

## Book Reviews

**Thinking Musically: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture** by Bonnie C. Wade. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. 180 pp + CD, no price given, paperback.

**Teaching Music Globally: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture** by Patricia Shehan Campbell. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. 258 pp, no price given, paperback.

The tag-line for these books is extremely attractive, promising a focus on how ‘people make music meaningful and useful in their lives’. This has been the elusive philosopher’s stone of ethnomusicology and world musics in education for at least the past two decades: how to communicate and enable a sharing focused around our musicking in its full intertextual richness. *Thinking Musically* and *Teaching Music Globally* are the two framing books for Oxford University Press’s ‘Global Music Series’. As the frames they are closely interlinked, both drawing on the CD attached to *Thinking Musically*, and then referring to the other case studies forming the rest of the series. They acknowledge that the job of supporting teachers who want their students to engage with some of the world’s musics has not always been sufficiently well done in the past. It is certainly time that this was reconsidered, as my perspective is that the dearth of effective high quality materials has led to some lessening of the urge for musical inclusivity in school curricula documentation, delivery and assessment. This series aims to provide materials to allow teachers to make choices that suit them and their circumstances, where the materials draw on the deep knowledge of those who have studied these musics and had the encounters themselves, and there is recognition of contemporary reality, rather than harking back to a non-existent

authentic/traditional mother-lode. This contemporary reality brings to the fore a set of significant topics (gender, globalisation and authenticity) to form a strand through the series. There is much to be enthusiastic about here which helps communication and sharing, but I have reservations about the framing presented in these two books.

*Thinking Musically* aims to provide a structure for working with the case studies. The author, Bonnie Wade, notes a dislike for comparative study but does not then really seem able to escape from it as she sums up: ‘[comparing] is inevitable when diverse materials are presented in a course’. If that is not an amenable task – and I fully understand the reluctance to undertake it – then why spend this book doing precisely that for much of the time? The case study books could stand by themselves, but this book aims to establish that there are common principles underlying intramusical organisation across global musics but mostly avoids considering how *meaning* and *use* might be explored. The very organisation of the book is disappointing in that it reinforces an essentialist, structuralist view of music, dividing it into instruments, rhythm, time, pitch and structure. There is an introduction which considers meaning, and a final chapter which explores issues, but these should have been the meat of this book: where is meaning to be made/found, how do we deal with it having made/found it? There are very many times when it is asserted that this is the driving energy: ‘the focus that is the most significant in ethnomusicology is people. People make music what it is, and *people make music meaningful and useful in their lives*’ (pp. xiv, 1, original emphasis). But the book tells us little about ways of thinking about how or why people do this. The case studies do (from the brief extracts I have

viewed on the related web site), but there is no substantial frame here.

Chapter 1 explores people first, asking who is involved in music, dividing them into *music-makers* and *listeners*. This is perhaps surprising, given the amount of work aiming to persuade that listening is an active attribute of music, that making meaning and responding to that meaning is a vital role for music (the work of David Elliott, Christopher Small, Keith Swanwick, June Boyce-Tillman and many others has explored this convincingly). Bonnie Wade does not really mean to make this division and develops the notion at later points, but as the discussion here only lasts for two (small) pages there is scope for much more, and a vital opportunity is missed. The chapter then moves on to consider 'what is music?' This fascinating topic is effectively and honestly introduced, assuring no overarching paradigms are presented before moving on to 'Musical values', which mainly deals with issues in aesthetics – here meaning what is regarded as beautiful or appropriate in particular circumstances and situations – and music's expressive capacity. This last aspect is enriched by quotations from students about musical values. These provide a rich insight, often strongly felt and clearly articulated. However, they are always students from American institutions (and mostly from the author's own university). This is not wrong, it is a source of strength, but it is not enough. It reminds us that this is an American textbook, setting an American framework for a series on the world's musics by other American academics, designed for use in American educational systems. The case studies in the series are much more open and revealing of the sources of the world's musics, but they are not well served here. The chapter moves on to 'meaning', and again it is unfortunate that this is not given more space. The debate about the location of meaning is fertile, vital and important. To sum it up in just over nine

lines means there is no preparation for the depth of the debate which I assume will be forthcoming in the case studies. There are then examples of meaning found in music-and-text before going to music-as-text. This is another opportunity to open up the excitement of how music works on/with/for us, but instead this is reduced to the notion that meaning is acquired from the situation in which music is heard. This is an entirely appropriate notion, but it is not sufficient. There is a vast swathe of aesthetics, poetics, physiology and psychology that is not revealed. It may be thought that this is because of the target audience (teachers), who have limited time to get to grips with complex material. However, teachers are in the peculiarly complex position of having to engage both with a source which has been mediated (in this series doubly mediated from framework to case study), and with the pedagogical/social/cultural imperatives of a group of students temporarily inhabiting an educational system, and enabling a fruitful relationship between the two. To do that they must be supported by materials that are clear and straightforward, certainly, but also sufficient for each engagement to be real.

