

Through the lens of Levinas:  
An ethnographically-informed case  
study of pupils' *practices of facing* in  
music-making

---

**Kathryn Ruth Jourdan**  
**Clare College**

**This dissertation is submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
University of Cambridge  
Faculty of Education January 2015**



## Abstract

This study investigates how the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas might shape practice in music education. In a climate of accountability and performativity within wider educational policy-making, the drive for ever-increasing efficiency has overtaken notions of professional judgement and ethical practice. This study opens by introducing current strands of international meta-policy priorities in education, and explores moves to redress the emphasis on standardisation and accountability through the rediscovery of notions of *responsibility* in the work of Biesta drawing on Bauman (1993), who in turn finds a way forwards in Levinas' 'ethics as first philosophy'. Emmanuel Levinas is introduced as a major thinker of the twentieth century whose influence is increasing throughout social science disciplines and who, writing firstly as a teacher, provides valuable philosophical tools with which to investigate current practices in education.

Over the past three decades competing paradigms for music education have tended to polarise rather than ground thinking in music education research. More recent notions of music-making as ethical encounter (Bowman, 2000) and as the practice of hospitality (Higgins, 2007) have taken forwards Small's relationship-oriented conceptualisation of 'musicking' (1998), and these provide the starting point for this study's search for an ethical underpinning for music education. Levinas' first major work (1969) provides two key strands of thought – the polarities of *totality* and *infinity*, and the exhortation to 'look into the face of the Other'. These tools open up explorations of how pupils encounter difference, the unfamiliar, and of how narrow conceptions of learning in the music classroom may be understood as an ethical problem.

At the heart of this study is the report of ethnographically-informed fieldwork undertaken in a Scottish secondary school, following a group of 13-year-olds through an academic year of class music lessons. Participant observation and semi-structured interviews were methods employed alongside participant self-documentation in order to gather pupils' experiences and perspectives on how they encounter the Other through their music-making at school and in their everyday lives. A critical realist theoretical framework enabled the experiences and perspectives of pupils to be set within a deep, layered conception of social reality, uncovering the dynamic interplay of structural forces and pupil agency. Through the lens of Levinas' philosophy pupils' 'practices of facing' were brought to light and conceptualised as agential.

From these ‘practices of facing’ the study’s conclusions are drawn. Music-making is conceptualised through terms in which Levinas spoke of language, as having as its first impetus a reaching out to the Other, ‘putting a world in common’. This grounds, and is generative of, an epistemological diversity within which aesthetic and praxial approaches are anchored in one underlying, ethical orientation, where the attentiveness and openness of aesthetic sensitivity are as significant as the developing of skills and competencies in enabling an ever-deeper entering-into ‘infinity in the face of the Other’. This study offers a critique of the present educational environment which prioritises predetermined outcomes and narrow models of knowing, thereby, according to a Levinasian view, legitimising practices of violence and domination, and sets out an alternative orientation, where richly contextualised learning in the music classroom and a radical openness might allow for an infinity of possibility to break in.

## **DECLARATION**

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

## **STATEMENT OF LENGTH**

This dissertation does not exceed 80,000 words, excluding footnotes, figures and tables, boxes, reference list and appendices.

# Table of Contents

---

List of Appendices .....	vi
List of Tables .....	vii
List of Reflective Log Boxes .....	vii
Observational Field Notes .....	vii
List of Figures .....	viii
List of Interview Boxes .....	x
Acknowledgements .....	xii
Introduction .....	xiii
<i>Music</i> by Micheal O'Siadhail .....	xviii
<b>Chapter 1: Situating my study: political priorities, accountability and responsibility ..1</b>	
Introduction .....	2
1.1 Political priorities for education in Britain and in the wider world.....	3
1.2 From accountability to responsibility .....	11
1.3 Towards ethical teaching in school – learning from Levinas.....	12
1.4 Towards ethical relationships in school music.....	14
<b>Chapter 2: Situating my study: the emergence of the notion of music education as ethical encounter .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Introduction .....	17
2.1 Polarities and paradoxes.....	17
2.2 The turn towards notions of music education as ‘ethical’ .....	23
2.3 Locating my study .....	39
<b>Chapter 3: The philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas: From music as ‘ethical encounter’ to ‘looking into the face of the Other’ .....</b>	<b>46</b>
Introduction .....	47
<b>Part One</b> .....	56
3.1 The distinctive ‘ethics as first philosophy’ of Emmanuel Levinas .....	48
3.2 Education as transformative: ‘the presence of infinity breaking into the closed circle of totality’ .....	56
<b>Part Two</b> .....	61
3.3 Taking Levinas into the music classroom .....	61
<b>Chapter 4: A critical realist theoretical framework .....</b>	<b>74</b>
Introduction .....	75
<b>Part One</b> .....	76
4.1. Assumptions in research questions and methodological choices.....	76
4.2 Critical realism .....	79
4.3 Levinas’ thought as underpinning this critical realist study.....	85
<b>Part Two</b> .....	91

4.4 From methodology to methods .....	91
<b>Part Three</b> .....	108
4.5 Research design .....	108
4.6 Methods.....	112
4.7 Analysis of data.....	124
4.8 Analysis and quality criteria .....	128
<b>Chapter 5: The case set within a wider context .....</b>	<b>132</b>
5.1 Scotland-wide policies and practices .....	135
5.2 Practices in the local education authority .....	139
5.3 Practices in school.....	143
5.4 Practices within the music department: learning music at the school.....	156
5.5 Practices in the music classroom .....	164
5.6 Lesson observations – a personal response.....	166
<b>Chapter 6: Pupils’ stories.....</b>	<b>175</b>
6.1 Amy’s story.....	178
6.2 Tom’s story .....	186
6.3 Amez’s story .....	195
6.4 Kirsty’s story.....	205
6.5 Finlay’s story .....	217
<b>Chapter 7: Discussion of strands - Conceptions of and perspectives on music-making as an encounter with the Other .....</b>	<b>230</b>
7.1. Music-making as language .....	232
7.2 Music-making as complex and challenging, rich in context.....	234
7.3 The Infinity of musical knowing.....	237
7.4 Music as an end in itself.....	239
<b>Chapter 8: Discussion of strands: Music-making as an exercise of agency .....</b>	<b>247</b>
8.1 National Government and the Local Education Authority: the shaping of notions of ‘being musical’ and their subversion .....	250
8.2 The school: the structural effects of the contested role of music in the curriculum – the resistance of pupils to totalising practices .....	256
8.3 The music department: totalising conceptions of ‘musical knowing’ and pupils’ actions to subvert these .....	259
8.4 The sample music class.....	265
<b>Chapter 9: ‘Practices of facing’ .....</b>	<b>271</b>
9.1 Reflection on findings: Contribution to thinking within music education.....	273
9.2 Reflection on findings: Contribution to thinking about music-making and about <i>musicking</i> .....	281
9.3 Implications of this study.....	284
9.4 Limitations of this study .....	291
<b>References.....</b>	<b>298</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>315</b>

## List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Methods employed by two studies providing a model for research design.....	316
Appendix 2a:	Information letter to participant pupils.....	317
Appendix 2b:	Consent form for participant pupils.....	318
Appendix 2c:	Example of a letter to the parents of pupil participants.....	319
Appendix 3a:	Drawing out strands from interview transcriptions.....	320
Appendix 3b:	Grouping strands from interview transcripts.....	321
Appendix 3c:	Exploration of strands of coding annotated with theoretical memos which reflect on the process of analysis.....	322
Appendix 4a:	Example of observation notes written up afterwards.....	323
Appendix 4b:	Photo of music classroom.....	325
Appendix 4c:	Example of a reflective note on development of theoretical framework ...	326
Appendix 4d	Example of additional memos reflecting on the practicalities of the fieldwork process, and emerging strands of significance.....	327
Appendix 4e:	Example of interview transcription.....	328
Appendix 4f:	Example of further questions arising from earlier pupil interviews.....	333
Appendix 5:	A taxonomy of triangulation (adapted from Downward and Mearman, 2007).....	334
Appendix 6:	Musicking Otherwise: Ethical encounters in music-making.....	335

## List of Tables

Table 4:1	Research design and timescale for fieldwork indicating adaptations during fieldwork .....	102
Table 4:2	Free school meals 2010 / 2011 .....	109
Table 4:3	Unauthorised absences 2010 / 2011 .....	109
Table 4:4	Observation schedule .....	114
Table 4:5	Topics for open and semi-structured interviews with pupil participants ...	119
Table 4:6	Interview schedule .....	120

## List of Reflective Log Boxes

5:1	Staying in the place of encounter (i) .....	163
5:2	Staying in the place of encounter (ii) .....	166
5:3	An exercise in alienation .....	169
6:1	Tom .....	192
6:2	Finlay .....	218
6:3	Finlay and Matt .....	223

## Observational Field Notes

6:1	Finlay and Matt .....	223
-----	-----------------------	-----

## List of Figures

Fig. 2:1	Bowman’s ethical dispositions and capacities .....	34
Fig. 2:2	Emergence of notions of music-making as ethical encounter .....	37
Fig. 2:3	Theoretical stances in music education inform research questions: insights from Master’s study.....	41
Fig. 2:4	Genealogy of research questions .....	42
Fig. 2:5	Developing research questions .....	43
Fig. 2:6	Clarification of terms.....	45
Fig. 4:1	A critical realist ethnographic case study .....	96
Fig. 4:2	Pack for self-documentation .....	121
Fig. 4:3	Notebook for self-documentation .....	122
Fig. 4:4	Guidelines inside notebook for week of self-documentation .....	122
Fig. 4.5	Themes emerging from early coding.....	125
Fig. 4:6	Analysis procedure .....	127
Fig. 4:7	Maxwell’s typology of validity .....	128
Fig. 5:1	Structural layers.....	134
Fig. 5.2	Themes emerging from within structural layers.....	174
Fig. 6:1	Diagram of themes from coding.....	177
Fig. 6:2	Themes emerging from Amy’s perspectives.....	185
Fig. 6:3	Tom’s Musical River.....	186
Fig. 6:4	Themes emerging from Tom’s perspectives .....	194
Fig. 6.5	Football stadium in Sanliurfa.....	196
Fig. 6.6	Local team’s stadium.....	197
Fig. 6:7	Themes emerging from Amez’s perspectives .....	205
Fig. 6:8	Themes emerging from Kirsty’s perspectives.....	216
Fig. 6:9	Themes emerging from Finlay’s perspectives.....	228
Fig. 8:1	Emergent social structures and pupils’ exercise of agency.....	248
Fig. 8:2	Structural layers.....	250
Fig. 8:3	Local authority .....	251
Fig. 8:4	Scottish Government .....	251
Fig. 8:5	Structures for instrumental music provision affect a Amy’s sense of being a ‘musician’ .....	255
Fig. 8:6	The contested role of music in the school curriculum and one pupil’s determination to develop musical skills .....	258
Fig. 8:7	Totalising practices in the shaping of ‘musical knowing’ .....	261
Fig. 8:8	The effects of ‘performativity’ .....	264
Fig. 8.9	A fault line through the school: the effect of a longstanding social division and the agential acts of pupils to transcend this .....	267
Fig. 8:10	Expectations of boys’ behaviour in the music class: three pupils find ways of resisting the totality .....	269
Fig. 9:1	An ethical basis for music education in the light of Levinas .....	276
Fig. 9:2	Contested notions recontextualised .....	277

Fig. 9:3	Orientation of the teacher.....	278
Fig. 9:4	Orientation of the pupils .....	279
Fig. 9:5	Model of ethical encounter in the music classroom.....	280
Fig. 9:6	Model of ethical encounter in music-making .....	283

## List of Interview Boxes

5:1 - 5:3	Scottish identity .....	136-138
5:4	Context for ‘world’ music .....	138
5:5 - 5:12	LEA .....	139- 143
5:13 - 5:14	School management practices .....	144
5:15	Legacy of industrial action .....	145
5:16	Organisational mistakes .....	145
5:17	Social division .....	146
5:18	Hospitable practices .....	148
5:19	Opaque language .....	149
5:20	What sort of vision? .....	150
5:21	Role of arts within the curriculum.....	150
5:22 - 5:25	Curriculum changes.....	151-153
5:26	Reflective space needed .....	153
5:27	Opaque language .....	154
5:28	Interdisciplinary learning .....	154
5:29	Insecurity in new ways of working .....	155
5:30	Curriculum changes.....	156
5:31-5:33	Diversity within the music curriculum.....	157-161
5:34	Contextualisation of learning in music.....	162
5:35	Curriculum changes.....	163
5:36	Scottish musical forms .....	164
5:37	Subject choices .....	164
5:38	Embodied learning .....	165
6.1.1- 6.1.7	Amy .....	178-183
6.2.1- 6.2.8	Tom .....	188-191
6.3.1- 6.2.3	Amez .....	195-200
6.3.4	Amez’s father - music-making in Urfa.....	201
6.3.5	Amez’s parents .....	201
6.3.6	Amez’s father .....	203
6.4.1- 6.4.12	Kirsty .....	206-215
6.5.1 – 6.5.13	Finlay.....	217-227

## Acknowledgements

After a long, part-time journey through doctoral research it's almost impossible to recall everyone who has helped me along the way. In 1992 I heard David Ford give what I now recognise as an account of Levinas, though it took me another fifteen or more years before I discovered his writings for myself. Reading Levinas filled the space David's presentation had opened up. Likewise the poems of David's close friend Micheal O'Siadhail have been my companions since our collaboration in combining Micheal's poetry reading with music in the mid-1990s. I now recognise those of Micheal's poems which reflect upon Levinas' thinking and which also have shaped me. Sam Wells, Maggi Dawn and Jeremy Begbie have encouraged me in honing my thinking over years of friendship, and a catch-up in Hong Kong with Daniel Chua while I was on a recent concert tour proved surprisingly fruitful for my writing-up phase.

Much appreciation is owed to the Faculty of Education in Cambridge who have provided such a rich environment in which to learn. Mandy Swann and Richard Hickman gave invaluable feedback during my registration exercise, and Mandy subsequently as Advisor. Pam Burnard and Darleen Opfer provided both warm support and rigorous resources for developing my thinking throughout my research training period and beyond, and I remain grateful for the friendship and wisdom of fellow researchers Rosie Burt-Perkins and John Verney. Ian Munday, Mary Earl, and John Beck in Cambridge, and Andrew Wright at King's College, London have all generously given me supervision time. Paul Woodford and Lee Higgins extended warm hospitality as they welcomed me into the community of music education researchers at the RME conference in Exeter, Easter 2011. I'm hugely appreciative of the depth in which my examiners, Felicity Laurence and Christine Doddington, engaged with my thesis. Thank you for your insights and encouragement.

My thanks must go especially to my site school and to the staff and pupils who became participants, especially the head of faculty and the class music teacher, alongside the small group of pupils who gave generously of their time. Thanks to Jacquie Johnstone who took time to discuss the Young Musicians' Initiative with me. Colleagues at St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh and in the Scottish Chamber Orchestra have patiently encouraged me over the past few years and, along with the team at Sistema Scotland, have provided contexts and engaged in conversations through which I have been able to explore emerging perspectives on ethical practice in music-making and in music education.

Jenny Booth, Alice Clegg, Bridget Macaulay, Helen Storkey and Jo Bailey Wells are amongst those close friends who have remained unwaveringly supportive throughout this research process. Heartfelt appreciation must go to my family who have borne the cost of these years of study and who will be relieved that this period of distraction is coming to an end. For Ben, Esther and Daniel there is little or no memory of a time prior to the PhD. Thank you for your support and good humour. To Paul, profound thanks for making this transformative process possible, for your help in turning this thesis into a presentable document, and for being my closest companion throughout.

Most of all, however, I want to thank John Finney who has truly ‘brought me more than I contain’. John trained me as a teacher in the mid-1990s, inspiring and encouraging me to develop my own path on teaching practice. He fed me with articles and interesting ideas until the time came, a decade later, when my children were all in school and I could begin research. His guidance and kindness as a supervisor has surpassed anything I could have hoped for, especially in the space he has allowed for me to roam freely, sometimes wildly, before helping me work my ideas into a coherent form. John, thank you.

# Introduction

---

As a viola player with the City Birmingham Symphony orchestra in the early to mid-1990s I took part in outreach projects in the city's schools and community centres. At that time players would typically visit a school once a week over a half term period, working with a class of pupils to compose a piece of music using building blocks of musical ideas drawn from a large twentieth century score the orchestra would be performing. On the final day all participating schools would meet in a large hall and perform their work to each other. That evening the pupils would attend our concert to hear the orchestra's version of the work, set within a full concert programme of other contrasting pieces.

One early project stands out for me. My colleague and I began to visit one of the predominantly Muslim primary schools only a mile or so from the city centre, situated within a closely-knit community who worshipped together at the local mosque, in fact the nine and ten year old pupils we came to know attended the mosque after school each weekday for two hours' religious instruction. Music-making and dancing were not encouraged by the community's religious leaders, but the National Curriculum had recently set out the requirement for pupils to receive an arts education, and our project was an early experience of classroom music for these pupils.

We brought Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* into the classroom as a starting point for musical exploration and creation, conscious that we were introducing pupils to a fresh cultural expression and inviting them to join us in a cross-cultural encounter. The vivid story and vibrant score offer numerous rich points of departure for primary pupils. We experimented with features such as bitonal fanfares, layers of the fairground busyness of the Shrovetide fair and found ways to express the three contrasting characters of the 'puppets' in a dance sequence. Gradually, as bonds of trust were formed, pupils contributed elements from their illicitly-indwelt cultural forms; a fragment of bhangra or a hand gesture from a classical North Indian dance tradition. In finding their own voices in response to an encounter with something other, these pupils were able to embrace creatively and respond with freedom to

the artistic expression of a different culture.

A contrasting encounter in a Cambridgeshire school a couple of years later provided further cause to reflect. I had left the orchestra to train as a secondary music teacher and found myself on the main teaching practice in a predominantly white, affluent, semi-rural school. A ‘world music’ module was being taught within a reductionist framework, concerned only with the achievement of various competencies, particularly keyboard skills. The music teacher began each lesson by playing a track from a CD of music from elsewhere in the world – from Bolivia, for instance. During a brief discussion, structural elements of the music were identified in terms of what was already familiar and pupils were sent away to their keyboards in order to compose a piece which included these features.

The elements from the CD track were quickly assimilated into the soft-rock electronic sound world with which pupils were comfortable. This fairly homogenous cohort of Year 9 pupils was missing the opportunity both to widen their musical resources through careful listening to what was new in this music and to learn from it, and to begin imaginatively in some way to approach the experience of the people whose music had been brought into the classroom. These pupils’ cultural voices remained underdeveloped while the ‘voice’ of the people whose music was being ‘used’ went unheard. Little was gained from an encounter with a musical expression from another cultural setting.

There was something profoundly disturbing about this scenario – a significant deficit in the experience of encounter with the musical expressions of distant others, a lack of reflective awareness and a missed opportunity for engagement at a deeper level, even simply to enrich pupils’ musical palates for composition, but worse, the propagation of unexamined attitudes towards the cultural forms of other people, attitudes of cultural imperialism which colonise the musical expressions of others and subsume their individuality, their ‘otherness’, under a blanket of generic western electronic sound. This was competency-based teaching, combined with a child-centred approach which met pupils where they were, yet didn’t seem to lead them anywhere new, and in doing so embodied undemocratic, uncritical processes which restricted pupils’ wider learning.

The instinctive reaction as a student teacher was to adapt lesson plans in order to bring nearer the distant Other, through extracts from film, artworks, and narratives from historical

and fictional writing, to enrich the contextual background so that pupils might imaginatively reach out to another's experience, might begin to listen for the 'voice' of another; to ensure that musical expression was not abstracted and colonised, but regarded as the opening up of new horizons of meaning, new worlds of possibility. Practical tasks were set in context so that cultural assumptions were made explicit. When, one morning, a new pupil arrived in class part-way through an exploration of West African drumming practices, her presence as a lone black girl in a predominantly white environment took on new resonance. It was a moment of recognition that history, context, story, artistic expression were richly present in the face of the Other, towards whom a fresh openness was experienced in the classroom.

This scenario is open to multiple interpretations, including a robust justification of the original teaching process according to longer-term goals of proficiency in keyboard skills and familiarity with musical elements, articulated by the Principal Teacher at the time. My response however reflected a wider, more holistic conception of what entails in bringing unfamiliar, distant musical expressions into the classroom, and an emerging critical awareness of ethical considerations with regard to the context in which the music has been formed. Underlying all these considerations are the questions of how 'coming to know' may be conceptualised in the music classroom and of how we can learn to live together, differently.

These two contrasting experiences led me to consider how we encounter the Other through music-making. The 'ethical turn' in social science research that has followed hard on the heels of the 'linguistic turn' has brought to the fore the work of philosophers who have explored difference and the Other, and has offered fresh opportunities for researchers to consider the significance of an 'ethical orientation' within music education.

My Master's study involved an examination of a school community set in its wider local context in an exceptional situation in a remote corner of Britain, where distinctive shared cultural and particularly musical forms allow for the development of a strong sense of local identity which forms the basis for an outward-looking, globally-engaged orientation of school and wider community.<sup>1</sup> In examining the relationship between local belonging and

---

<sup>1</sup> *The view from somewhere: Coming to know the 'other' through the indwelling of a local musical tradition* (2008) Dissertation presented for the M Ed (Res) degree in the Faculty of Education, Cambridge University.

welcoming-in of the outside world I began to conceptualise music-making in terms of relationship with the ‘Other’ in a context of ‘hospitality’, and to explore a spectrum of ‘otherness’ ranging from that which is unacknowledged within the individual self, to those perceived to be ‘different’ within a local community, to the more distant Other encountered either face-to-face or remotely.

This doctoral study seeks to build upon my earlier investigation, developing the notion of music-making as ‘an encounter with the Other’. What happens when pupils encounter unfamiliar musical expressions in the classroom? How may these encounters and the teacher’s role in these be conceptualised? What are the ethical considerations surrounding such an encounter? Do these relate in any way to what we might mean when in recent policy documents we have talked about ‘aesthetic sensitivity’ and ‘cultural understanding’? Does music education in schools currently allow for the development of these skills? What responsibility do we have towards those whose music we ‘use’ in music education, and how do we decide whose musical expressions are appropriate to class music lessons? Underlying these concerns is the need for an ethical underpinning for music education.

In order to investigate these questions further I undertook a case study in a secondary school in Scotland, where I now live, exploring how music-making functions in the lives of a class of thirteen year olds, what happens when they encounter difference, the unfamiliar, the other person, and how these encounters are negotiated by pupils, by teachers and by musicians in the wider community within which the school is nested. These experiences and perspectives are set within the wider context of structural layers of school policy, local authority practices and the priorities of national government and the international bodies which increasingly seem to dictate educational agendas.

A critical realist framework, with its dynamic conception of the interplay between structure and agency, has been employed in order to examine strands of meaning drawn from my ethnographic fieldwork within this deeper conceptualisation of reality. Many levels of structural forces come to bear upon the pupils and teachers who participated in my study and they in turn respond either by acquiescing to or by exercising agency to resist these forces. The critical realist outlook enables me to move back and forth between these various layers of reality and to uncover possibilities of transcendence, where pupils or staff find ways of breaking out of expectation and habitual practices to bring about change.

Underpinning my study is the work of French-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, whose exhortation to ‘look into the face of the Other’ puts the ethical act of taking responsibility for the Other before any kind of ‘knowing’ or ‘understanding’, before any kind of making sense of the world - ‘ethics before ontology’ or ‘ethics as first philosophy’. His critique of the Western philosophical tradition uncovers ways in which we have understood in order to control, dominate and colonise through our orientation to the Other. Levinas’ work provides a lens through which to examine pupils’ experience and perspectives. Strands are drawn out and developed, allowing the perspectives and ‘practices of facing’ of these pupils to point towards a reorientation for music education which prioritises ‘coming to know’ through looking into ‘the face of the Other’. The concluding part of the thesis considers the wider significance of these emerging strands of meaning in terms of an ethical conception of what it means to make music, developing Levinas’ notion of language as at its first impulse an ethical act, asking what it means for music-making to be first of all an ethical reaching out to the Other.

**Music**  
**by**  
**Micheal O'Siadhail**

Music, always music. And when the violins tumble  
A thief has entered me.  
Come and gone.  
A sneaking anarchy  
Leaving spores of memories I never had.

Incognito. Whimpers through crevices and pores,  
Quick bowings of a violin,  
Furious *pizzicato*  
Of what hasn't been  
Whinnies and hops beyond a future I imagine.

My vigilance breaks down. Rupture of being.  
This syncopation. Offbeat, out of phase  
With myself, I vibrate.  
What's this breathlessness I can't catch up with?

That flight of thirds mincing up a treble  
Clef. Lines of joy.  
Matrix of frontiers.  
EVERY GOOD BOY  
DESERVES FAVOUR. Silences are spelling FACE.

Endless glory of some muteness that eludes me.  
Approach of another face,  
*Tremolo* of forsakenness  
Naked and homeless.  
How can I fold and suckle all its orphanhood?

Music, always music. Neighbour, are you the face  
Of that thief breaking in,  
Hollowing me out?  
A tumbling violin  
Breathes its cries in me. I'm womb and mother.

(O'Siadhail, M. (1999). Veils and Masks, A Fragile City in *Poems 1975-1995*, Bloodaxe: Newcastle upon Tyne. Reproduced here by kind permission of Bloodaxe Books.)

## Chapter 1:

# Situating my study: political priorities, accountability and responsibility

---

## **Introduction**

This opening chapter sets out the context for my study by lightly sketching some of the underlying political discourses which shape educational practices in British schools at present. My quest to examine how pupils encounter the Other through their music-making, and how Levinas' philosophy might shed light upon these experiences to elucidate ethical practices within school music education, begins by setting policy-making for music education within an exploration of the political priorities and motivations behind recent educational policy in Britain. It considers the influence of international meta-policy-making bodies upon national government agendas, investigating the contradictions inherent in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) directives for music and arts education and the tension this creates for schools, teachers and pupils.

The latter part of the chapter describes Gert Biesta's attempts at finding an alternative to the contemporary 'accountability culture' within education, drawing upon Zygmunt Bauman's *Postmodern Ethics* with his emphasis upon 'responsibility' shaped by Levinas' 'ethics as first philosophy'. Emmanuel Levinas is introduced first and foremost as a philosopher whose work is rooted in his years of experience of teaching, and offers a valuable lens through which to examine educational practices and pupils' experiences in school music education. The chapter closes with a discussion of ethical relationships in the classroom and points to the need for an ethical framework to underpin thinking about music education in school, one which grounds relationships both within the music classroom and with those far beyond it, and which shapes conceptualisations of how we 'come to know' in music, twin strands which run throughout the thesis.

## 1.1 Political priorities for education in Britain and in the wider world

The neoliberal turn in political thinking, influenced by trends in the United States from the late 1970s onwards has brought the language and processes of the free market into every sphere of public life in Britain, including education.<sup>1</sup> The role of schools is now seen as equipping pupils with the skills necessary for participation in the job market and for their contribution to the economic well-being of the country. In 1983 the influential report from the US, *A Nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*, blamed the education system for perceived national economic failures because it had not adequately equipped students with the requisite knowledge and skills to compete in the global marketplace (Woodford, 2011: v). Calls for educational reform and the development of national standards, with their accompanying national curricula, standardised testing and educational comparisons, were heard in other parts of the world too, particularly in England under Margaret Thatcher's government. Already in 1976 James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech had reflected growing public concerns that Britain was not well-served by its schools, and had hinted at the notion of a national, core curriculum as a means of exerting more central control over what was taught in schools (<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/speeches/1976ruskin.html>).<sup>2</sup>

Callaghan emphasised the need for improvements in education to cope with the decreasing availability of unskilled jobs in the emerging global economy, and for monitoring a 'proper national standard of performance'. Twenty years later, and six months before his landslide general election victory Tony Blair, then leader of the Labour opposition party, spoke at Ruskin College, reiterating that those in education should be held 'accountable for their performance' (<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/speeches/1996ruskin.html>).

The Educational Reform Act of 1988 formalised the wresting of control of state education away from professional interests by the state in the name of moral and economic order,

---

<sup>1</sup>Neoliberalism is a diffuse and contested political ideology or project, not tied to a single organisation. The term was first coined in post-World War I Germany by a group of economists and legal scholars from the 'Freiburg School' to refer to their moderate programme of reviving classic liberalism (Steger and Roy, 2010: x). In 1951 Milton Friedman used the term in his book 'Neoliberalism and its prospects'. Philip Mirowski writes that 'Neoliberalism needs to be understood as a pluralist organism striving to distinguish itself from its three primary woes: laissez-faire classical liberalism, social welfare liberalism and socialism' (Mirowski, 2009:431).

<sup>2</sup> Callaghan's speech on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1976 at the laying of a foundation stone for an extension to Ruskin College Oxford, is widely regarded as having started the 'Great Debate' about the nature and purpose of public education.

passing it to ‘consumers’ (Finney, 2011:87). Education in Britain was now seen in ‘instrumental’ terms, equipping pupils for the world of employment, in response to economic pressures through processes of globalisation of the market place.

### **1.1.1 Meta-policy making and the ‘knowledge-based’ economic model**

Government education policy in contemporary Britain, as in other Western nations, is increasingly shaped through the influence of international organisations whose aim is to formulate and disseminate meta-policies. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was founded in 1961 to provide ‘a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems’ and to ‘promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world’ (<http://www.oecd.org/about>). Described by Pierre Bourdieu as an ‘armed extension’ of the prevailing economic order, the OECD is seen by many as part of a dominant discourse seeking ‘the movement toward the neoliberal utopia of a pure and perfect market’ (Bourdieu, 1998).

Although the OECD was originally conceived as concerned primarily with economic policy, education has taken on an important part in its mandate (Grek, 2009: 24; OECD, 1996: 7), reframed as central to national economic competitiveness and linked to an emerging ‘knowledge economy’ conceptualised as:

Production and services based on knowledge-intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technical and scientific advance, as well as rapid obsolescence. The key component of a knowledge economy is a greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources. (Powell and Snellman, 2004:199)

National governments realised that the choice was between a national economy based on knowledge, technology, innovation and high value added, where the basis of competitive advantage is the effective utilisation of knowledge resources (Clarke, 2001), and an economy based on the competition of standardised commodities, low skills and poor wages. The OECD points to where the challenge lies for schools and universities within individual, national systems of education: ‘Knowledge and information tend to be abundant; what is scarce is the capacity to use them in meaningful ways’ (OECD, 1996:11). OECD’s ‘meaningful’ however may be equated with ‘economically beneficial’. The adoption of the conception of a ‘knowledge economy’ leaves no room for other or pre-existent conceptualisations of what it might mean to ‘come to know’.

The OECD's educational agenda has become significant in framing policy options not just at the national level but also by constituting a 'global policy space in education' (ibid; Lingard and Grek 2007; Lingard, Rawolle, and Taylor 2005). Described as one of the 'missionaries of our time' (Barnett and Finnemore 1999: 712) the organisation has become one of the most powerful agents of transnational education governance. Martens (2007) suggests that the OECD's 'comparative turn' and its scientific approach to political decision making has established the organisation's output as 'indisputable', with its educational indicators accepted without question, despite the expressed need for contextualisation in their interpretation (Nòvoa and Yariv-Mashal, 2003).

The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) now receives 30% of its Education Directorate's funding and forms the organisation's platform for policy construction, mediation and diffusion at a national, international and global level (Rizvi and Lingard, 2006). This triennial study examines the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in compulsory education and now extends in scope to fifty-seven countries, including twenty-seven non-members. It is the international dimension of the study, overriding the boundaries of Europe for instance, which gives PISA a particularly significant weight as an indicator of the success or failure of education policy (Grek, 2009: 27). Results are eagerly awaited at the end of each three year cycle, with enormous media interest focusing upon the urgent need for a political response and upon PISA ratings as evaluating successive administrations' effectiveness.

The PISA project strengthens the development of a neoliberal educational discourse both nationally and globally, promoting the neoliberal goals of the OECD (Uljens 2007:2). De-contextualisation, commensurability and policy orientation have been the key ingredients contributing to PISA's success. The focus upon students' capacity to enter the labour market with core skills has taken PISA's focus away from less explicit educational aims which resist measurement, for instance democratic participation, artistic endeavour, understanding of politics or history. This is not simply a testing regime but is constructed and operates under a clear and specific policy framework which must be adopted by participant countries if they are to improve their future PISA scores and thereby improve their standing in attracting capital investment (Grek, 2009: 28).

### **1.1.2 Standards, accountability, performativity**

So what effect does the PISA project and its neoliberal agenda have upon the educational milieu of the United Kingdom, and upon its schools, pupils, teachers, and in our context here, music teachers? Music educator Pam Burnard writes that it is well established now that ‘standards’ in education are one of the key drivers of teaching and learning. In the battle for ratings schools are judged and regulated by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) which conducts national inspections. The Department for Education publishes performance tables for each school in England, incorporating assessment results, progress and value-added measures. School league tables were introduced by John Major’s Conservative government in 1991 as part of the ‘Citizens’ Charter’. Burnard writes:

Schools and teachers are living with, and in, a climate of increasing accountability, league tables, politically-driven targets, and high-stakes tests. (Burnard, 2011: 22)

Focussing here upon the consequences within the music classroom she observes:

It is increasingly apparent that the system, tasks and methods that music teachers use for summative assessment often constrain their capacity to reinforce and communicate a holistic view of quality in their daily music classroom practice and interactions with students. (ibid: 29)

Implicit here is the suggestion that in fulfilling the requirements to ever more effectively assess pupils’ achievement and to find ways of continually improving their performance teachers have to work against their own professional values.

Accountability has become an integral part of the educational system and the day-to-day practice of educators in many countries around the world (Biesta, 2004: 233). In England and Wales a decisive moment in the rise of the culture of accountability was the passage of the 1988 Education Reform Act which redefined parents as ‘consumers’ who were, in principle, given the right to choose a school for their child. At the same time schools were reconceptualised as small businesses whose income was to become dependent on their success in attracting customers within competitive local school markets. This is not a free market however, but one highly regulated by the state, to which the Act gave the right to determine precisely what was to be taught in schools through the national curriculum, and to enforce regular testing and the publication of league tables (Gewirtz, 2002: x).

Gert Biesta investigates the impact of ‘accountability’ on education, drawing the distinction between two meanings of accountability, a ‘managerial’ notion based in a strictly financial context and a more general meaning where accountability involves taking responsibility and

‘being answerable to’ (Biesta, 2004: 234). The current, ‘managerial’ use of accountability extends the financial discipline of submitting audited accounts to all areas of activity, resulting in practices having to adapt to the auditing process. Organisations are to be made auditable at any price (Charlton, 2002). Accountability as a system of mutual responsibility rather than as a system of governance was the dominant tradition before the rise of the technical-managerial approach. Discussions about accountability in the late 1970s and early 80s were focused on a professional interpretation where teachers were responsible to themselves as professionals, to their colleagues and to pupils, parents and society at large, as an integral part of educational professionalism rather than as an external demand (Poulson, 1996, 1998).

Gewirtz characterises this transformation as a shift from ‘welfarism’, prior to the Education Reform Act of 1988, with its public service ethos and professional values of equity, care, social justice and co-operation, to the ‘new-managerialism’ of ‘post-welfarism’, characterised by a customer-oriented ethos, decisions driven by efficiency and cost-effectiveness and an emphasis on competition.<sup>3</sup> If schools are accountable to the government as the provider of their financial resources this should create the possibility for a more democratic face of accountability, based in the relationship between school as providers and parents and pupils as consumers, yet Biesta contends that these opportunities are foreclosed by a lack of any direct relationship between these parties.<sup>4</sup> The new forms of accountability which ostensibly offer accountability to the public only in fact impose forms of central control, focused on accountability to regulators, removing the real stakeholders from the accountability ‘loop’ (O’Neill, 2002). Institutions begin to adapt themselves to the requirements of accountability rather than the other way round, easily leading to a situation which is detrimental for the consumers of public services. The primary question is no longer what schools can do for their students but what students can do for their schools (Apple,

---

<sup>3</sup> Gewirtz’s study provides an account of the devastating impact of the new managerialism on the day-to-day functioning of England’s secondary schools (Gewirtz, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Biesta writes of the ‘reconfiguration of the relationship between the state and its citizens’, which has become less a political relationship between people and government concerned together about the common good, and more an economic relationship between state as provider and taxpayer as consumer of public services (Biesta, 2004:237), and suggests that the political sphere itself may have disappeared. Citizens have a say in what kind of services they want but no participation in a wider democratic deliberation as to what the citizenry in general would consider desirable. Economic relationships have replaced political relationships making democratic relationships difficult if not impossible to establish

2000: 235). Accountability has become an end in itself rather than a means of achieving other ends.

Music educator Pam Burnard writes that the development of an audit and surveillance culture has led school leaders to make greater demands on teachers:

The focus on performance targets, delivering better results, raising standards, benchmarks, and accountability is related to the discourse of performativity . . . In the United Kingdom, the dominant model of schooling is a ‘high performance’ one – for the most part, students are valued to the extent that their attainments contribute to the school’s organisational performance. The pressure under which both pupils and teachers seek to improve performance and raise standards is immense and can . . . undermine the purpose, aspirations, and justification of the school. (Burnard, 2011: 26; see also Fielding, 2007)

Performativity used in this sense is rooted in Jean-François Lyotard’s development of the term as referring to the political and bureaucratic mechanisms of control which drive towards the achievement of goals in increasingly efficient ways. The discourse of performativity requires teachers to fulfil externally applied edicts and commands without allowing for the exercise of individual or ethical judgement (ibid: 28).

Jean-François Lyotard’s influential text ‘The Postmodern condition: A report on knowledge’ deals with the issue of how knowledge is legitimised following the collapse of the ‘meta-narrative’ (Lyotard, 1984). Drawing on Talcott Parsons’ conception of society as a self-regulating system (Parsons, 1967) Lyotard developed his notion of ‘performativity’, the legitimisation of knowledge in society through the principle of ‘optimal performance’ first applied in the development and application of technology.<sup>5</sup> The principles under which technology operates have led us to seek the maximising of output, the information gained for instance, with the minimising of input, the energy expended in the process. Technology is therefore a game pertaining not to the true, the just, or the beautiful, etc., but to efficiency: a technical ‘move’ is ‘good’ when it does better and / or expends less energy than another (Lyotard, 1984: 44). These principles have increasingly been applied to aspects of social ‘systems’, particularly those concerned with the transmission of knowledge. Performativity compels all discourses in education to conform to a logic of efficiency (Lyotard, 1984; Locke, 2008: 80). Central to its functioning is the translation of complex social processes into simple figures or categories of judgement (Ball, 2003: 217). Knowledge which is seen as complex and not easily assimilated is quickly abandoned.

---

<sup>5</sup>The true goal of the system . . . is the organization of the global relationship between input and output – in other words, performativity’ (Lyotard, 1984: 11).

Burnard identifies the tension in current UK educational policies between the sharply diverging agendas of ‘creativity’ and ‘performativity’ (Burnard, 2011).<sup>6</sup> In her context of specifically music education, she suggests that rather than promoting innovative, fresh approaches where pupils are allowed to develop ideas freely into musical forms, the pressures of performativity might emphasise the acquisition of skills through the manipulation of materials, tools and musical-cognitive processes to produce particular musical outcomes (Burnard, 2011: 27). The prioritising of the increasingly efficient achievement of goals in terms of learning outcomes may limit the range of musical responses pupils are able to make. Conceptions of ‘musical knowing’ may become narrow and constrained, where only those aspects of musical knowledge which are easily packaged up, assessed and lacking in nuance or complexity are permitted in the music curriculum. This sort of tension experienced regularly by music teachers in the classroom is manifest in another guise in meta-policy decrees which issue from international organisations such as the OECD.

### **1.1.3 The role of the arts in policy aims**

#### **i) Encouraging innovation**

Meta-policy documents from Europe and beyond reflect an instrumental view of arts education, emphasising the role of the arts in school to facilitate creativity in other disciplines, to the economic benefit of each nation. An OECD workshop report in May 2011 explored the relationship between education and innovation through initiatives regarding arts and science education. We read:

Education and training systems are increasingly under pressure to empower people to innovate and quickly respond to new skills needs generated by innovations. While lack of skills limits the amount and the diffusion of innovation, innovating requires a diverse set of skills that may vary across sectors, organisations and activities. In addition to disciplinary competences, skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and the ability to communicate and work in complex problem-solving teams are vital to innovation. (OECD, 2011: 1)

---

<sup>6</sup> Ian Munday’s paper, *Creativity: Performativity’s poison or its antidote?* suggests however that the ‘perceived dichotomy between creativity and performativity is, in some respects, a false one . . . due in part to a thin and superficial adoption of the term ‘performativity’ in educational writing and a rather modish, evangelical (if not cynical) treatment of creativity’ (Munday, 2013: 331). Munday argues that ‘modern educational conceptions of creativity have everything to do with performativity in Lyotard’s sense’ and that ‘the difference between the kind of performativity found in a teach-to-the-test approach to schooling and creative performativity is that, in the former, risk taking is a possible threat to the system whereas in the latter it is demanded’ (ibid).

Yet the same OECD workshop report observes:

An obstacle for innovation in education was seen in the strong emphasis on accountability and testing in some countries that may limit initiative, risk-taking and experimentation by teachers and school leaders. (OECD, 2011: 5)

The international drive for raising standards through assessment is seen here to be limiting this potential for creativity and innovation. The underlying market-driven ideology which propels educational aims globally denies educators the capacity to take risks and be innovative in the ways deemed necessary for pupils to become successful employees in the world economy.

The OECD workshop report suggest that arts education is often expected to enhance student motivation and instil cognitive habits that are useful in other contexts, though there tends to be little theory or empirical evidence to support this expectation. It concludes:

Overall, arts education is important for human development in its own right and should be defended on this basis, whether or not the instrumental justification of the transfer benefits of arts education can be demonstrated. Research has not yet demonstrated that arts education is a means of promoting innovation, creativity or success in non-arts, academic subjects. (OECD, 2011:7)

At the conclusion of her extensive survey for the OECD Winner states, ‘The primary justification for arts education should remain the intrinsic importance of the arts and the related skills they develop’ (Winner et al, 2013: 11).

## **ii) Facilitating social cohesion**

The emphasis on the individual rather than on the wider society in the current political landscape has encouraged the sense of isolated individuals in a quasi-contractual relationship with others, with society, or the state. Moves to offset the dominant individualist, consumerist outlook have included initiatives such as the introduction of ‘citizen education’ in school. Both the OECD and the Council of Europe place great emphasis on the role of arts education in promoting intercultural awareness and social cohesion:

Cultural education, which is learning and practising the arts, as well as learning through the arts using transversal pedagogical means, should also be understood as using the arts for the promotion of cultural and social objectives, in particular mutual respect, understanding and tolerance vis-à-vis others, appreciation of diversity, team work and other social skills, as well as creativity, personal development and the ability to innovate. (Council of Europe, 2009:3)

Here arts education is seen as useful in bringing about social change on behalf of the governments of Europe and in mopping up the fall-out from the loosening of social structures through globalisation.

## **Reflection**

Can creativity and innovation survive let alone be promoted in the present culture of (OECD-prescribed) performativity? Is social cohesion a reasonable expectation from practice in school-based arts and music education within the context of pupil-consumers, where league tables set one school against another? It seems that the meta-policies of international bodies and the national policy-making of successive, recent British governments have promoted mutually exclusive values. Innovation and social cohesion, the OECD and Council of Europe's vision for arts education, cannot be realised within the framework of standards, accountability and performativity which has been allowed to shape the educational milieu of recent decades.

### **1.2 From accountability to responsibility**

The present culture of accountability within education in Britain ultimately makes 'relationships of responsibility' impossible (Biesta, 2004: 250). The former conception of 'accountability' (in contrast with the newer 'managerial' notion) was associated with responsible action. Biesta turns to Bauman's articulation of postmodern morality where his idea of 'responsibility' takes central place. Having lost the trusty moral rules and structures of the past we are faced with choices and dilemmas as to which of the competing authorities to obey, which rules to follow and which to breach, as all 'speak in different voices'. 'It transpires sooner or later that following the rules, however scrupulously, does not save us from responsibility' (Bauman, 1993: 20).

Biesta writes:

The culture of accountability makes it very difficult for the relations between parent / students and educators / institutions to develop into mutual, reciprocal, and democratic relationships, relationships that are based on a shared concern for the common educational good (or goods) – relationships, in other words, characterized by responsibility. (Biesta, 2004: 249)

Following Bauman's thinking Biesta asserts that the techno-managerial approach to accountability cannot be reconciled with an approach in which responsibility is central. Bauman explores the processes of 'socialization' and 'sociality' to examine the ways in

which morality has become difficult under the conditions of modern life. Socialization ‘domesticates’ the moral impulse in order to provide structure to society by putting distance between actor and receiver of the action in the name of efficiency, by exempting some Others from the category of potential objects of moral responsibility (dehumanising), and ‘disassembling’ the object of action into a set of traits, instead of a potentially moral self, so that encounter with a whole person is unlikely.

These processes render social action ‘indifferent’ and represent an ‘out-rationalizing’ of the moral impulse (Bauman, 1993: 119). Sociality on the other hand brings individuals together in the ‘crowd’ where individuals simply ‘do’ and ‘are’, a state in which the question of responsibility will not arise. Both sets of processes create a situation where heteronomy of rules or of crowds takes the place of the autonomy of the moral self. Bauman urges us to ‘take responsibility for our responsibility’. Biesta responds by suggesting that it is a professional task for us as educators to see that responsibility is an essential component of educational relationships. Redefining our relationships on the basis of responsibility might be a way to regain and reclaim the political dimension of accountability, taking responsibility for that which is of common concern (ibid: 250).

Influenced by the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, Bauman holds that being responsible is our human condition, ‘the first reality of the self’ (Bauman, 1993:13). Levinas uses the idea of ‘proximity’ to express the unique quality of the moral relationship, not concerned with physical closeness but understood as a ‘suppression of distance’, an attentiveness or waiting, ‘the state of permanent attention come what may. Responsibility never completed, never exhausted, never past’ (Levinas, 1981: 84, 87, 88).

### **1.3 Towards ethical teaching in school – learning from Levinas**

The thinking of Emmanuel Levinas has become influential upon an increasingly wide range of commentators and scholars, including now those within the education research community. His Talmudic writings and his works of philosophy explore in different registers the ‘new subjectivity’ he envisages (Katz, 2012: 212). More recent research has brought together these two streams of Levinas’ writing to elucidate how his thinking was rooted in his practice as a teacher, and to explore his interest as an educator as fundamental to the coherence of his philosophy.

Levinas was a teacher and for many years Director of the *École Normale Israélite et Orientale* (ENIO) from 1947, prior to and during his late-developing, academic career. On his eightieth birthday Levinas recalled:

After Auschwitz, I had the impression that, in taking on the directorship of the *École Normale Israélite et Orientale* I was responding to a historical calling . . . I am still mindful and proud of it today. (Quoted in Malka, 2006: 84)<sup>7</sup>

Levinas saw teaching and how we educate our young people to be fundamental to any hope for the future in reorienting ourselves to a new subjectivity in a turning away from the ‘crisis of humanism’ that led to the catastrophe of the Shoah (Levinas, 2006: 45), the loss of ethical subjectivity (Levinas, 2000:160).

Fundamentally for Levinas, education is about seeing the face of the Other who teaches us. Recalling Husserl, he wrote, ‘We do not dissociate a lesson from the face that was the necessary interlocutor’ (Malka, 2006: xxxiv). Strhan writes:

Levinas leads us to consider the face through which we are taught as not just the face of the specific human teacher, but the manifestation of the Other, always vulnerable to my response. But through Levinas’ comment here, we can see that the relational means by which texts, traditions and rituals are handed down to us affects how we receive those gifts. (Strhan, 2012 : 202)<sup>8</sup>

We learn from Levinas’ outlook that the ‘face’ of the teacher is bound up with the moment of learning in the pupil, that the teacher enables an encounter with the Other and with the infinity of the subject being taught, as I will examine in Chapter 3.

This rich, relational conception of education throws a certain light upon the cultures of standards, accountability and performativity addressed above. The experience will not be a

---

<sup>7</sup> At the birthday celebration which gathered together former colleagues and students, Ady Steg told a fable which speculates upon Levinas’ approach to the throne of Heaven. God asks Levinas what he did with his life and Levinas replies that he believed in the Good and wrote about it, he studied with Husserl and Heidegger, and with the enigmatic Jewish teacher Chouchani, but the Almighty remains unimpressed. Levinas mentions that he was director of the ENIO and God is suddenly interested: ‘Director of the school, you a prestigious philosopher?’ Katz comments: ‘While the Heavenly Throne considers this particular task to be of the greatest importance, this surprise reveals an awareness of the possibility that not everyone would see things in the same way, thus making Levinas’ devotion to the school all the more admirable’ (Katz, 2012: 210).

<sup>8</sup> Strhan reflects on Levinas’ description of the Rabbis down the ages breathing on the ‘flame which traverses History’ and coaxing it back to life in language which recalls the priestly sacrifice of burnt offerings in the Temple (Levinas, 1990: 53; Caygill, 2002:200) and writes: ‘It is the task of the teacher to ‘read’ in such a way that they breathe onto the texts and objects of study that they offer to their students, a reading that requires effort, the sacrifice of breath, in coaxing flames from the embers . . . This reading stands for an attentiveness that both undoes and elevates the subject as she turns in responsibility toward what is beyond herself . . . This reading is the very task of education, an act of translation dependent upon the fidelity and hope of the teacher, her responsibility and the responsibility of the one who is taught’(Strhan, 2012: 202).

‘standard’ one in any way, as each encounter between pupils and teacher is dependent upon the *responsibility* of the one and the *responsivity* of the other. Performativity finds no purchase in a conception of education as encounter with the Other, unquantifiable and infinite, as explored in Chapter 3. There could hardly be a more ‘accountable’ milieu for learning than the one Levinas sets before us, where ‘coming to know’ emerges from the encounter between pupils and teacher. The richness and openness of Levinas’ conception of education stands in stark contrast to a tightly controlled regime of testing, which promotes a reduced and impoverished model of knowledge in the name of accountability.<sup>9</sup>

#### **1.4 Towards ethical relationships in school music**

How might we take responsibility for our responsibility in the music classroom? Towards the end of his recent book John Finney (2011) explores ethical relationships within music-making in school and asks, following the work of Nel Nodding (2003), if as teachers, whatever our specialism, we are firstly to ‘care’. Finney sets processes of ‘coming to know’ (Dewey, 1925/1958: 330) within an ethical framework, where emancipatory awareness achieved through examples of skilful ‘playful-dialogic encounter’, sees teacher and pupils emerge wanting to know more and understand more: ‘Skills, knowledge and understanding, considered ethically, are imminent to the life of the learner, the teacher and the music that is to be known’ (Finney, 2011: 162).

Finney concludes his book with a proposal for music education to be an ethical endeavour where relationships between pupils and teacher ‘remain curious’ and attentive within a critical approach to learning. He writes:

We need to find fresh purpose for music education, a music education that in a strong and positive sense is burdened by the self and that has interest in a way of knowing that recognizes the quest for self-realisation, self-understanding and a productive, creative, critical and authentic orientation to the world. (Finney, 2011: 141-2)

---

<sup>9</sup> An analogy from Levinas’ writing on Jewish education elucidates this. In her chapter ‘Ethics, fecundity and the primacy of education’ Claire Katz reflects on Levinas’ statement that the model of religious education understood by Catholics and Protestants will not suffice for Jewish pupils; Jewish education is not about teaching a Catechism but firstly about learning the ancient language which enables pupils to understand the ‘living conversations that keep the text dynamic rather than static, preventing Jewish education from becoming simply learning the Catechism. The original language opens up the text and allows the multiple voices and interpretations to emerge, so that the teaching of Jewish sources doesn’t run the risk of teaching dogma’ (Katz, 2012: 213-4). The quality of learning Levinas describes involves learning the ‘language’ so that knowledge isn’t just handed down unthinkingly, closed and lifeless, but may be explored through many different viewpoints and opened up to form new perspectives of richness and complexity, life-giving and meaningful.

This is what is required, he insists, for children to be able to survive the uncertain and ever-changing society in which they are growing up. He writes of the distinction between music education as self-realisation and music education for musical understanding, involving Fromm's notion of 'humanistic conscience' (Fromm, 1941/2007), unburdened by the self:

It is the tensions arising between a music education as self-understanding and a music education as a cognitive discipline that seeks resolution in an acceptance of a form of understanding that recognizes 'being in the world' and 'being in the world with others'. In this way musical understanding takes on a particular depth and ethical significance. Music education seeks out a 'humanistic conscience'. (Finney, 2011: 5)

This study seeks to investigate how pupils learn to 'be in the world' and especially to 'be in the world with others' through their experience of music-making in and outside of school, and to use the lens of Levinas' philosophy to draw out the ethical significance of musical understanding and of music-making.

