as complexity, originality and universality.[1] Philpott describes this as a museum approach where music is regarded as a commodity to be studied rather than something to be experienced or produced. In this scenario students continue to be alienated from the curriculum by the unrealised potential of the 'creative agency of pedagogy' (Philpott, 2010, p. 86). Philpott asks, 'Is it possible to develop pedagogy for the music classroom in which pupils are seen as the 'makers' of musical knowledge as opposed to consumers?' (2010, p. 87). If by 'makers of musical knowledge' Philpott means students engaging in creative and increasingly autonomous ways with the already existing concepts of the discipline, and adding to them, for example through composing and performing, then I support that idea. If he means that students are somehow capable of inventing their own knowledge, then this seems somewhat fanciful. We can value a student's perspective and input but this is certainly not the same as making knowledge from a student's worldview. Even Elliott (1995) in his rejection of music education as aesthetic education (see pp. 29–38) describes the development of musicianship as a form of induction into the music making traditions and conventions of various musical styles and practices. In this sense students do not make up the curriculum. They join mostly pre-existing traditions developed in style or taste communities which they may eventually contribute to in original ways (see for example Martin's (2006) discussion on how improvisation consists of a long induction into the norms of the field). The important question here is to what degree should students have input into curriculum content (see New Zealand secondary schools teachers' views on this question in McPhail, 2014b) or are they capable of finding their own way (see for example the case of PJ in Finney, 2007). Often the most efficient route is for a student to be guided through layers of musical problem solving by a knowledgeable and musically proficient teacher.

It is in Philpott's third moment that a radical change finally appears imminent for music education in the work of Lucy Green and the *Musical Futures* project (2008); 'Informal learning, where pupils are in control of the musical knowledge they produce. This approach has offered a vision for a new pedagogy with the potential to realize the radical implications of the sociological critique' (Philpott, 2010, p. 87).

Philpott's 'Moment 3' is centred on the influence of new informal pedagogies (Green, 2008) that locate 'musical knowledge with the students themselves, now in an unalienated relationship . . . knowledge is relativized and not externally imposed as a commodified, reified corpus' (Philpott, 2010, p. 88). Green's work essentially sees the informal learning practices of popular musicians utilised in the classroom. This involves students choosing the music they wish to aurally replicate in friendship groups with no formal plan of sequenced learning or instruction, and teachers work as observers and advisors. The influence of these informal pedagogies appears to have quite far-reaching influence if we recall Cain's remark from earlier in this paper yet it was not Green's intention that her informal project would provide a full and complete curriculum replacing other more formal dimensions of musical learning (Green, 2008). There is a danger that the proclamation of a schismatic break from what has come before quickly becomes reified as the answer to perceived problems within the field (Moore, 2009). However, Philpott (2010) is aware of this problem, as he suggests that even this radical pedagogical approach runs the risk of being captured by statutory requirements and becoming a curriculum package subverting 'the very process it aims to promote' (p. 88). Philpott also raises concerns about the 'conservative influence' of secondary school music teachers trained in classical traditions subverting the potential of Green's project, however my research from New Zealand indicates that teachers remain very open to diversity within their classrooms no matter what their personal musical background (McPhail, 2014b).

Philpott concludes his discussion of the three Moments with a brief mention of formal learning. He cites Folkestad's seminal paper (2006) that suggests informal and formal approaches are a matter of orientation to either playing and making music on the one hand or learning *how* to make and play music on the other and that 'all musicians are constantly engaging in a dialectic' between these two conceptions (Philpott, 2010, p. 89). Interestingly Philpott does not mention Folkestad's (2006) conception of a continuum of practice ('formal – informal should not be regarded as a dichotomy, but rather as two poles of a continuum' (2006, p. 135) but rather seems to be arguing for the primacy of the informal. The form, content, and extent of any formal knowledge within such a scenario is not clearly elaborated. How exactly will students be guided to be curriculum and/or knowledge makers and what form might this knowledge take?

Philpott concludes rather pessimistically that at each of these three moments in music educations' recent history the potential for radical change, that of realising the epistemological implications of the original NSOE critique of a relativised and unalienated curriculum, has been subverted by stronger, less visible ideological recontextualising principles; in the first moment by continuing to privilege content over any significant change in the approach to pedagogy, in the second by the continued subtle ideological influence of the values of the western classical aesthetic in perpetuating the status quo, and in the third, by the potential reification of informal music learning as a curriculum 'package' underpinned by the conservatism of classically trained teachers. In other words 'overarching structural influences have outweighed the power of radical human agency' (Philpott, 2010, p. 90).

