

HOW IS MUSIC LEARNING CELEBRATED AND DEVELOPED?

Graham F Welch and Pauline Adams
Institute of Education, University of London

*A Professional User Review of UK and
related international research undertaken
for the British Educational Research Association*

Contents

Dedication	3
Introduction	4
Learners: their characteristics and development	6
Musical enculturation	6
Specific musical skill development	10
Social groups and learning in music education	14
Music in schools	16
Music in the community: ethnomusicology and music education	20
Conclusion: research shows that we are all musical	22

*This Professional User Review is dedicated to
Gerry Farrell (1951-2003),
ethnomusicologist and music educator,
one of the original co-authors of the
BERA (2001) Music Education Review Group.*

Introduction

There is now an enormous body of neurological research evidence that every normal, healthy human being is musical (Welch, 2001; Zatorre and Peretz, 2001). It is an integral part of our human design. Therefore, music is, and should be, a necessary and essential component of any broad and balanced curriculum. Without music, we cannot be seen to be educating the whole person. The inclusion of music in education allows us to celebrate one of the unique attributes of humanity whilst, at the same time, to develop, deepen and extend our range of available musical behaviours. When we engage with music, we involve our inner emotional world (whether as listener, performer or composer) and foster expressive behaviours and creative imagination. We also experience music as a form of language, as a symbol system, as patterns of sound in which we perceive organisation and meaning, and as part of our individual, group and community identity. Music education, therefore, embraces both education *in* music and education *through* music.

Any music curriculum, whether statutory or not, will be more effective if its designers take appropriate account of the many different *contexts* in which musical learning takes place. A recent review of UK-based music education research (BERA Music Education Review Group, 2001), sponsored and published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA), suggests that music learning is shaped and influenced by a particular set of contexts - learning as an individual, in a group, in a formal school context and within the wider community and culture. Although interrelated, the particular contribution to musical learning of each of these contexts needs to be considered separately if we wish to ensure that music teaching is as effective as possible.

There is also an *emotional* aspect of being a learner in music. For most of us (if not all), the experience of music in our lives has a strong *affective* component (Juslin and Sloboda, 2001). We have particular music that we choose to listen to, whether working or sitting quietly at home, alone or with family or friends, or outside the home, such as travelling in a car or train with our personal stereo/CD/radio, or attending a special musical event in a concert hall or club. The experience of *listening* to music is often intensely pleasurable and one that many of us seek out as a regular feature of our daily lives. Of 15-24 year-olds, 27% listen to Radio 1 and 57% listen to an independent local radio station each week; 78% on average of all age groups report listening to recorded music, including 98% of 16-19 year-olds; nearly 1 in 5 regularly attends a concert and approximately 300 million CDs, LPs, cassettes and singles were sold in 2000. (ONS, 2002). In a recent large study of adolescent motivations for listening to music, participants reported that they listened to music 'to fulfil emotional needs', such as relieving tension and stress, and to express emotions (North *et al*, 2000). So the affective aspect of music is inextricably interwoven with our conscious experiences and attitudes towards music. Emotion is a powerful motivator in musical learning, but it

can also be a powerful disapproving force for musical disengagement if musical experiences are negative.

The narrative that follows is sectionalised using the same categories as the recent BERA academic review in the hope that this may facilitate cross-referencing for the interested reader. Additionally, following subsequent consultation with colleagues in school, opportunity has been taken to highlight particular *key issues and concepts* in italics and also in summative boxes at the end of each section. Where appropriate, reference has also been made to other recent research texts on aspects of music education in order to highlight current perspectives and to supplement the original UK-based research with findings from elsewhere on the globe. (For examples, see Hargreaves and North, 2001; Bresler and Thompson, 2002; MacDonald *et al*, 2002; and Parncutt and McPherson, 2002) Nevertheless, with new research being undertaken continuously, by teachers as well as others, we recognise that existing findings have a 'provisional' aspect to them. What follows, therefore, is a selection from the available published research, with some suggestions of implications for the professional world of the teacher and those involved with educational policy.

Key messages

- Music is a species-wide behaviour and is an integral feature of our basic human design.
- All musical experiences have an emotional component.

Implication

- Any broad and balanced curriculum that seeks to educate the whole person must include music as a necessary and essential element.

References

- BERA Music Education Review Group (2001). *Mapping Music Education Research in the UK*. Southwell, Notts: British Educational Research Association.
- Bresler, L. & Thompson, C. (2002). (eds.) , *The Arts in Children's Lives: Context, Culture and Curriculum*. Dordrecht, NL: Kluwer.
- Hargreaves, D. & North, A. (2001). *Musical Development and Learning: The International Perspective*. London: Continuum.
- Juslin, P. & Sloboda, J. (2001). *Music and emotion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- MacDonald, R., Hargreaves, D.J. & Miell, D. (2002). (eds.), *Musical Identities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- North, A.C., Hargreaves, D. J. and O'Neill, S.A. (2000). The importance of music to adolescents. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, **70**, 255-272.
- ONS (Office for National Statistics) (2002). *Social Trends 32*. London: The Stationery Office.
- Parncutt, R. & McPherson, G. (2002). (eds.), *The Science and Psychology of Music Performance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Welch, G.F. (2001). *The Misunderstanding of Music*. London: Institute of Education.
- Zatorre, R.J. & Peretz, I. (2001). (eds). The Biological Foundations of Music. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, **930**.

