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ISME COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY MUSIC ACTIVITY

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The role of values and judgements in the development of autonomy in the music teacher and community music tutor. Diverse professional musical experience and a common interest in action research leading to a dynamic view of music teacher/community music tutor training and praxis. A different approach.

Presenters:

Maggie Teggin, University of East Anglia (UEA)
Ben Higham, Community Music East (CME)

INTRODUCTION

This presentation will take the form of an initial, brief outline of the formative musical and educational experience of the authors as practitioners and how this has influenced their involvement in, and approach to, the training of trainee music teachers and tutors. The later part of the presentation will take the form of an interactive workshop exploring data gathered through the teaching and training of music teachers and tutors, and specific associated research in this field, that relates to the role of values and judgements in the development of relevant and useful practice.

CONCEPT

Maggie Teggin currently runs the music Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) courses at the University of East Anglia (UK) and Ben Higham is Project Director of Community Music East, a community music organisation operating in the same region. The authors are currently collaborating within the PGCE course to develop the emancipatory aspects of music education and training for teachers and students alike. Both are keenly interested and involved in the development and implementation of structured and relevant training for "community music tutors", i.e. mainly freelance musicians/tutors/workers active in varied educational contexts including schools, and "visiting musicians", i.e. employed professional musicians involved in outreach work mainly in schools. This is a received distinction and it highlights the issue of values and judgements that creates what could be called, optimistically, a "dynamic tension" in relation to cultural, educational and social standpoints. In many ways it is the contemporary music teacher in school, being responsible for all forms of musical experience and learning at this point of delivery, who is stretched the most by this "dynamic tension".

CONTEXT

"The government's vote of no confidence in local democracy, its naive belief in the rectitude of Whitehall planning, its growing politicisation of major curriculum advisory bodies and its erosion of local authority support structures not only represent a dangerous increase in central government control, but all these factors have conspired to create a void which is forcing schools and associated arts organisations to reappraise the purpose and nature of their shared endeavours. Although schools, through devolved responsibility and direct institutional control of their assets, are being given greater autonomy, the demise of local education authority advisory services has created an urgent need for schools to establish stronger working links with professional artists. This development has been strengthened by recent shifts in public arts policy, practice and funding, whereby all publicly funded arts organisations are expected to become involved in education as a condition of receiving a subsidy." (i)

This is how Renshaw (1993) views the current situation facing schools and "associated arts organisations" in the UK. Of course many of these organisations, the keepers of the cultural flame, have actually been carrying out such work from a point of principle and a desire to educate as is also the case with many community music organisations that exist for nothing else other than to generate knowledge and encourage exploration and cultural freedom. In fact it is probably fair to

say that such principled attitudes and explorations across the value and activity spectrum have stimulated the arts funding bodies to make the conditional "shifts", the sorts of decisions to which they love to leap, that may force many arts organisations into adopting decisions out of fiscal need rather than educational desire.

There has been a recent and radical transformation of the education system in the UK - i.e. the introduction of a national curriculum, the deconstruction of local education authorities (LEAs) and the creation of "agencies" to provide music support services (staffed mostly by ex-LEA advisors and teachers) - and these have resulted in the creation of both problems and opportunities for students and teachers. At the same time there have been considerable developments in the recognition and formalisation of community music activities and schools have become a primary focus for funding and activity in this field. The training of the diverse range of community music practitioners has also become a key issue. In the UK, and most other countries that operate national education structures, the most consistent, significant and broad context for the potential development of musical interest, learning, knowledge and skill is in school. Over the past decade or so schools, and more particularly teachers, have come in for a great deal of criticism regarding their effectiveness in the areas of maintaining educational standards and promoting social, moral and cultural values. Music teachers have not been exempt from these criticisms. Recently, music as a subject has been particularly targeted with a responsibility for generating social, moral and cultural change as a consequence of the broadening of the curriculum and the requirement to teach it to all pupils up to the age of fourteen. These are tasks that many music teachers feel ill-equipped and untrained to tackle.

HOW CAN COMMUNITY MUSICIANS AND MUSIC EDUCATORS BEST RESPOND TO CHANGE?

