

Book Reviews

Teaching Music Musically by Keith Swanwick.
London and New York: Routledge, 1999.
120 pp. £14.99.

On page 105 of this, his latest book, Swanwick summarises the essence of his thesis. Borrowing his words for the remainder of this paragraph, he argues that music is a form of symbolic discourse. At its heart is the process of metaphor which occurs in three ways: tones are transformed into ‘tunes’, or gestures; gestures evolve into new structures; these structures can give rise to significant experiences as they relate to our personal and cultural histories. The three metaphorical transformations are audible through the layers of observable musical elements to which they give rise: materials, expression, form and value. Music arises in a social context. However, because of its metaphorical nature music is not merely culturally reflective but can be creatively interpreted and produced. It follows that there are three essential principles for music educators: care for music as discourse, care for the musical discourse of students, care for musical fluency. An education committed to the quality of musical experience is mindful that students move between all four layers of musical discourse. Configured as an assessment model, these layers give validity when evaluating the work of students and in self-evaluation. Research based on this theory of musical mind supports the idea of an integrated music curriculum where students compose, perform and respond to music as audience-listeners. The contemporary plurality of ‘musics’ requires a redefinition of the relationship between music-making in the community and formal music education in the studio and classroom (p. 105–6).

If you have not quite followed all that, you would be well advised to read the book in full, because each of these statements is closely

argued in generally readable and persuasive language. For me, the most revealing text is found in the early chapters, where Swanwick explains the metaphorical nature of music and music-making, skilfully and legitimately referring to poetry and painting to exemplify his train of thought. Not that he is ducking the more thorny problems thrown up by music, where imagery and literal meaning are much more elusive. A flow-diagram helps to guide the reader through the argument, which essentially suggests that musical sounds are heard not as mere noises but as expressive shapes or gestures. As Swanwick puts it, ‘Tones become tunes’. Almost by definition, the tunes are expressive, the expressive shapes form new relationships and so music has ‘a life of its own’: it has form. Because each of us listens to music against a background of personal musical experiences, the ‘new’ musical experience necessarily becomes part of that general experience, and ‘informs the life of feeling’. Swanwick provides signposts for this linear process: ‘materials, expression, form, value’.

These observations resonate strongly, but I wonder whether he is trying to achieve the impossible task of analysing what it is that causes music to send a tingle up our spines. Whatever his measure of success, his concern about the essential musicality of music is enormously refreshing. It justifies the title of the book and supports his gentle scorn for the dry-as-dust concentration on the peripherals of music which bedevil the National Curricula of the UK and some other countries. Without labouring the point and without knocking music teachers generally, he speaks of the ‘sub-culture of school music’, and rightly questions whether we have taken a wrong turning somewhere.

Why is it . . . that a vision of what music is, so often gets lost in what music education

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actually turns out to be? . . . I have seen music taught unmusically in conditions where time and resources were more than sufficient and I have seen music taught *musically* in unpromising circumstances. (p. 44)

He goes on to plead that 'If we always or even mostly insist on naming notes and intervals, identifying chords, reading rhythm patterns, and so on, we may get stuck at the level of materials' (p. 47).

Chapter 3 dwells upon the exemplification of three principles of musical education. This may strike readers as a glance backwards since so many others have offered 'principles of music education', Mursell, Leonhard and even your reviewer among them. Swanwick's principles are less self-explanatory than others I have seen. They are: 'care for music as discourse'; 'care for the musical discourse of students'; 'fluency first and last'. His first principle is explained carefully and is linked closely to his well-argued earlier chapter on metaphor, but the other two are covered more cursorily, despite the inclusion of practical examples from observation and research. Swanwick uses a couple of his own compositions to illustrate his points, the first a folk-like tune which, for me, is marred by an almost certain misprint in the final bar of the notated music on page 52. The other example is a graphic score offering no advance over the creations of Brian Dennis, George Self and several others in the early 1970s. I can imagine some evocative interpretations, but nevertheless wonder what pupils should do afterwards, as indeed I used to wonder in the 1970s.

