



REVIEW | Music Education as Critical Theory and Practice

Lucy Green

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The seminal work of Lucy Green, leading contributor to the field of music education, includes a selection of key note addresses, as well as previously published articles and chapter essays. The volume is published by Ashgate in the *Contemporary Thinkers on Critical Musicology* series and comprehensively addresses Green's research trajectory, through her significant contributions to music education theory and practice over a sustained period.

Topics include those on sociology and critical thinking in music education, musical meaning and social reproduction, musical identities, gender, composition assessment, informal learning, popular music education, and learning styles and strategies. Although the selections are not structured in chronological sequence there is, as Green explains, a clearly apparent "chronology to the development of ideas" (xiii). The eighteen selected works (chapters) are divided into five categories – Part One: Music Education as a Reproductive Force - Ideology, Musical Meaning, Social Groups and Identity; Part Two: Gender and Music Education; Part Three: Assessment and Curriculum Content in Music Education; Part Four: Informal Learning and the Music Classroom; and Part Five: Aural Learning, Informal Learning and the Instrumental Teaching Studio. As these groupings suggest, the selected publications track the transition in Green's work from theory to practice. In addition to the volume's pagination, the previously

published works also depict their original pagination that facilitates reference to their original form. The selections are complemented by a full list of Green's extensive publications (xvii-xxiii).

As detailed in the introductory chapter to the volume, Green's trajectory has seen the exploration of critical theory "aimed at unpacking hidden ideological assumptions which contribute to the reproduction of inequality lying behind music-educational practices" (ix). Given this aim, it is not surprising that this trajectory has transitioned into music classrooms and instrumental studios with the aim of exploring musical inclusivity and enjoyment. Consequently, a comprehensive overview of Green's significant contributions that provide fascinating insight into the relationship between theory and practice. Describing herself as a sociologist of music education, Green traces her educational journey in the field with its shifts between theory and practice. Themes of "musical meaning, ideology, social reproduction, gender, class, ethnicity, identity" (xiii) are evident across chapters as is the undercurrent of Green's concerns in relation to equity in musical opportunities and access in music education.

Part One begins with a keynote delivered by Green in 2009. In this chapter, Green addresses the question of the meaning of the sociology of music education. She argues that sociology, in a broad context, is the study of relationships and social groups. Green then discusses social groups and music, the social organisation of musical practice, musical beliefs and values, and offers insight into the ubiquity of the term "education" (14). She does so with the aim of asking what the field of music education could or should mean. Chapter 2 moves into ideology and its relevance to critical thinking in music education. It concludes with the observation that the concept of ideology, "helps us understand how musical values affect musical practices, and most significantly, to indicate how our musical practices can act back to affect our musical values" (33). Beginning Chapter 3 with the universality of music in a broad context, Green then focuses specifically on music education, cultural capital and social group identity. Here, Green extends the concept of ideology by highlighting that music education largely affirms, "pre-existing ideologies of musical value [...] thereby reproducing social group differentiation" (46). She uses examples of social class, gender and ethnicity to emphasise issues pertaining to equality and access in music education. It is in Chapter 4 that Green introduces the topic of musical meaning and the relevance of engaging in music as music-makers. In this context, Green argues that making music has "a direct effect upon inherent meanings" (63) and facilitates autonomy. Green discusses her use of the term "inherent" in relation to the musical connections (51). In the volume's introductory chapter, Green qualifies this use explaining that she subsequently preferred to use the term "inter-sonic" (xi) in this context. Chapter 5 moves on to discussing musical identities and cross-cultural issues. In this discussion, Green considers identity formation within a globalized musical culture, as well as the challenges and opportunities that such contextual formation affords.

Part Two extends Green's concept of equality and access specifically in relation to gender as social group. Chapter 6 begins this focus on gender with an exploration of teachers' perceptions of gendered musical relationships. The findings demonstrate that gendered roles are "affirmed by boys' and girls' musical styles and by their teachers' interpretations of their proclivities" (119). Chapter 7

further extrapolates large-scale norms and trends in musical practices (126). Describing the emergence of gender as an issue in music education, Chapter 8 concludes this section with the ways in which engendered musical practices exist in an everyday context principally through the “symbolic power of music” (152).

In Chapter 9, Green discusses the assessment of composition. This opens Part Three, which focuses on musical assessment and curriculum delivery. Both Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 highlight the relevance of musical style in assessment practices, while Chapter 11 details changes in teacher perspectives in England (through surveys conducted in 1982 and 1998) in relation to the respective evaluation and uses of various musical styles in the secondary music classroom. In this comparative research, Green identified increased integration of practical work and cross-stylistic comparisons in the 1998 participant group.

In Part Four, Green further addresses informal learning in the context of the music classroom. In Chapter 12, Green reports on her research into skill acquisition (musicianship) by popular musicians. In this chapter, Green identifies skill development in the context of enculturation, the listening and copying of recordings, playing with peers, technical acquisition, aural capabilities, and practice. She calls for teachers to pay more attention to the role that enculturation plays in music learning, while drawing attention to the relevance of responsiveness, engagement and enjoyment to effective music learning. By exploring informal learning practices and contexts, Chapter 13 provides further clarity on informal learning and the skill integration it requires. It is in this chapter that Green engages with the differences and similarities between informal and formal learning and outlines pedagogical strategies for integrating informal practices into classroom education. Chapter 14 presents Green’s research that investigated the potentialities for integrating informal learning into the secondary music classroom. Several of the research participants expressed concern about musical authenticity in the classroom. Green suggests that authenticity could extend to the process of learning rather than focusing on authenticity in the resultant product and concludes that informal music learning practices have the potential to inform the authenticity of learning experiences. Chapter 15 introduces the concepts of group cooperation, group learning and peer-directed learning in the classroom. Green provides evidence to indicate that the integration of self-directed learning and peer-group cooperation strategies assist in the inclusion and integration of disaffected students. Chapter 16, a keynote delivered in 2007, draws on research findings informed by the UK initiative known as Musical Futures. The project adopted the characteristics of informal learning in curriculum delivery that was preferred by over ninety per cent of pupils in the study to traditional curriculum delivery. The project involved the adaptation of informal learning processes identified in popular music practices into classical music curriculum that led to a more positive engagement with classical music as reported by students.

Chapter 17 and Chapter 18 form the final section, Part Five. These chapters respectively detail research findings on a pilot study conducted on instrumental learning and the informal and aural learning that occurs in the instrumental music lesson. Learning style is given considered thought in relation to implications for teachers and pedagogy in Chapter 17, while Chapter 18 defines the emergence of potential learning styles identified in Green’s research. The chapter concludes

with identified issues for further research and development, and raises further questions to be considered and explored.

Overall, this volume represents a significant contribution to the multifaceted aspects of music education. It offers the reader the potential to access Green's extensive body of work in a way that adds clarity and depth to the concepts of informal and informal learning, critical theory and practice. Most significantly, the volume offers the reader the opportunity to explore theoretical writings, reports on research and detailed pedagogical strategies that extend and develop the concepts of "music teaching, learning and transmission" (14).