Of the questions posed for consideration at the 1994 seminar by the Commission this one is the key. It identifies the essential aspect of the teacher/tutor's work; their practice, the way, and why, they do it. It is this aspect, and its relevance to the desire for and the achievement of change, that is the focus of this presentation. The authors are committed to action research, ongoing qualitative reflection on practice, as a tool for investigation and personal and professional development. For the purposes of the workshop we shall explore action research in the context of its role in the development of the novice professional and their ability to make connections between aspects of differing values that may be interactive or conflictual - i.e. notions of standards in a context or a national curriculum as constraint or inspiration, etc.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASE FOR THE PRESENTATION/WORKSHOP

"What educates is significant experience." James Mursell, "Human Values in Music Education", 1934. (ii)

In this context we shall take certain key educational concepts as fundamental to the practice of the teacher and the tutor. These concepts we see as essential to the developmental role of the practitioner and their commitment to change. Actual learning experiences are the circumstances, physical and/or mental, in which people actually learn as opposed to the conditions in which they

might be expected, by others or themselves, to learn. From a concept of the learning process defined as "developing an understanding of human acts, social situations, and the controversial issues they raise", Stenhouse (1970) derived the following teaching principles:

- "1. that controversial issues should be handled in the classroom with adolescents;
2. that the teacher accepts the need to submit teaching in controversial areas to the criterion of neutrality at this stage of education (that is, the teacher regards it as part of a responsibility not to promote a personal view);
3. that the mode of inquiry in controversial areas should have discussion, rather than instruction as its core;
4. that the discussion should protect divergence of view among participants, rather than attempt to achieve consensus;
5. that the teacher as chairperson of the discussion should have responsibility for quality and standards in learning (for example, by getting discussants to ground their views in reasons and evidence). "

This view can be seen from another perspective that stresses the situational context and helps the teacher/tutor to begin to recognise their own experience base and, hopefully, believe in themselves as what Schon (1983) called "reflective practitioners". This perspective is highlighted by Elliott (1993):

- " - The practical situations public service professionals confront in relation to their "clients" are increasingly experienced as problematic inasmuch as their particularity, complexity and fluidity makes them difficult to predict, laden with value issues and dilemmas, impossible to stereotype and resistant to clear cut and fixed solutions.
- Professional knowledge consists of repertoires of experienced cases which are stored in a practitioners long term memory and represent his or her stock of "situational understandings".
- Wise professional judgements and decisions rest on the quality of the situational understandings they manifest.
- Professional judgements and decisions are ethical and not simply technical in character.
- Systematic reflection by practitioners in their practical situations plays a central role in improving professional judgements and decisions." (iv)

So, in order to achieve change we see the need to recognise "controversial areas" in "practical situations", in schools or elsewhere, that are "problematic" and in which the "divergence" of views should be protected. Outlining a possible approach to a music syllabus and a curriculum theory that considers these principles Paynter (1982) says:

"Although it is clear that the third term's work would need to include quite a lot of direct teaching of techniques and musical information, it will be most important to keep this in perspective, relating it always to the exploratory work of the pupils. The teacher's principal task is to draw upon the resources of ideas and imagination which the pupils themselves can bring to the work, skills and information providing the facility for the proper realisation of these ideas as they arise. A theory about how music works is of no use to someone who does not already "understand" music or who is not motivated to want to do something musical. The balance between "direction" and "domination" is a

fine one and calls for careful judgement on the teacher's part. Pupils must be given the opportunity to learn to develop their own musical thinking through structures that grow organically from first ideas....To develop that skill the material itself must be the starting point, because form is content not a pre-ordained pattern." (v)

If these concepts are accepted then they will clearly have a profound impact on the way, and the how and the why, a teacher/tutor will approach their work.

The data that will be explored in the workshop will be drawn from interviews, journals, evaluations and other sources generated by teachers/tutors on the secondary PGCE at UEA and involved in in-service training and evaluation at CME. The data, presented in document form, will form the basis for discussion by seminar participants and may be complemented by some practical, interactive exercises during the workshop.

References

(i) RENSHAW, P. (1993) *The Management of Creativity in Schools, Colleges and Arts Organisations*, p. 7. Gresham Lecture, Gresham College, London.

(ii) cited in PAYNTER, J. (1982) *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum under "Guiding Principles"* p. xiv. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge for the Schools Council.

(iii) STENHOUSE, L. (1970) *The Humanities Curriculum Project: The Rationale. Theory into practice*, 10, pp.154-162. CARE, UEA.

(iv) ELLIOTT, J. (1993) "Professional Education and the idea of a Practical Education Science" in *Reconstructing Teacher Education*, pp. 66-68, The Falmer Press, London.

(v) PAYNTER, J. (1982) *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum*, pp. 50-51. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge for the Schools Council.

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The role of values and judgements in the development of autonomy in the music teacher and community music tutor. Diverse professional musical experience and a common interest in action research leading to a dynamic view of music teacher/community music tutor training and praxis. A different approach.

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Some examples of values and attitudes expressed by participants in the research for initial consideration and to provoke thought in the context of this paper.

1. The difficulties of reconciling the mission with the reality.

A. PGCE Secondary Music Teacher training session, 21/1/93. (all emphases in written responses are original)

What do you see your role to be as a music teacher?