Swanwick tackles the issues of assessment next. As a lead-in, he asks:

Is it possible, not only to teach musically, but also to assess the work of students musically? It is not only possible but essential. For there can be no teaching in any real sense of that word without sensitive and responsive assessment. It is perhaps unfortunate that

student assessment has become a political issue linked to educational accountability. The growing number of tools for formal assessment are not often crafted musically and do not always reflect a really musical perspective. (p. 67)

Swanwick's exposure of the vacuity of the language used by both British and American authorities in their attempts to pin down levels of musical accomplishment is hugely welcome. As he states, 'Such language is too imprecise and spuriously qualitative to form the basis of a viable assessment model' (p. 77). His polemic should end all such nonsense once and for all, but I fear it will not. His own approach is far more sophisticated but also too complex to spell out in detail here. He provides general criteria for assessment which are closely linked to the processes identified and explained earlier in the book. He notes elsewhere that some teachers of music in schools teach up to 600 pupils each week, so one might wonder how this complex model might be applied to each pupil. Curiously, he appears not to tackle two key issues concerning assessment: the *intention* of students (i.e. what they are actually trying to achieve), and the *quality* (i.e. the extent to which they meet their objectives). I feel that this chapter advances the discussion significantly but must still stand as a 'near miss', since music educators have yet to agree on a simple, reliable and musical method of assessing musical achievement, and I am doubtful whether Swanwick's analysis will meet that need.

The final chapter, 'What of the Future?', dwells mainly on 'community' music-making, projects with professional musicians and bodies, and a general broadening of the cultural base. Information and communications technology is not even mentioned until page 107, just two pages from the end of the book. Not part of the future, perhaps.

Teaching Music Musically is clearly an important book which shifts the debate forward,

raises awkward questions and challenges us all to reconsider some of our assumptions. Inevitably, perhaps, there are errors, one of which has been mentioned. Among others, the poet A. E. Housman (1859–1936) is described as a Victorian poet, when his only ‘Victorian’ poems were published privately in 1896. Otherwise, his published poetical work first appeared in 1922, which is not even Edwardian.

Swanwick’s tendency to recycle previously published material (or, at least, its essence) might irritate. Readers may resent paying out for a repeat programme, just as one might feel cheated if a new symphony contained a movement from an earlier symphony at its first performance. He also indulges in a good deal of self-quotation, often apposite for sure, but creating some disruption to the central arguments, which are generally so compelling. He trawls through his earlier research, his professional visits to other countries and uses the research of his students as well, some of it unpublished.

No matter, really, since the book contains the essential and highly valued hallmark of its author: well-articulated philosophy that will surely filter through to practical work in classrooms. Indeed, the ‘recycling’ offers a more teacher-friendly distillation of the rather subtle ideas expressed in his earlier books, the last two in particular. While the book offers hope for the future of music in schools, it also contains a realistic admission of some opportunities lost since the 1960s, when Swanwick started work at the University of London Institute of Education. The title itself could be read as an admission of the failures of the profession: there is still too much unmusical music teaching about. Thirty years of innovation in initial teacher training, in-service work, the Schools Council projects and much else, have done little to remedy the situation where the classroom is concerned, although there has been an explosion in extracurricular

opportunities. As Swanwick himself states, ‘*For unlike most if not all other school and college curriculum subject areas, in music many desirable and easily alternative avenues of access are open*’ (p. 36, my italics). This is a key sentence, and possibly a prophetic one. The generalist classroom teacher of music is faced with too much competition from the burgeoning opportunities for musical experience that young people now enjoy outside the classroom and, in many cases, outside schools. Perhaps it is also fair to say that, with rare exceptions, the classroom has become too blunt a means for allowing teachers to help pupils to learn in musical ways.

WILLIAM SALAMAN

Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening, by Christopher Small. Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1998, 230 pp., no price supplied.

In this, his latest book, Christopher Small restates and further develops his major thesis – that music is not a thing but an activity, hence the verb form of the title, ‘Musicking’. For Small musicking is to take part in any capacity, including that of listening, in a musical performance. It is this concept of performance rather than ‘work’ or piece that is the nub of music. This may represent a challenge to some of those scholars and musicians who equate the word music with ‘works of music in the Western tradition’, with the implication that musical meaning somehow resides in musical objects. In Small’s opinion, such a limited view of music carries with it certain corollaries: that musical performance has no part in the creative process but is merely reproductive of the composer’s intention, largely conveyed through notation, that musical communication is a one-way system from composer to performer to listener, that all performances are

approximations to the ideal of the 'work' and that each musical work is autonomous, existing without necessary reference to any system of social beliefs. The idea of musicking liberates us from the confines of these assumptions.