## **Reflection**

In seeking out a 'humanistic conscience' music education must find an ethical underpinning, which Finney locates in the 'ethical meeting' of teacher and pupil (ibid: 163). As Chapter 3 will argue, Levinas offers a way of 'encountering the Other' which not only reorientates relations in the classroom and beyond, but also breaks open narrow models of knowledge shaped by the demands of the standards, accountability and performativity narratives, and offers an ethical basis for pupils and teacher together to encounter the other in an infinitely rich conception of music education. The next chapter will lay out influential strands of thinking in music educational research over the past two decades in order to trace the turning-away from polarised positions and the gradual move towards conceiving of music primarily in terms of relationship, and as ethical encounter.

## Chapter 2:

Situating my study: the emergence of  
the notion of music education as  
ethical encounter

---

## **Introduction**

The last chapter briefly outlined priorities for arts education articulated by the Council of Europe and by the OECD and described how in Britain the reach of neoliberalism deep into education has brought about a series of politically unacknowledged dichotomies. Looking behind the political realities of present educational policy, this chapter will likewise provide a light sketching of major currents of thinking about music in educational research over recent decades, selectively, and leaving aside some significant voices in the process, in order to trace the development of the notion of music education as ‘ethical encounter’, before delving far more deeply into the main work underpinning this thesis - that of Levinas.

The chapter begins by setting out competing notions of what music-making entails, conceptions which have tended to polarise into ‘aesthetic’ and ‘praxial’ positions. It goes on to examine what model of musical ‘knowing’ should be adopted in the classroom, and the emerging recognition of a need for an ethical basis to practice in music education in schools, growing out of the ‘ethical turn’ in social sciences which stems from the increasing influence of philosophers of the ‘other’, in opposition to discourses of ‘performativity’ which bring a narrow and impoverished conception of knowledge. Having traced the emergence of ‘music education as ethical encounter’ the chapter concludes by situating the present study within this stream of thinking and outlining the research questions which provide its impetus.

### **2.1 Polarities and paradoxes**

At a conference of researchers from the international music educational community in 1994, David Elliott observed that many music educators were unsure as to how to think about the nature and values of music education, because they realised that most traditional explanations were either incomplete or flawed (Elliott, 1994). Conceptions of music education will necessarily depend upon understandings of how music or music-making is conceived.<sup>10</sup> Heidi Westerlund writes:

The nature of a philosophical view of music education depends largely upon the way music, the subject matter, is defined . . . Theorists do not agree on what the essence of music is, on how to learn and teach it, or on what we mean by musical growth. (Westerlund, 2002: 14)

---

<sup>10</sup> This study in step with the wider research literature will use ‘music’, and particularly my preferred term ‘music-making’, and ‘music education’ interchangeably, as much of the discussion concerning one pertains to the other also (See Figure 2:6 for clarification of terms).

Does music have an ‘essence’? Is music as a curriculum subject understood as ‘music-making’ or ‘music as cultural artefact’? Most commentators agree upon music’s importance in human life but does its value lie in its culturally specific functions, or does it stand apart from everyday experience, magnificent in its autonomy? The mid 1990s saw the publication of a number of significant treatises in the field (Elliott, 1995; Jorgensen, 1997; Small, 1998). Randall Allsup recalls:

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a floodgate of philosophical research on music and music education poured forth, altering the educational terrain in profound ways . . . Scholars claimed new theoretical territory and made the field of music education philosophy an exciting place to do research. (Allsup, 2009: 55)

For the last twenty years the discussion has intensified amongst music educationalists. How might we conceive of music in all its diversity? Are there elements of music-making common to all sorts of music which enable us to conceive of music in an abstract fashion? Are there universal values inherent in music, transferable across different cultural expressions, or are musical meanings socially generated, arising through local practices? Is it possible even to recognise another’s conception of music? By the 1990s conceptualisations of music education had become polarised, particularly with regards to the significance or otherwise of the *aesthetic* conceptualisation of music and music education. Two opposing camps represented the universalist and the relativist outlooks: the first, where music is conceived of as autonomous, culturally transcendent; the second, where music is understood within its specific cultural context, and musical meanings are generated socially.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> This ancient polarity stems from Plato’s notion of unchanging, absolute musical forms which embody eternal values versus an Aristotelian ‘praxial’ view where the question is rather what music is ‘good for’ in a particular situation. See Mark, 1982.

### 2.1.1 Music education as aesthetic education

A ‘utilitarian’ view of music education held sway in Britain and in North America until the mid-twentieth century, when societal change led to the search for new rationales for music education.<sup>12</sup> Bennett Reimer’s ‘A philosophy of music education’ published in 1970 became highly influential, as did Keith Swanwick’s *A basis for music education* in 1979 in the UK. Reimer didn’t claim a new theory at the time, calling his philosophy a ‘continuing refinement’ (Allsup, 2010: 51). His view of ‘music education as aesthetic education’ (MEAE) effectively established a dominant paradigm amongst American music academics and teachers during the 1970s and 80s (Reimer, 1970, 1989, 2003).<sup>13</sup>

Reimer’s philosophy is guided by the notion that music enables a deeper understanding of complex, often inexpressible feelings, and that by interacting with music we have a deeper understanding of ourselves and our world (Reimer, 2003: 85). He emphasised that music and the arts are ‘basic modes of cognition’ (ibid: 5) and that music’s cognitive function is necessarily non-conceptual, so that understandings and values about music vary from person to person: ‘A single, agreed-upon meaning acceptable to everyone is neither possible or [sic] desirable’ (ibid: 57). Reimer rejects notions of music as a ‘language’ but sees an education in music as an education in feeling. Allsup (2009) observes that Reimer has both built upon and gone beyond the eighteenth and nineteenth century ways of understanding the ‘aesthetic’ explored further in the following chapter) which focussed upon problems of form, representation and feeling. At the same time Reimer has broken out of utilitarian approaches to music education and claimed a place for the ‘arts as the means by which humans can actively explore and experience [this] unbound richness of human subjective possibilities’ (Reimer, 1989: 59).

---

<sup>12</sup> By 1954 the National Music Educators Conference in the USA was looking for a re-examination of ‘basic concepts’ which might forge a way forwards into the emerging technological age and which would rearticulate philosophical and theoretical foundations for music education. See resulting publication (Henry (ed.), 1958) and especially the chapter by A. Britton, *Music in Early American Public Education: A Historical Critique*.

<sup>13</sup> Reimer wrote in 1989 that aesthetics serves as the ‘bedrock’ of the music education profession, acknowledging the influence of the aesthetic writings of eighteenth and nineteenth century philosophers (Reimer, 1989a, xi). Yet he advocated ‘the broadest possible’ conception of the term ‘aesthetics’, ‘encompassing all past and present philosophical discourse on the entire range of issues related to aesthetics and philosophy of art’ (Reimer, 2003: 7), drawing also upon the work of John Dewey (1934), Suzanne Langer (1942, 1967, [1953] 1979) and Leonard B. Meyer (1956), and influenced too by the calls for action from the Tanglewood (1967) and Yale symposia (see Choate, 1968), Music Educator’s National Conference (MENC now renamed NAFME) and other bodies committed to change in music educational practices.

### 2.1.2 Aesthetic knowing

In Britain too conceptions of the 'aesthetic' in music education were being explored (Swanwick, 1979), but without becoming codified into a unified practice or a dominant ideology as it seems Reimer's notions were in North America. Advocates of aesthetic education in Britain held diverging views on what an aesthetic education involves, on how this should be realised in school. Was aesthetic education located in each individual arts subject, or within the arts as a grouping, or did its scope encompass the whole curriculum? The curricular framework set by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) in 1985 designated areas of experience and one such area was the 'creative-aesthetic' (DES, 1985). Finney writes:

The belief that music education could be conceived as aesthetic education had grown steadily from mid-century. It promised to release music education from its utilitarian past and to establish it as an intrinsically worthwhile discipline: music for music's sake and not for any other. (Finney, 2011: 120)

Music as an aesthetic discipline could concentrate upon its inherent values and in doing so contribute to a 'liberal education'. Finney observes that HMI had come to recognise the aesthetic as a significant dimension of the whole curriculum, although there was no clear understanding of the nature of aesthetic experience and knowledge.

This broad conception of aesthetic education across the curriculum has its roots in the philosophy of John Dewey (1916, 1934). Plummeridge explains:

For Dewey, the aesthetic is an essential qualitative aspect of all those genuine experiences which contribute to the process of personal growth, or the 'experiential continuum' that is education. The aesthetic is by no means confined to the arts. Scientific, mathematical, historical, artistic or any other experiences can be said to have an aesthetic quality. Indeed it is the fusion of the aesthetic and the cognitive in an encounter that constitutes a proper and therefore meaningful experience. (Plummeridge, 1999: 116)

It is through the processes of aesthetic experience, writes Finney, that unknowable responses become knowable and intelligent: 'This is what distinguishes the aesthetic curriculum' (Finney 2002: 123). The aesthetic was a mode of knowing in any discipline.

Dewey had introduced an important shift from 'knowledge' to 'knowing'. Finney writes:

Use of the word 'knowing' gave status to awareness and perception and recognised the involvement of states of mind. These all contrasted with other kinds of knowledge, where description, words, statements and propositions held sway. Together with all the arts, music could establish an identity where the hard dualisms of fact and feeling, cognition and affect, objectivity and subjectivity were, if not completely lost, at least suspended. At the heart of aesthetic knowing was feeling, and feeling was knowable. (Finney, 2002: 122-3)

Philosopher of the arts Louis Arnaud Reid introduced the term ‘cognitive-feeling’ to indicate that feeling was an aspect of cognition, allowing for the investing of feeling and meaning in the music, where musical perception is active, interpretative and knowing (ibid). Reid writes:

The *raison d'être* of art is of course not merely physical or factual but imaginative rendering of *value*, the world of man and nature seen, felt, imagined, judged, by fully living persons. Art is imaginative symbolic embodiment in perceptual phenomena, in physical forms-as-perceived, of unlimited ranges of meaning . . . as apprehended by the sensitive and imaginative minds of artists, and offered to us if we will . . . espouse it. In its meaning-embodied the riches of the physical and the spiritual are gathered in, transmuted, trans-substantiated, metamorphosed, so that the division between physical and spiritual is dissolved. Meanings are drawn in, transformed in aesthetic embodiment and, as embodied, become *localized* in perceived space and time. (Reid, 1985:121-2)<sup>14</sup>

For Reid, all propositional knowledge of music is meaningless unless it is based upon direct, intuitive, first-hand experience. The experience-knowledge of the arts stresses the tacit, personal, revelatory and insightful. The musician, in engaging in musical endeavour, is engaged in ‘coming to know’.

## Reflection

The last section has traced the emergence of ‘music as aesthetic education’ in North America and the diverse understandings this gave rise to in Britain, where the aesthetic became seen variously as relevant to the whole curriculum and as located specifically in arts departments. Dewey’s advocacy of a move from ‘knowledge’ to ‘knowing’ laid foundations for an understanding of ‘aesthetic knowing’, a dynamic, agential act which combines cognition and feeling, whilst an attentiveness to localised meanings and the ability to gather in the riches of the physical and the spiritual points towards an ‘aesthetic sensitivity’ which arts educator Peter Abbs suggests may form a profoundly subversive bulwark against the forces of managerialism encroaching into education.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Reid then quotes Shakespeare who, he says, ‘as usual, has said it’:

‘The poet’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

And, as imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen

Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name’ (from Theseus’s speech in Act 5 scene I of *A Midsummer’s Night’s Dream*)

<sup>15</sup> Abbs developed a view of aesthetic education as ‘subversive’, going against the flow of the ‘depletion’ of education and culture: ‘Over the last two decades our educational system has come to resemble a broiler house

By the late 1980s in Britain the tide had turned in educational policy and the language of ‘aesthetic knowing’ or ‘aesthetic sensitivity’ had largely disappeared from the public sphere. John Finney writes, ‘The Education Reform Act of 1988 expunged the aesthetic dimension of education from the nation’s consciousness’ (Finney, 2002: 128). He reflects upon the writing of philosopher Herbert Marcuse to suggest that the aesthetic realm was seen by the architects of the National Curriculum as having the dangerous potential to be ‘free from necessity’ (ibid). This sat uncomfortably with the new curriculum which sought to control the content of education and ‘raise standards’, and which emphasised a model of knowledge as independent of the knower. ‘Education was about equipping children with knowledge and there was to be one size of knowledge to fit all’ (Finney, 2002: 128-9).

### **2.1.3 A praxial view of music education**

The ‘aesthetic’ conception of music waned in influence across the Atlantic too, and became a point of great contention for music educationalists in the United States in the 1990s, criticised for ‘segregating artistic pursuits from real life’ (Elliott 1994: 8) and emphasising the ‘work’ as a passive, objective reality divorced from the processes of music-making, and abstracted from its social context. A shift occurred within the music education community away from the notion of music envisaged as a noun, relying on an ‘imaginary museum of musical works’ (Goehr, 1992).<sup>16</sup> In his article of 1991 Philip Alperson set out a ‘praxial’ view where an ‘attempt is made to understand [music] in terms of the variety of meanings and values evidenced in actual practice in particular cultures’ (Alperson, 1991: 233) drawing upon the ancient Greek distinction between three areas of knowledge – *theoria*, *techne* and *praxis* – corresponding roughly to the English terms theory, technique and practice. According to this view different forms of musical endeavour are best regarded as different ‘practices’, with aesthetic approaches to music ‘placed alongside’ the functions which musical practices serve in different cultural contexts (Scott Goble, 2003: 23).

A colleague of Alperson’s, David Elliott, proposed his ‘new way of thinking’ in *Music Matters* (1995), a *praxial* philosophy of music and music education, where ‘music is

---

regulated by managerial and functional dictates – a place devoid of energy and animating spirit’ (Abbs, 2003: 1).

<sup>16</sup> Regelski, critical of this ‘aesthetic’ outlook, perceives a picture of musical meaning that is ‘timeless, placeless, and faceless’, accounting for the abstractness and inertness of much learning in school music lessons, and its irrelevance in the eyes of most students (Regelski, 2005: 226).

something that people do and make in relation to standards of informed musical and cultural practice' (Elliott, 1994: 9) in opposition to *theoria* involving knowledge for its own sake, encompassing the kind of meanings and values inherent in aesthetic theories. Elliott writes that *praxial* is meant to convey the idea that:

'Music' pivots on particular kinds of human doing-and-making that are purposeful, contextual and socially-embedded. I want to highlight the importance of conceiving 'music' as a particular form of action that is purposeful and situated and, therefore, revealing of one's selfhood and one's relationship with others in a community. 'Praxial' emphasizes that music (as products-and-processes) ought to be understood in relation to the meanings and values evidenced in actual music making, music listening and musical outcomes in specific cultural contexts. (<http://www.davidelliottmusic.com/music-matters/what-does-praxial-mean/> accessed 07/08/2013)

For Elliott the aim of music education is to develop the musicianship of all pupils through composing, performing and listening, through 'active musical problem-solving in balanced relation to appropriate musical challenges' (Elliott, 1994: 19) and 'to engage learners in musical actions, transactions, and interactions that closely parallel real music cultures' making the music classroom 'a reflective musical practicum, a close representation of viable music-practice situations, or music cultures' (Elliott, 1995: 206). Here is a view of music-making that sees participation in performing activities as essential for pupils to learn to make music.

## **2.2 The turn towards notions of music education as 'ethical'**

Elliott's praxial view of music education provided an effective challenge to the aesthetic view of music education in schools. Thomas Regelski took Elliott's notion further, again in a critique of Reimer's aesthetic education, exploring the 'highly refined ethical discernment' which guides *praxis*, the situatedness of music in each unique context, emphasising the notion of what music is 'good for'. Regelski talks of finding musical value:

Not in disembodied, metaphysical hypotheses concerning aesthetic meaning, but in the constitutive sociality of music and the functional importance of music for the human processes that govern social and thus individual consciousness. (Regelski, 2005: 234)

In his analysis of the overall assumptions and postures at stake in conventional approaches to the music curriculum Regelski emphasises that *praxis* is governed by its ethic of *phronesis*, the need for prudence or 'care-fullness' as Regelski suggests, that focuses on the need to bring about 'right' or 'good' results for human situations, clearly serving the needs of the present situations for which they have been produced. Attention to *phronesis*, Regelski

writes, reminds us that the values and qualities of any praxis are not intrinsic, purely or essentially aesthetic or artistic, fixed forever or for their own sake. In making this point Regelski advocates a broadening of Elliott's concern only with musical traditions, to include the most common 'goods' music serves in 'the life well lived', many of which are amateur, recreational, lay, and naïve in nature and purpose (Regelski, 2000: 87).

Wayne Bowman too emphasises that music-making is an *active* process, and stresses its *intentionality*:

Praxial orientations to music education reject transmission / reception models of teaching and learning. They insist that genuinely musical doings are *intentional* – that they are mindful of musical results . . . Praxis-oriented musical action . . . is mindful of the differences it makes in the lives of those who engage in it. (Bowman, 2009: 6)

It is *intentionality* that defines a praxis as music, and it also establishes the musical process-values involved. Thus, the intention to 'make special' certain human ends via music *is* a musical praxis, and the intention determines the way it is actualized musically. Music contributes to the 'life well-lived' by serving various human goods:

To be musical, to act in ways that have musical integrity, and to educate musically are always contextually situated undertakings. Their meanings are always open, never fixed, or final . . . To engage responsibly in human practices like music and education, then, requires vigilance, care, creative imagination, and a deep commitment . . . to acting rightly. (Bowman, 2009: 7)

Here questions of *purpose* and of *right* and *good* outcomes for social situations become the parameters within which we conceptualise music-making, moving towards a notion of music and therefore of music education which is situated once more, as in Plato's world, within the sphere of *ethics*.

### **2.2.1 The ethical and the praxial - the aesthetic and the agential**

This ethical turn in praxial thinking highlights the need to attend to the 'good' in each human situation that music-making serves, which hinges upon music as relationship, and the necessity to care for the other. The creation of personal and social meaning is a matter of *agency*. The *musical agency* Regelski seeks to recapture for the listener and the amateur musician is seen as redressing the balance from an aesthetic outlook which disenfranchises them:

Music's meaning and value are in and for personal agency, and such personal agency constructs an infinite variety of meanings from the same musical affordances according to personal and other situated conditions. (Regelski, 2005:235)

The 'good time' he describes, 'made special' through music (Regelski employs notions developed by Dissanayake, 1988, 1992) is seen as worthwhile in terms of its sociality and its individuating benefits and other meanings, benefits and uses (Regelski, 2005:235).

It is hard to eliminate aesthetic-type questions from a consideration of 'a good time made special through music'. Some sort of 'aesthetic experience' is in operation here in the intention to 'make special' or the perception of 'making special'. Are these competing conceptualisations in fact two opposing positions? Is it possible to hold together these outlooks, the aesthetic and the praxial, the global and the local? Are they necessarily in conflict? Regelski writes that there is no substitute for ethically oriented action based on informed judgement - that is, *phronesis*. Does the aesthetic not have a part to play in terms of this judgement?

Heidi Westerlund observes that the praxial critique is powerful in terms of Reimer's notion of music education as aesthetic education, but she resists the idea that praxial notions of music and of music education have no place for the aesthetic, and calls for a re-appraisal of the aesthetics of Dewey which she suggests sit well within a praxial outlook:

Although the praxial kind of thinking-in-action while making music, suggested by Elliott, is central in Dewey's thinking, I find Dewey's holistic notion of the aesthetic captures the multi-layered as well as the specific nature of musical events better than the kind of praxialism that we know through Elliott's cognitive approach . . . Dewey's approach leads us to situated, not only individual but also communal, transformative experiences. (Westerlund, 2003: 46)

Meaning for Dewey, Westerlund reminds us, is always a matter of social interaction and use.<sup>17</sup> Unlike an Aristotelian outlook, she writes, Dewey's world involves individual and communal possibilities not yet apparent: 'From this outlook music education is an experiment of our own doing' (ibid: 57). There are endless possibilities which have not yet been experienced within music education.

---

<sup>17</sup> 'The material of esthetic experience in being human – human in connection with the nature of which it is a part – is social' (Dewey, 1934: 326).

## Reflection

This section of the chapter has traced the move from a predominantly *aesthetic* view of music education to an outlook shaped by the notion of music as *praxis*. Regelski's interpretation of praxialism has introduced the question of what is music *good for* in any particular situation, and has opened up questions of ethical practice within music education. How might Regelski's ethical turn adequately inform contemporary practice in contexts where many cultural expressions sit alongside each other within different epistemological outlooks and value systems?

The next part of the chapter considers the response of commentators in music education to the priorities of 'postmodern' thinkers for whom the question of 'difference' is all-important. It goes on to introduce highly influential notions of music and music education as 'encounter' and as 'relationship', seeking to take forwards the ethical, praxial outlook into richer conceptions of music and music education. The question of whether the aesthetic may have a place in contemporary thinking about music education lingers on, inherent though unacknowledged in Regelski's 'making special' and suggested in Westerlund's championing of Dewey.

### 2.2.2 'Self' and 'other': Towards notions of music education as 'encounter'

In a reconsideration of his philosophical approach in response to the various challenges to the concept of 'Music as Aesthetic Education' Bennett Reimer, in a discussion of 'Selfness and otherness in experiencing music of foreign cultures' (2009) identifies the 'core issue of *self* and *other-than-self*' as the conundrum which lies beneath the complex questions arising from a diversity of music-making. 'We need both if we are to be whole' he suggests (Reimer, 2009:108). He seeks a balanced position whereby we may 'cherish what is 'ours' while also benefiting from 'theirs' '. This is achieved, he writes, not by dilution of either but by 'incorporating both into our enriched selfness' (ibid: 108):

We should want to preserve rather than dilute the differences in each music because every difference is a lens through which we are provided a glimpse of the human condition that only that particular music can provide. Each glimpse is precious. (ibid: 115)

We approach something different by means of understanding similarities to ourselves and our practices, as well as noticing the differences. He suggests that the otherness of foreign music is why we need to attend to it, in order to 'integrate what we can of it into our own

experience' (ibid: 114). He asks whether with 'proper and determined effort' we might achieve the 'sharing' of otherness through a willing and open spirit. We cannot shed our selfness, the 'culturally derived beingness of our selves' but we can celebrate this identity without putting up walls 'to keep other selves safely out' (ibid: 118).

Reimer writes of the adjustment of the self to demands from outside the self that is required as we respond to the needs of the musical practice every time we engage in music-making; 'a bending of who one is to the demands of something exterior to oneself' (ibid:120). In studying the music of others we come to a deeper understanding of ourselves both as individuals and as relative to other systems of being. When we yield something of our selfness the differences that seem at first so difficult to assimilate become more intriguing, and instead of selfness being abandoned it becomes expanded (ibid: 121). Despite the distance between them in aspects of their music educational outlook David Elliott concurs with Reimer; a music curriculum which brings in expressions from other cultures 'connects the individual self with the personhood of other *musicers* and audiences in other times and places' and can offer students the opportunity to achieve a central goal of humanistic education: self-understanding through 'other-understanding' (Elliott, 1995:209).

We are moving towards a conception of music education as 'encounter', where self and other meet in some way giving rise to musical processes of 'coming to know', despite the sceptics who hold to the notion of incommensurability.<sup>18</sup> Reimer and Elliott agree upon the value of 'self-understanding' through 'other-understanding' as pupils are brought into an encounter with musical expressions from other cultures. Yet we have not found an ethical basis upon which such 'other-understanding' can be formed. This notion is problematic. Can we really claim to 'understand' the other's music? Are we not in danger of colonising other people's musical practices if we claim to make the conceptual step from 'connecting with others' music to 'understanding' them?

---

<sup>18</sup> The legacy of the so-called 'postmodern' thinkers has been to call into doubt our ability to approach the experience of others in any valid way. In epistemological thinking (in contrast to the use of the same term in 'values' discourses) 'incommensurability' has been used by political theorists and others to describe the notion that we cannot judge between or compare scientific theories, cultural expressions, beliefs etc from different traditions or peoples, as these are deeply embedded in their context and cannot be abstracted from these surroundings. To abstract an example of music-making from its original social context therefore is an act akin to colonial violence.

### 2.2.3 A way forwards: ethical encounters in the classroom

Developing notions of ethical responsibility to those we are musically educating is the basis for one commentator's attempt to bridge the gap between Reimer's universalism and Elliott's praxial localism. Ray Wheeler writes:

The debate between these two philosophies has been contentious and has had the effect of fracturing the philosophical underpinning of the music profession in an irreconcilable way. (Wheeler, 2006: i)

Wheeler's response has been to investigate the philosophical roots of the opposing conceptualisations of music and music education and seek a synergy through the enabling philosophy of a third party. He has examined the philosophical basis of Elliott and Reimer's work and discerned a 'modern articulation of an ancient dialectic between Platonic and Aristotelian ideals'. Reimer's philosophy has its foundation in an abstraction - the idea of music and its value, related to the Platonic notion of the Ideal Form or Idea (Wheeler, 2006:97). Elliott, following Aristotle's example, believes that ideas and structures exist as objects, and through careful thought and observation, may be known (ibid: 122). Wheeler seeks a synergy of the two approaches through the work of philosopher-theologian Knut Løgstrup, whose 'ontological ethics' is articulated in his text *The Ethical Demand* (Løgstrup, 1997). Løgstrup describes how he conceptualises the notion of the two-fold 'ethical demand' he has developed:

First, it receives its content from a fact, from a person to person relationship which can be demonstrated empirically, namely, that one person's life is involved with the life of another person. The point of the demand is that one is to care for whatever in the other person's life that involvement delivers into his or her hands. Second, the demand receives its one-sidedness from the understanding that a person's life is an ongoing gift, so that we will never be in a position to demand something in return for what we do. That life has been given to us is something that cannot be demonstrated empirically (ibid: 123).

Wheeler believes that this combination of the empirical and non-empirical elements of the 'ethical demand' suggests the synergistic position of Løgstrup's philosophy between the empirical approach of Aristotle and the non-empirical notions of Plato and, by extension, the philosophical ideas of Elliott and Reimer; Elliott's notion of contextualized experience as against Reimer's emphasis on the 'education of feeling' (ibid: 158). Wheeler concludes that the task for music teachers is to recognize this trust and to respond as best we are able to the individual demands of our students (ibid:167) allowing, in Løgstrup's words, 'the other person . . . ample time and opportunity to make his or her own world as expansive as possible' (Løgstrup, 1997: 27).

This outlook of relationship as what might be called ‘ontologically basic’ has been explored by educationalist thinkers such as Nel Noddings, who views ‘caring’ as foundational to teaching (1984, 1992), and post-modern theorists such as Bauman who notes that our commitment to the ‘Other’ is guided by ‘the unspoken demand to take care of the Other’ (Bauman, 1993: 60). Returning to Løgstrup (1997), our response to others is a moral action because:

By our attitude to the other person we help to determine the scope and hue of his or her world; . . . We help to shape this other world not by theories and views but by our very attitude toward him or her (ibid: 18).<sup>19</sup>

Studies such as Buzzelli’s *Moral Reflections from a Primary Classroom: One teacher’s perspectives* (2005) have examined teachers’ attitudes and classroom practices in the light of this outlook of relationship as fundamental. Wheeler and Buzzelli conclude their studies with an affirmation of both the moral and ethical orientations required on the part of the teacher but neither seeks an ethical underpinning for wider or more distant relating which might govern our orientation towards music from another cultural context or towards the people with whom such expressions may have originated.

## **Reflection**

This part of the chapter has introduced Regelski’s ethical praxialism as a development of Elliott’s ideas, and has sought a way forwards for ethical practice within a diverse, pluralistic social setting which brings encounters with many varied cultural expressions from different people groups. Reimer and Elliott seem to agree across their philosophical divide on the enriching encounter between ‘self’ and ‘other’ which occurs when unfamiliar musical expressions are brought from one people group to another. Wheeler’s attempts to bridge the philosophical chasm between aesthetic and praxial outlooks has resulted in a turn towards ethical encounter in the classroom, as did Finney’s vision of music education seeking out a ‘humanistic conscience’ at the close of Chapter 1 (see p.15), but doesn’t seem to facilitate ethical encounters beyond this. In examining further the conceptualisation of music education as encounter the next part of the chapter explores notions of ‘music-making as relationship’.

---

<sup>19</sup> The resonance here between Løgstrup and Levinas will become clear in the next chapter as we explore how the ethical relation shapes what we come to know.

## 2.2.4 Music-making as relationship

Christopher Small's influential conceptualisation of 'musicking' posits musical meaning as socially generated, emergent as people relate together as a community (Small, 1998). He sees meaning as residing within the set of relationships established during the performance, both in terms of those between elements of the sound world and those established amongst participants. His contention is that as we take part in the musical act we experience a complexity of relationships which model 'ideal relationships' in the wider world between individuals, between individual and society, between humanity and the natural world, so that we gain a profound sense of who we are. These ideal relationships are non-Platonic, rather, they are as the musickers conceive them to be. Small's ideas, building upon emerging notions of art as something we *do* together, have had a huge impact upon thinking in music education internationally.

There is a significant departure from Elliott's 'praxis' here, as discussed by Odendaal et al:

For Small, musicking takes place as a socio-cultural 'event'. What makes a musical event musical is not a musical work, or a listenable (Elliott, 1995: 39-45) but the specific way in which participants relate to musical sounds, to each other, and to the physical context in which they interact (Small, 1998: 183-4). It is these relationships, rather than the listenable, which is the object of musical activity. (Odendaal et al, 2014:164)

Whereas David Elliott emphasises the action of achieving goals in relation to standards and traditions of music-making within a particular socio-cultural life, Small sees the event of musicking together as at the heart of where musical meaning resides. Small's musicking relates more to the 'openness of possibilities emerging from the music event' (ibid: 165). For Small the social context of a musical event doesn't just affect musical experience but actually *constitutes* our experience of social relationships within the musical event:

Small seems to take this generative power of music as universal in the sense that people everywhere can generate ideals of how their life could be through musical action . . . In Elliott, musical agency seems to focus on a capacity to act . . . to obtain specifically musical goals, whereas Small appears to extend musicking to the capacity to participate in one's community. (ibid: 166, 170)

Here we find a developing conceptualisation of musical *agency* extending out to our functioning as part of the wider community.

Lee Higgins develops the concept of music-making as relationship through an exploration of the practice of *hospitality* in 'The community in Community Music' (Higgins, 2007), building on Derrida's consideration of the parameters of hospitality (Derrida, 2000). The

term stems from the Latin *hospes* and *hostes*, ‘guest’ and ‘enemy’, highlighting the transgressive nature of crossing a threshold, and suggesting that the very parameters (hostilities) inherent within one’s welcome (hosting) is what makes hospitality possible. He asserts that community music practice:

Becomes a preparation for the incoming of the other, generating a porous, permeable, open-ended affirmation. As a practice, Community Music is a democratic form of hospitality promoting equality and access beyond any preconceived limits. The notion of conditional hospitality provides touchstones through which openness, diversity, freedom and tolerance flow. (Higgins, 2007: 284)

Higgins writes of a Community Music band that, through its social hospitality, porous, permeable and open-ended, through an experience of the other which is not ‘separate from’ but invited in to ‘become’ and to remain different if preferred, reinforces its identity.

There is potential for social change inherent in both the conception of *musicking* and of *music-making as an act of hospitality*; perhaps it even becomes possible to change society through musical participation. Musicking may be regarded as a political act in promoting agency, by building a sense of communality. In an article exploring the implications of Small’s notion of musicking for general music education Odendaal et al consider the requirements upon educators if the potential for forming a participatory community is to be realised. This will require:

From the educator a focus in musicking in itself as communicative activity rather than mere transmission of musical information. Music educators should work as dynamos that help the community members to establish new relationships through which to explore, affirm and celebrate their relations, and this activity can be taken as the ultimate goal of musicking. (Odendaal et al, 2014)

Relationship is foundational to the practice of music-making in any context, broadening the focus from the teacher-pupil ethical demand to the wider functioning of a music-making community. But how does ‘relationship’ function in these settings? What processes provoke and undergird these encounters? What about our relationship with the more distant other, not necessarily present in the classroom, and encountered only perhaps through the exercising of the imagination? The next section considers an ethical approach to music education in a wider, political context of *democratic purpose*.

### **2.2.5 The ethical critique of praxialism: political awareness and democratic purpose *contra* performativity discourses**

Introduced by means of Dewey's radical liberal vision of democracy in for example 'Democracy and Education' (Dewey 1916), Paul Woodford's stated aim in his own book 'Democracy and Music Education' is to encourage music teachers to reclaim a 'democratic purpose' for music education by participating in wider intellectual and political conversations concerning the nature and significance of music in all our lives. He writes of music education as, 'in the profoundest sense a search for personal integrity and identity'. Music, he claims, 'can break through our self-defences in ways that language cannot while helping us to empathize with and learn more about others' (Woodford, 2005:86-7):

Regardless of the kind of musical activity pursued, students should be constantly reminded of the necessity of expanding their musical and social horizons while learning how to live with others whose beliefs, tastes, values and sensibilities differ from their own. (ibid: 90)

Music education, according to this view, has a significant role to play in allowing pupils to acquire and exercise skills required for active, democratic citizenship. Music class lessons are occasions for the development of musical, intellectual and moral character (ibid: 85). In this view then music education touches deeply on 'self' and 'other', the development of a pupil's identity whilst becoming aware of different others, those around them immediate and distant.

Woodford is critical of the performance-based 'praxial' approach of David Elliott, where pupils are 'inducted into pre-existing musical cultures and communities of musicians' without the space for a meaningful conversation about the social consequences of the respective musical beliefs and values. Defining music in terms of its use, Elliott says little about the potential misuse or abuse of music or the need for pupils and teachers to make what Woodford terms 'moral choices' or about the importance of children developing a sense of social responsibility (Woodford, 1995:32). He observes,

Music continues to be taught for its own sake or as a means to future employment and not as a means of engaging with the world in search of a more just, inclusive and humane society. (ibid:85)

Kirsten Locke observes that Woodford's concerns reveal the need for an 'indeterminate mode of ethical judgement' (Locke 2008, 82). As there are no grounds for weighing one 'grand narrative' over another, Locke cites Lyotard's suggestion that we navigate the tensions of our postmodern condition by developing the capacity to judge ethically on a case-by-case basis (Lyotard, 1984). Locke extends this line of thinking to music education and writes:

Music is itself open-ended and indeterminate, and as such teaching methods and approaches need to be as well. There are many, many differing types of music and cultures, and teaching prescriptions need to have a sense of indeterminacy and contingency in dealing with them . . . Ethical judgment can be seen as the antidote to performativity in music education through an acknowledgment of the temporal dimension of music as an ethical encounter that involves the temporal necessity of judgment. Ethical judgment unfolds through time, aside and in contrast to Lyotard's techno scientific analysis of performativity. Further, musical action via Lyotard, can then be seen as the very embodiment of the unfolding of time, and a very unique realization of ethical judgment. (Locke 2008: 82)

Ethical judgement is thus here identified as unfolding through time in music, and relying upon a case-by-case approach. How do we make these indeterminate and contingent judgements when engaging in music-making and in coming to know in music education, taking into account how music and especially forms of knowing in music education may be manipulated through politically-driven policy technologies? Here we have the beginnings of a basis for ethical practice in music education in a wider sense, contributing to a rich sense of citizenship, of living alongside the 'other'. Has any sense of music-making for its own sake been lost here? The next section turns to Bowman's most recent thinking which addresses this issue of intrinsic versus extrinsic values.

### **2.2.6 Bowman's 'virtue ethics' conception of music education *contra* intrinsic / extrinsic discourses**

Wayne Bowman leads us back through Kant's thinking, where 'disinterested' aesthetic experience came to be exempt from any moral or practical task, from ethical obligation or commitment, thereby separating music from the practical and ethical and from moral significance. Echoing Regelski's investigations, Bowman seeks to recover the Aristotelian concept of ethics, inspired by MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, in order to investigate an ethical claim for music education. This Aristotelian view of ethics is concerned with the realisation of basic human potential so that acting ethically benefits both individual and society. 'The good' is always grounded and contingent, requiring 'a kind of improvisatory resourcefulness and responsiveness' (Bowman 2001:15) in contrast to the generalised knowledge prevalent in our technical, productive Western outlook. This is a kind of knowledge which cannot be written into static protocols but grows out of one's character, a manifestation of who you are, *phronesis* or practical wisdom, instead of the predominant *techné*.

Using the language of 'virtue ethics' Bowman advocates a focus on the kind of people we tend to become as a result of musical experiences and instruction, and urges us to consider music education as emancipatory in nature, 'an endeavour that frees people from the

debilitating notions that values come ready-made'. Bowman asserts that music education is a fundamentally ethical enterprise; that musical encounters are perhaps uniquely suited to developing ethical dispositions and capacities (Bowman, 2001: 42). He teases out ten ways in which musical endeavours may be considered ethical:

- Music-making nurtures character that is comfortable and skilled in adapting to contingency and particularity, agile at ongoing adjustment.
- Music is inherently social and music-making forms habits of right action with and towards musical others.
- Music-making necessitates an acknowledgement of one's own lack of experience and the need to learn from a more experienced other.
- Music-making involves taking on an ethic of care as one invests oneself in a collective, social practice towards a greater good.
- Music-making requires the taking on of standards of excellence at once consensual, fluid and hard to define, and the development of responsibility and what Bowman terms 'response-ability' – 'an intuitive ear for what matters in the particular musical practice at hand'
- Music-making requires a tacit grasp of 'what is due to whom at what degree under what kind of circumstances' and when deviation is possible or desirable.
- The most successful musical experiences are those which benefit the whole 'musicking' community.
- Musical successes are bound up with who one is – musical accomplishments and shortcomings are inextricably bound up with one's personal identity
- Music-making demands of us active engagement in creating and sustaining local forms of community concerned with shared, collective goods rather than individual or private ones.
- Musical experience gives us vivid examples of life lived well: with unity, meaning, direction, purpose, and integrity. In so doing it raises our expectations of other, subsequent experience.

**Figure 2:1 Bowman's ethical dispositions and capacities**  
(Summarised from Bowman, 2001)

Bowman draws up a set of dispositions and capacities which he attributes to the processes involved in music-making, with a sense of the inherent and universal virtue of music. He does not allow for the use of music for harmful purposes. In contrast, Small insists that what

in Small's own terms is affirmed, explored and celebrated in musicking is what is ideal for those people at that time, and may well not be for someone else. Small's conceptualisation allows room for musicking to do harm, in contexts where, for instance, music might be used as propaganda, to cause division or to incite violence. As the thinking of Levinas is introduced in chapter 3, it becomes clear that his exhortation is to a profound re-orientation, which stems from his response to the cruelty of the Nazi regime, and the orientation of Western thought which made the Shoah possible, the way in which Western philosophy has approached the Other. As I trace the development of the notion of music-making and music education as a mode of ethical encounter it is with this goal of radical ethical reorientation in mind. Levinas' philosophy will in Chapter 3 offer a way forwards between the apparent universalism of Bowman's outlook and the local musical meanings through notions of ideal relationships of Small's musicking.

In a recent article Bowman develops his argument further, exhorting us to acknowledge and embrace musical experience and study as fundamentally 'ethical resources', 'as practices in and through which people wrestle with and seek to answer the vitally important educational question, What kind of person is it good to be?' (Bowman, 2014). Critically, Bowman challenges the division between intrinsic and extrinsic values, between the *inherent* and *instrumental* benefits of music education, which have been debated since Plato's time. Bowman insists that the notion of value is always value *for* something, and that arguments for music's intrinsic worth are meaningless. Something can only be of value if it is a contributory good to human thriving, or *eudaimonia* as the Greeks called it. Practices consist in patterns of human action, Bowman explains:

They are living affairs that take their meaning at any given time from the beliefs and attendant actions of their practitioners. . . The actions of a person who is deeply committed to a practice are deeply linked to her character – to action habits that have been developed in service to the goods of the practice, goods that are enriched by those actions. (Bowman, 2014: 5)

Such practices or 'modes of human action' are flexible, diverse, variable, taking their meaning at any given time from the beliefs and attendant actions of their practitioners – far removed from an aesthetically-oriented discipline which might tend towards an emphasis upon the value of static universals. Bowman suggests, 'It is precisely the contingency of human practices that necessitates the deep personal engagement that is linked to character'. This is a committed, personally engaged 'coming to know' which develops 'potentials of character, identity and selfhood'. Bowman makes the powerful observation:

It would be a significant mistake to characterize these potential values as extrinsic – as if there were a realm of intrinsic values to which they were somehow inferior. Like all values, their importance is a function of the differences they make: the ways they enable people to thrive. (ibid: 6)

The realisation of these potentials, musical and educational, depend upon what and how music is taught, and the evidence by which we gauge the success of our actions as educators. These ethical concerns, he insists, should be at the very heart of professional knowledge in music education. It is these concerns to which the present study is addressed.

Bowman has moved forwards the conception of music-making as ethical encounter. Here he puts forwards a vision of music-making as a set of human practices which offer ‘profoundly important ethical resources as means through which we learn our most important lessons about who we are and who we aspire to become’ (Bowman, 2014: 5).

## **Reflection**

This chapter has set out the landscape of thinking in music education over recent decades, moving from a long-held utilitarian outlook on music education as ‘character forming’ for the individual and of wider benefit to society as long as regulation only allowed for certain ‘approved’ sorts of music. An aesthetic view of music education became predominant in North America, developed influentially by Bennett Reimer into an outlook of music education ‘as a means to the education of feeling’ from the 1970’s, but was challenged in the 1990’s by diverging ‘praxial’ outlooks led by David Elliott. Regelski’s work points towards music as a ‘good’ in fulfilling specific functions, and gradually through the work of Christopher Small, Paul Woodford, Wayne Bowman and Lee Higgins a conception of music-making and of music education as ethical encounter has begun to develop as set out in Figure 2:2.

aesthetic experience	<p>Reimer’s music education as <i>aesthetic education</i>: the expressive value of music and <b>aesthetic experience</b> is highly valued and <b>pupils encounter an autonomous musical work</b></p>
learning musical practices	<p>Notions of music as praxis – for Elliott music is something we ‘do’ but music as a noun persists, describing the sets of <b>local practices which pupils learn</b> to produce musical ‘listenables’ for listeners to listen for attentively</p>
music for a wider ‘good’	<p>Regelski’s praxialism introduces ethical considerations <i>phronesis</i> - <b>what music is ‘good for’</b> <b>Music-making set within a wider social context</b></p>
musicking of social value, modelling ideal relationships	<p>Small’s <i>musicking</i> emphasises <b>the musical event as of social value</b> offering possibilities of exploration, affirmation and celebration of shared values, <b>modelling ideal relationships</b> as conceived by those doing the musicking (not Platonic) where <b>music is a communicative activity</b> rather than a mere transmission of musical information</p>
music-making as developing political awareness of the different other - requiring indeterminate ethical judgement	<p>Woodford makes a critique of Elliott’s praxial notions, seeking to <b>reclaim democratic purpose for music education</b>, emphasising <b>the political dimension of music-making</b>. The development of identity alongside <b>awareness of different others</b>. Moral choices and social responsibility in music-making. Critical awareness of oppressive practices. Locke posits <b>need for indeterminate ethical judgement</b></p>
music-making as a rich, ethical resource	<p>Bowman draws upon virtue ethics – music-making as realising human potential to benefit individual and society. <b>What kind of person is it good to be?</b> <b>Music experience and study as ethical resources</b> always means to other human ends Eliminates intrinsic / extrinsic dichotomy</p>

A  
G  
E  
N  
C  
Y

**Fig. 2:2 Emergence of notions of music-making as ethical encounter**

Emerging strands of thinking in Bowman's (2014) most recent contributions towards the conception of music and music-making as ethical encounter point to a practice where music is always good for something (so there is no point in trying to artificially differentiating between intrinsic and extrinsic values); where an orientation towards musical experience and study as ethical resources holds sway in our ongoing existential journey individually and in community; where ethical concerns are at very heart of our professional practice as music educators, guided by the question, 'What sort of person is it good to be?'; where success is gauged by the extent to which potentials of character, identity and selfhood are fulfilled; where a deeply committed, personal coming to know is always contingent, deeply flexible and responsive.<sup>20</sup>

Significant questions arise in the quest for an effective conceptualisation of music-making and therefore of music education as ethical encounter, to be explored further through the perspectives of pupils in my fieldwork study.

How might we conceptualise Locke's 'indeterminate ethical judgement?  
Might musical agency be conceptualised as both individual and communal?  
Does the aesthetic have a place in conceptualisations of music-making as ethical encounter?  
Might the aesthetic be understood in terms of agency?  
Might the aesthetic be conceptualised as a rich ethical resource (Bowman)? As subversive (Abbs)?  
Might it be possible to reconcile notions of 'coming to know' aesthetically with a praxial outlook, within a conception of music-making as ethical encounter?

Returning to Odendaal et al and their article, 'What's with the 'K'? ' the authors insist:

It does not suffice to say that the educational value of music can be found from the aesthetic meaning of a musical work or listenable. Nor does it suffice to say that by learning to participate in musical praxis, the students learn to realise the ethical values inherent in that practice, and thus promote their own well-being as part of a specific community. (Odendaal et al, 2014:173)

These writers emphasise the enhancement of musical agency through *musicking* with whatever musical means and in whichever community, as leading to people 'find[ing]

---

<sup>20</sup> The use of the term 'ethical' here remains unexamined. My reporting of Bowman's contribution, and his understanding of 'ethical', is set in the context of my tracing of the development of the notion of music as ethical encounter within the music education research community. As my discussion in Chapter 3 will make clear, the ethics of Levinas, which shape this study, point to a radical reorientation in our thinking of what 'ethical' practices might entail.

themselves musicking’, towards growth and well-being. Are aesthetic modes of music education no longer relevant? Is there a place for notions of ‘coming to know’ and for any sense of a ‘musical work’ within a conception of music-making as ethical encounter? The agential potential of music-making alongside and sometimes in tandem with aesthetic sensitivity and awareness are strands which will re-emerge as fieldwork perspectives are examined.

### **2.3 Locating my study**

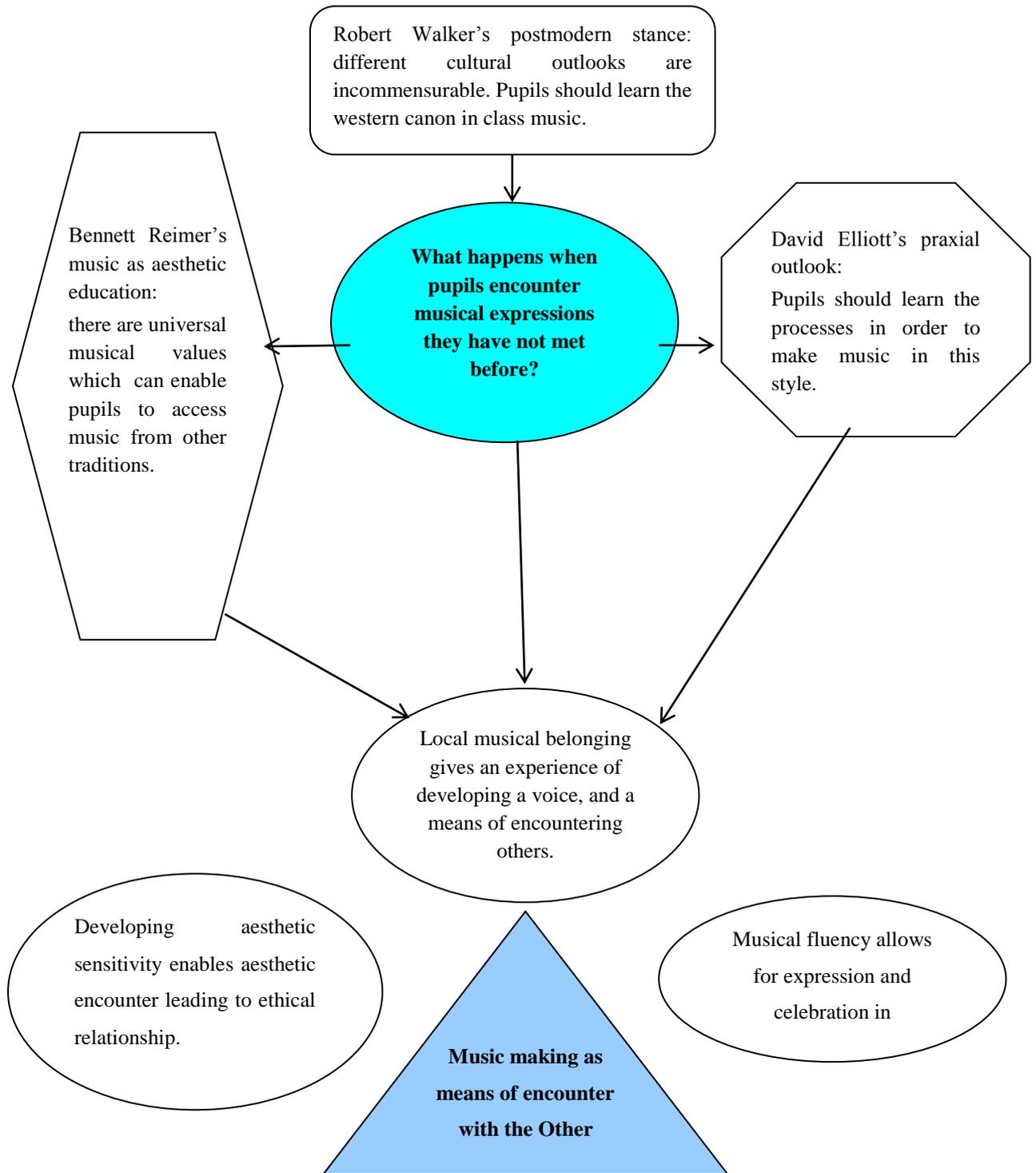
In seeking to join the conversation (Locke, 2008: 86), to take up Bowman’s challenge to recognise music-making as potentially ethical, a set of practices which provide significant ethical resources, to remove it from its ‘disinterested’ pedestal and reground musical experience in the ‘rough terrain . . . on which character is developed and where the goal of the quest for the good takes on personal meaning’ (Bowman, 2001: 20) <sup>21</sup> and taking on Bowman’s concern for the kind of people we become when engaged in musical endeavour, I have drawn upon the work of French-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, introduced in Chapter 1 through the writings of Bauman and Biesta in their search for a postmodern ethic and a way of refuting current educational discourses of standards, accountability and performativity. Following on from Locke’s advocacy of ‘indeterminate ethical judgement’ via Lyotard, and on from Reimer’s exploration of ‘self’ and ‘otherness’, I will consider in the next chapter Levinas’ exhortation to ‘look into the face of the Other’ as providing a way of exploring the possibilities for a change in orientation of intent and of practice in the music classroom and a means of taking forward current conceptions of music education as ethical encounter.

---

<sup>21</sup> Bowman’s reference to Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* § 107: ‘We have got onto slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the condition is ideal, but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need friction. Back to the rough ground!’ Bowman quotes this at the beginning of his Charles Leonard lecture of 17<sup>th</sup> April 2000, ‘Music as ethical encounter?’

