Teaching Music in Secondary Schools

A reader

Edited by Gary Spruce

London and New York

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Teaching Music in Secondary Schools

The Open University *Flexible* Postgraduate Certificate of Education

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Teaching Music in Secondary Schools
A reader

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Gary Spruce is a Lecturer in Education at the Open University and has responsibility for the Open University *flexible* PGCE, Music course.

Set book for the Open University *flexible* PGCE, Music course EXN880.

Teaching Music in Secondary Schools

A reader

Edited by Gary Spruce

The Open University

London and New York

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Abbreviations

ACCAC	Qualifications Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
AVCE	Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CGLI	City of Guilds of London Institute
CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education
DENI	Department of Education Northern Ireland
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
EBD	Emotional and behavioural difficulties
ENC	English National Curriculum
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
NACCCE	National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OCR	Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RAMP	Research into Applied Musical Perception
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Sources

Where a chapter in this book is based on or is a reprint or revision of material previously published elsewhere, details are given below, with grateful acknowledgements to the original publishers. In some cases chapter titles are different to the original title of publication; in such cases the original title is given below.

Chapter 3 This is an edited version of an article originally published in *Music Education and Research* 1(2), Carfax Publishing, Taylor & Francis Ltd, Basingstoke (1999).

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Chapter 14 This is an edited version of a chapter originally published in Spruce, G. (ed.) (1996) *Teaching Music*, Routledge, London. Original source: Swanwick, K. (1994) *Musical Knowledge*, Routledge, London.

Chapter 15 This is an edited version of an article originally published in *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 40(1), Oxford University Press, Oxford (2000).

Foreword

The nature and form of initial teacher education and training are issues that lie at the heart of the teaching profession. They are inextricably linked to the standing and identity that society attributes to teachers and are seen as being one of the main planks in the push to raise standards in schools and to improve the quality of education in them. The initial teacher education curriculum therefore requires careful definition. How can it best contribute to the development of the range of skills, knowledge and understanding that makes up the complex, multi-faceted, multi-skilled and people-centred process of teaching?

There are, of course, external, government-defined requirements for initial teacher training courses. These specify, amongst other things, the length of time a student spends in school, the subject knowledge requirements beginning teachers are expected to demonstrate or the ICT skills that are needed. These requirements, however, do not in themselves constitute the initial training curriculum. They are only one of the many, if sometimes competing, components that make up the broad spectrum of a teacher's professional knowledge that underpin initial teacher education courses.

Certainly today's teachers need to be highly skilled in literacy, numeracy and ICT, in classroom methods and management. In addition, however, they also need to be well grounded in the critical dialogue of teaching. They need to be encouraged to be creative and innovative and to appreciate that teaching is a complex and problematic activity. This is a view of teaching that is shared with partner schools within the Open University Training Schools Network. As such it has informed the planning and development of the Open University's initial teacher training programme and the *flexible* PGCE.

All of the *flexible* PGCE courses have a series of connected and complementary readers. The *Teaching in Secondary Schools* series pulls together a range of new thinking about teaching and learning in particular subjects. Key debates and differing perspectives are presented, and evidence from research and practice is explored, inviting the reader to question the accepted orthodoxy, suggesting ways of enriching the present curriculum and offering new thoughts on classroom learning. These readers are accompanied by the series *Perspectives on practice*. Here, the focus is on the application of these developments to educational/subject policy and the classroom, and on the illustration of teaching skills, knowledge and

understanding in a variety of school contexts. Both series include newly commissioned work.

This series from RoutledgeFalmer, in supporting the Open University's *flexible* PGCE, also includes two key texts that explore the wider educational background. These companion publications, *Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum in Secondary Schools: A reader* and *Aspects of Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools: Perspectives on practice*, explore a contemporary view of developments in secondary education with the aim of providing analysis and insights for those participating in initial teacher training education courses.

Hilary Bourdillon – Director ITT Strategy
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September 2001

Introduction

If this book were to have a subtitle, it might well be 'Ways of thinking about music'. For, although only the first chapter explicitly addresses this issue, many others have, as a kind of subtext, an awareness that: 'the way in which we think about music – our understanding of its nature and purpose – is most significant for our role as music educators. Our conception of what music *is* is a crucial factor in defining what we consider important subject knowledge to be, and by implication affects how we design our curriculum, what we teach and the way in which we teach it' (Spruce: Chapter 1).