Discussion

Philpott reports on the views of both Green and Young from papers appropriate to the period he is referring to but that do not necessarily represent more recent developments in their thinking. Most significant for this discussion is the change of perspective of Michael Young. As Beck (2013) has pointed out 'Young himself has more recently repudiated most of these ideas, especially those grounded in epistemological relativism, in favour of a stance indebted to social realism' (p. 1). Young (2013a) now suggests 'curriculum theory must begin not from the learner but from the learner's entitlement to knowledge' (p. 101). Context-independent knowledge is considered by many theorists to be the key to the development of higher-order thinking, and the process of conceptualising experience makes the important transition from the realm of experience to that of conceptualisation and abstraction (Muller & Gamble, 2010; Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2011). Considering concepts as paramount to the work of education is central to Carl Bereiter's (2002) work and to his utilisation of Popper's (1978) concept of 'Three Worlds', where he argues that it is through concepts that knowledge gains a level of autonomy and objectivity. In musical terms this is the idea that there is conceptual knowledge about music that is not tied to specific contexts and that may be utilised across contexts. For example the expressive potential of 'western' tonal harmony has been adopted, adapted, and utilised by many cultural groups around the world, just as many aspects of non-western music also exert influences on western practices. In a postcolonial environment this conceptual knowledge moves well beyond its site of production to be used by anyone who has access to it and sees in it some creative potential: epistemological motivations rather than political ones (Alperson, 2010). It may be that such generative concepts of a discipline hold the key for enabling students to make connections through various forms of content to pivotal knowledge that reaches across stylistic and even across cultural contexts (Hijleh, 2012). The content chosen by teachers to represent and illustrate these concepts is of vital importance (Rata, 2012). This is the distinction between knowledge content and knowledge concepts (the former being relatively fluid and the latter, relatively stable, Young, 2013b). Most students do not have this knowledge, and in this sense need considerable guidance to become, as Philpott suggests, curriculum makers.

In the next section I discuss the concepts of musical autonomy, ideology, and relativism, three key ideas in Philpott's chapter. I suggest that while the New Sociology of Education critique was instrumental in providing an historically pivotal deconstruction of the prevailing view of the curriculum as unproblematic, nevertheless it leaves us with the question of how to construct a curriculum post-deconstruction. What or whose knowledge do we include? I argue that relativism does not provide a satisfactory answer for curriculum development (it creates a sort of reductionism where all knowledge is conflated with power) but that judgemental rationality as espoused in social realism does (Maton & Moore, 2010; Rata & Barrett, 2014).

Musical autonomy

The belief that music 'expresses its meaning solely through the relationships and interplay of its sonic materials' (Spruce & Matthews, 2012, p. 119) independent of social context is described as musical autonomy and this is one of the dimensions of the hegemonic discourse or ideology of modernist aesthetics that Philpott suggests helps to perpetuate the alienation of students from the music curriculum. Philpott utilises some of Green's earlier work to support this position, suggesting that students need to develop an understanding of the musical processes connected with the cultural contexts of production. Nevertheless more recently Green argues 'for a partial but necessary reinstatement of the much-maligned notion of musical autonomy as a critical moment in any attempt to change things' (Green, 2005, p. 78). This possibility, she argues, comes from the potential for music's autonomous inherent meanings to communicate across social and cultural boundaries and this constitutes one of music's most powerful effects. Informal contexts can provide a much needed site of direct access to music's effects and production processes while more formal mediums of knowledge acquisition provide the means to understand and critique these effects. In other words music education needs to take account of both the potential of the sonic affective experience (often an informal experience) and the need to explain, understand and conceptualise that experience (often a more formal experience) irrespective of musical style. But these are two quite different and complementary 'ways of knowing'. It is not that one form is 'good' and one is 'bad' but they are essentially differentiated (Bernstein, 2000) and both are required in an educative encounter that claims to be critical. As Green (2008) suggests, an educational aim is to 'invoke a notion of 'critical musicality' . . . and [to] address it to pupils' own music as much as to any other' (p. 14).

