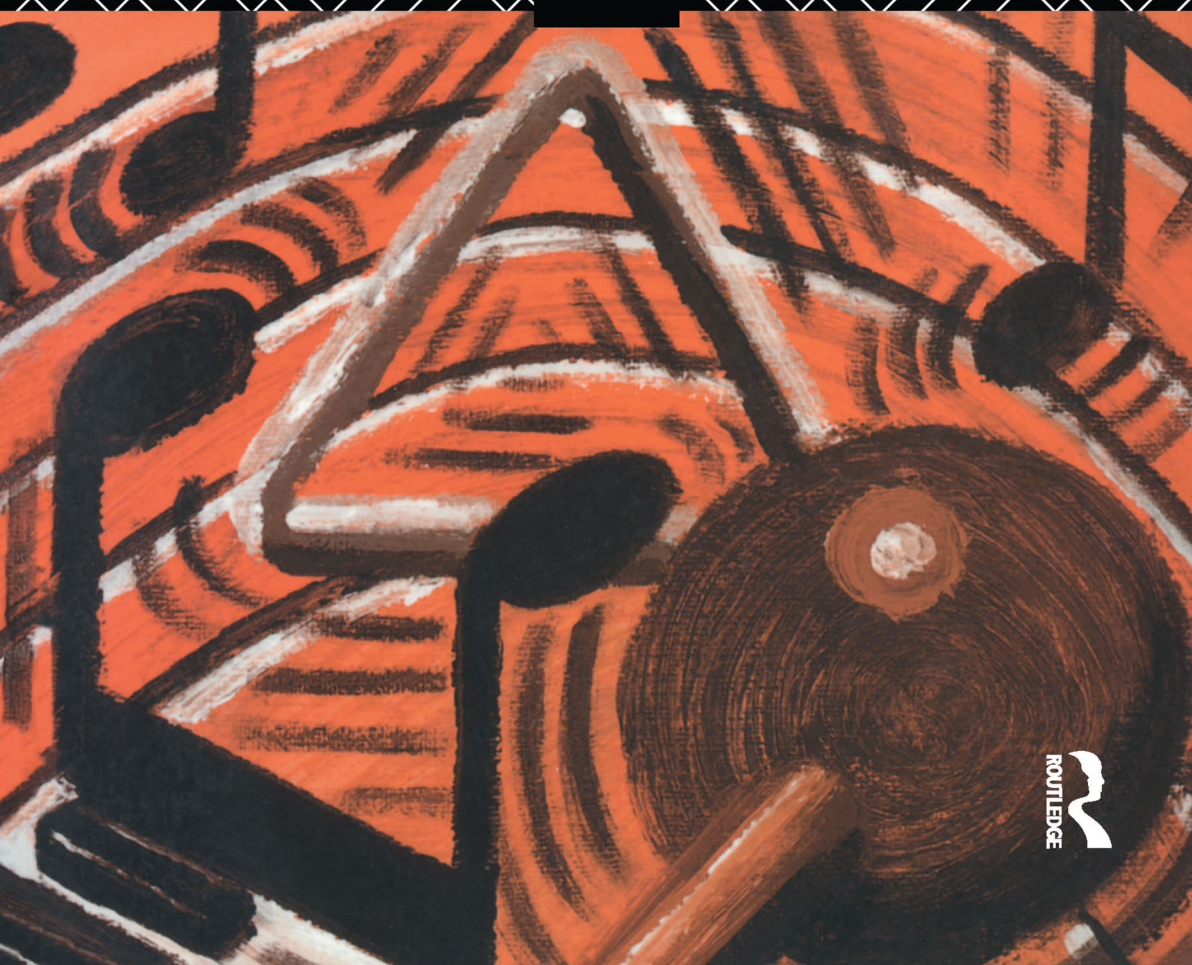
TEACHING MUSIC

edited by

Gary Spruce

The Open University



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Teaching music

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Contents

Foreword

The form of teacher education is one of the most debated educational issues of the day. How is the curriculum of teacher education, particularly initial, pre-service education to be defined? What is the appropriate balance between practical school experience and the academic study to support such practice? What skills and competence can be expected of a newly qualified teacher? How are these skills formulated and assessed and in what ways are they integrated into an ongoing programme of professional development?

These issues have been at the heart of the development and planning of the Open University's programme of initial teacher training and education – the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). Each course within the programme uses a combination of technologies, some of which are well tried and tested, while others, on information technology for example, may represent new and innovatory approaches to teaching. All, however, contribute in an integrated way towards fulfilling the aims and purposes of the course and programme.

All of the PGCE courses have readers which bring together a range of articles, extracts from books, and reports that discuss key ideas and issues, including specially commissioned chapters. The readers also provide a resource that can be used to support a range of teaching and learning in other types and structures of course.

This series from Routledge, in supporting the Open University PGCE programme, provides a contemporary view of developments in primary and secondary education and across a range of specialist subject areas. Its primary aim is to provide insights and analysis for those participating in initial education and training. Much of its content, however, will also be relevant to ongoing programmes of personal and institutional professional development. Each book is designed to provide an integral part of that basis of knowledge that we would expect of both new and experienced teachers.