This theme is continued in Chapter 2 where, following a brief overview of the changes in British music education over the last hundred years, Stephanie Pitts demonstrates how 'a clearer understanding of the past can inform our perceptions of contemporary music education'. She demonstrates this by considering from a historical perspective two perennial issues in music education: the teaching of notation and the place of popular music in the curriculum.

In Chapter 3, Lucy Green considers how certain sociological concepts can aid our understanding of various issues in music and music education. In the abstract to the original article (Green 1999) she describes how the chapter focuses on two main areas: first, ' the organization of musical activities – the production, distribution and reception of music by a variety of social groups'; and second, the social construction of musical meaning' – what music means, how it addresses those meanings and how those meanings are reproduced, contested and changed' (op. cit.) The chapter concludes by looking at how the concepts discussed can 'inform research in the sociology of music education'.

It is important that music teachers are aware of musical and pedagogical traditions other than their own and 'whether we in England may have something to learn from the systems and strategies adopted elsewhere'. In Chapter 4, Janet Hoskyns considers music education from a European perspective. She begins by looking at a number of music education ideologies, demonstrating how these map onto both western European traditions of schooling and reflect national traditions of education and schooling. She goes on to examine how tensions between the music curriculum and what is considered 'worthwhile knowledge' and between music outside and inside the classroom are resolved in a number of European countries, concluding that 'the ways in which this occurs are very variable and varied across the European continent'.

In the second section of this book, we look at music learning and musical development from a number of perspectives. Alexandra Lamont in Chapter 5 considers ways in which music psychology can assist our understanding of children's musical learning. Drawing on her own research and that of others, she examines the processes of *musical enculturation* – how innate capacities (those children are born with) develop according to the culture in which they grow up as well as their 'rapidly changing cognitive systems'. She makes the important point that although 'Conventional pedagogical wisdom states that passive experience is not the best way to learn … it is clear that "passive" experiences do have a role to play in developing musical understanding', and that music teachers need to take account of this in their teaching.

Evidence from Ofsted inspections suggests that music teachers in secondary schools tend to underestimate children's musical experiences and achievements at primary school. This then results in the standards achieved in Year 7 being lower than in the final year of primary school. In Chapter 6, Janet Mills 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. Continuing this theme, Helen Coll in Chapter 7 considers the issues of transfer and transition in music education. Drawing on Ofsted evidence, Government publications and recent research, she draws parallels between issues of transfer and transition in music and in other subjects. She considers the assumptions some secondary school music teachers make about primary school music and how these assumptions translate into practice. She concludes by looking at some strategies for effective transfer and transition.

Chapter 8 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. She argues the case for 'the inclusion of music within a programme of special education … and recommendations are made as to how music may be made more accessible within this context'.

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 9, Gary Spruce considers assessment in the arts from the perspective of the assumed need for objectivity. He looks at the relationship between the arts and the sciences and the relationship between objectivity and criteria-related assessment, concluding with a discussion of the principles that might underpin the formulation of an effective assessment model for the arts.

One of the main aims of music education must be the fostering of children's imaginations. However, how do we recognize musical imagination in children? Why do we frequently fail to encourage and celebrate children's musical imagination as we do their creativity in art and writing? How do we react as individuals and society to manifestations of musical imagination in children and adults? Do we agree what imagination and creativity actually are? These questions are addressed by Robert Walker in Chapter 10. 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.

The third section of this reader looks at four musical contexts, beginning with an overview by Paul Wright of ICT in the music curriculum. In this chapter, Wright not only looks at specific applications for ICT in music but how ICT impacts upon the nature of music and our perception of it. He considers a range of hardware both discretely and as part of a 'set up'. He concludes by examining how ICT can be integrated into planning for music learning and considers where ICT might lead music education in the future.

Composing is a relative newcomer to the Music curriculum. The associations that composing has with 'great' music of the past result in what Ted Bundy in Chapter 12 describes as 'unwarranted assumptions about what makes someone a "real" composer'. He considers why it is that our particular culture is so unwilling to accept children's composition in the same spirit as we do their work in art. Drawing on the work of, amongst others, Paynter, Ross and Gammon, he argues for greater emphasis on creativity to make the music curriculum 'a vital and meaningful experience that fosters creativity and innovation'.