### **2.3.1 The emergence of research questions and their underlying assumptions**

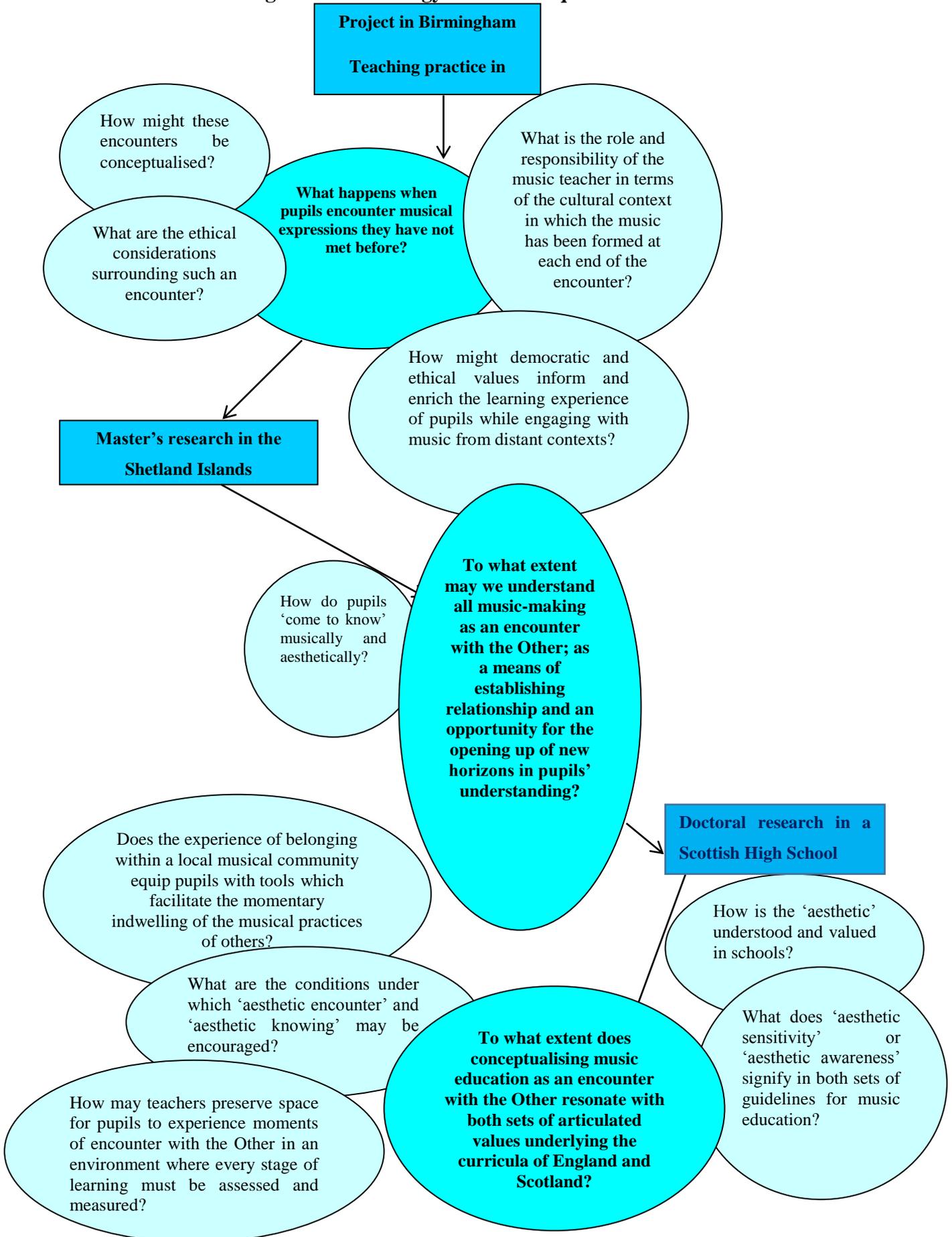
In seeking to take further the notion of music-making as ethical encounter into a field-work study investigating the music-making of a class of pupils, I have formed a series of three research questions which structure my study. The following series of figures give an indication of how these questions were gradually arrived at, as my focus was drawn in from considerations of intercultural encounters in the classroom to notions of music-making as a mode of ethical encounter with the Other. Figure 2:3 contains a figure emerging from my Master's study, which shows how theoretical stances in music education have informed my developing research questions. Figure 2:4 sets out the progression of enquiry which has taken me from the beginnings of research, emerging from intercultural encounters through a symphony orchestra's outreach work and further questioning during teaching practice, leading to Master's research and into doctoral work. These questions begin from an assumption that music-making functions in relationship with others, local or distant, that these relationships need to be negotiated ethically, and that a notion of the aesthetic, whether as aesthetic knowing or aesthetic sensitivity for instance, has a place in conceptualisations of music-making individually and together. Figure 2:5 shows the development of these questions as I began doctoral study and came under the influence of Levinas' philosophy leading to the three questions which structure the present study.

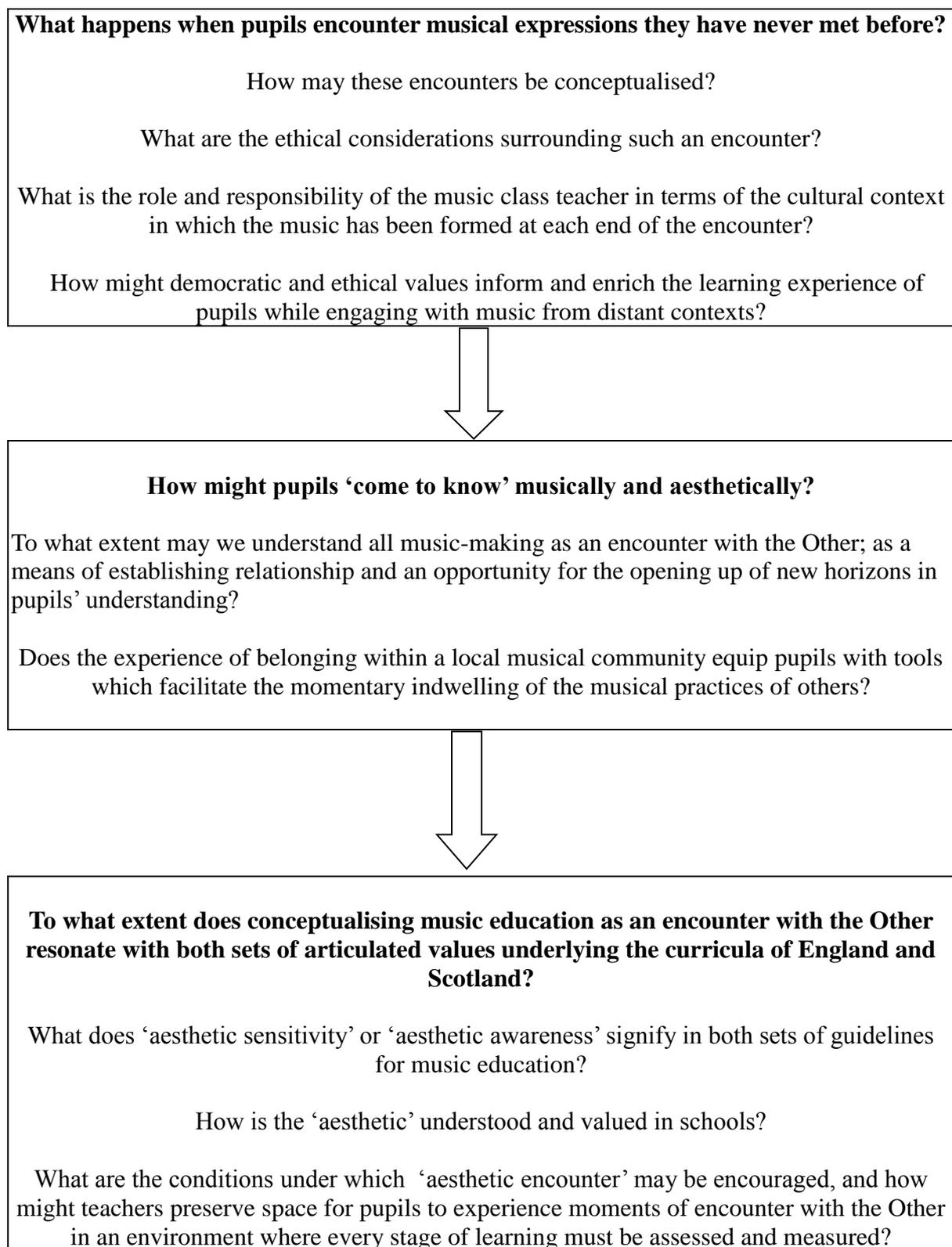


**Figure 2:3 Theoretical stances in music education inform research questions: insights from Master's study<sup>22</sup>**

<sup>22</sup> Jourdan, K (2008) *The view from somewhere: Coming to know the 'other' through the indwelling of a local musical tradition* Dissertation presented for the M Ed (Res) degree in the faculty of Education, Cambridge University

**Figure 2:4 Genealogy of research questions**





**Figure 2:5 Developing research questions during Masters and in preparation for PhD study**

Three research questions came out of this progression, and now structure the present study:

What light does Levinas shed on conceptualisations of music education as ‘ethical encounter’?

How do pupils encounter the Other through music-making?

What might characterise ethical music education?

The first question seeks to take forward thinking in music educational research from the point arrived at through the work of Bowman, Woodford, Small and Higgins and a philosophical underpinning for thinking about music-making through an exploration of Levinas’ ‘looking into the face of the Other’. The second question gives rise to the fieldwork study I undertook over the course of an academic year, accompanying pupils in their class music lessons to find out how these young people use music in their daily lives and how their music-making brings them into encounters with those different from themselves and with their music. The third seeks practices and principles drawn from the fieldwork study, informed by Levinas’ thinking, which may form the basis for the ethical practice of music-making in schools and beyond.

My empirical study explores the experience of pupils’ music-making in or outside of the classroom, their engagement with music, with each other and with the ‘other’ in their daily lives, in order to investigate the relationship between aesthetic encounter and the sociality of music, between an aesthetic experience and an ethical impulse; whether being captured aesthetically brings about a new relating to the other; how learning ‘to look into the face of the Other’ is facilitated through music-making. Aesthetic and praxial outlooks on music education are therefore both at the heart of my quest and I seek a coming together of these polarities through Levinas’ thinking. Figure 2:6 clarifies the ‘musical’ and ‘aesthetic’ terms I will use throughout the thesis. It is to the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas that the next chapter now turns.

### Common uses of the term 'music'

as the activity we engage in when we 'make music'

as curriculum subject area

as a 'piece of music', a 'musical work'

as the hard copy of the piece of music, or our 'part' of it

as the sounds we hear around us, musical but not specifically from a 'piece of music', often used metaphorically, e.g. 'music to my ears'.

David Elliott – *musicing* by *musicers* with MUSIC

Christopher Small – *musicking* – set within a wide social context, broadened to include even those who distribute tickets for a concert for instance, or those who clean up after the audience has left the venue

This study uses **music-making** as the activity we engage in, including much of Small's *musicking* but emphasising the **intentionality** and **agency** which this phrase suggests, not using Small's own term, in order to leave open the possibility for aspects of 'the aesthetic' to have a role in music-making, alongside political and critical practices.

**Music** (alongside music-making) refers to the curriculum subject, to the non-specific sound which may float in through the window and also to the particular sounds of a musical work.

### The aesthetic

**Aesthetics** as a philosophical discipline is discussed briefly in Chapter 3

**Aesthetic experience:** 'is a good experience that *transforms* life making a difference to our daily life. It means a fulfilling and inherently meaningful mode of engagement in contrast to the mechanical, the fragmentary, the non-integrated and all other non-meaningful form of engagement. It is these good and fulfilling experiences that we want in our lives and education in general and in this sense aesthetic is also an ideal. For Dewey art is the most powerful field of experience where aesthetic ideals come to flourish along with the multiplicity of involved values' Westerlund's Deweyan definition (2003:49).

**Aesthetic knowing:** a dynamic, agential act which combines cognition and feeling

**Aesthetic sensitivity, aesthetic awareness:** an attentiveness to localised meanings and the ability to gather in the riches of the physical and the spiritual

Figure 2:6 Clarification of terms

## Chapter 3:

The philosophy of Emmanuel

Levinas: From music as 'ethical encounter' to 'looking into the face of the Other'

---

## Introduction

In the last chapter a path was traced through some of the main currents in music educational research over the past four decades, from the polarities of Reimer's *aesthetic education* (Reimer, 1970/1989) versus Elliott's *praxial* conception (Elliott, 1995), on to a view of music-making in terms of *relationship*, with Small's notion of *musicking* (Small, 1998) and Higgins' of hospitality (Higgins, 2007), and finally, through the work of Bowman (2001 and 2014), Regelski (2000, 2005) and Woodford (2005) via Reimer's exploration of the relation between 'selfness and otherness' (Reimer, 2009), to the notion of *music-making as ethical encounter* and a recognition of the need for an ethical underpinning for music education.

In order to establish the philosophical tools with which to investigate my fieldwork study and take forwards the notion of music-making as ethical encounter, this chapter begins a journey into the work of French Jewish philosopher and teacher Emmanuel Levinas and lays out aspects of his thinking, particularly from his first major work 'Totality and Infinity' (1969) because it is in this text that we find a highly distinctive and perhaps the clearest discussion by Levinas of the nature of teaching (Strhan, 2007: 412). Two major and inter-related strands of Levinas' work are considered in particular; the polarity of Totality on the one hand and Infinity on the other, representing two 'opposite' responses to the 'Other', and the practice Levinas exhorts us to of 'looking into the face of the Other'. These strands are examined within the context of his thinking on education, which forms the very core of his philosophy, stemming from his many years' experience as a teacher.

Taking Levinas' thinking into the realm of music education in part two of the chapter involves coming to terms with his contradictory views on 'the aesthetic', on art and on music, through the work of musicologist Daniel Chua who explores how a musical work might function as an 'Other', revealing the 'face of the Other' and putting 'the self into question'. The closing sections of the chapter consider the work of a 'world music' practitioner in the light of Levinas' thinking, exploring how Levinas might provide an ethical underpinning to this practice of learning to 'hear the voice of the Other'. The chapter begins to address the first of the three research questions which structure this study:

What light does Levinas shed on conceptualisations of music education as 'ethical encounter'?
---

Insights gleaned from this exploration of Levinas' thought function as a lens through which to examine my fieldwork study of a group of young people's school music-making in the following chapters, and through which at the end of the thesis to form recommendations for future practice within the music classroom and beyond. The chapter concludes by pointing forwards to the uncovering in my fieldwork study of 'practices of facing' which Levinas' philosophy might require of us in the music classroom.

### **3.1 The distinctive 'ethics as first philosophy' of Emmanuel Levinas**

Levinas was born in Lithuania 1906 to Jewish parents. He moved to Strasbourg as a student in 1923, studying in Germany between 1928 and 1929 under Husserl and Heidegger, whose works he introduced to French thinkers through his translations. As a naturalised French citizen and soldier Levinas became a prisoner of war in Germany during World War II. Although his wife and daughter were kept safe by a French monastic community, Levinas' wider family perished in the Holocaust. These experiences, along with Heidegger's affiliation to National Socialism, profoundly shaped his outlook and the direction he took philosophically. He famously asserted, 'One can forgive many Germans but there are some Germans it is difficult to forgive. It is difficult to forgive Heidegger' (Levinas 1994:25). For Levinas Heidegger could not be forgotten, Levinas must 'go beyond' Heidegger. Whereas Heidegger is concerned with Being, Levinas resituates ethics as 'first philosophy', 'beyond Being' or 'Otherwise than Being' (Levinas, 1981). Levinas' translations and writings were important for the emergence of existential-phenomenology in France, influencing thinkers such as Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, and especially the more recent works of his pupil Derrida, to whose processes of 'deconstruction' Levinas' ethics became increasingly central (Critchley, 1992).

Levinas begins his philosophical process within the phenomenological method inherited from Husserl and Heidegger, but draws attention to what lies *beyond* the phenomenon, opaque to consciousness itself.<sup>23</sup> His statement that 'ethics is an optics' (Levinas 1969: 23)

---

<sup>23</sup> Phenomenology has been described as a *radical* way of doing philosophy, a *practice* rather than a system, attempting to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena as they manifest themselves to consciousness, to the experiencer, seeking to avoid all misconstructions and impositions placed on experience in advance. Phenomenology sought to reinvigorate philosophy by returning it to the life of the living human subject, to concrete, lived experience in all its richness (Moran, 2000:4-5). Levinas was critical of Husserl's account of 'intentionality' for making the representation of the objective world the focus of philosophy, bringing the 'other' within the immanence of the 'same'. For Levinas a 'deep' understanding of intentionality would emphasise transcendence and infinity. Moran writes, 'Levinas sees Husserl's understanding of the basic

suggests his method of bringing things ‘into the light’ in the phenomenological sense, whilst disturbing the field of consciousness itself. His is an *ethical* phenomenology (Strhan, 2012: 21). Levinas’ first major work *Totality and Infinity* (1969) is a critique of Heidegger and Husserl, in fact of the whole sweep of Western philosophy, in order to reposition ethics as ‘first philosophy’, prior to ontology. Western philosophy has been preoccupied with the ‘totality’ of Being, at the expense of what is other than, or outside of Being, transcendent, exterior, infinite - the Other.<sup>24</sup> Levinas uses the term ‘ethics’ not in a traditional sense as a code of morality or moral decision-making, but rather as a relation of responsibility to the Other.<sup>25</sup>

Who is Levinas’ Other? The concept of the ‘other’ has long been used to articulate the formation of ‘self’ in opposition to the ‘other’: the self needs the ‘other’ in order to define itself. Hegel was among the first to introduce the idea of the ‘other’ as a constituent of self-consciousness, discussed in Chapter Four of his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The ‘other’ has been used in social science research to denote those outside a social grouping, those who in some way do not fit in, who are excluded: French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan was instrumental alongside Levinas in coining contemporary usage of the ‘Other’ as ‘radically other’, different, unknowable.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.1.1 The self called into question

Levinas takes a foundationalist ethical position: for him there is nothing more primary to human existence than the ethical. Ethics has a particular *and* a universal reach. Levinas’

---

intentional act of giving meaning as being caught in the paradigm of knowledge as a kind of possession or grasping of its object’ (ibid:328). Levinas sought a phenomenology ‘beyond’ intentionality.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Being’ is a term established by Heidegger. Levinas’ use of the term is in answer to Heidegger’s development of the term in his own philosophy.

<sup>25</sup> In an article questioning Levinas’ welcoming into the philosophy of education Birgit Nordtug writes, ‘Levinas does not construct an ethics, if by ethics we mean concrete rules or moral principles for how we ought to behave. He rather explains the kind of orientation to the Other that is necessary if we shall be able to meet the Other in her Otherness. As Levinas remarks: ‘My task does not consist in constructing ethics; I only try to find its meaning’ (Levinas, 2009: 90) (Nordtug, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Levinas tends to use the term ‘Other’ in relation to a specific, embodied individual, whereas ‘other’ is used more as a generalisation (Todd, 2003: 147 n 1). Standish writes, ‘The capitalisation of “Other” denotes a relationship of a different order from the kind of otherness that is definitional of items in a categorisation. This Other is different from me not in virtue of any perceivable characteristic or quality but because of its invisible interiority (Standish, 2001: 347 n6).

ethics is not concerned with ‘morality’ as traditionally conceived.<sup>27</sup> His conception of ethics is in ‘encounter’ with the Other, where the Other calls the self into question:

A calling into question of the same . . . is brought about by the other. We name this calling into question . . . by the presence of the Other ethics. The strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions, is precisely accomplished as a calling into question of my spontaneity, as ethics . . . The welcoming of the other by the same, of the Other by me, is concretely produced as the calling into question of the same by the other, that is as the ethics that accomplishes the critical essence of knowledge. (Levinas, 1969:43)<sup>28</sup>

Ethics, says Levinas, describes what happens when, through the encounter with another, my existence is disturbed as my whole self is put into question, breaking open the ‘totality’ of self and enabling the possibility of ‘coming to know’.

### 3.1.2 Pre-ontological

Levinas prioritises ethics over ontology, positing ethics as ‘first philosophy’ prior to ontology. Levinas’ project was first of all a critique of the ‘totalising’ habits of Western philosophy throughout its history:

A philosophy of power, ontology is, as first philosophy which does not call into question the same, a philosophy of injustice . . . *Being* before the *existent*,<sup>29</sup> ontology before metaphysics, is freedom . . . before justice. It is a movement within the same before obligation to the other. (Levinas 1969, 46-7)

Encountering another provided an opportunity to make them ‘the same’, to treat them as if they were merely what I understand them to be. Levinas insists, ‘the invoked is not what I comprehend: *he is not under a category*’ (ibid, 69). Categorising others has led inexorably to many terrors and atrocities against the Other, to imperialist domination, to tyranny and especially, in Levinas’ experience, to the Shoah.

---

<sup>27</sup> Levinas opens his first magnum opus enigmatically with the statement, ‘Everyone will agree that it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by morality’ (Levinas, 1969). Richard Cohen suggests that the implicit question here opens the issue of whether we perceive morality as providing an absolute precept which will bring about harmony amongst humankind, a totality, or whether we acknowledge that morality keeps open the possibility for infinity where the other person is preserved as higher than the ego. Levinas’ task, says Cohen, is to reawaken the traditional wisdom that we have always known. We have not been duped by morality to the extent that this reawakening is a possibility (Cohen, 1986:79).

<sup>28</sup> Alfonso Lingis, Levinas’ translator, notes that with the author’s permission he has translated ‘*autrui*’, the personal other, the *you*, with a capital – Other – while ‘*autre*’ remains ‘other’ (Levinas, 1969: 24).

<sup>29</sup> Levinas deliberately employs terms used in the writings of Heidegger, whose pupil Levinas was but whose thinking he turned against when Heidegger’s philosophy became associated with Nazi ideology. Levinas sought to ‘go beyond’ Heidegger’s thinking in order to reorient Western philosophy.

Levinas insists that ethics is ‘first philosophy’, reorienting philosophical priorities set by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* when the Greek philosopher called ontology the ‘first philosophy’. Levinas’s ethical view is *deontic*, using the language of obligation and ethical responsibility towards others, yet it deals with the first person and the second person, and is intrinsically relational. Before all else, before any understanding of the world, I am responsible for the Other, the other person, for You. This orientation will govern everything else which follows in our human experience. Everything we do, says Levinas, should be governed by this standard.

For Levinas the face-to-face encounter is a condition of all social existence, which he sees as ethical. Traditional understanding in Western philosophy of human existence has been that it is primarily epistemological: our higher understanding in the sciences, for instance, is grounded in our view of how we can know the world around us. Levinas, however, grounds epistemological practices in the ethical condition that underlies human existence. It is our openness to the Other as we look into their face which is the condition for processes of ‘knowing’. His ethical commitments are pluralistic and situational, but they are also grounded and universal (Morgan, 2011: 14).

Michael Morgan leads his reader through a discussion of how to understand Levinas’ project in terms of philosophical paths previously trodden, with which Levinas was intimately familiar. He suggests that Levinas does not so much reveal new truths to us as uncover what has been hidden, giving a fresh perspective and letting us see things in a new light. Levinas teaches us that, in looking into the face of the Other we do not take up an epistemological stance, but rather we respond to the suffering, need and destitution that the face expresses to us (ibid: 55).

### **3.1.3 Both immanent and transcendent**

Should we see Levinas as both an empirical and a transcendental thinker? His philosophy is about ordinary life, but it is also about what it means to live life meaningfully and morally, assigning to philosophy a therapeutic role, to cure us and to cure philosophy itself from destructive modes of understanding and living life in the world (ibid: 57). The face-to-face encounter between the self and the Other occurs as a particular revelation of a particular person. It is this face, and my responsibility to this person, that has become hidden or forgotten in ordinary life. Robert Bernasconi suggests that although it is possible to read Levinas transcendently and empirically, neither of these readings is enough as Levinas

deliberately troubles the distinction between the two (Bernasconi, 1989; see also Strhan, 2012: 21).

Terry Eagleton also highlights the dichotomy of the empirical and the transcendent in Levinas' thinking. He observes on the one hand:

Ethics is generally regarded as the science of morality, and so is at one remove from actual behaviour; but Levinas' moral philosophy is intended as a species of meta-ethics, a reflection on the conditions of possibility of the ethical itself, and thus stands at two removes from empirical conduct. (Eagleton, 2009: 235)

Eagleton continues however:

Levinas has an immanent view of ethics, hearing the call of the infinite in the destitute and dispossessed; yet the style of thought in which he frames this view only succeeds in disincarnating it (ibid: 236).

Levinas' work is both a study of the possibilities for ethics at its deepest level, and an exhortation to its working out at the level of everyday encounter. Eagleton alludes to the profound criticism Levinas' pupil, Derrida, raised against 'Totality and Infinity', observing that Levinas uses ontological language despite himself.<sup>30</sup> His impenetrable style of writing is due at least in part to his own acute awareness of the dangers of creating an alternative 'totality'. Described by Derrida as the same wave breaking again and again upon a beach with deeper insistence (Derrida, 1978: 312), Levinas' prose seeks to reframe his thinking continually so as to keep his discourse radically open.

### 3.1.4 Relational

Levinas grounds ethics in the particularity of the Other and the self as they engage with one another; in fact Levinas sees these particularities as linked. The self's particularity lies in responsibility which comes into being as the Other calls the self into question. The call of the other person comes from their need and dependency, yet also has the compelling force of reason. The dominant strand of Western philosophy requires that we detach ourselves from our uniqueness as individuals and tie our ethical perspective to a detached, universal outlook. Levinas however insists upon the centrality of our own particularity while tying this to ethical obligation which comes *before* all the complexity of our richly-woven, diverse identities.

---

<sup>30</sup> Derrida is critical of Levinas for trying to give expression through language to something which is 'beyond ontology', and therefore outside of language (Derrida, 1978, 2005).

### 3.1.5 Asymmetrical, unending responsibility for the Other

How does this relation to the Other actually function, without those practices of understanding in order to categorise and control which Levinas exhorts us to turn away from? Levinas asks:

How can the same, produced as egoism, enter into relationship with an other without immediately divesting it of its alterity? What is the nature of this relationship? (Levinas, 1969: 38)<sup>31</sup>

Levinas describes the profound ‘ethical call’ we experience as we encounter another person, a demand which is asymmetrical and unending, enormously costly to those who are prepared to answer it. We are responsible for the Other before any sort of understanding about the world comes into play – ethics before ontology – and our response is not conditional upon a reciprocation. There is no limit to our responsibility for the Other, and the more we respond, the more demanding the ethical call upon us will be.

Tolerance is an insufficient response, a resigned ‘putting-up’ with difference which leads to controlling, even policing alterity. Levinas writes that what he terms ‘authentic desire’ is not found in any drive towards the security of self-gratification, rather it is the desire for ‘the absolutely other . . . the disinterestedness of goodness’ (Levinas, 1969: 34ff). Authentic freedom is not freedom-from relationship but freedom-for-relationship. When Levinas encounters the ‘epiphany of the face of the Other’ (ibid: 51) he encounters a sacred icon that opens up an infinity of new possibilities (Marion 1991:24).<sup>32</sup>

### 3.1.6 The face of the Other

Levinas’ conception of the face then represents an overflowing wholeness which cannot be easily assimilated into what he terms the ‘sameness’ of the self. Just as a face defies full description, is ‘irreducible’ (Levinas, 1969: 291) and is recognised instinctively, the encounter demands an ethical response which transcends a purely instrumental view of the Other, where the self subsumes aspects of the Other in order to control, to dominate. In the face of the Other is glimpsed Infinity, a profound notion of alterity or openness to the Other which draws back the boundaries of our conceptions of knowledge.

---

<sup>31</sup> Alterity refers to the state or quality of being other, of otherness.

<sup>32</sup> See W. David Hall, 2012: 181 n. 23 for an exploration of Marion’s distinction between the idol and the icon.

### 3.1.7 Language as ethical

So Levinas reorients our outlook. As I turn my face, with humanity, towards those who are different from me, my own self is called into question: ‘The calling into question of the I, coextensive with the manifestation of the Other in the face, we call language’ (Levinas, 1969: 171). He suggests, ‘The beginning of language is in the face’ (Levinas 1988:169-170). *Language* is understood by Levinas as a reaching out to the Other, a primordial ethical act before it is a communication of any specific meaning. He writes:

To speak is to make the world common, to create commonplaces. Language does not refer to the generality of concepts but lays the foundation for a possession in common. (Levinas, 1961:76)

Levinas describes speech as ‘a teaching’ and writes, ‘speech founds community by *giving*, by presenting the phenomenon as given’ (Levinas, 1969: 98).

Refuting the idealist tradition instituted by Descartes, Levinas sees discourse not as a means by which the subject constitutes itself in the *cogito* but as the source and necessity of relation with the other (Baker, 1995: 70). Levinas writes:

The traditional opposition between theory and practice will disappear before the metaphysical transcendence by which a relation with the absolutely other, or truth, is established, and of which ethics is the royal road. (Levinas, 1969: 29)

At every turn Levinas seeks to disturb and disrupt Cartesian dualities and reground philosophical priorities. The relation to the Other does not just happen at an abstract level but is grounded in language which Levinas presents as, at its first impetus, ethical. The very subjectivity of the self is produced through the revealing of myself to others in discourse (Strhan, 2012:19).

### 3.1.8 Exteriority

There is something of this other-directed orientation of human experience in Levinas’ use of the term ‘exteriority’. Levinas writes;

We can proceed from the experience of totality back to a situation where totality breaks up, a situation that conditions the totality itself. Such a situation is the flash of exteriority or of transcendence in the face of the other. The rigorously developed concept of this transcendence is expressed by the term infinity. (pp. 9-10 of *Totalité et infini* (1971, Kluwer Academic). Translation adapted by Peter Baker from *Lingis* in Baker, 1995: 67-8)

Exteriority derives from a transcendent experience, one where the subject feels his or her limits have been exceeded. This transcendent experience for Levinas is the face of the Other.

He terms it 'infinity' because it overflows the boundaries of conceptual thought. Exteriority, clarifies Baker, must be seen both as physically exterior to the subject, the face of the other, and as metaphysical, that which exceeds thought. For Levinas a respect for exteriority constitutes truth (Baker, 1995: 68). Another word Levinas uses for this openness to the Other, the aspiration towards exteriority, is *enseignement* or teaching.

## **Reflection**

So far this chapter has introduced the philosophical process of Levinas as a critique of the history of Western philosophy, prioritising ethics over ontology, and advocating a radical openness to the Other conceptualised as 'infinity' against totalising practices of the Same. Levinas describes the 'epiphany' which we experience as we look into infinity in the face of the Other and perceive there an ethical call to which we respond in unending responsibility. The relation to the Other is both transcendent and immanent, metaphysical and empirical, and is effected through language which Levinas presents as ethical at its first impetus.

The next part of the chapter explores these strands in relation to Levinas' thinking on education, which offers transformative insights into the conception of the *curriculum subject* and what constitutes *knowing*, alongside fresh understanding of the *role of the teacher* and the aims of education. At the heart of Levinas' philosophy is the centrality of teaching, which he describes as signifying the 'whole of exteriority'. The teacher is one who brings pupils into an encounter with infinity in the face of the other, through language.

## Part One

### 3.2 Education as transformative: ‘the presence of infinity breaking into the closed circle of totality’

Levinas sets his face-to-face, asymmetrical ethical encounter within a spectrum of orientation commencing at one end with Totality – the ideologies with which we make sense of the world, the drive to subsume the experience of another so that they are colonised and homogenised – and Infinity at the other, representing an unlimited openness to the Other seen as a glimpse of the infinite.<sup>33</sup> The consequences for education of adopting this outlook of radical openness are far-reaching. Knowledge is no longer seen as entirely contained within a specific context, but infinitely open to new possibilities which lie beyond the scope of our present understanding. Levinas writes:

Teaching is not a species of a genus called domination, a hegemony at work within totality, but is the presence of infinity breaking the closed circle of totality. (Levinas, 1969: 171)

Adopting this view requires us to engage critically, to resist any premature closure of thought and remain profoundly open. We no longer claim to fully comprehend reality, so we approach it with a renewed sense of awe, wonder and reverence. Our world is re-enchanted (Baumann, 1992: x).<sup>34</sup>

Teaching for Levinas is not the transmission of knowledge to another but rather the activity of turning outwards towards the Other:

Teaching signifies the whole of exteriority. And the whole infinity of exteriority is not first produced then to teach – teaching is its very production. The first teaching teaches this very height which even equals its exteriority, ethics. (Levinas, 1969: 171)

Teaching is the space of encounter with the Other in which subjectivity is revealed as ethical (Strhan, 2012: 20).

---

<sup>33</sup> See Paul Standish, 2009 for a clear account of the two directions the philosophical spirit can take, from Levinas’ ‘Philosophy and the idea of infinity’, 1957.

<sup>34</sup> ‘The disenchantment of the world’ is a phrase sociologist Max Weber (1946, 1976) borrowed from Schiller.

‘It is the historical process by which the natural world and all areas of human experience become experienced and understood as less mysterious; defined, at least in principle, as knowable, predictable and manipulable by humans; conquered by and incorporated into the interpretive schema of science and rational government’ (Jenkins, 2000:12)

### 3.2.1 The roles of the teacher and pupil and the language of the curriculum

Levinas sees the history of Western philosophy and therefore the development of Western thinking as characterised by its failure to recognise the Other, always returning to the Same, exemplified by Socrates' teaching through maieutics, where the teacher acts as the midwife to the birth of knowledge and understanding in the student. Knowledge and understanding are not imparted from without, but are seen as 'in' the soul of the individual (Strhan, 2007:414). Levinas observes that this causes us 'to receive nothing of the Other but what is in me' (Levinas 1969:43). He is radically opposed to this notion of teaching.

Sharon Todd writes that it is in the very break between Self and Other where Levinas locates both the conditions for ethics and the possibility for teaching and learning. Teaching is about staging an encounter with the Other, with something outside of the self; to learn is to receive more from the Other than the self already holds (Todd, 2003:29). For Levinas, to be taught means to encounter that which is wholly other, which 'brings more than I contain' (ibid: 51).

Levinas writes:

Teaching is a discourse in which the master can bring to the student what the student does not already know. It does not operate as maieutics, but continues the placing in me of the idea of infinity. The idea of infinity implies a soul capable of containing more than it can draw from itself. It designates an interior being that is capable of a relation with the exterior and does not take its own interiority for the totality of being . . . For the Socratic dialogue already presupposes beings who have decided for discourse . . . whereas teaching leads to the logical discourse without rhetoric, without flattery or seduction and hence without violence, and maintaining the interiority of him who welcomes. (Levinas, 1969: 180)

Levinas resists the idea that learning has its source within the learner, and draws out the limitations of influential conceptions of learning, both ancient and modern. He reorients the *teacher* as one who brings the student into a place of encounter with the Other without recourse to coercive rhetoric, and thereby respects the learner's own self alongside the different Other. Levinas reorients the *pupil* who is open to learn as one in whom is reconciled the contradiction between the freedom of their own interiority and the exteriority which might limit this freedom; a reconciliation between the nurturing of one's own self and the impinging ethical demand experienced when we reach out to the Other.

The very relation to the Other is to be thought of in terms of teaching and learning:

[The] voice coming from another shore teaches transcendence itself. Teaching signifies the whole infinity of exteriority . . . [The Other's] alterity is manifested in a mastery that does not conquer, but teaches. (Levinas 1969: 171)

Philosopher of education Paul Standish's view, following Levinas, is that the content of the *curriculum* may be seen as a form of relation to the Other:

Subjects are language to the extent that they are ways of thinking and reasoning about the world that have passed down through the generations, where this thinking and reasoning essentially is language. (Standish, 2008: 63)

Formal education has, Standish seems to suggest, been responsible for violence towards the Other in models of learning which emphasise mastery of the subject under study. The pupil is less the owner of their own learning than as one possessed by it, less master of the subject matter than being in its service (ibid: 65).

So the role of the teacher, according to Levinas, is not that of the Socratic midwife attending at the birth of knowledge in the learner, nor is it one of persuasion through rhetoric. As Standish clarifies, the teacher points beyond, acting as a conduit for the learner's connection to the infinity of the subject and the questions it raises:

To cast the teacher as the conduit to the Other in this way, through the language to which she gives the learner access, is to see herself oriented by her own relation to the Other. The exteriority to which Levinas refers then – the attention this exacts – amounts to a kind of objectivity. (Standish 2008: 65)

The teacher is not just a facilitator, for that would be to deprive the pupil of the face through which they encounter the Other (Standish talks of the dangers of 'effacing' the teacher). In a deeply committed stance, the teacher's very presence offers an encounter with the face of the Other, access to the infinity that is the curriculum subject, through the passing on of ways of thinking through the use of language which opens up rather than that which closes down:

The master, the coinciding of the teaching and the teacher, is not in turn a fact among others. The presence of the manifestation of the master who teaches overcomes the anarchy of facts. (Levinas 1969:70)

Standish clarifies the contrast Levinas develops in 'Otherwise than Being' between the representational and the invocational functions of language, the 'said' and the 'saying'. There is both the stabilising of meaning through an instituted linguistic system, and a vitality where new forms of expression move beyond the system. The dynamism of the verb suggests *becoming* not *being*, and positions this prophetic, invocational aspect of language as central to teaching. The 'saying' points forwards towards infinity. Standish's discussion of

the ‘professing’ of a professor captures the personal commitment to knowledge. Following Levinas’ assertion that ‘to see the face is to speak of the world’,<sup>35</sup> that language is an offering to the world, the means through which things receive a name and become concepts, ‘a first action’ (Levinas, 1969: 174), Standish insists that it is through what he calls the ‘language of the curriculum’ that the learner is brought face to face with the Other.

## **Reflection**

This section of the chapter has begun to explore strands of Levinas’ thinking on education, where teaching is described by him as signifying ‘the whole of exteriority’, the deeply ethical practice of radical openness. The role of the teacher lies at the heart of Levinas’ philosophy. The teacher is the conduit through whom the pupil is brought into an encounter with infinity through the face of the Other. The face of the teacher is bound up in what is learned. Levinas used to recall of his teacher Husserl, ‘we do not disassociate a lesson from the face that was the necessary interlocutor’ (Levinas, cited in Malka, 2006: xxxiv).

Standish’s explorations pave the way for an investigation of the language of the music curriculum in the light of Levinas. Levinas emphasises that language is the site of one’s ethical subjectivity, and that to receive language is to be taught (Strhan, 2012: 26). Following Standish, the language of the *music curriculum* consists of ways of thinking and understanding within music inevitably conceived of and articulated through language.

### **3.2.3 Gathering philosophical tools from Levinas**

These strands of Levinas’ thinking provide valuable tools with which to examine my fieldwork study. His central exhortation for us to ‘look into the face of the Other’, and to answer the call to ethical responsibility which we find there, suggests an orientation to be investigated in the music classroom. The polarities of Totality and Infinity form a spectrum on which to investigate pupils’ experiences of the school music curriculum and in the music classroom. The Infinity encountered in the face of the Other speaks of the human other as well as the infinity of the curriculum subject. The relational conception of what it means to

---

<sup>35</sup> ‘The presence of the Other, or expression, source of all signification, is not contemplated as an intelligible essence, but is heard as language, and thereby is effectuated exteriorly’ (Levinas 1969: 297).

learn is illustrated in the notion (the face) of the teacher as conduit for the pupil's encounter with the Other, and of language as a reaching out to the Other, an act of generosity, of 'putting the world in common'. These form a lens through which pupils' experiences are investigated to glean insights which point the way forwards to recommendations suggested in the concluding chapter for ethical practice in school music education, through posing the question, 'how does music-making function in a Levinasian outlook?'

The exploration of Levinas' philosophy continues in the next section of the chapter in order to answer more fully, in this preparatory stage of developing philosophical tools, the first of my research questions:

What light does Levinas shed on conceptualisations of music-making as 'ethical encounter'?
--

What does Levinas tell us about the aesthetic, or about praxial models of music-making? Does a 'musical work' function as an Other? Can we look into the face of the Other through a 'piece of music' as well as through taking part in music-making? What place does art have in coming to look into the face of the Other? Does 'aesthetic knowing' or 'aesthetic sensitivity' play a role in drawing us into an encounter with the Other?

## Part Two

### 3.3 Taking Levinas into the music classroom

#### 3.3.1 The problem of aesthetics: autonomy, disinterest and purposiveness without purpose

Is there a place any more for the notion of the ‘aesthetic’? Is it an outdated Western concept, dragging us back to 19<sup>th</sup>-century Germanic thought, whose death post-modernism has celebrated in the dilution of aesthetics into every cultural expression of the quotidian (Jameson, 1998)? Should *aesthetic experience* still be understood in terms of Kantian detachment? Is *aesthetic knowing* necessarily divorced from questions of purpose, of meaning and of ethical action?

Aesthetics as a discipline pursued in university departments of art or philosophy is the branch of philosophy which deals with the arts, with imagination, perception and sensation. Its name derives from the Greek word *aesthesis* referring to what we perceive through our senses in opposition to *anaesthesia* which refers to the state in which we cannot perceive anything (Dewey, 1934). Its beginnings as a modern discipline stem from early-18th century Europe, where autonomous categories were being drawn around the emerging ‘fine arts’ from which developed the specialised field of musical performance and the establishing of national conservatoires for its study. Once the fine arts were categorised philosophers began their quest for defining characteristics and forms, establishing competing analyses leading to labels such as representationalism, formalism etc. (Allsup, 2010).

In 18<sup>th</sup>-century philosophy the term ‘aesthetic’ first came into use to denote a level of cognition derived from immediate sensory experience, before it is subjected to the intellectual process of abstraction which organises general knowledge. Very soon however it became associated more widely with the kind of insight imparted by the experience of beauty, insight which was immediate and particular rather than general, intuitive rather than logical (Korsmeyer, 2004: 37; Bowman, 2006b). Establishing the validity of such insights, setting standards and distinguishing the ‘genuine’ from the ‘false’ became a preoccupation of the times. The notion of ‘aesthetic experience’ came to be used to distinguish between ‘interested’, fleeting, sensual and personal pleasures and genuine, durable experiences of ‘beauty’.

The giant of the Enlightenment Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* of 1790 set out his thinking on the processes of aesthetic judgement. This was interpreted in ways which became profoundly influential in shaping conceptions of music and of music education right up to the present day. Kant's thinking on how we perceive beauty excluded both 'interested' pleasures and conceptual orientations in establishing its 'subjective universality'. 'Disinterested' contemplation enabled the subject 'to sever all sympathetic identification with the object in an act of formal alienation' (Chua, 1999:145; see Kant, 1973: 50-60). According to Kant we behold nature or a work of art in a state of detached contemplation which distances us from committed, bodily engagement rooted in ethical relation to the world around us, and without recourse to conceptual thought through which meaning may be articulated. This was a conception of aesthetic engagement which led to a world which, as musicologist Daniel Chua comments, had become 'a museum for the decontextualisation of objects' (Chua, 1999: 145).

Chua has traced how Kant's thinking shaped the development of the notion of 'absolute music' as a central tenet of aesthetic theory until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He describes the move from a conception of experiencing music in our bodies through our senses, to perceiving it as a transcendental encounter:

Although Kant left music in the body, he actually hoisted the aesthetic out of the empirical world and relocated it in the transcendental realm; the sublime, in particular, was no longer a somatic feeling of awe but a transcendental revelation of moral will. The early Romantics merely carried further the logic of Kant's aesthetics to include instrumental music. For them, such music was a mysterious out-of-body experience. (ibid: 148)

In the opening of his 'Analytic of the Beautiful' Kant makes a distinction between 'free' and 'adherent' beauty, between beauty 'in its own right', for instance an intricately-patterned border, and the beauty which comes through the fulfilment of a purpose, for example a church building. As Chua explains, Kant's refined distinction drawn between ideal or pure beauty and 'adherent' or dependent beauty has been lost, as subsequent philosophers ignored the latter and transformed a theory of ideal beauty into a theory of art. It is the autonomy of the art-work which has been Kant's enduring legacy rather than any notions of its worth as fulfilling a societal function.

Kant posited the *form* of an art-work as its interior *purpose* and set it outside the everyday context of human life. Chua explains how this is reflected in the emerging musical style of the Classical period:

In the aesthetic of autonomy . . . the minuet is not to be danced to, the song has no voice, the horn call is on the piano: the topics no longer stand in for reality but are torn out of context to represent their functionlessness and are thrown together to negate each other's meaning so that the *total* meaning is entrusted to a *formal* structure. (Chua, 1999: 193)

Musical devices which had been closely associated with particular social functions – specific dances and songs for particular occasions, hunting signals used in fields and forests – are now abstracted from their everyday uses and lose their ‘meaning’, subsumed into a greater structural shape which becomes their justification and end. Chua reflects on this withdrawal from practical function or sense of purpose:

The paradoxical existence of the aesthetic process captured most concisely by Kant's definition of the beautiful: *Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck* – a purposiveness without purpose, a finality without end. Kant's aesthetic process is basically a teleological structure with its origin and end removed so that it is without external cause or external finality; the teleological process folds in on itself as an inner purposiveness, creating an organic, self-legislating form that has no practical function. It is as if the historical drive of modernity has withdrawn from the world of *praxis*. (ibid: 248-9)

This withdrawal from the world of *praxis* set in train by Kant's formulation of the aesthetic process has shaped thinking in music education and has contributed to an outlook which regards music education as a process of initiation into a set of values and a canon of musical works, rather than learning the skills to engage in musical practices situated in diverse cultural contexts, serving social functions.

## **Reflection**

This part of the chapter has looked further at the ‘problem of aesthetics’ for contemporary thinking about music education, drawing upon Chua's musicological research. Kant's legacy has been shaped by successive interpreters who have emphasised notions of autonomy, which have freed the ‘work of art’ from ethical moorings, of the disinterest with which art is encountered, which has brought about its decontextualisation, and of the purposiveness without purpose which has emphasised the totality of form over the reaching out to the Other. The next section explores Levinas' thinking on the aesthetic, on art and on music, then considers how more recent conceptualisations of art as activity, and specifically Small's notion of *musicking*, might shape a re-reading of Levinas to find a Levinasian approach to music-making which is ethically grounded.

### 3.3.2 Levinas and the aesthetic

Levinas never elaborated an aesthetic ‘theory’ and there is much work to be done in considering the implications of a Levinasian aesthetic. It is clear however that the ‘aesthetic’ is still invoked in relation to music education and, as argued by Bowman among others, needs a fresh conceptualisation. Bowman writes that ‘the [Kantian] separation of the musical (and the aesthetic?) from the ethical and the social was and is an intellectual move that has not served us all that well’ (Bowman, 2001: 19).<sup>36</sup> Should we not be seeking to bring the ‘aesthetic’ into the domain of the ethical? Might Levinas provide a way forwards here?

Levinas’ writings are notoriously contradictory in terms of an understanding of the aesthetic. The ancient Judaic prohibition on graven images may have left its mark, although the second commandment is understood by many commentators not to refer to art at all but to its idolatrous use during worship (Albertini, 2009: 159 note 6). Levinas is suspicious of the artist as seeking to escape the responsibility of the ethical call in a self-referential world, a double or negative pole of reality, a shadow, and of art as a façade, as a mask. But Frances Albertini has traced a ‘zigzag’ through Levinas’ work, analysing the evolution in his thinking and suggesting that the encounter with the face of the Other is in fact primarily an aesthetic encounter (Albertini, 2009:169).

During the 1940s Levinas’ essays ‘Reality and its shadow’ (1987) and ‘Existence and existents’ (Levinas, 2001) reveal a negative conception of art. Levinas believed that Romantic-Hegelian aesthetic theories tended to lead to a quasi-religious veneration of the aesthetic experience. Levinas saw this worked out in the elevation of museums and theatres to temples in which the artist is Creator, absolved of his duties as a human being and endowed with a facile and undeserved nobility (Albertini, 2009:158). Levinas talks of the ‘shadow’ which art draws over reality, the ontological danger of art in which reality is modified radically so that a dimension of irreality within reality is opened. Art invites us to understand and to act, but it also takes us into a self-referential dimension: ‘Art no longer involves the indifference of the contemplation, but rather the indifference of the irresponsibility’ (Albertini, 2009: 158). Even ‘socially engaged’ art falls into this danger.

---

<sup>36</sup> Bowman goes on to write, ‘Recognizing and valorizing the ethical nature of music would help remove it from the pedestal where it seems aloof and disconnected from life, living, struggling, and flourishing’ (Bowman, 2001: 20).

Levinas identifies the *image* with the perceptible dimension, interpreted as pure sensation, an autonomous function purified of every conceptual form. He writes that art leads the receiver to abandon perception in order to be lost in the sensation itself.

He identifies two aesthetic categories through which art's negative ontological power develops itself; musicality, or specifically rhythm, understood as a characteristic of every art form, not just music, and plasticity. The plasticity of every form of art defines a dimension of what he terms the 'il y a', a presence in the absence, a pure nothing which nevertheless resounds in the aesthetic dimension as a Something. The *il y a* is part of Levinas' polemic against Heidegger's Being, which Levinas sees as a 'horror', an anonymous stream of Being invading and submerging every subject, person or thing, compelling participation without even a way out in death as liberation. The image is opaque; the work of art is not ready to begin a dialogue, but rather is the negation of understanding, contented to be the shadow of the world. The aesthetic elements replace the object itself and overpower the perceiving subject, so that they become distanced from and unable to control objective reality (Albertini, 2009:161).

Levinas considers that sound is the quality most distant from the object. When we listen we are beyond the domain of concepts, articulated through language:

The subject is caught up and carried away by it . . . in rhythm there is no longer a oneself, but rather a sort of passage from oneself to anonymity. (Levinas, 1987: 4)

The deposing of the sovereignty of the Self however anticipates the putting into question of the self in the ethical relation (Critchley and Bernasconi, 2002: 214). Levinas elaborates:

There is . . . in sound – and in consciousness understood as hearing – a shattering of the always complete world of vision and art . . . while in vision a form espouses a content and soothes it, sound is like the sensible quality overflowing its limits, the incapacity of the form to hold its content – a true rent in the fabric of the world – that by which the world that is *here* prolongs a dimension inconvertible into vision. (Levinas, 2008: 116)

Although his early works reveal a mistrust of art works, Levinas increasingly came to use works of literature to explore his philosophical thinking. Tracing through this movement towards a recognition of 'a modality of transcendence' in Levinas' attitude towards art, Sean Hand writes that Levinas uses certain works of literature, to 'open up ontological language and philosophical tradition to transcendence', to break open philosophy's totality (Hand, 2009: 64). Robert Llewellyn writes:

Maybe it is time to see imagination as not a lowly faculty bound to insinuate the idolatry of graven images or see the human face as an aesthetic object with no ethical appeal . . . The imagination is that moment of the mind that chooses not choosing, depones and postpones the choice of a system of syntax, even the system of these logical connectives that Kant calls forms of judgement. (Llewelyn, 2008: 232)

This particular quality of aesthetic encounter enables an ethical act of staying open, of ‘not choosing’, a breaking out of totality and a receptivity towards infinity.

In Levinas’ later thinking he conceives of aesthetics as the phenomenology of sensibility, through which we may encounter the other as a face. In his essay ‘Langage et proximité’ in the late 1960s (Levinas, 1987) and again in the section ‘Langage et proximité’ in ‘Otherwise than Being’ (Levinas, 1981) Levinas writes that *sensibility*, a term Levinas uses to emphasise that the ethical relation takes place at the level of embodied exposure to each other in flesh and blood, daily interaction, is *conceptualised perception* which aims to establish a relationship to reality by ‘piercing’ knowledge (Levinas, 1981:71; 1998b: 228). Furthermore, in an essay on the work of writer Max Picard, Levinas expresses the notion that poetry represents the capacity of art to effect a movement of the subject from the meaning of their own existence to the experience of the other’s time and existence. Levinas describes the poem as incessantly *interrupted* in its rich allusions in order to let the voice and the time of the other, and of the reader, pass through its gaps (Levinas, 1996: 94-98; see the discussion in Albertini, 2009: 167). Albertini concludes:

When the work of art is radically thought, it shows itself as a movement of the Self towards the other . . . because the work of art is primarily relationship to the other reached without appearing to have been touched. Under this point of view, there is no difference between art and ethics. (ibid: 167)

Levinas has come to see art as having the capacity to allow the Self to encounter the face (or voice) of the Other ‘through its gaps’.

### **3.3.3 Music as an Other**

What role does music play in the encounter with the Other? Do processes of artistic engagement bring us face to face with the Other, or does a work of art function as an Other? Is it in the process of making music, for instance, that we may gaze into the face of the Other? Chua has explored how a musical work functions as an Other, significantly through the works of the composer with whom the autonomous, totalising concept of ‘absolute music’ is most closely associated, and in which the purity of musical form has been interpreted to exclude the Other, leaving no place for material that cannot be assimilated into

the form. In *Beethoven's Other humanism* Chua examines cultural theorist Theodor Adorno's fragmentary writings on Beethoven (Adorno, 2002) in which Adorno identifies processes of 'alienation' in the composer's late works, whose musical discourse is frequently interrupted by diverse material in a perplexing fashion:

Buckling under their own pressure the motivic and tonal structures lose the rigour of their internal order to reveal the exclusionary violence formerly masked by the aesthetic of purity. (Chua, 2009:584)

This logic of disintegration announces a new humanism, says Adorno.

Chua uses the lens of Levinas' thinking to reinterpret Adorno's observations, showing how Beethoven ruptures the totality of the musical form, developed to such a high point of relentless integration in his middle period works, through specific somatic gestures which speak of particularity, of the *human body*, of *breath* and of *love*. (ibid: 604-608)<sup>37</sup> Instead of the response of alienation to the 'failure of humanism' which Adorno perceives as the source of this expression, Chua discerns the face, or the voice, of the Other 'passing through the gaps' of Beethoven's writing. Through a close analysis of the Cavatina from the late string quartet Op. 130 Chua draws out how Beethoven allows the voice of the Other to be heard in its suffering through the breaking down of fluency in the musical expression in the *beklemmt* (oppressed, anguished) section.