Bob Moon
Professor of Education, The Open University

Introduction

Ways of thinking about music

Gary Spruce

Music education has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years. Lessons which were once dominated by passive listening and the didactic imparting of information, are now characterized by the involvement of children in performing, composing and *related* listening and appraising. Children now learn about music through actively engaging with it.

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that these changes were effected easily or that they were at once universally accepted. Despite various curriculum initiatives – particularly *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum* (Paynter 1982) and the HMI report *Music from 5–16* (DES 1985) – there was resistance to change. This resistance tended to emanate from those teachers who felt uneasy with the new practical approach to music teaching and who were unwilling to compromise on what they perceived as the 'academic' content of the subject. They believed that the academic aspect of music was what gave it comparable status with the core elements of the curriculum and thus its *raison d'être*. Writing in 1986, Hargreaves (Chapter 3 in this volume) bemoaned the fact that 'many teachers still emphasize the academic formal aspects of music rather than its intuitive creative aspects, and may thus be putting the cart before the horse'. Also, the practical, creative approach to music education required teachers to adopt radically new teaching methods which some were unwilling to do. Examination boards, which could have led the way towards the bright new dawn, opted instead to try to be all things to all men, by offering, until recently, two distinct GCSE syllabuses: one that emphasized a practical, creative approach and another that reflected the old 'O' level. Therefore, although many music teachers immediately adopted the curriculum initiatives of *Music from 5–16* and *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum*, it was only with the implementation of the National Curriculum that children gained an *entitlement* to experiencing music through practical and creative involvement with it.

Part I of this book – 'Music education in context' – therefore considers

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the changes that have taken place in music education over the last fifty years. Bernarr Rainbow considers developments in music education from the Butler Act of 1944 through to the mid-1980s, while Keith Swanwick looks at the state of British music education immediately prior to the introduction of the National Curriculum and discusses the implications of the National Curriculum for music teaching. Both chapters are invaluable not only for what they have to say about the nature of music education but also as contemporary records of some of the more crucial developments in music education during the second half of the twentieth century.

Central to the role of music educators is an understanding of how children learn. Therefore, Part II – 'Teaching and learning in music' – looks at the process of learning in music from a number of perspectives. In Chapter 3 David Hargreaves begins by discussing the increasingly important role of music psychology in understanding the processes of musical learning. He considers the various aspects of psychology – cognitive, developmental and behavioural – and relates them specifically to music education.

Following on from this, in Chapter 4 Margaret Barrett discusses a recurring theme in this book: the somewhat contentious issue as to whether – either on a semiotic level or as a learning model – parallels can be drawn between music and language. In proposing a model for music learning based upon an analysis of language acquisition, she defines six stages in the learning process – immersion, demonstration, engagement, expectations, responsibility, approximation, use and response – and relates them specifically to music education.

Irrespective of the learning model adopted, one of the main aims of music teaching must be the fostering of children's imagination. However, a number of issues proceed from this: 'How do we recognize musical imagination in children?'; 'Why do we frequently fail to encourage and celebrate musical imagination in children the same way as we do their creativity in art and writing?'; 'How do we react as individuals and society to manifestations of creative imagination in children and adults?'; 'Do we agree what imagination and creativity actually are?'. These questions are addressed by Robert Walker in Chapter 5. Drawing on musical examples from many different styles and cultures, he questions accepted ideas about the nature of musical creativity – particularly as it applies to children's compositions – and argues against the language acquisition model put forward in Chapter 4 as a basis for music education.

Having sought a definition of what is meant by creativity, in Chapter 6 Peter Webster discusses the characteristics of creativity by concentrating upon creative thinking as a *process*. In doing so he offers a potential teaching model for the development of creative thinking as well as suggesting what one of the main aims of music education might be.

> Conceptual understanding, craftsmanship and aesthetic sensitivity obviously grow with age and experience, but transfer of these abilities into the mosaic of creative thinking does not often occur naturally. This transfer might well be an important goal of formal music education.

Until recently, an unevenness of music provision in the primary sector made the creation of a coherent 5–16 music curriculum problematical. The requirements of the National Curriculum now provide for a basic minimum musical entitlement for all children at Key Stages 1 and 2. A report by OFSTED into the first year of the National Curriculum (Music) indicates that many secondary school music teachers need to be more aware of the music curriculum in the primary phase and of the standards being achieved. This has led to an 'underestimation of the pupil's abilities and skills' during the first part of the autumn term of Year 7 and the setting of 'tasks lacking in challenge so that the pupils could not show the same standard of achievement . . . as in the primary schools from which they were drawn'. In Chapter 8, Janet Mills, a music HMI, discusses the musical development of children during the primary phase describing what many experience and the level of attainment that might be expected of them.

Part III of this book – 'Issues in music education' – is concerned with those things which, while not being specific to music education, particularly impact upon it. In Chapter 9 Lucy Green demonstrates that the preconceived notions that pupils and teachers have concerning the relationship between gender and musical tastes and practices are not an inherent part of music itself, but are the result of historical tradition and social expectations which are 're-enacted daily in the life of the music classroom as a microcosm of a wider society'. She argues that such gender stereotyping must be challenged, first by direct, musical confrontation and second, by an awareness 'of the complexity and depth-embeddedness of gendered music meanings, not only of our educational structures but also in our musical experience'.

