

Editorial

We are excited and delighted to be taking on the role of co-editors of the *British Journal of Music Education*. The BJME is a great journal with a long tradition of music education research, debate and scholarship. We both feel very privileged to be given the opportunity of working for this highly regarded journal whose reputation has continued to grow and strive to strengthen connections between research and practice during the excellent editorship of Gordon Cox and Stephanie Pitts. We are committed to working hard to build further on their work and that of previous editors.

In 2008, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the *British Journal of Music Education*. We have determined that the November 2008 issue should be a 'special edition' that both celebrates the previous 25 years and also looks forward to the next period of the BJME's development. We plan for this issue to feature contributions from previous BJME editors along with newly written and commissioned articles which explore perennial themes in music education research and identify key areas for research for the next 25 years.

In this present issue, we bring together a collection of six compelling articles written by contributors from the contexts of New Zealand, South Africa, Finland, England, Ireland and Scotland. Each contributor offers music educators, researchers and researcher-practitioners an understanding of the social and cultural interfaces and contexts in which teaching and learning music occur. Each article offers ways of attuning to and reflecting on the critical dimensions of music learning, teacher practice and curriculum change. Similarly, the four books reviewed encapsulate and frame innovative ways of thinking about music education, re-mediating theory and practice, and redefining teaching and learning music with a transformative agenda.

It is appropriate that, in this 25th anniversary year, the first article comes from one of BJME's founding editors, Keith Swanwick. The last decade has witnessed a growing realisation that children's musical learning and understanding develops in a range of contexts and arenas in addition to those of the formal school context and curriculum. *Youth Music* is a key organisation in promoting these out of school music opportunities and, through its *Music Leader* programme, supports those that promote and facilitate young people's engagement with music in informal and formal contexts. Drawing on a research-based evaluation of the *Music Leader* programme, Swanwick uses his three principles for music educators (care for music as discourse; recognition of what students bring to their learning; the promotion of musical fluency) to identify what the 'good enough' music teacher contributes to a student's musical development in whatever context the teacher–learner transaction occurs.

Reporting from the context of Finland, and strongly related to the former article, Heikki Ruismäki and Traja Tersaka use quantitative methods to show assessment of music learning experiences from kindergarten to university of Finnish pre-service elementary teachers. The authors present findings that provide significant insights into how the development of attitudes towards music education shifts from early childhood to adulthood. The results

reveal much about how music teachers, along with elements relating to instruction, class activities and the learning environment, contribute to the making of positive and negative attitudes to music learning at different ages.

In *Technologically mediated composition: Josh's story*, Jan Bolton moves the focus from the teacher to the learner. Employing personal narrative techniques, Bolton describes how an ICT-based project designed to address the lack of composing opportunities in New Zealand primary schools, led to an increase in self-confidence and compositional skill and knowledge in one hitherto disaffected pupil. The relationship between the researcher/narrator and the pupil resonates with many of the characteristics of the Swanwick's 'good enough' music teacher in its respect of creating musical encounters and respect for the learner's autonomy.

The final three articles in this issue focus on factors that impact upon curriculum development and implementation in three different countries. Charles Klopper, picking up on the issue of primary teachers' 'confidence and competence', identified by Bolton as a significant factor in the effectiveness of music teaching and learning, employs questionnaire-based research to analyse the skills and knowledge of those responsible for delivering the music curriculum in the Guateng province of South Africa. Drawn from the findings, he identifies the resources and professional development needs that are required for the successful implementation of the music aspect of the Arts and Culture learning area in schools in this area.

A similar theme is addressed by Lloyd Davies who begins by tracking the changes to the music curriculum in Scotland in the final decades of the last century. He uses the theses developments as a framework for exploring and analysing teachers' response to change and the impact of these responses on classroom practice and concludes by reflecting on the conditions that create the most effective climate for change.

As with the opening articles' foci on teacher-learner transaction, we return to consider again the influence of teachers' formative musical experiences in the final article by Mary Stakelum who reports on a research project based in Ireland. Bourdieuan principles are applied in the analysis of how teachers' formative experiences influence their views of the nature and purpose of music education and their response to the 'official' curriculum. One of her conclusions is that so powerful are these formative experiences, changes to an official curriculum – in this case the introduction of composing – can be subverted. She argues that in order to effect change, such changes need to be not only part of the official curriculum but also 'valued and imbued with cultural capital'.

Finally, the task of producing this issue would not be possible without our hardworking Editorial and International Advisory Boards who offer a highly professional contribution towards the review process – a significant process which maintains the high quality of the journal. We would like to thank the outgoing members, who have completed their 3-year-term, and warmly welcome the incoming new members (see the inside front cover of this issue for the complete list). We welcome this issue and the 25th anniversary of the BJME which is a journal well positioned and dedicated to leading research on all aspects of music education.

PAMELA BURNARD and GARY SPRUCE