Chua reorients Adorno's analysis to position the music as looking at us, as listeners, with the 'sad eyes' with which Beethoven admitted he regarded the Op.130 movement (Lenz, 1855-60: 217). It is the music which understands us and waits for us to respond, with a vision not admissible in the conceptualisation of this music as 'absolute', described by Adorno through the analogy of Leibniz's *monads*, as autonomous and unseeing, the very conception of the artwork against which Levinas was reacting as an 'ontology' and as a false reality, cut free from ethical responsibility (Adorno, 1998:164):<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Italics are mine, to highlight Chua's discussion of 'three mimetic qualities congruent with Adorno's philosophy which music must convey in order for its temporal gaze to be human' (Chua, 2009: 604).

<sup>38</sup> Chua (2009), following Adorno, uses the analogy of Leibniz's *monads*, soul-like substances, irreducible units of perceptual reality, to describe the view of the musical work since the Enlightenment – ontologically independent of each other, they don't interact and their glistening surface hides a darkness within. They are 'windowless', unseeing, blind in the sense of being impervious to the outside world, autonomous, subject to their own internal logic. At the moment when instrumental music becomes aesthetically autonomous, free from constraint by church and courtly patronage, it takes on its own internal tyranny of formal purity, internalising the very discipline from which it frees itself in order to be human. Being human has inhuman consequences, Adorno suggests. The purity of form is modelled on the purity of the subject, and has no place for the Other,

So if Beethoven's music has eyes, if 'the human is its gaze', then our very being, to return to Levinas' phrase, will be 'put into question' by the music. (Chua, 2009: 588)

Chua suggests that the sad eyes initiate a reversal, turning the 'I am' of modernity into a question. 'Who am I?' and writes that it is our inability to answer the question – our inability to be human, to return the gaze – which leaves those 'sad eyes' waiting for the reciprocity which turns *alienation* into *relationship*. The gaze that Adorno discovers is one which can only resist and not a gaze which can *relate* to an Other (Chua, 2009: 601). Chua writes, however:

Musical eyes refer to moments that cannot be assimilated, where music appears to disclose the human, as if these eyes were portals into the depth of a human being whose 'delicate aura'<sup>39</sup> indicates the inviolable and irreducible existence of a person . . . Beethoven's 'gift of sight' is literally a gift; it *gives time* for an Other to *give itself* to be seen. (ibid: 603)

### 3.3.4 Re-reading Levinas

This section has sought a pathway through Levinas' contradictory thinking on aesthetics, which developed throughout his life from suspicion and hostility to an acknowledgement of art's ability to rupture philosophical totalities. Chua's work has pointed to ways in which the face of the Other, or more appropriately, the *voice* of the Other, may be perceived and may rupture totalities of form within the musical work, allowing infinity to break in through humanising features which ground the musical expression in the body, the breath and the particularity of love.

Art for Levinas is conceived of in unapologetically European canonical terms and he regards its legacy of 'aesthetic of autonomy' with extreme suspicion, for in these terms art remains divorced from any ethical anchor. Yet the 'praxial' turn has brought conceptualisations of 'art as action' (Wolterstorff, 1980), music as music-making (Elliott's 'musicing'). How might we read Levinas in the light of notions such as Small's *musicking*, where musical meaning is located partly in the relationships between participants (Small, 1998:13), and of conceptualisations from Bowman and others, that music-making might offer a mode of ethical encounter? Is there a place for the 'aesthetic' in a Levinasian orientation towards

---

expelling everything that cannot be integrated into its structure. The purer the form, the higher the autonomy of the works, the crueller, more inhumane they are, says Adorno. Musical material is forced to obey the rules of form so that every particular must add up the whole, with disjunctions closed within the system and each loose end tied up, resolving any anomalous event (see Leibniz, 1714; and Adorno, 1997).

<sup>39</sup> Chua refers to Walter Benjamin's concept to an 'aura', 'a phenomenon that endows a work of art with 'the ability to look back at us' (Chua, 2009:588; Benjamin, 1968:184).

music-making? Can we take forwards the ‘need for the face to appear’ into a conceptualisation of *aesthetic sensitivity* and *aesthetic knowing* in regard to processes of how we perceive the face or the voice of the Other?

### 3.3.5 Aesthetic encounter

At the close of a discussion on ‘Music education as aesthetic education’ John Finney considers the process of ‘aesthetic knowing’ in an encounter whose outcome is changed understanding, which opens up the possibility for ethical action:

Take the case of knowing not music but a lake. I experience it at sunset as calm, dark, mysterious. I am perceptually open, able to forget myself, dreaming yet wide awake, able to indwell. The lake has symbolic and metaphoric resonance and my experience is intensified. In knowing the lake I know something important to me. I may remain in an inarticulate state, in a state of intelligent feeling. I become deeply interested in and committed to the lake . . . I wonder about the lake and about other lakes close by and far away in distant places. I am willing to learn and any kind of calculative thought becomes laden with an aesthetic imperative. Being poetic in this way acknowledges my existence as part of others, as a social and cultural being (Finney, 2002: 132).<sup>40</sup>

The writer is captured by a moment of beauty, truth or insight and is willing to become quietened and interiorised as other concerns recede, described by Jane Bennett as a ‘mood of enchantment’ (Bennett, 2001). The senses feed the imagination in this face-to-face encounter, and a relationship becomes established between the one who gazes and the lake. Through our senses we engage actively with that which lies beyond ourselves. Questions concerning propositional knowledge take on a fresh and rich context, opening a new window for learning, transforming one’s understanding of reality and opening up possibilities for ethical action.

---

<sup>40</sup> I am reminded of Stanford’s a cappella setting of Mary Coleridge’s poem;

The Blue bird

The lake lay blue below the hill.  
O’er it, as I looked, there flew  
Across the waters, cold and still,  
A bird whose wings were palest blue.

The sky above was blue at last,  
The sky beneath me blue in blue.  
A moment, ere the bird had passed,  
It caught his image as he flew.

Is this experience necessarily divorced from everyday life and from ethical responsibility? True, it describes a moment of repose, but it is life-giving in its richness, and engenders a willingness to learn and a sense of belonging, of connection, of relationship. Does this mode of aesthetic sensitivity leading to a notion of aesthetic ‘knowing’ allow pupils to develop the habit of encounter with the Other? How might this function when pupils are faced with the music of another? What does Levinas’ lens reveal about these practices? The next section considers the writings of a practitioner of ‘world music’ and suggests how a Levinasian outlook might provide an ethical underpinning for his practice.

### **3.3.6 Encountering the music of the Other**

Turning towards the example of a practitioner who brings learners into an encounter with the Other through music-making, Huib Schippers sets out the variety of habitual responses to encountering ‘world music’ in the classroom and highlights the approach he labels as ‘Wonder, as in ‘Exotic Music’, ‘Music of the Other’’, which captures the surprise and delight at discovering new sounds from a different context (Schippers, 2010:18). He identifies this sense of discovery as a ‘driving force’ and a ‘powerful mechanism’ for introducing new music to people of all ages, but warns too of the other connotations of the word ‘exotic’ as ‘outlandish, barbarous, strange and uncouth’ (ibid:19). Schippers reminds us that the exotic or mysterious is a successful marketing tool for those who seek to make money through the dissemination of music from around the world. Here lies the danger that the absolute difference of the Other be exploited for profit in an instrumental view of the Other which totalises and violates.<sup>41</sup>

Schippers has come to an acceptance of the potentially totalising term ‘world music’ as a useful term in describing ‘the phenomenon of musical concepts, repertoires, genres, styles, and instruments travelling, establishing themselves, or mixing in new cultural environments’ (Schippers, 2010: 27). He points out that in an educational setting a *dynamic* conception of music from around the globe is particularly useful, as music from all over the globe is taught outside of its original context (ibid: 28). Here is a conception of music-making as

---

<sup>41</sup> Edward Said wrote powerfully of the implicit prejudice behind Western interest in the generic indication of ‘exotic’ or ‘oriental’: ‘The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ‘different’; thus European is rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal’ ’ (Said, 1978:40). Schippers remarks, ‘This is the darker side of the ‘music of the Other’ and a factor that still influences the presentation of world music in many settings, including education’ (Schippers, 2010:22).

‘encounter’, where the relationship of self and other is worked out continually in the ongoing shaping and reshaping of musical forms and expressions as voices of different communities are heard by others.

Schippers’ continua are useful tools in recognising at which level of de- or re-contextualisation the encounter will take place in a class music lesson but he offers no ethical elucidation or underlying orientation. He recommends that ‘a dialogue approached with integrity and some cultural sensitivity’ will lead to ‘highly rewarding experiences or even revelations’ and highlights the need for educators to communicate with musicians and communities around them in order to bring ‘added credibility’ to a music lesson that might otherwise fail to engage and convince (Schippers, 2010: 168). Schippers writes:

Be aware of tradition, authenticity and context, but do not get stifled by these concepts. Read about them, think about them, and boldly present the recontextualized version of the music you have chosen to work with in the classroom. The core of music is not correctness but its power to move people. Acknowledge differences with originals, and proceed to create meaningful experiences. (ibid: 168-9)

Yet music’s ‘power to move people’ is perhaps in itself an insufficient basis for a robust notion of music-making, nor is the creation of ‘meaningful experiences’ an adequate goal. Levinas’ ‘exteriority’ emphasises the outward movement of ethical action as the self reaches out to the Other in language, putting a world in common. This offers an underlying, ethical orientation.

Schippers touches upon questions of the spiritual context for music-making in his discussion of perspectives on the nature of musical knowledge beyond the West. His section on ‘Values’ mentions the African notion of ‘*ubuntu*’, the spirit of togetherness that many Africans attribute to music-making, and an example from Indian classical music whereby ‘values are taught partly explicitly, partly implicitly, and often through stories, anecdotes and legends’. He comments that such legends don’t need to be ‘taken at face value’, but make learners aware of the value system and respect underlying the tradition. These values are perhaps clear in the original context, but need to be explained or highlighted somehow in their recontextualized settings through ‘conscious and intelligent choices’ (ibid: 73-4).

A Levinasian orientation might enable both intelligent and ‘ethical’ choices. Schippers’ ‘bold’ conception of the teacher chimes with Standish’s deeply committed stance (see section 3.2.1), where the teacher’s experience of the subject in its infinity allows them to lead pupils, or act as conduit. But his aim to create ‘deeply meaningful experiences’ lacks an

anchor in a robust ethical orientation. Levinas' notion of the call of the Other upon us as we look into their face provides a profound and sustainable basis for classroom encounters with music from around the world.

### **3.3.7 Learning to hear the voice of the Other**

Huib Schippers advocates 'holistic learning' where a piece of music is presented to the pupil as a whole, not as an exercise or study, or as a simplified extract. This of course creates a challenge for the pupil, but counter-intuitively addresses the analytical skills of the learner more than the 'atomistic' approach to learning favoured in the West. In this context, he suggests:

The value of confusion as a powerful instrument in learning should be addressed. Whereas Western music education seems to attempt to exclude confusion as much as possible from the learning process . . . in traditions leaning towards holistic approaches it often plays an important role. The learner is confronted with techniques or pieces of music that are too difficult, gets no support in breaking these down, but has a strong desire to master them . . . This mechanism is recognized in contemporary educational literature as cognitive dissonance . . . It can lead to a process of highly motivated internal analytical activity, which may make students achieve above their expected level. (Schippers, 2010: 84-5)

This practice is consonant with Levinas' concern with seeing the irreducible Other in their radical, 'unknowable' difference without attempting to control or manipulate through disassembling. It speaks of the cost exacted as the Self is put into question.

This mode of learning occurs at a contrasting point on a continuum when pupils learn popular music from the radio or recording, in line with Lucy Green's findings on 'How popular musicians learn' (Green, 2002). Having chosen what they would like to learn to play, and beginning in friendship groups by listening to the CD, up to speed, unmediated, not broken down into steps by a teacher, pupils experience 'anxiety and frustration as each player realize[s] that their skill and knowledge levels [a]re way below those needed for an accurate rendition of the song' (Green, 2008: 52-3). Yet facing the infinity of the whole through this manner of learning often leads to results which may be less accurate than conventional methods would have elicited, but which have more 'feel' and are able to contribute to an ensemble straight away (ibid: 55). The teacher may be less obviously leading pupils' learning in these instances but pupils are encouraged to stay in the place of encounter with the complexity of the music until they begin to be able to join in and take on a richer sense of idiom and style.

## Reflection

This chapter has introduced the work of Emmanuel Levinas as a rich resource, a lens through which to examine how pupils encounter the Other through music-making. Standish's writing takes Levinas' thinking into the classroom and elucidates the role of the teacher in 'going before' pupils and bringing them to an encounter where they may look into the face of the Other and be drawn more deeply into the infinity of their curriculum subject, and in the context of this study, into the infinity of music-making. Chua has shown how the musical work might function in terms of perceiving the face or the voice of the Other in a re-humanising account of aesthetics. Levinas' complex attitudes towards aesthetic experience have been explored and set alongside the thinking of practitioners who explore 'aesthetic encounter' as an arresting experience which captures us and leads to 'aesthetic knowing', suggesting that developing aesthetic sensitivity might enable pupils to come into encounters with the Other. Levinas' 'looking into the face of the Other' has been described as necessarily involving aesthetic processes which enable us to perceive the face of the Other, and motivate us to move from encounter to ethical action.

Towards the end of his book *Self and salvation*, which involves a rich discussion of Levinas' thought in dialogue with Ricoeur and Jüngel, David Ford considers the 'practices of facing' in the lives of two contemporary saints (Ford, 2002). Above all, this is what Levinas calls us to as educators – *practices of facing* – learning to look into the face of the Other and to respond to the ethical call we perceive there, to bring pupils into an encounter with the infinity of the Other, and to pass on to our pupils habits of 'facing' as they learn to hear the voice of another. What might these practices of facing look or sound like in the music classroom? The following chapters introduce the fieldwork study at the heart of my investigation, and look at experiences and practices of facing I found amongst the pupils of a music class in a Scottish high school.

## Chapter 4:

# A critical realist theoretical framework

---

## Introduction

Chapter 2 explored the emergence in the research literature of the notion of music education as *ethical encounter* and traced the development of the research questions which structure this study:

What light does Levinas shed on conceptualisations of music education as ‘ethical encounter’?

How do pupils encounter the Other through music-making?

What might characterise ethical music education?

Chapter 3 introduced the thinking of Emmanuel Levinas as a tool with which to develop and deepen the notion of ethical encounter. In addressing my first research question, Chapter 3 explored how strands of his philosophy might inform a consideration of encounters in the music classroom and the quality of *coming to know* experienced there, preparing a theoretical lens through which to examine the fieldwork I undertook in order to address the second of my research questions, ‘How do pupils encounter the Other through music-making?’ I planned a study spanning one academic year which sought to uncover secondary pupils’ *practices of facing* through music-making in order to draw out from these findings insights which address my third research question identifying ethical practices in the music classroom.

This chapter sets out the parameters for my fieldwork study, the study’s ontological and epistemological assumptions which govern the methodology chosen for the empirical research, outlining my progression from a social constructionist outlook in my Master’s research, to a realist ontology and a critical realist theoretical framework for this doctoral study. Levinas’ thinking underpins the critical realist outlook here. Its dynamic relationship between structure and agency is informed by his notion of looking into ‘infinity in the face of the Other’. His ‘ethics as critique’ constantly challenges and scrutinises the theoretical framework, allowing ‘infinity to break into totalising practices’. The chapter continues with a consideration of my own positioning as researcher in the study. Part Two sets out the methods I have chosen as appropriate for addressing my research questions, examining how these are shaped by a critical realist theoretical framework and by a Levinasian orientation. Part Three sets out the methods and phases of analysis I employed and considers issues of research validity.

## Part One

### 4.1. Assumptions in research questions and methodological choices

Firstly, a setting out of assumptions and choices is necessary. Methodological assumptions are ones about the very nature of the ‘realities’ that we study, how we can come to know those realities and how we can make valid or truthful generalisations about the social world on the basis of the very limited materials that we gather during fieldwork (Watson, 2003:14). Crotty exhorts researchers to make clear the assumptions about reality which we bring to our work (Crotty, 2005:2). Inherent in my research questions is the belief that philosophical ideas can throw light upon lived experience in order to enable us to live together more effectively and can contribute to human thriving or well-being (which Aristotle termed *eudomonia*);<sup>42</sup> that developed thinking about the ethical basis of human experience can help to shape educational practice in such a way as to bring about a more ethical, just society; that music education can be oriented towards our relating to one another in a richer, life-giving practice; that social reality might be perceived in diverse ways, but that transformative modes of practice may be found which might also allow for a transcending of local realities.

My fieldwork study focuses upon the experiences of a class of high school pupils in the final year of compulsory school music lessons.<sup>43</sup> I sought to explore how music-making operates in pupils’ lives in and outside of school music lessons, how pupils encounter the Other through music-making, and respond through music-making to those different from themselves, and to unfamiliar music from distant places and people groups. Pupils’ perspectives were to be set alongside those of staff and wider school practices, to be considered within the context of local and national educational policy and practice.

The assumptions outlined above led me to seek a theoretical framework for my fieldwork which would allow for a many-faceted exploration of a study of the particular, moving from the predominantly constructionist stance of my research training to a realist position which more adequately represents how I see the world, as a complex, rich, many-voiced and deeply-layered reality which we can begin to grasp in part, but which demands a humility of

---

<sup>42</sup> See Aristotle, 1998, *Nicomachean ethics* §21; 1095a15 –22.

<sup>43</sup> I use ‘secondary’ and ‘high school’ as interchangeable adjectives. The former is used widely in England, while the latter is more common in Scotland. Pupils change schools at 11 years old in England but at 12 in Scotland.

approach. What we know will be provisional, and we will approach the exploration of it in many different ways.

Embedded in my approach to research design and methods is the conception of *music-making as ethical encounter* outlined in Chapter 2 and Levinas' *looking into the face of the Other* explored in Chapter 3. A mode of *ethical encounter* must lie at the heart of the research design and choice of methods for the study, consonant with the philosophical priorities underlying its conception. Underpinning the research process are the *practices of facing* inherent in Levinas' thinking – a taking-on of unending responsibility for and openness to the Other – and an awareness of the dangers of instrumental thinking with regard to the pupils I encounter.

#### **4.1.1. From social constructionism to critical realism**

My Master's study had taken as its theoretical framework the dominant research paradigm within my faculty at the time, the social constructionist outlook, a methodological approach emerging from interpretivism and particularly from phenomenology with links to postmodernism, which became very influential in the social science research community following the publication in 1966 of Berger and Luckman's classic text *The social construction of knowledge*.<sup>44</sup> As Rowland (1995) argues, research study reflects a particular worldview composed of at least three philosophical layers; ontological beliefs, epistemological assumptions and methodological choices:

Ontological beliefs are our beliefs regarding reality (or what it is), epistemological assumptions are our assumptions regarding how we come to know about our world (i.e. our sources of knowledge, or how we make sense of reality); and methodological choices are the means we choose in attempting to achieve desired ends . . . Particular ontological beliefs lead us to make particular epistemological assumptions . . . That is, our explanations of how people come to know about the world depend on what we believe the world to be. Likewise, particular epistemological assumptions lead us to choose certain methodologies over others. We choose to carry out activities that fit with how we assume humans come to know. (Rowland, 1995: 278)

---

<sup>44</sup> The Austrian, Alfred Schutz, had been a pupil of Husserl and upon fleeing the Nazi persecution settled in the USA and applied his phenomenological outlook to the common sense world of everyday life (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 24). Berger and Luckman then developed his ideas in the field of sociology, influenced also by Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Mead, who may all be seen as forefathers to social constructionism, calling into question notions of knowledge as purely rational and objective, and exploring knowledge as arising from processes related to ideology, interests and power.

The social constructionist outlook seeks for context-specific understandings rather than the discovery of causal relationships, within a constructionist epistemology which considers the only means of knowing to be an unlocking of the constructions made in the minds of individuals:

If realities exist only in respondents' minds, subjective interaction seems to be the only way to access them. Inquirer and inquired into are fused together into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two. (Guba, 1990: 26)

Here ontological considerations are elided with epistemological ones, with no sense of a reality external to the awareness of these two participants, leading to a relativistic ontological position. Social constructionism is open to the criticism of committing the 'epistemic fallacy', conflating ontology and epistemology, confusing what actually 'is' with our knowledge of it.

During my Master's research I sought refuge in Gadamer's reaffirmation of the Aristotelian tradition of practical philosophy in which he finds a pathway through the ontological / epistemological quagmire by establishing intersubjective agreement, a consensus among cultures, his 'merging of horizons' (Gadamer, 1975; see a discussion of Gadamer in Carr, 2007: 140). Adopting Gadamer's outlook towards *Horizontverschmelzung* necessitates a genuine dialogue facilitated through open, respectful and empathic relationships; an *I-Thou* encounter in research (Buber, 2004). The process of 'merging of horizons', as pupils in my Master's study encountered the cultural expressions of others, seemed problematic however. How could a merging of horizons unfold in a situation in the music classroom where pupils were brought into an encounter with music from a distant community of people unable to participate in a respectful dialogue? How might such classroom encounters be understood, in terms of what sort of 'coming to know' results? Levinas' work emphasises the dangers of negating difference through processes of domination and control and his poles of totality and infinity challenge us to eschew reduced models of knowing.

These considerations led me to explore critical realism as originally expounded by Roy Bhaskar (1978, 1989, 2011; Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 1998; Manicas, 2006; Sayer, 1992, 2000). Writing in his chapter 'The problem of knowledge', against the backdrop of a constructionist-preoccupied research community's weakening of the notion of knowledge, distinguished sociologist of education Rob Moore observes:

For a long time the sociology of education had been strongly influenced by epistemologically weak forms of relativistic constructionism . . . The promise of critical realism lies in its capacity to support an anti-reductive position *vis-à-vis* the *autonomy* of knowledge. (Moore, 2004:175)

Critical realists accept ‘weak’ social constructionism, noting that the social character of knowledge does not mean that it cannot successfully identify real objects, including social constructions which exist independently of the researcher (Sayer, 2000: 90). Critical realism, however, views social constructionism as not going far enough in exploring a many-layered, realist view of social reality.<sup>45</sup> Critical realism seemed to offer more effective tools for examining how pupils might come to know within a Levinasian outlook which holds to the notion of an infinity of the subject area of music, where pupils come into encounter with this infinity through the face of their teacher. Though also ‘transcendent’, Levinas’ view of knowledge within a curriculum area is a realist conception. The encounter occurs through social relations but through these an unending treasure trove awaits pupils’ discovery as they begin to enter its infinity.

## **4.2 Critical realism**

Critical realism may be seen as a position halfway between positivism and postmodernism. A loose grouping of thinkers across a variety of disciplines, critical realists uphold the legacy of the Enlightenment in its commitment to reason, and insist that its project has not been terminally damaged by postmodern criticisms.<sup>46</sup> These thinkers are part of a broader range of philosophical positions which combine a modernist intention to engage with ‘reality’ with a postmodern recognition that our knowledge and understanding is limited (including for instance Gadamer, 1979; Habermas, 1985; MacIntyre, 2007; Nagel, 1986; Polanyi, 1958; Taylor, 1992; Williams 2002).

### **4.2.1 A realist ontology, a pluralist epistemology**

Critical realists affirm the existence of a mind-independent reality, a real world whose existence does not depend on our awareness of it or our ability to comprehend it:

---

<sup>45</sup> Crotty’s ‘Foundations of social research’ (2005) has been an influential text in research methodology training, yet his is an outlook which underplays the importance of ontological considerations to the extent that he identifies ontology as the first layer of methodological decision-making, then proceeds to explain why it is unnecessary to address this: ‘Ontological issues and epistemological issues tend to merge together’ (Crotty, 2005: 10).

<sup>46</sup> Many of those known as critical realists have significant areas in common with theological critical realists.

It may be that, epistemically, we can only know the world through concepts of our own making, but within our own concepts, we must always make an ontological distinction between what we believe exists independently of us, and what does not. Otherwise we simply conclude that the universe is coterminous with our knowledge of it. To avoid this conflation, critical realism insists on an epistemological distinction between what it calls the transitive dimension (our beliefs or knowledge claims about the world), and the intransitive dimension (what the world is actually like apart from us). (Archer, Collier and Porpora, 2004: 2)

On the other hand, critical realism rejects the Cartesian assumption that we are detached, isolated observers of this world. Any description of reality we produce must give an account of our place within it. Nagel writes that if ‘one of the strongest philosophical motives is the desire for a comprehensive picture of objective reality’, then ‘the natural place to begin is our own position in the world’ (Nagel 1986:13).

We ‘indwell’ the world; our understanding of it is necessarily grounded in a particular time and place, and our pursuit of knowledge involves making the best sense we can of the world based on past and present experiences and relationships, using the best intellectual tools available to us. We are situated within specific traditions and expressions and bring prior assumptions, beliefs and prejudices. Gadamer called this the necessary forestructure to all our understanding (Gadamer, 1991). Faith plays an integral part in our pursuit of knowledge, in that our understanding proceeds from that which we already know. Critical realists acknowledge that understanding social practices is a matter of interpretation, but retain an ontological realism, believing that there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories and constructions, while acknowledging a plurality of epistemological approaches, embracing the varied, diverse understandings of social practice.<sup>47</sup>

For critical realists, engaging with reality in order to come to know requires humility and the recognition that our knowledge is limited, provisional and open to subsequent revision; although we have an ‘open-ended capacity for understanding that we have not yet conceived . . . we must also admit that the world probably reaches beyond our capacity to understand it

---

<sup>47</sup> Crotty explains the conflation of ‘ontology’ with ‘theoretical perspective’ in the work of social constructionists, citing Blaikie’s explanation that the definition of ontology is ‘the science or study of being’; however, ‘For the purposes of the present discussion’ ontology means ‘the claims or assumptions that a particular approach to social enquiry makes about the nature of social reality’ (Blaikie, 1993: 6). Blaikie sees interpretivism as entailing an ontology in which social reality is regarded as the product of processes by which social actors together negotiate the meanings for actions and situations (ibid: 96) but Crotty comments, ‘This is stretching the meaning of ontology well and truly beyond its boundaries’. Crotty observes, ‘We need to recognise, however, that this is no longer ontology in its philosophical sense . . . It refers to how one views the world’ (Crotty, 2005: 11) that is, one of a plurality of epistemologies.

no matter how far we travel' (Nagel, 1986:24). This realisation is a prerequisite for the intellectual optimism which drives us towards a deeper understanding of reality. I suggest that this resonates with Levinas' notion of *infinity*. Levinas leads us into a position of seeing that our own subjectivity is established and shaped as we respond to the ethical call of the Other, in processes which social constructionists might recognise as a mutual construction of reality. But Levinas insists that this encounter is a moment of transcendence, that it is *infinity* we glimpse in the face of the Other, always drawing us deeper into relationship where 'coming to know' can begin, but always also overflowing us, transcending our capacity to contain it. Levinas' philosophical outlook is consonant with a view of reality as beyond our own imaginations and our totalising grasp, yet it is through our openness to the Other that in our local, rooted and diverse ways of coming to know, our plurality of epistemologies, that we can look more deeply into infinity.

#### **4.2.2 The possibility for transcendence**

A critical realist outlook based on a social ontology allows for the possibility of 'transcendence' and for an examination of how notions of transcendence may sit with postmodern and social constructionist perspectives on cultural embeddedness. 'Transcendence' refers to the human capacity to overcome, or perhaps overflow, some existing state or level of consciousness, including knowledge:

Transcendence is implicit in the basic, critical realist distinction between the intransitive domain of the real and our transitive knowledge of it. Transcendence is always built on, though never reducible to, an immanent ground made up of pre-existing knowledge, including theories, beliefs, tacit knowledge and traditional practices. (Archer et al, 2004:27)

The acknowledgement that the experience of 'coming to know' may transcend the necessarily situatedness of pupils in school is significant for a consideration of learning in all subject areas, but especially where pupils are invited to engage with the cultural expressions of others, as in the class music lesson in school where pupils encounter the music of distant people groups.

#### **4.2.3 A stratified social reality**

Critical realism attempts to identify the structures, processes and causal mechanisms that operate beneath the surface of social reality but which are also a constitutive part of it (Watson, 2003:15). Social reality is only partly text-like. Much of what happens does not depend on or correspond to actors' understandings. There are unintended consequences and

unacknowledged conditions attached to events and things can happen to people regardless of their understandings (Sayer, 2000: 19). Critical realism does not embrace a naïve realism, assuming that reality is represented simply by surface appearances, but engages critically to probe beneath the immediate:

Knowledge may be not only of what appears, but of underlying structures, which endure longer than those appearances, and generate them and make them possible. We may have knowledge, not just of actions but of characters; not just of historical events but of social systems; not just of family likeness but of the molecular structure of DNA. (Collier, 1994: 6)

What appears to be the case on the surface may in fact contradict the underlying reality. As we investigate the world it constantly yields up far more than we anticipate and we are drawn on to engage more widely and deeply to discover more of its secrets.

Critical realists embrace the ‘hermeneutical circle’ which interprets the individual parts of reality in the light of the whole, and the whole in the light of its parts.<sup>48</sup> They seek an understanding of reality through a stratified hierarchy of academic disciplines, reflecting the layered nature of our knowledge of reality, suggesting that reality itself is stratified. Reality is rich and multi-faceted in nature and needs to be approached through a variety of complementary interpretative disciplines to differentiate the distinct mechanisms which are operating simultaneously. The possibility of perceiving a layered reality about which one can be critical, which transcends and surrounds the intimately ‘constructed’ knowledge between interviewer and participant, opens up a depth of understanding through multi-method research design which identifies *structures and processes* not necessarily immediately visible to the participants in my study.

In exploring the possibilities of critical realism I began to see the potential for looking at pupils’ exercising of their agency through music-making, set within a rich context accessed through separating out layers of social reality. The effect upon the school music curriculum of the examination requirements of later years, the political priorities of the local council which determine opportunities for instrumental tuition in school, the management style of senior staff and its effect upon class teachers – these are all examples in my study of emerging structures which surround pupils’ experience of encountering the Other through their music-making. These structures may or may not have an effect upon pupils, although they have the potential to. Whether or not these exert influence upon pupils’ experiences

---

<sup>48</sup> The ‘hermeneutic circle’ was developed by Heidegger (1962) and taken further by Gadamer (1975)

depends upon the exercise of agency of members of staff and of pupils themselves (discussed in Chapter 8).

A critical realist outlook offers me a healthy framework within which to embed interpretive fieldwork. The perspectives I gathered in my site school are set within distinct layers of social reality, so that an understanding may be formed that can take into consideration contextual, cultural, societal forces which may be acting upon my participants. There is depth to the study, as these strata interact with each other; yet they remain distinct: the stratification of knowledge doesn't imply the reducibility of knowledge to just 'society' for instance. Complexity is embraced and a range of disciplines employed in its multi-faceted exploration. Constructionism is re-contextualised through critical realism into a richer, layered, dynamic and complex exploration of reality.

#### **4.2.4 A dynamic view of structure and agency**

For critical realists the central relation of social reality is between agency and structure (Scott, 2010: 16). Agency is the ability of human individuals to make choices and to act freely. Structure refers to the recurring patterns which shape the social structures which constrain or offer opportunity to the individual. The interplay between the two describes processes of socialisation versus the autonomy of the individual. Specifying how social powers and agents' projects combine entails two stages; firstly, theorising about how structural and cultural forms can impinge upon people, and secondly about the reception of these objective influences, with their potential power to condition what people may do, by reflexive agents whose subjective powers ultimately determine what in fact they do (Archer, 2003: 2). David Scott writes:

Social structures pre-exist agential operations, and in turn human beings reflexively monitor the social world, either individually or collectively exerting an influence and changing relatively enduring but emergent structures. (Scott, 2005: 640)

Margaret Archer's view of this relation posits agency and structure as having distinct properties and powers that cannot be subsumed into the other. Each has the potential to exert a force upon the other. In contrast to the 'habitus' of Bourdieu, or the 'structuration' theory of Giddens, Margaret Archer advocates differentiating between the existence of

structural properties and their causal powers.<sup>49</sup> In my explorations of pupils' perspectives and experiences this has meant indicating the apparent existence of a structure alongside its potential to shape pupils' experience in the classroom, for instance the model of knowledge the examination board advocates through the formulation of its music listening question papers, whilst examining the choices and orientation of individual pupils who either resist this structural force, or experience its effects on them.<sup>50</sup>

The interplay of structure and agency – parameters which in critical realist studies are kept distinct – is in contrast to the conflation of the two parameters which occurs in other widely-used research techniques. Margaret Archer gives a vivid example of three different theoretical interpretations of the testimony of a 62-year-old construction site foreman, concerning his managing of money (Archer, 2003: 10):

I'm very cautious in what we spend – I like to be right if I'm going to do something out there. And the caution is don't jump straight in. Just stand back . . . and make plans. Stand back, don't stand forward. (Archer, 2003: 10)

All three accounts redefine 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity' so that they do not allow that the site foreman is reflecting upon himself in relation to his circumstances as two distinct parts of reality with different properties and powers, as Archer insists he does:

In saying what he does, he endorses a belief in his own subjectivity and that his reflexive deliberations affect his actions within the objective social situations that he finds himself . . . He is . . . right that he lives in a social world that has different properties and powers from his own – one which constrain (and enable) his actions . . . that he is capable of reflexively monitoring himself in relation to his circumstances . . . then adopt a 'stance' towards his social context. (ibid: 14)

Archer emphasises the causal efficacy of human reflexivity towards ourselves, our society and to relations between them. Human reflexivity is held to be one of the most important personal emergent properties, but one whose causality is frequently denied by other approaches to social research. In the example of the foreman, Archer highlights his awareness of his own subjectivity as a first-person ontology, real and influential, with powers that can be efficacious in relation to himself and the society around him. He is aware

---

<sup>49</sup> In 'Outline of a theory of practice' (1972) Pierre Bourdieu first outlined his now famous distinction between the field of social practices and the *habitus*, the 'subjective disposition of actors to balance the demands of structures against the individual's ability to engage in free play with those demands' (Chaffee & Lemert, 2009: 136). Giddens' structuration theory is set out in his 1984 book 'The constitution of society'.

<sup>50</sup> Figure 8:7 later in the thesis sets out in diagrammatic form the interplay of these structures and the actions of pupils to resist this totalising conception of musical knowing.

that he lives in a society with different properties and powers from his own, ones which constrain and enable his actions:

They are *temporally prior* to his conceiving of a course of action, *relatively autonomous* from how he takes them to be, but can *causally influence* the achievement of his plans by frustrating them or advancing them. (Archer, 2003: 11)

He adopts a 'cautious' stance towards his social context, aware that whilst he is capable of reflexive monitoring in relation to his circumstances, the structural powers bearing upon him are not. Archer writes:

To defend these three elements is to endorse the notions that 'structure' and 'agency' constitute two distinctive and irreducible properties and powers, and that human reflexive deliberations play a crucial role in mediating between them. (ibid.)

Archer proposes that the 'internal conversation' is the process of mediation through which agents respond to social forms. These reflexive deliberations are held to be genuinely interior, ontologically subjective and causally efficacious (ibid: 15).

Chapter 8 sets out examples of pupils' 'internal conversations' such as Tom's, captured during the self-documentation phase of my fieldwork. Tom reflects upon his own place in the world:

Probably the people I share my life with is my main family and the way I see myself in the world is not a large part, really nothing compared to anybody, but sometimes small people can make a change.

Tom is exploring how to position himself in terms of resisting the marginalising social forces of pupil dynamics in school alongside the enormity of what he witnesses from the world around him as he 'keeps up with the news', whilst holding to a belief in his own agency as a 'small person' to 'make a change'. My study seeks to uncover pupils' *practices of facing* and critically evaluate how these arise from within the context of the social structures emerging from the fieldwork, how pupils' and staff members' actions and orientations have resisted or acquiesced to these structures potentially exerting forces upon them.

### **4.3 Levinas' thought as underpinning this critical realist study**

Emmanuel Levinas may seem an uncommon bedfellow of critical realism, his work being associated with strands of continental philosophy which have given rise to the 'postmodern' critique. Andrew Sayer writes, however, that critical realism should not reject

postmodernism, but acknowledge that some elements of it may be valid, particularly the problematisation of modernist categories and structures of explanation. He suggests that, 'Strategically, the main mistake made by the critical realists in academic debate is to have ignored rather than engaged with poststructuralist and postmodernist thought' (Sayer, 2000: 30). Certainly Levinas' 'hermeneutic of suspicion' (Ricoeur, 1977), his radical critique of the whole history of Western philosophy, and his exhortation to turn away from its practices, with 'their tendency to totalise and reify reality in ways which close them to the appeal in the face of the other' (Ford, 1999:46) and which have underpinned centuries of domination and violence, puts into question the Enlightenment project.

Yet Levinas' 'breaking open' of the many ways in which we have come to make philosophical sense of the world is deeply aligned with critical realism's aim to keep open conceptions of what it means to come to know, where reality can never be restricted to the known (Archer et al, 2004:68). Levinas' practice of looking into the face of the Other speaks of an exercise of agency which wholly refuses to categorise the Other and which is a powerful tool in uncovering oppressive relations within the workings of social forces. It radically calls into question the Western will for power which Levinas sees as voiced by ontology, and it powerfully resists the depersonalising of the particular which leads to dehumanising practices. The face of the Other is transcendent and irreducible to our understanding. Levinas' insistence on this constantly pulls research practice back to the fundamental relationship of myself in an unending relation of responsibility towards you.

### **4.3.1 Levinas' ethics as prior to ontology**

Philosophy for Levinas is the work of reflection that is brought to bear on unreflective, everyday life (Critchley, 2002: 7). As explained in Chapter 3, ethics is understood as a relationship of infinite responsibility with the other person. At the heart of Levinas' philosophy is the assertion that 'ethics is first philosophy', or put another way, that ethics precedes ontology and is therefore prior to any attempts to understand or make sense of the world. Levinas uses the term 'ontology' with a negative connotation to designate any relation to otherness that is reducible to comprehension or understanding. Levinas challenged Heidegger's notion of Being as 'thematic', or a concept, with the claim that the relation with the Other goes beyond comprehension (Levinas, 1998: 52). If the other person were reducible to the concept I have of him or her, then the relation to the Other would become a relation of knowledge or an epistemological feature. For Levinas, all ontological

relations to that which is other are relations of comprehension, and form totalities. Critchley explains:

If I conceive of the relation to the other in terms of understanding, correlation, symmetry, reciprocity, equality and even, as has once again become fashionable, recognition, then that relation is totalized. When I totalize, I conceive of the relation to the other from some imagined point that would be outside of it and I turn myself into a theoretical spectator on the social world of which I am really a part, and in which I am an agent. (Critchley, 2002: 13)

But Levinas insists that ethics is not reducible to epistemology and that practical reason is not reducible to pure reason (ibid: 11): ‘Ethics is otherwise than knowledge’ (Levinas, *Autrement que savoir* 1987). Critchley notes the visual imagery in Levinas’ prose, yet points to the relation with the Other as always linguistic. ‘I am not contemplating, I am conversing’ (Critchley, 2002: 12). He continues:

Levinas’ point is that unless our social interactions are underpinned by ethical relations to other persons, then the worst might happen, that is, the failure to acknowledge the humanity of the other. Such disasters of this century, where the other person becomes a faceless face in the crowd, someone whom the passer-by simply passes by, someone whose life or death is for me a matter of indifference. (ibid: 13)

Whereas Levinas puts ethics first, Critchley observes, Heidegger placed them second. Critchley explains:

The relation to the other person is only a moment in a philosophical investigation of which the ambition is the exploration of the basic question of Being. Of course the danger in all this is that the philosopher risks losing sight of the other person in his or her quest for ontological truth. (ibid)

This has pertinence for the practice of social science research. Philosophy and social science may be seen to have persistently totalised relations with others.

### **4.3.2 Ethics as critique in a critical realist study**

For Levinas ethics is critique and his ‘non-ontological’ philosophy consists in the resistance of the other to the same, a resistance he sees as ethical.<sup>51</sup> In underpinning critical realism with Levinas’ thinking, a profound ethical voice constantly challenges and reorients the theoretical framework and allows for the constant breaking in of infinity to ward against the

---

<sup>51</sup> Levinas was criticised, most powerfully by Derrida, for his continued use of ontological language in *Totality and Infinity* and he thereafter sought to move away from this terminology.

danger of totalising practices. Levinas' 'ethics as first philosophy' offers a bridge between a critical realist outlook and postmodern currents of thought. His impulse is:

To modify the Enlightenment version of the universal light of reason rather than abandon it completely to a war of conflicting power interests and self-interested ideologies. (Handelman, 1990: 66)

Levinas' critique of reason does not seek to negate reason, but to move it away from autonomous or imperialist tendencies in order to re-establish it as a fuller rationality, through the ethical binding of self to the Other. Levinas' work aims to show that reason and freedom are not autonomous but are founded on prior structures. Whatever claims to be independent, 'for and of itself',<sup>52</sup> is 'faced' with the Other. This facing, questioning and hollowing out of the subject brings about a turning outwards into a 'for-the-other':

Levinas is one of the few writers who is able to restore *ethical binding* in the face of the ruptures enacted in post-modern thought. His aim is to deconstruct the subject but retain it as responsible, lucid, awake, obligated. (Handelman, 1990: 61)

In common with post-structuralist thinkers Levinas brings a radical critical lens which disrupts philosophical totality. He differs from most post-structuralists however in that he reorients philosophy as *ethics* prior to all else, with the relation to the individual human Other at its heart:

'L'absolut Autre, c'est Autrui' (Levinas, 1969: 39). The word *autrui* signifies the other as personal other; in other words, absolute alterity passes or is traced through the personal human other. (Handelman, 1990: 63)

Human experience is rooted in our orientation of responsibility in the face of the Other. This ethical mooring enriches and empowers the theoretical framework of critical realism.

### **4.3.3 Positioning of the researcher: 'responsible, lucid, awake, obligated'**

So what is the stance of the researcher within a critical realist study, and specifically within this study, shaped by a critical realism that is constantly ethically challenged by the exacting thinking of Levinas? Andrew Sayer writes:

Realism does not require some kind of denial of 'subjective' influences or standpoints so as to guard against forms of projection and selection which misrepresent our objects. Realist social

---

<sup>52</sup> For instance, Handelman suggests, Classical reason, the dialectical march of History, reflexive self-consciousness, the impersonal world of art, the narcissistic ego, the play of the signifiers, institutional Discourse, etc. (Handelman, 1990: 71).

science requires reflexivity. We are always in some position or other in relation to our objects; the important thing is to consider whether that influence is benign or malign. (Sayer, 2000:53)

The researcher's own life-experience and the layers of perspectives we bring to the study don't need to be eliminated or controlled, if indeed this were possible. But the researcher must engage in processes of reflexivity, continually assessing what effect they may be having upon their participants and how their own views and experience are shaping the study. Maxwell talks of the 'researcher identity memo' exercise in which he encourages researchers to identify and reflect upon beliefs, values and dispositions they bring to the study and what resources and potential concerns lie therein (Maxwell, 2012: 97 and 99). He writes:

The goal is partly to 'bracket' one's experiences and perspectives, seeing them more clearly and thus being able to see past them, and partly recognise the insights and conceptual resources that these experiences and perspectives provide . . . an ongoing exploration of one's identity and perspective in relation to the research, which may change during the study. (ibid: 99)

The interpretative process which builds meaning and develops theoretical ideas will necessarily be influenced by the outlook of the researcher, whose interests and outlook need setting out so that others reading the research may make their own judgements as to the validity of the findings in the light of the researcher's own story. I was fortunate in being able to talk regularly and informally with the music teacher whose class I was observing, her head of faculty and the participant pupils themselves, to continually check that my insights drawn from interviews were consonant with their lived experience, with their recollections and understandings of the interviews. Frequent memos accompany my field notes, with queries and observations to be checked and rechecked with the participants. Where my own observations elicited a highly personal, critical response which I didn't feel able to share with the participant I have made this clear.

Alongside the checking of interview and observation details and insights I was continually assessing how my demands upon participants were having an impact on their experience of school, especially in terms of their curriculum studies, aware that any time taken up with my interviews took them away from other lessons. The desire to give something of value to my pupil participants was realised in our exploration together of processes of self-documentation and reflection, processes which participants Amy and Tom saw as revelatory in terms of their own ability to evaluate and draw meaning from their experience. They had been changed by the research process.

Maxwell's acknowledgement that the identity and perspective of the researcher may change during the study is consonant with Levinas' model of the journey undertaken by Abraham in contrast to that of Ulysses, where Abraham is changed forever by the process, never to return 'home', with the implication that this is the way to the Promised Land, the riches which the researcher hopes for. Perspectives gleaned from my pupil participants challenged and

changed my thinking and led for example to my exploring Amy's conceptions of 'music as a language' through the Levinasian lens. My initial response that this was a hackneyed theme gave way to a re-reading of Levinas' notion of language as ethical in its first impulse and on to a consideration of music-making as functioning in a similar manner.

I suggest that Handelman's descriptors above provide a succinct guide to the well-positioned researcher, as well as denoting Levinas' subject. We must be responsible, lucid, awake, obligated:

i) Responsible: taking responsibility for the encounters with participants and for the whole research framework, but also 'response-able' so that we may be responsive to the changing situation and shifting emphases as well as the needs of our participants.

ii) Lucid: able to think clearly, incisively and in an informed way, not hoodwinked by circumstances but discerning and penetrating.

iii) Awake: with an openness to possibilities and an alertness which allows us to glean what is important.

iv) Obligated: always looking into the face of the Other without desire to categorise and dominate, in our face-to-face dealings with participants, whose interests must be given priority, and in being open to the infinity of possibilities in our interpretation of strands of experience and meaning.

## **Reflection**

So far this chapter has described my methodological journey from social constructionism to critical realism, setting out the case for adopting this as the basis for the present study, stating its realist ontological and pluralist epistemological assumptions, and exploring the critical realist emphasis upon a dynamic understanding of structure and agency, drawing particularly upon the work of Margaret Archer. The work of Levinas functions as a philosophical underpinning for this critical realist framework, interrogating the layers of social reality under investigation and also the research processes themselves for totalising practices, and seeking to uncover 'practices of facing' (Ford, 1999: 17-29) which represent the 'breaking-in of infinity' (Levinas, 1969: 171). The next part of the chapter sets out the research methods employed in the study, considers how Levinas' looking into infinity in the face of the Other' functions as a critique for these methods, describes the research design for the fieldwork phase and explores the implications for the researcher of the Levinasian subject as responsible, lucid, awake and obligated.

## **Part Two**

### **4.4 From methodology to methods**

#### **4.4.1 Introduction**

This section of the chapter discusses the choice of a qualitative methodology and an ethnographically-informed case study for my fieldwork. The research design for the study and the methods of data collection are presented alongside issues of sampling and phases of research, shaped by two exemplars of studies within music education. The relationship between a qualitative methodology and an overarching critical realist theoretical framework is considered as appropriate for my fieldwork study. Fieldwork relations and research design modifications during the fieldwork are explored in the light of Levinas' exhortation towards taking responsibility for answering the ethical call in the face of the Other. The framework for analysis is set out, with a discussion of criteria for quality and a consideration of what kind of 'coming to know' is sought through the analytical process.

#### **4.4.2 Qualitative methodology within a critical realist framework**

Although distinctly different from social constructionism in its ontologically realist stance, critical realism acknowledges the plurality of epistemologies which govern the transitive world of knowledge and which emerge from the diversity of time- and place-dependent ways of understanding the world. Social constructionism in its 'weak' form fits within a critical realist framework along with its qualitative research methods.<sup>53</sup> Andrew Sayer explains:

Critical realism is compatible with a relatively wide range of research methods, but it implies that the particular choices should depend on the nature of the object of study and what one wants to learn about it. (Sayer, 2000: 19)

My fieldwork study sought to uncover and explore pupils' experiences and perspectives as through music-making they encountered the Other, whether this be through encountering people different from themselves, or unfamiliar musical expressions. I chose qualitative, rather than quantitative research methods, which provide effective tools for the examination of context and of individual cases. Maxwell writes:

---

<sup>53</sup> In its 'strong' form social constructionism 'privileges, often to the exclusion of all else, discursive, linguistic, or other semiotised phenomena' Fleetwood & Ackroyd, 2004: xi).

In education . . . causal processes are often complex, temporally and contextually variable, and directly observable. In such situations, qualitative methods have distinct advantages for identifying the influence of contextual factors that can't be statistically or experimentally controlled, for understanding the unique processes at work in specific situations, and for elucidating the role of participants' beliefs and values in shaping outcomes. (Maxwell, 2004:9)

Qualitative researchers are interested in the uniqueness of the individual case, the variety of perceptions of that case and the different intentionalities of the actors who populate the case. Sayer describes the above methods as 'intensive', in contrast to the 'extensive' methods usually associated with quantitative methods (Sayer, 2000: 21):

Extensive research . . . aiming to find regularities among atomistic events or variables, seeks out mainly formal similarities and differences rather than substantial connections. Intensive research seeks out substantial relations of connection and situates practices within wider contexts, thereby illuminating part-whole relationships. (ibid: 22)

Social systems are always open, complex and messy. We therefore have to rely, Sayers suggests, on abstraction and careful conceptualisation:

On attempting to abstract out the various components or influences in our heads, and only when we have done this and considered how they combine and interact can we expect to return to the concrete, many-sided object and make sense of it. (ibid: 19)

In 'making sense of it' we interpret what participants mean. Human agents, however, are separate from social structures such as class, gender etc. which have causal powers over such things as resource allocation, privileging some and rewarding others in ways that human agents do not alone determine. In the context of my study, the model of musical knowledge employed (probably relatively unwittingly) by the exam board (SQA) forms a structure which has the potential to privilege some pupils over others:

Hence it is important to acknowledge the limitations of purely interpretative accounts of social action for uncovering a rounded understanding of reality of social structures. (Smith and Elger, 2013:4)

What critical realists add is that in order to interpret what participants mean we have to relate their discourse to its referents and contexts. Social action takes place in the context of pre-existing social relations and structures, which have constraining and facilitating implications for such action (ibid: 6). The social world has an external reality and exerts power over the way we act, but at the same time, as Elder-Vass puts it, 'human action may be affected by social causes without being *fully determined* by them' (Elder-Vass, 2010: 87-88).

## Reflection

In seeking out perspectives of pupils on their music-making and their encounters with the Other I am entering the open system of their social world as it interacts with their educational context. Qualitative research allows me to linger on individual experiences, to explore beliefs and values through face-to-face encounters in the richness of the everyday context during interviews and observations, to draw out significant strands which elucidate practices. A critical realist framework allows me to set these within the wider context of the various educational and political structures which form layers of social reality within which mechanisms have the potential to come to bear upon human agents. Pupils' experiences are affected by the decisions made at policy level and how these have been implemented by the local education authority and the school. The local authority's priorities for instrumental music provision for instance has the potential to shape pupils' conceptions of themselves as musicians (see Figure 8:5). The critical realist framework allows me to explore the parameters of the realisation (or non-realisation) of these potential structural forces, to highlight pupils' exercise of their agency and to identify their resistance or acquiescence to these structural forces.

### 4.4.3 An ethnographically-informed approach within a critical realist framework

Liora Bresler and Robert Stake introduce 'qualitative research' as referring to several different research strategies with various labels – case study, field study, ethnographic research, naturalistic, phenomenological, interpretative, symbolic interactionist – which share certain characteristics:

1) non-interventionist observation in natural settings, 2) an emphasis on interpretation of both emic issues (those of participants) and etic issues (those of the writer), 3) highly contextual description of people and events, and 4) validation of information through triangulation. (Bresler and Stake, 2006: 271)

I chose an ethnographically-informed approach to my fieldwork study:

The objectives of ethnography are to apprehend the way that people construct, operate in, experience, and make sense of their world; to do so *in situ*; and to do so in a way that affects people's normative conduct as little as possible. (Szego, 2002: 707)

In his seminal work 'The Professional Stranger' (1996), Michael Agar talks of the aim of ethnography being to 'assemble a fragment of culture'. My fieldwork study aimed to do just this through uncovering experiences and perspectives of pupils through their school music

lessons, and finding out how they operate and make sense of the world in this aspect of their lives. Agar talks of the ethnographer's search for pattern, and advocates the adoption of a 'funnel' approach, whereby the researcher, taking an involved, humanitarian position, begins by striving for breadth of understanding, in a student-child-apprentice role. As the fieldwork progresses the focus purposefully narrows onto some specific issues, and the researcher designs systematic approaches to formally document the experience from the perspective of a stranger (Agar, 1996: 252).

The flexibility inherent in this approach, the acknowledged and perhaps creative tension, and the sense of positioning myself in the 'in-between space' of narration (Benhabib, 2002:194 n.8) reflects the complexities involved in first entering into someone else's world and outlook, then in some way interpreting and reporting their perspectives. It has been important in ethnographic studies of the past to make the distinction clear between etic and emic voices, between the outsider's position as they observe through a different perspective, and the insider's story. More recently researchers have questioned whether with the reach of globalisation this distinction is still meaningful (Ely, 1991; Agar, 1996 and Benhabib, 2002).