Ideology

The hegemony of western classical music has been revealed through post-structural analysis (for example Spruce, 2002) and in response to such ideological deconstructions major positive changes have occurred in curriculum conception and policy (McPhail, 2012). Moreover, if we consider ideology to be primarily a form of concealment with the intention of benefitting only some groups in society then we can mitigate its tacit influence, as far as possible, to go beyond an ideology critique by looking for an epistemic core of knowledge that can be separated from political effects. In terms of school knowledge, a critical awareness of the dialectic nature of various value positions that may become official or unofficial recontextualising principles (Bernstein, 2000) should encourage open choices for curriculum content rather than either a hidden curriculum leading to reification and unquestioned legitimation, or to a new ideology created as a reaction to what has come before (Alperson, 2010). Green's (2003) important points concerning ideology's potential are worth noting in full:

> What the concept of ideology continues to be able to do, is to make us aware of some of the distinctions between different types of evaluative claims, to help us understand how musical values affect musical practices, and most significantly, to indicate how our musical practices can act back to affect our musical values. What the concept of musical ideology cannot and should not do, is allow us to slip into a position of total relativism . . . (p. 22)

Louth (2012) suggests a 'critical' approach to music teaching that invokes the notion of a dialectic in a perpetual cycle of critique. For example he cites the need to look beyond the apparent naturalness of the western tonal system and to search for critical ways to understand it, nevertheless this is not possible without first encountering it as 'knowledge'. Without the discomfort of a dialectical approach now possible with our understanding of music's varied sources of power (political, economic, epistemic) students run the risk of education simply celebrating their subjectivity and mirroring the apparent choice of the predatory market place (Allsup & Olson, 2012).

Relativism

In keeping with the original critique of knowledge from the NSOE, Philpott regards the relativising of knowledge as central to music education's search for an unalienating curriculum. In Bernstein's terms (2000) it would be a prime recontextualising principle relying on weak classification and framing of knowledge (McPhail, 2013b). However Young (2010a) now identifies a central problem in the relativising of knowledge:

> If the structure of knowledge is an expression of the distribution of power in society, there can be no objective basis for the distinctions between different types of knowledge and whether some can make stronger truth claims than others . . . Taken to its extreme, this argument leads to a relativism that sees knowledge differences as merely expressions of the experience of different groups. (p. 11)

Relativism certainly creates problems for education and in the case of music education, if all music and all opinions regarding music are equally valid, then what are we to teach, and how are we to encourage the development of critical awareness in students? One possible outcome of relativism is that conversations become limited where students only study or know what they are interested in. Woodford (2005) argues:

> If music is truly only subjective, or only intelligible to members of a particular social or cultural group, then there can be no conversations . . . only monologues leading to cultural imposition, increased fragmentation, and a retreat from the wider world and its problems. (p. 19)

While the sociological critique of the 1970s provided the impetus for much-needed change, it did not ultimately provide a way of theorising what should be taught in schools (Young, 2010a); of creating a theory of knowledge enabling a differentiation of the arbitrary from the necessary. Emptied out curriculum documents (Muller, 2006; Priestley, 2011; McPhail 2012) and the more recent instrumentalist search for 'best practice' has continued to centre attention on pedagogy rather than the important distinction and relationship between pedagogy and what pedagogy is the carrier of (McPhail, 2013b). The important conversation needed within music education now concerns not only, as Philpott (2010) suggests, the relationship between informal and formal knowledge and pedagogy, but also the implications of knowledge differentiation (What knowledge might be necessary for knowledge building and in what sequence?) and the distinction between content and pedagogy (In what ways should teaching be approached?). What can education add to students' informal knowledge that they do not already possess? These are the big questions, as Bereiter (2002) asks:

> How do we make contact between students' interests and the big ideas that form the intellectual life of a civilization? How do we teach things that lead somewhere? How do we ensure that the quest for understanding maintains a continually growing edge? (p. 339)

What is required for education is a flexibly evolving 'canon' based on judgemental rationality rather than relativistic preferences, that teachers use to guide students to a critical awareness of the musicing judged most compelling within given musical practices, genres, styles, and cultures. Judgemental rationality provides a way out of the educational dilemma, an epistemological 'either'/'or' impasse – with Philpott's museum approach on one side and total relativism on the other. Social realists argue that there are 'rational, intersubjective bases for determining the relative merits of competing knowledge claims' (Maton & Moore, 2010, p. 4); 'This enables one to accept the relativity of knowledge but also judge some forms of knowledge (powerful knowledge) as having greater explanatory powers than others' (Luckett & Hunma, 2013, p. 2). This *judgemental rationality* does not argue for negation of musical values held by students and their communities (McPhail, 2013c) but it may provide a means to theorise what we may need to include in a crowded curriculum. Agency is developed in the way both students and teachers can be aware of the contested nature of the processes of legitimation by having to argue though evidenced judgment for the music and music making processes they find most compelling. Bowman (1998) too argues for the acceptance of a 'responsible relativism': 'Relativism need not contend that all criteria . . . all assertions of musical worth, are equally defensible' (p. 5) but, rather, judgements of value can be made 'without claiming at the same time that they are ultimate' (p. 6). As Moore (2010) argues 'judgements are less than absolutes in that they acknowledge their fallibility. They are more than preferences in that they submit themselves to historically evolved rules of collective evaluation' (p. 152).

