B. J. Music. Ed. 2009 26:2, 225–236
doi:10.1017/S0265051709008456

Book Reviews

Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy by Lucy Green. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. 226 pp., £16.99 paperback. ISBN: 9780754662426

The borders between formal and informal learning have been softening for at least a generation, and music teachers are becoming increasingly aware of how the music that children know outside school is richly informative to how school music might best proceed. Popular music of every sort is radiated out to children and youth, and as they are drawn to the dynamism of the music (as well as to the message behind the music) they make this music their very own. In the privacy of bedrooms, basements and garages, they listen, sing and play what they have heard, and they create new expressions within the envelopes of sound they have come to know.

In *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy*, Lucy Green leads readers into a consideration of avenues for the incorporation of familiar music and music learning practices into classrooms of adolescents in secondary schools. The eight chapters, including introduction and afterword, provide a carefully rendered description of how the borders are breaking down, and how the worlds of in-school and out-of-school experiences could conceivably be converging toward a sustainable model of music. This documentation of an empirical study shows that by facilitating the musical ideas and interests of adolescents, as well as their preferred approaches to the use of music outside of school, teachers may thus be tapping into avenues of music learning and enjoyment that best fit students in their adolescent stages of intellectual and social-emotional development.

One important impetus for the book is acknowledged by Green: Britain's 'Musical Futures' project, a national venture supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to devise ways of engaging students aged 11–19 in music activities. Spearheaded by community musician and project leader David Price, Green served in this £2 million, four-year music education action research project with hundreds of consortia partners, schools and youth services, and delivery team members, all intent on examining, developing, and delivering ways of enhancing the musical lives of young people. Price's own influence on the shaping of the national project continues to be huge, in that his leadership in the UK's Community Music movement has brought participatory music making into the realm of schools via model projects in community centres, concert halls, hospitals, and prisons. His long and successful record of popular music projects for adolescents propelled him to the top rung of a hierarchy intent on making school music more meaningful. There is acknowledgement by Green of Price's vision on the national project, as well as attribution to Abigail D'Amore, a colleague-member of the delivery team in Hertfordshire with whom she worked closely on the empirical project. This book is a culmination of thought and practice on the minds of many, a 'coming to a head' of an idea that has been percolating for more than a few years, which emerges from a systematic examination of questions pertinent to teachers who may wish to go beyond the rhetoric in taking to curricular practice the substantive inclusion of popular music. Moreover, it is a recognition of the voices of young people on musical expressions they find meaningful.

Green reports the findings of an empirical project to determine just what transpires in the way of music learning when adolescents select the content of their music curriculum for themselves. The study's

expressed interest in 'pupil autonomy' directed also a focus on the learning strategies that emerge when students direct their own learning. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected on-site in 21 schools in London and Hertfordshire; a focused group of 11 teachers and 200 pupils were the principal data sources of the report. Through a series of interviews and observations, responses to the project aims – 'to adopt and adapt aspects of popular musicians' informal music learning practices for use within the formal arena of the school classroom' were collected and evaluated. Two or more of five characteristics of informal learning were facilitated by the teachers and studied by Green and d'Amore: the use of pupils' own preferred (popular) music, learning by listening (and copying recordings), learning with friends, learning in non-structured and non-(teacher-)guided fashion, and learning through the integration of listening, performing, improvising, and composing.

The five 'results' chapters document the musical practices of the adolescent students at liberty to choose the way their music classes unfold. One chapter on making music details their singing and playing activity, with attention to the influence of the CD as authority (rather than the teacher), their interest in playing untuned percussion instruments, and their processes for finding pitches on electric and bass guitars. Listening, 'purposive hearing', and the vocabulary to describe the music they listen to comprise a chapter devoted to their development of an appreciation for pieces, genres and styles. Attention to the enjoyment-factor follows in a chapter that examines adolescent concepts of 'fun' (and teachers' wonders about motivational techniques that help to gain and maintain student attention to lessons). Another chapter gives focus to group cooperation and peer-directed learning, with an intriguing section on those disaffected students who through the course of autonomous learning experiences developed the enthusiastic and cooperative traits of students, transformed. Still another chapter richly documents teenagers' responses to classical music, their views prior to learning about it, their approaches to listening to and copying classical music in order to make it themselves.