A two-fold reconsideration is important here: for the critical realist the assembled fragment of culture must be considered within the broader contexts around the site of research. Perspectives of participants in the research process are examined with respect to the many referents pertaining to them, and within the different levels of structural forces acting upon them, often in ways in which they are unaware. Secondly, a critical methodology must remain mindful of the dangers of denying the 'otherness' of the participants in the research project. A Levinasian orientation underlines this danger and demands an attentiveness to the face of the Other. An attitude of humility rests at the heart of the critical realist project: the understandings which emerge are limited, provisional and open to subsequent revision.

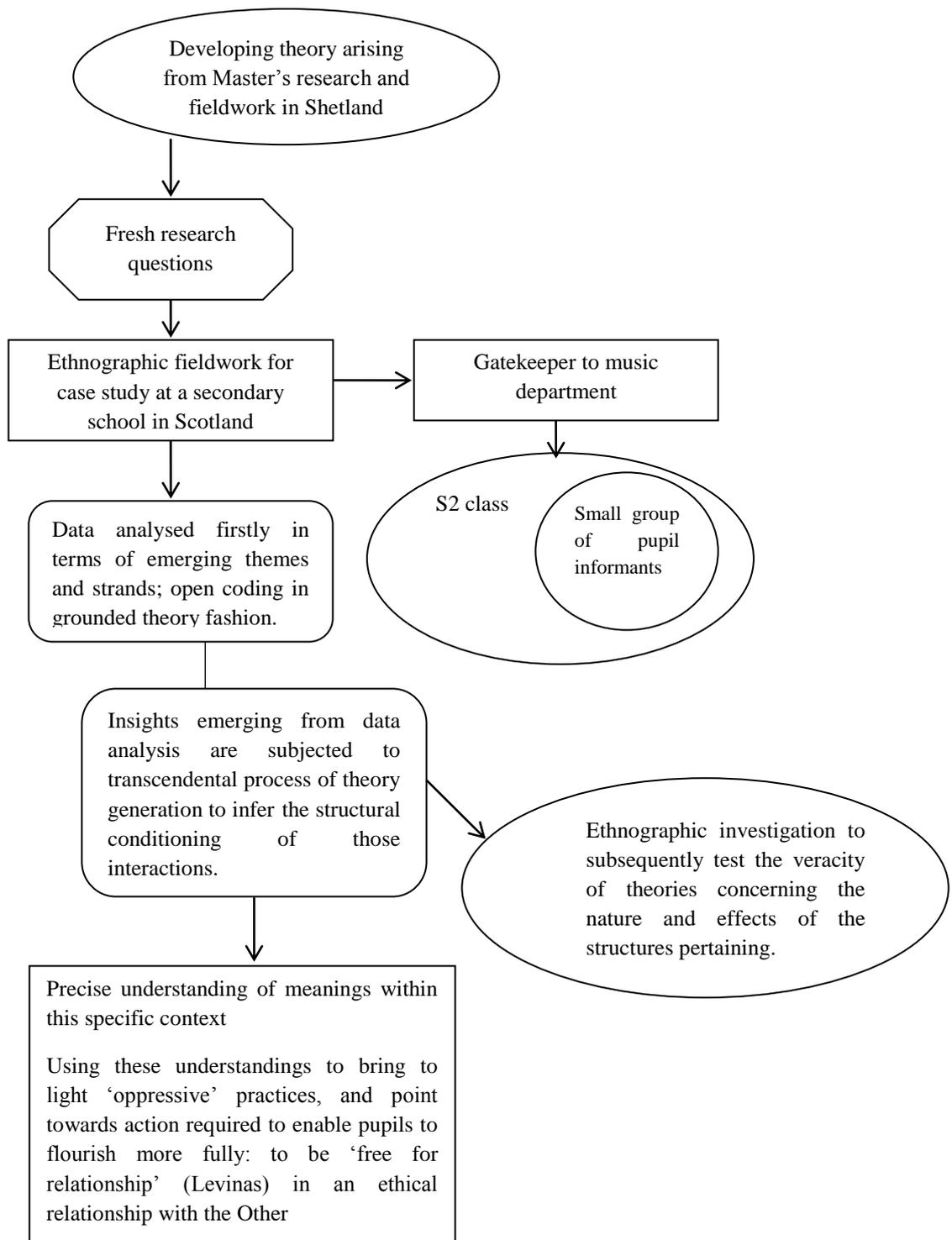
Setting an ethnographic study within a critical realist framework allows it to move beyond the examination of specific social instances in order to deeply contextualise the human meanings of the here and now through the revealing of the social structures which underpin them. The purpose of ethnographic investigation for the critical realist is not simply to ideographically illuminate the understandings and actions of individuals, but to use careful scrutiny of those understandings and actions as part of the process of uncovering the relationship between agency and structure (Porter, 2002:65).

#### **4.4.4 A critical realist ethnographic study**

Sam Porter gives an example of how critical realist ethnography works in practice through a discussion of his research in an Irish hospital concerning the relationship between Black and Asian doctors and white nurses. At the outset he elucidates the assumptions upon which he was working, the most significant being that racism, because it involves enduring relations between people in different social positions, can be categorised as a social structure. Racist positions predate the people currently situated within this social setting and it is not possible to explain racism solely through elucidation of the attitudes of the individuals involved.

In order to avoid a static conception of racism the articulation between racist attitudes, acts and structured relations must be considered. Not all interactions between people of different colour will necessarily be characterised by racism. Critical realism rejects the notion of 'constant conjunction' on the grounds that these interactions take place in an open system, and that social structures are only relatively enduring and dependent upon the conceptions and actions of the people involved. Rather, these structures will engender tendencies towards certain courses of action. Porter then 'uses the transcendental move' (Porter, 2002: 66): the interactions of the social world, now made manifest through the ethnographic process, are then subjected to the transcendental process of theory generation to infer the structural conditioning of those interactions. Ethnographic studies may then be used to subsequently test the veracity of theories concerning the nature and effects of the structures pertaining.

Critical realism continues to use ethnographic techniques of data collection but goes beyond many of the methodological assumptions normally associated with ethnography. It seeks to reconcile the context-bound and emergent descriptions that are made about the world with the ontological dimension that exists outside of, and is independent of, attempts to describe it. This outlook accepts that there is a reality beyond individuals but does not over-extend its claims about how much we can know about that reality, or about the degree to which external reality controls the decisions of individuals. Figure 4: sets out these processes within this study.



**Figure 4:1 A critical realist ethnographic case study**

#### 4.4.5 Levinas, ethnography and ethics

The underlying and pervasive influence of the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas throughout this study brings into question elements of the above discussion. Ely (1991), Agar (1996) and Benhabib (2002) all seek to some extent to minimise the distance between themselves and their participants. Firstly, Ely seeks to ‘become the other’ in the context of an apprentice learning from a master. Agar accepts ubiquitous ‘sameness’ stemming from the reach of global communication systems. Benhabib proposes a ‘complex cultural discourse’ between people of different traditions and cultural settings, and insists upon the respect shown to the particular, concrete other, yet following Habermas conceives of these processes as symmetrical and reciprocal. Levinas rejects each of these standpoints, insisting that to assume another’s point of view, to bring the Other into the same category as oneself, and to expect reciprocity instead of a costly, asymmetrical self-giving is to inflict ‘violence’ upon the Other and to close the circle of totality.

So how is it possible to take part in ethnographic encounters without ‘totalising’ ethnographic encounters? In a paper entitled *Facing risk: Levinas, ethnography and ethics* (2007) Benson and O’Neill outline a phenomenology of the ‘doing’ of fieldwork and emphasise the contingency of face-to-face encounters over controlled research design, arguing for critical self-reflection about the fundamental face-to-face dimension of fieldwork as central to ethnography’s ethical possibilities. They choose the phrase ‘critical self-reflection’ over the term ‘reflexivity’ as suggesting in the former an aim to undermine the self’s sovereignty and knowledge rather than a totalising tendency perceived in the latter to see ethnography as an engaged form of action which returns power and authority to the ethnographer (Benson and O’Neill, 2007: 30-31).

They argue that ethnographic research is embedded in the contingency and risk of human relationships:

From Levinas’ standpoint, this means that ethnography is also about an *unequal* relationship in which a researcher’s self is ‘marked’ through encounters with other people their diverse experiences, value orientations, political positions, and forms of knowledge. Ethnography thus becomes a deconstructive basis upon which encounters with others dynamically inform the patterns of life and values that define the researcher. Indeed, we argue that ethnography’s ethical possibilities are *actualized* when ethnographers change . . . not simply for the self and its interests, but rather for the sake of new kinds of collective affiliations across the interpersonal and intercultural boundaries. Hence . . . ethnography is always a matter of risk for researchers. (Benson and O’Neill, 2007: 31)

The risky business of ethnography from a Levinasian perspective is that the process will *change* the researcher. Levinas talks of two kinds of ‘travel’, typified by the contrast between Ulysses’ journey, who return to the ‘same’, and Abraham who left all he knew forever to go to an unknown land. In the first instance no substantive transformation occurs, but in the second, a journey away from the self brings about a departure from ‘totality’ and a move towards an ‘exterior’:

Encounters with forms of ‘face’ become the basis for an ethics that departs from the self-centring attitude that Levinas regards as the hallmark of Western philosophy. (Benson and O’Neill, 2007: 33)

The ethical potential of ethnography begins to be realised as the researcher becomes changed through looking into the face of the Other.

Face-to-face encounters make ethnography an inherently ‘open’ method, improvisatory with the potential to transform the guiding research design. But Benson and O’Neill also caution against the power of research design to structure and shape engagements. The construction of a ‘field’ is a theoretical process bearing the traces of anthropology’s historical connections to colonialism and to ‘cartographies of power / knowledge that have constituted the modern world order’ (ibid: 37). Levinas writes:

Individuals are reduced to being bearers of forces that command them unbeknown to themselves. The meaning of individuals (invisible outside of this totality) is derived from the totality . . . [and] each present is incessantly sacrificed to a future appeal to bring forth its objective being. (Levinas, 1969: 22)

Throughout my fieldwork study I was conscious of this tension, between my own circumscribing of a field of investigation with my selection of participants within it, to whom I brought my own, developed ways of understanding, and the ethical call I perceived as I looked into the faces of my participants, with the imperative not to categorise or totalise their perspectives and experiences but to remain open to the infinity of what they brought to me.

#### **4.4.6 Role of the researcher**

My aim in undertaking fieldwork in school was to select one class of pupils and gradually learn of their worlds - to catch a glimpse, through their perceptions, of their experience of encountering the ‘other’. The mode of being that I took on as a researcher was that of a committed engagement with the participants as ‘other’, retaining the freedom to remain myself but to be transformed by the encounter as Abraham rather than Ulysses.

Liora Bresler has identified and categorised aspects of the musician's expertise as sensitising the musician-researcher to the 'fluidity of personal and cultural experience, the heart of qualitative research' (Bresler, 2005: 170). The improvisatory nature of emergent design in qualitative research is consonant with the musician's ability to respond immediately to changes in expression that occur spontaneously during performance. It draws on the researcher's grounding in past practice on the one hand, and their capacity for original thought on the other, as they seek to uncover new meanings that build on the findings of others.

As a chamber musician I bring a particular set of skills to the research process. I have developed the ability to respond instantly to any change in expression from those around me, to blend my sound to match the timbre and pitch of another player, to change tempo suddenly in response to another's move, and to play a solo line in such a way as to match or answer someone else's nuances of timing and phrasing. Bresler suggests that the experience of listening and performing involves 'empathetic connection to the music within an aesthetic distance' (ibid: 176), resonating with that of the participant-observer who operates in the space between empathy and reflective detachment, and finding parallels with an ethnographic stance.

Taking on a Levinasian orientation, however, grounds this experience within a deeper ethical underpinning where empathy, always in danger of totalising through its tendency to 'make you the same as me' in 'putting myself in your shoes', must be put aside in favour of the self-giving quality of Levinas' subjectivity, rooted in unending obligation to the Other.

Levinas writes:

The other is in no way another myself, participating with me in a common existence. The relationship with the other is not an idyllic and harmonious relationship of communion, or a sympathy through which we put ourselves in the other's place; we recognise the other as resembling us, but exterior to us; the relationship with the other is a relationship with a Mystery. (Levinas, 1969: 121)

Sharon Todd explains:

What Levinas articulates here is that while we can have a shared reality with the Other, feelings such as sympathy require renouncing the irreducibility of self and Other. This means, then, that in everyday communication within social situations, such as teaching and learning . . . we of course do commiserate, sympathize, and pity . . . For Levinas, it is not that these everyday feelings are unimportant, it is just that they have little to do with the necessary maintenance of alterity, an alterity that is revealed in the encounter with the face . . . It is where the Other is not merely heard, seen or felt with, but where the self is receptive to the revelation of difference and is thereby moved to a level of responsibility. (Todd, 2002: 51)

For Levinas empathy is not a sufficient response to the Other. Rather the relationship of researcher and participant must be grounded in a level of ethical responsibility as the self encounters the infinity of the irreducible Other (see final chapter discussion in 9.3.1).

#### **4.4.7 The case: study of the particular**

The case study puts bounds around the open-ended potential in time and space of ethnographic research, specifying a narrowing of the field of enquiry. The situatedness of the study is crucial, and case study as a method allows for a deep appreciation of the significance of context, consonant with a critical realist outlook which engages with reality from a position of rootedness in the present time, specific place and within particular traditions. Taking on a Levinasian orientation as a researcher, place defined as ‘space’, the ‘here-below’, is where I am responsible for the Other, as Levinas writes in his 1950 essay *Place and Utopia*.<sup>54</sup> Attachment to a place is the *sine qua non* of ethical action. Place is not a co-ordinate or fixed point in a predefined space but rather this primal event which constitutes the position or the localization of a conscience, of a subject. Place is constitutive of subjectivity.

Stake’s categorisation of purpose in case study draws a distinction between intrinsic, instrumental and collective case studies. The present enquiry is placed in the ‘zone of combined purpose’ between intrinsic and instrumental aims (Stake 2000: 437). This case is of intrinsic interest for my research aims as an individual case, the experiences and perspectives of a class of pupils from this particular school, but significant as representing one point on a continuum of settings. The case is chosen for its intrinsic interest; to find what these particular pupils experience in this particular context, how they shape their own learning with these circumstances and forces acting upon them. The case is also instrumental, as analysis of the collected data provides insight into the broader issues of pupils’ experiences of encountering the ‘Other’ through music education and contributes to theory-building concerning possibilities within school music for such encounters to be occur and to be effective, even transformative.

Yet what can be gained from the study of the particular? Why should the perspectives of pupils in school be significant for practitioners working elsewhere? I aimed to find

---

<sup>54</sup> Later published as a section of *Difficult Freedom* (1997), pp. 99-102.

understandings which might reverberate with experiences in other educational contexts (see Gadamer, 1986: 21 discussing Kant). A case study's aim is to learn enough to encapsulate complex meanings into a finite report, describing the case in sufficient descriptive narrative so that the reader can vicariously experience these happenings. The expectation is for the reader to draw from the research their own conclusions, which may differ from those of the original researcher, and to modify the reported interpretations (Stake, 2000: 439). The critical realist framework allows me to set this case within the richness of a deeper, layered social reality which draws the reader into wider insights.

#### **4.4.8 A model from recent music education research**

In considering my research design I have drawn on two studies by music educationalists who chose to narrow their focus to a single class of secondary school pupils. The methods of the two studies are compared in Appendix 1, while Table 4:1 sets out the research design for my own fieldwork and the adaptations made during the course of my fieldwork:

**Table 4:1 Research design and timescale for fieldwork indicating adaptations during fieldwork**

Method	Sampling	Autumn term 2009	Spring term 2010	Summer term 2010
Observation	Observation of music classes of all years groups throughout the school, in order to gain understanding of how the department functions, and of all music class lessons of the S2 cohort in order to select one class and music teacher	Initial observation of pupils in a variety of music lessons to become acquainted with the whole spectrum of classes. Focussed observation of S2 music class lessons. Selection of participating class and of any instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities involving members of selected class. Observation of other curriculum lessons with selected class.	Continued participant observation in class music and other lessons. Visits to out-of-school sites of pupils' music-making, if appropriate, and possibly co-participation in music-making. <i>No out-of-school visits possible to observe or co-participate in music-making, but extended interview with participant's family in their home with the help of an interpreter.</i>	Continued participant observation in school
Critical incident charting opener task  Group discussion		Group discussion with class members, dividing into three to five subgroups, using a critical incident charting task as a starting point to determine the range of their musical experience, their music-making as individuals and with others; their musical aspirations, how pupils view their class music lessons and how music operates for them outside of the school environment. <i>'Musical River' tasks used as a starting point for initial interviews and group discussion.</i>		Reflecting back in the pupil informant group(s) and encouraging discussion on emerging insights.
Interviews		Initial interviews with individual pupils as a group of key informants emerges (5 or 6 pupils), and with music staff.	Ongoing dialogue with staff and pupils, reflecting back upon individuals' experiences and emerging themes through sharing filed notes and reflective journal	Reflective interviews with staff focusing on individual experiences and emerging themes <i>and with individual pupils, reflecting upon emerging insights and the process of self-</i>

				documentation. In-depth reflection with individual pupils on self-documentation.
<b>Method</b>	<b>Sampling</b>	<b>Autumn term 2009</b>	<b>Spring term 2010</b>	<b>Summer term 2010</b>
Self-documentation		Seek permission from pupils and parents for participant self-documentation next term	Select one or more small groups and organise pupils' self-documentation, with the aim of pupils recording their musical interactions over a week's span. Unsolicited interviews with one pupil part-way through self-documentation to support his developing research skills.	Reflecting back in small groups and encouraging discussion on emerging insights.
Participation in music-making		Participation in music-making in school, especially extra-curricular ensembles. No possibilities for participation in school ensembles, but observation of Samba band. Ongoing support in music classroom, guiding pupils in practical tasks as requested by the teacher.	Ongoing participation in school music-making. Ongoing support particularly for one pupil sought by music teacher in practical tasks.	Ongoing participation in school music-making.
Documentation		Examine curriculum schemes and handbooks. Staff were reluctant to share curriculum documents as they were perceived to be in a state of flux with new curricular guidelines being introduced imminently.	Ongoing dialogue with music teachers concerning curriculum aims and values.	Closing interviews with staff members to examine relationship between stated curriculum aims and delivery.

In approaching a research project with the question 'what's wrong with music in schools?' Ruth Wright (2008) initially intended to undertake a multiple case study of several different schools in Wales but decided to change her research design. Her decision-making process

has much to offer my study as a model, both in terms of research design and in the focus of my research questions:

I . . . became concerned that my initial methodological design was replicating methods which some music education researchers referred to as providing only ‘snapshot’ evidence. As Hennessy (2001: 244) had observed: ‘the nature of inspections gives rise to large amounts of “snapshot” evidence which may well distort our knowledge of what is going on both in terms of quality, quantity and effectiveness’. I began to think that this was true not only of inspections but also of many large-scale research projects, such as the report of Harland et al. (2000) where the methodology prevented coherent and extended contact with the participants. It became apparent that a more in-depth approach might yield interesting results, those referred to by Geertz (1973) as resting on ‘thick description’ which painted as complete a picture as possible of the situations and people observed through detailed and in-depth observation. (Wright, 2008: 390-391)<sup>55</sup>

Wright cites Finney’s work on pupil voice as providing a model of an in-depth case study; an extended study of one teacher and a class of pupils resulting in thick description of the teacher’s pedagogy and its effects on a class of his Year 8 pupils. John Finney’s comments on Stephanie Pitt’s analysis of the challenges facing music education reveal the value of the local voice:

Pitts (2001) points out that the challenge facing music education is how to arrive at a common understanding of what a music education might mean amongst the various players – the pupil, the teacher and the policy maker, so that music education can become effective for all. In particular, there appears to be little reliance on the ‘local intelligence’ of pupils and teachers in school in articulating their perceptions. We know very little about what pupils think of their music teachers, of the ways in which they think music might be taught in school and what meanings they give to their school music lessons. There is a dearth of investigation into the lived experiences of young people and their music teachers within music educational settings with a paucity of music educational theory generated by pupils and teachers in tandem. Researchers have been slow to collaborate with either of these key players. (Finney, 2003)

Wright highlights the need for in-depth studies with their emphasis upon ‘thick description’ in order to avoid the fleeting impression of ‘snapshot’ research. Finney values the common understanding arrived at when pupils’ and teachers’ lived experience and perceptions are

---

<sup>55</sup> Geertz writes that he borrowed the term ‘thick description’ from Gilbert Ryle who through detailed narrative describes the ‘the piled-up structures of inference and implication through which an ethnographer is continually trying to pick his way.’ (Geertz, 1973: 6). ‘Behavior must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behaviour – or more precisely, social action – that cultural forms find articulation.’ (ibid: 17). Thick description seeks to ‘rescue the ‘said’ of [social] discourse from its perishable occasions and fix it in perusable terms’ (ibid: 20). ‘Our double task’, writes Geertz, ‘is to uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects’ acts, the ‘said’ of social discourse, and to construct a system of analysis in whose terms what is generic to those structures . . . will stand out against the other determinant of human behaviour. In ethnography, the office of theory is to provide a vocabulary in which what symbolic action has to say about itself – that is, about the role of culture in human life – can be expressed’ (ibid: 27).

sought, and the theory generation which can result from collaboration with a researcher under this sort of sustained engagement.

Lastly, Wright's research design was shaped by Osborne et al. (2003) in a comparative study of secondary learners and educational systems in the UK, France and Denmark, where they note a primary concern for:

The need to understand what it is that motivates and empowers an individual to take advantage of the learning opportunities available to them; to shift the focus of research concern away from the provision of educational opportunities, from the factors that influence the ability to learn and towards those that impact upon the desire to learn. (Osborne et al., 2003: 9)

The location of interest in the motivation of learners and the exercise of their agency is helpful in orienting my own study. Ruth Wright concludes:

It therefore appeared to me that an ethnographic, longitudinal study affording the opportunity to become more fully acquainted with a discrete group of subjects, socially situated in their daily learning environment, might provide some interesting data with which to work. (Wright, 2008: 392)

In her study, Wright uses pupil and teacher voice as commentary on perceptions of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, of how it is taught and learned and assessed, and the effects of these factors on pupils' decision-making when choosing whether or not to continue to take music in school beyond the age of 14 years, forming an original perspective on these issues. Not only did Ruth Wright discover the value of investigating a single case, especially in terms of taking into account the 'social situatedness of learning' (Hughes, 2004), but also the worth of individual voices of staff and pupils as she immersed herself in their lives.

Five years previously John Finney had provided the model for Wright in his own immersion in the cultural life of one music class of secondary pupils aged 12-13 years in their second year of secondary schooling:

I wanted to learn about the pupils' and their teacher's attitudes, motivations, ways of knowing and perceptions of the learning and teaching of music—a search for the significance, for them—of their weekly joint encounter with music. This I believed might tell as much about the state of school music and musical education and perhaps be of more assistance to music teachers than official reports, national surveys and rhetorical debate. (Finney, 2011: 102)

John Finney found a profound openness to the unexpected in the music teacher he observed, whose teaching style:

Looks to be responsive to the feeling and mood of the class, of individuals within it and the way they appear to be perceiving and making sense of what is presented. It speaks of his concern to

create a lesson that is to be an event where spontaneity and creativity break any predictable pattern. (Finney, 2003: Perceptions of schooling section)

He works hard to acknowledge and celebrate what it is that the pupils bring with them to the classroom, their musical worlds, their functional and dysfunctional school week, their desire to be known and to know music, to know each other better and to make a classroom musical culture that can be adapted and harmonise with their musical learning beyond the school gates.

The music teacher's vision expects his pupils to be makers of culture and in this to rub up against and resist his own, to sort and sift values for themselves, to share in the joys and sorrows of his musical life as he presents a range of possible ways in which they can be musical and become musicians. (ibid: Perceptions of musical schooling section)

This music teacher engages with pupils in an authentic, co-creative exchange. He has high expectations for their development as musicians in and outside of school. John Finney concludes that the dynamic of relationship at the heart of these music lessons runs counter to the emphasis underpinning the National Curriculum of measurement and assessment:

Of primary importance is the relationship between teacher and learner, and learner and what is to be learnt. This means that outcomes can rarely be pre-specified and that preset standards and goals are likely to contaminate real learning. This is likely to place teachers on the horn of a dilemma as they seek to maintain both personal integrity and public credibility. (ibid: Conclusion)

Finney identifies the primacy of *relationship* here – between teacher and pupil, and between pupil and their learning through music-making – and the tension which results as national policy priorities work against this.

## **Reflection**

The studies outlined above give useful pointers for my own research design. Wright's work has shown the value of in-depth engagement over a period of time and of 'thick description' to access as fully as possible the lived experience of pupils and teachers, with an emphasis on pupil motivation and agency in their own learning. Finney's perspectives have highlighted the need to start from the perceptions of pupils and staff and to generate theory from this starting point. I have drawn elements of my research design from Wright's work, using it as a methodological model, but wish to ask questions which may run counter to her interests and findings. She writes:

To allow for the multiplicity of musical identities inhabited by our pupils to flourish and to lead them to discovery of new musical worlds at times when they are ready to engage positively with them, we need to empower our pupils and afford them increased autonomy over curriculum and pedagogy. This will require a new type of teacher possessed of the empathy to 'kick' their dominant habitus where necessary and enter the musical worlds of their pupils. (Wright, 2003: 400)

While I concur with these aims initially, my concern is that pupil experience may be impoverished when new worlds hitherto undreamt of are denied them in the name of a critical desire for cultural hegemonies to be overcome. The moments of enchantment which form the kernel of an encounter with the Other in the music classroom may come through engagement with the least expected, possibly least familiar musical expressions. It is not an act towards emancipation to deny pupils access to cultural expressions which might become unexpectedly empowering.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> For instance the young people of the Big Noise in the Raploch, Govanhill and Torry, centres within the Sistema Scotland initiative.

## **Part Three**

### **4.5 Research design**

#### **4.5.1 Aim: ‘Assembling a fragment of culture’**

My aim was to ‘assemble a fragment of culture’ (Agar, 1996: 252), to build up a vivid picture through ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) of how music impinges upon the lives of the pupils, what role music-making may have in terms of encountering other people and new ideas and how these pupils ‘use’ music in exercising their agency. My aim in interviewing was to produce ‘rich accounts’ (Alvesson, 2002: 108) in terms of documenting participants’ experiences, knowledge, ideas and impressions.

I aimed to set these intimate conversations and observations within a wider context of staff perspectives, management structures and priorities, and further back within the policies of local and national governments, underpinned by the global recommendations of the EU and the OECD. The gathering together of a small-scale case study using ethnographic methods is situated within wider layers of reality, always conscious of the ways in which individuals at each level exercise their agency either to submit to or to subvert the effects of the pressure from these wider social structures which act upon them as individuals and communities, in the spirit of a critical realist investigation.

#### **4.5.2 The site**

My aim in locating a site for fieldwork was to find a local school whose pupil body would reasonably represent a ‘normal’ high school, to contrast with the highly unusual site of my Master’s project in Shetland where music-making enjoys high status and the community has a strong sense of local musical identity, reflected in the Isles’ main high school. Difficulties arose when I approached a slightly more socio-economically representative school local to me for fieldwork access. After a fruitful meeting with the head teacher, initial approaches to the Principal teacher for music resulted in her declining to take part for fear of being over-committed, and I was forced to reconsider my selection. It became clear that already existing personal connections were going to be a more helpful way of gaining access to a site for fieldwork than ‘cold-calling’.

I had visited another high school in my capacity as viola player with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra two years previously to co-lead an afternoon workshop which formed part of a

‘Masterworks’ series for Standard grade music pupils.<sup>57</sup> When approached for permission for fieldwork access the head of faculty for the Expressive Arts responded with warmth, enthusiasm and good communication, qualities essential for the success of sustained fieldwork in school in someone who will be taking on the role of doorkeeper. The pupil roll was 850 at the time of my fieldwork, with a staff of 85. Free school meal provision is slightly higher than at other schools in the city, and in Scotland as a whole, reflecting the catchment area which includes some of the more disadvantaged areas of the city, and attendance is slightly lower. The city and school’s names have been withheld, along with the names of participants, in order to preserve anonymity.

**Table 4:2 Free school meals 2010 / 2011**

	Site school for fieldwork	City	Scotland
Percentage of pupils	19.6%	15.6%	15.2%

**Table 4:3 Unauthorised absences 2010 / 2011**

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
<b>Site school</b>	1.3%	2.6%	3%	4.3%	2.7%	2.8%
<b>City</b>	1.4%	2.3%	2.8%	3.4%	2.3%	2.5%
<b>Scotland</b>	1.6%	2.3%	3.2%	3.5%	3.1%	2.7%

Retrieved from <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/scottishschoolsonline/schools> accessed 04/05/2012

In the past the school had absorbed two older schools in contrasting catchment areas, one of the main arterial roads leading out of the city centre providing an unofficial boundary in terms of social status. The HMI Report of 2004, investigating ‘attainment and achievement’ in the first two year groups, S1 and S2, found:

---

<sup>57</sup> See <http://www.sco.org.uk/education-project/masterworks-2014>

The overall quality of attainment at S1 / S2 was fair. The majority of pupils were making good progress in their coursework but there was too much variation across subject areas. Overall, work in S1 / S2 did not take sufficient account of pupils' prior learning from primary school. The proportion of pupils gaining appropriate national levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics were well below national averages. (HMI Report, 2004: 1)

### **4.5.3 The role of the gatekeeper**

The head of faculty for the Expressive Arts took on the role of gatekeeper, providing an invaluable link with other members of staff and mediating my access to lesson observation and permissions within school to interview pupils. She laid the foundations for a good working relationship between myself and the senior management team in school at the outset, by taking me to meet the head and Deputes<sup>58</sup>, whom she had already informed of my project and who were receptive and enthusiastic, asking how my work could inform their own broader school development concerns, for instance the 'bringing into school' of aspects of the wider community. The more difficult ethical issues pertaining to my research were negotiated through the faculty head, for instance the steps necessary to prepare for pupils' self-documentation, in asking pupils' parents for permission and explaining my research aims to them.<sup>59</sup> My opportunity to visit a pupil's home had to be carefully overseen by the faculty head as gatekeeper.

### **4.5.4 Sampling**

Following the practice of Ruth Wright (2008) and John Finney (2003) I decided to select one class as the 'case' for the present study. A single class allows for a broad enough range of voices to be heard, and for contrasting experiences and perspectives amongst pupils, yet is small enough to be able to get to know pupils individually. The class was selected from the S2 (or Year 8) cohort, pupils who had been at the high school for one year already, so as to minimise for my study the effects of moving up from primary school, but who had not yet made their subject choices for public examination courses and for whom music was still a compulsory school subject. The final choice from the S2 year group was made on the basis firstly of which timetabled class music lesson I was able to attend each week, and secondly of how warm and welcoming the class were towards me, in other words how likely they

---

<sup>58</sup> *Depute* in Scottish schools is equivalent to *deputy* in English schools

<sup>59</sup> Appendix 2a, b and c show examples of permission requests to parents and pupils, an information sheet and consent form.

were to want to cooperate with interviews and observation. Letters were sent home asking for parental permission to interview pupils, and information and consent forms were issued to pupils (Appendix 2).

I observed the class throughout a full academic year of class music lessons, giving me a broad sweep of time in which to get to know the pupils in the selected class, taking sound recordings and observational notes of lessons and discussing the lesson before or afterwards with the class teacher. Each pupil of the class of 19 was given the ‘musical river’ introductory task to complete (Burnard, 2000), a ‘critical incident charting’ task (Denicolo and Pope 1990) which gave an insight into the highlights of their music-making so far in their lives. An initial discussion with the class music teacher threw light on the range of musical interests and experiences amongst the pupils. Groups of pupils were interviewed using their musical rivers as a starting point for discussion. Five pupils were identified to form a smaller group of key participants – two girls, three boys – one selected from each ‘table’ of the seating plan for the class music lesson, representing a spread across friendship groups. Three of the smaller group agreed to participate in self-documentation. I gradually focused in on a handful of pupils whose stories I could tell more fully. This small group was formed through my interactions in the classroom. Sometimes it took a long time to win pupils’ trust, and it was always a struggle to find times outside the music lesson to conduct more in-depth interviews.

#### **4.5.5 Ethical issues**

Some interviews were conducted within the class music lesson, but I was concerned not to take pupils out of curriculum time, so sought occasions when they would not be missing learning opportunities in order to schedule meetings with them on an individual basis. The weekly library period which was timetabled during one English lesson offered a good solution, especially as there were several smaller rooms off the main library area where I could interview pupils on their own or in a small group, whilst still being adjacent to the main class. In terms of pupils not missing more time with their class than was necessary, and in terms of child protection issues, this arrangement worked well. The librarian became

intrigued with what I was doing and discussed with me articles of interest which she offered from time to time.<sup>60</sup>

In the particular educational setting of my study I was concerned to offer an experience to which would benefit pupils in some way, as an ethical approach to asking young people for their help as participants. This was partly fulfilled by my presence as an extra pair of (musically trained) hands in the classroom, something which the class music teacher repeatedly expressed appreciation for, and which benefitted one vulnerable pupil in particular, who subsequently made music one of her subject choices for the following year, but was also fulfilled in giving pupils the opportunity to be ‘heard’ as I listened to and valued their perspectives, and through the small group acquiring some early research skills in terms of employing different methods of analytical reflection, an experience on which all three self-documenting pupils made unsolicited, positive comments.

#### **4.6 Methods**

Qualitative research is essentially multi-method in its implementation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) and the image of a ‘tool box’ of methods, from which the researcher may select, is a helpful one (Phelps et al, 2005: 79). Research design is widely conceived as emergent, as the researcher responds to the data during collection, modifying approaches and selecting different methods as the situation demands, reflected in Robson’s preferred descriptor of ‘flexible’ rather than ‘qualitative’ (Robson, 2002). The Levinasian orientation which underpins the design of this study underlines the demand of responsiveness upon the researcher to be shaped by the ‘infinity’ they perceive in the ‘faces’ of their participants. The emergent design will involve adaptations arising from the tension of walking a path of Levinasian responsibility through the necessity to categorise and put bounds around participants in a case study. Table 4:1 shows the outline of my research design with indications of adaptations as the study progressed. A sampling phase was undertaken in the first month of the school year followed by; Phase 1, Exploration; Phase 2, In-depth enquiry; and Phase 3, Checking and consolidation.

---

<sup>60</sup> She was particularly intrigued by an article ‘Weaponising Mozart’ concerning some local authorities’ attempts to in various ways punish young people through the use of classical music.

### 4.6.1 Observation

Ethnographers have long relied on *participant observation* which utilises what is described as ‘a lot of hanging around, soaking up every tiny detail’ (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004: 538). Participant observation has the advantage of gathering data in a ‘real-world’ setting, as it happens, and can also capture non-verbal behaviour. My research tools were three-fold: observation, interviewing and participant self-documentation.

Participant observation was the primary method (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), providing me with a way of getting to know the workings of the school and the participating class of pupils as a whole (see Table 4:4 for my observation schedule). Unstructured, naturalistic observation provided the opportunity to capture non-verbal behaviour in a real, everyday setting (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2003) and be open-ended and inductive, soaking up little details (Jeffrey and Truman, 2004:538). In the sampling stage and Phase 1 of my study my observations ranged widely, taking in, for instance, how classrooms were physically organised, how school structures such as discipline procedures were implemented, and how staff / pupil relations were negotiated. My field notes at this point include many diagrams, lists and detailed descriptions. Having chosen my participating class my attention remained broadly focused in their particular music classroom, until I felt I had established a basic level of ‘knowing how things worked’ in their music lessons. At this stage I focused my gaze more specifically upon interactions between pupils, especially in situations of their working closely together, and how these shaped the outcomes of their musical tasks, upon teacher / pupil relations and upon how the class as a whole and individual pupils in particular responded to new tasks or unfamiliar music.

My observations were recorded at several levels of description in field notes; quick, fragmentary jottings, more detailed observations, narrative accounts of lessons and activities within lessons, pen portraits of participants, reconstructions of conversations, and descriptions of the physical settings of events (see Appendix 4a-4d). The forms of writing involved included immediate field notes and a journal of field experience, written up a few hours later away from the site, which organised material into more of a narrative; a log which reflects on emergent themes, noted issues concerning methodology and decisions as to modification of research methods, with incidental memos which speculated as to matters of theory, and developed a ‘tentative running record of ongoing analysis and interpretation’

(Cohen et al, 2000: 313).<sup>61</sup> After each day of fieldwork, themes emerged, drawn out from reflection upon the collected data (see Appendix 4f). These informed the orientation of the next day's interviews and observations, and sent me back to check emergent issues with participants.

**Table 4:4 Observation schedule**

<b>September 2009</b>	<b>Autumn term 2009</b>	<b>Spring term 2010</b>	<b>Summer term 2010</b>
Sampling phase	Phase 1: Exploratory	Phase 2: In depth	Phase 3: Consolidatory
Getting to know the school and choosing a class	Getting to know the selected class  Focusing gaze on pupil / pupil, pupil / teacher encounters, on musical outcomes of pupil interactions and on pupils encounters with new and unfamiliar music-making		
S1 music class 4 different S2 music classes with 2 different teachers 2 different S3 Intermediate 2 music classes with 2 different teachers S4 Intermediate 2 music class S5 Higher music class Samba band rehearsal City Schools' concert at the local concert hall (School samba band plus one participant pupil)	Observing members of selected class in:  Craft, Design and Technology (CDT) class  Top set maths class  English class in library  English class with a different selection of pupils from selected music class  Personal and Social Education class  Art lesson  Ongoing weekly observation of class members in Personal and Social Education (PSE) class and in music class  Parents' evening alongside class music teacher	Ongoing weekly observation of class members in Personal and Social Education (PSE) class and in music class	Ongoing weekly observation of class members in Personal and Social Education (PSE) class and in music class  S2 class of third music teacher

<sup>61</sup> Appendix 4a gives an example of observation notes written up shortly afterwards. Appendix 4b shows a photograph of the music classroom where observations of class lessons took place. Appendix 4c shows one example of a reflective note on the development of my theoretical framework; 4d is an example of a memo reflecting on the practicalities of the fieldwork process, and emerging strands of significance; 4e is an example of an interview transcription and 4f gives an example of questions arising from interview, which give focus to subsequent interviews and observation.

My fieldwork in school required a frequent moving along the participant-observer continuum (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993: 93-4), as participant-as-observer and observer-as-participant in class lessons, particularly as the study wore on and I became increasingly accepted in the classroom and asked to support individual pupils' learning.

#### 4.6.2 Interviews

Open and semi-structured interviewing was my second tool. Agar advocates the informal interview as a central form of data collection in the early part of an ethnographic study, with observation in a supplementary role.<sup>62</sup> As the study progressed the role of interviews became more significant. The unstructured interview was central to my fieldwork, both as a means of investigating further issues emerging from observation, and as a springboard from which to focus subsequent periods of observation.<sup>63</sup> A major strength of the open interview as a research method over a standardised instrument such as a questionnaire is the opportunity for clarification and summarization (Guba and Lincoln, 1983: 128-152) and the checking of data with the interviewee.<sup>64</sup>

The empathetic interaction between interviewer and interviewee provides the fertile soil from which findings can flourish; 'a growing trust is the basis for richer interviews' (Ely, 1991: 61). Oakley goes further, asserting that there can be 'no intimacy without reciprocity' (Oakley, 1981: 49) and concluding with the recognition:

Personal involvement is more than dangerous bias – it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives. (ibid: 58)

Having experienced this as fundamental to my Master's fieldwork, I went into the field for the present study aware that the nature of the data I managed to collect depended on the quality of the relationships that I had been able to forge, but this time alert to the asymmetry of my responsibility to my participants in a Levinasian ethic where first before all else I was responsible for them as Other, not merely to be mined for information for my use. Thinking of Levinas' irreducible notion of *face* in the parallel terms of *voice* was helpful here.

---

<sup>62</sup>'Observation and interview mutually interact with each other, either simultaneously or sequentially' (Agar, 1996: 158).

<sup>63</sup>Agar notes that observation is critical in enriching one's ability to give an account of events, since informants have a tendency to leave things out (Agar, 1996: 159).

<sup>64</sup>The open interview is able to deal with the atypical response more effectively in comparison with a standardised tool, allowing access to data that may significantly enlarge the parameters of the study and contribute significantly to the holistic richness of the research (Phelps et al., 2005: 85).

### **4.6.3 A critical realist approach to interviews**

For critical realists, as for other qualitative researchers using interview methods, the qualitative, ethnographic interview provides access to ‘both ‘information’ – knowledge about events and processes that we wish to analyse – and ‘perspectives’ – concerns, discursive strategies and cultural frameworks’ (Smith and Elger, 2013: 10). Critical realists go further however in aiming to develop an understanding which includes hypotheses about their subjects’ reasons for action within a wider model of their causes and consequences (Pawson, 1996: 302; Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 162-3).

Pawson and Tilley employ a theory-driven conception of interviewing which hinges upon a characterisation of the interviewer and interviewee as possessors of different types of expertise. On the one hand the interviewer has particular expertise in characterising wider contexts and the outcomes of action, and on the other the expertise of the interviewee is likely to be greatest in relation to explanatory mechanisms that focus on reasoning, choices and motivations. In this ‘division of expertise’ model the researcher is involved in a teaching-learning process where the participants are shown how to bring their awareness and understanding to bear on the researcher’s theory, especially in regard to contexts and outcomes (Smith and Elger, 2013: 12). Pawson suggests that:

The researcher / interviewer plays a much more active and explicit role in teaching the overall conceptual structure of the investigation to the subject, for this in turn will make more sense of each individual question to the respondent. (Pawson, 1996: 305)

The interviewer offers formal descriptions of the parameters of the participant’s thinking followed by an opportunity to explain and clarify this thinking (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 168).

Smith and Elger suggest that this strongly didactic account may overstate the clarity of the conceptual framework deployed by researchers, underplay the challenges of moving between the framework and informants’ accounts and risk biasing response or alienating participants. They concede however that this approach may be employed in such a way as to help the participant appreciate the distinctive layers of the social processes that the researcher seeks to understand so that the participant’s response may throw maximum light on these features., though the deployment of for instance vignettes to invite comments, the participant’s review of pilot interview questions and the scope for elaboration in semi-structured interviews.

The didactic account of interviewing developed by Pawson and Tilley (1997) within a critical realist outlook must, for the purposes of this study, be subject to the scrutiny of Levinas' thinking. A tension is evident here between the Levinasian imperative for the interviewer to be profoundly open to the participant as 'the Other who brings me more than I contain' (and who 'teaches me') and the view of the researcher as imposing a theoretical outlook upon the participant, framing their perspectives and beginning to codify their responses, which might be associated with 'totalising' practices. Margaret Archer advocates an orientation of 'attempting to remain receptive and never intentionally to be evaluative' (Archer, 2003: 162).

A careful negotiation is required here on the part of the researcher involving a willingness to be 'marked' by the encounter (in the manner of Abraham not returning to the same place as he started from) as they remain open to the infinity that the Other brings, and the openness and humility of approach espoused by critical realists to the formation of knowledge, which is regarded as always provisional and incomplete.

Interviews can only provide one means of access to a layered social reality for critical realist research and are not adequate by themselves for analysing a multiplicity of causal factors in play in social relations. Margaret Archer however emphasises the importance of the role of the interview in drawing out and analysing human reflexivity, the reasoning of the individual as grounded in the 'inner conversation'. Such inner conversations, she suggests, 'have powers that can be *causally efficacious* in relation to [the participant] and to society' (Archer, 2003: 14). Reflexivity is therefore a significant strand of a layered account of the distinctiveness and the interplay of structural, cultural and agential dynamics (Smith and Elger, 2013:20).

Explorations of critical realist approaches to qualitative research methods remain few and far between however the existing literature indicates a degree of pluralism as evidenced in the different emphases of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), Pawson (1997) and Archer (2003). It also suggests that theories should be 'in-process' during the phase of data collection, allowing for 'co-evolution, development of theory-data and is less likely to create divisions and disconnections between data and analysis' (Archer, 2003: 27).

#### **4.6.4 Interviews in the present study**

As an initial approach during the interview with each of my key informants for my Master's study, I experimented with eliciting life histories, asking pupils to reflect on experiences which have facilitated a sense of belonging, and on the role that their own music-making has had in that process. In some instances I used a photographic image of a local landscape to initiate discussion on belonging; at other times I asked for musical compositions to be performed for me to hear, in order to gain access into the musical world of the participant. I was looking to find the expressions of belonging and those of encountering difference that could be approached from both my perspective and that of the participant in an interpretative act.

In the present study my aim was again be to explore with pupils how music functions for them in and out of school as a mode of encounter. Critical incident charting was employed to facilitate the telling of pupils' own musical stories (Burnard, 2000), encouraging participants to reflect on the unusual, or the defining, moments of music-making in their lives. Burnard, working with 12 year-old children, used this tool in order to elicit memorable musical events that she then illustrated using a 'musical river', where each bend represents an important incident in the child's musical history (ibid: 9).

I began the process of interviewing by giving the Musical River task to each pupil of the selected class, speaking to pupils individually or in very small groups straight after or during class music lessons. These rivers formed the starting point for the first level of interviews I conducted, and helped me to identify members of the smaller group of pupils who would allow me to interview them in more depth.

Perspectives on belonging and identification within various communities was a starting point once more. I probed further however in seeking an understanding of how processes of 'aesthetic knowing' (Finney, 2002) might be experienced in pupils' music-making and to what extent a 'coming to know' the Other might be taking place as pupils make music together or encounter unfamiliar musical expressions. Insights gained through initial open interviews led to a focus for questions in semi-structured interviews, when I sought to home in on specific areas for further exploration with pupils. Initial interviews with members of the music staff were undertaken early on, then a dialogue established in which I returned to

points raised through the initial encounters again and again as new light was shed through participant observation and pupil interviews.

As the year went on, and as I got to know the pupil and staff participants better, I was able to probe more deeply in interviews and was conscious of the tension, discussed above, between drawing participants in to my developing theoretical outlook and not biasing their responses. In particular the three pupils who engaged most fully through self-documentation saw themselves as ‘learning how to do research’ and began to reflect on their own practice and how their experience of self-documentation had changed their perspectives in various ways. At this point it became appropriate to explain more of how their responses illuminated my theoretical outlook and to discuss background to my research, sharing my ‘story’ with them as they had with me.

**Table 4:5 Topics for open and semi-structured interviews with pupil participants**

Critical incident charting to provide initial impetus – what have been the most significant music happenings in pupil’s experience?
Pupil’s own musical history and current interests
How does music function for the pupil – how do they ‘use’ it?
Does music-making contribute to a sense of identity, of belonging locally or nationally?
Have there been moments of special encounter, aesthetically?
Have there been moments of special encounter, socially?
Have there been transformational experiences of music?
What negative or destructive musical experiences come to mind?
How do experiences of music-making differ in and outside of school?
What is the relationship between school music and music in the rest of their lives?

**Table 4:6 Interview schedule**

Terms 1 and 2		Term 3
Phase 1 Exploratory	Phase 2 In depth	Phase 3 Consolidatory
<p>head of faculty, Creative and Aesthetic</p> <p>head of specialist music unit</p> <p>Assistant head of specialist unit</p> <p>head of School</p> <p>Piano teacher / teacher trainer at University</p> <p>Music teacher of selected class</p> <p>Initial teacher training student</p> <p>Informal chats in music staff room with most academic and instrumental teachers in department</p>	<p>Critical incident charting (Musical river) with each member of selected class, in small groups</p> <p>head of Art</p> <p>head of Guidance</p> <p>Informal chat with librarian</p> <p>Class music teacher: reflecting on observations so far with selected class and asking detailed questions about members of the class and how they have interacted in music and other lessons. Discussing curriculum aims for music. Exploring responses to ‘world music’ lesson with student teacher.</p> <p>Class music teacher: in-depth interview concerning school catchment, ethos</p> <p>Finlay</p> <p>Amez</p> <p>Matt</p> <p>Kirsty</p> <p>Amy</p>	<p>Kirsty</p> <p>Finlay</p> <p>Amy</p> <p>Amez</p> <p>James to set up self-documentation</p> <p>Class music teacher - ongoing dialogue. Discussion of class questionnaire.</p> <p>Ongoing dialogue with pupils about their self-documentation process</p> <p><u>Follow up interviews:</u></p> <p>James</p> <p>Finlay</p> <p>Kirsty and James together</p> <p>Amy</p> <p>Home visit to interview Amez’s family with interpreter</p> <p>In-depth interview with Depute (deputy head)</p>

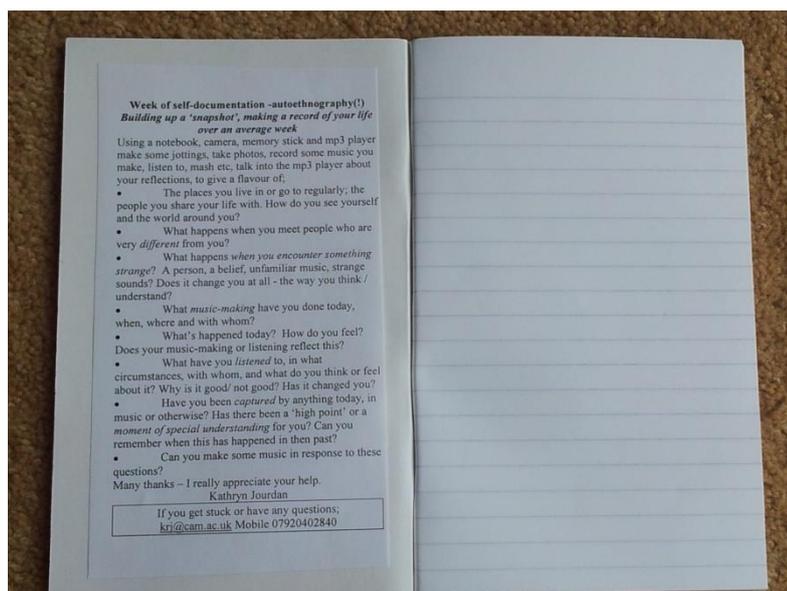
#### 4.6.5 Participant self-documentation

A third tool was pupil self-documentation, akin to the ‘Cultural probes’ (Gaver, Boucher, Pennington and Walker, 2004) developed as a means of accessing environments where it is difficult for the researcher to go into, and in order to understand ‘the practical activities, practical circumstances and practical reasoning ‘at work’ in our participants’ local cultures’ (Crabtree, Hemmings, Rodden, Clarke, Dewsbury, Hughes, Rouncefield, 2003: 3). An initial group of seven pupils became a nucleus of three key participants, co-researchers engaged in a small-scale auto-ethnography, keeping a diary for week or so, where they recorded a broad range of experiences concerning their school life, particularly relating to their music-making and relationships with other people or with new or challenging experiences. I handed out to these pupils self-documentation packs, comprising a disposable camera, mini mp3 recorder with UBS cable and earphones, a notebook, a sheet of instructions for guidance and consent forms:



**Figure 4:2 Pack for self-documentation**

On the inside cover of each notebook I had printed out some suggestions for their self-ethnographic investigations:



**Figure 4:3 Notebook for self-documentation**

The questions encouraged the pupils to build up a picture of their life and music-making over a week, giving plenty of differently-phrased, open questions for the pupils to be able to find their way into the task by responding at different levels:

### **Building up a ‘snapshot’, making a record of your life over an average week**

Using a notebook, camera, memory stick and mp3 player make some jottings, take photos, record some music you make, listen to, mash etc, talk into the mp3 player about your reflections, to give a flavour of;

- Photographs sound and video recordings, the places you live in or go to regularly; the people you share your life with. How do you see yourself and the world around you?
- What happens when you meet people who are very *different* from you?
- What happens *when you encounter something strange*? A person, a belief, unfamiliar music, strange sounds? Does it change you at all - the way you think / understand?
- What *music-making* have you done today, when, where and with whom?
- What’s happened today? How do you feel? Does your music-making or listening reflect this?
- What have you *listened* to, in what circumstances, with whom, and what do you think or feel about it? Why is it good / not good? Has it changed you?
- Have you been *captured* by anything today, in music or otherwise? Has there been a ‘high point’ or a *moment of special understanding* for you? Can you remember when this has happened in the past?
- Can you make some music in response to these questions?

Many thanks – I really appreciate your help.

**Figure 4: 4 Guidelines inside notebook for week of self-documentation**

The three self-documenting pupils approached the task differently. Tom recorded his thoughts at some length on the mp3 recorder, reflecting on his school day as a starting point, exploring his responses to key events then developing his perspectives. Kirsty took photos

of aspects of her life, and recorded music which played a significant role in her daily activities. These were useful starting points for further discussion on interviews. Amy wrote reflections in the notebook which again provided material for exploration in subsequent interviews.

