

EDITORIAL

Editorial 2023

This first issue of the *BJME* for 2023 is coming out at a time when the world is yet again wondering what is in store. At the time of writing this editorial, new variants of the Covid virus are being investigated, with medical professionals expressing concerns about what could be coming next. At the same time, people in many countries are keen to get back to as normal as existence is possible under the circumstances. Joint music-making has returned, as have public performances, although, of course, it remains the case that these activities are very much in jeopardy. Should the pandemic take a turn for the worse. In our schools and colleges too, music education has returned, and children and young people are now having music lessons again and are singing and playing instruments. What we know, though, is that these activities are very fragile, and there is no certainty for the future.

It is against this backdrop that music education continues, and we here at the *BJME* continue to promote scholarly thinking and research into all aspects of music teaching and learning that are educational in nature. As a profession, we are developing resilience to these matters, and we know that music-making, and music teaching and learning will continue, although the forms and structures may well be altered, and the technology that is evolving for this will hopefully be assistive. Whatever the future holds, the *BJME* will be reporting on research and providing a forum for knowledge dissemination in this important area of human endeavour.

Turning to the current issue, we open with an article on teaching and assessing composing in upper secondary schools – an under-researched area that Kirsty Devaney gives due consideration. This fascinating research shines a light on ‘myths’ relating to the perceptions of teachers’ beliefs about composers and how they compose. Devaney argues that this impacts the way some teachers approach composing with their examination students and the unfortunate potential. This has to stifle students’ creative processes, potentially disadvantaging their examination outcomes.

Jacob Thomson-Bell’s article ‘Student-centred strategies for higher music education: using peer-to-peer critique and practice as research methodologies to train conservatoire musicians’ explores student-centred learning and teaching approaches for higher music education at a UK-based conservatoire. The article concludes with a proposed student-centred curriculum design framework that places importance on developing student motivation and engagement.

Erin MacAfee and Gilles Comeau’s article ‘Teacher perspective on music performance anxiety: an exploration of coping strategies used by music teachers’ reports on a study drawing together existing literature on this important topic and interviews with five piano teacher participants. The study highlights multiple strategies employed by teachers and also identifies a gap between the research and the practical implementation of strategies to help students cope with music performance anxiety.

The next article focuses on pre-service music teachers. Jihae Shin’s article reports on a case study from Korea focussed on understanding pre-service music teachers’ experiences in a collaborative community. It identifies the importance of teacher collaboration throughout their training processes and the multiple ways in which this can be nurtured and promoted.

A fascinating case study from Joris Cintéro - ‘Making sense of democratisation: a case study about extracurricular music workshops in France’ – illuminates the thoughts of teachers on the ‘pedagogical projects’ arising from creative partnerships between music schools and conservatoires with stakeholders outside of music education. This study explores many tensions within

this model of working and, in particular political and pedagogical tensions, some of which will no doubt resound in many other jurisdictions and raises some important and tricky questions for conservatoires, music schools and public authority, particularly in relation to the involvement of teachers in discussion and implementation of policies impacting creative education.

Next is Andrea Sepúlveda-Ortega and David Magnitzky-Vargas' article 'How do teachers of primary school approach the music assessment in Chile? Differences and similarities between professors' experience and ministerial guidelines'. Again, this article provides important opportunities for us all to reflect in relation to our own context on the potential of a mismatch between the actuality of what happens in a music classroom and government guidelines for music education, particularly in relation to the implementation of assessment tools and the function of musical assessment in the primary phase. Their conclusion proposes that "it is essential to understand the experience of teachers in the assessment process from a constructivist perspective", opening the door to further exploration of teaching, learning and assessment of music education well beyond the scope of this article.

Following on from the excellent Music in Early Childhood Special Edition of the British Journal of Music Education published in autumn 2022, the final two articles in this edition once again focus on this important area of a child's musical development. The first of these is from the perspectives of second-year undergraduate music students at a university in South Africa. Mignon Van Vreden's article 'Creating a musical for pre-schoolers in South Africa as pedagogical praxis for a tertiary music education module' draws out a range of interesting emergent themes from data analysis and considers these in relation to three teaching and learning approaches.

The final article 'Is music on the wane? A small mixed methods study exploring musical learning in the school reception class in the East of England' by Julie Digby explores the nature of musical learning of 4- to 5-year-old children in the reception year. The findings of the research highlight tensions between a child's entitlement to musical learning at this phase of education and the educational policies that drive the curriculum, pedagogies and practises in formal settings, which can marginalise the opportunities for music education and creative exploration in this phase of education. Very sadly, Julie passed away before this edition went to press, but we know she was pleased to see her article appear online, and we send our condolences to her family and friends.

Returning to this current edition of *BJME*, as this eclectic set of papers shows the diverse nature of music education and musical learning continues to be discussed and debated in the *British Journal of Music Education*, and we look forward to continuing to bring new research and scholarship to our readership across the UK and around the world, whatever the future may bring.

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