Leaving aside the issues of whether or not the alleged corollaries really are inevitable, we can see at once that his position has considerable virtue. It enables us to think about music in a whole range of contexts, not merely but including the performances of notated music in the symphonic concert hall. Small chooses not to test his thesis in a variety of musical settings but instead gives a detailed account of a hypothetical symphony concert from an ethnographic perspective, influenced by the detailed descriptive methodology of social anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz and with reference to Gregory Bateson's philosophy of mind. Chapters on the symphony concert venue, facilitating personnel, the ethos, audience and participants, the score and so on are interspersed with three 'interludes', where he develops his perspective that musicking offers a way of articulating our ideas of ideal relationships, where 'contradictions can be reconciled, and the integrity of the person affirmed, explored, and celebrated'.

Small's account of the orchestral concert is rich indeed. All we might ever have thought about these curious events is here brought to our attention in his witty 'thick' description. It seems inappropriate to even try to reproduce or paraphrase this part of the text. It will suffice to offer one quotation – on the role of the conductor – which may give an impression of his sharpness of observation and his style of commentary.

From the audience's point of view the orchestra is an undifferentiated collectivity from which only the conductor emerges as an individual. It is he who receives the audience's homage and applause, he who bows on behalf of the orchestra, and if he makes an occasional gesture toward sharing

the applause by getting the orchestra to stand, we know it is a courtesy only. The blank expressions of the faces of the musicians as they do so shows that they know where the applause is really directed. It is as if a musician had asked the audience to applaud his instrument. (p. 80)

Some readers may object to either the veracity of this kind of observation or to the statement that it does not matter where the symphony concert is taking place or who is involved: apparently they are all essentially the same. I shall not tangle with issues of this kind. For every contestable observation there are hundreds that ring true. It seems more important in this brief review to focus on the emergent theory, the point of view that comes to the foreground as Small tells the story of the concert and which is established throughout the 'interludes'.

The first and basic premise concerns the nature of mind and is taken from Bateson. Mind is simply the ability to give and to respond to information: 'wherever there is life there is mind'. We do not have either objective knowledge of the world nor are we completely subjective. In the gap between is where 'human freedom and creativity live' (p. 55). Knowledge is therefore the result of an interpretative process of the environment in which we find ourselves in part a product of the knower. This is an important concept, one which can also be found just for instance in the fiction of Pirsig and in the philosophy of Kant and Cassirer. Small then asks what kind of important information we need to give and respond to. His answer is information concerning relationships.

Now the patterns of relationships are too complex, continuous and layered for verbal language to articulate. Gestural language seems better able to embody relational meanings. And over time the gestures of relationships have been elaborated on to the patterns we call ritual. For Small 'ritual is a form of organized behaviour in which humans use the language of gesture, or "paralanguage", to affirm, to

explore and to celebrate their ideas of how the relationships of the cosmos (or a part of it), operate, and thus of how they themselves should relate to it and to one another' (p. 95). By ritual we are not to infer only the large-scale or religious. Rituals may be as informal as courtship or a family dinner. They affirm and explore or even change 'who we are'. By way of a discussion on the nature of metaphor, the purpose and actual sense of which seems somewhat unclear, Small arrives at a central proposition: ritual is the mother of all the arts.

This of course is not new. Long ago Suzanne Langer drew attention to the centrality of myth and ritual to human well-being and the relationship of the arts to these activities. But Small feels 'almost' able to say that ritual is art and that the arts always incline towards an earlier unseparated state, towards a unity. Even the apparently disembodied activity of the concert hall exemplifies this tendency, 'the essential part of the human encounter that is the performance'.

