

Editorial

In this issue the majority of articles focus on performance. Within this context we are invited particularly to reflect upon the perspectives of students, parents and children, all of whom may share the delights of music learning, musical knowledge and engagement but who experience and apply them in very different settings. Understanding how we learn music, how musical skills develop, how musical knowledge is represented and how music teachers can best teach and inspire, are challenging topics for music educators across all phases whether they be early music teachers, artists in residence or artist educators.

Traditionally, and perhaps inevitably, a student's journey to become a performing musician is complex. The issues of how musical skills develop, what factors inhibit or enhance development, what constitutes effective musical engagement and how we come to know the long-term consequences of music education, are perennial questions. It is an obvious point, but one worth remembering, that the temporal and ephemeral nature of musical engagement often makes for very different solutions to capturing and making sense of experience, compared to the visual or digital arts. Where different researchers with different takes on a topic are brought together, much can be gained through the quality and range of thought and action which acknowledges such distinctions in practice and seeks to complement and find new ways of working and researching. The articulation of this process contributes to new understanding. The diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives used make these articles a particularly rich collection.

Using retrospective accounts of formative musical influences, Stephanie Pitts (England) reports adult viewpoints and accounts of what sustains involvement and interest in music throughout lives. Personal beliefs not only influence a child's motivation to continue playing but also shape their identities as individuals and their orientations as learners. The message here is a powerful one and concerns the potential influence of music teachers 'to make music central or peripheral to the lives of students'. Using life-history methodology to track the various catalysts that shape musical participation, this article offers important lessons about the serendipitous nature of musical experience and learning, including children's motives in beginning to learn an instrument and the impact of home and school influences on their progress and achievement. The article reveals the complexities of the contexts that influence practices and pedagogies within compulsory and post-compulsory education and the diversity of people's musical lives over a lifetime of engagement in music.

Many parents form and hold expectations and values about their child's learning that subsequently impact on how able they are to help their child to take personal responsibility for his or her learning. An innovative study by Jonathan Lilliedahl and Eva Georgii-Hemming (Sweden) investigates parents' expectations of music teaching and learning in a Swedish Municipal School of Arts. Using grounded-theory methodology, the results demonstrate that parents hold a diversity of views and bring many preconceptions about music learning and teaching to their perceptions of the music education offered by the particular school. They then go on to theorise about the mediating factors involved in children's musical development. Fundamental to developing parents' confidence in the schools' instrumental and ensemble teaching and learning are the teachers' commitments and roles.

Drawing again from the Swedish school system, Niklas Pramling (Sweden) uses preschool children's invented notations to explore how children are able to communicate their understanding of the relationship between representation (sign) and sound in the development of musical knowledge. Again, the teachers' role in appropriating effective educational opportunities and accessing tools useful in representing music is emphasised.

The next two papers provide viewpoints and insights from undergraduate music students attending university or conservatoires. In respect of the theories of musical performance, Allan Hewitt's (Scotland) paper offers insights into how students' perceptions of what characterises a successful performance are influenced by the particular musical genre(s) in which they practice. The empowerment felt for developing the skills necessary to master challenges associated with learning and performing on an instrument, and developing certain genre affiliations, may help instil more personal awareness in the form of active self-regulation. Research which examines the actual repertoire practised offers another way of understanding why some students make greater progress than others.

Performance opportunities are important facets underpinning music students' personal beliefs about learning an instrument. A collaborative study by Andrea Creech, Linnhe Robertson, Helena Gaunt and Susan Hallam (England) explores the views of conservatoire students concerning the value and purpose of masterclasses. A range of factors are found to be considered important in a successful masterclass. This research raises the possibility of beneficent change from the insiders' viewpoint. This is a fascinating topic which readers working in the conservatoire system and in studios will find useful and will aid their planning.

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