World musics are an established part of the music curriculum for most schools. The present National Curriculum, for example, has across all Key Stages the requirement that children study 'a range of live and recorded music from different times and cultures' (DfEE/QCA 2000). Music departments' schemes of work regularly include modules or topics based on, for example, Indian music and Balinese gamelan. Anyone spending a few days in a typical secondary music department will observe children listening to, composing and performing music from a wide range of styles and cultures. In Chapter 13, Malcolm Floyd raises fundamental issues concerning our attitude towards music from other cultures, particularly as they appear in the school curriculum. Developing some of the issues raised by Spruce in Chapter 1, he argues that considering music exclusively 'in terms of its structures and modes of operation … is insufficient, and allows for the unauthorised appropriation of techniques, timbres and, perhaps most perniciously, samples without permission'. This raises issues of musical ownership and musical meaning which Floyd considers in the context of the music of the Masai of Kenya and northern Tanzania.

In Chapter 14, Keith Swanwick says both the best and worst teaching he has seen has been by instrumental teachers. He argues that the best instrumental teaching is by those teachers who see 'their job as teaching music through an instrument and not just teaching the instrument'. For, as he says in typically robust fashion, 'Getting people to play an instrument without musical understanding – not really "knowing music" – is an offence against human kind'. Drawing on research and observations of instrumental teachers at work, he explores the benefits of varied practice strategies, the use of metaphor in instrumental teaching and the benefits to be gained by teaching in groups. The overarching theme of the chapter, though, is that instrumental lessons should always be *musical encounters*.

Finally, in 'The art of improvisation and the aesthetics of imperfection' (Chapter 15), the book, in a sense, comes full circle. Andy Hamilton considers improvisation

in the context of an hegemonic aesthetic in music as 'works', operating on the presumption of 'classical masterpieces as the touchstone of artistic excellence'. Focusing primarily on jazz and other popular musics, he attempts to correct the 'many pervasive misunderstandings of improvisation'.

Reference

Swanwick, K. (1979) *A Basis for Music Education*, Slough: NFER-Nelson

Section 1

What is music and music education?

1 Ways of thinking about music

Political dimensions and educational consequences

Gary Spruce

> More important than economic benefits were the social improvements which reformers believed could be achieved through education. Schooling would bring a sober morality to the destitute and 'godless' urban poor and impose a social authority over the working-class child where the working-class family had failed … their desire was to counteract the spread of radical ideas through education of working-class children and later adults in the benefits of middle-class morality and bourgeois political economy.
>
> (Green 1990: 52–3)

Introduction

Government education policy over the last twenty years has significantly reduced teachers' and schools' autonomy over curriculum structure, lesson content and, by implication, teaching methodology. The Education Reform Act (1988) through the National Curriculum established 'the first statutory curriculum in the history of British education' (Docking 1996: 1). For the first time, the subjects to be taught in maintained schools and, in many cases their overall content, were determined at national government level.

The National Curriculum Council (a quasi-government body) was established to consult and make recommendations as to the broad style and content of each subject. Many of their initial recommendations were controversial, running counter to prevailing educational orthodoxies. Moreover, they were perceived by many as an attempt to impose upon schools a narrow, politicized and nationalistic subject perspective, the purpose of which was to return education to its traditional role as a means of constructing a 'political discourse through which the authority of the state and traditional social values can be restored' (Quicke 1988).

In music, the debate focused upon whether the Programmes of Study should reflect and support the music classroom as a place where children engage with music experientially as performers and composers, or signal a return to music education as 'music appreciation' of a European canon of high art music. The former view prevailed. The music Programmes of Study prescribed two Attainment Targets, performing and composing, and listening and appraising, with the proportion of time to be spent on each weighted 2:1 in favour of performing and

composing. Within these broad boundaries, the content of the Programmes of Study was relatively non-prescriptive.

The autonomy which music seemingly enjoys was not granted to most other subjects. The 'content free' nature of the music National Curriculum allows music teachers much greater flexibility over subject content and pedagogical style than that enjoyed by colleagues in other subject areas. Music teachers' primary obligation is to provide a context in which children engage with a wide range of music as performers, composers and critical listeners. Within these broad boundaries, the content of the Programmes of Study is relatively non-prescriptive.

Such freedom has potentially many positive aspects. It allows music teachers to devise a curriculum that reflects the interests, aspirations and social and cultural backgrounds of their pupils. The diversification of teaching styles that naturally proceeds from such freedom is promoted by what Government agencies identify as examples of good practice. For example, both the Ofsted publication *The Arts Inspected* (1998) and the late School Curriculum and Assessment Authority's (SCAA) *Optional Tests and Tasks* (1996) reflect the varied nature of much contemporary music classroom practice. Consequently, children's experience of 'school music' can vary significantly both within departments and, particularly, between schools.