Chapter 10 deals with aspects of music and special needs. Yvonne Packer:

> highlights the difficulties relating to the provision of music education in schools for the emotionally and behaviourally disturbed – formerly labelled maladjusted. Often considered unteachable within junior and secondary schools, such children are assigned to EBD schools or units where they seem to fall between two stools of mainstream and special education, unable to reap the benefits of either. The case is argued for the inclusion of music within a programme of therapeutic education based on the writer's research within these schools, and recommendations are made as to how the music may be made more accessible within this context.
>
> (Packer, 1989)

Teachers' professional lives are so controlled by the national condition of education that they frequently fail to consider the possibility of an international perspective on what they do. In Chapter 11, Janet Hoskyns looks at the nature of music education and relates it to the notion of a European dimension. She discusses the difficulties implicit in such a model and proposes strategies for overcoming them, concluding that: 'it is our duty to ensure that music education remains on the agenda and that the European dimension includes wider access to music for all Europeans'.

It is also of great importance that pupils experience music which goes beyond their own cultural perspective – that they are able to engage with music 'from different times and places, applying knowledge to their own work' (National Curriculum 1995 para. 4e). It is therefore crucial that music educators are able to relate confidently to music that is not from the western cultural tradition. It is also important that the teaching of such music should not be merely symbolic, tokenist or compartmentalized as part of 'multi-cultural' education, but should be part of what Robert Kwami (1993) describes as an inter-cultural music curriculum. In Chapter 12, Jonathan Stock argues that commonly accepted definitions of what music is are often unsatisfactory in a consideration of world music. In a discussion which again draws parallels between music and language, he shows that those musical characteristics that we associate with certain emotions are not universally held. Furthermore, he challenges the notion of valuing music in terms of western ideas of development and complexity (i.e. the kind of view which describes folk music as 'primitive' and considers all music in the context of a stage in music's development towards a pinnacle represented by Western 'high art'). Turning for a second time to the relationship between music and language, he analyses those things which he sees as being common to most musical cultures and which could provide a starting point for the teaching of world music. Throughout the chapter he provides examples of classroom activities which support the concepts under discussion.

Assessment lies at the heart of teaching. As Keith Swanwick (1979) says, 'to teach is to assess'. It is therefore of critical importance that the role of assessment is clearly defined and issues relating to assessment are clarified. In Chapter 13, Gary Spruce considers assessment in the arts from the perspective of the nature and function of objectivity. He looks at the relationship between the arts and the sciences and concludes with a discussion of the principles that might underpin the formulation of an effective assessment model for the arts.

Accountability is one of the key words in education. Teachers are accountable to parents, politicians, governing bodies, head teachers and to a number of outside agencies. It is therefore perhaps easy to forget that we are also accountable to the children whom we teach concerning the nature of the education that they receive. Ironically, it is often their opinion

which is least often sought. Part IV – 'Music education and the classroom' – therefore begins with a record of an interview with an upper sixth student about his experience of twelve years of music education (Chapter 14).

Classroom management is one of the foremost concerns of any new teacher, and rightly so. It is particularly vital in a subject like music that basic classroom management skills are developed as quickly and as effectively as possible. Much has been written from a generalist point of view on this aspect of teaching (for example, McMannus (1994) and Wragg (1994)) and these are highly recommended. Nevertheless, music teaching makes classroom management demands of a unique and high order, and therefore I have included an article by Margaret Merrion (Chapter 15) which deals specifically with this aspect of music teaching.

Although many teachers are eager to develop their understanding of technology there are fears concerning its implications for their role as music teachers and its impact on classroom management. For an inexperienced teacher, unfamiliar technology can seem to be simply one more variable in an already tense situation. Furthermore, technology is something that students are often at greater ease with than is the teacher. It is, however, a vital part of the music educator's armoury, often reaching those members of the class that other aspects of the music curriculum fail to reach. It opens up new vistas of creativity for music teachers and students alike and cannot be ignored. Kirk Kassner (Chapter 16) recognizes the fears that music educators have about technology and discusses them in a sympathetic and positive way. This is then followed in Chapter 17 by an illustration by Sam Reese of the potential applications of technology to the classroom situation, looking at how MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) can be used to support the teaching of composition.

The increase in composing and performing as classroom activities has inevitably marginalized the acquisition of listening skills. This is a pity. For, as Philip Priest argues in Chapter 18, developed aural skills are basic to any fostering of musical experiences and understanding. He considers that the ability to have an aural vision of an intended musical outcome is essential to composition, performance and, particularly, improvisation and he is critical of the fact that an undue concentration on music literacy by music teachers has militated against the development of such skills.

Developed aural skills are frequently found in exponents of those musics which attach more importance to constant reinterpretation through performer intervention than to the manufacture of a definitive version: jazz, pop, folk music and many non-western musics fall into this category. In Chapter 19 Peter Dunbar-Hall demonstrates two different ways of considering the nature of music and then applies these to the processes involved in designing a teaching model for pop music.