The next section deals with the 'use' of music. This again is precisely what this book needs to do, to reveal and explore what music does: 'it defines, represents, symbolizes, expresses, constructs, mobilizes, incites, controls, transforms, unites, and so much more' (p. 15), and then move on to consider how it does this in its various contexts. But we are given little more than a brief introduction when the author could have introduced the case studies much more abundantly and usefully, and given the reader some tools to engage with them enthusiastically and imaginatively. The final section of this chapter deals with transmission. This is secure ground on which to be descriptive and comparative, and

provides the pattern for the next few chapters as we move through 'Thinking about instruments' – which presents some models of classification, 'Thinking about time' – which deals with rhythm and does make the important point about the physicalisation or embodiment of rhythm through movement, 'Thinking about pitch' – which leads on to melody, polyphony, heterophony and so on through thinking 'vertically and horizontally'. Bonnie Wade acknowledges that this is a Western notion but doesn't consider alternatives, or just not doing it. This may be another instance of the book being aimed at a very culture-specific educational system.

The following chapter is 'Thinking about Structure', which starts with the important line of reasoning that 'ethnomusicologists are interested in exploring not only *how* music is structured but also *why* it is structured the way it is' (p. 108). However, it is mostly the 'how' that is explored until the final short section on 'Social values'. 'Thinking about issues' does an interesting job well and brings a strong dose of reality into discussions that are often based on stereotypes and dogmas. The issues themselves are well chosen: globalisation, influences, boundaries, gender, the national community, other group identities, the local, transnationalisation, authenticity, mass media, and some of the many relationships between these start to be presented. This chapter is for me one of the principal strengths of this book: it looks at arguments, at current discourses which the reader can then follow through into the case study books.

I am also very taken with the idea of the last chapter, 'Thinking about Fieldwork'. I am entirely convinced that fieldwork (which can of course be very local) is one of the best routes into uncovering our own musico-contextual authenticities, of finding how music functions for us, how we address

the issues and so on. This chapter doesn't really make that argument, however. It starts from the point that fieldwork is what ethnomusicologists do before going quickly on to how to do it, again answering the answerable 'how?' rather than the more problematic 'why?' I would have then liked some summary of where the reader will now be, what skills they might expect to be able to use, how to relate them to other materials in the series and beyond (because although the case studies are well spread out geographically, they can never be exhaustive or responsive to all particular needs or circumstances).

In the end I wanted the chapters 'Thinking about Music' and 'Thinking about Issues' to be expanded, and the others to be subsumed within them where appropriate or left to the specifics of case studies. These two chapters are the real ethnomusicology, and better than that they are the real music-in-life, but I think they need a fair bit of support.

*Teaching Music Globally* provides a rather more positive encounter. It has a different remit in that it is much more explicitly about suggesting methods for engaging with world musics in the classroom at various stages. The imperatives of the American educational system are well to the fore here, but there are certainly some ideas that could be developed elsewhere. The opening does a good job of enthusing teachers and of bringing them up to date with the interesting diversity of practice in music learning and teaching in various traditions. This allows teachers to recognise their own skills and practices while opening ideas about alternatives. There is also a good amount of 'why?' being answered here. This takes on some of the history of world musics and moves on to consider relationships with what children are able to accomplish and thus how they become engaged. The majority of the book is taken up with suggested classroom activities drawing on

