

Book Reviews

Arts Education in Secondary Schools: Effects and Effectiveness by John Harland, Kay Kinder, Pippa Lord, Alison Stott, Ian Schagen, Jo Haynes with Linda Cusworth, Richard White and Riana Paola. Slough: NFER, 2000. Paperback, 602 pp., £24.00.

This book reports a three-year study that took place mainly in five secondary schools 'with reputations for good practices in the provision of arts education': four in England, and one in Wales. The researchers circulated a questionnaire to the Year 11 pupils in a further twenty-two secondary schools that were thought to be more representative, interviewed some employees and employers, and made some use of a database which was already held by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), and that includes national assessment records for 152 schools. However, most of the book is concerned with the practice in just five schools. The researchers write of having sought expert advice concerning their choice of five schools.

This book is concerned with the 'effects' and 'effectiveness' of arts education. By 'effects', the researchers mean 'outcomes for pupils and outcomes for others'. These effects may simply be reported by pupils, teachers, employers or employees: they do not have to be demonstrable, measurable or observed objectively. The researchers have categorised the effects that were reported using a typology that they devised: intrinsic and immediate effects; arts knowledge and skills; knowledge in the social and cultural domains; creativity and thinking skills; communication and expressive skills; personal and social development; extrinsic transfer effects.

While the reader might expect an 'effective' arts education to be one associated with a high quality of teaching and learning in the arts, or perhaps high standards of

achievement in the arts, the researchers use this term to denote an arts education that promotes (intentionally or unintentionally) the 'effects' described above. The effects only have to be promoted: they do not have to occur. An effect is judged to have been promoted if a teacher or pupil says that it has been promoted.

The strengths of this book include its wealth of reported speech by pupils and teachers. These extracts from interview transcripts are interesting in their own right, and will be found useful by other researchers.

Perhaps because the interviewers spoke to the teachers and pupils informally (there is a fair bit of 'and things' and 'cos' in the transcripts), the teachers and pupils frequently responded informally, and this gives what they said a degree of charm. I was touched particularly by a Year 9 pupil who compared music favourably with football as a developer of team work: 'I don't think the bond is as strong in a football team. You still work together but it's not like music . . . I think you're closer somehow.' Another Year 9 pupil spoke about composing in groups: 'I like working to compose pieces with my friends. That's fun, because it's really, when you've just got something and you've made it all up yourselves, that's nice when you've just finished and everything.' Other readers will have their own favourite quotations.

The summary which forms the book's last few pages, and which was circulated widely when the book was launched, contains some very critical references to music in schools that do not seem to be obviously supported by the findings reported earlier in the book.

The summary states that music has 'critical problems', and that 'there is an urgent need to tackle the quality of teaching in this subject – by mounting . . . a programme of continuing professional development . . . in which those teachers achieving high outcomes should play a leading role as models of effective practice.'

The problems with music are said to include that 'pupil enjoyment, relevance, skill development, creativity and expressive dimensions were often absent'. Music is singled out for this criticism: art, dance and drama escape with a mainly clean bill of health.

As one works one's way through this lengthy book, the extent to which the critical judgements about music are justified by the evidence that the researchers report becomes less clear. I give just two examples of this. First, there is the assertion that pupils do not enjoy their music lessons. The researchers judge such effects by counting the number of pupils who report them, which is fair enough. However, it appears that more pupils reported enjoyment of music than enjoyment of dance or drama, and so the basis for criticising music, but not these other subjects, is unclear. Moreover, the researchers return to their data on enjoyment in music on several occasions during the book: the numbers are set aside, while the interpretation tends to become more damning.

Second, there is the assertion that the quality with which music is taught has serious weaknesses. To judge from the annual reports of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), it may indeed be the case that, in general and in England, music is taught less effectively than other subjects to pupils aged 11–14. However, the researchers do not refer to this evidence anywhere in their 602 pages, and so the issue is the extent to which the researchers may support their claims from their own evidence. In fact, the research appears not to have addressed the quality of teaching, which is raised as a concern only in the concluding summary. Two music lessons are indeed reported at considerable length (almost ten pages apiece), but without value judgements. And from what one can tell, given that the researchers did not report what the teachers intended that pupils should learn, or precisely what the pupils were doing, these lessons actually sound rather good – as one

would expect given that they were drawn from schools that had been chosen for their good reputation in arts education.

