

JOHN FINNEY, *MUSIC EDUCATION IN ENGLAND, 1950–2010: THE CHILD-CENTRED PROGRESSIVE TRADITION* (Farnham: Ashgate Press, 2011). ISBN 978-1-4094-1076-8; x+189pp, £55.

In this study, John Finney interrogates the relationship between teacher, learner and knowledge in music education within a child-centred progressive tradition. He does this by asking such questions as: What are schools for? What is music for? What are music teachers for? (9) In chapter 1, Finney sets the context for his line of enquiry, namely, that, at its heart, the relationship between teacher, pupil and what is being learnt 'involves fundamentally the negotiation of beliefs and values' (6). He uses six episodes to illustrate how this negotiation has been played out in policy and practice over the period from 1950 to 2010.

The first episode (chapter 2) draws on the writings and practices of Sybil Marshall, who, in the 1950s, encouraged her fellow teachers to provide experiences that would help the learner 'to be and to become a person through curiosity, engrossment and a love of learning' (23). Predicated on a belief that 'knowledge is unitary not a fragmented affair' (23), a key aspect of her practice was to engage her pupils in projects within 'the realm of imaginative free play' (23). What mattered was not so much the organization of knowledge into discrete subjects, such as art, music, drama and so on, but the relationships between them, which were 'likely to be the source of inspiration and deeper understanding' (23). Finney uses accounts from Marshall's former pupils to corroborate her claim that, in an educational context, the arts were interchangeable and that a child's creative impulse could be served just as well through art as through music. It was possible 'for the community of the schoolroom [to become] a central source of energy and productiveness' (28), but the teacher needed to provide starting points which would lead to sustained concentration and commitment on the part of the children. Finney shows how Marshall's method proved to be a watershed in teaching and learning. It provided an alternative to a view of music education that had prevailed since the late eighteenth century, where teachers were figures of authority over knowledge and in which they were committed to music that civilised, formed character and educated morally.

If the first episode centred on Marshall's consideration of music in childhood as a form of life in itself, the second episode (chapter 3) brings to the surface some of the tensions that arose in the 1960s and 1970s with regard to music and adolescence. There were calls from politicians for music to be vital to the child's life here and now, and at the same time to serve national economic ends; as the prime minister of the day, James Callaghan, put it in a famous speech at Ruskin College in 1976, 'there is no virtue in producing socially well-adjusted members of society who are unemployed because they do not have the skills' (45). Thus began 'a debate about established and dominant conceptions of the school' (29) and 'between those intent on cultural restoration and

those seeing culture as everyday and ubiquitous' (48). This was the era of the 'Arts and the Adolescent' report (1970), 'which set out to provide a basis for teaching the arts in school by drawing upon what was [purported to be] in the minds of arts teachers and their students' (44). Four matters were identified: 'self-expression and individuality; control of the medium; use of realized form; personal development' (44). Finney considers the dialogical character of the teacher-pupil relationship in the adolescent phase and identifies Malcolm Ross and Robert Witkin, the authors of the report, as two of the central thinkers at the time, each one looking into issues about music and its purpose in education. Ross was a secondary teacher and Witkin a sociologist; both recognized that, of all teachers working in the arts, music teachers were the most dependent on realized forms, with little or no attention paid to the processes by which these came about. Their impact on music education can be seen to effect a move away from formal methods of teaching in the classroom towards informal ones, while their claim that music was a special case in education posed a challenge to the music education community at large: 'to grasp the progressive nettle and bring about change and to consider what kind of *rapprochement*, if any, could be made with the social order' (49).

Finney's third episode (chapter 4) considers how, in the 1980s, some teachers began to take a lead from their pupils. Here he recalls how music was seen to occupy a unique place in liberal education and a new notion of the teacher emerged: 'we were exhorted to give up the idea of the music teacher as guardian of the sacred flame of tradition in the form of inert knowledge separated from practical application and as essential to be passed on to each new generation' (54). Some of this approach he traces back to Paul Hirst's seminal paper, 'Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge' (1973). But perhaps more importantly, he uses this episode to show how music education had begun to make space for activities that extended beyond performance. What had been conceived by Marshall as imaginative play, and had been further encouraged by Ross and Witkin as an aesthetic impulse, finds a manifestation in John Paynter's notion of music as a creative way of knowing, where teachers were encouraged to involve themselves as co-composer and as co-adventurer alongside their pupils (70). Such encouragement for the exploration of sounds as an activity of intrinsic value would pave the way for children to come to know music in three inter-related ways: composing, performing and listening.