Of course these ritual meanings are socially constructed. Indeed, how could they be otherwise? So the enactment of social relationships during a musical performance will differ according to the shared meanings of the performers. So far so good. But Small then makes the common side-slip of suggesting that each musical performance 'articulates the values of a specific social group'. Although Small draws attention to internal differences and even conflicts within any social group, he still wishes to assert an 'overriding unity' with the culture. Those involved are saying 'this is who we are'. Yet, as Small recognises, we all belong at the same time to a number of social groups and although reality may be socially constructed 'no individual is bound to accept unquestioningly the way it is constructed'. Perhaps he has a way of reconciling this tension through the idea of a performance articulating the values of a social group 'at a specific point in its history'. If so this is not really evident and it

might be better to say more directly a specific point in time. For the social group must be those involved in the particularity of that performance, whether playing or in the audience.

Clifford Geertz himself would not be happy with the suggestion of music functioning as simple cultural reflection. For him, to study an art form is 'to study a sensibility' and that this leads us away from what he calls the functionalist view, that 'works of art are elaborate mechanisms for defining social relationships, sustaining social rules, and strengthening social values'. Of course there are often strong connections between the music of particular groups and their life styles and social positions. But this is not to say that music simply embodies these social worlds. Musical discourse is inherently social, not symptomatic, in the deterministic sense of 'reflecting' society, because any form of discourse depends upon individuals interpreting and negotiating their perspectives within systems of shared meanings that are never one hundred per cent agreed. If music somehow embodies ideal or 'right' relationships of a group we need also to remember that a group in these circumstances is not an undifferentiated mob but a temporary and mostly voluntary subscription – for a great variety of reasons – to an event, such as a symphony concert.

Small includes one short chapter called 'A solitary flute player'. He tells us he was advised by friends not to include this text, as he – the flute player – may appear to be an idealised, interchangeable identity. It may be that he was so advised – advice he thankfully set aside – because at the end of this chapter the flute player is imagined to be saying 'here I am, and this is who I am'. Such a perspective might indeed appear problematic to those who subscribe unswervingly to the idea of music as being not only socially constructed but also and inevitably socially symptomatic. We have to be careful not to reify 'musicking' groups as idealised, interchangeable identities. Rather

they are transient, fluid networks of people who are – for the time being and for a great variety of reasons – gathered around and focusing in on a particular performance.

Leaving aside this conceptual difficulty, Small opens up considerable richness in musical transactions by returning frequently to three central social functions, that in music the values of the group are explored, affirmed and celebrated.

There are chapters on music and theatre, discussion of elements of the development of Western music history and more specifically a response to the music of Beethoven. These have their moments but do not seem to add anything to the central discussion which in itself is important and interesting.

On the negative side, his discussion of emotion and music is uninformed and uninforming. In general an editor's pencil might have been used more often and more ruthlessly to good effect and the referencing could be more helpful, as might some form of index. Nonetheless, this is a significant book written from the heart, 'carefully', in the strongest sense of that word. It addresses important issues in a highly personal and stimulating way. Most of us would subscribe to at least the final part of his credo, that in 'musicking' the integrity of the person is 'affirmed, explored, and celebrated'.

KEITH SWANWICK

The Effects and Effectiveness of Arts Education

in Schools: Interim Report 1 by John Harland, Kay Kinder, Jo Haynes and Ian Schagen. Slough, Berkshire: National Foundation for Educational Research, 1998. 120 pp., £6.00.

This volume is the Phase 1 report of a Royal Society of Arts funded project on the wider effects of arts education in schools. The blurb on the back cover promises to address the question 'What do pupils get out of studying the

arts at secondary school?' As the project introduction states in its rationale for the research: 'in order to substantiate the case for the arts in the curriculum, there is a clear need for valid and impartially collected evidence on the outcomes of arts education in schools' (p. 118). I will try to explore some of the content of the report and deal with some of the assumptions and methods of the authors. The category of 'the arts' seems elastic: it is always art, drama and music, but at times also includes English literature and dance.

The first chapter details the background, aims and methods of the project. It is a three-year project, the volume under review being the report on the first year's work. The aims of the project include documenting and evidencing 'the range of effects and outcomes attributable to school-based arts education'; an examination of 'the relationship between these effects and the key factors and processes associated with arts provision in school'; an illumination of 'good practice' in this area and an examination of the correlation between institutional involvement in the arts and its correlation with school improvement. This volume is largely concerned with the first of these.