However, it is clear that autonomy and diversity have not resulted in universal quality music teaching and learning. Even *The Arts Inspected* (1998), whose essential purpose is to celebrate and extend good practice, warns against complacency: 'It would be wrong to suggest that all is well with music in schools … for every lesson or school that is above average, roughly one falls below' (Ofsted 1998: 60). Recent research from The National Federation for Education Research (Kinder *et al.* 1995 and 2000) suggests that many pupils are dissatisfied with their school music education – at least that part of it which takes place in the classroom. It is evident therefore that musical *activity* and diverse repertoire are not sufficient to guarantee quality music teaching and pupil satisfaction. As Shulman says, we need to give 'careful attention … to the management of *ideas* within classroom discourse' (Shulman 1987: 919) and in considering these ideas to take account of the historical, philosophical and, particularly, the political and cultural legacy that we take into the classroom.

What I will argue in this chapter is that the way in which music is perceived – the understanding of its nature and purpose – is critical to the way in which it impacts upon curriculum design, what we teach and the way we teach it. Consequently, this determines whether children receive a purposeful and rich musical experience that 'puts the child at the centre of the experience, engaging with music from the inside' (Pitts 1998: 32).

I will suggest that, despite radical developments in musical classroom pedagogy and increased diversity of repertoire, our understanding of what music *is* and what constitutes worthwhile music has remained significantly unchanged over the last hundred years; furthermore, that this understanding is rooted in a conception of music that has its genesis in the late eighteenth century and which is fundamentally politically constructed; finally, that the main aim of this political 'construction' has been to maintain social and cultural hegemonies through low art/high art

distinctions that are assumed to articulate and reflect class divisions. Music, I shall argue, has operated as a tool of social stratification with western art music identified with the upper and middle classes – the bourgeoisie – whilst popular musical forms are typically associated with the working class. Consequently, the bourgeoisie, by virtue of their identification with art music, confirm their higher social status whilst, circularly, art music is perceived of as being inherently superior through its identification with the higher social status of its consumers. The traditional role of music in the curriculum has been to reflect and reinforce the social stratification articulated by this musical hierarchy, reflecting Brian Simon's argument that since its inception, English state education has served to 'preserve social stability and reinforce emerging social hierarchies' (Simon 1987: 106).

Traditional authority and music stratification

The sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) argues that there are three ideal types (pure forms) of authority. Firstly, *charismatic authority* which is fundamentally leader-based and depends upon the power of personality. Secondly, *traditional authority,* which 'rests upon a belief in the "rightness" of established customs and traditions' (Haralambos and Holborn: 502). Finally, *rational–legal authority* which is established through law and operates conditionally upon society's acceptance of that law as being legitimate.

Of these three types, *traditional authority* is arguably the most effective, being rooted in the consent of the 'silent majority'. Moreover, consent that is derived from an acceptance of such authority as self-evident, pre-ordained, universal in application and, consequently, not open to question or debate. In a musical context, tonal music has acquired the mantle of traditional authority, in that:

> established rules and conventions, however arbitrary, come to seem right and proper, not to be tampered with or lightly disregarded. People who know nothing of formal music theory can instantly identify a 'wrong' note, and they often react to one just as they would if some other sort of social rule had been violated. The rules themselves are simply taken for granted, known but not noticed, and often they only become objects of our attention only when they are violated.
>
> (Martin 1995: 9)

Traditionally, there has been similar unquestioned acceptance of the superior status of western art music as the highest form of tonal music and, by implication, those musical procedures and values which it is perceived as exemplifying. Fundamental to these procedures and values is the notion of art music shaping itself 'in accordance with self-constrained abstract principles that are unrelated to the outside world' (Leppert and McClary 1987: xii). Music's meaning is understood as being expressed entirely in terms of the relationships of musical elements to each other rather than through mediation with the (social) context of its performance. High status music is *autonomous* music.

The ideology of musical autonomy

The ideology of musical autonomy is deeply rooted in the aesthetic of western art music. High art music is understood as being exemplified through musical 'works' – music as 'object'. Music thought of as 'object' is perceived as being essentially 'complete' like a painting or sculpture. It does not require an external justification for its existence. A contemporary expression of this view is made by Roger Scruton (1997) when he writes: 'the experience of art is available only if we forget the use. We must consider the work of art as an end in itself' (Scruton 1997: 375).