The quotes of students are rich and thick, with a constant stream of explanations and reflections by individual students and dialogues that feature adolescents telling in their own words what they are experiencing, learning and feeling in the way of their self-directed lessons. The lens is adjusted to allow the reader close-up views that bring a sense of intimacy, or at least familiarity, with the students represented in the report. They express their enthusiasm for having experiences with rock music at school, with working together to make music, with creating their own learning pathways. They also air their frustrations, including points in the project when the learning became boring, unfocused, or simply did not happen. Teachers, too, are a presence within the report, sometimes in lengthy expressions as to what they observed but did not interfere with, and in reflections of how they might teach and facilitate learning differently past the point of the project.

Green fully admits that unanswered questions and unexplored avenues have arisen from the empirical project, which is the probable result of any intensive and thorough-going work of this nature. Still, *Music, Informal Learning and the School* is an important book that chronicles the realities of taking seriously the values and views of adolescents as to *their music* and the ways in which they prefer to know it better. It gives pause for putting into practice what has been discussed and debated for some time in music education, and in

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051709008456 Published online by Cambridge University Press

education at large, and paves the way for further developments in making music reasonable and relevant for students in secondary schools.

PATRICIA SHEHAN CAMPBELL
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON,
SEATTLE, USA

Psychology for Musicians: Understanding and Acquiring the Skills by Andreas C. Lehmann, John A. Sloboda & Robert H. Woody. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. 268 pp., £17.99 hardback. ISBN 0195146107

Psychology for Musicians is presented as a sequel to John Sloboda's well-thumbed *The Musical Mind* (Sloboda, 1986), with ambitions to provide 'a panoramic view of music making and listening based on cognitive theory in conjunction with the cultural context in which the music occurs' (p. vi). As the title suggests, this book serves to introduce musicians to psychology. Accordingly, it avoids scientific terminology and addresses questions of practical concern to performing or teaching musicians in its three parts: 'Musical Learning', 'Musical Skills' and 'Musical Roles'. 'Musical Learning' comprises an introductory chapter on science and musical skills, followed by chapters on musical development, motivation, and practice. 'Musical Skills' deals with expression and interpretation, reading or listening and remembering, composition and improvisation, and managing performance anxiety. Finally, 'Musical Roles' addresses in turn the performer, the teacher, the listener and the user.

In the Preface, the authors explain that the book was initially written for classroom teaching, hence a 12-chapter structure to align with a teaching term. The pedagogical thrust of the book is also manifest in the uniform structure to each chapter: a summary of the arguments to be developed is provided at the beginning, followed by a focus on one important study or typical methodology in detail, and ending with study questions. Other features of the chapter structure include what the authors term a 'cross-cultural perspective', where the chapter topic is addressed from an alternative point of view. Musicians are encouraged to reflect on their own musical practice in self-study exercises that usefully bridge hands-on experience with psychological research findings.

Despite its organisation into an appropriate number of chapters for a teaching term, this is not a textbook. Breadth of topic rather than depth of material is favoured. While the classroom situation might have originally motivated writing the book, it is difficult to know whether this classroom was university level, music conservatoire, or high school. In a bid to present a straightforward picture, critical analyses of the music psychology literature are lacking. Music students, while inexperienced in scientific enquiry, should still be encouraged to analyse research ideas and outcomes critically. At the same time, a danger of presenting the complexities of music psychology research can mean that the findings are simply never incorporated into music education. At least *Psychology for Musicians* simplifies the picture and provides music teachers with convenient take-home messages.

'The topics covered here contain relevant information for musicians who perform or teach, for students of psychology who want to know more about music and the mind, and for musically inclined persons who seek personal growth and enrichment' (p. v). While the *topics* might be relevant to such a wide-ranging readership, their presentation is less well suited. As is typical of cognitive accounts, discussion of the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051709008456 Published online by Cambridge University Press