

EDITORIAL

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It has been a busy time for official publications relating to music education in England over the summer of 2021. Following hot on the heels of the Department for Education's controversial 'Model Music Curriculum' came a 'research review' from Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – the government body responsible for inspecting providers of education and skills, and in the middle of the school summer holiday, the Department for Education published a report on their public consultation about music education in England, carried out in early 2020, just before the Covid-19 pandemic impacted our daily life. An interesting aspect concerning all of these publications is the direction in which they are taking music education. We appreciate that the English situation is very different from that in many other jurisdictions in which the *BJME* is read, but nonetheless, given these governmental and official pronouncements concerning music education, we would be pleased to receive scholarly contributions and discussions concerning these, as we feel there is much in them that would benefit from an international critique.

Indeed, in these strange covid times in which we all find ourselves at the moment, and which we have commented on in previous editorials, it might well be that the very nature, purpose, and operation of music education in many countries is currently undergoing change. However, as world events unfold, we sincerely hope that Article 28 of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child¹, “*the right of the child to education*” continues to be a priority for all children across the world, regardless of where they live, and what the political system appertaining holds in store.

This edition of the British Journal of Music Education continues to showcase the diversity of contexts in which music education research around the world is undertaken. It opens with an article from Jennifer Hennessy and Sinéad Corr, reporting the findings of an exploratory study which investigates the integration of disciplinary literacy in the Irish secondary school music classroom. This is a fascinating and timely study, *‘Chasing every mark’*. ***High stakes assessment and curriculum narrowing: the case of disciplinary literacy in the Irish secondary music classroom*** offers core recommendations that certainly have resonance beyond the Irish context. In highlighting the need for “more disciplinary engaged, student-centred approaches in the development of music literacy within the secondary classroom” the authors urge educators to support the ambition for disciplinary literacy to be integrated in authentic ways which support musical learning, rather than fragmenting it.

Our next article focuses on pedagogical practices. Åsmund Espeland and Brynjulf Stige's article *‘Teaching repertoires and pedagogical improvisation in music teacher practices’* explores research on pedagogical improvisation when teaching a pop band and teaching piano in a Norwegian community school of music and arts. The focus is on improvisatory processes in teaching and educational practice. The study uses video analysis of lessons to capture ‘techniques’ and ‘teaching acts’ performed by the teachers, showing how these are ‘in constant interplay with the pupils within the context of overall learning activities in the music classroom’.

Moving to Higher Education, Ronel de Villiers' article *‘The Force Field Model applied to a Music Education teacher training framework in a South African context’* explores Music teacher

¹United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

education through four inter-related and dynamic forces (contextual, institutional, biographic and programmatic). The findings of this study elicit multiple interesting ‘push and pull factors’ which will very likely resonate with international readers as they grapple with changes and priorities in their own settings.

The next two articles focus on singing, although from very different perspectives. *‘Opera in primary education for the development of social and emotional skills: a case study from Mexico City’* by Rosa Soliveres, Andrea Giráldez-Hayes and Jose Luis Parejo is a preliminary report of a Key Stage 2 project based learning (PBL) programme through which the development and acquisition of interpersonal skills are explored. Lan Dong and Dimitra Kokotsaki’s article *‘Music achievements of being an English chorister’* explores the ‘uniqueness of the English choristers’ education’. Through interviewing 30 ex-choristers who attended English choir schools between 1940 and 2010, the research details the impact of this immersive musical experience on the participants’ broader musical learning and explores the impact of this education in later life. The article also draws out some interesting recommendations for broadening the musical education of future generations of choristers.

Our penultimate article explores *‘Common musical mistakes in Early Childhood textbooks’*. The authors (Judith Sánchez-Marroquí, Gregorio Vicente-Nicolás) analysed ‘2,200 activities corresponding to the textbooks of four leading publishers in Spain’, and found that 22.6% of these activities contained some kind of mistake. This article discusses some of the tensions of using textbooks in music education and the potential problems of these resources being used by teachers with limited prior personal experience of music education who use them in good faith of the content being correct.

This current edition of the British Journal of Music Education concludes with an article which draws upon research data from a study of undergraduate pianists studying in England and Australia. *‘Time for practice: implications of undergraduate pianists’ choices of repertoire’* by Katie Zhukov and Jane Ginsborg reports on a study which aimed to ‘evaluate the effect of sight-reading training on undergraduate pianists’ choices of repertoire for practice’. The article draws out some differences in the musical foci between institutions and countries. The findings of this fascinating study led to the authors making recommendations for higher education institutions in relation to future curricula choices for undergraduate pianists, in order to better equip them with the skills required for a career in classical music in the 21st century.

In conclusion, we hope all of our readers stay safe, and that music education continues to be a force for good in the rapidly changing world in which we live.