#### **4.6.6 Documentation**

An examination of school documentation allows insight into an institutional level of social reality pertaining to the school, and into the school's music curriculum, whilst broader policies on inclusion and diversity, along with citizenship and global issues, reveal something of the ethos and learning environment. The school handbook, policy statements and music department handbook are all sources for investigation. This proved to be problematic however as the whole school was preparing for the implementation of the new Curriculum for Excellence and all curricular documents were in the process of being rewritten, hence the staff were reluctant to show me what they perceived as obsolete documents. My examination of official documentation therefore was restricted to the recent Inspector's Report.

#### **4.6.7 Adaptations in research design as fieldwork progressed**

The lack of forthcoming, substantial documentation was one of many aspects of the original research design to be adapted as the study got underway. It became apparent that I was not going to be able to play alongside pupils in extra-curricular activities partly because the engagement of pupils from the selected class with these was very limited. A constant tension was the need for interview time with pupils without taking them away from curricular time to an unacceptable extent. Observation of all lessons was subject to the cooperation of various members of the wider community of staff and communication issues within the school meant that my visits were frequently frustrated by changes in timetabling or extra-curricular events. Opportunities presented themselves however that could not have been foreseen or worked into a prior research design, for instance the invitation through an interpreter at parents' evening for me to visit the home of Amez's family and talk at length about what music-making means to them, which was a particular privilege.

## 4.7 Analysis of data

### 4.7.1 Emergent phase

In his presentation of the ‘five traditions’ of qualitative enquiry and research design Creswell sets out distinctive approaches to data analysis for each tradition (Creswell, 1998: 148-149, Table 8.2). My data analysis was informed by aspects of more than one of these traditions, drawing especially from ethnographic and phenomenological approaches, but also from techniques drawn from grounded theory. In their setting out of good practice in analysing qualitative data in a grounded theory-building study Glaser and Strauss advise the establishment of phenomena through multiply-determined ways before generating theory (Haig, 2005). Data are intended to cast a wide net as the researcher seeks to describe, understand and explain the phenomenon (Jacard and Jacoby 2010: 261). The first phase of analysis was therefore to bring together all data collected through each method. The initial organising of data was followed by a reading through of the ‘text’. For my study this entailed reading through the recent Inspectors’ Report, field notes, field journal and memos, listening to interview recordings and recordings of class music and other subject lessons, making decisions as to which sections to transcribe fully, viewing photos and examining pupils’ own record of self-documentation.

Interview recordings were transcribed in full, along with sections of class lesson recordings. Transcribing these myself allowed me to remain closely connected with the ‘face’ or the ‘voice’ of each participant (see Appendix 4e). The making of marginal notes throughout the reading process contributed to the formation of initial codes, referred to as ‘open coding’ in the grounded theory tradition, where information is segmented and categories are established which identify emerging themes (see Appendix 3). The open coding process is fundamentally interpretative in nature, aiming to include the perspectives and voices of the participants (Strauss and Corbin, 1994:274). Open coding has been described as involving ‘breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:61).<sup>65</sup> Interpretation constitutes the next step in data analysis.

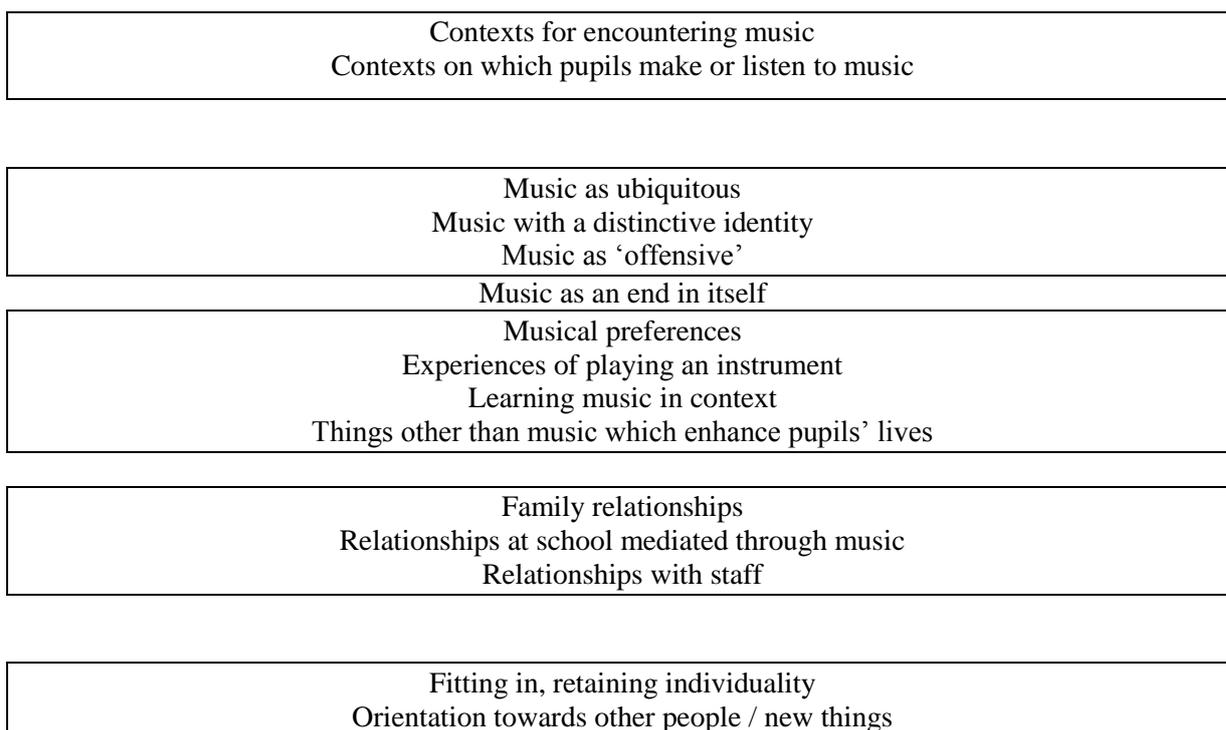
The language of ‘coding’, ‘categorisation’ and ‘breaking down’ is problematic in terms of a Levinasian outlook in its associations with processes of control and domination which do ‘violence’ to the ‘infinity of the face’. I have sought to preserve the ‘face’ of pupils through

---

<sup>65</sup> A Levinasian approach might rather employ language of ‘drawing out, throwing light on and uncovering’.

using terms such as themes and strands rather than the more distancing ‘codes’ and ‘categories’, and took the decision not to use computer-aided analysis but to keep the whole narrative of the pupils’ stories in close proximity by using coloured pencils to code, segment and annotate the interview ‘text’, and by putting extracts of text next to other passages in order to ‘read’ one in the light of the other.<sup>66</sup>

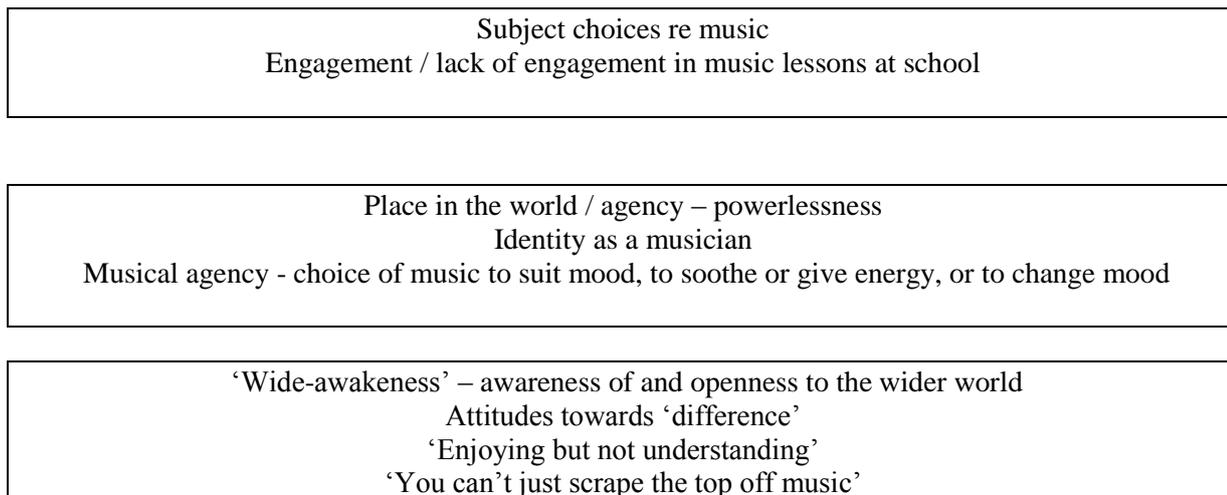
Data have been examined against the theoretical backdrop I set out in the early chapters of this thesis, and in the light of the research questions. Operating within a critical realist framework the interpretation of the data constantly refers back and forth to other influences, social structures and processes which have a potential effect upon participants, reflecting the distinct strata of social reality within which the interpretative research is situated. Transcribing and reflecting on field notes and recording of observed lessons soon after the event allowed for the checking of transcription and coding with participants in follow-up interviews and informal chats. As this process and the early coding proceeded, themes began to emerge:<sup>67</sup>




---

<sup>66</sup> Appendix 3a gives an example of the process of drawing out strands from interview transcriptions. Appendix 3b shows part of the process of grouping these strands and Appendix 3c shows how these strands of coding were explored and annotated with theoretical memos which reflect on the process of analysis.

<sup>67</sup>The ability of mechanisms to combine to create something new is called *emergence* (McGuire, 2006; Danermark, 2002; Bhaskar, 1998, Eastwood et al, 2014)



**Figure 4:5 Themes emerging from early coding**

### 4.7.2 Construction phase

Themes from early coding informed subsequent interviews with pupils and staff to test and fill out emerging strands of significance. A narrative of each pupil was formed from which was drawn out a further two-fold analysis: the individual’s perspectives upon music-making and, applying the theoretical lens of Levinas, the ‘practices of facing’ of each pupil. Practices within the school were elucidated through the open coding of staff interviews, tested against the deductive analysis of data and field notes then set within the wider context of national and local policies. An emergent, layered structure interacts dynamically with pupils’ experiences and brings to light the exercising of their agency through music-making.<sup>68</sup>

### 4.7.3 Confirmatory stage

Having set out a way of ‘making sense’ of pupils’ perspectives, experiences and practices of their school-based music-making set within a layered analysis of the educational context which surrounds and has an impact upon them, and of ‘reading’ the practices of school, local authority and national and international policy bodies in the light of Levinas’ thinking, the next chapter goes on to explore how these findings might shape how we perceive music-making in school and what kind of practices might be understood as ‘ethical’.

---

<sup>68</sup> Appendix 5a sets out the stages of my fieldwork in terms of a critical realist ethnographic case study.

Open coding analysis

Transcription and initial reading of pupil interviews  
*Open coding* of interviews  
*Grouping of codes into themes*  
Themes employed to focus further data collection and analysis

Transcription and initial reading of staff (and parent) interviews  
*Open coding of interviews*  
*Grouping of codes into themes*  
Themes inform *deductive analysis* of observational data and field notes

Whole text analysis of five participant pupils

Collation of all data for each pupil  
Pupils experiences set out in narrative and perspectives towards music-making identified – ‘pupils’ stories’  
Follow-up interviews to verify with pupils  
These perspectives and practices then *subjected to transcendent step*: Levinas’ strands of ‘Totality and Infinity’ and ‘Looking into the face of the Other’ applied as an interpretative tool  
Pupils’ ‘practices of facing’ identified

Wider context analysis

*Coding* from staff interviews informs *deductive thematic analysis* of wider contextual data - policies and practices Scotland wide, local authority, in school and in the music department, drawn from further interviews  
*Emergent characteristic practices identified*  
*Layers emerge of structural forces* surrounding pupils’ experiences  
Pupil stories set within these layers  
Emergent ‘practices of facing’ of pupils set in dynamic relationship with surrounding structures  
Pupils’ agency through music-making identified

Building theory through abduction and retroduction

Exercise of pupils’ agency seen in the light of resisting totalising practices and looking into the face of the Other  
Insights gleaned to inform basis for establishing practices of ethical music-making in the classroom:  
Vision for role of music teacher  
For conception of music as a subject area

**Figure 4:6 Analysis procedure**

## 4.8 Analysis and quality criteria

### 4.8.1 Descriptive, interpretative and theoretical validity

So does my study give a valid, reliable account of pupils' music-making and their encounters with the Other? Notions of validity are important aspects of qualitative research for which critical realism has significant implications. What we believe about the nature of reality, our ontological standpoint, will be critical for assessing the sorts of understandings we can attain, the conclusions which embody these and the evidence used to reach them (Maxwell, 2012:127). Maxwell suggests that influenced by a constructionist outlook qualitative researchers have fallen back upon procedural criteria for validity but Brinberg and McGrath insist:

Validity is not like a commodity that may be purchased with techniques . . . Rather, validity is like integrity, character and quality, to be assessed relative to purposes and circumstances. (Brinberg and McGrath, 1985:13)

Wolcott's critique of the notion of *validity* in qualitative research leads to the assertion that *understanding* is a more fundamental concept for qualitative researchers than validity (Wolcott, 1990: 146). Maxwell posits out three broad categories of understanding relevant to qualitative research, and three corresponding types of validity; descriptive, interpretative and theoretical, but resists rigid demarcations, embracing 'ambiguity and fuzzy boundaries' as the rule rather than the exception (Maxwell, 2012:134). Figure 4:4 sets out Maxwell's typology, influenced by researchers such as Cook and Campbell (1979), Erickson (1986), Kirk and Miller (1986) and Seale (1999) and particularly Runciman (1983) and Kaplan (1964).

#### **Descriptive validity**

The accuracy of the account of 'primary understandings' (Runciman, 1983) referring to specific events and situations which can be agreed upon by means of interview recordings or video footage for instance, unproblematic for participants.

Geertz (1973:17), 'Behavior must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behaviour – or more precisely social action – that cultural forms find articulation.'

Omission of things that participants feel are significant to the account threatens the descriptive validity.

#### **Interpretative validity**

Concerned not just with recording events and behaviours but what these mean to the participants, including their intention, cognition, affect, belief, evaluation – the 'participants' perspective'.

Distinction between the search to comprehend phenomena on the basis of the participants' perspectives, from an 'emic' perspective, from the construction of understandings from the researcher's perspectives and categories, an 'etic' perspective or theoretical understanding (Fetterman, 2008).

Interpretative accounts are grounded in the language and thought of the participants. Interpretative understanding is developed through inference on the part of the researcher.

Essential not to treat these accounts [of participants' meanings] as incorrigible: participants may be unaware of their own thoughts or feelings, may recall these inaccurately, and may consciously or unconsciously distort or conceal their views.

The meanings and constructions of participants are part of the reality that an account must be tested against in order to be interpretively as well as descriptively valid.

### **Theoretical validity**

Theoretical understanding goes beyond concrete description and interpretation, which assume a shared theoretical perspective, and addresses the theoretical constructions that the researcher brings to or develops during the study. Seeks to give an *explanation* for a phenomenon.

Two elements:

Construct validity (Kirk and Miller, 1986) – the validity of the concepts employed by the theory as applied to the phenomena

Causal validity (Cook and Campbell, 1979) – the validity of the postulated relationships among the concepts

Concerned with the legitimacy of the application of a given concept or theory to established 'facts' of the situation.

### **Figure 4:7 Maxwell's typology of validity (summarised from Maxwell, 2012)**

This study has ensured *descriptive validity* by processes of checking back over interview and observation data with pupils and staff participants in subsequent conversations to find agreement on what actually happened and what was said.<sup>69</sup> Later phase interviews involved practices of reflecting back with participants to confirm their interpretations then, as a researcher, put these alongside contrasting, sometimes contradictory perspectives to establish *interpretative validity*. Both sets of processes use a triangulation of methods through observation of pupils and staff, interviews with the wider class of pupils, with the small group of participants, through their self-documentation, with music staff, with management and with wider curriculum staff.<sup>70</sup> My study has established *construct validity* by drawing on established concepts from the existing literature as a starting point, notably the conception of 'music education as ethical encounter', exploring and defining terms and reflecting upon these as I have used and developed them throughout the study.

---

<sup>69</sup> The experience of working with an interpreter made this process even more explicit.

<sup>70</sup> See Appendix 5b for a *Taxonomy of Triangulation*

A second layer of construct validity has been established through the use of strands of Levinas' thinking, employed as a theoretical lens and as an ethical underpinning for the critical realist framework, building on Standish's employment of Levinas in the philosophy of education and Higgins' in community music research. The critical realist outlook provides a robust framework with which to establish *causal validity* through the dynamic between insights emerging from pupil perspectives and strands of meaning drawn out from the wider context which form an interactive, deep, layered social reality, highlighting pupil agency.

#### 4.8.2 Generalisability

Are the insights presented here of wider significance? Generalisability concerns the extent to which an account given of a particular situation may be extended to other people, times and situations than those directly studied (Maxwell, 2012:141). While strong claims about the capacity to generalise cannot be sustained, a critical realist outlook allows for aspects of a particular situation to be seen to be instances of a broader recognisable set of features (Modell, 2009) often involving the development of a theory which both makes sense of a particular situation and suggests how the same process in different situations can lead to different results (Becker, 1990:240; Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 119-120; Yin, 2003). Maxwell suggests two aspects of generalisability; *internal generalisability* within the setting studied to people not directly observed or interviewed, and *external generalisability* to other, entirely different settings (Maxwell, 2012).<sup>71</sup> The present study sets out to explore one particular instance of pupils' experiences and perspectives but the employment of a Levinasian theoretical lens and the use of a critical realism layered social reality demonstrate how pupils' agency through music-making may be identified in other contexts too. The insights gained into 'practices of facing', elucidated in the final chapter, forms a theoretical construct which may be tested in other settings.

Maxwell concludes:

A realist perspective focuses attention on the credibility of the *interpretations* and *conclusions* drawn from the study, and the ways in which the researcher used the study's data to assess these interpretations and conclusions in the light of plausible alternatives. (Maxwell, 2012:148)

---

<sup>71</sup> These distinctions are analogous to Cook and Campbell's (1979), between *statistical conclusion validity* and *external validity*.

The real value of the methods employed is as a means of obtaining evidence which might deal with plausible threats to the validity of the study's interpretations and conclusions. Processes of reflexivity as discussed in section 4.3.3 run throughout the phases of data collection and analysis, highlighted in the consolidation phase where the small group of self-documenting pupils engaged at a much deeper level with their own reflections on their research processes and how these related to my own developing insights.

## **Reflection**

This chapter has presented and justified the methodological basis for my study. A move away from the social constructionist framework of my Master's study led to an embracing of a critical realist outlook, underpinned by strands of the philosophy of Levinas, introduced in Chapter 3, which provide an ongoing ethical critique of methods chosen for gathering participant perspectives – observation, interviewing, participant self-documentation – in an ethnographically-informed, qualitative study which aims to collect in-depth, contextual understandings as it investigates the music-making of a class of pupils in their last year of compulsory school music education. The role of the researcher in this Levinas-inspired study is necessarily responsible, lucid, awake, obligated, where *practices of facing* are paramount in shaping researcher / participant relations. Three phases of fieldwork were carried out over an entire academic year from September until June, overlapping with three phases of data analysis. Open coding of all observation notes and interview transcriptions led to the emergence of strands of meaning explored in the next two chapters. Throughout data collection and analysis practices of checking across different kinds of data, and in confirmatory interviews with participants, sought to address issues of validity, understood at different levels of processes. The next section of the thesis reports on the findings of my study.

## Chapter 5:

### The case set within a wider context

---

## Introduction

The fieldwork which lies at the heart of this doctoral study was undertaken in order to investigate the second of my three research questions:

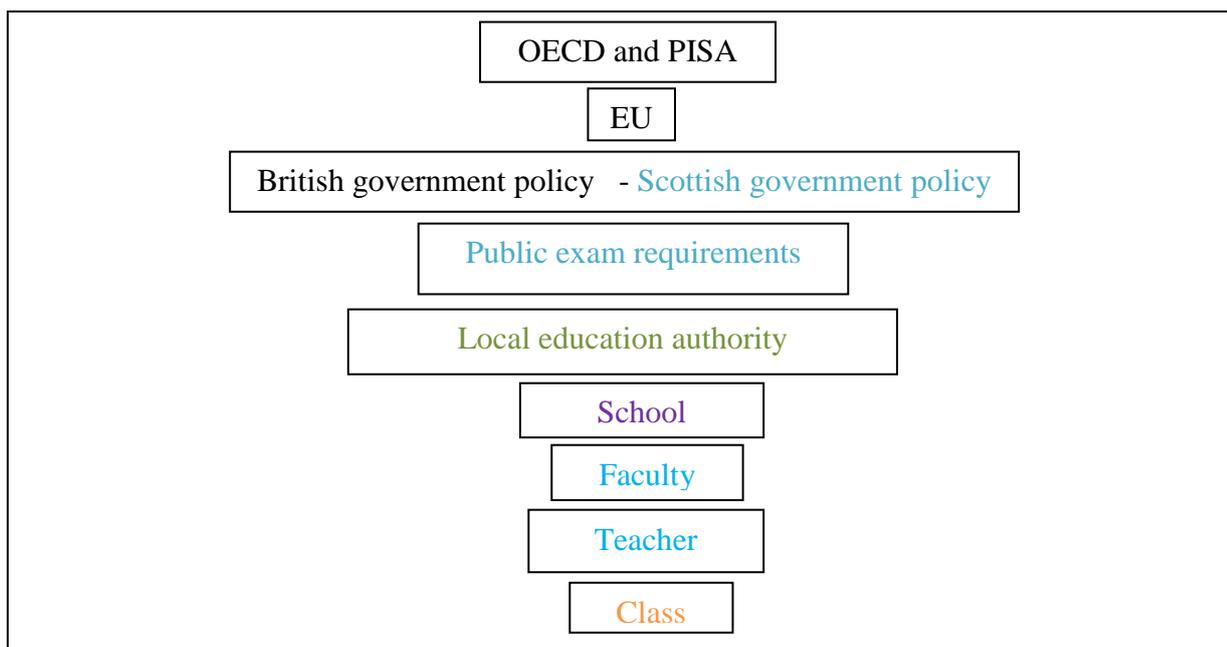
What light does Levinas shed on conceptualisations of music education as ‘ethical encounter’?

**How do pupils encounter the Other through music-making?**

What might characterise ethical music education?

In visiting a school over the period of one academic year I sought to explore how music-making functions in the lives of a group of secondary-aged pupils coming to the end of their statutory music education. Through the case study of one group of pupils at a particular school I sought to investigate ‘practices of facing’ which allow pupils to ‘look into the face of the Other’ through music-making, and which may help build a wider understanding of how ethical music education might be characterised in school. Chapter 4 set out the methodological framework for my fieldwork study and reported on the methods of data collection and analysis I employed.

This chapter begins to draw out the wider context, setting the fieldwork within a critical realist framework as outlined in Chapter 4, where ethnographic investigation is situated within a stratified social ontology which delineates properties and powers emerging at different levels of social structure (Archer, 2003: 17). It reports on evidence from fieldwork interviews which hints at aspects of the social structures formed as a result of past and present habitual practices and policy decisions within the local authority, the school and the expressive arts department within the school which have a bearing upon the experience of individual pupils in the class I followed, in response to which pupils, alongside authority chiefs, school leaders and subject teachers, exercise their agency in order to conform to or subvert the effects of these structural forces, helping or hindering pupils’ experience of openness to the Other in their music-making. Figure 1 gives an outline of how these structures may be understood and the coloured text indicates which layers are addressed in this chapter.



**Figure 5:1 Structural layers**

Strands are drawn out from interviews with key members of staff, from my observations and responses in field notes, and practices are identified which shed light on the various structural layers which interact to set the backdrop for the experience of pupils' music-making in school. The name of the local authority, of the school and names of staff members have been withheld in order to protect the anonymity of participants and institutions alike. I have not sought to present a comprehensive survey of the various institutions which form layers of influence upon the members of staff I interviewed, rather to report on those issues which staff raised as important in shaping the teaching and learning of music in school and which impinged directly on their own experience as music teachers in my site school at the time of my fieldwork, a period of preparation for enormous changes in the school curriculum and public examinations nation-wide, with an underlying apprehension at the effects of budgetary cuts.

Themes were drawn out from interview data and are presented here as pointers rather than exhaustive descriptors in a critical realist framework which recognises the partial and transitory nature of knowledge construction. The last part of the chapter includes lesson observations where extracts from my reflective log reveal my highly personal response to practices of staff and pupils' experience of learning in their music lessons. The themes which emerge from the discussion will be returned to in Chapter 7, as the thinking of Emmanuel Levinas acts as a lens through which to examine these insights and to draw out

those practices which encourage a ‘looking into the face of the Other’ in the music classroom.

## **5.1 Scotland-wide policies and practices**

### **5.1.1 Inclusive music examinations**

The SQA is the agency set up by the Scottish Government in 2006 which has responsibility for educational awards and accreditation.<sup>72</sup> The introduction throughout Scotland of the Curriculum for Excellence is bringing a transition to new national qualifications. At the time of this fieldwork study pupils were still being prepared for the Standard Grade and Higher exams, taken in the fourth and fifth years of secondary school.<sup>73</sup> The SQA Standard grade music examinations had been shaped so as to be accessible to all pupils, including those who don’t learn musical instruments outside of the class lesson, an aim towards inclusivity which I heard articulated many times during interviews with each member of the music staff at my site school. This is seen as a commitment to social equality in school, as the examination course must be suitable to be undertaken by pupils who might not have the resources to pay for instrumental tuition outside of school. This arises particularly as school instrumental services have been gradually eroded over the past four decades so that provision for pupils’ instrumental lessons has to be eked out to fewer children.<sup>74</sup> The commitment to ease of access to the music examinations has shaped the written exam. The form of the SQA listening paper at each level is based largely on a tick-box, multiple choice answering technique. The issue of how the drive for accessibility has affected how ‘musical knowledge’ is conceived of will be returned to in Chapters 10 and 11.

### **5.1.2 A commitment to a distinctively Scottish musical understanding**

The distinctively Scottish character of the Scottish curriculum for schools is more hotly debated than ever before following the election of a Nationalist political administration at Holyrood and the 2014 referendum on independence.<sup>75</sup> The Curriculum for Excellence

---

<sup>72</sup> Its responsibilities are set out in the Education (Scotland) Act 1996 and the Scottish Qualifications Act 2002. In 2007 the SQA took over the functions of the former Scottish Examinations Board and the Scottish Vocational Education Council.

<sup>73</sup> See O’Dowd (2008) for an overview of recent developments in music education in Scottish schools.

<sup>74</sup> For a discussion of the reforms in the Standard grade music exam and persisting inequalities see Cope & Smith (1997) and Sheridan & Byrne (1997).

<sup>75</sup> See Paterson (1997) and Harrison (1997) for an historical overview.

requires that expressive arts lessons should ‘provide opportunities for me to deepen my understanding of culture in Scotland and the wider world’<sup>76</sup>. In a discussion about the Curriculum for Excellence’s aims for cultural understanding, the faculty head outlined the resurgence of a confident, Scottish identity in contrast to her own experience of growing up as a young musician in the 1970s.

Interview box 5:1 Scottish identity (i) (faculty head, exploratory interview)

KJ And what about, ‘deepen my understanding of culture in Scotland and the wider world’?

MM I can relate to that. This has been confronted for years and years and years. Scotland, hiding the fact it had tartan, and it wasn’t cool to be in a ceilidh band when I was playing the accordion. I used to leave it at gigs. In the hope that somebody pinched it – nobody ever pinched that accordion. I’ve had every other instrument pinched. It would lie there for a year, because it was totally uncool to be Scottish. And then Scottishness became alright.

KJ What happened?

MM Roots, Parliament, culture, society woke up and went ‘It’s OK’.

KJ When was that – the 70’s?

MM Basically the Rollers<sup>77</sup> came round, musically. It was a laugh. ‘80s – I cannae put a date on it because I was out of this country, but I came back and it was OK and I know it was a political landscape change. It was anti-Thatcherite government, the Poll Tax, and I think it galvanised opinion. There was a lot of separate things going on, and people saying, ‘You took all the money from the oil’ and there was films coming out too like ‘Local Hero’. You know it was playing with people a lot of the time. But suddenly it became OK. Then somebody realised you can actually make a bit of money from it. I remember this drummer with a ceilidh band, going to Bahamas, getting booked for world-wide gigs playing in a ceilidh band. Now you couldnae get a gig with a ceilidh band in the 70s.

I don’t know, I think the country has woken up to its heritage. But there’s been an expense. We’ve tried to build up our classical side – our highbrow side – and I think it’s all come down to a different level now. The opera took a huge hit in the 80s. The ballet took a hit. There has been a cost. It’s something else coming up. I’m sure that’s happened over decades.

An exploration of Scottish traditional musical styles is incorporated into the S1 curriculum, building upon familiarity with Scottish music and dance from primary school. This was one area of the music curriculum which all the members of the music staff I interviewed were happy to discuss, in agreement in being fully committed to educating pupils in Scottish traditional forms. Class music teacher Ms E told me, ‘The emphasis we have is definitely on

---

<sup>76</sup> Curriculum for Excellence: Expressive Arts. Outcomes and experiences  
<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/myexperiencesandoutcomes/expressivearts/music/index.asp> accessed 17/09/2012

<sup>77</sup> Bay City Rollers rock group, formed in Edinburgh and popular in the 1970’s

Scotland as a must-do . . . and England won't have that really'. There is pride in the acknowledgement that Scottish music is widely taught in schools in Scotland in contrast to the status of English traditional music in schools south of the border.

Interview box 5: 2 Scottish identity (ii) (faculty head, exploratory interview)

KJ When you do the Scottish component – is that something they're familiar with, or is that something unfamiliar because they're not really listening to that type of music?

HE Being in [the city] especially, they're surrounded by pipers on the [main tourist thoroughfare]. They may have had a 'qually' as they call it, at the end of P7, a dance for them leaving school, going to high school, so they might have done the dances. Sometimes they don't do that, but the majority of them will do some sort of Ceilidh dancing.

At [local feeder primary school] in fact, they just had an outdoor Ceilidh just last night, the last day of the current head, and for Burns Day as well. I looked at their programme – it's fantastic. Every class sang a song and some of them had soloists playing violin. They did a big Orcadian<sup>78</sup> 'Strip the Willow'. So in that primary, they all know their music and their dances and coming into senior school it's quite clear in their heads. They tend to love it. They know what we're talking about. It's not brand new, except for the kids from Poland for example, it's brand new for them. They tend to get really behind it.

With the Scotland unit, we cover all that then, and it is slightly dumbed down for them, their age group. So back into 3<sup>rd</sup> year we start it all again, start covering them all again, reminding them of them all. Sometimes we would do a wee quick routine, get a few of them up, I do that in the first year.

KJ So that's important in terms of the curriculum guidelines, in terms of knowing your own culture?

HE I would teach it anyway, not just because I have to. I like the kids to know about it, and they do generally get really into it – we do Auld Lang Syne near Christmas, or to do Scotland the Brave or Flower of Scotland. I mean that's sung at the end of any Scotland football game, rugby match – they all know it and they love to be able to play it. In those yellow books where they choose for the keyboard pieces, very often the boys will go for Scotland the Brave, and they get really patriotic. So I would definitely cover it. I don't feel that that's an 'I must do'. Some of the concepts I would go into more detail definitely, like the Gaelic psalms, I wouldn't necessarily go into detail with that; the dances I would still make a point of teaching them all.

When I asked about pupils learning about the context in which music-making takes place it was within the work on Scottish music that Ms E felt this was addressed:

---

<sup>78</sup> From the Orkney Islands

Interview box 5:3 Scottish identity (iii) (faculty head, exploratory interview)

When we talk about songs being passed down maybe people sitting passing on music – how life was in days of old. We might talk about that. Especially when they start going into more topics of learning like Scotland – we talk about . . . well maybe things were passed more by on more by ear, they weren't written down so much, and trying to get that across.

Otherwise she didn't perceive this as something which needed to be included in the curriculum:

Interview box 5:4 Context for 'world' music, (faculty head, in-depth interview)

KJ [Asking about contextualizing world music, looking at the social meaning, and reading from the Scottish curriculum documents]

Is there space for this side of contextualising world music and looking at the sort of social meaning, and that sort of thing? Or is it not really in the curriculum?

HE Not particularly yet I wouldn't have said. Maybe we could bring that in. That might be something we have to adapt our curriculum to include more.

Ms E's comments seem to suggest that a 'canon' of traditional forms has been informally developed which she considers important for the pupils to be familiar with. The most popular traditional dances and their instrumental accompaniments, for instance the Strathspey, are prioritised, while some of the more challenging forms, such as the Gaelic Psalm singing from the North West and the Outer Islands of the Hebrides, are glossed over. These more unusual styles however offer opportunities for pupils to hear music still in common usage today from other parts of Scotland, uncovering new sound worlds and rich contexts to explore. Pupils show great enthusiasm for the well-known Nationalist anthems sung at sporting events, but inclusion of contrasting, other forms opens up possibilities for a critical examination of what it might mean to be 'patriotic' in the light of the Other within Scottish culture.

Ms E remarks about the dances not being new to pupils coming up from primary school, except for those from other countries, Poland for instance, who as she says 'tend to get really behind it'. These traditional Scottish dances and their tunes become shared cultural forms which act as a point of mediation for incomers to Scotland, who can learn the dances and to play the tunes, thereby finding an entry point into the local cultural conversation.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> During my Master's work in Shetland I interviewed a teenager from Hong Kong who had recently won the 'Traditional Fiddler of the Year' competition in Lerwick. He had begun to learn Shetland fiddle tunes alongside the violin he had begun to play in Hong Kong. Before long he had become proficient and had found

## 5.2 Practices in the local education authority

### 5.2.1 A commitment to free instrumental tuition endangers wider provision

The head of faculty talked at length during one interview about the practices of the local education authority and its relationship with the school and its own instrumental service of visiting instructors who give lessons in the authority's schools. She saw this authority as resistant to changes which she saw as inevitable, having worked in other local authorities which had found ways of restructuring services to retain or improve efficacy. This stance, she observed, rendered their policies unsustainable and damaging to school music in the longer term.

The City Council have retained a commitment to not charging for instrumental lessons taken in school, in contrast with practices of neighbouring authorities, as the head of faculty explained to me in an interview:

Interview box 5:5 LEA (i) (faculty head, exploratory interview)

[The local authority] is probably unique. Most of the authorities round it have been attracting a fee. So the school will have been taking some of the cost, subsidising it, but it's just as it is in the private schools - it would be the kids who could afford to make the contribution who would get it.<sup>80</sup>

Implicit in this comment is an admiration for the ideological stance of the authority, who hold firm to the notion of free access to tuition, albeit for a limited number of pupils selected through a process of assessment for ability. The head of faculty explained the disadvantages of a situation where pupils make a financial contribution to instrumental lessons;

Interview box 5:6 LEA (ii) (faculty head, exploratory interview)

KJ Did it work with pupils having to contribute towards instrumental lessons?

MM No, because, they very often dictated the instruments they wanted to play. Pushy parents!

---

a means of entering Shetland cultural life through its own musical heritage, shared with a generous and hospitable habit in the Islands

<sup>80</sup> A motion was lodged before the Scottish Parliament on 11/09/2012 drawing attention to the discrepancies in access to instrumental lessons across the Scottish education authorities:

<http://childpolicyinfo.childreninscotland.org.uk/index/news-app?s=&story=12344&offset=0> accessed 12/09/2012

It skewed things. I remember in the band, someone would come in and say, ‘Why’ve you got hundreds of . . . ?’ And I’d say, ‘Have you seen the recruitment policy?’

Where parents pay towards lessons they expect a higher degree of control over which instrument is offered, resulting in an unbalanced musical ensemble. Under the model favoured by the site school’s local authority control is retained by the directors of the instrumental service in terms of which instruments they offer to how many pupils, and this enables them to retain the right balance for their central ensembles to function effectively.

The commitment to maintain free instrumental lessons, however, has put the council’s music budget under strain which has recently resulted in cuts being made in the funding of central ensembles, and now threatens the jobs of some instrumental instructors. The funding of the local authority orchestras and bands has also diverged from that of neighbouring authorities in that tutors have been paid separately for coaching young musicians in these ensembles, whereas elsewhere the instructors’ contracts included these responsibilities within their normal salary.

Interview box 5:7 LEA (iii) (faculty head, exploratory interview)

KJ And what about [local authority schools’ symphony orchestra] and all the other central bands? Some of them have already been cut?

MM That started happening not long after my arrival – they’re only having so many rehearsals, not meeting as often . . . In fact I can see the cost saving immediately because [the local council] weren’t charging, still aren’t charging for that, but they were paying instructors to go along and tutor the bands whereas in other authorities were saying, you’re contracted for extra time – the extra hours that McCrone<sup>81</sup> said you had to do, you will turn up to a band rehearsal and you will tutor them, that will be your hours, you’re getting paid for it anyway, get yourself there. Whereas as soon as they cut a rehearsal they’re saving money, so now they know that, the people who are operating the budgets, they are going to have another look at that.

---

<sup>81</sup> The McCrone Report Scottish Executive Education Department (2000) Teaching Profession for the 21st Century: Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Professional Conditions of Service for Teachers (the McCrone Report), Edinburgh, HMSO.

### **5.2.2 The local authority's management practices cause distress to individual instructors**

The authority's handling of its instrumental instructors in communicating about the processes of finding financial savings was of prime concern for the head of faculty, whose role includes managing the team of instructors who visit the school weekly to give lessons:

Interview box 5:8 LEA (iv) (faculty head, exploratory interview)

Well I had the lady from the Union down here on Monday, the day when I have the majority of the instrumental staff in school. It looks like 25 % this year and may well be the same next. The biggest cut at the moment – they're looking at losing 3-point-something brass teachers. That's three full times and a bit of a part-time. They split up the strings, brass etc and delivered this at different times so they couldn't get together as a big group. They sent some forms saying, 'If you think you can reduce your hours write to us and tell us'. So it's a hot potato here. I got a text from a guy who has had to reapply for his own job and they cut his time by a day and a half. If you'd seen this text . . . I was seriously worried. He was talking about ending it all now. The whole scenario, it's very unstable and unsettling. I said, get to your GP. Get signed off. He must have not done that because a text came through saying he'd been sent home by the school. So this is what it's doing to people.

This interview took place only weeks after a visiting instrumental teacher in the site school, whom I had recently interviewed, had taken his own life. Job insecurity and financial concerns were thought by colleagues to have contributed to his death and his passing had been traumatic for the members of the music teaching staff.

The faculty head felt a deep concern for colleagues in the instrumental music service, and was critical of local authority managers' methods: 'If they'd said it's a one-off and that's it I think people would have said, "OK, a bit of natural wastage for next year". But they've said that's just for this year'. Although the head of faculty acknowledged the local authority's upholding of free tuition she observes its failure to properly communicate to the public its priorities: 'We are a luxury, In Jo Public's eye we are nothing but a luxury. Nursery education or private lessons on the French horn or the violin?'

### **5.2.3 Budgetary cuts have an impact upon pupils' music-making**

The fiscal restraint insisted upon by central government has curtailed the exercising of an individual authority's agency in relation to values it wishes to uphold, for instance in this case free instrumental tuition based on the requirements of central ensembles. Pupils' experience of music-making together is directly affected by the local authority's political

outlook and subsequent decision-making. The cost-saving measures introduced by all local authorities in Britain over the past few years, and still to be worked out in practice, have had an immediate effect upon pupils' music-making amongst the wider community of school pupils in this authority. Failing to have set the instrumental service on a sustainable footing has revealed consequences which threaten to destroy the musical opportunities the council had been committed to providing. The head of faculty spelt out her fears in one interview:

Interview box 5:9 LEA (v) (faculty head, exploratory interview)

And the bottom line is, [the music service] will contract and the school will still have to deliver music for all the kids that are coming through the door. We're not in protected classes; art is, drama isn't and music isn't. There's nothing to say you can't teach up to thirty. So the impact will come back to the classroom at some point. The extra-curricular will go. You won't have the kids who would normally come through the service and go to bands etc.

### **5.2.3 Reluctance to adopt new management structures**

The authority has been slow to adopt the newer management structures implemented by neighbouring authorities. The head of faculty explained that from her perspective this made it much harder to move in and out of teaching posts throughout the authority as practices diverged so markedly:

Interview box 5:10 LEA (vi) (faculty head, exploratory interview)

The authority I used to work for as a faculty head had a completely different structure. It's piecemeal here – it's half PT's, half faculty heads. It's a mixed bag. We don't meet here as faculty heads and drive it. It's a meeting with the head and a joint response to it. I have concerns about that. Once you go from authority to authority? There's no consistency. You're thinking, OK what do I need for this school, it's completely different – what method is this? So there's a whole hotbed, a lot of unanswered questions.

The head of faculty perceives the effects of the authority's and the school's late, piecemeal adoption of new structures as limiting her ability to shape the school curriculum alongside the other heads of faculties. She sees this as preventing new ideas for improving 'delivery in the classroom' from being introduced, practices she has become accustomed to at her previous schools:

Interview box 5:11 LEA (vii) (faculty head, in-depth interview)

It's changing your practices, it's adopting what the research is saying just now, that assessment is for learning, getting it into your lessons, accelerated learning – time in the lessons, don't dive in – and they get a better answer, 'I want you to think about this for a couple of minutes . . .' and they have all these techniques taught across the whole school consistently. I've mentioned accelerated learning a couple of times and I've seen the blank looks. There's a Master's programme you can do on it. They're called Lead Teachers. Essentially you're gathering about 30 credits and a bit of research. And it's literally to hit the 'attain' button. That's one of many. It costs, but that authority was prepared to pay. But [this local authority] is skint. It's just resources.

The very title of the faculty, 'Creative and Aesthetic' is seen as backward-looking:

Interview box 5:12 LEA (viii) (faculty head, in-depth interview)

MM That's an old-fashioned title now. Back in 1997, that was my first faculty head's job. And all the documentation you got out was called 'Creative and Aesthetic'. Then it became out of fashion. But this school only got faculty positions a couple of years ago, because it's behind the times. I've had this conversation wit (sic) the boss. When you go and talk to NQT's from outside it's called 'Expressive Arts'.

A high level of frustration is apparent through these perspectives shared by a senior teacher who had only just arrived at the school when I began my fieldwork there, frustration that structures have not adapted to new demands and that pupils' learning is not improving as it might. Her language hints at the influence of the performativity discourse which has percolated through British educational structures: 'And it's literally to hit the 'attain button'. The image of pressing a button for a required result conveys a closed system where there is no possibility for Levinas' 'breaking in of infinity', even as Ms M's understanding of the aim of the 'accelerated learning' programme is to open up possibilities for deeper responses from pupils. A very sharp focus in terms of a desired and controlled outcome drives the introduction and implementation of new techniques. The implication is that if there is the political will to commit adequate resources, the desired and predicted outcome must follow.

### **5.3 Practices in school**

#### **5.3.1 Oppressive management practices: tensions between senior management and faculty staff**

The head of faculty and class music teacher talked in interviews of the building resentment at the way some management issues were handled within the school itself. The head of faculty expressed her anxiety in one interview concerning an interaction that week between one of her departmental staff and a deputy-head teacher, a music specialist who also teaches

for a couple of periods of class music each week, and who had casually informed the class teacher that she would be having to cover for the deputy during the ‘off-timetable’ month at the end of the academic year. Both members of staff had expected to use the extra non-contact time in order to develop policies and documents for the curriculum changes being introduced early in the next academic year, but the senior member of staff had used her more powerful position to off-load her remaining teaching time onto a more junior member:

Interview box 5:13 School management practices (i) (faculty head, in-depth interview)

The bottom line is I’ve never experienced that – it’s not a good management policy. Our Depute happens to be a music teacher. If it had been the science department, a huge department, we could have spread it. It needs to come from [Ms S]. If she’d looked reflectively at her own practice – surely to God two and a half hours on a non-teaching week?

In her role as curriculum leader for the expressive arts and in her role as manager of her department’s staff, Ms M reacts angrily against a management decision which seems to oppress a member of staff rather than support her to plan for the year ahead. A hierarchy of worth is articulated subtly here which degrades the class teacher’s role.

Conversely, the deputy head is critical of the manner in which the new head of faculty has shaped the music curriculum and finds it hard to teach within these parameters:

Interview box 5:14 School management practices (ii) (deputy head, in-depth interview)

I really miss teaching music and I’d love to get my hands on the music curriculum here. Ms MM knows I find it very difficult to go down and teach to this unit that to me doesn’t make sense.

The deputy, Ms S, laid out to me in a long interview her concerns and priorities for the music curriculum, and it was apparent that in her previous schools, as head of faculty she had reflected upon her own practice and made changes to improve the learning experience for pupils in class music.

These struggles over management of staff and curriculum priorities and teaching styles operate at a background level and shape a layer of the structures in school which ultimately has a bearing upon the experience of pupils but in a manner which is difficult to perceive. A critical realist framework allows for this to be acknowledged as only partially uncovered but with the potential to exert influence upon the experience of pupils.

### 5.3.2 The legacy of industrial action amongst teaching staff

The head of faculty reminded me in interviews of the effects of the teachers' strikes of the early 1980s and suggested that the school's extra-curricular programme has never recovered. She recounted the efforts of the young PE teacher who was trying to resurrect a new form of a Sports' Day for the whole school to be involved in:

Interview box 5:15 Legacy of industrial action (faculty head, in-depth interview)

The PT for PE caught me and asked for a sound track to be put together for the inter-house games. She's been in post six months and she's trying to get enough support for a sports day. There was a big downing-tools back in the 80s and all this sort of thing stopped with the industrial action and a lot of it's not recovered. It's not your traditional 100 metres . . . won't be what goes on at [local private school]. And she's dragging in all sorts of people around her – she's got the art department making the banners and stuff like that. It's like a suspended timetable for that day, so kids will opt in to what they want to do. Those interested in art will go and do the banners, music will come here and do the sound track for when they get onto the podiums.

Here is an example of a younger member of staff taking the new Curriculum for Excellence's initiative and using its cross-curricular principles to breathe new life into a traditional event which had been lost from the pupils' experience through poor labour relation two decades earlier. Unfortunately though the head of faculty had only been informed of the proposed event very soon before it was scheduled to take place; 'It's quite a commitment and to get that sprung yesterday it's a bit odd'.

### 5.3.3 Organisational mistakes

The head of faculty explained why the class I followed for the academic year did not have lessons together in exactly the same grouping apart from their weekly music class:

Interview box 5:16 Organisational mistakes (faculty head, in-depth interview)

There's a problem now with the way practical classes were set up two years ago – normally if they're a register class the register class is the practical class, so there's a gelling there. That year courtesy of someone who's now not here, we had register classes and practical classes and classes for English, Maths and all that. And none of the classes are together long enough to actually gel. Every time they go into a different lesson there's a different make-up. And that has resulted in some serious behaviour issues in some of the classes. [Sample class] is not one that I know of so that means they're behaving themselves.

This is the only year in the school which was organised in this way, and it was clearly perceived by staff as a mistake with consequences for behaviour in classes which had no

opportunity for sustained engagement as a group of pupils and had no sense of belonging together. Here is a logistical decision which has had far-reaching effects for pupils, and has influenced their experience of learning in school. Fortunately for my sample class the particular combination of personalities in the class, and from my observations the skills of one or two individuals who had a very positive effect on the cohesion of the group, made for a more effective working environment than many other classes in the year group.

### **5.3.4 Social division: A fault-line through the school or ‘the only real comprehensive left in Britain’?**

Following my observation of an art lesson which drew together nearly all the members of the sample music set, I was able to discuss the class and their lesson with the head of Art, a very experienced and compassionate teacher whose approach to the class took me by surprise at first but which I found very effective and ultimately moving as the pupils developed from a mood of apprehension and lack of confidence to a sense of pleasure as they saw both how much they had managed to achieve and could look ahead along the trajectory they were on to envisage a satisfying and result.

Interview box 5:17 Social division (class music teacher, in-depth interview)

KJ It was Mr J said how split the school is between people who live north of the [ ] Road and [ ], and he said how this class was unusually well-mixed. The girls were getting on really well in art, I thought. They were having a nice, gentle conversation, kind of affirming – and I thought [vulnerable pupil] was quite involved in that, and they were quite open to me. It was as though they had the head space, while they were doing this task.

So he said this class was unusually integrated.

HE It’s true, it’s not as divided as other classes. Although you can see maybe J, K, Amy’s an odd one, because she doesn’t sing so she’s always been separated, but this time they’ve all decided to sing. They are generally just quite nice girls – T can raise her voice and be a bit . . . (makes a screechy sound) but often in the classes – this is just the catchment we’ve got. You’ve got girls in nice skirts and nice stuff and then you’ve got the girls who are wearing sort of chavvy navy tracksuits and a real divide – and boys as well. It’s not really like that in this class thankfully. But it is in others. And then you would really – you can get a ‘them and us’, and you wouldn’t ever be altogether on the same side of the room. It would be like, ‘Oh no, I’m not sitting there, I’m not sitting with her!’

KJ Is that addressed on a school-wide level?

HE They’re trying to. It’s a difficult one. I’ve got my own personal thing about uniform right now, because I think if they were all to wear pretty much the same thing it they would blend better. And the uniform – you can tell just by looking at the child where they’re from. And it’s not even as obvious as how their hair is or their earrings or

anything, it's just jumpers, do they have trousers or do they have tracksuit bottoms? You won't get Stockbridge kids in tracksuit bottoms. Simple as. And then the top half, is it regulation uniform, and if it's not, is it a nice fitted blouse, 'cos some of my girls in my fourth year class, it's not that they don't look smart –they actually do, if they were working in an office, even a teacher. They wear a fitted blouse and a scarf, and whatever, but it's not school uniform. That's the [wealthier suburb] kids who wear them. Then you've got the big neon jumper wearers, who are not in uniform either. Now that's much more of an eye sore. Now I've this issue in the morning where I've got two girls and I'm fighting constantly to get their blooming jumpers off. Now I've got other girls sitting here with a fitted shirt, wee belts and that's not uniform either. It's like a working uniform somehow – it's a professional look. They're dedicated not necessarily to the school, but to their work and to their exam success. But when I tell them to take the two jumpers off they go, 'What about them, Miss, they're not wearing uniform either!' It's all kicked off in my fourth year class, because we have a real geographical divide. They don't even talk to each other. And the uniform change is very, very clear.

KJ How can this be working then? It's a big crack in the school!

HE I know. I don't know exactly when this happened, but [19]90-something the [less affluent local area] school was closed. It didn't used to be that they had this divide. It was more the [more affluent local area] end, so [the site school] was probably a 'better' school – more supported kids. And there was a school which closed. It will always be difficult for two schools to mix. And the [more affluent area] kids were not keen to have the [less affluent area] kids. The [less affluent area] kids aren't necessarily a problem but – there's always going to be kids who are not going to want to cooperate with work, and when it comes to dress code you can tell exactly who they are. I'm not saying there are not [less affluent area] kids in uniform, of course there are, but there are a core who don't and they look, as they said this morning, as if they work in JJB Sports. (Laughs) That absolutely just nails it. Because it is, it's tracksuits and trainers, pair of jeans, stripey tops. They look like they work in a sports shop. Whereas the [affluent area] non-cooperative ones are just, they're more subtle about it – but they're still defying the system. It's not like they're any better. They just do it in a different way.

KJ And is that being addressed at all?

HE Well, it is in my room for the last week and a half. It all started because two of the [affluent area] kids who wear uniform said to me on the way out the door, 'Why don't you make a fuss about uniform anymore?' Now basically I hadn't since we came back because it was so cold, with all the snow, and I thought, I see them for 10 mins. In the morning – it doesn't matter if they keep their coats on right now, because I can understand they've come in from the cold. We're all cold, I'm not going to make a fuss for 10 mins., and when I was at school we were allowed to leave our jackets on at registration, I've kind of got that into my head too. But these girls were coming in wearing sort of jumpers; obviously, it's not like a coat. It's more obvious, in your face, as if they'd . . . you should make a fuss. 'Why, you're wearing uniform?' 'We always wear uniform! You should make a fuss!' It was really strange – I've never had kids telling me to do something about uniform before. But I thought, 'Right I will!' but oh my goodness, it's caused me all sorts of problems. Because those two really suffered, firing back at me, 'What about her, she's wearing that, and you're no saying to him, how come you're no saying to him?'

KJ It could be a real key, couldn't it, for addressing some of the . . . like a social justice issue?

HE I know, like the jumper-wearers there, they've got this chip on their shoulder, almost, because generally speaking [more affluent area] children have bigger houses, more money etc. 'There's loads of kids can't afford uniform!' They give me that kind of argument. But as we would say, what do they come in and wear then? You watch the kids who don't wear uniform - they come in all labels. Everything with a label. It's not like it's cheap clothes that they're wearing. It's actually really expensive ones. Superdry, G Star, you know it's expensive names.