The researchers miss some opportunities to present music in a more favourable light than other subjects. For example, music is undersold by the manner in which the researchers count pupils' reports of extra-curricular involvement. Pupils' reports in music are divided between two categories, with the result that music slips behind drama, which has only one category.

Another missed opportunity to present music more positively relates to the NFER database of 152 schools. The researchers used this to investigate whether or not getting a good GCSE grade in an arts subject is linked with getting a good GCSE grade in a core subject: English, mathematics or science. (Welsh was not addressed.) Clearly, one could argue about cause and effect here. But that is not the point: the researchers had doubtless thought about such issues when planning the investigation, and made a professional judgement that it was justified. The results of the investigation clearly showed music in a more positive light than art or drama. The researchers found that good grades in core subjects were linked with a good grade in music, but not with good grades in art or drama. However, this positive finding did not make its way through to the end-of-chapter conclusion, let alone the much-circulated summary, on the grounds that, to paraphrase, 'the teachers thought that the effect existed in art and drama too, so what we found from the database must be wrong'.

While the advantages of focusing on only five schools include that they may be considered in detail, the disadvantages include the low generalisability of what is found. The researchers write of 'many' schools on the strength of observations in only five of them. 'Many' presumably means three schools or four schools: this is not what one normally means by 'many' when writing of a school system that contains thousands of schools.

This study looks at schools in a non-teacherly way. While the advantages of this include a degree of freshness (not least absolutely no references to the inspection of schools) the disadvantages include that the researchers' occasionally imperfect knowledge of the school system has found its way into print, something that may reduce the credibility of the research among those who are more knowledgeable. For example, one of the four schools in England is introduced as a 'grant-maintained school with city technology college status' although a school cannot possibly be both of these; the researchers appear unaware that art is compulsory for pupils aged 11–14 and that technology and a modern foreign language are virtually compulsory for pupils aged 14–16; and references to the 'National Curriculum' address only the National Curriculum for England, and not that for Wales.

So, to whom would I recommend this book? It will be of interest to many readers because of the large number of teachers' and pupils' comments on arts education that it contains. In my view it is also a 'must' for those who wish to spread the bad news about music contained in the book's much-circulated summary, as it is only by reading the book that one can understand what this bad news really means.

JANET MILLS

Teaching Music in the Secondary School by David Bray. Oxford: Heinemann, 2000. 210 pp., £12.99.

Teaching Music in the Secondary School is presented as 'a practical guide for classroom teachers . . . intended to set a context for music education in secondary schools and also to look forward to future developments' (p. iii). It claims to cover key issues involved in the successful provision for music in secondary schools and remarkably is the first book of its

kind written for secondary music teachers since John Paynter's *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum* of 1982. Comparisons are interesting. The earlier text brought to summation a decade of teachers' action research in the classroom concerned with making music relevant to all secondary aged pupils. It revealed fresh ways of thinking about what constituted musical knowledge and what form a balanced music curriculum might take. The music curriculum was for the teacher to *make*, and the teacher's first constituency was the pupil. Times have changed and a centralised curriculum asks that a curriculum be *packaged* and *delivered*, and that the work of the music teacher be accountable to multiple constituencies. Thus, while Bray warmly acknowledges the Paynter legacy and indeed other innovative practitioners and theory makers of the recent past, it is a legislated model of music teaching that pervades the book, circumscribed by notions of the effective music department and the effective music teacher of the twenty-first century.

There are eleven chapters. The opening chapter addresses the wider context surrounding music education, and is followed by chapters devoted to the interrelated matters of planning, assessment, differentiation, and teaching and learning. Other chapters focus upon integrating ICT into the curriculum, integrating the work of the instrumental/vocal teacher, the effective teaching of GCSE and post-16 examination courses, and making a contribution to the whole school. The final chapter is concerned with self-review and improvement. Watchwords are 'effective' and 'improvement', thus giving the book its contemporary credentials. After a decade of implementation of a National Curriculum and the compilation of a data base of inspection evidence, it is possible to draw currents of contemporary practice and official aspiration together in the form of a guide for teachers. Bray, an OFSTED Inspector, is well qualified to do this.

