

Editorial

The *British Journal of Music Education* has always aimed to offer a variety of perspectives on musical teaching and learning, and in this issue the diversity of researcher and participant voices is wider than ever before. Most notably, we hear from a 12-year-old researcher, Eleanor Denny, whose project on extracurricular musical participation was carried out at the Children's Research Centre at the Open University. As John Finney says in his response to Eleanor's work, equipping young people with research skills leaves them 'empowered to ask ever more interesting, challenging and sometimes uncomfortable questions'. The growing literature on 'pupil voice' in educational research invites us to consider, not just the views of the young people involved in musical learning, but also our own position as researchers and our responsibilities to those who inform our research and writing.

This theme of the pupil voice is taken up in the article by Lori Custodero in respect of children's musical improvisations. She argues that we must view such processes from the child's eyes or we risk imposing pre-conceived assumptions of adult models. A skills-based approach to improvisation can infer a deficit model, rather than considering the actions of children as intentional. Custodero juxtaposes the collective improvisations of two professional composers and two 7-year-old children in order to present an alternative view of improvisatory skill.

Elsewhere in this issue, we hear other stories of those on the receiving end of music education offering evaluative views of the opportunities and provision available to them. Adrian Hancock and Janet Hoskyns consider the under-researched area of post-14 music education, and shed light on the array of courses available to students with various ambitions to work in sound recording and the music industry. Career orientation is also a central theme for John Miller and David Baker, who investigate the ways in which conservatoire undergraduates exhibit changing attitudes to potential careers in education as they progress through their degree course. They show how an initial reluctance to engage in pedagogy training is gradually overcome as students start to see the relevance of teaching for their future careers. Meanwhile, Vicky Ward tackles the question of instrumental teaching strategies from another angle, trialling the use of a 'toolkit' for linking analysis and performance. She holds that 'musical awareness' should be at the heart of instrumental learning, but finds a level of anxiety amongst teachers about using analytical concepts in their teaching. Miller, Baker and Ward between them identify a worrying separation between performing skills, musical knowledge and pedagogical training which requires careful thought at all stages of instrumental learning.

Finally we include a historical study of inventing musical games, within the wider contexts of women inventors and eighteenth century notions of playful learning, and educational play. Ghre and Amram observe that Ann Young's patented box of musical games of 1801 has much in common with modern music teaching games, in their shared skill-based approach. But Young – working long before the notion of 'pupil voice' was at all recognised – perhaps failed to heed Locke's theory of learning through play, so that her

game, ostensibly suitable for 8-year-olds, might have been more playful, rather than being technical exercises in disguise.

Through diverse approaches and areas of focus, the authors in this issue illustrate the value for teachers and researchers in listening to the voices and perspectives of musical learners. What's more, several of the papers illustrate the potential empowerment that such an approach offers to the pupils themselves – a fruitful direction for researchers and practitioners to consider.

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