*Thinking Musically* and its accompanying CD. It starts with schedule suggestions, and the notion of comparative studies is prominent, but there are also suggestions for planning some depth studies which I am inclined to think is a more secure way of enabling meaningful engagement. The end of each chapter takes the form of three 'Problems to probe'. I think these have been well chosen to assist the teacher who is thinking about developing this work make sense of things and grapple with some of the major concepts at an appropriate stage. Chapter 2 deals with 'Sound Awareness' and takes some well-known activities and develops them to get students engaged with the musicking going on in their own communities. These are also very good at starting to raise interesting questions at an early stage, for example, what is needed to recognise musical beauty? Once it gets on to musical structures I am less convinced by the choices as they start moving away from the intention of the series by considering music only through Western structural concepts rather than music in its own life – so comparison of human vocal concepts (p. 42) draws, implicitly, on Alan Lomax's cantometrics project, leaving value-laden descriptive terms such as 'raspy' and 'nasalized'. However, there are lots of types of activities here to allow discerning teachers to considerably enrich their own portfolios. The next three chapters move forward from 'Attentive Listening', which is 'directed listening', that is, focused on musical elements and structured, through 'Engaged Listening' (the active participation by the listener in some extent of music-making) and 'Enactive Listening' (the stylistically accurate performance of the work). I am taken with this way of making the music live through participating in aspects of performance as soon as possible. My surprise is that they are presented as developmental phases, whereas my expectation would be that the youngest

children are often most able to perform with stylistic authority from listening: a recent infant school harvest festival in Hampshire included a song sung by Year 2 which copied exactly the Highlands Scots tone and pronunciation of their teacher.

There is another issue, and that is the CD samples provided. They are often very short, and while the author recognises that this is the case (p. 194), she suggests that they are sufficient. I am not so sure, as there is virtually nothing of depth in this initial CD, and teachers will need to look for other exemplar material. There is also some technical confusion: for example, track 25 is credited on page 104 as being 'Aruh li min' from Egypt, but on page 163 is given as being for 'Segah Sarki' from Turkey. It seems in fact to be the former, but it is most obviously related to the musical notation on pages 146–7 rather than to the melodic extract given on page 104. I am also hard pressed to make clear links between the notation of 'Feng Yang Hua Ge' on page 164 and track 20, certainly in terms of using the activity with it. This may certainly be the result of my own ignorance and incapacity but I suspect others may share my difficulties. Additionally, it would have been very useful for a book of this sort to include at least some material in visual format, to make notions of the impact of context concrete for teachers and their students. Nevertheless, there remains a wealth of material here to draw on for the enterprising teacher in terms of the ways activities might be structured, developed progressively and differentiated.

'Creating World Music' is the title of the next chapter, which does a particularly good job of attending to some of the anxieties that have existed in this field for decades, such as the anguish over authenticity, respect, and so on. Patricia Shehan Campbell comes up with a pragmatic approach which I think works very well. For example, she makes the point that 'culture-bearers' are generally positive

about the engagement of others with their musics, and notes that this can happen effectively when there is respect and time given to studying the particular music. However, this does highlight again one of the difficulties of the comparative approach apparent in some of the schedules suggested at the start of the book. What is needed is some depth, and this book might have aided that further by referring to the other books in the series more fully. Another fundamental issue in the book which I would support is the need to work with culture-bearers (pp. 198, 212), with those who are best placed to inform and help develop our work. This again talks of depth rather than survey. As with *Thinking Musically*, I would like some chapters to be expanded, and others to be subsumed or related to the case studies.

In the end I welcome the approach taken by this series, I acknowledge much careful work done in trying to bring vital issues in world musics/ethnomusicology into the classroom more convincingly, and I am grateful for a wealth of ideas for activities with which to negotiate in constructing my teaching. But I am left wanting much more. These may be the right books for their particular market but I think others may be disappointed.

MALCOLM FLOYD  
University College, Winchester

**Knowing Bodies, Moving Minds: Towards Embodied Teaching and Learning** edited by Liora Bresler. London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004. xiii + 223 pp, £66, hardback.

Intuitively, the importance of the bodily realm in education, and arts education in particular, is obvious. And yet discourse about the role of the body is often marked by its absence from the central areas of schooling. In *Knowing Bodies, Moving*

*Minds: Towards Embodied Teaching and Learning*, Bresler both informs and provokes questions about how we should understand the dualism of and relationship between mind and body and how this is played out in processes of education. This exciting book not only unveils a range of philosophical perspectives and 'reconstructions of our notion of the body' (p. 10), it essentially provides understandings about the nature and role of the body in the processes of education. It achieves this by providing some answers to questions about the uniqueness of the human body–mind connection as it is manifested in different communities of practice, cultures and pedagogies within arts education settings in particular.