The first chapter also outlines the methods of the project: a mixture of observation, interviews and informal meetings with pupils and teachers, and the questionnaires used. A typology of teachers' perceptions of the aims and effects of arts education was constructed and an analysis exploring the possible relationships between the taking of arts-orientated GCSE courses and general academic achievement at GCSE was completed. Nowhere are we given a clear indication of the detail of the methodology – a fact that makes this chapter and the report generally frustrating and difficult to evaluate.

The second chapter explores teachers' perceptions of the effects of arts education. Those interviewed were asked to 'identify what they saw as key effects or outcomes of their

particular arts subjects' or the arts in general, if more appropriate. From the material generated was constructed a 'typology of claimed effects' which breaks down into four broad categories: effects on pupils, effects on the school, effects on the community, and 'art itself as an outcome'. Of these, the first, effects on pupils, was by far the largest category.

What is constructed is a fairly predictable 'common-sense' list of what teachers think of as the effects of arts education; it includes such matters as knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the art form, communication and expressive skills, thinking and creativity skills, awareness of others etc. Generally, this is unremarkable stuff. This chapter is rich in verbatim transcriptions of material, some of which is very interesting, exploring as it does teachers' attitudes and values. The problem I have with the chapter is that there is a sort of sleight of hand which transmutes the teachers' responses into strong 'claims' for the effects of arts education that require empirical verification (see p. 4). I am happy with the idea of trawling such data in order to construct a typology (which is no more than an attempt to organise disparate material and may be useful for future research), but the treatment of attitudes, values and assumptions as 'claims' seems to be of a different order. We are not told exactly how the interviews were conducted other than the key question quoted above, and although 'other questions in the interview schedule' are referred to we never learn what these were (p. 4). We do not know exactly what respondents were asked, whether they received advanced warning of the questions or had to 'think on their feet'. All of these factors would have influenced the responses and quality of the interviews, and ought to be available to the readers so that they can assess the research. Nor are we informed of the way in which the researchers dealt with the transcriptions. There are vague references to 'coding' but again the absence of detail

makes a clear assessment of what has been achieved impossible.

The researchers are clear that they make 'no pretension to endow the data with scientifically rigorous and unproblematic quantification' (p. 54) and then go on for nine pages to discuss the frequencies of categories, and variations between schools and between the different subjects. If this is not quantitative analysis, it certainly gives the impression that it is! Really, they are using the responses (unsystematically collected) as data, and hard data at that. When we read that 'none of the schools demonstrated a propensity to identify the richest and most comprehensive array of perceived effects in all of the art forms' (p. 61), then a reasonable response is, that given the way in which the data was collected, it is hardly surprising. But I forgot – they make no claims to be doing 'scientifically rigorous and unproblematic quantification'. Do we know what they are doing? Counting for the sake of counting?

This move to quantification of material collected for a qualitative use (the construction of a typology) is confirmed in Chapter 3, which explores how the perceived effects varied between art forms. The aim of the chapter is 'to enhance analysis of the typology of claimed effects' (p. 63). I did not know that a typology (a construction) could be subject to analysis (I thought it was a tool for analysis). The conclusion of the chapter reports on the incidence of perceived effects across the art forms. It purports to show some 'interesting variations' between subjects but fails to show how the analysis of the typology has been enhanced.

Chapter 4 is about pupils' responses to the question 'what is learning in the arts for at this school?' One intention of the chapter is to 'allow the pupil voice to be represented'. The authors do not state the number of pupils interviewed but refer to 'a small group of year 7 and year 9 pupils in the five secondary case-

study schools' (p. 81). Teachers were asked 'to nominate pupils who were making good progress in at least one of the art forms' to be interviewed (p. 2). These are described as 'pupils favourably disposed towards at least one of the art forms' (p. 97). Given this favourable disposition is it surprising that the researchers found 'much common ground between teachers' perceptions and those of their pupils' (p. 97). The pupil voice, it seems, can only be represented by a select and hand-picked few.

Chapter 5 has a very different style from the others. It is an investigation of 'the possible effects of taking key stage 4 arts-related courses on general performance in the GCSE examination'. Its paragraphs are longer and it is altogether more quantitative, more rigorous and more circumspect than the rest of the report. The chapter investigates the claims for a 'transfer effect' from arts to other subjects but clearly states that 'it is crucial not to lose sight of the fact that the analysis cannot offer any evidence of causality, or even the direction of causality' (p. 105). Thus when the writer of this chapter finds a strong positive correlation between achievement in music and achievement in mathematics we do not know whether the mathematics has influenced the music or the music the mathematics. Or perhaps there has been no causal influence between the two subjects.