"Broaden pupils thoughts on "serious" music. Make music enjoyable and accessible to all ages and levels of ability. To encourage group work and individual performance, and be self-critical of work" - Lisa

"Give children an appreciation of music. Pass on my own musical knowledge. Provide the school with a "strong" music department."
- Joan

"To help children enjoy music. To help increase the creative abilities of all children, regardless of their musical abilities. To increase children's awareness of their musical heritage."
- Peter

What expectations do you feel your students will have of you as a music teacher?

"To be brilliant at everything (unfortunately!). They expect perfection and see your standard as something they have to work for and attain. But if we show how bad we really are then it gives them an incentive to actually achieve something before giving up." - Francesca

"To be a musical genius. To set a "good example". To be a source of inspiration." - Peter

"That I know everything there is to know about my subject. That I will be slightly eccentric and probably lack classroom control." - Lisa

Summary Analysis

All the indications are that these trainee teachers see their practice as being judged from both above and below on the basis of values and criteria that they no longer own, if they ever did. The task they have set themselves appears to be to pursue a developmental approach whilst retaining the expectation of themselves as the "expert" and the "genius", sustaining the established cultural values (heritage) and achieving the expectations of the schools ("strong" music department) whilst being honest, even sometimes vulnerable, and collaborative with the pupils in the pursuit of musical knowledge, understanding and skill. Their expectations and experience appear to severely undermine their autonomy as teachers/tutors.

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b. Questions and summary analysis of answers from the end of term questionnaire completed by PGCE Secondary Music Trainee Teachers.

1. Have your personal values and attitudes been challenged/confirmed/changed during the course? If so in what way?

2. How have your professional values changed/emerged/developed/been confirmed during this course?

3. Are you aware of, and can you describe, how your personal and professional values interact in your experience of teaching so far?

4. Are you aware of establishing boundaries between the personal and professional? How exclusive/interactive are they?

5. How do you perceive music to function in your personal and professional experiences? What role does it play? Do you play?

6. How does this compare with other aspects of the curriculum? Do you think music is unique in anyway?

7. Are you special/unique in any aspect of your professional identity? Can you identify strengths/weaknesses?

8. When you have come across value - attitudinal - cultural contradictions how have you experienced them? How have you dealt with them?

9. How do you think you can best equip yourself to respond to change?

10. Thinking back to the questionnaire that you filled in at the beginning of January, how do you feel about your identified strengths and weaknesses in the context of curriculum and pedagogical demands?

11. How do you perceive music should function in the context of the whole school image? Is it different from your school experiences as a pupil and pre-course (PGCE) observations? If so in what way?

Your responses to these questions are intended to be confidential between student and tutor unless otherwise agreed by both parties. These questions are intended to stimulate your thinking and are not intended to be prescriptive.

Summary Analysis

Q.11 - Maximum response - varied but with a common thread of negative school experiences and most of the university and conservatoire courses preceding the PGCE.

Q.1, 2 and 3 - Students combined these questions for their responses - rather abbreviated until subsequent interview and tutorial in preparation for main written assignment.

Q.4 and 5 - Needed more elucidation - probing questions from me to extract really thoughtful responses - several thought it was all very self-evident.

Q.7, 9 and 10 - grouped together by a few students.

Q.7 and 10 - grouped together by more students.

Q.8 - Most admitted that this had been the most threatening question and the events they described in response to it were experienced as threatening either during or on reflection - several responded with ideas about having to learn not to be personally challenged and rejected in those situations.

Trainee student teachers comments from their own experience of school and undergraduate courses:

"There's no way I was going to end up teaching music....being treated like that! Now, here I am training to teach music but there's no way they're going to treat me like they treated her!"
(School)

"It was awful" (Conservatoire).

"What was the point of the course? What reality do they operate in?" (Conservatoire)

"I look back at my course and I feel angry - mostly it's inadequate and irrelevant - how can they justify it? I've not been stretched or challenged in any way except as a cipher of their own interests and specialities. I'm not sure how well prepared they were either. Did they ever consider my musicianship and musicality in any way other than as something measurable against some secret standard?" (University)

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2. The difficulties of reconciling the reality with the mission.

All the following are drawn from interviews with CME tutors in 1992 discussing the role and value of the organisation and any need for change.

"To encourage real use of the project by many different groups within the community and to educate the community in the value and potential value of this type of work." - Jon.

"CME seeks to convey music as a medium which is accessible to and encourages an integrated society. It aims to do this by educating its users in musical techniques and experiences thereby throwing off the preconceived notions and constraints that hamper self-expression and communication.....but it must always be borne in mind that pre-conceived notions and constraints play an important role in our lives. They are the starting point and reflect our way of survival and cannot be shrugged off irrespective of the people who value them." - Karin.

"Music for all. Making enough money to exist. Creating jobs..... ..Oh! Fulfilling a need within the community." - Mark.

"Our main role must be in empowering individuals to make and interpret music and to promote the integrity of such processes." - Steve.