This book forms volume 3 of a series called 'Landscapes: The Arts, Aesthetics and Education', which aims to provide conceptual and empirical research in arts education (including music, visual arts, drama, dance, media and poetry). As its title suggests, *Knowing Bodies, Moving Minds* has as its theme the experience of and relationships between body–mind connections as conceived by a multidisciplinary team of leading scholars in various arts disciplines and human sciences. Its target audience is in the fields of educational research (including methodology and method), arts theory, arts education, pedagogy and practice. This timely and much welcomed book is destined to become influential in that it explores the possibilities of the body in education at a time when education is having to take on board potentially disembodied forms of interaction in relation to technology. Understanding the nature of bodily knowing and its potential in teaching and learning encounters, its presence and interdependence across arts disciplines, in cross-cultural contexts and educational settings, are issues vigorously addressed throughout this book. The question of how

schools, colleges and universities might shift a focus to the bodily experience in ways other than through a respect for and cognisance of the body's role in embodied knowledge is perhaps less clear.

The aim of the book is to reverse the Cartesian legacy and to rethink the role of the cognitive or knowing body in classroom education sites. Liora Bresler's experience as a performer, musicologist, arts writer, educator, ethnographer and university professor gave her the vision and passion to assemble a multidisciplinary, cross-cultural team of scholars, each of whom writes passionately about the implications of a new understanding of and insight into the centrality of embodied knowing.

The book is organised in two sections. In the first section, 'Cultural and Philosophical Contexts for Embodied Knowledge in Education', a cluster of writers discuss and theorise about bodily knowledges and disciplinary practices using a range of theoretical and cultural lenses. Perspectives from phenomenology (Michael Peters), somaesthetics (Richard Shusterman), ethnomusicology (Minette Mans), cultural psychology (Daniel Walsh) and early childhood education (Joseph Tobin) are introduced. These writers address critical aspects of what we take to be the central problems of arts education, including the nature of knowledge, of knowing, of learning, of thinking, of doing, of performing and, importantly, cross-cultural views of embodied knowledge in school and outside institutions. Although not all writers locate whatever they are writing about in relation to teaching and learning issues, and some readers may feel themselves not 'up to' the level of philosophical discussion presented, we are invited to consider critically what kind of bodily knowledges and different body-mind constructions and experiences we promote and experience within our own educational practices and applications.

The second section, 'The Body in Educational Settings', represents perspectives on body and mind as applied within chapters which are particularly valuable in situating the focus on curriculum applications relating to dance education (Liora Bresler, Susan Stinson, Judith Davidson), and learning environments ranging from classrooms to prisons (Janice Ross). In addition, the richness of embodied knowledge is seen through the interaction of the body-mind of Taiko drumming ensembles (Kimberly Powell) and school curriculum and instruction in arts education (Judith Davidson) and moreover as a means for connecting theoretical interpretations and our teaching.

Taken as a whole, this book demonstrates the power of anchoring research in the theoretical paradigms emanating from sociocultural studies – paradigms that embrace education and institutions as social, cultural and political sites of struggle, power and possibilities, all of which shape our body-mind engagement with the world. The conclusions presented across the book are well summarised by Davidson in the final chapter, where she calls us all to stop decoupling action from content and to argue against the dichotomous view of mind and body that pervades the traditional 'anti-body orientation of schooling' (p. 208).

*Knowing Bodies, Moving Minds* offers personal accounts, conceptions and theorisations of knowing the work through our bodies, as embodied and encoded understanding through which our learning is transformed, enriched and deepened. And it requires of us the same demand for awareness and the same will to seize the meaning of our own personal experience of body-mind connections as that meaning comes into being. It is a complex book in its diversity and in the profound topics presented. However, this complexity shows

us that it is necessary to think in the various dimensions involved, simultaneously, in the teaching profession. The complexity of the book is a result of the complexity of the landscape of arts and education. We need to navigate among these different topics to understand both the institution and its teachers and our own practice at our institutions.