Success in music (rather than other arts subjects) seems to have a stronger correlation with success in non-arts subjects at GCSE. Whilst a number of interpretative hypotheses are discussed the obvious social one seems ruled out of court. I would hypothesise that pupils who are successful in GCSE music are more likely to come from homes that offer both encouragement to learning and material support. Success in GCSE music is greatly facilitated by possession of an instrument and private or school-based tuition. To suggest there might be social factors which influence educational outcomes is not to give in to 'the

culture of excuses' – it is to try to understand something of the complex world in which we live.

Chapter 6 consists of a summary and conclusions, and is mainly a regurgitation of the conclusions of the earlier chapters. A warning is given that the findings are tentative and provisional and that caution should be exercised regarding claims about possible indirect or transfer effects.

Reviewing this work has not been a very satisfying experience. With the exception of the well-written and rigorously argued Chapter 5, this is a disappointing report. It is only a progress report on a project but NFER have chosen to publish it. There is an instrumental assumption that underlies the report: the place of the arts in the curriculum depends on its outcomes and effects on other subjects rather than on its intrinsic value. It is significant that the only place where the instrumentality of this underlying assumption is challenged is in the rigorous, well-argued and quantitative Chapter 5. The qualitative part of the study leaves one wondering what the authors think they are trying to achieve and whether they are quite sure themselves.

VIC GAMMON

I would like to thank Professor Stephen Harrison of the Nuffield Centre at the University of Leeds for discussing with me in detail the research-based aspects of this report.

Developing Singing Matters by Patrick Allen.
Oxford: Heinemann Educational, 1999.
192pp., £49.99.

Discover Your Voice by Tona de Brett and Jon West. London: Schott & Co, 1996. Book (76 pp.) and CD, £20.

Two years after Allen's ground-breaking first volume, *Singing Matters*, comes this follow-up. The format is the same: an A4 loose-leaf binder containing, along with an introduction,

background information on technical matters affecting the voice and a set of warm-up exercises, thirty choral projects for use at key stages 3, 4 and beyond. The volume is progressive with respect to the previous in two senses. It is aimed at a slightly older age range (and deals specifically with issues concerning the changing voice) and the projects taken as a whole assume an increase in technical and musical refinement over the first-volume repertoire. This does not imply a restriction in the range and breadth of material (pop songs, Bulgarian chants, gospel hymns, medieval and Renaissance part songs, African anthems – and a single nineteenth-century parlour song) but more challenging arrangements, almost all of which require two-, three- and four-part singing.

However, the question of repertoire prompts some thoughts. On the one hand, Allen's eclectic approach constitutes a rich and varied diet, some of which is almost certain to hit the spot with even the most reluctant of adolescent singers. On the other hand, it also signals the lack of any national canon of vocal music which a multi-cultural Britain might take as its own. This volume is a veritable supermarket of vocal produce imported from many corners of the globe. It might not matter much in educational terms, though it must surely say something about the nature of contemporary culture in Britain.

The material is well chosen – often because it resonates profoundly in the communities from which it has been lifted (this includes the pop songs from previous decades). Some will doubtless dismiss cultural dislocation as being of no consequence ('so long as it's good, let's use it'); others may prefer to question, or at least investigate, the cultural context of the material more fully. It does seem a disturbing irony, however, that Allen's persuasive and effective attempt to re-establish the voice at the heart of school music education requires the wholesale importation of songs from other cultures.

By way of contrast, one thinks of Kodály,

whose even more extensive and rigorous vocal syllabus never strayed beyond the distinctive Hungarian traditions known to virtually all of his intended recipients.