These responses reflect a variety of relationships between the tutors and the organisation. They are influenced by the length of time people have been involved, the changes they have already seen, the strength and nature of their personal views, perceptions of "official" attitudes, both internal and external, their own experience working for themselves and, in some cases, a reluctance, or a lack of perceived necessity, to discuss these issues anyway and a preference to just get the right kind of work and get on with it.

Need for change?

"I think that change can only be good. As long as it's monitored, and it's felt that standards are maintained, then I think that change is a good thing.." - Karin

"I think it stems from personal interests really. If you have an interest in working with a certain group of people"....."Actually setting up work could be quite a personal thing almost...have an idea and follow it through, but with the guidance and help of other people." - Mark

"..the project needs, maybe, a broader base"...."rather than being able to be marginalised..and therefore....more easily...dispensed with" - Sian

Areas for change?

"..creating a balance between targetted work, that operates within fairly strict guidelines set down by other people, and developing open work which is more oriented towards allowing groups to develop and be supported and facilitated, and eventually...become self-supporting." - Sian

CME's "Powerful role"?

"I think that we could maximise our power. I don't know how powerful that would be....I think we can make use of our own resources, as community musicians, to try and bring about change in the way that people see and experience things ...in a small way perhaps." - Karin

"I think it should be..that..CME is set up to be a sort of shining light, a sort of beacon.....get more continual publicity...and just keep peoples' involvement.." - Jon

"I think it could (have a powerful role), and the reason that it hasn't is because things have been moving very slowly, and there's always the problem of having to work with musicians, ..that musicians always want to be doing something else rather than working....There has never been enough commitment, or that kind of level of involvement that's been unifying or strong and moving forward to innovate." - Mark

"..there are groups...which have very little access to platforms of...public expression and...targetting work in those areas,...is a way of really bringing a voice into the community that's not being heard particularly distinctly at the moment..." - Sian

Restrictions on change?

"The open mindedness of people to perceive things in general, I mean both in relation to the people you are trying to reach and of the agencies that you have to go through to reach them, and the workers concerned, and the management as well. Everybody has to have a degree of open mindedness before the change can really take place." - Karin

"Well, of course, money. It's a massive problem....I don't think there are necessarily any restrictions on change apart from money.....Talking to (other tutors)..I think people are beginning to understand the whole basis of CME and are trying to understand it's philosophy.....It certainly took me a while to understand exactly what it was for,""the community music philosophy is really more wide ranging than I initially understood it to be.. ..perhaps we ought to be encouraging all sorts of ideas about music. Everyone's got their own ideas about it (music)." - Jon

"...there may be restrictions...in finding common ground between people that are working in this particular area, finding people that hold the same kind of objectives.." - Sian

Professional development?

"I think it's important.. (to develop) self-monitoring and monitoring by your peer group, and obviously monitoring by management, and by your clients, if that's possible and....appropriate." - Karin

"..that perhaps the group becomes more of a team, a working team, so that we know how each other works?""It would stimulate a lot of the workshops that the individual tutors do. That could be a very positive move." - Jon

"..all that development side of it is very important. Personally, I don't like having to justify anything I do, as regards work, through having certain qualifications, or being a certain type of person, or being affiliated to a certain group of working people.. ..I think that (training) is very important, but there is still the problem of it being accepted by other people.. ..the problem of other professionals ...accepting what you do, listening to what you do and placing any value on what you do, other than it being at a price they can afford." - Mark

Other individual questions

(Dogma - "...is it something that we also need to take on board in terms of our own notions and constraints as practitioners" - Ben) "The thing that we have to be most aware of is our limits....because if we don't know what those limits are for ourselves, then we can't really help other people find where they want to be.." - Karin

("..you put "(CME) lacks the feedback to make it a community driven musical group" ?" - Ben) "...if people understood..what we were trying to achieve, then they would be able to put their own input in"..."almost like a clinic idea"..."not how we perceive them, but how they perceive them." - Jon

("I was asking about CME working in the right way....you said "if the right way is an agreed way - Ben) "I think it's just a matter of CME working in a way that is more than acceptable. I don't think there is a...right way, because of (CME's) nature ...That suggests almost that there should be some kind of structure to it, that is there but people don't really know about it." - Mark

Summary Analysis

Perceptions on change are expressed in a variety of ways in these extracts. Sometimes it is wanted and sometimes not; sometimes it has already happened and sometimes not; it is identified, in either of the previous cases, both consciously and unconsciously; and sometimes people are not sure if the changes they desire (or not) are really changes - i.e. perhaps they have, or should have, already taken place or they have not been noticed or acted upon. Comments reflect the need for change in the organisations thinking, practice and image (internal), and the need for, and viability of, change in the way others (clients, funders, organisations, institutions, professions) perceive us (external).

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