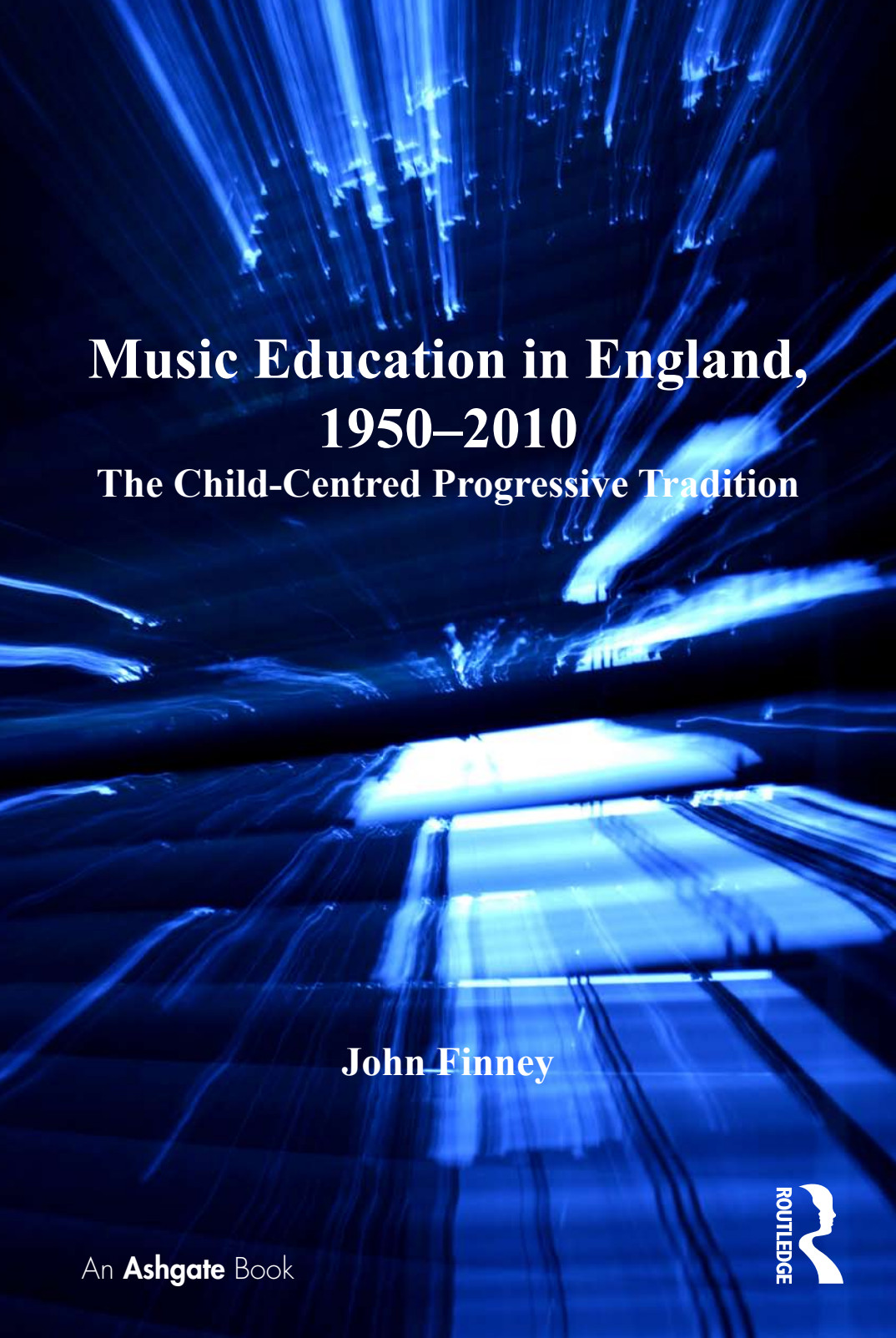

Music Education in England, 1950–2010

The Child-Centred Progressive Tradition

John Finney

An Ashgate Book

ROUTLEDGE

MUSIC EDUCATION IN ENGLAND, 1950–2010

In memory of Edwin Newland Finney, young schoolmaster killed on 19 May 1917 in the Battle of the Somme