Chapters 18 and 19 both touch upon the role of improvisation in the classroom. Improvisation can be perceived as something of a soft option:

as an activity not governed by the criteria usually applied to the evaluation of musical skills, a kind of anarchic free-for-all. Yet, as John Stevens, a practising improviser says (Chapter 20), improvising is a skill and the starting point for improvisation in the classroom is the personal development by the teacher of this skill. He argues that the way to learn improvisation is as 'exemplified by the Indian method' through interaction with an already skilled exponent of the art.

The final two chapters of this book are by Keith Swanwick. In the first he looks at instrumental teaching and in the second – 'Music education and research' – he compares different research methodologies, discusses research evaluation and relates both to music education and the music teacher. He demonstrates that the best research has beneficial effects not only for the researcher's own professional performance, but also allows the wider professional community to plan for the demands of the future.

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Part I

Music education in context

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Chapter 1

Onward from Butler
School music 1945–1985

Bernarr Rainbow

The present tripartite system of education in this country with its stages of Primary, Secondary and Further Education was brought about by the Butler Act of 1944 which implemented the findings of the McNair Report and thus incidentally strengthened the place of music in general education. Music teaching in schools was quickly expanded as a result and has since undergone a further series of revolutions often influenced by social and political circumstances rather than purely musical considerations. The concurrent and similarly prompted shift of values which took place in young people's ideals, sense of independence and general behaviour during the 1960s further sharpened the atmosphere of change. This year's anniversary of the passing of the Butler Act presents a symbolic occasion for reviewing some of the events which have so radically altered the pattern of school music teaching during the past forty years.

THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Anticipating the need for additional teachers due to the introduction of tripartite education, the McNair Report made careful recommendations with different disciplines in mind. The shortage of music teachers would at first be most pronounced in the secondary schools for boys, where the subject had traditionally been neglected. As a first step, headmasters were advised to recruit new staff from among local private teachers and church organists; thereafter, in addition to the universities and music colleges, new or expanded music departments in teacher training colleges would eventually supply a generation of specialist teachers. At the same time the whole question of 'educating' rather than 'training' non-graduate teachers was placed under review. Earlier attitudes toward teacher training were criticized as doing little more than offering 'tips for teachers' without continuing the student's education appreciably beyond the elementary stage.

To remedy that deficiency students in training colleges were required in

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future to select a 'main study', followed for their own personal advancement, and not necessarily as the subject which they chose to teach. On the pedagogical side the general policy was to encourage teaching skill by the systematic study of 'Principles of Education' and supervised teaching practice, rather than by a demonstration of teaching methods in the lecture room.

As far as the majority of subjects in the school curriculum are concerned, grasp of subject matter coupled with reasonable competence in planned verbal exposition enables the young teacher to survive in the classroom: but however adequate that equipment may prove for teaching English, history, mathematics or geography, for example, additional resources are essential to teachers of music – practical experience and understanding of how to develop such basic techniques as singing and aural perception must precede success in teaching them to children.

Yet in the struggle to attain academic respectability prompted by the new concept of 'teacher education', music syllabuses during the post-war era commonly imitated the theoretical content characteristic of earlier university courses. As a result, would-be teachers who lacked the levels of musicianship to earn a university place received a watered-down version of a university course rather than one designed to develop the practical skills essential to successful work in schools. Instead of being taught choral techniques students learned to analyse fugues; before learning to hear a melody from the page they were asked to harmonize it; and though largely unfamiliar with classroom repertoire their attention was first drawn to Haydn's string quartets. Ideally, of course, both aspects of musical experience should have been made theirs but limitations of lecture time and the reaction against 'tips for teachers' saw to it that priority was given to 'academic' music, consideration of classroom needs coming a very poor second and being seen as an inferior appendix rather than an integral part of the course. This attitude was further hardened with the eventual introduction of graduate courses for the B.Ed.

Entrants to teaching from the universities and colleges of music were not at first required to undergo training for teaching. The possession of a degree or a 'recognized' diploma was accepted as an adequate initial qualification. An attempt on the part of the colleges of music to introduce a graduate diploma incorporating methodology was found not to produce satisfactory teachers and soon abandoned. It was replaced by a voluntary scheme which took diploma-holders to one of the few training colleges selected by the Ministry of Education's inspectors to run a special one-year course in Education, Teaching Preparation and Practice, leading to the award of a teaching certificate. This procedure was later made compulsory for entrants from the music colleges.

University graduates in music were not obliged to undergo professional training for teaching until very recently. Those who chose to might enrol

for training at one of the selected training colleges – though some opted to attend a general postgraduate course in a university department. Only when the patent disadvantage of allowing music teachers to be trained in general courses which made no provision for their special needs was later realized were postgraduate courses exclusively designed for music teachers established at the Universities of Reading and London. Even so, many music graduates continued to enrol for general postgraduate training which left them ill-equipped for the realities of the classroom.