From the outset the writing takes on a pithy style. Each chapter is headed with an aim: chapter one, for example, sets a context for music education in schools and offers suggestions for some of the attributes which may be displayed by a 'successful department in the future'. Each chapter ends with summary points. This is one of three points made at the end of the first chapter: 'There is still a tension between music as a curriculum subject for all students and music as an out-of-class activity for a smaller number' (p. 13). Clearly, here is the kind of issue that continues to engage the mind of every music teacher. One could envisage the first chapter inspiring the hard-pressed teacher to pass a copy to the school management team as a basis for developing common understanding of the problems of providing an inclusive music education. This is a good indication of the book's relevance and usefulness. Throughout, the writer has a very direct conversation with the music teacher.

The current mantra, 'assessment informs planning for teaching', is explicated through three closely linked chapters. 'Planning schemes of work' considers the way the teacher needs to hold together the long-term, the short-term and the medium-term, and how assessment becomes feasible. There is much talk of learning outcomes, little of learning objectives and nothing of expressive outcomes. The multi-dimensional nature of assessment and patterns of differentiation are clarified and readers will gain in confidence as they encounter such things as formative assessment, summative assessment, monitoring, recording and reporting. The possible approaches to planning emphasise a synthesis between working with musical styles and genres, and elements of musical expression. All this is safe and well tried, but could there be some consideration for teachers at different stages of their professional development? Presumably, some are ready to be more effective than others, indeed some may be reaching into the new status of 'advanced skills

teacher'. There may be teachers who teach organically, working with what issues forth from their interactions with students. This seems to be what great music teachers of the past were able to do. Should not we be analysing a wider variety of approaches to planning?

But, what are we planning for, and what is it that we are to assess, to value and cherish in the musical outpourings of our students? The writer sensibly places emphasis on knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. But knowledge and understanding in respect to music remain contested concepts. What is it to know music or, if you prefer, what is musical knowledge? And what is meant by musical understanding? Proposing adequate conceptions is important, for here are the foundations of the house. A number of commentators have pointed out the inadequacy of the National Curriculum's one-dimensional concept of knowledge prescribed for all subjects in the curriculum. What kind of knowledge are we looking for in music? Is musical knowledge really the same kind of knowledge as historical knowledge or scientific knowledge? Well, there are some things in common if we are speaking of propositional knowledge when we 'know that', as in *knowing that I hear a drum played with a soft beater*. Such knowledge can be verified or contradicted. But thinkers of the recent past have argued that while such knowledge is not without value, the most significant kind of musical knowledge is of a different order. The musician shows knowledge of a musical phrase, shows musical understanding inside the creative act, in the shaping of the phrase, and as musicians we all 'know' about this and look for it. We intuitively discern it and celebrate it. However, such distinctions between propositional knowledge and 'experience-knowledge' have been lost on curriculum makers and it was this that provided the impulse for Keith Swanwick to intervene in the making of the 1992 curriculum orders for music.

While a workable solution was found at that time, the essential problem remains unresolved. Despite the recent making of one attainment target, the matter has yet to be dealt with adequately. The consequences are serious. Bray tackles the problem to some extent and proposes that the teacher distinguish between 'knowledge about' music and 'understanding about music'. He suggests that 'knowledge in music is facts about pieces, people or things. Facts (and therefore knowledge) are easy to assess; how many symphonies did Beethoven write?' (p. 43). And Bray points out that here is a potential pitfall. Teaching facts can result in 'time consuming and peripheral activity' (p. 43). Thus, a severe form of propositional knowledge is properly marginalised. But salvation is found in 'understanding'. And it is this, Bray argues, that is the fundamental concept to grapple with: we should focus on 'understanding about the ways that the musical elements can be used to create an atmosphere or effect' (p. 44). Understanding is moved from the intuitive knowing of what feels musical to how well propositional knowledge has been applied and this becomes conditional on what the student can say rather than do. The notion of experience-knowledge seems to have been largely lost in all this. It is reflected in the kind of outcomes, the writer suggests, that a teacher might plan for. The example of Blues (pp. 26–8) sees the students by the end of the project able to: use a standard twelve-bar blues sequence, play chords in C major, have listened to and recognised the use of ninths in three pieces of music, know the names of notes in chords I, IV and V. There is no mention of musical qualities. The core of aesthetic endeavour seems to have been lost. After all, isn't the blues about the way people feel and the weight and nuance of their musical gestures? Is it really about chords I, IV and V?