Music Education in England, 1950–2010

The Child-Centred Progressive Tradition

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Preface

Writing an account of music education in England from 1950 to the present time is bound to involve this writer in a form of autobiography, for the period covers the time during which I progressed from childhood to secondary school music teacher, then to music teacher educator and now commentator on contemporary policy and practice. It is the time in which I have lived music education. It was in the 1950s as an inquisitive child hearing from my primary school teacher, Mr Blanchard, about his Second World War exploits that music began to grow in my mind as a way of understanding who I was and what I might become. In due course as a secondary school music teacher I became aware that I was part of an ever-changing milieu of music educational thought and practice, and that there was a long-running conversation with which to engage. Whose music should I teach? Was I teaching a subject or teaching a child? To what extent should I listen to the mind of the child? What authority did I have to declare a child's musical needs? To what extent was it my responsibility to infer these needs and might the child be expected to express a different set of needs? Could children be seen as artists uniquely expressing their thoughts and feelings? Were the products of their imaginations *sui generis*? Whose music education was this? These were not new questions. However, it was the discovery of child-centred progressive practice and its tradition manifest in the privileging of children's expressive thoughts and feelings that brought about a change in my own identity as a music teacher and which in due course called for serious reflection. This story of personal awakening and reflection runs quietly throughout what follows.

While the study offers a fresh viewing point from which to evaluate ideas and practices evolving during the past 60 years within English music education, there is another task to accomplish; a critique of the present, exposing the dangers lurking in our unrelenting pursuit of future gains and market values which are thought to serve the making and sustaining of the social order. Problems of the present are much in mind as the story of the past 60 years unfolds.

To speak of music education in the present time draws in a great deal more than the idea of music in the school, for music education is widely recognized as existing in a vast range of regulated and unregulated settings, and altogether more out of school than in. However, music remains a part of the idea of the school, involving a relationship between music teachers and their students. It is this species of music education that is worked with in what follows. The reader will find a story which draws in major debates of the period covered, along with their protagonists, counterpointed by the voices of teachers and pupils. At the same time the voices of policy and governance are found becoming ever louder as

we reach the present time. Here is a contextualized account of music education: social, cultural and political matters have an important role to play.

In telling the story the labels 'children', 'young people', 'pupils' and 'students' will be used as the context requires. These of course tell something of the ways in which the young are regarded. The first two recognize the existence of a 'person' living both within and beyond the school and potentially free from tutelage, while there is no such freedom afforded by the terms 'pupil' and 'student'. There is still one more label, recently in use: the child is a 'learner', but this is now an identity for all, adult and child alike.

In bringing the project to fruition I must first recall and in particular thank amongst my teachers Henry George, Ian Carswell, Gordon Cox and Tony Kemp, who listened and encouraged. I am thankful too for the support and stimulation of colleagues I have worked with in secondary schools; Alex Mitchell, Cliff Lancaster, Peter Kendall, Frank Mason, Audrey Atter, Ian Muir and a great many more. Again, it was their encouraging friendship and frequent forbearance that sustained thought about what were the challenges of the daily meeting with our classes in our efforts to educate. There is much gratitude too to express to my current colleagues in the Faculty of Education in Cambridge, who meet each day as an early morning coffee collective. The group's spontaneous agenda continues to give space to the sociological mind of John Beck, Mary Earl's quest to better conceptualize Religious Education, Richard Hickman's steady grasp of matters artistic and aesthetic and Anne Sinkinson's redoubtable realism. Together these provide a strong source of intellectual stimulation and rootedness. It was Gabrielle Cliff-Hodges who one morning asked whether I knew of Sybil Marshall's *An Experiment in Education*, of her Symphonic Method and the Beethoven term. My discovery of this text gave impetus to the whole. For this I am very grateful.