In chapters 5 and 6, Finney draws from his own teaching experience in the late 1980s, a period when a national curriculum was introduced to schools in England and educational reforms called for greater consultation between teachers and pupils in the learning process. In the first of two episodes that feature research he carried out at that time, Finney reports on the work of four fifteen-year-old boys in his school who formed a rock band outside of formal music lessons. He describes how he tracked their learning with increasing confidence and dedication, noting how they were learning to

become musical on their own terms. In the second episode, he set out to understand a class of twelve- to thirteen-year-olds and their teacher in one secondary school: 'I wanted to investigate the pupils' and their teacher's attitudes, motivations, ways of knowing and perceptions of the learning and teaching of music—a search for the significance, for them, of their weekly encounter with music as a way of life' (103). He describes how music became a catalyst for change among the class and, in the case of four pupils who were given particular responsibility for the organization of learning for themselves and others, he considers the potency of pupil voice, participation and democracy in a child-centred progressive education. Finney's accounts are well placed to test the legitimacy of claims made for child-centred education, particularly those regarding freedom, self-expression and self-realization, together with those made for the relevance of the school as an institution: 'While the discourse created recognized the school as a regulatory force and an agent of state authority, it also saw in the school the place of possible deregulation where life could be lived in its fullness and where particular requirements of the social order would be unselfconsciously accommodated, disregarded or explicitly rejected' (75).

Observing the proliferation of approaches to teaching that were available to teachers at the turn of the millennium, Finney notes how education was becoming something of 'a market place in which schools and their music teachers were required to choose how best to perform, for which audiences and for what purposes' (140). The episode in chapter 7 takes place against this backdrop, when a number of strategies emerged that attempted to introduce personalized learning, creative citizenship and social inclusion in schools. Finney attends to two such strategies, each one setting out to achieve greater pupil engagement with music, albeit in different ways. The first of these, the National Strategy Music Programme for Key Stage 3, had as its focus the implementation of an official version of curriculum knowledge. 'Dispatched by the DfES', as Finney notes, on 16 April 2007 'to all head teachers of secondary and special schools in England' (126), the Programme was grounded in a precise definition of musical understanding, and provided the teacher with six units of study that were intended to be comprehensive in terms of meeting the learning needs of all pupils. By contrast, the second strategy, Musical Futures, was based on providing a mode of learning that began with pupils' interests, and aspired to the musical participation of young people in all settings able to support them, including schools. Finney uses these initiatives to make a case for music education as an ethical pursuit and develops this point further in the final chapter.

There is much to commend in this publication. Part autobiography, part philosophical enquiry, Finney draws on a lifetime of experience in music education—as a child in school, as a music teacher, and as a teacher of music teachers—to create a narrative which is at once deeply personal and universal. He makes a compelling case

for proposing that teaching music is an ethical pursuit that concerns itself with the wants and needs of children, and with how they make, come to know, critique and understand music; and he calls for a pedagogy that ensures the meaningful engagement of young people. In charting the major milestones in music education in England since 1945, he singles out three significant changes: the introduction of recorded music to the classroom and thus its impact on teaching and learning; a move away from the apprenticeship model of education that underpinned the way in which choral singing and instrumental performance were taught; and the introduction of a national curriculum which intended that all pupils in the system would have access to the same specification for music. All of this serves to illustrate how much music education in England has changed during the period under discussion. We can see that, while this change has been gradual, it has been continuous, and has presented many challenges to music teachers. For some, the challenges proved to be too much and would result in 'a kind of historical inertia' (39); for others, however, the challenges would act as catalysts for imagining new ways of thinking and doing. It is worth noting that, in England, the child-centred progressive educators of the Fifties were moved by the Enlightenment principle of allowing children to develop as individuals and to be free to make independent judgements. In recent times, this freedom has been tempered by those with responsibility for monitoring and administering the curriculum. With the making of a national curriculum came 'new era values' (8) which, for Finney, marked the beginning of a surveillance culture in music education and the closure of practices that celebrated the authority of the child as artist.

The 'ownership' of music education continues to be fluid and contested. Finney's achievement in this book is in revealing the significance of this. In giving us some mechanisms by which to consider—and even, perhaps, influence—the shape of things to come, he has enabled us to try to answer the question he poses at the beginning of his account: 'The future of class music! There was one, but what was it to be?'

Mary Stakelum

University of Reading