In one major respect, *Developing Singing Matters* differs from its predecessor. Here, Allen concentrates in his introduction on the ethics and mechanics of running extra-curricular choirs (although the material is all perfectly capable of fruitful exploitation in the classroom). He builds on the essential preparations for choral singing, dealing with strategies for encouraging participation, motivating adolescent boys, organising and managing rehearsals, establishing a broad range of singing activities and preparing for performances. Much of this will be self-evident to the experienced music teacher *cum Kapellmeister*, but it is nonetheless worth reading, if only for Allen's balanced and thoughtful approach, clearly derived from daily experience. And there are especially helpful chapters on aspects less likely to be part of a music teacher's expertise. Part 2 contains an outline of the physiology of singing, dealing with posture, breathing, voice production, resonance and vocal ranges. There is also a useful section on health matters with reference to singing. Additionally, he sets out some concise detail on when and how to use p.a. amplification for voices.

We find, as before, useful, practical advice on dealing with choral problems such as slack tempi, poor pitching, unfocused diction and vocal blend, followed up with a comprehensive set of warm-up exercises. Sensible (and often inspiring) advice is all very well, but in some cases, a less experienced teacher or (dare I say it) a less accomplished musician will simply not be able to achieve his reasonable demands merely as a result of reading them. In his 'varied and appropriate repertoire' paragraph, Allen warns against its delivery in a uniformly 'serious' singing style, but advises teachers to use pop 'authentically'. All very well if the teacher is attuned to the pop idiom – but

otherwise a hopeless exhortation. The one thing that has a huge influence on young people's singing (though Allen is careful not to say so) is the teacher's own musical competence, both as singer and accompanist. There can be nothing more embarrassing than a vocally challenged choir director trying to put across a song in an idiom he or she has little sympathy for. And this situation becomes potentially more hopeless if teachers follow Allen's advice to minimise reading but concentrate on oral transmission of the material.

For similar reasons, it is difficult to imagine the benefit of a short section on accompaniment. It is all very well to sing the praises of keyboard or guitar busking, but this particular skill will not be achieved merely by reading the note about chord symbols and right-hand/left-hand piano technique. Bad busking can kill even the most well known of pop, rock, folk or gospel songs – no matter how well they are sung. And though Allen rightly points out that it is not about keyboard virtuosity it is, nevertheless, a musical skill of a very high order which can directly affect choral progress within a school, as any pianist who has tried to make sense of pop song sheet music will tell you. As it happens, however, most of the songs in *Developing Singing Matters* require minimal, if any, accompaniment.

At £50, the new volume is not cheap. It is expressly designed for photocopying, however, so there is no need to buy pupil sets. And doubtless the price also reflects the high royalty count in a volume containing many current or recent pop and rock songs.

Unlike *Developing Singing Matters*, *Discover Your Voice* is directed primarily at the solo singer with non-classical aspirations: cabaret, musical theatre, session singing and rock bands. Approximately a quarter of the book is taken up by Jon West's outline of what the singer needs to know when working in a recording studio.

De Brett is aware of the pitfalls in

attempting to deal with the unique development of a single voice by remote control: 'this book cannot teach you how to sing, but it can, I hope, help you in many practical ways with your study of singing'. It will certainly not replace serious study with a teacher, but it could be the starting point for such, and its readership will probably be the kinds of young singers inspired by the work of Patrick Allen to explore the possibility of a serious career in the medium.

Part One surveys the field: short sections dealing with breathing, practising, vocal registers, aural awareness, vocal strain. There is sensible, principled advice here, sufficient to launch the student on the right path without pre-empting detailed work likely to be introduced by a future teacher. Much of it is common sense leavened by solid experience: singers are athletes – look after your body; singing requires commitment, soul and ambition – be sure you have a realistic view of your talent and the field you want to work in; singing is a musical activity – you must develop your aural perception. There is helpful comment, too, on the place of imitation and the positive qualities of karaoke. And a final post-script on choosing a teacher.

There follow two substantial sections containing vocal exercises. Although designed for the individual voice, many could be used in a class or choral limbering context. More inventive than bland scales and arpeggios, they nevertheless require a student to be able to read music, with access to a keyboard to check pitch accuracy – or at least they would have to, if they were not also all recorded on the accompanying CD. *Discover Your Voice* is not, on its own, going to bridge the gap between the school choral singing experience and making it as a professional, but it contains one of the best (non-classical) career outlines available, and its practical content gives strong encouragement to anyone who wants to take their voice seriously.

ANDREW PEGGIE