Teachers, students and researchers alike may utilise this book as an extremely useful resource. They may ponder and reflect on possibilities of embodied knowledge, perspectives on learning and teaching and about what they think and experience of our own embodied understanding of the world. This is an important reflection for all of us engaged in arts education in particular and education in general, not only in conservatories, academies and studios, but in primary and secondary schools as well. The manner in which we define who we are and how we see our profession is a primordial aspect in the determination of what we choose to do with our students in our classrooms. This book stimulates us to reflect upon our relationship to the ways knowledge is embodied and the forms by which this knowledge is expressed in our own teaching. It raises interesting questions with regard to the opportunities we provide to explore and reflect on the body–mind connection in learning and teaching, for in order to inform and provoke changes in the institutions we must change ourselves first. It is therefore hoped that *Knowing Bodies, Moving Minds* will serve as a catalyst for change, for further research, and for honouring the uniqueness of the human body–mind connection in education and arts education.

PAMELA BURNARD  
University of Cambridge

PENELOPE BEST  
University of Surrey, Roehampton

**Bluebirds and Crows: Developing a Singing Culture In and Out of School** edited by Anice Paterson and Eileen Bentley. Matlock: National Association of Music Educators (NAME), 2003. 55 pp, no price given, A4 paperback.

The wide-ranging work of the National Association of Music Educators (NAME) has become ever more established over the last decade through dedicated leadership and enthusiastic involvement from a wide range of professionals. Its success and growing impact on practice lies in making connections with the day-to-day work of music educators across a variety of contexts and notably those working in classrooms, drawing them out of potential isolation, providing practical support and opportunity for fresh thinking.

*Bluebirds and Crows*, one of their latest publications, represents an important facet of their work: the dissemination of the experience and knowledge of their members. The book is presented as a ‘mixture of research-based study and thoughtful practical experience’. It is not intended to supplement the ever expanding library of teaching materials and vocal repertoire.

There are 13 contributions, ranging from the scholarly to the enthusiastic, and it is this blend that makes for an engaging read. The 55 A4 pages are set out in generous style and at times with some luminosity where grey print on red background may prove a challenge for the reader. No single contribution runs to more than 1,500 words and one is a mere 300. Underpinning all contributions is the conviction that there needs to be a culture of singing in all our schools and that there is value in thinking about what we do and how we do it. Thus, we find insight into the developing voice, guidance on the selection of repertoire, how material is presented to learners and

ultimately how to secure their enduring love of singing.

Graham Welch's opening contribution draws upon current research knowledge particularly applied to developing competency in the early stages of learning. There is the reminder that 'much out-of-tune singing is the product of asking children to sing music that is inappropriate'. He helpfully takes the reader inside the 'body-mind' of the young child grappling with managing words and pitch simultaneously. The contribution is an excellent example of practical wisdom emanating from high quality research counterpointed with a firm advocacy free from overwrought rhetoric. A second major contribution is made by Michael Stocks drawing on the legacy of Kodály and offering principles of practice. Conscious of presenting the potentially alienating methodological orthodoxy that easily emanates from the great music educators of the past, Stocks underlines key principles that lead to mind-making practices. The unfashionable notion of teaching children to 'think music with the voice' (might this not be 'thinking *and feeling* music with the voice?') is central here, as is the maxim of voice before instrument. Yet, and almost predictably, the argument at times falls into dogmatics. While convincing the reader of the importance of sequencing learning, is it really essential for the teacher to work in simple time before compound time? Taken out of a particular and closed methodological framework such injunctions feel uncomfortable. A third contribution of note is Malcolm Goldring's review of the role of the vocal *animateurs*. He helpfully sets out their working practices, bringing valuable understanding to music teachers in school wishing to draw upon this expanding resource.

Other contributors offer advice drawn from personal working contexts. Mary

Heyler writes on vocal health, Eileen Bentley on achieving good tone quality, Patrick Allen on finding the perfect song. The publication is rich in teaching strategies and bubbles along with enthusiastic advocacies for singing.

The work overall, while not addressing the way vocal activity might relate to the wider music curriculum, including the interface between ICT and the voice, or calling on the most expert witness in all this, the perspective of the pupil, does much to stimulate and encourage and is a useful addition to the growing library of publications that seek to draw together the whole community of British music educators.

JOHN FINNEY  
University of Cambridge

### **Instrumental Teaching in Nineteenth-Century Britain** by David J. Golby.

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004. xvii + 380 pp, £55, hardback.

The historical study of instrumental pedagogy is relatively new, and, according to the author, this is the first dedicated account to focus on Britain. The problem for the researcher is that there is a paucity of contemporary descriptions of music lessons which might have provided the nitty gritty of what was actually taught or learnt from the perspective of the teacher or pupil. Instead Golby deals with extant, published material such as treatises and tutors, supplemented by private diaries and correspondence.