Fortunately, the naturally talented among those entering the teaching profession soon overcame such limitations, and whether from training college, music college, or university, most elected to teach in secondary schools. In the wider range of schools for boys and girls over the age of eleven, opportunities now arose to pursue higher levels of musical achievement. Existing Grammar Schools for boys or High Schools for girls which were fortunate enough to have a capable musician on their staff were soon undertaking ambitious performances with choirs and orchestras, backed by soundly organized sixth-form music courses. And although academic standards were necessarily lower in the new Secondary Modern Schools, experience soon showed that under inspiring teaching very satisfactory (and rewarding) levels of musical performance were attainable by children not otherwise much given to shine. Yet in both types of secondary school it was in the classroom that the limitations of the existing system of music in general education were frequently revealed.

It proved virtually impossible in secondary schools generally for teachers to avoid starting music lessons from scratch if they meant to tackle the subject seriously. With each new intake of children the disparity between those who came from primary schools where music was taught competently and those from others where it was neglected or taught badly was regularly emphasized. It seemed difficult to avoid the conclusion that since there was no commonly accepted standard as to what could or should be achieved in the primary school, continuity of teaching throughout the child's school career was simply unattainable. Discussion always revealed the general conviction that it was during the formative years in the primary school that basic musical skills and perceptions were best cultivated. But circumstances in primary schools, staffed as they were by general class teachers rather than specialists, presented problems of organization and teacher training to which answers had not been found – and which remain unresolved to this day.

In the early days of teacher training in this country (midway through the nineteenth century) it was taken for granted that every elementary school teacher should teach singing, and initial training consequently included instruction in approved methods of learning to read music and sing from notes. In spite of changes in the choice of methods approved for the purpose this remained the state of affairs until the 1920s, by which time

our elementary schools had gained an international reputation for the ability of their pupils to sing at sight.

Disregarding, for the time being, the question as to whether learning to sing at sight is a desirable pursuit or not, but acknowledging that standards of teaching it varied considerably among elementary teachers depending upon ability and enthusiasm, it seems evident that the state of music in the elementary schools of the 1920s demonstrated what can be achieved in spite of individual limitations, when modest aims are set and those aims are made clear to the teachers concerned. The same might be said, after all, about most of the subjects in the junior school curriculum.

But this argument was not allowed to influence policy when the pattern of post-war training for general class teachers was decided. It was argued instead that the potential content of the junior school curriculum had grown to such an extent that teachers should not be called upon to teach in all areas; and that since music was a subject best taught by those with a liking for it, it should be made an optional choice in the training college syllabus. One unforeseen result of this decision was that most of the students choosing to engage in an optional music course were those who had already learned to play an instrument from childhood and who consequently entertained certain misconceptions about the learning process in music. Almost more unfortunate was the impression created in the child's mind that since music was not taught (like other junior school subjects) by every class teacher there was something 'peculiar' about it; and that if a favourite teacher didn't seem to care for music there was no reason for her pupils to do so either.

A further complication, which particularly affected secondary teaching but also impinged on the primary school, was the amazing growth of the music curriculum during the post-war decades. What had been an exclusively song-based activity in the nineteenth century now offered a multiplicity of possible opportunities involving instrumental music-making, guided listening, interpretational movement and creative work. This development, which demands closer examination, made the choice of classroom musical activities much more dependent upon the teachers' own individual enthusiasms, and the adoption of an authorized core curriculum for the primary school less than congenial in the liberalized atmosphere of the post-war era.

THE BROADENING MUSIC CURRICULUM

Innovations which widened the scope of music teaching in our schools began to appear quite early in the present century, but since they were confined to independent schools and spread only slowly even there, the Musical Appreciation movement, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, the use of the gramophone in the classroom and infants' percussion bands made little

impact in state schools before the 1930s. By then, however, listening to music had become a domestic pastime through the advent of gramophone and radio. Although in many households the music broadcast received little conscious attention, the 'Foundations of Music' talks given by Walford Davies became a surprisingly popular feature among middle-class listeners. The climate of public response to music was gradually changing, and with it attitudes to music in schools began to change, too.

Emphasis began to shift from vocally-based activity to instrumental work with the introduction of the bamboo pipe followed by the recorder during the 1930s. The move was hailed, and with some justification, as adding purpose to music lessons by providing an end product for theory. Elsewhere attention turned from singing to listening to recorded music. This innovation in turn was applauded as a realistic preparation for future enjoyment. In both cases older children whose early music lessons had been adequate and whose grasp of basic musical essentials was sound were able to benefit from the new element of variety in their later lessons. But without that foundation, at the hands of less competent teachers, both types of activity invited misuse of limited lesson time. The Board of Education found it advisable to warn teachers not to regard the new activities as *alternatives* but as *adjuncts* to former methods. That warning was in a sense prophetic – for the immense variety of alternative musical activities introduced in schools since the Butler Act has led to a situation in which hardly any two secondary schools have a concordant policy, while such basic skills as singing and aural training are quite neglected in a very high proportion of our primary schools.