However, it's an interesting school from that point of view. Much more of a spectrum of social background than the average high school, definitely.

KJ Mr J made a sweeping statement – he said it's the only real comprehensive left in Britain.

HE (Laughs) I can imagine him saying that.

### 5.3.5 Hospitable practices

Following the discussion outlined above with the class music teacher concerning a fault line of social division running through the social fabric of the school which seemed to remain largely unaddressed, the Depute explained to me in a subsequent interview the school's commitment to reach out to immigrant families in order to draw them in to the school community:

Interview box 5:18 Hospitable practices (deputy head, in-depth interview)

We have got this plan, long-term plan . . . Last year I met with the parents of the bilingual students to try and find ways of making them feel more integrated into the school, so it wasn't just a case of they arrive in this community and the kid came to school here. I have to say, third world war nearly started because at one point there was an argument between a Russian lady and a Polish lady, during which the Russian lady said something like, 'Well, you don't understand because you're Polish!' and we were sitting there thinking, 'Oh my God!' But the general feedback was that the parents did want to be more involved in the school and that they have skills, they have knowledge, they have all sorts of things that could be shared. And I don't know if you've met any of the Abdullah children? Mr Abdullah actually has been in to support MR who deals with Ramadan. But the plan is always still to have this bigger thing; we don't know what to call it. Do we call it an International Day, a Multicultural day, what is it? And it is basically to get the people who . . . in some respects it's networking for folk that come in; it's to bring their culture into the school; you know we've got this fantastic new building in terms of displaying and stuff like that. Something like that would need to be planned very carefully. But we still intend to do it.

In an initial interview with the head of School at the outset of my fieldwork period I had learned that one of her priorities was an enhanced engagement with the wider community in terms of a meaningful relationship between what happens in school and in the community

outside the school walls. It was interesting therefore to see evidence that this commitment had been taken up by one of the deputies.

### **5.3.6 Opaque language of policy and curriculum**

I asked the class music teacher and faculty head about the use of the word ‘aesthetic’ in the faculty name and in the Scottish curriculum documents:

Interview box 5:19 Opaque language (in-depth interview with class music teacher and head of faculty)

Ms E Yes, the word ‘aesthetic’ kind of confuses me. ‘Aesthetically pleasing’ I mean what’s that? Looking nice?

KJ Does anyone understand what ‘aesthetic talents’ means?

MM I’m not sure they do. I think this is a collection of words pulled together by a team of people – it may have meant something to them on that day, but the information never filtered in. Now [local authority Quality Improvement Officer] and I will get a wee jab at this. And he’s got his interpretation of ‘aesthetic’.

The head of faculty indicated that the language used in the new Curriculum for Excellence was similarly opaque. Terms from the documentation had come to mean something for the policy-makers in their discussions, but their vision had not been communicated so that language which might have opened up possibilities had failed to do so, and remained opaque to the faculty head and class music teacher.

### **5.3.7 Preparing pupils for life: a bleak vision?**

Over the academic year of fieldwork I observed several Personal and Social Education lessons with a class grouping which included a few members of the sample music class. I asked the head of Guidance, who taught these classes, about the difficult content in these lessons which at least one of my pupil interviewees found hard to engage with, physically turning away from some of the presentations on the smart board. She explained the need for pupils to be aware of issues such as self-harming so that firstly they might be able to seek help if they found themselves engaging in self-harm, but secondly, she emphasised the need for pupils to be able to recognise signs in their peers, and be able to support their friends in seeking help.

In an interview with the Depute I asked what vision the school had of what they were preparing pupils for in their lives ahead:

Interview box 5:20 What sort of vision? (deputy head, in-depth interview)

PSE's supposed to be helping them deal with life, but then maybe we do lean too much on all the horrible things. With Curriculum for Excellence now, all of that – PSE, RMPS, PE and HE are all coming under health and well-being. Under the health and well-being umbrella we are supposed to be preparing the kids for life outside the school – skills for life, skills for work, skills for learning, all this kind of stuff. And I suppose there is a danger that you dwell too much on the things that could go wrong and help them to deal with that, as opposed to working from a more positive stance and saying, well this can be good.

We discussed whether music-making, and learning in the other expressive arts, offers a counter-balance to these pragmatic aims and the sometimes rather bleak experiences of raising awareness of difficult issues. The question arising from our discussion concerned what sort of vision the school is communicating to its pupils about their lives ahead. Did the school offer a glimpse of transcendent possibilities for young people alongside a preparation for the day to day issues they would face – a 'breaking-in of infinity', as Levinas might suggest?

### 5.3.8 The contested role of music in the school curriculum

This extract from an interview with the Depute sets out her vision for a transformation in the way the curriculum is organised where music could occupy a central position, if the whole school were to take on a music or arts specialism, building on its existing, semi-autonomous specialist music unit:

Interview box 5:21 Role of arts within the curriculum (deputy head, in-depth interview)

I know when [*the other Depute with responsibility for the curriculum and who has an art specialism*] did the interdisciplinary learning, one of them was about what it meant to be a pupil here. The kids were working over in [the local park]; they were working with the park rangers, they were talking to people who work on the allotments. Giving them a wider understanding – that's how Curriculum for Excellence is good. But my concern would be, in formal subjects as well, is that you spend a lot of time on the kind of wider, more aesthetic-type things, and you don't do the skills. And I think there's balances to try and get the skills incorporated and that's what we were trying to do before Curriculum for Excellence was out. That's what we were trying to do in music, and to link it to other subjects, and I know that I've spent a lot of time with other PT's trying to find ways to link music to lots of other subjects. I mean my own personal belief is that I would have the whole world centred around music, and I would have the creative subjects as your centre and learning from all of that, because I think if you are genuinely involved in the creative subjects there is a lot more that you can get out of the child as a whole. . . [The other Depute] said the same as I did one evening at a social with the head and me; 'Why shouldn't we just be a school that's known for Creative and Aesthetic? It doesn't mean that we cancel everything else out. . .' Sometimes kids are very good in some of the creative, practical subjects but they struggle in other areas. It's good you know from a confidence-building point of view – even if it's as basic as singing their times tables. I think arts are quite a good medium for all other learning. I don't know, if I were ever head teacher, if I'd have the support or the guts or

whatever but I'd love to go down that road. I'd love to investigate something like that. Maybe instead of getting seven or eight periods a week of English and Maths they could get seven or eight periods a week of the creative subjects.

It is a bold conception of music generating the rest of the curriculum. The head of faculty however has a different vision for the place of music and for the other expressive arts in the wider curriculum. Her priority is the efficient preparation of pupils for public exams, the results of which form her justification for music's survival as an 'academic' subject. It is a defensive strategy which speaks of the difficulties of leading a department which has to prove its worth against more highly valued and perhaps easily assessable subject areas.

### **5.3.9 New curriculum practices require new school structures**

The faculty head described the options open to the senior management of the school as they prepare to implement the Curriculum for Excellence's directive for interdisciplinary working:

Interview box 5:22 Curriculum changes (i) (faculty head, in-depth interview)

They can either shut the place down – suspend the timetable – and say, 'This is something different' and over two days there are these eight or ten projects, or you spread them out and the knock-on effect of that is perhaps that you're disrupting the regular flow of the school. But then up for grabs is, 'What is the regular flow of the school, now that we've been told anything goes?' I can't wait – I don't actually know which way we'll go. The easiest way is to have interdisciplinary days where regular hours are suspended. And the kids have this element of choice. It will be guided choice.

The school's leadership must decide whether to embrace the policy change as an uncomfortable 'disruption' which may lead to a redefining of what 'the regular flow of the school' may be, or to manage the introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence by keeping to as much of the former ways of working as possible, to allow minimum disturbance to existing practices. The head of faculty expresses her openness to the new possibilities and conveys a sense of excitement at what might develop. The choice between remaining open and limiting possibilities through 'guided choice', for instance, highlights the challenges of being open to Levinas' infinity in school. The 'easy' option is for specific interdisciplinary days to be set aside, which contains the new initiatives and prevents them from thoroughly transforming curriculum practices.

The faculty head also identifies the one area of the high school curriculum which has been the cause of sustained concern, nationally as well as in the site school:<sup>82</sup>

Interview box 5:23 Curriculum changes (ii) (faculty head, in-depth interview)

The big concern is the flat-lining in Second year – you know how the kids are saying, ‘What am I doing next? Why am I still here?’ . . . there’s a lot of problems with these children no doing anything in their second year. The pace is awful. It’s keeping them going. Something has to change – but what to, we’re not at that stage yet. We’ve not even had that discussion. We’re basically looking at what we’ve got for first year. It will depend, top-down. If they say, there’s going to be quite a change in music and in art, we’re going to take the two periods of art away and give to music, we’re going to have to get up to speed pretty fast – what are we going to fill the time with that is going to ooze creativity?

The perceived lack of progression throughout the S2 cohort has been one of the motivating factors for the re-envisioning of the Scottish secondary curriculum, and the head of faculty recognises that any response to the new policy document will need to show a huge improvement in the S2 pupils’ experience in the music classroom.

The Curriculum for Excellence’s insistence upon literacy and numeracy being taught across each subject area has brought fresh urgency into the discussions which seek to justify each subject within the secondary curriculum:

Interview box 5:24 Curriculum changes (iii) (faculty head, in-depth interview)

I’d love to be able to look back on this period from ten years’ time and say, so that’s what it was all for – that’s what was needed. There are conversations about the make-up of an English department; ‘We don’t need an English department of ten staff any more – we’re all delivering literacy skills’. So it will only be the able ones, the ones who want to specialise that will end up doing Higher and going on to do literature. Why are you making other kids do that, who will only need to be able to fill in forms? Do they have functionality? I’ve heard English teachers saying, ‘Yes, you’re right!’, because they have for years had to deliver Romeo and Juliet and they knew fine well that 30% of the class couldn’t even read.

These instrumental ways of thinking begin to undermine separate disciplines which cannot show their wider ‘use’ in preparing pupils for the workplace. The head of faculty relates her concerns as she draws up plans for the music curriculum.

---

<sup>82</sup> See <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/sp/?gid=2010-06-17.27422.0> accessed 17/09/2012) for relevant discussion in the Scottish Parliament.

Interview box 5:25 Curriculum changes (iv) (faculty head, in-depth interview)

The hardest bit is, you've got to be sure that whatever you put in has got to stand up to scrutiny. You have to have your argument there for putting it in and you'll be expected to say why you've put it in. Does it fulfil the criteria now? So you might have potted on for ten years, dead sure of yourself, saying if you do x, y and z you're going to get your whatever exam, because you've got evidence to support it, you've got evidence in the pupil packs, you can show that attainment is rising and that they can all read the lines and spaces. But now, if we overcrowd it, what's going to get squeezed out? So that's a concern for me. And what gets squeezed out, will that be acceptable to someone else who comes in and inspects? It's my opinion here. The model is going to be so different, depending on who's leading it. Because [the local authority's quality improvement officer] was very explicit in saying, 'Go back to your departments and concentrate on getting the first year course done, get the literacy embedded and fight the case for numeracy not being a big thing for music – yes. His argument was, 'You're saying music has got a big say in the numeracy project across the curriculum of the school. So when they come in to have their first year of music with you you're maybe getting them to count to four, count to three. Time signatures and things like that. In Maths they are doing Pythagoras theorem. They have overtaken counting to four, a primary skill. They've overtaken fractions. They will laugh at you, the children, if you start saying . . . There's that argument at this level now – we were all trying to justify the existence of music, providing everything numerical, in fact the kids are well, well above it. We shouldn't be making assumptions that we should be spending copious amounts of time . . . so I can see his reasoning.

It is a very un-nuanced argument however which sees music's benefit to pupils' numeracy as limited to counting beats in the bar and learning about fractions from time signatures. The possibilities for all manner of cognitive and memory development whilst exploring complex rhythmic patterns or developing musical motifs in compositional tasks is far richer than is being acknowledged here. Justifying music's place in the curriculum through instrumental means however is fraught with dangers.<sup>83</sup>

The need for reflective space for staff to be able to explore curriculum issues together in school was articulated by the head of faculty:

Interview box 5:26 Reflective space needed (faculty head, in-depth interview)

I would prefer more professional dialogue. When we have meetings, they don't happen regularly enough and there's an agenda that goes one, two, three four five, and there's no space for professional dialogue or discussion, it's more an information sharing. I think that's a financial thing . . .

---

<sup>83</sup> Wayne Bowman (2003) sets out some of the dangers of advocacy, archived at an arts education, advocacy database for teachers, parents, students and business retrieved from <http://www.oocities.org/theargonautca/briefcommentsonmusicedadvo.htm>

Meetings are tightly restricted to essential communication with little room for the sort of discussion which might allow for risk-taking and imaginative responses to the new curriculum demands.

### **5.3.10 Implementation of new government policy: the desire for prescription and the possibility of transformed practice**

A recurrent thread of concern running throughout each interview with members of staff at the site school was the reaction to the imminent introduction of the Scottish Government's new Curriculum for Excellence which aims to 'achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum from 3 to 18'<sup>84</sup>. The head of faculty spoke of the scepticism of staff as the consultation documents were refined to the stage of publication:

Interview box 5:27 Opaque language (faculty head, in-depth interview)

I don't know if you saw the earlier draft? The 'joy and the magic'. When they put out the first outcome, the language that was being used, people were falling about and hee-hawing at it, about how it's going to be 'magical'. And the responses that went in, it was unbelievable. We were asked to comment on it before it went out. It just got lambasted at every level – the parents, faculty meetings, national meetings.

The early derision had given way to anxiety when faced with greater freedom and a less prescriptive regime: 'There's a lot of fear – people don't know what it means, just now, because we're on the cusp of it, how it should be interpreted'. A recurrent theme in staff interviews was the dichotomy between the desire for more freedom in the development of the arts and music curriculum and the fear of not knowing what is expected from teachers. The head of faculty described to me the enthusiastic discussions of a year earlier when staff were keen to make cross-curricular initiatives in line with the new policy. The apparent emphasis on interdisciplinary learning, the most oft-quoted characteristic of the Curriculum for Excellence, is perceived to be already happening in the school, but the challenge to new levels of cooperation are embraced by the staff I spoke to:

Interview box 5:28 Interdisciplinary learning (faculty head, in-depth interview)

A year ago we were all saying, 'We could try this as an idea', 'This is what we've got just now, but we could maybe work with the Art department to do something different'. And we have to look also at the introduction of interdisciplinary projects. So we're looking at . . . rather than insular bases with your department just churning away . . . which doesn't really happen here. We're working with other departments and with outside agencies. We've had

---

<sup>84</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp>

an artist in residence this year. Those partnerships are there, but within the school we need to be tying up with English, History and Music, and the meeting we attended this week was everyone saying, 'Here's what we can do, it's now down to management to timetable . . .' There's quite a few interdisciplinary projects on their way. The planning has been done, the identification of resources, now it's, 'How do you make it happen?' That's where your SMT come in and they have to be clever and innovative and creative and think outside what they're used to. Which will be interesting because it won't be replicated in any other school. So I can't wait to see the models that come out.

The possibility of each school developing ways of working which are unique to that school is both an exciting and a frightening prospect for the head of faculty. She expressed her concern that no examples of good practice had yet been issued: 'I've not seen anything which has said, 'This would be good practice. Embed this in your curriculum for S1'.

Interview box 5:29 Insecurity in new ways of working (faculty head, in-depth interview)

And there's certainly room for the authorities that are producing this handing out examples of good practice that would be considered OK, just as a wee bench-mark, to reassure staff that you've no methods of assessment just now, and you're being told to make up your own course, but if you keep broadly in line with that, here's some examples; you don't have to copy that, you'll have the flexibility as a professional to come out of your wee departments and test your toe in the water and maybe take them up to the Galleries, and maybe do something new, get out and do a painting of the allotments, instead of saying, 'Get in that concrete room and do it!' So I think that most folk find difficult the interpretation of that and practically it's no prescribed at all . . . They keep telling us that everything we're doing just now should fit into this. But we've got to incorporate all the research that's showing the old ways of delivering it are not necessarily achieving the best outcomes. They're looking at the pedagogy and the methodology – people like me who twenty or thirty years in have got the skills base, well-trained people but the pace of learning is just stagnant. They're trying to encourage us to do accelerated learning, incorporating ICT, and for some people where you've been in a school for a long time, or you've not had the resources, you'd better step up to the mark. You might be a well-trained musician but your delivery might have been boring the children to death. I often think of the [local private school], the very traditional lessons there, and the argument of, 'Why am I being asked to ditch that while the hoop, the GCSE or the Higher or whatever, is still going to be there?' What a dilemma. So I'll be intrigued as to how a lot of these schools proceed. Will they take the risk and say, 'OK!'

The head of faculty acknowledged the need for a reappraisal of teaching methods for staff who had been successfully delivering the curriculum for many years, but who must now face the prospect that their techniques were not as effective any more. The dilemma she identifies is that of embracing creative ways of teaching and constructing the curriculum whilst the traditional examination system remains, with the risk that pupils may not now achieve reliably if methods have been changed to bring them in line with the new government policies.

### 5.3.11 A cynical or a pragmatic accommodation?

This dilemma was spelt out baldly by the local authority's quality improvement officer who had recently visited and reassured staff that their existing practice already fulfilled the new requirements: ' "Use your existing stuff . . . Get the words right". That was it.' From an anxious casting around for certainties through models of best practice, the implementation of the new curriculum had now been reduced to a recasting of existing practice using a new vocabulary. The head of faculty told me that her main task as the academic year drew to a close was to rewrite the curriculum documents:

Interview box 5:30 Curriculum changes (faculty head, in-depth interview)

As the Curriculum for Excellence is coming in we've been advised to get at least the first unit, the terminology and language of our resources in Curriculum for Excellence 'speak'. At least for the first years coming in. And this is it in August – so it's going to be a refresh, not a lot of changes . . . The resources I brought with me, that's them now two years old. They are out of date. They're out of date immediately in August, because they're not adapted to these terms and the content needs looking at.

In order to manage the introduction of the new policies the authority's own officer undermined any possibility for transformation by encouraging a re-writing of existing curriculum material now in the 'right' language.

## 5.4 Practices within the music department: learning music at the school

Music is taught as a statutory subject in the first and second years of the high school, with the opportunity to choose at the end of the second year to take the Scottish Standard Grade Music course, now being replaced by the new national qualifications in Scotland. The Standard Grade course took two academic years, with externally-examined performances on two instruments, a 'pass or fail' internally-assessed composition, culminating in an hour-long listening paper in May of the second year of study.<sup>85</sup>

The first and second years of music learning in the high school chosen for this case study were substantially shaped by the requirements and assessment style of this first level of public examination. Teachers aimed to bring their S2 classes up to a standard where any pupil might be able to choose Music for their examination courses by becoming proficient enough on two classroom instruments so that they could play the equivalent of Grade 3

---

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.sqa.org.uk/files/nq/music.pdf> accessed 15/09/2012 Since this fieldwork study was undertaken the Scottish Qualifications Authority has introduced a new system of National 4 and 5 qualifications.

ABRSM pieces.<sup>86</sup> Classroom instruments include the electric or bass guitar, keyboard, drums or glockenspiel.

This aim has had a significant bearing on the music curriculum for the last two years of statutory music education in school. The listening paper requires a background knowledge of specified ‘concepts and terminology’ spanning the history of music from Renaissance times until contemporary popular styles, and a degree of ‘musical literacy’. ‘World concepts’ drawn from traditions from around the world are prescribed but the weighting of the examination, with most marks awarded for performance and only a tiny proportion of the listening paper addressing ‘world’ styles, mitigates against teachers spending long on unfamiliar cultural contexts for music-making, even in the early two years of the secondary school.

The ‘musical literacy’ component of the examination is addressed in the 12-14 years curriculum of the site school through booklets given out to S1 and S2 pupils, leading them through written tasks which ensure a basic proficiency in reading notation. Small homework tasks are sometimes set and marking was often observed to be done on a one-to-one basis at the beginning of the weekly class music lesson. Listening tasks which focused on identifying instruments and musical styles were sometimes introduced at the beginning of each lesson.

#### **5.4.1 ‘Push out the unnecessary . . . only what’s compulsory to learn’**

The following box includes an extract from an interview with the class music teacher as she explains the priorities for the music curriculum during the first two years in high school.

Interview box 5:31 Diversity within the music curriculum (i) (class music teacher, in-depth interview)

HE I find that when I look up websites and get lots of things for English systems – and there’s loads on China, Africa, and there’s just tons. And I think in our syllabus, what’s compulsory for us to learn is so small, and when you’re pushed for time you do the bare minimum; you teach them the Scottish songs and dances and all that Scottish stuff which OK we feel they need to know, but they’ve got quite a lot of concepts to learn. But World Music, it’s literally, can you identify a sitar and the tabla, panpipes . . . that might be it. You know it’s so small. It’s done within half an hour.

---

<sup>86</sup> Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music which administers practical and theoretical music exams.

KJ I was trained to do this World Music much more as part of the first three years, and there's a whole thing about setting it more in context. That doesn't really happen in the Scottish Curriculum, do you think?

HE Not particularly, no. I've worked in five schools now and I haven't come across any World Music particularly anywhere. Apart from third and fourth year when you have to teach them a bit about Gamelan, and it's only done so quickly because there's only a couple of marks in it for the kids, and because you're teaching them for an exam at the end of the day, you're trying to make sure they get through, then your emphasis is on what they need to know in terms of listening. There's a whole lot more, I suppose orchestral concepts than there is World concepts. Indian stuff is just almost laughable, because you show them pictures, and play a video on You Tube, and most of them will recognise the sound in the picture anyway. 'As long as you know that's a sitar if you get it', 'Yep, got that', and you're like, 'That's it'. Unless I wanted to spend time on it, but in terms of getting them ready for the exam, that is it, and if they sit down with their multiple choice paper and one of the questions they'll be asked will be, 'What can you hear?' and sitars will be in there amongst guitars – really obvious often. It's one of the easiest things for me to make sure they know – so easy. But it doesn't go into it at all.

KJ So it doesn't pay to spend time . . .

HE Not really, because at the end of the day, you've got kids recognising the sound of all the orchestral instruments, which is more likely to come up – clarinet and oboe, right OK, need to make sure they can determine, whereas sitar it's Ok, it's obvious.

I do primary music now and I find it's a good opportunity to do songs from Africa, and I'm more interested in it now because in primary I've got this time. I can do what I like with it. And not having to train them up to play anything specifically. Whereas at school, especially if you've got kids who don't have private lessons, I'm thinking ahead, if they're in first and second year, if they're going to do music in third and fourth year, if they've got keyboard as an instrument, I need to make sure they spend a reasonable amount of time playing that instrument in the one hour I see them a week.

Otherwise they might choose music in third year and you've gone, 'Oh my goodness, they don't know how to play this'. Right, you need to now spend loads of time on this. Plus make sure they can learn all these words well enough to identify them and do some composition, learn a second instrument. So it is like – push out the unnecessary. Let's just cram in what is actually what our qualification requires us to teach, at the detriment of world music definitely.

KJ That's just looking at the different priorities in the music curriculum. By having this big emphasis on playing instruments in the lesson, that's obviously to prepare them to access the public examination. Do they get to the standard that they need to, by coming in at S1?

HE Yes, they can do. Obviously it's easier for them and for me if they've been getting lessons privately or during school time, going to [percussion teacher] for drums or since primary they have, but there are a number of kids who will start in first year completely new, do classroom instruments only, and be able to play them for the fourth year exam, especially ones like keyboards and guitar, because quite a lot of the guitarists, they start with the rock school books and it is just single notes at a time and it builds up to the chords. We've done chords with them, towards the end of first year. And glockenspiel – it's quite straightforward for them to pick that up. So you often find that the classroom musicians, the ones that have not had any private lessons, they'll be playing chordal guitar, because some of

the boys just want to play chords. Bass guitar because it's simple – tab- and glockenspiel – those are my three fall-back instruments pretty much. If anyone is struggling, it's like right, come off the violin, get on to the glockenspiel. And it's sad, because you feel that you're only doing it for the sake of an exam, but at the end of the day, that's what we're here to do.

We've got to get them through these exams fit enough to justify our marks at the end of the day. The exam results come in – and why did this child only get that? What can you do differently? Right, put them onto xylophone earlier to be honest, (laughs)

And then they're going to be ready. They might not think it's cool, because I've got it actually in my third year right now. It is pretty much the threat. (Laughs) Because none of them are playing it right now, and they're doing a concert a week on Friday on their first instrument, a concert a month on Friday on their second instrument, a piece on each, and the deal is, if any of them cannot play a full piece on each instrument – just one at this stage, we're obviously near into the course – then whatever instrument they can't play a piece on, they're moving onto glockenspiel, and that like gets them 'Oh' practise, practise . . . And they're like, 'How do you know we'd be able to play the glockenspiel?' It's like, 'Easy – of course you could play it!' And I say, yeah, pretty much. And the daft thing is, if they were going with the mindset of, 'I'm going to get the best possible exam grade I can', they would all be playing the glockenspiel. Because it is easy. The keyboard, glockenspiel, they're the ones that will get them the easy marks but of course with their cred, their street cred, and just their interest, they want to do drums and guitar. I think I'd rather they chose that because they want to do it, but there is always that fall-back.

Emerging here is the perceived need to tailor the learning from 12 to 14 years to the first level of public examination in music. Sixty per cent of the marks for the Standard Grade music exam taken by pupils in their fourth year are awarded for musical performance, with forty per cent set aside for the listening paper. The overriding priority for the class music teachers in years one and two is to prepare pupils to be able to take the exam through building up facility on two classroom instruments.

#### **5.4.2 'Training' for the exam**

Ms E observes her contrasting practice in primary schools where doesn't have to 'train them up for anything'. From the class teacher's perspective then the music curriculum must 'train' rather than 'educate'. The primary school affords opportunities for a wider exploration of diverse musical expressions. The music teacher's perception is that the first two years of secondary school are already too late for this, and that exam requirements must shape pupils' learning by then.

### 5.4.3 Problematic encounters with other musical traditions: whose music?

It became apparent through my lesson observations that bringing the musical expressions of other cultures into the classroom was not a priority in the curriculum at the site school. Early on in the academic year a student teacher led a series of lessons on music from elsewhere in the world, including a session on Gamelan styles which seemed to make a significant impression upon the class I was following, eliciting sustained, concentrated engagement and perceptive questions. The class teacher along with the head of faculty however were uncomfortable talking in interviews about music from other cultural traditions, seeing it as an optional element which took time away from teaching pupils musical literacy through their theory booklets, identification of orchestral instruments and developing fluency on the various classroom instruments.

Interview box 5:32 Diversity within the music curriculum (ii) (interview with class music teacher and faculty head)

But look at us in cross-section; I had two people with interpreters last night, and that was a good night.

Ms E (who has just joined the conversation) I had four – it's the most I've ever had.

KJ So do you think the kids are getting an understanding of culture in the wider world?

MM Well, we do a bit of Latin American . . . We're not doing that in any depth. We at the moment should be looking at world music.

KJ Where does it say that?

MM It's no prescriptive. It's very woolly. '5-14' came in and it was pretty vague.<sup>87</sup> And to be honest in the papers in Intermediate 1 and 2 you get a couple of questions on it, but how much..?

KJ So it's not worth investing in it in S1 and S2?

MM I think we have to introduce them to it, for example, we had a guy in to do Indian drumming – he works up there in a restaurant, but that's his thing - tabla. We brought that in for lower school. Some of them got some things out of it. He was very rushed that day.

---

<sup>87</sup> Scottish Office Education Department, (1992). *Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland: National Guidelines: Expressive Arts 5-14* (Curriculum and assessment in Scotland: a policy for the 90s). SOED: Edinburgh.

KJ They really liked it though. I was hearing about it in my interviews.

MM Aye, so it caught their imagination- it was hands-on, you see. So they get a wee shot of it. It was a bit rushed. I remember thinking, we could have done with him longer, but it was to do with money. We had £50 and he asked for a couple of hundred, and I thought, we've actually not got that. We as practitioners have to identify in the limited time we've got, if it is 55 minutes a week, what percentage of the time that we do have, bearing in mind that 60%, presuming Higher is still there in some form, or Intermediate or whatever, we have to make sure they have basic skills on minimum one instrument. What percentage of time are we prepared to hand over? And I would say the second years in particular need looked at in that respect. . . Because there's no kids opting for technology now. And we are supposed to be embedding in the curriculum a knowledge of music in other societies, and it needs to be stipulated how much. The resources I brought with me, that's them now two years old. They are out of date. They're out of date immediately in August, because they're not adapted to these terms and the content needs looking at.

KJ Would you be tempted to put more world music in for the first years?

MM Not for first years. The refresh on the first year stuff is now . . . I could justify a visit . . . I've no objection to saying, right, we're doing percussion are we? Let's get Mr . . . from that restaurant to come in.

During an extended interview with one of the school's Deputes (Deputy head in Scotland), a music specialist herself, I learned that the question of whose music should be 'used' in school was one she had grappled with, having written a report on multicultural music-making as part of her initial training as a teacher:

Interview box 5:33 Diversity within the music curriculum (iii) (deputy head, in-depth interview)

Basically I was finding out that it didn't really exist, other than Scottish music – maybe a bit of Indian where they spoke about tabla – maybe a bit of African drumming . . . just before I left [a neighbouring school] we were looking at trying to get a genuine multicultural music unit, trying maybe to buy into the kids – there were quite a lot of Polish kids in the school. Could we look at Polish music? Why does it always have to be Indian music and African music? We don't have many Indian or African kids here. I'm not saying it has to relate to the people you have in the class, but if we've got a growing Polish culture, why should we not be looking at Polish music?

It's funny because some of the people I wrote to, I now know who they all are, but at the time I was just writing to Principal teachers in Edinburgh, what did they do, that kind of stuff, and the responses I got I noted and I can't remember what I said – I've got some very idealistic conclusions about making a proper stab at being inclusive and looking at all this music, and I think the curriculum needs to have that but each individual department also needs to have that. But they need to sit down and think about how they're doing it, because you can't just look up African music, get some different rhythms and expect kids to have an understanding of African music.

She raises significant questions about whose music should be included within the curriculum in school, and whether the cultural background of the pupils themselves should provide a

starting point for building a music curriculum, rather than relying upon stock examples often from commercially produced materials. This suggests an affirming recognition of and openness to pupils' inherited cultural expressions, but the language used – 'trying maybe to buy into the kids' – brings the discourse into the transactional world of the marketplace.

There is an intention towards inclusivity here, where music departments seek to make each pupil's cultural voice heard within the curriculum in an act of openness to the Other. The 'problem' of authenticity is raised at the end of this extract from an interview. How is it possible to be open to the Other's music in the classroom when of necessity the class teacher will have little first-hand experience of playing within a different musical paradigm? Attempts to present material run the risk of being mere tokens. How may we avoid encouraging 'early closure' by fulfilling stereotypes, and rather bring pupils face to face with other people's musical expressions in a sensitive laying-out of a different tradition, where pupils are drawn into listening for the voice of the Other?

The Depute described to me her approach to teaching the Blues, where pupils were first led through an exercise of their imaginations which drew them into the experience of the West Africans who were violently torn from their communities and transported across the Atlantic to brutalised lives as slaves:

Interview box 5:34 Contextualisation of learning in music (deputy head, in-depth interview)

I did a Blues unit and we did a whole bit of advanced knowledge if you like – it all only started with storytelling; imagine yourself in your bedroom in the middle of the night, and the doors burst open and you get hoisted out by all these guys who take you and put you in the bottom of a boat, chained by your feet and your ankles. Three months later you arrive at this place you've never been before and then they sell you. What does that feel like? And you get 'Oh, I wouldna like that Miss!' and you say well, that's what happened; that's how the slaves got to where they got to. And I say to them, they weren't allowed to bring anything, but what they did bring was what was inside of them. Nobody can take that away from them. And what they brought was their music. And they did it and we got blues. So it gives them a basic understanding of what they're doing.

This echoes the lesson I observed where Ms E introduced my sample class to a whole group performance of *In the Mood* through a brief narrative about people being snatched from West Africa and forced into slavery across the Atlantic (discussed in the next chapter). My reflective notes record the intense interest shown by pupils as they experienced a joining-up of knowing in history with this imaginative encounter in music. It was a fleeting few minutes before the class performance got underway:

Reflective log 5:1 Staying in the place of encounter (i) After observation of ‘In the Mood lesson)

*My observation was that . . . many others in the class would willingly and fruitfully have stayed in that place of encounter, of beginning to reach out towards the experience of others, of the Other. There was no time or space in the music curriculum for this sort of sustained engagement with an aspect of learning in music which did not find an immediately measurable outcome. As I was reminded on many occasions, the main aim of music teaching in the S2 year group is to achieve competency on two instruments as gauged by the public examination syllabus criteria and to allow all pupils access to the Standard Grade curriculum. The possibilities for ethical encounter remain unrealised, along with the opportunity for pupils to develop and enrich their own contexts for performance through encountering the voice of the Other.*

#### **5.4.4 Curriculum changes brought by new head of faculty**

The new head of faculty had introduced theory of music work booklets and exercises on instruments of the orchestra from her last school for all first year classes. Ms E remarked in one interview:

Interview box 5:35 Curriculum changes (class music teacher, in-depth interview)

We’ve got this new unit this year on instruments of the orchestra. I have never had a first year so good at identifying instruments, because this course has been quite thorough. And there’s been homework every second week. They’ve been either giving me in homework or taking notes away, so that’s been fantastic. And then it was that Scotland unit. We cover all that then, and it is slightly dumbed down for them, their age group.

The sense here perhaps is of delight that at last there is a clear setting of written work in music which gives a sense of confidence that what is being taught can be quantified as in most other subjects. The recognition of the orchestral instruments is an easily-demonstrated outcome amongst the first years. Could the unit of work introducing Scottish musical forms be seen as an ‘opening up’ rather than a ‘dumbing down’, I wondered?

#### **5.4.5 Concerns over the quality of learning in the music classroom**

The music specialist Depute raised related questions about the quality of pupils’ learning in the music classroom: in the recent past a move had been made away from simply learning information to embodied learning through movement, dance and hands-on performing of musical forms. The example she gave was from a similar unit of work on Scottish traditional forms:

Interview box 5:36 Scottish musical forms (deputy head, in-depth interview)

We were the ones who were teaching the kids and saying, you know, I've just done a lesson in Scottish music. How do I know that that child actually knows what a Strathspey is? They could probably spout off a sentence I'd got them to memorise, but are they actually going to recognise a Strathspey? And that's when it was actually J who took over the Scottish music unit and we got them involved a lot more in performance.

It's not just a case of sticking a Chinese tune, going [sings]. We would be looking much more interdisciplinary and much more background. Because the question I asked in the department was, 'Why are we teaching this? What are they actually learning from it?' Even with Scottish music. There's so much more attached to Scottish music than teaching a kid a jig is in 6/8, so they can tick the 6/8 box in their standard grade paper. And that's what we're trying to get at. What are they learning from this? Do they understand why they're learning it? They're learning it because we've got it on an exam syllabus.

So what we'd started looking at was taking the idea – actually we started from the exam and took various concepts and asked, what can we take out of the 3rd and 4th year concepts, out into the 1st and 2nd year concepts so we can create a unit there that we can maybe make a bit deeper because we know they're learning the skills to take them on, and we know we can get them there, they've already learned some of the concepts, but we're trying to open it up that way.

## 5.5 Practices in the music classroom

### 5.5.1 Music not popular for examination choice with sample class

In the course of the academic year I observed the process of pupils choosing their optional subjects for Standard Grade examination courses, with accompanying PSE lessons on career choice and parents' evenings to discuss strengths and weaknesses of individuals. The class music teacher, Ms E, talked through the results of a short questionnaire she had given the class to fill in, asking for feedback as a result of the choices they had just made for their examination subjects the following year:

Interview box 5:37 Subject choices (class music teacher, in-depth interview)

It is a bit disappointing that not more of them are continuing, as they're fairly able. It's just J and Finlay which is sad. I mean there's definitely more could do it. J's not exactly strong. H, M would have been great; L – I mean he's keen enough; S, A, N, they could do it; Kirsty, Tom plays the saxophone. I'm thinking, 'Why are you not all carrying on?'

I found it fascinating to ask pupils what their reasons were for not choosing to carry on studying music at school. One boy, a keen player of electric guitar and a strong candidate for taking music at Standard Grade, told me that his Mum wouldn't let him choose music as media studies was much more relevant in today's world where the various media held such influence. Other parents seem to agree that music wasn't relevant as a subject area for their son or daughter's future. The skills and disciplines developed as pupils learn in music had

not been adequately communicated to the parents, neither had the enriching importance of the sheer enjoyment of making music.

### **5.5.2 Class response to new musical expressions: embodied responses**

In discussions during staff interviews of the class's encounters with music from other cultures in 'multicultural' whole school days, two aspects of pupils' responses emerged as significant. Firstly that any opportunity for a 'hands on' experience led by a face to face meeting with a practitioner from the wider community was valued highly: 'Aye, so it caught their imagination - it was hands on, you see. So they get a wee shot of it'. This observation was borne out in interviews with the smaller group of five pupils from the class. The immediacy of communication with an expert, the physical thrill of trying out the instrument and the engagement in a new and complex task within a different musical paradigm captured the pupils.

Secondly the pupils were observed by their class teacher and by me as they instinctively responded to unfamiliar music from different styles and traditions by seeking a rhythm to which they could respond and join in with physical movement.

#### Interview box 5:38 Embodied learning (class music teacher, in-depth interview)

[Discussion of student teacher lessons on 'World Music']

HE Well, they made up an ostinato each.

KJ As soon as something comes on it's just this drive to embody it somehow, so Finlay was noticeable because I was sitting over there, but during the Gamelan clip he was doing a pulse, and with the other hand he was doing a rhythmic counterpoint. And others – Stephen and one or two other people – were doing it. It's interesting that in the Gamelan we concentrate on the pitches and yet what they were responding to was the rhythm.

HE Yes. Always the same. In whatever culture. It's the beat. I find that with any piece of music I put on, the drummers, or just the kids in general, they will find the beat and will start tapping it out. Even in Baroque music, they're tapping it out. Whereas the singing won't . . . and it's also about not being noticed quite so much. You can subtly be doing that and enjoying it to themselves (sic), without making a show of themselves. No one needs to know.

KJ It was quite interesting that they then had to turn away to a keyboard individually to look at pitches, when actually what they'd been embodying was almost communal counterpoint rhythmic thing. So the task they were asked to do was about abstracting elements in an instrumental, rational sort of way, and putting them onto keyboards, whereas they were instinctively responding to the core of the whole performance. But I notice Katie was trying out one of the dance movements with her hands.

HE Oh Yes!

KJ Completely unselfconsciously as far as I could tell. And I was **really** surprised that they listened in that lesson really well, and with the dance – there wasn't any sort of tittering or anything.

HE Yeah, they were good.

It was an almost involuntary reaction to move, tap, join the rhythm, dance when music was heard in class, whatever the genre or cultural background, however remote and unfamiliar. The class seemed able to home-in on the beat and core rhythms.

## 5.6 Lesson observations – a personal response

### 5.6.1 Lesson I

**i) Abstracting from another's whole?**

**ii) Could pupil response be allowed to disrupt the lesson plan in order to open up learning?**

The reference above to a lesson exploring Gamelan sounds is put into context by the extract below from my reflective log. I had observed a student teacher taking the sample class one week, where she led them through an introduction to Indonesian Gamelan styles, culminating in a class performance:

Reflective log 5:2 Staying in the place of encounter (ii) (after observing student teacher Gamelan lesson)

*Extract from my reflective log for November 25th*

*The bell has gone, and pupils have begun to line up outside Ms E's classroom door. Standing against the wall, out of the way of the comings and goings, they are quietly waiting with the odd conversation in groups of twos and threes.*

*Ms E interjects a couple of times, for instance to tell Finlay how well he did in the Monday night concert. She catches Tasha on the way in to clock the fact that she has a music-lesson behaviour sheet to be signed, as she had been disruptive in recent weeks, but reminds her that she did well last week. Ms E has commented to me that this should help to 'Knock this behaviour on the head', and 'A happy Tasha is a happy class!'*

*The class enters, as Ms H indicates them to. She is taking the lesson today and has a further two weeks in school here. On the smart board is the heading 'The music of Java – Gamelan'.*

*The class reach their seats and Ms H instructs them to take out their planners. She is calm, with a friendly tone of voice, but has to insist. The learning objective is to find out about the music of Java. There is a table of mostly boys in the middle of three groups of desks where no planners are out, and she queries this.*

*The lesson moves quickly into an introduction – finding where Java might be. Coffee provides the first clue – was it Helena who suggested this? South America and Africa are*

suggested – yes, coffee does come from these areas too. Ms H guides the class nearer to China, and someone offers ‘Indonesia’.

The class is fairly interested, but their attention is really drawn in when the first extract of music is played. They listen closely. Ms H talks about the different instruments used in the Gamelan orchestra. Pupils’ interest is aroused particularly in the ‘gongs’. These are unusual, new to pupils. It’s easy to draw the conclusion here that pupils are very eager to embrace learning experiences of unfamiliar, distant musical forms.

Concentration deepens as two more extracts are played and Ms H gives some background information to guide their interpretation of the scene on video. She explains about the elders playing the gongs, the most respected having charge of the most revered instruments.

Amez’s engagement is fascinating today: Stephen does his best to distract him, but he persists in entering fully into an engagement with this new learning experience. ‘They look depressed’, he observes. ‘No, they’re not depressed’, Ms H responds. It would be interesting to take this further – respect, concentration, the solemnity of ritual.

He asks, ‘Is that not rude, Miss, that the older man playing the gong sometimes falls asleep. Is it not rude while everyone’s playing?’ He’s not sending this up. He’s really entering the situation imaginatively, I think. Again, points for development. ‘An older man could teach a younger one to do it’. He’s raising rich points for learning, for encountering the Other here.

These are fundamental questions of how this music operates in this place as part of this tradition. It affects the way people relate to each other. Amez is sensitive to this.

The dance video meets with sustained attention too – I’m a little surprised. There is no tittering. I spot Kirsty unselfconsciously trying out a hand movement with the characteristically angular, stylised pinching together of thumb and index finger with wrist at an extended angle.

There has been a background tapping ever since the music started – pencils and fingers. Rhythm and beat are joined by a few pupils. I notice Finlay is using his palms against the table in one pulse and his clapping hands as a rhythm in counterpoint. Matt joins him, hands on lap rather than on the desk.

As soon as the music has begun pupils want to embody this learning. Is it a drive towards movement, a kinaesthetic expression, or is it primarily that the rhythm is fore-grounded in this musical form for them, and the rhythm is enticing them to join in? Amez too uses the flat of his hands on the desk to join in the rhythmic texture. He and others pick up beats and off-beats. Matt matches the ‘quavers’, the faster-moving part.

Ms H. leads a discussion of the structure of the music. Amez offers, ‘Someone was leading it. However fast they went they all followed’. Ms H. tells them that the drummer has the power to tell everyone what to do. Helena asks, ‘Are we actually going to play this?’ She’s interested, but perhaps wonders how this distant expression can find a voice in the classroom.

The task on keyboards, in fact, focuses on pitch rather than rhythm. A grid is revealed on the smart board. At this point attention is dissipated. Is this the difficulty in having to assimilate a complex-looking representation? It resembles a mathematical matrix, but of course when explained is fairly straightforward, although still confusing to the eye to ‘read’.

Each pupil turns away to their own keyboard. Was this the best way to harness the enjoyment? Perhaps. Or possibly a whole class task with tuned and untuned percussion

*would have had the benefit of a rhythmic framework. The pupils are working now in isolation and the rhythm the boys were almost involuntarily embodying has been abstracted from the musical learning process. Should we see this as instrumental rationality from a Western technical viewpoint divorcing one element from another? I feel this breaks in on the engagement and assimilation of learning evidenced by the (mainly boys') realisations of rhythms – always, incidentally, exactly in time with the recorded ones.*

*How can we facilitate the directness of learning, the face to face encounter, without the teacher actually getting in the way? Ms H did a fantastic job in grabbing pupils' interest, giving a few little nuggets of information to draw them in, arouse their interest and desire to engage. The transfer into practical task is artificial, and difficult. But could something more important have been sustained – the communal sharing of tasks towards a whole? This, of course, is possibly what next week will hold, when pupils have been promised a time of playing together.*

*This task was given a real context – it's called 'Lancaran Kebogiro'. I hope that pupils will trust Ms H. That this will build up into an integrated (authentic?) realisation or musical engagement with the musical event pupils witnessed on video.*

*Interestingly, Amez's attention is held, even though the grid being put up on the board. Finlay, however, returns to his seat at the close of the practical task with the verdict 'boring'.*

Amez's unusual level of interest in this lesson and his appreciation of music-making within a rich social context are discussed in the next chapter. The significant question for discussion here relates to the abstraction of one parameter of a musical expression as a basis for class learning, and what effect this has upon pupils' experience of music of the Other. The student teacher had aroused the interest of the pupils to the extent that they posed interesting and searching questions.

The teacher had drawn them gently away from day-to-day relating and towards an unfamiliar social setting. The pupils were beginning to look into the face of the Other as they quietened and engaged with the whole experience before them – the positioning of the musicians, their relationships to each other, how they learned and found their way through the performance, what implicit values and beliefs were evident.

It was not possible for the student teacher to remain in this place of quiet encounter for very long; she had planned a practical task which would enhance pupils' learning through their physical encounter with the building blocks of the Gamelan performance. The focus of the practical part of the lesson however was on the organisation of pitches, translated into a written form on the smart board. The turning away from each other to individual keyboards and the loss of the rhythmic, propulsive quality of the music meant that engagement with the holistic conception of Gamelan was lost.

The lesson raised many questions. Would it have been possible to disrupt the lesson plan and allow pupils responses to lead the learning, as they began to enter the encounter with the Other? Could the conception of a communal and holistic music-making have been taken into the practical task? What responsibility does a teacher have in this situation to handle the music of another with ethical awareness and a sense of responsibility towards the distant Other? Could these pupils have been drawn further into hearing the voice of another and perceiving the call to ethical relationship?

### 5.6.2 Lesson observation II: Practices of exclusion and early closure?

Reflective log 5:3 An exercise in alienation (after observation of an end-of-term lesson by part-time class teacher J).

*Extract from my reflective log: 26<sup>th</sup> May*

*Towards the end of the school year I was finally able to observe a lesson led by a part-time member of the music department. J has an easy, attractive manner with pupils and is a technology specialist for the Council's education department, giving her huge credibility at school. Pupils enjoy her fast-moving, confident use of the white board in whole-class musical games, for instance.*

*For this lesson J set up stations of different instruments around the room and led a whole class performance of 'Going to a party' (Montgomery). Stations of drum kit, guitars and keyboards were set up around the classroom, where pupils would perform with the backing track, then swap over as they moved around. J joined in to support the drummers with her own boogie-woogie piano accompaniment.*

*Three aspects of classroom management were striking in this lesson; the ignoring of non-compliance with rules on uniform, in contrast to Ms E who saw uniform enforcement as a route into better-behaved classes; pupil engagement where, although most pupils were happy to take part in the task, two boys remained undisturbed as they played cards on a far table; the sort of 'talk' tolerated which, although joking, revealed a level of violent intent towards the girls which I had not witnessed in other classes; 'Scott, come over here and button her!' A boy threatens to hit a girl with the drum sticks. 'What if that were a knife?' he smirks. I recognised Sidra from the PSE lessons I had observed. She was very quick to acquire a basic proficiency on all the instruments, despite no experience of playing outside of school. She is a reserved girl, who is still acquiring enough English language to be able to access the curriculum confidently, and wears a headscarf as a practising Muslim. I wondered how safe she felt in this environment.*

*In the closing minutes J decided that the class would take part in a quiz, recognising the various tracks she chose at random from an ipod she had confiscated from one of the boys in the class. The pupils divided up into two teams, boys versus girls, each sitting on a set of tables, with J at the front.*

*As the tracks followed, mostly music from the charts, it became quickly apparent who was included in and who excluded by this game. Most of the girls were shouting out answers within a few seconds of hearing the song's opening, although one or two, with Sidra, sat quietly, politely as the end of the lesson completely passed them by. The boys' table was*

*fronted by two or three who were familiar with the songs, but the majority had switched off, unable to find an access point.*

*As I stood as an observer on the sidelines I identified strongly with those for whom the end of this lesson had become an exercise in alienation. I had very little knowledge of the chart songs and found it interesting to observe that this presumed universal interest was not shared by a fair proportion of the pupils either. It caused me to reflect on the assumptions we make about the cultural outlook of pupils; on 'whose culture' we think we are engaging with; on how crushing it can be for the cultural expressions within school to be alien to pupils' own experiences and preferences, and to be presented as the expected norm; and conversely, on youth culture 'stolen' by teachers who might perhaps once have allowed pupils to share a sub-culture safe from official sanction?*

The stance of the teacher in this lesson seems to have little in common with the conception of the teacher in the writings of Levinas. There is little evidence of 'the presence of infinity breaking the closed circle of totality'. The boys playing cards were allowed to remain in their own closed-off world, untouched by the lesson instead of being brought into an encounter with the infinity of music and invited to countenance something outside of their current experience. The thinly-disguised violence suggested in the comments by boys towards girls spoke of the endemic sexual violence in the wider community which was being tolerated here instead of being unmasked, challenged and transformed. Here was a literal example of the violence Levinas refers to when he describes the totalising processes where one seeks to dominate and subjugate another, and where the Other becomes other through a dehumanising refusal to 'look into the face'. There is no vision in this lesson for the transformative functions of education.

By taking over the ipod of a pupil another act of violence occurs on behalf of the teacher. Whilst the confiscation itself could have been part of a process of 'bringing into encounter with' the infinity of the subject in the lesson, the ipod is then opened and its contents revealed, potentially an act of humiliation as the pupil's most intimate choices of listening, their mobile expression of identity, is exposed in front of the class.

The tracks on the ipod are then used to set up a class task which required closed answers, and which drew upon assumptions by the teacher that everyone listened to the charts and was familiar with the latest hits. This was clearly culturally insensitive to what turned out to be the majority of the class, or perhaps the unsafe environment with its undertow of smothered violence and unbridled lack of discipline meant that for many pupils the most effective strategy for survival was to remain quiet and unresponsive, as Sidra and many around her did.

The teacher had set the lesson firmly within her own conception of cultural relevance, and ignored the needs of a majority of pupils while making herself seem 'cool' and 'relevant' to a few. To use pupils' own listening choices as a starting point for the lesson would have allowed for her to move deeper into an encounter with one of these songs, engaging the whole class as she brought them into an encounter which engaged their aesthetic sensitivity. The shouting out of closed answers only alienated most pupils, who gave up on the lesson.

This teacher was not responsive or responsible towards those in her educational care. Neither did she seek to bring her pupils into an encounter with the Other. On the contrary many were frightened of contributing for fear of humiliation and covered at the violence boasted of in unchecked banter. This lesson represented a far point towards the opposite end of the spectrum from ethical engagement or relationship. This member of staff however tours the education authority's schools and speaks each year at the national conference for music teachers. She is highly regarded and clearly seen as delivering the music curriculum efficiently, as her IT skills are well-developed and this is seen as engaging pupils effectively.

## **Reflection**

This chapter has introduced the wider educational context within which the five pupils' perspectives on and experiences in music-making are embedded. Strands have been drawn out through the uncovering of practices and orientations at each level of the layered social reality which lies 'behind' the experience of pupils in the music classroom. Through these habitual practices, properties and powers emerge from the layers of social, or educational, reality, bringing a potential force to bear on staff and pupils, who act in response to these potential effects by either acquiescing to or by resisting these forces. I have conceptualised their responses in the light of Levinas' poles of totality and infinity, identifying totalising behaviours which 'close down' learning in the classroom, for instance, and those which 'open it up'.

This chapter has traced totalising behaviours at structural levels of national and local authority policy, sometimes the unwitting consequences of attempts towards more ethical practices. The Scottish exam board's reconceptualising of the music exams in order to be more inclusive, for instance, has led to totalising models of knowledge, as teachers shape their curricula to prepare pupils for the tick-box response to a narrow range of musical expressions, and a fresh utilitarianism has emerged, with one teacher telling me that staff

must 'push out the unnecessary' – this in a department of the 'Creative and aesthetic', the very place in which to be allowed to explore the 'unnecessary'.

Within the management of the school, oppressive practices towards non-promoted teachers, and a hierarchical rather than a supportive orientation towards the transition to the new Curriculum for Excellence, with its accompanying administrative load on subject staff, leads to another set of totalities, which have degraded the class teacher's role and alienated staff from managers. The adoption of the new curriculum brings about a further totality within the staff body at the school, as the need to simply put existing curriculum documents into 'Curriculum for Excellence speak' precludes any deeper engagement with the official attempts at national level to open up ways of learning and understanding within school. The frustration of one member of the management team was palpable as she recalled her own re-envisaging of the whole curriculum through the arts, representing the exercising of her agency, and her entering into an infinity of possibilities, in response to totalising practices within the organisation of the curriculum. She is unable to take action on this however, despite her seniority, because of the hierarchies which delineate her own area of responsibility.