Important too were times spent during the first half of 2008 in the company of characters close to the story being told. Long conversations with Jill Cafferky telling of Sybil Marshall's schoolroom of the 1950s and a day spent with Sybil Marshall's daughter Pru and husband Tony were immensely rewarding times. Likewise days spent first with Malcolm Ross and then John Paynter proved to be important. But too must be acknowledged those who have supported the project through ongoing discussions and through reading of the text: Gordon Cox, Kristen Eglinton, John Hopkins, Tim Cain, Jennie Francis and Felicity Laurence for their close readings and critique; Louise Cooper, Ruth Wright, Gabrielle Cliff-Hodges, Emily Finney and Mary Finney for reading and commenting on individual chapters; Alan Morgan, a long time mentor in my use of the English language, for his sympathetic and detailed attention to the text, its meanings, idiosyncratic spellings, ambiguities and confusions and for never discouraging a tendency towards the poetic; Katherine Shaw for her astute and dedicated support in preparing the final text for publication; Heidi Bishop and colleagues at Ashgate for their gentle encouragement and splendid support. For the final text I must of course take full responsibility. The work was substantially carried out during two sabbatical terms

granted by the University of Cambridge for which I am grateful and likewise to Roger Green and Rob Lepley for covering aspects of my teaching.

Finally I am grateful for the permissions granted to include extracts from previously published work. Chapter 4 draws from the paper 'Music Education as Aesthetic Education: a re-think' in the *British Journal of Music Education* (Vol. 19, No. 3) with permission granted by Cambridge University Press, and likewise elements of 'The rights and wrongs of school music: considering the expressivist argument and its existential component' in the *British Journal of Music Education* (Vol. 16, No. 3) and used in Chapters 5 and 8. Chapter 6 contains the previously published Chapter 5 of *Rebuilding Engagement through the Arts: Responding to disaffected students* (2005) and is reproduced by kind permission from Pearson Publishing Ltd. Elsewhere there are small amounts of material taken from the article 'From Resentment to Enchantment: what a class of 13-year-olds and their music teacher tell about a musical education', *International Journal of Education and the Arts* (Vol. 4, No. 6) and from Routledge the following extracts: in *Learning to Teach Music in the Secondary School* edited by Chris Philpott and Gary Spruce (2007) the section on page 5 'A Moral and Political Question' and the section 'Concession and Change' on pages 6 to 8; from Chapter 3 of *A Practical Guide to Teaching Music in the Secondary School* the section on page 29 'Why teach the Blues?' and the section 'Finding cultural depth' on page 30. For all these permissions I am grateful.

John Finney
Cambridge, May 2010

Dorothy recalls the Silent Band of school days, circa 1930

There was Margaret, the clever one, Sheila – very sweet and good, and me, always on the look out for a bit of fun. The game started when we reached the back lane, a long narrow lane where we never saw any one, and of course, no one ever saw us. Each one chose an instrument – 'I'll play the drum, I'm going to play the trombone, I'll play the violin.' We line up, and one, two, three we're off, marching in line, arms waving and not a single sound. Then laughter overcomes us, we are doubled up, rolling about with laughter. Then 'what did you play?' – Land of Hope and Glory. 'What did you play?' – Polly Wolly Doodle – 'What did you play?' Red Sails in the Sunset – Right – off again. Usually we managed three goes, then we had reached the end of the lane. Coats smoothed down, hats straightened, back to normal once more. Game over until tomorrow.

(Written communication, 2006)