Learners: their characteristics and development

The research evidence suggests that individual musical learning is a result of the intertwining of two key elements, *musical enculturation* and the learning of *specific musical skills*.

Musical enculturation

Everyone is musical. The ability to make music in some form, to notice distinctive features in musical structures, to be moved emotionally by particular pieces of music - these are all examples of a species-wide capability that is part of our human genetic inheritance. It is extremely rare for normal, healthy human beings to be musically disabled as part of their genetic inheritance. Much perceived musical 'disability' is a product of enculturation, including inadequate education and/or inappropriate experience (see Welch (2001) for a review). For a recent neurologically-based overview discussion on musical disability, see Münte (2002).

Our innate musicality is nurtured from pre-birth by the sounds made by caregivers (especially mothers) and subsequently shaped by the soundworld and local culture into which we are born and raised. Consequently, young children are likely to enter school having experienced a range of different musical genres and having developed sensitivity to key features of the music(s) within their home and community culture. Such features include the music's scale and interval structure, its characteristic melodic shapes and basic harmony (Deliege and Sloboda, 1996). Children also have begun to develop preferences for particular musical styles. Subsequently, musical preferences become most marked in older children where they have a key role in shaping and reinforcing adolescent identities, particularly through interaction with peers (Zillmann and Gan, 1997; Tarrant et al, 2002).

Research studies into musical enculturation often portray development as *sequential* and stage- or phase-driven. For example, various studies have reported sequenced changes in pupils' vocal and instrumental compositions (Swanwick and Tillman, 1986; Davies, 1992), in their listening skills (Hargreaves and Galton, 1992) and their ability to make sense of musical pitch (Lamont, 1998). Taken together, such studies suggest that childhood and adolescence are characterised by qualitatively different ways of musical understanding. Depending on the model, up to four or five different phases (or stages) have been identified. Their common characteristics, however, suggest an overarching sequence:

- We have a genetic predisposition from the last months of pregnancy to attend to sound and to differentiate patterns in the sounds that we hear.
- This predisposition is shaped by the actual sounds from the culture and the ways that music is organised within the culture (the structural features of music - its 'grammar').
- We attend to basic musical shapes and outlines (often labelled as a 'figural' phase of musical understanding), before being able to appreciate music as an abstract.
- We develop an appreciation of what counts as music in our home culture by experiences, both informal as well as formal.
- Similarly, specific musical skills can be learnt both informally and formally, but some more advanced instrumental behaviours often require support with a specialist focus (such as from a skilled teacher or expert peer) - a 'formal' phase.

This phased progression is common for all children and adolescents with appropriate exposure to music at home, in school and in the wider community. Individual differences arise in relation to diverse types of musical experiences and individual preferences. Although there may be other factors involved, the evidence to-date emphasises specifically musical experiences as the prime force for musical development.

Such a phase-related perspective on development has both positive and negative features for the teacher. On the positive side, it is possible to characterise pupils' musical behaviours in terms of their 'phase' of development and to map 'progress' in terms of such phasing. Appropriate differentiation in provision should arise by matching teaching strategies to currently observed behaviours. However, one possible negative feature is for the teacher to have an overly 'normative' expectation and so expect too much or too little from a particular individual because of assumptions that link chronological age to development, or because of a belief that such 'phases' in development are assumed to be immutable. 'Children are both sophisticated listeners and music-makers from early infancy onwards and the ways that they understand music are constantly evolving' (Hallam and Lamont, 2001).

Context is also significant. Diversity of experience, therefore, is essential and to be welcomed, because such diversity is more likely to provide an 'encounter' that is particularly interesting and so motivating for further progress. Individual differences generally arise because of the range of opportunities that pupils will have had to engage with music. However, from the perspective of the teacher, it is important to remember that all have the potential. Some pupils will have had many opportunities to

engage with music, others will have had fewer (see 'Music in Schools' below), but all have the prospective to develop further.

Parents should encourage and share musical experiences with their offspring from the earliest age. This could also be officially encouraged: for example, those responsible for pre-school provision should explore the interchange of music between home and school, perhaps through the provision of recorded music (including songs) that are often part of the child's daily routine.

The richer these experiences are musically, the more likely it is that the child will enter the school system with a wide range of musical skills and so be more likely to find enjoyment and success in school music. For example, children who sing with their parents (particularly mothers, as having the same voice pitch) are more likely to enter school at age five with basic singing skills, such as being 'in-tune'. Once at school, continued parental support (at least taking an interest) is important for the development of instrumental expertise, particularly up to the age of eleven. After this age, the competent adolescent musician is more likely to be intrinsically motivated to continue to practise and develop. Conversely, where parental support has initially been weak, there is often less likelihood of perseverance with learning to play an instrument, even if the parents become latterly supportive (Gembris and Davidson, 2002).

Nevertheless, even if parents of school-aged children are not as positive as they should be, the latest research continues to indicate that individual teachers, whether seen in a school context or outside, are also highly significant in the fostering of musical development. (This is a finding emerging in the early data analyses of the current Hargreaves, D.J., Welch, G.F., Purves, R. & Marshall, N. ESRC-funded study *Teacher Identities In Music Education*). This also includes non-specialist Primary teachers who can promote musical development by making time for music in their weekly curriculum. Children are musical. They bring a wide range of musical knowledge and skills to the classroom and these need an outlet, an opportunity to be explored, shared and developed.