The first part of the book deals with the contextual background of music in Britain in the nineteenth century. Music engendered ambivalent feelings about whether it was an intellectual or mechanical skill, and there was a huge gap between amateur and professional status. After 1850 there was a massive increase in the consumption of music and practical instruction among middle-class girls and young women.



Instrumental teaching (particularly the piano) became a secure and regular source of income for the incoming army of women teachers, and it created a kind of semi-professionalism. In fact by the end of the century teachers dominated the music profession and self-employed teachers (mainly women) became the largest single group within it. Hand in hand with the burgeoning of this sector came the development of music colleges, ever ready, according to Golby, to cater for amateur consumerism rather than professional demand. The level of diploma 'mania' did not help to encourage teacher quality. There is a later discussion in the book about the early years of the Royal Academy of Music, 'a preserve of mediocrity', the Royal College of Music, which was more practical and professional, and Kneller Hall, whose success was achieved through a concentration upon centralisation, specialisation, standardisation and professionalism.

The main focus of the book is on the teaching of the violin. It was Geminiani and Spohr who provided the models which came to represent the technical and expressive ideas specific to British violin playing. The benchmark was tasteful performance epitomising order, refinement and control, all at one with Victorian ideas of progress. The distinction between virtuoso and artist characterised English taste to a large extent: there was little concern for the latest technical devices. Although the latter nineteenth century saw the increased involvement of women violin students, there were two general issues which militated against this: the instrument's associations with sin, death and Satan, and its ascribed feminine gender in voice and shape, but male-defined mode of performance. By the early years of the twentieth century, however, violin classes were introduced into elementary schools,

and by 1910 a massed orchestra of several thousand elementary school children playing violins performed at the Crystal Palace.

There is some consideration of other instruments in the book. Brass tuition in particular is interesting as it was associated with lower middle- and working-class males. Their progress was far more rapid than that of their fellows in the lettered classes largely because in their music-making they moved from home straight into the band, which immediately focused on public performance rather than on nurturing a polite, sheltered and largely self-gratifying accomplishment. Golby reckons it was this group of men who became the real achievers of instrumental music in 19th-century Britain.

The book ends with a warning: there is a danger that current trends signal a return to the priorities and prejudices of two centuries ago. It is far too easy for a 'non-essential' subject like music to suffer from high levels of ambivalence, particularly when funding issues come to the fore and it achieves 'luxury' status.

This is an admirably researched and authoritative study which has broken new ground and will provide future researchers in the field with valuable information, particularly regarding the plethora of the principal British instrumental treatises, 1780–1900. Whilst the book might have benefited from some judicious editing with regard to the mass of detail presented, it is undoubtedly a most significant contribution to the history of music education.

GORDON COX  
University of Reading

**Des représentations d'enseignants de musique relatives à l'évaluation des performances musicales: Enquête sur les conceptions du Diplôme d'Études Musicales** by Cédricia Maugars.

Brittany: Musiques et Danses en Bretagne. 192 pp, paperback, no price

given. Limited edition – available from Musiques et Danses en Bretagne, 1 rue du Prieuré, BP55 35410 Châteaugiron.

This is an interesting volume which would not normally find its way into most music education libraries. It is a research report commissioned by the organisation Musiques et Danses en Bretagne (Music and Dance in Brittany) which looks at particular issues surrounding the examination known as the *Diplôme d'Études Musicales*, or DEM (Diploma in Music Studies). In the United Kingdom, it is likely that such a report would have been used to inform the commissioning organisation, and those involved in the research and the limited edition of this volume suggests that the same is true in Brittany.

Why might the report be of interest to those in the anglophone world? It is written in French and at first sight might seem to be of limited relevance to those working in music education generally. French traditions of reporting, researching and publishing are perhaps different from those across the Channel, although in recent years francophone writers in music education have become more prolific and have begun to infiltrate their near neighbours in ways that would have been unthinkable in the past.

To understand this research report you need to know that there is a national network of music and dance 'schools' (further and higher education institutions) and that the network in Brittany is formed in collaboration with the local conservatoire. Regional conservatoires in France are more numerous than in the UK, as are local music schools, and they, rather than local authority music services, offer much of the specialist teaching and training of musicians that occurs in France.