Although the outbreak of war in 1939 seriously affected the day-to-day running of schools, planning for post-war development continued, and contrary to what might be supposed, the war years were to see further growth in popular response to music – a circumstance aided by the creation of a national Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, later to become the present Arts Council. The first post-war decade was dominated by austerity, but special resources were made available for building houses and schools. To begin with only the bare essentials of the Butler Act were implemented, but during the 1950s the number of pupils remaining at school until the age of seventeen rose to double that of the pre-war total. Most of the schools which they attended were now better equipped to teach music and had begun to introduce wider activities with resources hitherto found only in independent schools.

At the same time social and technological advances were boosting average weekly incomes which rose by 34 per cent between 1955 and 1960. Ten years later they had risen by 130 per cent. The 'Affluent Society' symbolized by a car, a washing machine and a television set to every household had arrived. With it came the creation of a new consumer society from within the formerly underprivileged (and their children),

whose unprecedented purchasing power now made them a tempting target for predatory commercialism. This development helps to explain the rise of the 'pop' music phenomenon, supported as it was by the prodigious growth of recording sales among young people in the 1960s. Calculated populism encouraged triviality, and following the pattern of teenagers in the United States their counterparts on this side of the Atlantic soon adopted the deliberately non-intellectual repertoire provided for them, as a badge of identity.

To begin with, the attitude of the bulk of teachers toward their pupils' odd musical preferences was no different from that of their predecessors. Although not dignified as is now the case by such pretentious labels as 'youth culture' or 'popular culture' a type of popular song formerly regarded as merely vulgar had always existed. Under the influence of Arthur Somervell, HM Inspector of Music at the beginning of the century, and Cecil Sharp, the folk-song revivalist, teachers had accepted that an important part of their task was to wean their pupils away from 'the raucous notes of coarse music-hall songs'. The same attitude had been adopted following the advent of the 'crooner'. The pop-singer seemed to present an identical problem and to merit the same treatment. But then experience with growing numbers of secondary pupils revealed that young people were able to compartmentalize their musical response – finding satisfaction from both 'pop' and 'serious' music. Only with the birth of the 'generation gap' and the adoption of leaders of the pop scene as cult figures, did the true scale of the problem confronting music teachers in schools reveal itself.

Meanwhile attention turned to new opportunities of extending classroom musical activity. Rumour had it that the German composer, Carl Orff, had revolutionized music lessons in his homeland simply by introducing new pitched percussion instruments with detachable tone-bars to suit different levels of ability. Cheaper versions of his glockenspiels and xylophones were promptly marketed in this country together with simple performing scores imitating his originals. Classrooms everywhere began to echo with the clink and bong of metal and wood. Many teachers felt they had found a simpler and more enjoyable way of developing musical literacy. But when authentic English versions of Orff 's *Schulwerk* were later published they revealed that instrumental work provided only a part of his programme, and was designed to complement carefully developed basic aural and vocal skills. Yet for every teacher who examined Orff 's instructions books there were hundreds with only secondhand acquaintance with his methods. By this time, however, the vogue for pseudo-Orff was too well established, backed by wide commercial support, to halt the decline which had taken place in the development of aural skills and class singing.

The teachers who joined the rush to adopt classroom instruments were not simpletons; an instrumental stance appealed to them particularly because most were themselves instrumentalists – mainly pianists – and

their own mental approach to the interpretation of musical notation was instrumentally based. During their early lessons they had learnt to 'find' a note on a keyboard rather than to 'hear' it in their heads after identifying the symbol concerned on the page. Even those of them who could play at sight confidently, commonly lacked the ability to sing quite a simple tune from the page. More to the point, as we have seen, during their training as teachers the deficiency had not been corrected and the paradox which explained it had not been thoroughly exposed.

This was a time, too, when instrumental activity had begun to dominate school music exclusively. As developing secondary schools flexed their muscles, the creation of a school orchestra became a common goal and the employment of peripatetic instrumental teachers the essential means to that end. The appointment (which now seems unconventional) of a former leading orchestral player to the post of HM Inspector of Music in Schools served to strengthen what was a growing trend. With the creation of the first three comprehensive schools by the Labour-controlled London County Council in 1955, the large number of pupils enrolled increased both the range of choice for membership of an orchestra and the *per capita* financial grant to provide the necessary instruments and tuition. As more comprehensive schools were created during the 1960s, each school often catering for more than a thousand pupils of mixed ability, music blossomed in them as an extra-curricular activity just as evidently as it declined in effectiveness and popularity as a classroom discipline.

The truth of this situation failed to secure public attention. Scarce references to school music in the press largely consisted of self-congratulatory accounts of performances by school orchestras or the often admittedly excellent youth orchestras which they fed. But the children concerned had been selected for their talent and given special coaching to reach such standards; far from typifying the wellbeing of music in schools these exceptional pupils served rather to emphasize the poverty of the rest – whose unenthusiastic response to their music lessons in the secondary school can readily be traced to an awareness of their own musical incompetence. Lacking the basic skills best taught at an early age but all too often neglected in our primary schools, the musically untalented pupil quickly lost interest in a teacher's efforts to build upon foundations that were simply not there. Also, given the special place that music of a particular sort occupied in the adolescent's lifestyle, active rebellion of a vigour spared to teachers of other subjects was regularly aroused during and after the 1960s.