The chapter devoted to teaching and learning aims to set out 'some information about what makes teaching effective. This is

related to relevant information such as inspections, performance management and national initiatives such as literacy and numeracy' (p. 65). The chapter continues 'It is generally accepted that good teachers make a big difference to the quality of a student's educational experience. In this country we are fortunate to have many inspiring teachers. Some work exclusively in schools or FE, others work in higher education or LEAS. Collectively they have exerted a strong influence on the musical education of students' (p. 65). With such felicitous expressions the reader is drawn forward to statements that sometimes verge on the self-evident. While there are examples of sequences of teaching and learning, there is no attempt to engage with ideas about how a musical mind develops. While some music teachers may be relieved that there are no developmental or constructivist theories of learning to grapple with, there is no mention of musical thinking or thinking about music, and aural skills are left to a later chapter. There is in effect no discussion of pedagogy but there is an invitation to teach directly and interact with pupils within the whole class rather more than is common. In this kind of way the book continually attempts to challenge ineffective practice drawing on wisdom derived from much music teaching observed. The chapter on effective teaching at the post-14 level in preparation for examinations does this well and acts as a timely commentary on current reform of examination requirements.

The book is at its best in defining, clarifying and laying out parameters and this is the way of the chapter addressing the integration of ICT into the curriculum. Definitions are lucid, perspectives will be broadened and eyes drawn to future scenarios. There is excellent guidance on bringing about greater coherence between the work of the classroom teacher and the instrumental/vocal teacher. The desire for inclusiveness runs through the book. The instrumental/vocal

teacher is led away from exclusive tendencies, and symptomatic here is the use of musical ability tests. 'The predictive qualities of tests (in the sense of likely future success in playing a musical instrument) have proved particularly suspect' (p. 103). However, no evidence is provided for this claim. The idea that ability, talent or aptitude for music might be innate or that it might develop independently of exposure to musical environments appears to be largely rejected. While such tests may or may not be good predictors of musical achievement, they may be able to provide teachers with one source of useful knowledge about the potential of their students, knowledge which could be helpful in planning for their success.

The penultimate chapter looks at the place of music within schools and draws heavily on official sources and their interpretation of key concepts. Particularly helpful is an exposition of the ways in which music teachers can contribute to the development of students' literacy. Ideas about students' cultural, social, moral and spiritual education through music, like so much of the book, come neatly packaged and one hopes are intended for unpacking, providing a starting point for debate, elaboration and fuller definition. The proposal that 'students are likely to consider some of the ways music can cause a nuisance in particular circumstances, for example *through high noise levels*' (p. 153) as an aspect of moral development, is perhaps indicative of the current ascendancy of educational instrumentalism.

The final forty-eight pages of the book invite the teacher to take part in a self-review, an opportunity to become an effective music teacher and part of an effective music department. The list of 246 questions is likely to be exhaustive and exhausting. All this in the name of improvement, more improvement and yet more improvement, in the name of effectiveness, more effectiveness and yet more effectiveness. I want to ask, albeit in the quietest of tones, 'and then what?'

The book is intended as a guide and as such successfully takes music teachers into the common tongue of a contemporary official conception of a secondary music education. One can only hope that this guide leads to rather more expeditions of discovery, a greater depth of informed enquiry than has been evident during the last decade. Then we would need another kind of book to be written, one perhaps a little more like its predecessor.

JOHN FINNEY

Composing Music at Key Stage 3 by Lynn Burr, Fran Vicary and Steph Yates. Milton Keynes: The Chalkface Project, 2000. 63 pp. + audiocassette. £25.

Cover Lessons in Music by Rob Jones and Steph Yates. Milton Keynes: The Chalkface Project, 2000. 64 pp., £25.

Composing Music at Key Stage 3 follows the course of seven themes: Jungle, Shock-Horror, Spy Theme, Unknown Territory, Calypso, Ramps and Ground. It comprises a progressive approach to developing students as composers across Key Stage 3. Each theme provides the teacher with notes and recorded musical extracts, and the student with a series of work sheets graphically illuminated by Andrew Wright. Themes move forward in a systematic way, enabling students to draw on previous learning, create ideas and to organise these within progressively more complex structures. Structures are for the most part pre-formed for students, and teachers will want to complement this template approach to composing with a range of alternatives. The work encourages individual, paired, group and whole-class activity and should facilitate the acquisition of individual compositional skills, so easily lost where there is an undue emphasis on small group work. ICT is deftly integrated and notations are introduced to serve a purpose. Individual student needs are attended to within

each theme, and indeed the resource as a whole could form the basis of individualised learning programmes. The stylistic content and cultural range of the work is limited and as with so many similar resources, questions arise about where we might go from here.