The report examines the experience of teachers and their students being presented for the DEM. The DEM forms part of

specialist education in music outside the school system, using either independent teachers or as part of a music school or conservatoire curriculum. The research investigates the role of both examinations and evaluation in the preparation and presentation of candidates for the diploma, and interviews were undertaken with 49 music teachers who presented candidates for the examination during one particular academic year.

The whole assignment is unusual in that there is little or no tradition of research into the professional training of musicians in France and so a large proportion of the references and research frameworks are drawn from the anglophone world, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia being the principal sources. The report recognises that this is the case and suggests that many teachers and musicians would benefit from careful examination of their own systems to try to ensure that the current schemes and systems provide appropriate training and assessment for the future development of professional musicians in France.

Some of the major issues are that courses in music at this level are optional, that is, they do not form part of the school and further education compulsory curriculum and are taught in separate institutions. However, in the classical tradition and for entry into conservatoires, achievement of the DEM is a prerequisite. Another major point of discussion is that levels of achievement, although required, are not nationally standardised, so although entry into conservatoires requires the award of the diploma, it is hard to say whether (or not) standards are the same, or at least equivalent, across the different regions of France.

It was indeed brave of the Breton music and dance organisation to commission such research to investigate the validity and

relevance of the examination and approaches to it, since it was likely that many involved would find fault with some of the procedures and processes. In the end, the outcome was less controversial than might have been anticipated and it has caused many of those involved to question the aims, methods and structures used in order to try to ensure a more impartial system of assessment and to consider new ways to evaluate performance. A number of teachers have been introduced to the concept of formative evaluation as part of the assessment process, rather than relying on a 'sudden death' final performance examination conducted by a jury whose motives may not always be as impartial as should be expected. It is clear that Cédricia Maugars was able, through this research, to present a number of alternative modes of assessment and that these will be considered seriously by those working with candidates in future.

This research report may signal the start of some important changes in the systems of professional education in music in France, and for that reason it is worth reading.

JANET HOSKYNS  
University of Central England

**The Cambridge Companion to Blues and Gospel Music** edited by Allan Moore.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 208 pp, £45.00 hardback; £16.99 paperback.

Hard on the heels of the *Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, reviewed last year in this journal, comes the present volume, edited by Allan Moore. Like the jazz *Companion*, the *Cambridge Companion to Blues and Gospel Music* is a stimulating and informative book that should be read by teachers, musicians and anyone else interested in how the culture of African-American people has proved such a positive and dominating force

in the development of music over the past 100 years.

In common with other volumes in the series, this *Companion* opens with a succinct chronology, detailing salient events in the history of black Americans and their music, starting in 1619, the year the first African slaves disembarked on American soil. Allan Moore's preface and introductory chapter, surveying the present state of scholarship in the field of blues and gospel, set the tone of lucid exposition and infectious love of the music that pervades the volume.

Moore draws on a wide pool of contributors – scholars, historians and musicians – to convey a comprehensive picture of how these musics developed and what makes them distinctive. Writing on the development of the blues, David Evans sums up the form: 'it was [the African Americans'] music for dance and recreation, humor, philosophy, courtship, even at times approaching the status of a religious cult and a way of life'. Evans shows how the words of the blues intertwined with instrumental accompaniments in call-and-response patterns to create structures of extraordinary durability: 'Ultimately blues would outlast many of the genres and styles that it influenced'. He is particularly good at showing how a variety of literary and musical tributaries flowed into the blues. He sees a similarity between blues prosody and the iambic metre of English verse, while stressing how 'its accents would be displaced, giving life and strength to the syllables... This sort of improvisational variation is typical of African singing'. In a parallel chapter on the development of gospel, Dom Cusic stresses the timelessness of the best spirituals and gospel songs: 'They are songs that can inspire joy or comfort in sorrow, a verbalizing of people's feelings and thoughts. Within these songs are the roots of blues, country, modern gospel and rock'n'roll'.

Later in the book, in what for me was the most delightful and enlightening chapter of all, Guido van Rijn draws attention to the richness of imagery to be found in the lyrics of both blues and gospel songs. Throughout their history, African-American people have consistently displayed an amazing knack of making the familiar strange by drawing on the everyday with such economy and poetic precision. The lyrics of blues and gospel songs exemplify an almost infallible ear for the beauty of words, whether drawn from contemporary life or derived from the sonorous cadences of the King James Bible.