Chapter 1
Introduction

The future of class music! There was one, but what was it to be? This was the question that concentrated the minds of delegates attending the Music Advisors' National Conference at Saffron Walden in the last days of June 1977. The source of provocation had been the book *Music in Education: A Point of View* by Arnold Bentley (Bentley 1975). To Bentley many contemporary practices were trivial, for he deemed that music in school should focus on music listening, singing, playing classroom instruments, and music reading and writing. Bentley's was a reaction against 'progressive tendencies' of the time. In the July/August 1977 edition of the popular publication *Music in Education*, feature space is given over to a discussion recorded shortly before the conference. The protagonists are Bentley himself, head of the music education centre at Reading University, and Hamish Preston, music advisor for Berkshire. Severe tensions are brought to the surface between a long-standing commitment to the mastery of the techniques and disciplines expected of a music education and the problems presented by reluctant teenagers rejecting what music teachers had to offer (Music in Education 1977). The discussion bore the title 'The future of class music' which reflected a controversy that was emblematic of the time. Preston alludes to John Paynter's notion of creative work, thinking and feeling like a composer and children gaining greater insight into music, while Bentley defers to traditional practices that are tried and tested. For Preston what is important is the musical engagement of young people, artistic values and a humanizing education. For Bentley there is commitment to the integrity of a well ordered and balanced curriculum which he concedes may not be appropriate for all beyond early adolescence.

Bentley was swimming against the tide of progressive ideas, for the child-centred progressive educational movement had grown in force in the decades following the Second World War. The child could be viewed as playful, curious, insightful and with an impulse to create and make, and the school could become more open and responsive to the interests of its pupils. It was such ideas that were to yield a vast array of possibilities that would change the nature of classrooms, how knowledge, culture and authority were to be thought about and the kind of relationships that were possible between teacher and pupil and what was being learnt. The impact upon music education and education in general was to be long lasting. The crudely formed distinction between traditional and progressive approaches was to become one way of framing political, social and cultural contestations within a shifting educational landscape. Indeed, it was to serve as a focus for arguments about the moral purpose of education. As Moore points out: 'The traditional versus progressive debate has been conducted as a conflict about

society itself, as reflecting a tension between social order and change, respect for tradition versus "permissiveness"' (Moore 2004: 147–8).

Justification

If Moore is right then there are good reasons for a study of music education in England from 1950 to the present day seen through the lens of those child-centred progressive ideas that gained momentum in the post-war period. The enquiry draws together developments of the period in a unique way, yielding fresh insights into the place of music in education. It becomes possible to view social, political and cultural changes of the period in a particular light and to uncover new relationships between those ideas that have been most influential in the development of music in schools.

Beyond justifying the study as offering a fresh perspective on music education of the recent past, there is a pressing case for understanding this in the context of the present, where the place of the child in making a music education is framed by a contradictory rhetoric. No longer is a 'child-centred' education promoted. The idea is both *passé* and politically inept. Instead, there is talk of an education that is 'learner-centred', and where there is 'personalized learning' addressing the needs of the child as a consumer and producer of education. Indeed, the notion of 'personalization' proposes that education, like other services, should be designed, co-produced and co-delivered involving 'intimate consultation' and 'expanded choice' (Leadbeater 2005). The child is indeed the centre of attention. Hartley notes 'the strong semantic accord between the terms "personalization" and "child-centred education"', pointing out how the government's denial of association between the two serves to 'adapt education further to a consumerist society …' (Hartley 2009: 423). The roots of the 'personalization' concept lie within marketing theory and with an attachment to neo-liberal doctrine.

The neo-liberal present sees education as a state investment from which there needs to be tangible economic dividends. It must be ever more efficient and economically productive. State education in England now works as a quasi-market where schools must compete as well as children (Ball 2007, 2008). Children take centre place as consumer-learner-citizens with entrepreneurial potential. The neo-liberal way is seen as liberating enterprise where the individual finds greater freedom, exercising unlimited choice and autonomy. Children are expected to be not just enterprising but to become members of an enterprise culture, and to ensure themselves that they are not only employable but marketable too. Neo-liberalism assumes that people are driven by private interest, that they are best served by market competition, that seeking equality of opportunity is misguided and doomed to failure and that greed is a source of social progress (Lauder et al. 2006: 26; see also Harvey 2005). What is private is necessarily good and what is public is necessarily bad, or at least suspect, and investment in education allows the nation to successfully compete, for the world is intensely competitive. In Gordon Brown's

phrase, 'there is a skills race' and this is reason for 'pushing ahead' with reforms to the education system – 'the challenge is now to unlock the talents of all people' to take part in a 'global skills race' (Brown 2008: 27). The vision advances the notion of 'opportunity for all' and the need to 'personalize these services so they meet the distinct and unique needs of individuals'. This requires that we 'nurture and develop creativity, interpersonal skills and technical abilities, as well as analytic intelligence' (ibid). Education becomes a commodity.