For example, a non-specialist teacher can ensure that their classroom has a good range of simple pitched and un-pitched percussion available from which small groups can be tasked to create entrance and exit music for school assembly. All each group needs is time to discuss, create, practise and polish their collective musical composition. The teacher intervention can be minimal apart from structuring the time and indicating that such activity is valued and has a shared outlet. For both teachers and parents, making time for music, with (whenever possible) individually differentiated opportunities for musical activity and practice in a supportive context, is critical.

Key messages

- Children are inherently musical.
- Different types of musical behaviour are characteristic of phases of development through childhood into adolescence.
- Experiences at home, in school and in the wider community can nurture or hinder more advanced musical development.

Implications

- Parents should encourage and share musical experiences with children from the earliest age.
- Teachers (including non-specialists) should promote pupils' musical development by making time and opportunities for musical activities.

References

- Davies, C. (1992). Listen to my song: a study of songs invented by children aged 5 to 7 years. *British Journal of Music Education*. **9**(1), 19-48.
- Deliege, I. & Sloboda, J. (1996). (eds.) , *Musical Beginnings: Origins and development of Musical Competence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gembris, H. & Davidson, J. (2002). Environmental influences. In: R. Parncutt. & G. McPherson (eds.) , *The Science and Psychology of Music Performance*. (pp. 17-30). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hallam, S. & Lamont, A. (2001). Learners: their characteristics and development. In: BERA Music Education Review Group. *Mapping Music Education Research in the UK*. (pp. 9-25). Southwell, Notts: British Educational Research Association.
- Hargreaves, D.J. & Galton, M. (1992). Aesthetic learning: psychological theory and educational practice. In: B. Reimer & R.A. Smith (eds.) , *National Society for the Study of Education Yearbook on the arts in education*. (pp. 124-140). Chicago: NSSE.
- Lamont, A. (1998). Music, Education and the Development of Pitch Perception: The Role of Context, Age and Musical Experience. *Psychology of Music*. **26**(1), 7-25.
- Müntz, T. (2002). Brains out of tune. *Nature*. (7 Feb) **415**, 589-590.
- Swanwick, K. & Tillman, J. (1986). The sequence of musical development: a study of children's composition. *British Journal of Music Education*. **3**(3), 305-339.
- Tarrant, M., North, A.C. & Hargreaves, D.J. (2002). Youth Identity and Music. In: R. MacDonald, D.J. Hargreaves. & D. Miell. (2002) (eds.) , *Musical Identities*. (pp. 134-150). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Welch, G. F. (2001). *The Misunderstanding of Music*. London: Institute of Education.
- Zillmann, D. & Gan, S-L. (1997). Musical taste in adolescence. In: D.J. Hargreaves and A.C. North. (eds.) , *The Social Psychology of Music*. (pp. 161-187). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Specific musical skill development (or *generative* skill development)

There is an extensive research literature on the acquisition and development of specific skills in music, whether for creation (such as in composition and improvisation) or *re-creation* (as in many types of performance). The development of specific musical skills is often referred to as *generative* skill development in the research literature.

One key area concerns the role of *practice* (rehearsal) that is seen as being 'central to the development of musical expertise' (Barry and Hallam, 2002), whether in improvised jazz piano, classical flute, or Javanese gamelan (an orchestra of percussion instruments). In general, practice is likely to have the greatest benefit when it is regular, systematic and structured, makes use of memory as well as the reading of musical scores, has clear goals, draws on good models and also involves the developing performer in reflection about their learning and practising strategies. Overall, the learning of performance skills should be enhanced by appropriate guidance and feedback from an 'expert' teacher. In the absence of such guidance and meaningful feedback, there is the possibility that practice could also include the rehearsal of inappropriate behaviours and errors. However, 'expert' teaching in this context could be from a peer, a specialist music teacher or just someone who is more expert in a particular aspect of music, such as an aspect of musical performance or a particular style of music. For example, much popular music expertise is developed informally. (Green, 2001: this research provides much detailed evidence of the power of peer group-initiated informal learning in music).

The development of skills in *singing* is another common concern. The research indicates that singing expertise also develops generally in a sequenced way, with particular elements (such as melodic fragments) becoming mastered before complete songs. The combination of text and music in singing can sometimes lead the young (and older) child to focus on the former rather than the latter and so to perform 'out-of-tune' by adopting a speech mode. Essentially, this is a problem that arises from the twin perceptual focus of words and music. Teachers can address this by separating the two before their combination when teaching a new song. The role of the teacher is often central to the development of particular singing skills because the performer's 'instrument' (the voice mechanism) is relatively hidden from view. *Simpler* singing tasks, therefore, for all students (young child to adult) are more accessible to focused change (Welch and Sundberg, 2002).