Having now read several *Cambridge Companions*, I find that the present volume does sometimes raise a question that the others also seem to pose: who is the intended readership? Is it the general public or a more specialist audience? (Judging by some of the more arcane contributions to two recently published *Companions* on classical composers, I get the impression that these are chapters written by professors to impress other professors!) To be fair, the *Cambridge Companion to Blues and Gospel Music* does keep a general readership in mind and does not contain an excess of over-specialised writing. However, when the subject matter under consideration is music orally transmitted and aurally assimilated, it does make the act of compiling a *book* about it somewhat problematic. Without recorded illustrations to support points made in the text (in many ways much of it would come over better as a series of radio broadcasts), the writers do sometimes find themselves having to resort to specialised language and, in places, diagrams when addressing musical issues directly.

Given the willingness of contributors to use this terminology, it is surprising that there is a seeming reluctance to use conventional musical notation. Using a methodology reminiscent of Ian MacDonald in his book on the Beatles (1994) and of Barry Kernfeld

(1995) in his guide to listening to jazz recordings, Graeme Boone selects 12 key recordings for detailed discussion. While Boone's text is musically enlightening and perceptive (his analysis of Muddy Waters's 'Hoochie Coochie Man' could hardly be bettered), I felt his diagrams added little to the insights already offered in his text. Why not use conventional staff notation, a form of analysing and communicating musical ideas, in whatever idiom, that has been developed and refined over hundreds of years? For example, a staff-notated transcription of the Golden Gate Jubilee Quartet's *a capella* performance of the 'Golden Gate Gospel Train' would have communicated the essence of the wonderfully intricate rhythmic web spun by the voices. Boone's diagram, on the other hand, comes over as prosaic and somewhat confusing.

Three chapters concentrate on the foremost vocal and instrumental media for blues and gospel: voice, guitar and keyboard. Barb Jungr's detailed chapter on vocal expression leaves the reader in no doubt that the vocal production, nuance and finesse that go into black vocal styles are responsible for musical expression of infinite power and subtlety. Matt Backer sees the guitar as the prime medium for sonic experimentation, from the 'grooves etched in stone' created by Robert Johnson and the early use of amplification by artists such as B. B. King. These paved the way for the experiments in amplification and sound modification practised from the late 1960s onwards by musicians such as Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton. Where the keyboard is concerned, Adrian York, himself active in the UK in promoting young people's performance and musicianship skills in pop and rock, gives a wide-ranging account of the impact of barrelhouse, gospel and boogie piano styles which eventually led to the development of the rhythmic basis for early rock'n'roll.

In the concluding chapter, Dave Headlam writes on appropriations of blues and gospel in popular music. More than any other contributor, Headlam comes armed with an agenda that is quick to criticise the commercialisation and mass production of styles that originated in communities where simple survival came before even considering any form of profit motive. However, I am somewhat uneasy about his sweeping condemnation of white appropriations of black culture. He says rather sniffily of the Rolling Stones and other British bands of the 1960s: 'Along with the riff and guitar timbre, they substituted the banalities of American advertising for the blues male macho sentiments of the [Muddy Waters] original. This loss of meaning in British reworkings of American blues was a necessary part of the reason for its success with white audiences in the U.S'. While David Evans concluded earlier in the book that 'although its stylistic development has slowed, blues has increased and broadened its audience, until today it is more popular than ever', Headlam claims that 'with the rise of rap, blues has become largely a historical form'. Headlam's polemic is interesting and provocative, but I wonder if it really forms an appropriate conclusion to an otherwise balanced and enlightening volume.

Steve Tracy's account of the changing performance conditions for blues and gospel artists might have made a more suitable closing chapter. Tracy writes vividly of the lives of itinerant musicians and the hardships they had to endure to get their music performed in their communities, and out to the wider world through the medium of the concert hall and the recording studio. The accounts of the racial discrimination they endured are appalling; yet, as one musician put it, the quiet persistence of black musicians in getting their voices heard eventually had its impact not just in America, but across the globe: 'I'll tell you the major contribution. Without getting up on the soap box, without having marches, we brought blacks and whites together with music'. Indeed, this statement could epitomise the entire book and the cultures that it celebrates.

#### References

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PIERS SPENCER  
 University of Exeter