This neo-liberal present exists in stark contrast to the benevolent workings of a liberal state supporting education in 1950 where the protected child was embedded in traditional forms of community and institutional order. At the beginning of the new millennium the child is no longer situated within a set of traditional values. And there are no institutions stable enough to provide ease, comfort and secure identity. Identity is no longer a given but a 'task' to perform, a process of 'obligatory self determination' (Bauman 2008, xv). While child-centred progressive educators of earlier times were offering children new freedoms within the secure bounds of an established order, children today *are* what Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2008) define as 'freedom's children'. Not identity but freedom is a given as they 'practise a seeking, experimenting morality that ties together things that seem to be mutually exclusive: egoism and altruism, self-realization and active compassion' (Beck and Beck Gernsheim 2008: 159). In this view we have to accept children as members of the 'me' generation, and as an inevitable product of democratic evolution and the source of new values. Freedom has arrived and in school children will be looking for something other than the routines and disciplines of former times, seeking space to develop their own biography, and at the same time a worthy pack of credentials.

In English schools the introduction of non-negotiable standards, assessment regimes with high stake testing and league tables, and with a proclivity for certain kinds of knowledge having greater currency than others, sets the rules of the official game. Learning objectives narrow, outcomes become entirely predictable accompanied by the closure of 'open engagement that allows for expression of values, beliefs and interpretations' (Doddington and Hilton 2007: 117). Beyond this there is increasing concern about the loss of depth and quality in learning and about the enforced dedication of schools to an input-output model of education embedded within a 'culture of pragmatism and compliance' (Alexander 2008: 79). Education is very clearly future-orientated, market-orientated and bereft of history.

In February 2009 Ofsted, the schools' inspection body, published a 78-page report 'Making more of music' based on evidence from inspections in a range of maintained schools in England between 2005 and 2008 (Ofsted 2009). Quite unlike the Ministry of Education's 'Music in School' report of 1956 there is no engagement with the past (HMSO 1956). In the 1956 report a substantial chapter is devoted to the historical context in which the way ahead is located. There is respectful and carefully measured critical comment on the long revolution that effected the development of music in schools. There is a conversation between what

has been and what might be. Now there is only the matter of raising standards. If education has become overwhelmingly future-orientated the case for more history of education is compelling. Without it criticism of the present as well as hope for the future is diminished.

The Lure of History

In providing a 'usable past' for music educators, Gordon Cox argues for the need to 'engage with the real concerns of policy makers, administrators, and practitioners in music classrooms' (Cox 2002: 145–6). What follows will need to make sense for music teachers, teachers of music teachers and curriculum innovators too. It must explain and clarify the problems, confusions and errors in the thinking and practices of the present as well as the past. It must cause reflection as it shapes ambition and hope. It must draw forth human sympathy and the empathic imagination if it is to contribute to better understanding of the present, a love of the past and trust in the future.

For myself the value of a historical perspective was a slow burning process and first came through reading the first chapter of *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum* written by John Paynter in 1982, in which is related the development of music as a subject within a general education with a concern to reach all pupils. The fact that what I did as a secondary school music teacher at the time was without a sense of history became a matter of interest. In 1987, and now a student of music education, Anthony Kemp at Reading University presented the proposition that there might be enduring principles of music education to consider. Music educators of the past such as John Curwen and Emile Jacques-Dalcroze still had much to teach provided that principles underlying their methods were grasped. That there were key individuals, sometimes iconoclasts, having considerable effect on the formulation of policy and influencing practice as demonstrated in Gordon Cox's 1993 study *A History of Music Education in England 1872–1928*, in due course became of interest too. People, ideas, values embedded in philosophies were what counted. There was no science of music education and indeed, as Allan Hewitt points out in reviewing *Music in Educational Thought and Practice* (Rainbow with Cox 2006) … 'the structure and content of school music education is inevitably (and perhaps regrettably) driven by values rather than empirical evidence …' (Hewitt 2008: 132). Values, beliefs and ideologies are what we subscribe to and what leads us on.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, I read Stephanie Pitts's *A Century of Change in Music Education: Historical Perspectives on Contemporary Practice in British Secondary School Music* in one day (Pitts 2000). I missed no word and read quickly. It was a story that was important to me. There was a compelling narrative and in the second half of what was revealed I was deeply implicated, first as a child in school and subsequently as a music teacher, and finally teacher of music teachers. In part what follows is autobiography, part a story of others who were