The onset of puberty, normally in *adolescence*, brings changes in vocal anatomy and physiology, both for girls as well as boys. These physical changes result in *sequenced* changes in vocal pitch ranges and quality. Nevertheless, it is possible for all adolescents to continue to sing, provided that the repertoire is matched to their changing capabilities. (For a good example of repertoire with adolescent voices see Hunt, 2001). For males, there is first a loss of their highest sung pitches, followed by a gradual lowering of vocal pitch. A limited comfortable vocal pitch range marks each

succeeding phase until the young adult voice begins to settle with a broader pitch compass. For adolescent females, the high point of their sequenced voice change is characterised by a loss of upper pitches and increased variability in voice quality. A wider, richer vocal pitch range, allied to greater dynamic expression, succeeds this phase. (For a comprehensive overview of the various literatures on singing, including psychology, anatomy and physiology, development across the lifespan and teaching and learning strategies, see Thurman and Welch, 2000). For many pupils, the high point of voice change is around the ages of 13-14 years, but it may be earlier or later.

In general, *improvisation* has been under-researched until recently. It is understood to be a multi-faceted musical behaviour that draws on several elements simultaneously, such as an understanding of musical patterns, expression and co-ordination. However, improvisers normally report that they can only focus consciously on one feature at any given time, suggesting that other features are put into the background, but are still present. Rather like language, improvisation in music is believed to be fostered through encouraging the learning of basic elements (such as patterns of fingering, harmonic progressions - drawing on features of deliberate practice *see above*). Children should be encouraged to explore these on a small scale before moving to bigger structures. Improvising as part of a *group*, with opportunities for reflective discussion, has been shown to encourage children to explore roles, take turns and risks and to draw both on their inherent musicality and their musical enculturation.

In contrast, *composition* has received a lot of attention by researchers. Much of the research has focused on mapping the development of composing behaviours, such as through the charting of children's and adolescents' growing awareness of, and the use of features from, their contemporary musical cultures. More recently, research on composition has focused on the application and use of new technologies to support adolescent composing skills. Collectively, these studies suggest that what governs the ways in which music is created is the *past musical experiences* of the participant(s), rather than the technology itself (whether this be technology in the sense of a traditional instrument or computer-based: Folkestad, 1996). For example, if pupils have had structured tuition on a musical instrument, they are more likely to make use of this formal knowledge of musical form (such as structures and sequences) in their own compositions (Seddon and O'Neill, 2001). This again reinforces the significance of *enculturation* in musical development and behaviour and also extends the concept to include the community and school settings.

One of the specific musical development skills concerns music's written form as *notation*. The transformation of sound into written symbols has a long history in particular musics found across the world, but not all. It is certainly not a prerequisite for musical behaviour and there are many examples of highly skilled musicians who do not use, nor need, musical notation. However, notation can be useful as a tool for thinking about musical patterns and structures and it is often a common feature in the individualised learning of an instrument (usually Western). Research suggests that the

role of the teacher is important in the *introduction of notation* because success is more likely if notation is preceded by other activities. In particular, any beginning instrumentalist (whether in the classroom or outside, using a simple percussion device or a more advanced orchestral instrument) should have opportunities to explore the instrument and to copy and improvise sounds, before any learning by rote and repeated listening to the particular piece of music being studied. They should also sing as well as play any heard piece that is the learning focus.

Beginning instrumentalists should be encouraged to invent their own notations of the learned piece (which could be oral notations as well as written). This will allow the teacher to understand more clearly which specific features of the music are the current perceptual focus for the student. Then the formal score (where this exists - see 'Ethnomusicology' section below) can be introduced in order to allow the student to make connections between the sounds that they can already play with their representation in traditional notation (McPherson and Gabrielsson, 2002). As such, there are parallels in the research on how best to foster an understanding of notation in music with other research concerning the notation of language and the development of reading (Graham and Kelly, 1997). In both cases, research suggests that sonic exploration, shaped by enculturation, precedes written symbolisation and that invented symbols for sounds can be a powerful tool in the subsequent understanding of traditional symbols.

Key Messages

- Practice is central to the development of musical expertise.
- Expertise is available in informal as well as formal settings.
- Learning can be fostered by anyone with musical expertise, including peers.
- Singing skills develop sequentially.

Implications

- Teachers should match musical tasks to the developmental sequence through childhood and adolescence.
- Improvisation skills are based on building blocks of simple musical behaviours which should be practised.
- Composition skills are strongly influenced by enculturation and previous musical experiences.
- Notation should be taught through sound exploration, imitation and improvisation: sound before symbol.

References

- Barry, N.H. & Hallam, S. (2002). Practice. In: R. Parncutt. & G. McPherson (eds.) , *The Science and Psychology of Music Performance*. (pp. 151-165). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Folkestad, G. (1996). *Computer Based Creative Music Making*. Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothenburgensis.
- Graham, J. & Kelly, A. (1997). *Reading Under Control*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Green, L. (2001). *How Popular Musicians Learn*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Hunt, P. (2001). *Voiceworks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McPherson, G. & Gabrielsson, A. (2002). From Sound to Sign. In: R. Parncutt. & G. McPherson (eds.) , *The Science and Psychology of Music Performance*. (pp. 99-115). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Seddon, F. & O'Neill, S. (2001). An Evaluation Study of Computer-Based Compositions by Children With and Without Prior Experience of Formal Instrumental Music Tuition. *Psychology of Music*. **29**(1), 4-19.
- Thurman, L. & Welch, G.F. (2000). *Bodymind and Voice: Foundations of Voice Education*. Revised Edition. Iowa: National Center for Voice and Speech.
- Welch, G.F. & Sundberg, J. (2002). Solo Voice. In: R. Parncutt. & G. McPherson (eds.) , *The Science and Psychology of Music Performance*. (pp. 253-268). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Social groups and learning in music education

There has been increasing interest in how membership of diverse social groups affects learning in music education. Central to this research is the idea that relationships within a group are constructed, defined and interpreted by individual members. Six main groups - gender, family, peer networks, social class, ethnicity/religion and the world of the practising musician (O'Neill and Green, 2001) - are evident in the research literature.