Cover Lessons in Music will be welcomed by teachers. The thought of being provided with fifty-four possibilities that can be carried out by non-specialist teachers, when the specialist teacher is absent, is appealing. Each lesson has teacher notes and a photocopiable student worksheet. Lessons are designed to be taught, and not merely monitored as is often the case in the scenario addressed. The aim is to go beyond merely occupying students and this is likely to be fulfilled to some extent. Subjects range from film music and rap, to the music of India, and to women composers. At best the materials engage students in worthwhile activity involving reading, writing, thinking, discussion and musical action. However, where musical action is omitted the lesson inevitably takes on the character of a lesson in something other than music. A significant number of lessons require access to information. There are 'help slips' to nudge students forward, and musical dictionaries and lexicons will need to be at hand. Even so, some of the knowledge demanded will be difficult to find. 'It's All Italian', for example, expects students to gain familiarity with musical terminology, and their worksheet asks that they explain why many musical terms come from Italian words. Where will the answer be found, other than by being told by the teacher or another student! Is all this really worthwhile? There are a number of familiar activities running through projects, some of which are well worn and of dubious value. There may be more musical ways of creating rhythm than setting crotchets and quavers to students' names, and to their favourite football teams.

JOHN FINNEY

The Music Teacher's Companion: A Practical Guide (UK Edition) by Paul Harris and Richard Crozier. London: The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. 2000. Paperback, 132 pp., £12.95.

This book is divided into two broad sections: The Essence of Teaching and Beyond the Lesson. The first and larger section, covering some ninety pages comprises thirteen chapters, devoted to such areas as motivation, teaching rhythm, sight-reading, aural skills, improvising and composing, and the teaching of pupils with 'Special Requirements'. This last chapter includes interesting summaries on working with the gifted, and children with dyslexia and dyspraxia. The second section, making up the remaining forty pages is divided into seven chapters and looks at those areas outside the lesson itself where the teacher's guidance is equally important, such as practice, performance preparation and opportunities for performance whether through graded examinations, competitions or festivals. There is also a chapter on holiday courses and a look to the future of maturing pupils through further education and employment. The final pages offer a Further Reading and References list and sample forms for the planning and monitoring of lessons. Additionally the UK Edition contains an eight-page pull-out Supplement devoted mainly to explaining the National Curriculum in music and to providing a list of useful contact organisations.

The book aims to offer 'pragmatic solutions to everyday problems' (p. vii) and in this it certainly succeeds. It is eminently readable too, written in simple language, but based on a wealth of current thinking and research in music education. If occasionally the reference list at the end (p. 132) is found wanting for the more academic reader, for example in directions to the 1987 study by Leslie Francis (p. 6), to the work of Professor Kevin Thompson in the 1980s (p. 80), or, more

vaguely to 'some research carried out recently' (p. 13), this is no serious detractor.

The book is set in easy-to-handle A4-sized format which will fit comfortably in any studio teacher's music pile. It has been proofread with the greatest accuracy, helping to lend it an air of lasting authority. Approximately every ten pages the text is punctuated by a humorous cartoon – the work of Martin Shovel – in the style of the book's eye-catching cover. These are most apposite and help to provide light relief.

The content of the book will often be familiar to the instrumental teacher already, but is no less valuable for this. What the book achieves is a ready reminder of known, but sometimes more hazily conscious, good practice to help infuse a basically common-sense reflective approach. So we are reminded to be aware of pupils' reactions rather than making assumptions, for example 'that F and F natural are the same note, or that a rhythm is the same whether the note stem points up or down' (p. 4). We are reminded too about the importance of the first lesson (p. 23), and given helpful clarifications of the distinctions between the terms pulse, beat, metre, rhythm and time (pp. 37–8).

Occasionally the book provides information which will be new and interesting to most readers, such as in illuminating the process of eye movements which occurs when we read or sight-read music – 'very rapid short movements (called 'saccades'), followed by longer periods of 'fixations' (p. 45). In reading music, we are told, 'the eye makes *more* movements than when reading text . . . and more regressive (backward) movements' (p. 45). An awareness of these backward eye movements might influence us not to overuse the tactical game of covering up the music which a pupil is sight-reading with a piece of card 'forcing the eyes to look ahead' but at the same time 'restricting the regressive or backward glances that are . . . part of . . . the scanning process' (p. 49).