convinced about the creative potentials of the child, part too an account of living realities in classrooms and schools and part philosophical enquiry, seeking to better understand the distinction between a music education as self-realization and a music education for musical understanding unburdened by the self. It is the tensions arising between a music education as self-understanding and a music education as a cognitive discipline that seeks resolution in an acceptance of a form of understanding that recognizes 'being in the world' and 'being in the world with others'. In this way musical understanding takes on a particular depth and ethical significance. Music education seeks out a 'humanistic conscience' (Fromm 1941/2007).

Child-centred and Progressive Traditions

The notion of child-centredness has little currency or meaning at the present time. It is a thing of the past and in discussing child-centredness Pring (2004) reminds us that the idea arises from different traditions.

> Put crudely, the distinction is between, on the one hand, those who emphasize the individual nature of growth – the gradual development of potential that is there waiting to be recognized, fertilized, watered, or just allowed to grow (the horticultural metaphor is popular among the followers of Froebel and Pestalozzi) – and, on the other hand, those who stress the social context of development.
>
> (Pring 2004: 82)

It is the latter that is associated with the work of John Dewey and the former with the legacy of Rousseau and John Locke, the educational freedom thinkers of the Enlightenment. In the case of Dewey there is a commitment to a socialized intelligence, the development of participatory democracy with the school as the site where this is first experienced and progressively learnt. Education is life itself and not merely a preparation for life, a lived present with a 'potent instrumentality for the future' (Dewey 1938/1971: 23). Subject matter is important. Subjects need to be socially relevant, problematical in a way that makes the present alive with human interest. For Dewey this idea was some distance from a child-centred education that leads to the 'relativizing of authority that quickly degenerated into authoritarianism' (Woodford 2005). In the case of the arts the child-centred tradition had an easily discernable lineage found within the expressivism of early nineteenth-century Romanticism, leading to ideas of the child as artist and the child as individually and uniquely expressive. However, the overlapping and intersecting of ideas from both child-centred and progressive traditions is considerable and in any case, in the period investigated, the notion of child-centredness is sustained and invigorated by ideas emerging from wide-ranging sources as its proponents sought out fresh authority and compelling witnesses in support of their case. Branches of psychology, existential philosophy, expressivist theories of art, modernism and

contemporary artistic practices, for example, were all to make contributions. The child-centredness of which I write can have no pure form and is best referred to as a child-centred progressive tradition.

Within this frame of reference I do have in mind a particular kind of relationship between teacher, pupil and what is being learnt, for it involves fundamentally the negotiation of beliefs and values. The relationship is more than a functional one. In school it is within this tradition that relationships come to be thought of as personal rather than instrumental. In the relationships formed there will be some revealing of selves, and what we are teaching and learning will be an interpersonal matter and come to be of mutual interest. There will be a 'clearing' created between those engaged … 'a *clear* space is created that allows and even calls each person to articulate his or her own values and beliefs' (Doddington and Hilton 2007: 89). And in this are implied principles of democracy. It is this dedication to creating a climate of exchange that the notion of the 'whole child' can be best made sense of. Childhood is viewed as a distinctive time, and it is the state of children's 'here and now' existence that matters most, for 'childhood is a *time in itself*' (ibid: 55). In this way of thinking, the school, the music lesson can be thought of as a way-of-life, as something apart and largely free from necessity. Of course, if this way-of-life is non-authoritarian where democratic ideals are practised, there may well arise a life-long love of learning and the possibility of making a contribution to a better future for all. But the music lesson needs to make sense now. Music teachers will be listening to those they teach, to see each child as being unique. The teacher will be able to respond to each child and enter into a conversation that discerns and nurtures the musicality and humanity of each. So how shall we proceed?

