

ROUTLEDGE FOCUS

MUSIC EDUCATION
THROUGH THE LENS OF
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Crisis and Crossroads

Edited by
Clint Randles

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Music Education through the Lens of the COVID-19 Pandemic

A compelling exploration of how music education adapted during COVID-19, *Music Education through the Lens of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Crisis and Crossroads* reveals the challenges, innovations, and lasting shifts that are shaping the future of teaching and learning music.

Music Education through the Lens of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Crisis and Crossroads offers a comprehensive look at how music educators, students, and communities navigated unprecedented disruptions during the global pandemic. Drawing on current research, case studies, and practitioner reflections, the book explores key themes such as digital transformation, equity in access, emotional resilience, and pedagogical innovation. Topics include remote ensemble teaching, gamification, the ARCS motivation model, connected learning, and the integration of formal and informal music learning contexts. The book also highlights how social media, community music groups, and blended learning have reshaped educational norms. With a forward-looking perspective, it examines which adaptations should remain in post-pandemic music education and which areas demand renewed attention. This volume is an essential resource for educators, researchers, and policymakers invested in the future of music teaching and learning.

This book is intended for music educators, researchers, graduate students, and education policymakers seeking to understand and shape the evolving landscape of music teaching and learning. It offers practical insights, theoretical frameworks, and reflective narratives that support both classroom innovation and long-term strategic planning in music education across K–12, higher education, and community-based settings.

Clint Randles is Professor of Music Education and Director of Contemporary Commercial Ensembles at the University of South Florida, where he teaches courses at the intersection of contemporary musicianship, creativity, and popular music. His work centers on the development of innovative curricular practice and training the next generation of practicing songwriters. He enjoys performing on guitar and singing as a part of his role as Director of Contemporary Worship at a church in Tampa. He is an award-winning composer of music for film, animation, and musical theater and author of *Growing Songwriting*.

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Edited by Clint Randles

First published 2026
by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

and by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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80331 München, Germany.

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ISBN: 978-1-041-22140-1 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-041-22142-5 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-73085-9 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003730859

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Newgen Publishing UK

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>Prologue</i>	<i>xiii</i>
1 Change?: We Changed Over Night	1
CLINT RANGLES, DAWN MITCHELL-WHITE, SARA CINO, AND DANXU MA	
<i>The Suncoast Declaration</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Yin and Yang: To Everything There Is a Season</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Utilizing Co-Autoethnography to Tell This Story</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>The Power of Narrative</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Seeing COVID-19 through a 9/11 Lens</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Bringing Together the Worlds of Philosophy, Practice, and Research (SD18)</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Adaptation</i>	<i>13</i>
2 More Music for More People: Pedagogical Perspectives	16
YILING LI, EMILY LANGERHOLC, AND CLINT RANGLES	
<i>Professional Lives</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Instructional Technology</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>The Disruption in Music Pedagogy</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>The Connected Learning Framework: A Guiding Lens</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Motivation in a Disconnected World: Applying the ARCS Model</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Gamification vs. Serious Games</i>	<i>20</i>

- Flipped and Blended Learning in Remote Music Education* 20
- Rethinking Learning Contexts: Formal, Informal, and Semi-Formal Learning* 21
- Digital Media and Music-Specific Adaptations* 21
- Professional Lives in Transition* 22
- Future Directions* 22
- 3 Send Me Your Tracks: The Rise of Recording Arts 25
- SHANE COLQUHOUN, CLINT RANGLES, TOSH SARGEANT,
SARA CINO, BUTCH THOMAS, NANCY KARUNAKURAN, AND
ERIN TIGHE
- Virtual Performances* 26
- Butch Thomas* 26
- Sean Beirnes* 27
- Sara Cino* 28
- Nancy Karunakaran* 29
- Erin Tighe* 31
- Reflections from Butch Thomas* 33
- Putting Virtual Performance in Context with the Literature
(Clint Randles)* 34
- DAWs and Digital Instruments (Sara Cino and Butch
Thomas)* 34
- Putting DAWs and Digital Instruments in Context with the
Literature (Clint)* 37
- Contemporary/Popular Music (Clint)* 38
- Music Teacher Producers (Sara and Butch)* 39
- “Add Tracks”* 40
- 4 Wash Your Hands: General Music 43
- SEAN BIERNES, YANGQIAN HU, AND CLINT RANGLES
- Teaching General Music in Non-music Classrooms
(Sean Beirnes)* 43
- Teaching General Music with Modified Instructional
Methods* 47
- Moving Class Online* 48
- International Perspectives* 49
- Just One Weekend We Became Two-Dimensional Beings* 49
- Social Aspects* 50
- A Case from China* 50