Concerning the first of these, musical practices often embrace *gender stereotyping*, such as in relation to preferences for certain musical styles and instruments. Teachers can address this by their intervention strategies, such as providing expert role models that challenge stereotypes (Harrison and O'Neill, 2000). However, for any intervention to have a longer-term impact, it also needs to address issues of self-identity, that is, the extent to which certain musics (whether toward the popular or classical ends of the spectrum) and musical practices are seen as matching the pupil's self-image and their private and public identities.

Family groups can be supportive or inhibitory to musical development, depending on the nature of the inter-relationships. Families often provide supportive environments and these have been shown to be highly significant in the development of instrumental expertise. Nevertheless, making time for regular instrumental practice can also be a point of considerable family tension (Borthwick and Davidson, 2002). Schools should consider, therefore, the provision of clear guidance for both pupils and their parents on the importance of a regular time for practice. (See Hallam, 1998, particularly Chapter 7 on 'Practice' for more detailed research-based advice on how to structure practice effectively). This should be negotiated and can include creative and improvisation practice, as well as rehearsal of repertoire (being pieces from popular as well as classical musics).

Peer group membership can also have positive and negative affects on musical development. A recent study of informal learning practices in popular music, for example, indicates that teachers could have considerable success if they provided more opportunities for pupils to investigate and imitate their own preferred musics within the setting of their peer group (Green, 2001). In contrast, there is other evidence of negative peer influences, even bullying, concerning individual pupils' choice of musical instruments (Howe and Sloboda, 1992; O'Neill, 1997).

Of the other main group influences, *social class* is still likely to be evidenced in the values that different groups assign to different types of music. Fortunately, popular musics as well as classical are now more common within the school curriculum, leading to a less explicit class bias in curriculum content. Nevertheless, there is continuing evidence that the majority of graduate musicians coming into teaching tend to have a conservatoire-type education in which certain types of music predominate (see 'Music

in Schools' below), although they may have experience of other musics. *Ethnicity and religion* are relatively under-researched in music education, as is the world of the professional musician (although this is now improving).

Key Messages

- Relationships within a group are constructed, defined and interpreted by individual members.
- Musical practices often embrace gender stereotyping.
- Family groups and peer group membership can be supportive or inhibitory to musical development.
- Social class can affect the values that groups assign to types of music.

Implications

- Teachers should counter gender-stereotyping in pupils' preferences for certain musical styles and instruments by ensuring that musical examples challenge stereotypes and through the provision of a wide range of musical experiences for both sexes.
- Schools should have an explicit policy for musical practice in the home that is shared with pupils and parents. Practice should include creativity and improvisation as well as rehearsal and also popular musics.
- Opportunities for peer group music making should be provided.
- All would-be teachers of music should have experience of, and some expertise in, popular musics if they wish to engage more closely with the musical lives of their pupils.

References

- Borthwick, S.J. & Davidson, J.W. (2002). Developing a child's identity as a musician: A family 'script' perspective. In: R. MacDonald, D. Hargreaves & D. Miell. (eds.) , *Musical Identities*. (pp. 60-78). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Green, L. (2001). *How Popular Musicians Learn*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Hallam, S. (1998). *Instrumental Teaching*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Harrison, A. & O'Neill, S. (2000). Children's Gender-Typed Preferences for Musical Instruments: An Intervention Study. *Psychology of Music*. **28**(1), 81-97.
- Howe, M.J.A. & Sloboda, J.A. (1992). Problems experienced by talented young musicians as a result of the failure of other children to value musical accomplishments. *Gifted Education*, **8**, 16-18.
- O'Neill, S. (1997). Gender and music. In: D.J. Hargreaves & A. C. North. (eds.) , *The Social Psychology of Music*. (pp. 46-63). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- O'Neill, S. & Green, L. (2001). Social groups and learning in music education. In: BERA Music Education Review Group. *Mapping Music Education Research in the UK*. (pp. 26-31) Southwell, Notts: British Educational Research Association.

Music in schools

The statutory specification of the National Curriculum for music presumes a common understanding and shared emphasis by teachers regarding the nature of 'performing, composing and appraising', but the research evidence is equivocal (Cox and Hennessy, 2001), not least because musical behaviour and development is multi-faceted and culturally diverse.