As a result of this stalemate music's renown as an all-embracing educational force seemed subject to direct challenge in secondary schools. Some thought it should survive there only as an optional subject. Others suggested that radical revision of the music curriculum itself was necessary to meet changed circumstances. There were, needless to say, many rival theories as to the desirable content of future music lessons – ranging

from egalitarian pressures in support of populism to equally extreme avant garde calls to outlaw the diatonic scale. Each school of thought had its followers and the current assumption was that salvation lay only in novelty; but partisan interest and support centred particularly around three policies.

The first was based on the argument that it was a mistake to try to educate children to respond to music which, it was claimed, had been written for the edification of an upper-class audience – a 'cultural elite'. Instead, teachers should aim at strengthening the sub-culture presently enjoyed by their pupils, first entering and then coming to terms with it themselves. Efforts to bring the cultural heritage of the past to the children of the present were unlikely to succeed and were, it was said, of doubtful educational value. The 'broad mass of people' did not respond to the heritage of the past, according to radical opinion.

Where this policy was implemented – (notably in inner-city areas) – musical appreciation lessons were dropped, and the song repertoire shifted away from former tradition by introducing songs of the very type that Somervell and Sharp had condemned. To identify the stratum of sub-culture common to all pupils in the wide range of a comprehensive school obviously meant selecting the lowest. And so the process of 'levelling-down', already familiar in other schemes of social engineering, began its debasing progress in the unlikely field of music teaching.

The second proposal was an off-shoot of the first. The requisite sub-culture selected here for investigation and development was the 'pop' music so favoured among young people of school age. The declared aim was to heighten discrimination within the sub-culture itself, as well as to develop a wider response to music generally. Supporters of this policy included many young teachers whose limited knowledge of the background of pop found them poorly placed to teach its devotees – who in turn resented this incompetent invasion of their preserve. Hence the aims of this revisionist policy were seldom realized. Then, otherwise capable and enthusiastic teachers became disenchanted as pop's obvious associations with drug abuse and youthful revolt became inescapable, making serious attempts at criticism and assessment less than realistic. Few teachers were equipped to deal with problems of this magnitude and complexity.

A third alternative syllabus sought to apply the currently favoured technique of 'creativity' to the music lesson. Even if confident that a child was as able to experiment with sound in the music lesson as with design and colour in the art lesson, teachers had hitherto been brought to a halt by their pupil's inability to record in standard notation the sound patterns he could easily invent. With the adoption of graphic musical notation by avant garde composers a way of overcoming this handicap presented itself; and through their spontaneous use of sound without trying to ape the formal structures of earlier music, children's efforts even acquired a 'contemporary' quality. After George Self 's pioneering work in this vein at a London

school, other influential teachers adopted what came to be known as 'Experimental Music in Schools.'

The new technique, so adventurous in concept compared with traditional methods, attracted many young teachers who started creative work with their classes. However, an element essential to success in this activity was an ability on the teacher's part to guide and sustain positive criticism of children's efforts in performance and this attribute, owing to a combination of immaturity and limited acquaintance with contemporary music, proved to be sadly beyond the reach of many of the teachers concerned. Moreover, since the new activity made a virtue of musical illiteracy, an already strong movement to abandon teaching the use of standard notation received further impetus.

In pursuit of spontaneity a generation of schoolchildren had already grown up without skills which had previously been regarded as essential in elementary education. Theories that children should not be pestered to learn to spell, write grammatically or learn multiplication tables later found a musical counterpart in arguments against teaching the use of notation. Its opponents reinforced their position by remarking that sight-singing had first been added to the school curriculum largely in order to improve congregational singing in churches. That policy was clearly no longer justifiable, and the time given to the exercise should now be devoted to other 'more enjoyable' musical activities. In spite of the weakness of their case, advocates of child-centred education were aware that fashion supported them; and encouraged by this apparently erudite and historically sound argument unsuccessful teachers of sight-singing were glad to abandon the pursuit.

Tonic Sol-fa, the standby of elementary teachers at the beginning of the century, had never gained wholehearted support from the instrumentally biased teachers who succeeded them. Sol-fa syllables did not help a pianist to find his notes, and the letter-notation designed to help beginners was seen as an old-fashioned expedient which had outlived its usefulness. The first English announcement, early in the 1960s, of Kodály's Method and its successful application in the schools of Hungary aroused a stir of interest – but without revealing to teachers generally that the inspiration of Kodály's achievement lay in their own neglected Tonic Sol-fa. And while a limited number introduced the Kodály Method in their schools, news of Carl Orff 's *Schulwerk* with its instrumental bias – also first circulating at this time – attracted much greater interest and support from the new generation of teachers. It was widely felt that instrumental activity in the classroom satisfactorily replaced sight-singing, making the use of Tonic Sol-fa unnecessary. It was generally abandoned.

Another casualty to current iconoclasm was class singing itself. Former high standards of school singing now earned scornful rejection as being artificially reminiscent of the cathedral chorister – that outmoded elitist.