The Project: Structure and Method

The argument presented works through a series of six episodes, each seeking to capture the spirit and fervour characteristic of a particular phase within the period studied. The first episode (Chapter 2) is a portrait of Sybil Marshall, a woman of the immediate post-war period, independent in mind and spirit, a 'liberal romantic', whose class of children aged five to eleven learnt to imagine and to express their understanding of the world through artistic outpourings and through music in song, dance and famously through coming to know a whole symphony. Sybil Marshall was a woman of the 1950s attuned to the criticisms of an unduly conformist society, an overbearing rational order where there was repression of feeling and spontaneity and lack of individuality. It was Sybil's free-spirited enterprise in unique circumstances that was to become a source of inspiration for several generations of primary school teachers, and which was to chime well with the Plowden Report of 1967 and the official reshaping of the primary school. What was emerging was 'the age of authenticity' leading to the contemporary demand for an 'expressive individualism', a search for sources of the authentic self (Taylor 2007).

The first episode sets out to be a compelling narrative drawing upon Sybil Marshall's writings both educational and literary, interviews with pupils from her class of the 1950s, examination of their art work and poetry still preserved, the voice of Sybil as archived radio broadcast material, my own reflections on being in primary school and teacher training, and all this set in the context of an HMI report of the time calling for fewer large group musical performance activities and more attention to individual musical development. The chapter is an 'experiment in portraiture' serving Sybil Marshall's own 'experiment in education'. The art of portraiture demands that 'the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism are blurred in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life' (Lawrence-Lightfoot 1997: xv).

Sybil Marshall's robust resistance to authoritarian models of the past and her reaching out for intellectual stimulus from the progressive thinking of artist educators such as David Holbrook and Wilfred Mellers, served as a precursor to the more widespread distaste expressed by the young for what seemed mechanical and all that smothered creativity, individuality, the body and the possibility of informal organic ties in place of traditional communities of order. Thus, the second episode (Chapter 3) examines the 1960s and 1970s and the impact of egalitarian ideals, focusing on a bold response to the changing expectations of adolescents and their rejection of the canons of good taste. Why did reason dominate feeling, why was play marginalized by work and why was school so different from 'not school'? Could not the authentic self of the adolescent be present in school? The radical thought and practice of Robert Witkin and Malcolm Ross, like that of Sybil Marshall, bring to the fore the dialogic character of the teacher-pupil relationship and how to know the medium of musical expression was to know self and to learn a respect for subjectivity. At the same time the clash of educational ideologies brought into play by the rejection of traditional values and creeping cultural relativities saw the emergence of a highly partisan political positioning that was to establish a 'new right' educational voice of great force. Culture was now contestable and at the heart of politics. Quite unlike the portrait of Sybil Marshall, this episode explores complex theoretical ideas that were posited in the name of self-expression, where the arts would have a common purpose and the adolescent first and foremost would have a life of feeling.

This prepares the way for considering the response to changing circumstances and a major crisis of confidence within music education through the perspective of the thought and practice of composer and music educator John Paynter. Concurrent with the turbulence caused by Witkin and Ross, episode three (Chapter 4) uses the text *Sound and Silence* as the starting point for understanding how the idea of creative music and creative music making worked to reconfigure what it meant to know music and to be musical. This was conceived as a part of a liberal education in which music education would need to find underpinnings in philosophical debate about what it meant to 'know music', what was distinctive about music and the arts and just whose music was to be a source of education. This coincided with my own most formative phase of experience in the classroom, where an

ideological shift of some significance led to innovative practice and being drawn to find further and better explanations for what I was experiencing.