At present, the available research suggests that music is a popular subject in the *Primary* curriculum, particularly in the early years and lower Primary school. Across Primary schools in general, recent OfSTED reports suggest that high standards in singing, playing instruments, composing, listening and appraising are now found more frequently than previously and that fewer pupils leave with 'low musical attainment' (OfSTED, 1999a). Yet, OfSTED continues to be concerned about music education in a minority of schools and it is the element of '*composing*' that is considered to be the most neglected aspect of the music curriculum (OfSTED, 1999b). Similarly, it is the '*creative*' rather than the recreative aspects of music that are likely to be reported as causing concern in the music education provision for under-fives. Although 'most institutions are good at giving children opportunities to listen to different sounds, and to explore different ways of making them' (OfSTED, 1999c), less progress has been made in providing young children with opportunities to make and perform music.

Viewed across the *Primary* age phase, it would seem that music teaching is more likely to be reported as being of a satisfactory quality when it focuses on the *re-creation* (*reproduction*) of music rather than its *creation*. This is perhaps surprising, given that pupils enter school with an innate ability both for the creation, as well as the (re)production, of music (see 'Learners: their characteristics and development' : page 6 *et seq*). But it may also be an indication of a similar bias in the formal musical experiences of Primary school teachers, both in their initial teacher education and also in their own musical biographies. This would seem to indicate the likelihood of a circularity of biased musical experiences: Primary pupils are less likely to experience creative opportunities to make music (to compose and improvise) and, unless they have compensatory experiences as they get older, they are less likely in adulthood to become Primary school teachers with confidence to teach creative aspects of music.

There is also evidence that, as children get older and transfer from Primary to *Secondary* school, music becomes less popular. This may be because certain musics and musical practices have customarily been part of the school curriculum to the exclusion of others. Adolescence (as was noted earlier) is characterised as a time of strong musical preferences. Where these preferences do not coincide with the musical opportunities being offered within a formal school curriculum, there is increased likelihood of negativity and lack of interest, particularly in the case of ethnic

minorities (Harland *et al*, 1998). Less than half of those who opted to continue music studies through to *GCSE* are reported as seeing their music studies as 'creative' or 'imaginative'. As far as sex differences are concerned, past research suggests that, in general, girls have been more positive than boys about music and girls have tended to be rated more highly by their teachers at Key Stage 3. When music becomes optional (age 14+), more girls take *GCSE* and generally achieve better results. (See DfES Standards website for detailed results in music). However, although girls have continued to outperform boys at Key Stage 3 in 2001/02, the latest official data indicate a greater similarity in performance at *GCSE* music. Furthermore, data from one recent study (Hargreaves *et al*, 2002) go against the general trend in the research by reporting an increase in boys' enjoyment of class music up to Year 9. This was because those surveyed reported that there was increased opportunity to 'perform' and play musical instruments. Also, more secondary boys than girls in this survey reported that they were creating or playing music outside school, probably because of increased access to music via computers and the web.

Central challenges, therefore, are for music education (i) more effectively to promote the creative aspects of music from nursery through to school leaving age, (ii) to provide increased access to musical instruments and opportunities to perform and (iii) to make full use of the new technologies to expand musical horizons. Drawing on the research into music, self-identity and individual development (see 'Learners' - page 6 *et seq*, and 'Social Groups and Learning in Music Education' - page 14 *et seq*), one way forward is to encourage more *peer-group initiated* musical experimentation, exploration, improvisation, composition and performance, allied to critical reflection and discussion, that draws on pupils own musics and their musical enculturation, as well as teacher-led sessions that introduce them to other, less familiar musical genres (see 'Music in the Community' - page 20 *et seq*).

Such an approach would necessitate a review of *pre- and in-service teacher education*, as well as the official Orders and non-statutory guidance for the National Curriculum. As a minimum, there would need to be greater emphasis on musical creativity in the teacher education curriculum and wider access to the latest music-related technology. But there is also a need for more pre-service preparation time for music in general, particularly if one of the aims is to increase teacher knowledge, skills and understanding of non-classical musics. For example, intending Primary teachers are reported to have an average of 16 hours for music in a one-year course and only 30 hours on a four-year course (the latter provision being potentially threatened by a recent Government initiated switch from four- to three-year courses - Rogers, 1998) Secondary teachers are generally already music graduates, but their formal experiences of music education at school and higher education are likely to be biased towards classical music. Although one recent report (Rogers, 2002) advocates greater employment of practising musicians in schools (not least because the vast majority

(87%) of adult musicians are reported as being engaged in playing non-classical musics in their professional lives), this in itself will not provide a significant solution unless these musicians have also had an opportunity to develop appropriate pedagogical skills to foster musical creativity in others.

The challenges of *assessment* in music appear to be greatest in the areas of 'composing' and 'appraising', compared to 'performing'. A phase-related view of the assessment of composition (Swanwick, 1994) suggests that musical understanding is in 'layers', progressing from 'awareness and control' of 'sound materials', to 'expressive character', 'form' and finally to 'an awareness of the personal and cultural value of music'. However, assessment also needs to take account of individual differences in composing styles in the actual composition *process* (Burnard and Younker, 2002) and also the personal *values* that pupils bring to the act of composition (Mellor, 1999). *Appraising* is regarded as an integral part of musical behaviours as defined within the school curriculum, including the act of composition. The term is meant to imply more than listening and suggests a critical self-reflection and awareness of musical and non-musical features. Apart from research that arose in the development of the National Curriculum (Flynn and Pratt, 1995), there has been relatively little research into appraisal *per se*, but it is often evidenced in other areas, such as teacher and pupil talk about composition.