Simple but useful exercises which can be introduced, particularly with younger pupils, are highlighted in grey-shaded boxes throughout the book, such as rhythm-clapping exercises, and articulating the word 'hippopotamus' to help grasp a rhythmic group of five (p. 41), or ideas for the beginnings of improvisation – tapping answering phrases (p. 68).

An important chapter on 'Simultaneous Learning' (pp. 71–8) seeks to encourage music teachers to integrate the often compartmentalised sections of the lesson – scales, aural work, sight-reading and pieces – into a whole, thereby making learning more effective, rather than falling into a pattern of simply correcting mistakes. This type of approach relies on the development of two important aspects: (a) 'a considerable amount of pupil–teacher interaction' and (b) 'the asking of questions and transference of much of the thinking and problem solving on to the pupil' (p. 72). Candidly, it is recognised that the freedom required for such a holistic approach may not lead to such obvious or measurable 'straight line' progress, although we live in a society 'so dependent on the measurement of "progress" by success in exams' (p. 82).

Once or twice the views expounded in the book may be said to be based upon received wisdom rather than the most current state of research evidence. For example, for a busy teacher with a waiting list, it is suggested that in assessing potential pupils' suitability for lessons one ought to be looking for 'a personality tending to the extrovert' (p. 7). Anthony Kemp's book *The Musical Temperament* (1996) reveals a much more complicated interplay between personality traits of introversion and extroversion, the former undoubtedly necessary for long hours of isolated thoughtful practice, the latter for performance. There also may be differences of personality emphasis required for, or brought about by, different instruments. Kemp's research for example suggests that

cellists, are often of a shy temperament (Kemp: 150). In short,

we should not fall into the trap of considering introversion as indicative of timidity; far more it can be interpreted as an inner strength and resourcefulness that allows the individual to deal with exacting demands with hidden levels of resilience. (Kemp: 156–7)

Additionally, one detects from time to time a slightly dogmatic tone in the book, notably in the assertions that ‘it is important for you to discover if a potential new pupil is not keen to practise *before* taking them on!’ (p. 8) and, when discussing the playing of dynamic markings while sight-reading, ‘it is really a matter of laziness if the actual marked levels are not observed . . . It is up to you to insist that these markings are observed’ (p. 49).

These minor reservations notwithstanding, this book contains much sound advice to keep the music teacher on track, for example for the group teacher to try to ensure that ‘all the pupils are *actively* involved all the time, whether playing, listening or commenting’ (p. 83). Chapter 14 on ‘Practice’ also offers very sensible insights and explanation, not least in advising that it is more helpful to think in terms of ‘careful practice makes for progress’ rather than ‘practice makes perfect’ (p. 101). My only quibble in this chapter is with the insistence that ‘The practice notebook . . . is essential’ (p. 98). Not all teachers would agree with the writing of a pupil’s practice notebook. Some may feel that it interferes with the building of trust between teacher and pupil, or with the development of the pupil’s own sense of responsibility for remembering what is to be practised. Young pupils may find it very difficult to remember and so progress may be slow, but in terms of Simultaneous Learning we shall be ‘instilling in our pupils the very important means to “do it themselves”’ (p. 71). Much worthwhile research into the effectiveness or

otherwise of practice notebooks has yet to be undertaken.

Overall *The Music Teacher’s Companion* is a valuable and wide-ranging book covering all the salient practical issues with which instrumental and singing teachers will be faced in private practice or working in schools. With its easy-to-read and approachable style it should help disseminate to a wider audience much of the best practice and current educational thinking in music teaching in palatable form, disentangled from its more academic roots. For this it should be commended.

Reference

Kemp, A. E. (1996) *The Musical Temperament: Psychology and Personality of Musicians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

OLIVER GLEDHILL

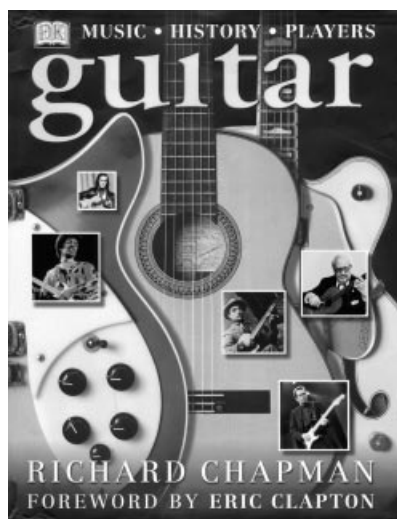
Guitar: Music · History · Players by Richard Chapman, foreword by Eric Clapton. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2000. 240 pp., £19.99 hardback.