Already sadly undermined by the introduction of rowdy songs into the repertoire and perhaps even more seriously assailed by the deliberately unformed voices modelled by pop-idols, voice training finally disappeared from most schools. Gruff low-pitched voices producing either an ugly uproar or a husky mutter now regularly went unchecked in junior classrooms, while older pupils sulkily refused to sing at all.

During the 1970s the wheel turned full circle as former children who had received this impaired musical education themselves became teachers. To the existing problems of the junior school was now added the class teacher who had never learned to sing and who believed that children's voices should not use the upper register. This opinion was echoed in research documents which claimed that (judging by existing standards in schools) all previous theories and experience touching children's singing voices were mistaken, and that the true compass was in the contralto range. At a stroke the entire repertoire of treble songs drawn from the past four centuries was consigned to the dustbin. All told, the future looked far from bright.

THE AFTERMATH

It is not unusual to find the phenomenal growth of new teaching methods which has taken place since the 1950s described as an 'Explosion'. Like other explosions this one has emphatically produced its roll of casualties. But however serious that consequence may have been it is not just what was *destroyed* that gives rise to misgiving in this case: there seems as much cause for concern in the very prodigality of what has been *created.* Although methods and resources have expanded to an unprecedented extent, the allotment for music on the school timetable remains much what it was a century ago; and this means that instead of producing a general broadening of the music curriculum, the range of alternative procedures presented to teachers has left them to decide what to include and what to omit in the time available.

While there is much to be said for enabling individual teachers to bring to their pupils the benefits of their own preferences and enthusiasms, this can only become a satisfactory general policy where a basic core syllabus exists – at least at primary school level. But this, as we have seen, is something entirely lacking as things stand. As a result, indiscriminate growth in the upper reaches of the syllabus has meant fragmentation of effort and a situation where no two secondary schools teach the same range of musical activities. The position of a pupil transferred from one school to another is thus an unenviable one. At the same time the absence of continuity in musical education between Primary and Secondary levels results in failure to realize music's intellectual and educational potential. And the child's own musical experience and sensibility are left to depend less on what is taught at school than on the choice of television channel at home.

The process of disintegration begun in the 1960s was accelerated by an absence of leadership. The withdrawal of HM Inspectorate from its former role as classroom adviser and critic perhaps reflected an awareness of the unfortunate effect of excessive zeal on earlier generations of teachers. Whatever the reason may have been, the resulting vacuum remained unfilled, in spite of the existence of such bodies as the Incorporated Society of Musicians and the more recent United Kingdom Council for Music Education and Training. For though subcommittees were appointed to make recommendations on school music in either case, their findings were constrained by compromise, and lacked weight. No assembly of 'experts' today, it seems, should be expected to agree a forthright statement which might tread on partisan corns. One vexed issue raised at these discussion meetings concerned the development of musical literacy. And while earlier opposition to teaching the use of notation had given way by the seventies to more general realization of the value of this skill in developing aural sensitivity, agreed statements on the subject were yet discreetly worded to recommend only 'the use of an appropriate form of notation' in order to accommodate the experimental music lobby.

The situation which this impasse reveals is a particularly interesting one showing that the fragmentation which has taken place in the pattern of school music is no more than a reflection of the over-specialization which now divides would-be authorities on music education – each of them concentrating his energies upon the establishment and maintenance of an exclusive facet while defending it from encroachment by other factions. Only rarely, it seems, is an 'expert' to be found with a universal attitude toward the whole range of aspects now available – one who is ready, moreover, to agree the detail of a core curriculum around which other optional activity might take place to complement it. Without such a policy the present spiral of thriftlessness and dissipation seems bound to continue.

Meanwhile, there is plenty of evidence to show that between them, the new teaching methods introduced during the 1960s still command support from large numbers of teachers. What is not so readily apparent is how often this support is forthcoming only because such activities keep pupils 'busy', and not because of the educational expectations they arouse. For that matter, when faced with problems of the kind regularly confronting secondary teachers in urban areas today, the teacher whose prime aim in planning a music lesson is to find undemanding ways of filling up the time must earn at least some sympathy. Yet the consequence of this all too common policy has been to treat the music lesson as an occasion for entertainment rather than for learning. When policy is dictated by despair in place of resolve, educational aims necessarily carry little weight. Music has been seriously undervalued as a result.

Yet there are signs that the long flirtation with unorthodoxy in music teaching is waning. Teachers are rediscovering methods and attitudes

rejected by their predecessors during the years when excellence was equated with novelty. In-service training has revealed to many junior school teachers that properly directed effort enables them first to overcome their own shortcomings, then to develop children's skills usefully. Subsequent experience with their classes has shown that contrary to hearsay children enjoy learning to use their musical sense, while short regular sessions of aural training soon develop new skills contributing toward that adventure of discovery which plays so important a part in a child's gratification. Quite as much as any other subject in the curriculum, music offers opportunities for enjoyment through achievement. The conviction is now widespread that much of the secondary pupil's lack of enthusiasm for his music lessons is due to the absence of early training in aural-skills. Misguided attempts to make good the starvation years of the primary school with a prodigal menu in the secondary school now merely call to mind Marie Antoinette's harebrained proposal to feed the breadless poor: 'Let them eat cake!'.