Key Messages

- The National Curriculum in England for music presumes a common understanding by teachers, but the research evidence is equivocal.
- Research suggests that music is popular in primary schools although OfSTED expresses concern about composing and creative work.
- Research suggests that music becomes less popular in secondary schools although, or perhaps because, adolescence is a time of strong musical preferences.

Implications

- Schools should provide more opportunities for musical creativity, for composing and performing pupils' own music.
- Secondary schools in particular should encourage creative musical activities, including peer-initiated composing and performing that draw on their own musical interests.
- Pre- and in-service teacher education, both primary and specialist secondary music, should make greater provision for the promotion of musical creativity in the classroom and greater expertise in different musics.

References

- Burnard, P. & Younker, B.A. (2002). Mapping Pathways: fostering creativity in composition. *Music Education Research*. 4(2), 245-261.
- Cox, G. & Hennessy, S. (2001). Music in Schools. In: BERA Music Education Review Group. *Mapping Music Education Research in the UK*. (pp. 32-39). Southwell, Notts: British Educational Research Association.
- DfES (Department for Education and Skills) Standards website
<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/performance>
- Flynn, P. & Pratt, G. (1995). Developing an understanding of appraising music with practising primary teachers. *British Journal of Music Education*. 12(2), 127-158.
- Hargreaves, D.J., Lamont, A.M., Marshall, N. & Tarrant, M. (2002). *Young people's music in and out of school. A study of pupils and teachers in primary and secondary schools*. Interim Report to National Music Education Forum, QCA, London, June 2002.
- Harland, J., Kinder, K., Haynes, J. & Schagen, I. (1998). *The effects and effectiveness of arts education in schools*. Slough: NFER.
- Mellor, L. (1999). Language and Music Teaching: the use of Personal Construct Theory to investigate teachers' responses to young people's music compositions. *Music Education Research*. 1(2), 147-158.
- OfSTED (Office for Standards in Education) (1999a). *Primary Education. A Review of Primary Schools in England, 1994-1998*. London: The Stationery Office.
- OfSTED. (1999b). *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools*. London: The Stationery Office.
- OfSTED. (1999c). *The Quality of Nursery Education*. London: OFSTED.
- Rogers, R. (1998). *The Disappearing Arts*. London: Royal Society of Arts.
- Rogers, R. (2002). *Creating a Land with Music*. London: Youth Music.
- Swanwick, K. (1994). *Musical Knowledge, Intuition, Analysis and Music Education*. London: Routledge.

Music in the community: ethnomusicology and music education

Many different musics are practised and enjoyed in contemporary society.

Within the UK South Asian community, for example, recent research has revealed a multiplicity of musical genres and practices (Farrell, 2001; Farrell *et al*, 2001). The Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi population of 2.5 million (being a majority of the total 3.4 million [6%] ethnic minority population in the UK) embraces many different musics and at least five major linguistic communities. Two particular musical genres predominate, North Indian classical music and *filmi* song (songs from popular movies).

Whilst there are many links between the two (and between forty-three other identified genres), the adolescent/young adult populations have a preference for variations of their own popular music, *bhangra*. Each of these musics is integral in the framing of personal and group identity within the South Asian community, whilst also including modern challenges to traditional political and gender stereotyping.

This example of musical diversity in South Asian arts is a reminder of the challenges that are inherent in incorporating non-western musics into the school curriculum.

First, many of the world's musics are part of an oral tradition, with little or no written notation as understood within the conventions of the West.

Second, social and cultural contexts are central to understanding the nature of musical behaviours. Focusing solely on music's sonic features may expand the musical horizons of pupils, but unless contextualised in relation to the culture, is likely to do a disservice to understanding the nature of the original behaviour.

Third, the nature of contemporary music and teacher education suggests that relatively few teachers are likely to have sufficient knowledge about any non-Western music to be able to teach it as a performance behaviour.

However, this is not to say that non-Western musics cannot be part of the curriculum, but rather to emphasise that teachers need to be aware of any 'translation' that is taking place from the original. Considerable success is possible where teaching focuses on introducing pupils to different sound worlds, to understanding the commonalities, differences and musical procedures used by others, rather than in trying to recreate an authentic non-Western performance.

Key Messages

- There are many different types of music performed in the community, both popular and traditional.

Implications

- Teachers should provide opportunities for pupils to encounter and celebrate musical expertise from across the community, including an understanding of the music's performance context.
- Music curricula should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they reflect and celebrate the wider community's musical diversity.

References

Farrell, G. (2001). Ethnomusicology and music education. In: BERA Music Education Review Group. *Mapping Music Education Research in the UK*. (pp. 39-42). Southwell, Notts: British Educational Research Association.

Farrell, G., Welch, G.F. & Bhowmick, J. (2001). South Asian Music and Music Education in Britain. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*. 147, 51-60.

Conclusion: research shows that we are all musical

A *negative* emotional response to music as an adult can usually be traced back to a disapproving experience of being a *producer* of music as a child, whether in school, at home or elsewhere in the community (Welch 2001). There has been a long-time misconception about music, namely that some people are musical and others are not. For some children, the developing musical behaviours that are characteristic of childhood have been misunderstood and compared (wrongly) to adult notions of what it is to be 'musical'.