My father bought me my first guitar when I was thirteen. Unfortunately, he taught me to tune it in fourths throughout – he was a mandolin player of sorts – and this rather frustrated my early attempts at learning chords. (C major was particularly excruciating.)

Yet these early set-backs were trivial compared to those of Richard Chapman, author of *Guitar*. According to the introduction, music-making in his family was seen as ‘dangerous and subversive’. And when he finally saved up and bought a guitar, his father ‘destroyed and burnt’ it along with all his music. As this gave the fourteen-year-old ‘a greater determination to succeed’, we have to be thankful, I suppose, because he might not otherwise have gone to write *Guitar*, and *Guitar* is a terrific book.

The first thing that strikes you is the lavish, coffee-table format, with an inventive and ever-changing layout, so that you never quite know what is going to happen when you turn the page. There are hundreds of superb black-and-white and colour photographs, and there are even occasional examples of musical score, including some transcriptions made particularly for this volume.

The next thing that hits you is the scope. The book is divided into sections on Classical, Flamenco, Blues, Country, Folk, Jazz, Rock and Pop (UK and Europe), Rock and Pop (North America), Latin and World. This is an extraordinary range for one person to cover.



And as soon as you start dipping in, you get the biggest surprise of all, for the author writes with ease and authority on all these topics. Whether he is discussing Julian Bream, Joan Baez or Eddie van Halen, he seems to be enjoying every minute of it, just so long as a guitar is involved, and is being played well.

An obvious question with a book like this is 'who gets the big treatment?' As it turns out, Segovia, Django Reinhardt, Chet Atkins, Jimmy Page and Eric Clapton all fare well though both Jimi Hendrix and the Beatles do better still, each getting twice as much coverage as

Segovia. (This could, I imagine, make 'disgusted of Tunbridge Wells' reach for a pen.)

For many of us, though, the 'little things' will be at least as interesting. In the Classical section, for example, I was surprised to learn that the second movement of Malcolm Arnold's Guitar Concerto (1959) had been written as an elegy for Django Reinhardt, and this certainly made me listen to it afresh. Other highlights for me were a strangely haunting full-page photograph of a very young B. B. King, a short history of the Hawaiian slide guitar, and a nice little section on the country player Albert Lee, who played – I think – a lovely solo in one of Eric Clapton's recordings of 'Cocaine'. And in the Jazz section, it was good to see the early (1920s) guitar duos of Lonnie Johnson and Eddie Lang, as well as the far more recent virtuoso solo jazz guitar of Joe Pass. (I agree that 'Night and Day' is one of his best tracks.) And the treatment of one of my great heroes – Django Reinhardt – is very fine, and includes an arresting photograph, which I had not seen before, of the Quintette du Hot Club de France in the recording studio in 1939.

One of my other great heroes, from a much later era, is Hank Marvin, who, with The Shadows, dominated the UK Rock and Pop scene immediately prior to the emergence of The Beatles. Here we find a photograph showing his early equipment including a Fender Stratocaster, a Vox AC15 combo amplifier and a Meazzi echo unit (the last of these looking incredibly like an Enigma machine). In fact, throughout the whole book, the discussions of the musicians and their work are interspersed at random intervals with beguiling photographs of vintage guitars, and it is all too easy for some of us to spend our time ogling these.

There is much in this book that will appeal to music teachers. While it is organised in sections on individual musicians, details of their lives (even in the more colourful cases) take second place to the music, the playing

techniques being used, and the types of guitar being played. The book will also appeal to students, as it contains a great deal to suit all tastes. As the Rock and Pop sections are the largest, occupying over a third of the book, it could be particularly attractive for the sort of youngster who would not normally dream of being seen in the music section of the school library. And if education is, in part, about building on a flicker of interest and broadening horizons, then this book should be in every single school library in the country.

I used to think that I had quite wide interests, so far as the guitar is concerned. I

have seen Segovia at the Royal Festival Hall, I have heard Hank Marvin playing *'Apache'* in Oxford, I have seen Tal Farlow play high-speed artificial harmonics in Hampstead, and I have sat on an old park bench in Samois-sur-Seine which Django Reinhardt *must* have sat on from time to time. As a young boy, I even saw Gene Autry play the guitar on his horse at Earls Court. But all this is nothing compared to the passionate involvement with the guitar that comes through on every page of this remarkable book.

DAVID ACHESON