

Editorial

A common thread running through the articles in this issue is that enjoyment is a vital but somewhat elusive criterion in shaping effective and engaging experiences of music education. It becomes clear by reading these articles in conjunction that enjoyment is not always externally recognised as a necessary component of musical learning, but that it is highly valued by pupils and students of all ages, whether it is found in the teaching they receive or the music they make and listen to out of school.

Peter Cope's polemical 'point for debate' considers the role of enjoyment most directly in his critique of an OFSTED report that challenged a school music department for placing too much emphasis on fun. Cope's defence of the school's priorities invites us to pause and consider the purpose of music education: a vital process in determining how we might develop and strengthen current practices. And to inform this debate further, the views of the secondary school participants in some research commissioned by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) offer another perspective on music in and out of school. Alexandra Lamont, David Hargreaves, Nigel Marshall and Mark Tarrant report the initial findings of this study in their paper 'Young people's music in and out of school', which presents a more positive view of young people's attitudes to music learning than has been the case in other surveys of the past decade. Lamont *et al.* begin to map what it is that secondary school pupils find enjoyable: playing instruments, making up music, contact with 'real' professional musicians. There are some connections here with Malcolm Floyd's account of textbook development in Kenya, as an awareness of the musical needs and contexts of young people is shown once again to be a priority for teachers and researchers alike.

The balance of 'challenge and competence' that Cope sees as being vital to enjoyment finds theoretical expression in Csikszentmihalyi's concept of 'flow', which is discussed in the paper by Charles Byrne, Raymond MacDonald and Lana Carlton. Investigating the use of flow as an assessment tool, they emphasise that when students report feeling 'active', 'happy', 'strong', 'clear' and 'involved', some of the conditions of flow are present, and the students achieve high quality creative output in composition. Similarly, in her discussion of 'Enlivening analysis through performance', Deborah Mawer seeks ways for music analysis to be both intellectually fascinating and fun: engaging university students in their musical learning is, after all, every bit as important as appealing to students in compulsory education. Mawer's proposal for an alternative analytical curriculum aims to increase the accessibility of music analysis, and she reports on her students' experiences of their learning as she evaluates her new teaching approaches. Susan Monks is also sensitive to her pupils' learning experiences, and uses interviews, diaries and recording sessions to explore the self-concepts of adolescent singers, considering the implications for education of the doubts and discoveries experienced by singers of this age.

Enjoyment, then, is critical to music education. It could be a happy coincidence that these papers address that point from different angles. More optimistically, it could instead be a sign that research in music education is beginning to place the learners' experience at the heart of the debate, just as the best practice has always done.

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