This (mis)interpretation of an innate musical 'disability' by a teacher or parent can then result in negative comment and so foster a sense of childhood or adolescent musical inadequacy and shame that can persist into old age. Take, for example, this report of an interview with an applicant aged 86 who wanted to join a new community choir for 'non-singers': 'As a child, I loved to sing. I sang all the time. One day the music teacher at school had us sing for her by ourselves, and she divided us up into two groups - the bluebirds and the crows. I was a crow. Well, I grew up on a farm and I knew what crows sounded like. I haven't sung since. But I guess that before I die, I want to learn how to sing.' (Mack, 1979). This is not unique to music. See, for example, Bibby's account of a negative emotional response to mathematics (Bibby, 2002).

This sense of personal musical failure can also be taken into the Primary classroom by succeeding generations of teachers, a self-perpetuating expectation of musical incompetency by the adult, both of herself and of a significant proportion of her pupils. Not surprisingly, many Primary student teachers often report anxiety about music.

As has been mentioned above, one possible solution is to encourage *generalist* Primary teachers through focused pre-and in-service education to engage more in the *creative* aspects of musical behaviour, to encourage pupils to explore, manipulate, share, borrow and reflect on the elements and structures of their own individual and group compositions. The music *specialist*, where available, or teachers with some more advanced specialist musical expertise, can focus on *specific musical skill development* (see 'Learners' - page 6 *et seq*), whilst the generalist can utilise the wide range of experiences from children's own musical enculturation to foster imaginative music play, composition and improvisation. Each type of teacher will then be working more to their strengths and both can promote an enabling musical culture, for younger and older learners (including themselves).

For the Secondary music teacher, inclusivity should be a key focus, using the diverse musical interests of pupils to build greater understanding of adolescents, their music

and its place within their communities. In addition, pupils' affective and cognitive interest in music can be explored by examining examples from other musics and musical cultures and through creative, improvisatory and performance opportunities to explore such musics.

Collaborative partnerships with outside agencies provide schools with additional musical expertise and can support a diverse and broad curriculum that offers authentic musical experiences.

Over the last twenty-five years, arts organisations, such as orchestral and opera companies, have been developing educational projects within schools and in the wider community. Although such organisations have their own perceived benefits from partnerships, research suggests that many educational programmes have 'emerged in response to the requirements of funding bodies' (Tambling and Harland 1998). Although individual orchestras often developed their own unique approaches to education programmes, there has been a move to build genuine partnerships with a 'closer commitment to achieving shared educational aims and outcomes' (Tambling and Harland 1998).

In 2000, the QCA in collaboration with The Arts Council of England published a guidance document to help schools establish partnerships in order to enrich their own arts provision, both inside and outside of school, and as part of curriculum and extended-curriculum activity (QCA and Arts Council of England, 2000). With careful organisation and agreed musical objectives for pupils, projects can ensure that all participants benefit and that there is professional development for both teachers and artists.

Musical collaboration allows everyone to explore 'shared values and patterns of behaviour that are characteristic of different social groups and local communities' (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999, p.42). In each case, thorough evaluation of collaborative project work is essential if all partners are to continue to develop programmes that are appropriate for children and young people, and which enhance the curriculum rather than supplement or replace music as an essential taught subject.

How is music education shaped? Research shows that we are all musical: we just need the opportunity for our musicality to be celebrated and developed. Such is the prime purpose of music education.

Key Messages

- Childhood is a critical period in the formation of musical identity. Perceptions of musical 'disability' can be lifelong and often arise because of an inappropriate comment from an adult (parent, teacher, relative) about some aspect of a child's developing musical behaviour.
- Musical 'disability' and failure can be self-perpetuating and can include adult self-labelling by generalist Primary teachers.
- However, all children (and adults) are musical and bring enculturated musical behaviours and understanding into the classroom.

Implications

- The task for the teacher, including the non-specialist, is to provide a framework for musical activity, especially creative musical activity, that enables the pupils to draw on, share and extend their existing musical knowledge.
- Such a framework should include opportunities to make music, with lots of sound making materials and simple instruments, to create, review, polish and perform, using notation as appropriate.
- Non-specialist teachers can draw on other areas of their expertise, such as language, science and mathematics, to generate creative opportunities for pupil music making (such as creating musical narratives, questions and answers, identifying sonic similarities and differences, creating and modifying patterns and sets in sound).
- Non-specialist teachers can also seek partnerships with specialist musical groups from across the community.
- Any music curriculum, whether statutory or not, will be more effective if its designers take appropriate account of the many different *contexts* in which musical learning takes place.

References

- Bibby, T. (2002). Shame: an emotional response to doing mathematics as an adult and a teacher. *British Educational Research Journal*. 28(5), 705-721.
- Mack, L. (1979). *A Descriptive Study of a Community Chorus made up of "Non-singers"*. Unpublished EdD dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education. (1999). *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education*. London: DfEE.
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and The Arts Council of England, (2000). *From Policy to partnership*. London: QCA & The Arts Council of England.
- Tambling, P. & Harland, J. (1998). *Orchestral Education Programmes: Intents and purposes (pv)* Consultation Document. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research, on behalf of the Arts Council of England.
- Welch, G.F. (2001). *The Misunderstanding of Music*. London: Institute of Education.