Conclusion

Bernstein (2000) suggests we must have an understanding of the recontextualising principles whenever the classification of knowledge undergoes change, as ideology comes into play. Young and other curriculum realists have laid bare the epistemological implications of the sociological critique of the NSOE and its shortcomings, in particular its failure to provide a theory for curriculum inclusion rather than exclusion. The problem is that in our ethically motivated moves to democratise the curriculum we have overlooked matters of knowledge differentiation, widening the potential for increased participation but not necessarily for epistemic access, and we must be careful not to disadvantage those we aim to advantage through the reification of a new curriculum ideology largely empty of 'powerful knowledge'.

In agreement with Philpott it is clear both informal and formal knowledge and pedagogy must play their part in music education. It is also clear that the New Sociology of

Education has necessarily 'given voice' to historically marginalised forms of music and ways of being musical, particularly through our awareness of the curriculum as reproducing the interests of dominant groups. However, unlike Philpott I have argued that relativism does not provided a satisfactory way forward as an escape from aesthetic ideology; it runs the danger of simply replacing one ideology with another. I have argued that while there may be no escape from some form of ideological position, judgemental rationality that involves testing our ideas in extended disciplinary communities is our best option for developing a curriculum that acknowledges the importance of experience (the informal or context-dependent) but also the development of understanding of that experience (the formal or context-independent). It is context-independent knowledge that provides the mechanism for the development of critical understanding. The problem identified by Bereiter (2002) remains; 'How do we make contact between students' interests and the big ideas that form the intellectual life of a civilization?' (p. 339). This is the next challenge in developing a curriculum where both informal and formal knowledge sit together rather than one replacing the other. It is a pedagogical challenge, and one also for teacher training, but one I have argued that should take account of knowledge differentiation. As Young and Muller (2010) suggest we need to seek out a 'Future 3' model for education, neither under-socialised, moribund, and elite as in the past, nor over-socialised and epistemologically weak, as is in the present. Bringing knowledge back in (to use the title of Young's 2008 book) could be music education's 'fourth moment'. In this moment there is a realisation that conceptual knowledge must play a pivotal role in establishing an unalienated curriculum for students, one that ultimately is of use in expanding and explaining the world they already know.

Coda – Vignette from 2012

My year 11 class this year has been particularly challenging. It includes many students who love to play their guitars and sing. Some are talented composers, singer-song writers who have little or no formal music knowledge. They just love music and opted to take it. I work with Ella, who has not been particularly engaged so far this year. She has been stuck for some time working on a song, finding it difficult to move the song ahead. She has limited experience with reading music or conceptualising ways of working beyond her guitar and voice. I decide to introduce her to some sequencing software and one particular way of utilising it. By way of introduction we work together at getting some of her tune into the computer via the keyboard. We then 'arrange' her song using her chord progressions and adding a bass line, a keyboard part, and a harmony line. Once the tune is in the computer she can play along with it and by ear and eye develop a bass line that fits with the music. Ella is learning that there is a structural relationship between a melody and its harmonic implications in the bass. She later discovers there is more than one way to realise the bass line and how harmony provides a sense of progression in the music. All this is developed with constant sonic feedback so the ear and the concepts are developing together. Along the way we are beginning to develop a language with which to talk about these concepts and the choices they provide. Ella is more motivated than usual and seems quite excited by the prospect of working in this way. These concepts can be informed and made explicit through more formal means when Ella is entirely convinced I have her best interests as a learner at heart and is prepared to come along with me on the learning journey.

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Note

1 Interestingly Jones (2008), in his book *The Rock Canon* lists the following dimensions as significant amongst the criteria for positive reception in the rock music field: originality, authenticity, seriousness, pure artistic motivation and autonomy, *complexity*, and lasting relevance (italics added). We can all think of highly effective pieces of music that are not complex, and perhaps 'sophistication' (which could be demonstrated through alarmingly simple means) could be a better criterion than complexity per se, nevertheless it is identified as significant in Jones's analysis.

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