In considering the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s and the more circumspect 1980s, the reader will be taken into classrooms and become acquainted with particular pupils and my own progress as a music teacher in secondary schools. It is now time to hear the voices of youth through an ethnographic study yielding better understanding of ways in which the young are, in Paul Willis's phrase, 'culturally energized'. In episode four (Chapter 5) a group of four adolescent boys, engaged in managing their own music education, present what must *ipso facto* constitute a child-centred progressive view of how music is learnt and the kind of values that come to be attached to the creative process. In this way theoretical concepts previously developed are brought down to earth and developed further. This gives rise to more questions about music's social and cultural significance and the inadequacy of a model over-reliant on music as an expression of the self. And this coincides with the making of a National Curriculum, representing a call to order leading to a centralization of policy making and the onset of bureaucratic management and the surveillance of music in school. With 'new era values' comes the closure of practices celebrating the authority of the child as artist.

By the new millennium the official curriculum had repositioned the child as a 'learner' amongst a dazzling rhetoric surrounding the notion of 'learning'. Out of all this had come 'pupil voice', a fresh attempt to place children at the centre of the educational process and promote their full participation in the life of the school. The fifth episode (Chapter 6) presents the story of a class of 13-year-olds and their teacher in a school striving to improve following the educational reforms of the 1990s. In particular it celebrates the agency of four of the class given voice and authority to engage a class of 11- and 12-year-olds in their vernacular musical practices. The chapter draws on ethnographic data as well as that gleaned through action-research making full use of the pupils' voices as they create an image of a school where, for a short time, they are seen differently and where a school might be seen differently.

In the wake of a second crisis of confidence in music education and amidst the hope of a music educational renaissance, the final episode (Chapter 7) is presented as a critique of attempts to revive the fortunes of music in school at the start of the new millennium. This is focused on two initiatives boldly setting out to enliven music in the school. On the one hand there is offered a radical quasi child-centred progressive curriculum in recognition that 'freedom's children' know how to learn music through their consumption and production of music beyond the school gates. On the other, there is a National Strategy intensifying the official curriculum through the deployment of set procedures and templates of practice. All this is placed in the context of New Labour's educational policies investing in the future and the consumer-learner-citizen.

In the final chapter the unfolding narrative is reviewed and the idea of music education as an ethical pursuit is proposed in which classroom relationships can be thought of as playfully dialogic, where teacher and pupil remain curious, and where

attention is paid to what is to be taught and why. These pedagogic imperatives will always need to be negotiated to ensure the expressed and inferred needs of children work together to find a critical approach to what is being learnt.

The enquiry tells of a time through which music education in England has travelled with both abounding confidence and great uncertainty. It is an era during which two major crises of confidence have surfaced within music education and in each case been met by bold responses disruptive and contentious in equal measure of well-established orthodoxies. Throughout the period there have been child-centred progressive tendencies drawing on child-centred and progressive traditions that have emanated from the belief that a music education for the child and adolescent here and now should hold personal meaning and significance.

In what follows we must ask not so much what is the nature of music, although that will arise, but what are schools for, what is music in school for, what are music teachers for and what kind of relationship are music teachers to have with their pupils? What kind of pupils and what kind of schools do we want? What is the place of music in the school?

The Festival of Britain held in 1951, 100 years after the Great Exhibition of 1851, was an occasion of hope well expressed by King George VI on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral:

> Let us pray that by God's good grace the vast range of modern knowledge which is here shown may be turned from destructive to peaceful ends, so that all people, as the century goes on, may be lifted to greater happiness.
>
> (Kynaston, accessed 15 March 2009)

In that year I moved from the infant section of my primary school to Mr Burton's class numbering 48 children. I continued to drink the milk provided at morning break time and to ingest the statutory small red capsule that was cod liver oil. The social historian Eric Hobsbawm writes of the twentieth century as an 'Age of Extremes' and the 25 years that followed the Festival of Britain as a 'golden age', marked by rising prosperity and social contentment in which the welfare state did its work (Hobsbawm 1994). It was a time to construct fresh visions and potent realities and one such place was the Fenlands of Eastern England.