The ideological hegemony exerted by the notion of music as autonomous works, fully concords with Weber's notion of *traditional authority* as authority perceived of as self-evident, timeless and universal. However, 'musical autonomy' is none of these things. It is in fact a concept that has its roots in the late eighteenth century and developed primarily as a means by which the emerging bourgeoisie could identify with the old aristocracy and draw a clear distinction between themselves and the working classes.

Prior to the late eighteenth century, a musical 'product' (inasmuch as that term is appropriate) was deemed to have been achieved at the point of performance, not through its notation. Musical production being defined by performance has implications for the way in which the relationship between composer and performer is conceptualized. First, given that production is defined as being 'performance', the composer would typically be responsible for the entire process from composition to realization. Consequently, the distinctive roles of composer and performer, which we now tend to take for granted, were much less clearly defined. As late as 1802 'Prince Nicholas II of Esterhazy had to agree with Haydn that "it would be very difficult – especially in the case of new works – to perform music without the personal direction of the composer"' (Goehr 1992: 191).

Second, as music was not considered as an object but as an event, musical ownership did not exist in the way we now understand it. What was marketable was not an 'object' but the skills that enabled a music event to take place.

Third, given that the musical product was defined by its performance and not the production of an object, musical performance would be motivated primarily by external exigency. Music was composed and performed for church, state or entertainment occasions. Composers were part of the fabric of society and were employed to produce music to order. There was no rationale for the production of music for its own sake, for any value music had was purely in terms of fulfilling a particular social function.

Musical production prior to the late eighteenth century was inextricably linked to social context. The notion of going to a particular place specifically and exclusively to listen to a musical performance was contrary to the way in which music was conceived of as functioning within society. This is not to suggest that music was not listened to attentively. Rather, that such attentiveness would result from the context in which it was being performed (for example a religious service) and the text that was set, rather than in order to construe an inner meaning from the relationship and interplay of the musical parts. Indeed, the sublimation of music to

the setting of morally and spiritually uplifting texts was considered to be the highest function to which music could aspire:

> it was believed that the words of a text captured music's meaning much more adequately than sounds by themselves; sound and dance movements were usually relegated to the status of accompaniment either to a text or an 'occasion' which would provide them by association with meaning. The use of words, however, was often considered essential to any musical occasion if that occasion was to be regarded as edifying, truthful, and thereby respectable. The immediate implication of this belief was that music without words … [had] insufficient moral import and, therefore, was probably of very little import at all.
>
> (Goehr: 128)

Instrumental music was thus considered to be of lower status, suitable only as prelude or interlude to vocal performances or as accompaniment to dancing and eating.

Finally, as music was understood as existing only in performance and not as autonomous 'object', the perception of the function of notation was significantly different from the way in which it has been perceived since the end of the eighteenth century. Notation simply provided the broad parameters that enabled a performance to take place – indeed primitive printing techniques allowed only such limited uses. The realization of the notation through performance would be informed by stylistic understanding, tradition and, frequently, the involvement of the composer–performer. Notation did not, for example, in many instances specify tempo, dynamics or even instrumentation. It was not, as it became in the nineteenth century, a means of attempting to codify every aspect of music in order to create an objectified and definitive version.

So what then happened to so dramatically change our perception of music's nature and function? At the end of the eighteenth century there occurred what Wolff refers to as: 'the developing and problematic relationship between the bourgeoisie and the working class … the effort made by the new ruling class to control the working class and legitimate its own rule' (Wolff in Leppert and McClary 1987: 6). In order to legitimize social stratification, the bourgeoisie needed to demonstrate their inherent superiority through the construction and application of Weber's traditional (or self-evident) authority type. One way in which this was achieved was through identification with the emerging notion of 'art' as an autonomous, non-utilitarian construct capable of being appreciated only by those of refined sensibilities.

In order for music to act as a tool of social stratification it had to fulfil two interrelated criteria. First, access was controlled so that the music identified with the middle and upper classes was accessible only to them. This was achieved firstly by moving art music to places specifically designated for its performance (away from the theatres, coffee houses and market places and into concert halls), then charging for admission at prices prohibitive to all but the bourgeoisie and aristocracy.

Second, in order to legitimize restriction of access, there developed the notion of musical 'ownership'. This required a reconceptualization of the nature of music and its relationship to other disciplines. Music had traditionally been part of the medieval