5	Wear Your Mask: Band, Choir, and Orchestra	55
	BRIAN PANETTA, MORGAN JOLLEY, CHARLES EDWIN PATTERSON III, LAUREN YACHT, NANCY KARUNAKURAN, AND TIAO XIE	
	<i>A Podium Perspective</i> 55	
	<i>Past (Fall 2020) (Charles Patterson)</i> 58	
	<i>When It Happened (Fall 2020) (Charles Patterson)</i> 58	
	<i>Present (Fall 2020) (Brian Panetta)</i> 59	
	<i>My Discovery of the Music within Me (Fall 2020)</i> <i>(A Reflection by Nancy Karunakaran)</i> 60	
	<i>Future (Fall 2020) (Lauren Yacht)</i> 61	
	<i>What We Learned</i> 64	
	<i>Moving Forward</i> 64	
	<i>The Transformation of Digital Music Education into</i> <i>Mainstream Curriculum</i> 65	
	<i>Making Creative Decisions</i> 66	
6	Turn On Your Microphone: Higher Education	69
	CLINT RANGLES, AMBER ALDERMAN, DARBI LAMRANI, DAWN MITCHELL-WHITE, DEVON PORTER, TOSH SARGEANT, XINGYAN LIU, AND TIAO XIE	
	<i>Review of Literature</i> 69	
	<i>Living through Crisis</i> 74	
	<i>I Am Tired (Amber)</i> 74	
	<i>Learning (Devon)</i> 75	
	<i>Virtual Educator (Darbi)</i> 78	
	<i>I No Longer Spit When I Run (Tosh)</i> 80	
	<i>A Different Kind of Semester (Dawn)</i> 83	
	<i>Concluding Thoughts</i> 85	
7	Change Your Camera Angle: Private Studios	89
	JAZMIN GHENT, ASHER CARLSON, ZHENG WANG, AND TIAO XIE	
	<i>Private Lessons and the Opportunity for Self-Reflection in</i> <i>Quarantine</i> 89	
	<i>Choice—Freedom—Change—Community—Motivation</i> 92	
	<i>Choice</i> 92	
	<i>Freedom</i> 92	
	<i>Change</i> 93	

x Contents

	<i>Collaboration and Diversity</i>	93
	<i>Community</i>	93
	<i>Motivation</i>	94
	<i>Another Perspective</i>	95
	<i>Product or Process</i>	96
	<i>OMO Mode Will Be a Supplement for Traditional School Education</i>	96
	<i>Internet Plus: A Way Out for Music, but Never the Substitution</i>	97
	<i>Instruction on Instruments</i>	97
8	Morphing into a New Normal: Music-Making in the Community	104
	VICTOR FUNG, DANXU MA, ADRIAN IORDACHE, AND CANCAN CUI	
	<i>Individual, Family, and Community</i>	104
	<i>Layer 1: Individual Professional Musicians (Adrian Iordache)</i>	105
	<i>Layer 2: Family Musician Unity (Cancan Cui and Victor Fung)</i>	106
	<i>Negotiating Time and Resources</i>	106
	<i>In a Family of Four</i>	107
	<i>Layer 3: Community Music Groups (Danxu Ma)</i>	108
9	Administration: Unfreezing to Move Forward	111
	CHRIS BURNS AND CLINT RANGLES	
	<i>Background</i>	111
	<i>Using the Pandemic as an Unfreezing Moment</i>	113
	<i>Making the Change</i>	115
	<i>Implications for Music Administrators and Educators</i>	119
10	Conclusion, Implications, and Future Directions	122
	CLINT RANGLES AND TIAO XIE	
	<i>Moving Forward</i>	122
	<i>Suggestions for Music Education</i>	128
	<i>Suggestions for Future Research</i>	129
	<i>Conclusion</i>	129
	<i>References</i>	135
	<i>Index</i>	143

Figures

1.1	FMEA Crossover Festivals	12
4.1	Picture of Sean Beirnes' Cart	46
5.1	Decline in Enrollment by Program Type	65

Tables

3.1	Some of the Popular Technology Platforms Used in the Schools During the Pandemic	37
4.1	Design of Learning Sessions	51
10.1	E-Learning Sub-Dimensions	125

Prologue

Welcome to this book written by members of the Center for Music Education Research at the University of South Florida School of Music, in Tampa, FL, USA. It was written in the fall of 2020, the year of the pandemic—COVID-19—and then in the fall of 2023. We normally met in a dedicated classroom for music education on the second floor of the School of Music at USF. In fall 2020 we met online via the teleconferencing platform *Zoom*. During our weekly meetings we decided after a high-quality and thoughtful presentation by Danxu Ma to tackle this book project as a way of processing the unique era of life that we were living through. We have Danxu to thank for the seed of the idea of this book. It has been watered and tended to by each member of the group over these two 15-week semesters. What you now hold in your hands is in every way a collaboration, a meeting of minds, a synthesis of thought and experience.

We have loosely framed each chapter around a specific area of music education that has been affected by the pandemic with the idea of discussing (1) what has been done in the past in each area, (2) what we are currently doing in each area, and (3) what we plan on doing in the future in each of these areas as we process our experiences and what they mean for our understanding of how we can best move forward as a profession. So, there is a past, present, future structuring of our thoughts throughout the book. We intend for it to be a historical record in some ways of what happened as much as a call to arms for action. As some of our colleagues in music education have expressed, we intend for this work to invoke active reflection AND critically reflective action.

If you have lived through this time period yourselves, you will be able to relate (we hope) to the experiences that we document throughout. If you are perhaps too young to remember this time

period, or fortunate enough not to be affected by it, we hope that the honesty of our narratives and thoughtfulness of our assessments of what it all means will be enlightening and stimulating to you as you seek to enact change processes for the benefit of your students in your unique settings. We wrote this book to help ourselves process what we were going through, to make sense of it, and to project how we might grow and move forward as a result of the understandings that were being made manifest to us. We later examined the research and scholarship that came out regarding this time period as a way of furthering the body of knowledge around this topic. This is an action book. What will you do with what we have written? If these ideas spread even in small ways, we will have accomplished our two-fold goal of doing it well and doing well for others. Future generations of thoughtful music educators will ultimately be the judges of these efforts.

Amber Alderman

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Tampa, FL, USA—Fall 2020–Fall 2023



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