In the first of my lesson observations described at section 5.6.1, the student teacher begins to open up an infinity of socially-situated music-making to the delight of the class, who are absorbed and responsive, but the perceived good practice of meeting lesson objectives, formalised with the help of pupils' planners at the school, simply does not allow for extended explorations into the infinity of music-making. Despite rich, unsolicited questions from pupils, the student teacher has no time to linger, or to divert her lesson plan in response to pupil engagement. Infinity is tantalisingly opened up, but quickly shut down again. A new totality is imposed in the class creative task, as elements are abstracted from the music-making of the Gamelan players, which run counter to the embodied rhythmic responses of the class as they listen, fracturing learning about the significance of a social act through an atomised task which highlights only pitch organisation, and involves each pupil turning their back on the others.

In the second of my class observations described at section 5.6.2, the teacher allows a set of totalities to persist during the lesson. A small group of boys make thinly veiled threats to nearby girls. Their totalising practices make the lesson an uncomfortable one for those around them, while they allowed to carry on with impunity. The teacher creates another

totality by commandeering one boy's i-pod, subjecting him to the class' critical gaze in this, the most personal expression of who he is – his choice of music to accompany him throughout his daily life – and by allowing the exclusion of those to whom these chart hits are not familiar. The discourse of 'relevance', and of using pupils' own expressions as a starting point for learning has become an excluding totality, an observation which might have implications for initiatives such as Musical Futures, popular in English music classrooms. The closed, quick answers elicited hold no possibility for drawing the peripheral pupils into an experience of learning. Cultural assumptions in the classroom close down possibilities of learning to enter into the infinity of music-making, for those left outside of the experience of the quiz. In fact, totalising practices have for some pupils allowed this classroom to become an unsafe learning environment.

The following chapter focuses upon the group of five pupil participants, and draws out themes which characterise their practices of music-making, and their encounters with the Other through making music, whilst identifying further layers of social forces which are seen to exert influence upon pupils, to which they respond in various ways through their exercise of agency. Themes from this chapter are returned to in Chapters 7 and 8 where the thinking of Levinas provides a powerful lens, through which to re-examine identified practices, in order to draw out those which point towards the development of an ethical orientation which enables pupils to look into the face of the Other in their music-making.



**Figure 5:2 Themes emerging from within structural layers**

# Chapter 6:

## Pupils' stories

---

## Introduction

The last chapter identified aspects of the wider educational context of my case study through an exploration of the perspectives of key members of staff, and through my own observations. It outlined aspects of the various educational structures and local practices which influence the school environment in which pupils experience music-making, in line with a critical realist framework, where an ethnographic study is considered within layers of structures which have the potential to exert influence upon the subjects of the ethnography, who may act to confirm or subvert these.

The present chapter focuses in on the experience of a small group of pupils drawn from my sample class during fieldwork, when I asked the question:

How does music-making function in the lives of a class of 13- and 14-year-olds?

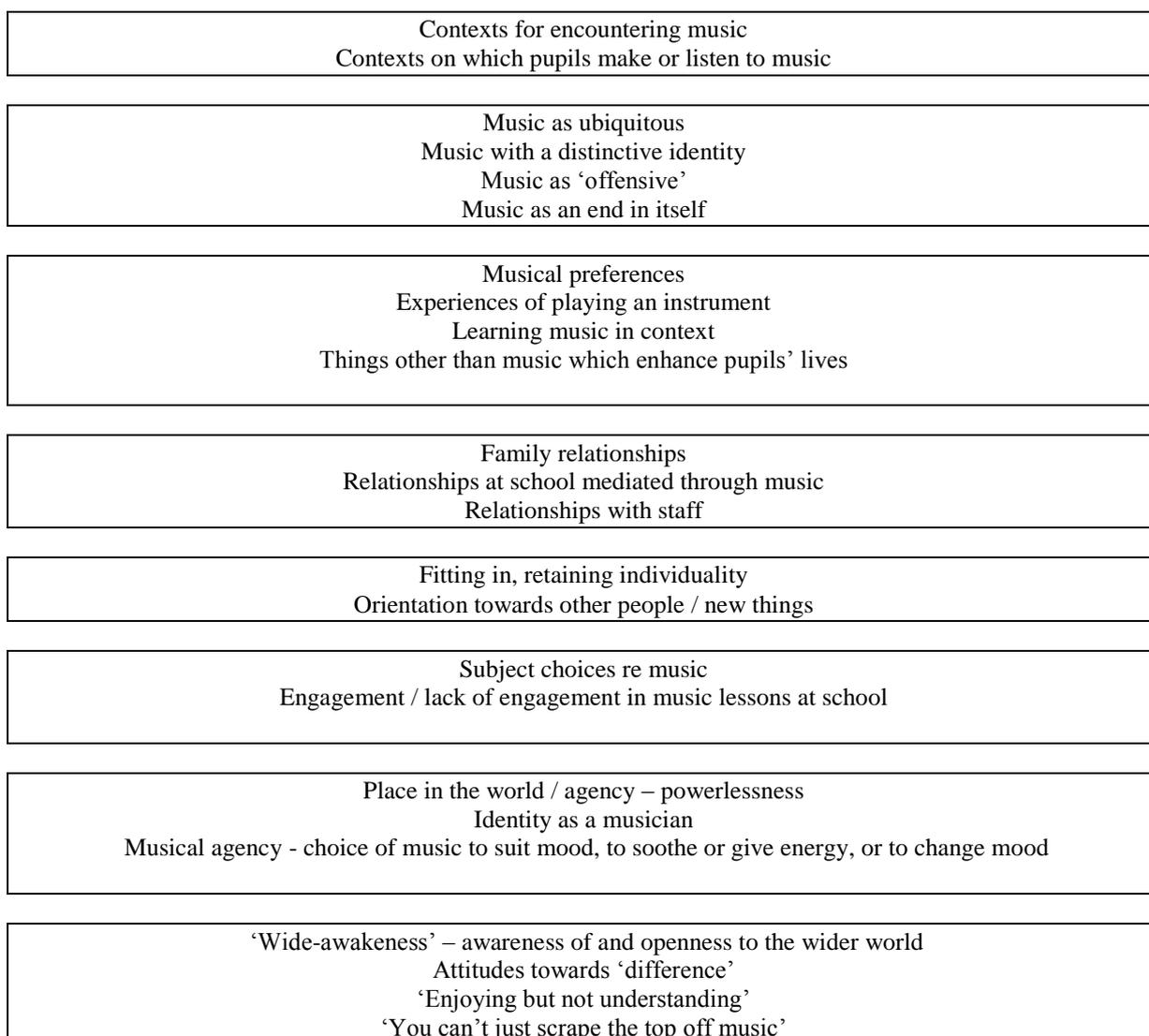
in order to address the second of my research questions:

How do pupils encounter the Other through music-making?

Chapter 4 outlines the methods used in collecting data from pupils. Questioning in semi-structured interviews focused on eliciting perspectives on pupils' music-making in and outside of school, in order to gain insight into how music functions in their lives and in particular how their music-making enables encounters with others and with the Other. Initial interviews began with the Musical Rivers (Burnard, 2000; see section 4.6.4) pupils had drawn as a starting point in the classroom, prior to interviewing. Opening questions drew out pupils' earliest experiences of music-making, often within the context of the family, and led on to music-making in school and in leisure time. Gradually questions focused on encounters with different sorts of people, with unfamiliar cultural expressions and new musical sounds.

This chapter introduces the five pupils who came to form the small group of key informants within my sample class, three of whom became co-researchers undertaking self-documentation. By the end of the academic year the three pupils who participated in self-documentation had become more practised in self-reflection and were able to appraise their processes of research and make deeper observations of their own perspectives and experiences. Interviews with this group of five pupils were set against my observations throughout the year and informed by interviews with the three key members of staff who

taught in the music department. An uneven number of interviews with members of the group reflects the rather chaotic experience of snatching time outside of main curriculum time. Sometimes short discussions took place in and around the class music lesson time, at lunch, or in the library, which clarified points of interest to me arising from a newly transcribed interview. On other occasions the full scheduled interview could take place over a longer time period. Figure 6:1 shows the initial categories of data which emerged during processes of open coding of all the five pupils' interview data. A portrait of each pupil is presented as their perspectives on how music-making functions in their lives are examined. Pseudonyms are used for each pupil to preserve anonymity. Broad themes emerge which shed light on the particular ways in which each pupil encounters the Other through music-making, and point towards 'practices of facing' which in Chapter 9 inform a developing model for ethical music education.



**Figure 6:1 Diagram of themes from coding**

## 6.1 Amy's story<sup>88</sup>

Amy did not stand out in any particular way in class music, other than for her mature attitude towards her work and towards those around her. She was prepared to talk to me from the outset of my year with her music class, and we conducted several interviews, including one alongside fellow pupil Tom. Amy was quiet during class lessons, completing her work and her practical tasks but not overtly joining in or being vociferous in discussions. Amy saw herself as more of an 'observer' in music than a 'performer', insisting that she 'had no musical talent':

### Interview box 6.1.1 Amy In-depth interview (i)

Amy

I like listening to music more than playing it. I don't think there's much connection between music in and outside of school. But I enjoy music in school. I'm not very musically talented – I don't have the concentration span. I took up violin in P6 but I had to quit because I just found it too boring. Same with the trumpet, but I did have braces at the time. I wouldn't want to take up the trumpet again – I'm just not into Classical music. I just wouldn't like to play it myself – it just doesn't capture me. I don't think I'm any good at singing – but I will sing at home or with my ipod if no one's listening. . . I love dance – I do a contemporary dance class outside of school. I like songs that are good to dance to.

She had briefly taken up the violin at primary school, and then switched to the trumpet, but neither had grabbed her interest, however she still tends to look up trumpet and violin related items on You Tube.

Amy equates learning an 'orchestral' instrument only with 'classical' music from the Western art tradition, a style of music-making she is keen to distance herself from, but her early experience of learning instruments now gives her a starting point for exploring new sounds on the web, informing her practices as a listener. Amy loves to dance and I get the sense that in dancing she experiences being caught up in a way she simply can't be with classical music, which has not 'captured' her. An interesting choice of word, this remark suggests that Amy recognises the experience of being in some way bound by an experience of music-making (through an embodied response in dance) which overwhelms in its demands and rewards.

---

<sup>88</sup> Amy's perspectives were included in an article forming an early reporting of results from this study. See Jourdan, 2012.

Amy's perspectives from interviews, discussed in the following sections, reveal two themes which characterise her music-making and her encounters with the Other: she balances a private world of exploratory listening with positioning herself in the social mainstream at school, and she identifies 'totalising' practices around her. Her perspectives offer three valuable starting points for developing 'practices of facing' which point towards ethical practice in music education: her view that while listening to music she was 'enjoying but not understanding': her conception of music's function as *language* and of music-making as an agential activity in which everyone can engage, whatever their circumstances, anywhere in the world. After transcription and open coding of her interviews I reflected back to Amy the themes I perceived there. We discussed and refined these together in the light of her responses, but my outsider's observations remain in my narrative too.

### **6.1.1 Music as a means of negotiating a sense of belonging**

Amy loves to dance, but it simply wouldn't be 'cool' for her to dance at school. This is an initial indication that belonging in the social mainstream at school is a high priority for Amy. Having dismissed herself as having any sense of identity as a 'musician', Amy reveals that she is in fact an active listener and that music plays a significant role in her life, especially in terms of negotiating the subtleties of belonging in the 'mainstream' at school. Amy can function as part of the group of mainly girls who command the central social position in her year group at school. She knows what music it's cool to listen to, is quick at keeping up with chart songs and confident in her belonging. For Amy what sort of music she listens to is an exercise of her agency.

Alongside this though she observes the coercive nature of the social force operating upon those in her wider circle as the music they listen to becomes an attribute of themselves, to be judged as belonging or not to the groupings of people considered to be powerful in the year group. She discerns the exclusive processes which ensue, quoting her friend's interest in heavy metal, acknowledging her own surprise at these preferences in one 'so girly' but at the same time commenting on the ridicule this provokes from the trend-setters, those powerful in terms of social positioning within her school year group. She comments that it isn't easy to retain one's individual preferences at school, and seems to resolve this by enjoying her status as belonging while keeping her own listening preferences alive but hidden.

Interview box 6.1.2 Amy In-depth interview (ii)

Amy In Broughton you're so influenced by everyone else and what they like that it's hard to keep your individuality. A friend of mine, she's very into heavy metal and it's really weird cos she's quite girly, I would say. But she says that in class whenever she tells some of her friends that she likes that they think she's weird. And that is quite nasty, cos it's like, there's a style of music here in Broughton that most of the girls like, so that's normal.

KJ So it's hard to have a public identity that's different from that?

Amy Exactly!

KJ And how about music from other cultures around the world?

Amy Last year – we had lots of people coming in. A Spanish woman came in and showed us some Spanish dancing. We had a lot more of that in first year I think than now.

If you go to a club in Edinburgh that type of music (world music) just wouldn't be played, which is quite bad really. Of course it should be brought into school. I think it's really good that we heard the kind of other musics from other countries. I love that kind of thing. That would be one of the reasons that I would take music in third year. That's what I really enjoy to do in music, yeah. So hopefully more of that to come.

I think it's great that children can grow up and learn about other cultures, their music and their languages, and not just to be stuck in this kind of American pop music, you know'

School should be doing that.

Amy's thoughts about music expressed during the interviews focused mainly around her friendships. Amy told me, 'I've got a friend who's into the same kind of music as me'. One observation came from her Mum, who likes to tease Amy that she and her best friend sit frequently on the sofa together in Amy's home, each listening on their individual ipods with headphones. Her Mum finds it bemusing that the girls often don't talk, just sit together and listen, usually to different songs. They do however stop from time to time to discuss what their thoughts are on what they've heard, either introducing one another to new finds, or warning the other off tracks that disappoint.

Amy, however, retains however an individual, private listening world where she explores different sorts of music on her computer, through iTunes, You Tube or similar sites, sometimes following recommendations through popularity, but often following her own nose, clicking on something that catches her eye. When in her first year a special 'cultural day' at school brought about an introduction to Spanish music she explored what she could find later in the internet. Violins or trumpets, a favourite singer or group, a mention by a friend of a chance find, these send her off into a stream of probing the net for new musical experiences.

Amy enjoys digging out new and different musical expressions, but is also keen to make clear that she wouldn't buy some of these, wouldn't want them on her ipod which

encapsulates and sets her identity, and that they wouldn't be heard in the city's clubs. She is very aware of which artists and bands are currently popular, and doesn't want to be publicly identified with anything outside of this trend. She treads a very fine line between conforming and roaming freely, but privately. My impression is that Amy places herself on the fulcrum at school – guarding her private world but socially adept and concerned to belong.

### **6.1.2 Observing 'totalising' practices around her: 'I've got my music –I don't want to listen to that!'**

Amy told me of the general attitude at school that music is not considered an important subject and that it's tempting to 'skive off' the lessons:

#### Interview box 6.1.3 Amy (iii) In-depth interview

Amy I think in English you would feel, alright I have to have this qualification if I get a job, but Music – oh, Music's nothing. I don't want to be a singer, so I won't do Music. I think that's how it's perceived anyway. I think people think that English is definitely more important, but Music, well I know a lot of people who would skive Music just 'cos they don't rate it.

And she paints a picture of the wider school experience for many of the boys: 'A lot of boys in our class just refuse to do work. Don't want to do it. 'I wanna be a footballer and what's the point . . .' Amy's own enjoyment of new musical expressions shapes her attitudes to what the primary school music curriculum should involve: 'I think it's great that children can grow up and learn about other music from other languages. And not just to be stuck in this kind of American pop kind of music.'

Her enthusiasm for different sorts of music to be taught in primary school is tempered when considering what music should be heard in high school:

#### Interview box 6.1.4 Amy (iv) In-depth interview

Amy In primary you have that forced upon you but now we're in high school we've got more freedom – there could be some pupils who really don't want to tolerate that kind of music, you know, we shouldn't listen to that. So that's why, I don't think they're going to force it upon us in an assembly or that kind of thing. I think in music class they would talk about that kind of music.

Maybe a load of pupils would be saying, 'it's a load of rubbish, I don't want to be listening to that – I've got my music' so I don't think they would, but I think it would be a great idea if they did. I would certainly be happy with that. They're into their music and that's what they like and they're not really open-minded enough . . .

Amy recognises the balance between a pupil-centred approach to the curriculum where pupils have a voice in terms of curriculum content and the need to introduce the unfamiliar,

and makes a distinction between establishing a shared whole-school culture and what is introduced in the ‘privacy’ of the music classroom. She tells me that when hearing unfamiliar musical expressions in school many (she estimated about fifty percent) of her schoolmates think, ‘It’s a load of rubbish, I don’t want to be listening to that! I’ve got my music . . .’ The choice of the word ‘forced’ is interesting as Amy describes how her and her classmates’ exposure to ‘other’ music had changed with the move from primary to secondary schools. Does this imply that Amy identifies with her classmates’ resistance to unfamiliar music? Does it convey something of the mind-set of the school in its ‘public’ dealings with its pupils? Does the school leadership not ‘dare’ to present challenging material to the pupil body? Elsewhere Amy talks with warmth of the French teacher who gives the class ‘freedom’ to choose activities, articulating her desire to have a voice in terms of curriculum choices and delivery:

Interview box 6.1.5 Amy (v) In-depth interview

Amy We have a French teacher at the moment who doesn’t impose anything on us. Obviously you have to do the work, but afterwards, it’s small things - if you want to watch a DVD or listen to music – it’s the class’ choice.

### **6.1.3 Music functions as a language: Music-making an activity for everyone**

Amy’s conception is of music functioning as language. She talks of ‘music from other languages’, ‘music in another language’ and ‘it’s a different language’, but this is language which all can somehow access and use agentially. Her perspective of music functioning in some way as language is close to Levinas’ conception of language as primarily a reaching out to the Other before anything is intended to be communicated. Amy stated insistently that music is an activity which everyone can take part in, wherever they are in the world. She comments:

Interview box 6.1.6 Amy (vi) In-depth interview

Amy I’d say it’s like any kind of person anywhere, if they want to, can make music. It’s not something that only certain people make. And music, you know it’s not a modern thing. It’s not this thing that’s suddenly happening now. And I think people forget to appreciate that.

This is at odds with her remarks which declare herself to be ‘unmusical’. Amy strongly expresses something which may be understood as a social force which exerts its influence over her; the expectation that only special, talented people can be musicians is implicit in her

own labelling of herself, a totalising gesture towards herself. Amy however has countered this through her own developed conception of music as an activity in which all can take part.

#### 6.1.4 ‘Enjoying but not understanding’

##### Interview box 6.1.7 Amy (vii) In-depth interview

Amy The music from other countries is, well I feel, extremely different from the music in this country. You hear people in other countries enjoying songs from here, but not understanding the lyrics because they’re in English.

You can enjoy the style of music but not understand it. It’s music in another language. It’s a different language. . .

KJ Is it a good thing to bring music from other cultures into the classroom?

Amy Obviously it’s different from normal music you would hear. Music in different languages

In the course of a discussion about her experience of music from other cultural settings being encountered at school, Amy describes an experience of enjoying but not understanding. She delights in the newness of the sounds and the sung language of a Spanish song she heard at school, but recognises in herself what she terms a ‘lack of understanding’. Her remarks seem to refer both to the spoken words of the foreign language and to the unfamiliar musical language – ‘music in another language’, ‘it’s a different language’.

#### Reflection

Amy observes totalising practices in those around her at school, but has succumbed to labelling herself in line with social practices which have in the past sought to keep music-making as the preserve of an elite few. Implicit in her self-denigration as ‘unmusical’ is the commonly-recounted experience of many who at primary school were subjected to local authority tests for instrumental tuition and were not considered fit for selection. Amy has had the opportunity to try out a couple of instruments at primary school, but seems to be haunted by what she perceives as a failure to continue with instrumental learning.

Conversely Amy has developed a conception of music-making which is universally inclusive and empowering. Her main activity within music-making is listening, and this provides for Amy a means of negotiating her public identity at school, while nourishing a secret, adventurous world of encountering and enjoying unfamiliar musical expressions. Moreover Amy is contented to ‘enjoy’ without needing to ‘understand’, indicating an openness to accept complexity without needing to master or assimilate. This raises several questions.

Does Amy's perceived 'lack of understanding' derive from an apparent deficit in her musical skills? Does Amy's experience involve the 'aesthetic sensitivity' or 'cultural understanding' prescribed in the curriculum policy documents?

In order to 'enjoy' Amy must have ways of approaching each new musical expression: her extensive listening has developed in her the means to remain with new sounds, suspending judgement and taking in the fresh timbres and structures in a mood of aesthetic sensitivity, or 'aesthetic knowing' as discussed in section 3.3.5 (Finney, 2002:132). Amy remains in the place of 'enjoying', just as Finney indwells the experience of a lake at sunset, yet she recognises this as an experience of 'not-understanding' rather than of 'knowing'.

Is 'aesthetic knowing' sufficiently 'open' in its description here? Finney uses this term in the context of an ongoing relationship between the lake and the one who gazes upon it: 'I become deeply interested in and committed to the lake . . . I wonder about the lake and about other lakes close by and far away in distant places' (ibid). He is 'perceptually open, able to forget [himself]', remaining in an 'inarticulate state'. This sort of 'knowing' is a dynamic process, developing and deepening yet never finished, as a relationship never exhausts the ultimately unknowable Other who overflows our attempts to 'know' them. Is Amy's experience a staging-place on the way to 'aesthetic knowing' or must we reshape the concept to allow for the 'not understanding' factor? Or is Amy engaging in 'knowing aesthetically', but isn't used to this sort of knowing being valued? Perhaps she feels that, as it isn't a variety of knowing which she can articulate in words, it doesn't bring 'understanding'.

In the light of Paul Standish's thoughts on Levinas' writings, this sort of knowing also is where one seeks the face of the Other. In the music classroom this calls for a sensitivity to listen out for the 'voice' of another both through the enjoyment of new musical sounds and textures as Amy has, and through the discerning of what is being 'expressed' in the music. This involves exercising an ethical imagination which is sensitive to context, to social significance, to the human story. This involves an orientation of openness to the infinity of the Other. There can be no early closure, no definitive capturing of meaning.

These discernments are facilitated through musical fluency and exposure to many different musical expressions which sensitise pupils to listen more deeply and to 'come to know' musically. The point of entry into such an encounter comes through the aesthetic mood, a suspension or intensification of normal time and experience. This sensitivity can bring about 'cultural understanding' in terms of an orientation of willingness to encounter the Other

through the asymmetrical relationship described by Levinas. Such understanding is however unfinished, open, provisional, elusive and fragile. The transformational quality lies in the intention within the pupil to reach out and remain open, resisting easy assimilation and mastery within the encounter.

### 6.1.5 Summary

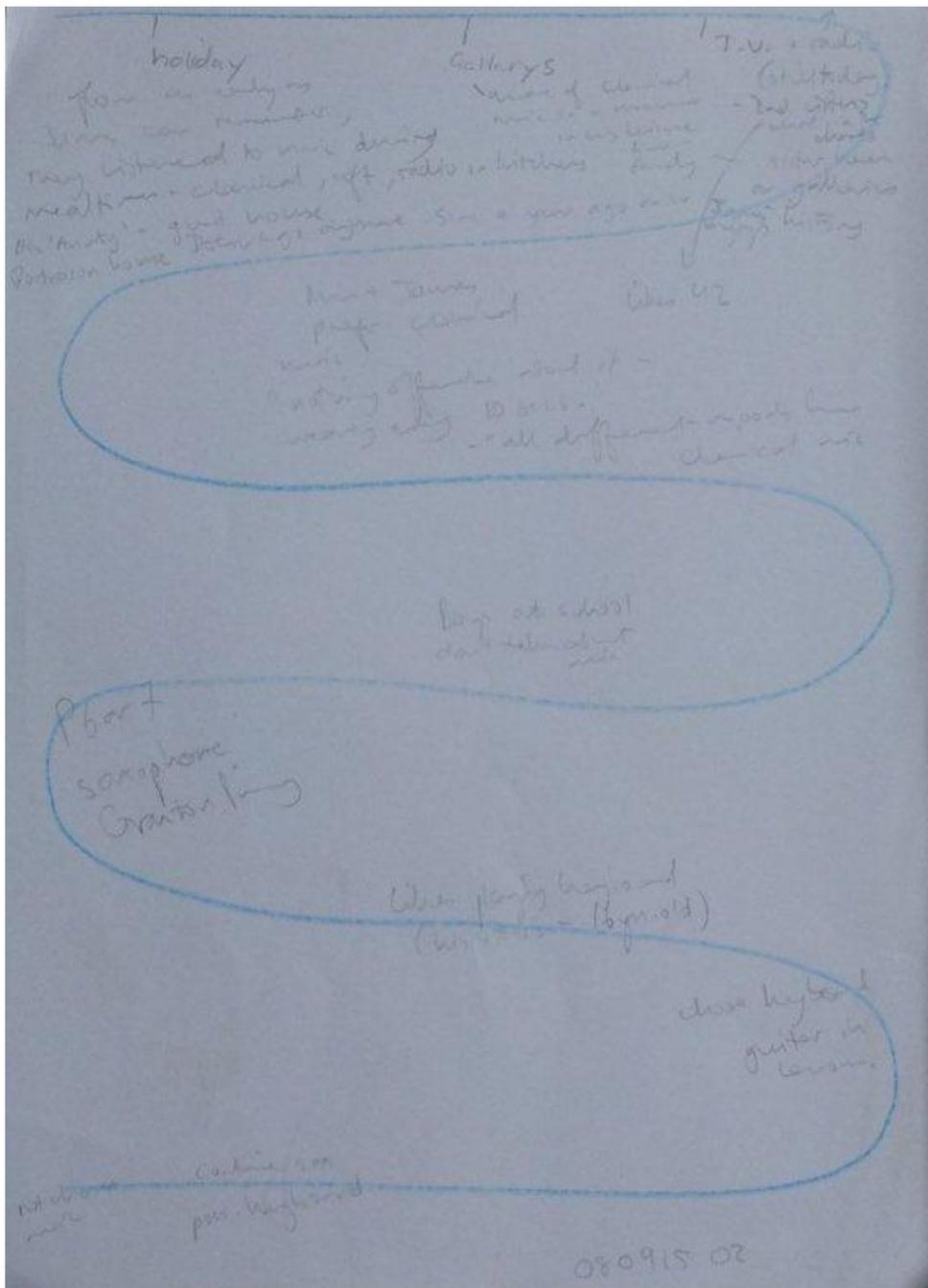
Following the above exploration of Amy’s interview data the following table summarises her practices of music-making and those of looking into the face of the Other. Amy emerges as highly skilled in her ability to negotiate public and private practices of music-making in order to maintain a high-status social positioning within her year group, but to remain open to the Other in her private world of listening. Her notion of music-making as fully-inclusive and agential, and her willingness to accept complexity without needing to assimilate what is Other, provide valuable examples to inform a discussion towards ethical practice in school music education.

<p><b>Amy’s music-making and her practices of facing</b></p>
<p>Music-making as a tool in social positioning; belonging publicly and exploring privately</p> <p>Identifies closed attitudes and totalising habits in school; ‘I’ve got my music’</p> <p>Music functions as a language; everyone everywhere can make music; exercise of agency</p> <p>Open to the Other in music-making; ‘enjoying but not understanding’</p>
<p><b>Emergent social structures acting upon Amy</b></p>
<p>Selection through testing for local authority instrumental tuition breeds an exclusive conception of music-making</p> <p>Peer group social positioning – the pressure to conform in order to align with those powerful in the year group and to publicly assent to their totalising practices</p> <p>Pupils’ collective resistance to unfamiliar music which influences which music is used in the public life of the school</p>
<p><b>Amy exercises agency to remain open to the Other</b></p>
<p>Conception of music-making as universally inclusive</p> <p>Nourishing her own practice of private, adventurous listening where she is open to the Other</p> <p>Accepts and is open to complexity, eschewing the need for easy assimilation - able to enjoy without mastering</p>

**Figure 6:2 Themes emerging from Amy’s perspectives**

## 6.2 Tom's story

Not his real name, but a pseudonym chosen himself, Tom was a shy but friendly boy who was happy to undertake the Musical River task with support from me in the form of scribing for him.



**Figure 6.2 Tom's Musical River**

It took me a while to get to know Tom. He was initially very cautious when I approached him about being interviewed and again when I suggested the idea of self-documentation. As

I got to know him I realised that this is a key characteristic, as Tom tends to weigh the risks before committing himself to new situations. Gradually I won his trust and he talked fairly openly and enthusiastically, putting himself forwards for extra interviews and embracing the self-documentation task with enjoyment, though with a self-conscious edge.

Tom had started to play the saxophone at primary school, but was too shy to play in a group at school, and had lessons after school with Ms E, the music class teacher: ‘It’s my self-confidence – I don’t think I’m that good. I think at some point I’ll muck it up and let everyone down in the band.’ I never managed to persuade him to play to me.

Tom sat on one of the two ‘boys’ tables in the music classroom, sandwiched between boys who found it difficult to stay engaged throughout the lesson, and who sometimes made Tom feel ‘uncomfortable’. At first he struck me as hard-working and happy to conform to school rules and expectations. Later I recognised his vulnerability and although he never spoke explicitly about being made to feel ‘other’, Tom returned frequently to themes of pupils in school not heeding calls for acceptance or tolerance of, for instance, pupils who were gay. Tom found it easier to have friendships with one or two of the girls in the S2 class. He remarked that it’s the girls at school who are more interested in music, and the boys don’t talk about it.

Tom’s interview data reveal three main themes which characterise his participation in music-making and his encounters with the Other: 1) An appreciation of music of the past; i) a sensitivity towards distinctive musical sound and timbre ii) A turning away from the violence inherent in contemporary lyrics and iii) a delight in the diversity and distinctive qualities of music 2) A commitment to a disciplined openness to the perspectives of others in the face of an awareness of his own vulnerability 3) A holistic conception of music-making as set in a wider context of his ‘wide-awakeness’ to the world – ‘You should not just scrape the top off music’ – where rich contextualisation resists totalising practices of abstraction and reduction.

### **6.2.1 An appreciation of music of the past**

Tom talked a great deal about his family, from his earliest memories of listening as classical music from the radio in the kitchens drifted through to the guesthouse dining room in the North of Scotland, where he would holiday with his family throughout his early and primary years, to his love for music from the forties, fostered through his closeness to his Gran, with

whose outlook on life he identified strongly; ‘I visit her quite a lot. It’s good to see her, ’cos she sort of shares the same points of view as me’. It was at his Gran’s home that Tom first discovered the music of the 1940s in Britain and America, which he has come to love.

#### Interview box 6.2.1 Tom (i) self-documentation

My Gran quite likes music, I wouldn’t say she listens to a lot of it, but I have looked through her CD drawers and she has quite a lot of music, maybe not the most recent sort of music. Some artists that I can remember are Glenn Miller from the 1940’s, Benny Goodman as well, so pretty old music players.

### **6.2.2 A sensitivity towards distinctive musical sound and timbre**

Tom enjoys musical styles from the ‘older years’ as ‘sometimes better than music now’. There were three aspects to his reasoning; the main factor was that the contemporary musical sound world that he encounters in his daily life is shaped by electronic and computer-generated sounds, whereas he values the distinctive timbres of acoustic instruments:

#### Interview box 6.2.2 Tom (ii) self-documentation

In an interview before this I said that music from the older years, quite a few decades ago, are sometimes better than the music now because . . . let’s say, a saxophone, what I play is saxophone, and a piano playing. . . and like you could say. . . When you’re listening to the music, you can’t really hear a proper instrument playing. There’s just a lot of noise, but you can’t really pick out a key instrument, say erm one of the new artists, like Jay-Z or someone. In his music which I don’t listen to a lot, you wouldn’t hear a flute or a violin, you would mainly hear noises, that’s what I would call them, noises, ’cos I wouldn’t really say they were specific . . . they’re not really a specific thing – Oh God – not a real instrument,’ cos . . . See in our music classes in school our teacher Miss E won’t say, oh we’re doing this instrument that you can hear in the more modern songs, ’cos it isn’t really an instrument.

### **6.2.3 An appreciation of diverse musical styles**

Secondly, Tom felt that ‘older’ musical styles are more diverse and distinctive, so that he could tell which country they originated from; for example, an ‘old’ American film and an ‘old’ Japanese film would be perceived as having very different sounding scores, in contrast to how he perceived contemporary film tracks which tended to iron-out cultural differences in their film scores. Thirdly, Tom saw contemporary lyrics as ‘offensive’ in their language. He told me that he sometimes prefers classical music, ‘Because they’re not swearing every ten seconds. There’s nothing offensive about it and you can get all different music in classical music’.

#### Interview box 6.2.3 Tom (iii) self-documentation

And some of the language that they use in newer, yeah, newer albums or songs, isn't exactly, well you wouldn't let your 5 year old son or daughter listen to it, I don't think. And I think I appreciate older music as well, because of those two reasons I just gived (sic) and not many people listen to it because it's almost unique, like our country's music. I'm sure I've said before like Japanese folk music, there's some really different music, there's different music everywhere – maybe different moods or different instruments. Japanese folk music would be different, in a film, would be different than an American cowboy film.

For Tom turning to the music from a past era had become a refuge from aspects of contemporary styles of music well-loved by his peers but in some ways 'offensive' to him. He felt that he identified with his Gran's values and this had led him to prefer the music of her generation instead of that of his own, from whom he felt somewhat distanced.

#### **6.2.4 A commitment to staying 'open'**

Tom's musical preferences are well-established but he articulates the importance of remaining open in judgement and respecting the perspectives of others around him;

#### Interview box 6.2.4 Tom (iv) self-documentation

That's why, when I do listen to music, that's why you have to keep an open mind on what you listen to, but in a way you just have to see from other people's points of view. I mean, I wouldn't go round saying, 'Oh, I don't like Jay-Z!' <sup>89</sup> or anybody, cos other people might like them, and that's their opinion, and you have to respect it don't you? Yeah.

This had an element of determined discipline for Tom. He acknowledged to me on a few occasions that he had 'problems' with a group of boys in his class, 'and I'm sure you know who I mean', indicating that he knew how transparent his vulnerability in the class was to observers. His response involved a deliberate 'remaining open' instead of retreating into closed perspectives. During interviews he recounted instances of pupils at school showing prejudice towards others of different colour, and mentioned the posters around school which encouraged pupils to accept those of different sexual orientations. His sensitivity to this treatment seemed to stem from his own experience of vulnerability.

---

<sup>89</sup> Jay-Z the rap artist from the Brooklyn area of the United States and now an internationally successful artist and entrepreneur.

#### Interview box 6.2.5 Tom (v) in-depth interview with Amy

Tom I think a lot of people sometimes block out differences. But most people like the exact same music and sometimes they'll wear the exact same clothes – hoodies and jogging bottoms – you know what I mean. And some people are more different. But I think lots of people sort of not want to be the same as other people but they'll fit in and they'll not be like had for being different or anything. Perhaps that's a bad thing.

KJ You were saying people 'block out differences' – are those the people who want to shut off what they like in order to follow the crowd or what did you mean by that?

Tom What you just said, and maybe by religion or the colour of your skin or anything like that as well, and the music idea and fashion.

KJ Are you meaning that people don't see those things and can see just the person?

Tom Well some people I know don't really like it so they just try and block it off and keep it away, like a prejudice type thing.

KJ So they block those people away? Tom Yeah, try to. AH People that are unchanging, that are not going to change themselves for anyone else.

Tom Not racist but, well yeah, some people can be quite . . .well, they are quite racist.

### 6.2.5 Music-making in a rich context of wide-awakeness to the world

Despite feeling in some ways violated by musical expressions of the predominant culture around him at school, Tom practises the discipline of resisting early closure and remaining open in orientation, articulating his respect for the Other as part of his rationale.

Tom's view of himself-in-the-world reveals the interplay of how he perceives structure and agency in his life;

#### Interview box 6.2.6 Tom (vi) from self-documentation mp3 recording

The way I see myself in the world is not a large part, really nothing compared to anybody, but sometimes small people can make a change.

His view of himself is a humble one, but he has the courage to face outwards, to engage with the world and see to the possibilities for transformation through the exercise of his agency. He spoke of his interest in engaging with the wider world, both historically and through current affairs, being a viewer of television news – 'I am pretty interested if it's like politics or what's been happening in the news' - and an enthusiastic gallery and museum visitor - 'It just like shows you the history of the world and what's happened'.

#### Interview box 6.2.7 Tom (vii) from self-documentation mp3 recording

KJ OK so you said you like going to galleries, what does that mean? Does that mean when you're in Edinburgh?

Tom Yes. I haven't been to the museum there recently because they're refurbishing it.

KJ Yes, would that be with school or . . .in your own leisure time. . .

Tom No, just in my own leisure time.

KJ And would you go with friends?

Tom No, just mostly family.

KJ So are your family quite keen on galleries and things?

Tom Well my sister is, I don't think my Mum's greatly interested; she likes to go to galleries though. I don't think really museums; I think it's just me and my sister mostly.

KJ And what do you like about going?

Tom I just probably like the history of everything. It just like shows you the history of the world and what's happened.

KJ So it sounds to me that you're quite interested in the world around you.

Tom Yeah, I am pretty interested if it's like politics or what's been happening in the news or...

KJ Do you read the newspaper?

Tom No, (laughs) but my Dad normally watches the news and reads the newspaper at the same time, so ...but I do watch the news sometimes.

There is a sense in which Tom is both engaged with the wider world and at the same time wishing in some ways to withdraw from it and find refuge in things of the past, illustrated through his love of forties' music, and embracing of the attitudes and outlook of his grandmother; 'We think the same about things'. Yet perhaps his close engagement with the past (certainly the post-World War II decade) somehow enables him to keep 'open' to the present (see Roger Simon citation below).

In a discussion of the 'world music' lessons Tom saw value in listening to the music of other people groups because, 'Sometimes you can get a different perspective of the country – it makes you think differently about them, and you can find out about what they've done in history'.

#### Interview box 6.2.8 Tom (viii) in-depth interview

I never really knew about the background to the Blues until we learned it a bit in history. Unless you knew that history, like Ms E said, it wouldn't really come to mind about it. I think you should not just scrape the top off music. I think you should go down into it . . . it gives you a better understanding and different views of what's happening.

Tom made this comment in a discussion with Amy following a music lesson in which the class built up to a whole class performance of 'In the mood'. An opening, listening task required pupils to categorise an extract of music, choosing from classical, folk, techno or blues. Many pupils chose 'classical' and one pupil chose 'folk'. The music teacher explained that classical music 'generally applied to orchestral music' and briefly recapped over the named periods of music history. No reference was made to the 'folk' label choice. This narrow categorising of musical styles which requires no discussion of the music's qualities invariably led to confusion and deflation in the S2 lessons I observed. Pupils didn't respond positively to these sorts of questions, as they led to a shutting down of musical engagement rather than an opening up to the infinity of the subject.

The teacher sought to give a sense of context to an example of the kinds of music known as 'The Blues', linking with the work on slavery that the year group had been doing in other areas of the school curriculum. With some information up on the whiteboard the class were quiet and attentive. They responded with interest to the links with their history learning, and the story of the slaves' experience captured them. The teacher used language which reflected the suffering and tragedy of the slaves' exploitation. The task at hand however required a swift moving on; the contextual preparation had lasted three or four minutes. The performing element of this lesson remained paramount.

### **Reflective log 6:1 Tom after observing the Blues lesson**

*My observation was that Tom, and many others in the class, would willingly and fruitfully have stayed in that place of encounter, of beginning to reach out towards the experience of others, of the Other. There was no time or space in the music curriculum for this sort of sustained engagement with an aspect of learning in music which did not find an immediately measurable outcome. As I was reminded on many occasions, the main aim of music teaching in the S2 year group is to achieve competency on two instruments as gauged by the public examination syllabus criteria and to allow all pupils access to the Standard Grade curriculum. The possibilities for ethical encounter remain unrealised, along with the opportunity for pupils to develop and enrich their own contexts for performance through encountering the voice of the Other.*

Tom's observation following the lesson on the Blues was interesting; he sought a deeper, multi-layered perspective on his learning, and found satisfaction in lateral curriculum connections he was not used to making. His comment that, 'You should not just scrape the top of music' was telling. Tom eschewed a reductionist treatment of music from other cultural expressions, and recognised an ethical need to see a rich whole instead of abstracting pieces of useful information without considering their source or their meaning for those amongst whom these expressions were formed.

### **Reflection**

Tom expresses perspectives which set him apart from his classmates and which are symptomatic of his vulnerability to being perceived as 'different' in a school setting, where this is problematic. He is acutely aware of this dynamic at school. Tom was aware of his own vulnerability - 'Some of the boys in the music class . . . it's not that I want to stay away from them . . . but they make me feel uncomfortable. I think you'll know who I mean' - but

again and again in interviewing he conveyed his ability to remain open, to stay vulnerable. In fact Tom frequently began his sentences with the observation of something he feels he has to overcome, couched in language which refuses to take a negative view of the situation.

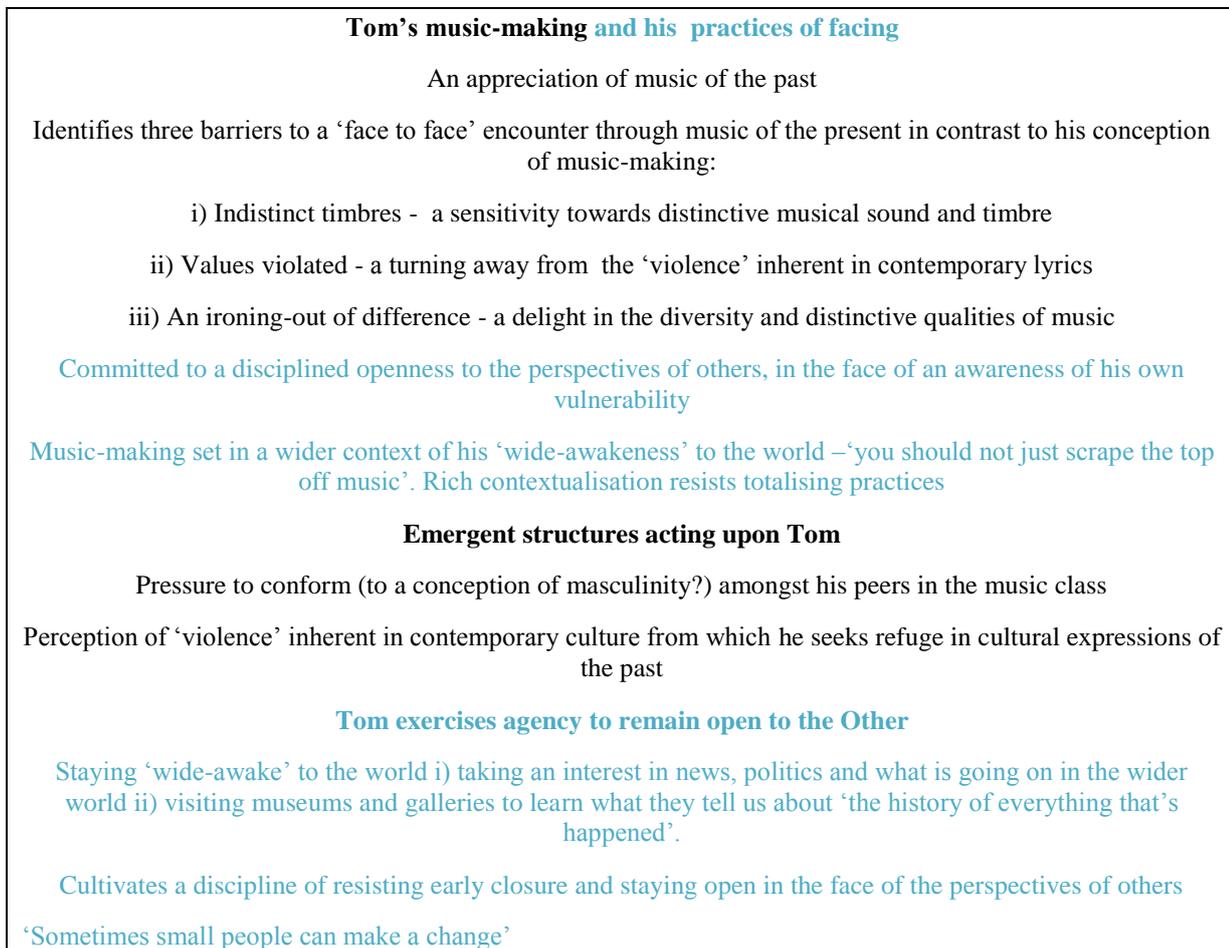
Tom's responses reflect different aspects of a violation of the face-to-face encounter. The synthesised sounds of electronic instruments set the listener a step back from the immediacy of acoustic voicing, causing a veil to further obscure the face-to-face encounter of listener and performer, already distanced by the recording process. The generic sound world in a globalised musical economy swallows up distinctively located voices, ironing out colour and cultural particularity in a totalising fashion where the distinctive voice of the Other is subsumed into a generality which denies difference and causes it to disappear. In Levinasian terms this is an act of violence, as the infinity of the Other is totalised into our 'Sameness'. Aggressive and explicit lyrics, sung in order to shock and to put the listener at a distance in an apparent brusque refusal of the ethical encounter, repulse Tom yet he remains determinedly open and refuses to condemn.

I wondered whether Tom had found a refuge of sorts in the music from the past when he found obstacles to a holistic encounter with contemporary musical expressions. He hints at the attractiveness of the values of the past (the 1940s for instance) as he listens to the big band sounds and agrees with his granny's outlook on life, which seems settled, fixed, grounded. Tom is interested in many aspects of history, and is also keen to keep abreast of contemporary political developments. Does his relation to the 'past' have a bearing upon his ability to embrace vulnerability and remain 'open' in a Levinasian sense?<sup>90</sup> Tom, helped by his unusually coherent family and intergenerational relationships, holds the present open with hope yet looks upon it critically. This informs his musical choices and his outlook upon

---

<sup>90</sup> Roger Simon has written about how the influence of Levinas' thinking bears on our attitude towards history within an educational setting, addressing: 'the problem of what it could mean to live historically, to live within an upright attentiveness to traces of those who have inhabited times and places other than one's own . . . what practices might embody a sensibility through which an encounter with the testament of another is lived within an ethics of responsibility . . . as though the lives of other people mattered'. (Simon, 2003: 46). 'Hope exists only when the present remains exposed, vulnerable. Hope becomes 'a way of naming the present's inherent incompleteness . . . functioning as a structural force . . . holding the present open and thus as being unfinished' (Benjamin, 1997, p. 10). If remembrance is to participate in 'holding the present open' not just to the possibility of existence but to its own 'inherent incompleteness' . . . remembrance enacts a transformation, it becomes a practice of unsettling the present; in particular unsettling the sufficiency of the terms on which the present recognizes the past as one of its own concerns' (ibid: 49).

music-making as he embraces the historical background and contextual particulars of those whose music is being brought into the classroom.



**Figure 6:4 Themes emerging from Tom's perspectives**

### 6.3 Amez's story

Amez was a boy who came to my attention first through his relationship with Stephen, a physically big, mature looking lad who was constantly challenging school rules, and whom Miss E often asked to remove non-uniform items of clothing. From the first few weeks of term it became apparent that Amez was torn between following Stephen's lead, creating trouble for himself at school, and adhering to the strict codes of behaviour with which he had been brought up. This was made clear first of all as I discussed the class with Miss E in the early stages of getting to know them. She told me of the 'beautiful manners and respect for elders' with which Amez had arrived at the school in his first year, and that she was frustrated by the negative influences around him. Depute Ms S told me:

#### Interview box 6.3.1 Amez (i) Deputy head in-depth interview

Amez is no angel and quite often gets in trouble, but he's very respectful to his family and the last thing he ever wants is for me to phone home . . . There's quite a big thing going on there about their education and being respectful towards teachers. He's actually a really nice boy, it's just he's very easily led.

On parents' evening I met Amez's father who, talking through an interpreter, was keen to engage in conversation about music, for which he obviously has a passion. Amez had mentioned the famous Kurdish singer from his parents' home town whom the family listened to regularly at home. Amez's father invited me to visit their family home and talk further. There were, he said, things he wanted to tell me about his thoughts on music.

With the help of the interpreter I arranged a time and made my way one Saturday afternoon to the family flat in the north of the city, in a run-down neighbourhood on a typical shared 'stair'. I was offered warm hospitality – tea, sweets and cakes from Turkey. Amez's father did most of the talking, while his wife and children sat and listened quietly, including Amez (until Amez's mother, having nodded assent throughout her husband's responses, suddenly and passionately intervened later in the interview). I understood then the strict discipline and traditional expectations of Amez from his parents, and wondered at the dissonance in terms of peer behaviour he encountered at school.

Amez's perspectives gathered through his interviews are supplemented by the themes which emerge from the extended interview with his parents. I have included his parents' perspectives in order to set Amez's experiences within a greater contextual depth. From Amez's interviews, my classroom observations and the interviews with teaching staff, three main themes emerge with two more drawn more specifically from the discussion with his

parents’: 1) Music-making as socially embedded and a means of coming to belong 2) as a mode of relating to others and of encountering the Other 3) as face-to-face encounters and embodied learning in music 4) music-making as a means of having a ‘voice’ culturally and politically and 5) as expressing suffering and the making of meaning.

### **6.3.1 Music-making as socially embedded and a means of coming to belong**

I asked Amez about what he remembers about coming from Turkey when he was five or six years old. He responded that he didn’t remember any music, and indicated that his life really started when he came to Scotland; ‘That’s when I started to play football and to listen to music’. Football songs and chants were an aspect of music-making which had had an impact on Amez, as he is a talented footballer who supports local team and has offers of places for youth teams for a couple of the Scottish Premier League sides, and were the first aspect of music-making which Amez discussed during interviews. Both football and music-making transcend national boundaries and language and both are for Amez means of negotiating social structures, of establishing his Scottish identity and his place in the social groupings of his peers at school.



**Figure 6:5 Football stadium in Sanliurfa<sup>91</sup>**

---

<sup>91</sup> (<http://www.tff.org/Default.aspx?pageId=535&kulupId=31>) accessed 13/06/2012

Urfa was renamed Şanlıurfa - which literally means Great Urfa – in 1984 by the Turkish government on account of the role the city played in the Turkish War of Independence. People generally still refer to the city as Urfa and someone from Urfa is usually still an ‘Urfalı’ rather than ‘Şanlıurfalı’.



**Figure 6:6 Local team's stadium<sup>92</sup>**

### **6.3.2 Making music as a mode of relating to others and of negotiating identity**

Amez's family had come to Scotland when he was four or five years old, living firstly in Glasgow in the Cranhill and Sighthill Housing Schemes, where Amez remembers there were always a lot of fights until after a couple of years after his family arrived, when more police resources were mobilised and the gang fighting calmed down. Sighthill was used from the late 1990s as a temporary housing location for asylum seekers, and violence towards members of the many different ethnic groups was a relatively common experience for families seeking asylum.

Amez recounted a more life-affirming experience he had when the family moved from Glasgow to the city of my site school, to live in an area to the north west of the city centre:

---

<sup>92</sup>([https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=hibs+stadium&hl=en&client=firefox-a&hs=1RV&rls=org.mozilla:enGB:official&prmd=imvns&source=lnms&tbm=isch&ei=BanYT4HZAYWh8gPV-e34Ag&sa=X&oi=mode\\_link&ct=mode&cd=2&ved=0CF0Q\\_AUoAQ&biw=1064&bih=696](https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=hibs+stadium&hl=en&client=firefox-a&hs=1RV&rls=org.mozilla:enGB:official&prmd=imvns&source=lnms&tbm=isch&ei=BanYT4HZAYWh8gPV-e34Ag&sa=X&oi=mode_link&ct=mode&cd=2&ved=0CF0Q_AUoAQ&biw=1064&bih=696)) Accessed 13/06.2012

### Interview box 6.3.2 Amez (ii) in-depth interview

When I lived in [first area of the city where Amez's family had lived] there was this African downstairs. He had lots of drums. I went there myself sometimes. He was showing me how to play drums. His brother – they were in this group with like Scottish bagpipes. The bagpipes and the drums - mixed up Scottish and African music– they sounded very good together. They recorded some songs and they're quite good.

Here was an encounter with a neighbour from another continent where music became the means through which relationship was established; in fact it was a teacher / pupil relationship as the African began to help Amez to play the drums. I wondered what effect this experience had had upon Amez as he watched an adult from another shore negotiate a fresh musical culture, but maintain his own musical voice in the encounter with the indigenous Scottish folk expressions, forming a new musical sound world in the process. I wondered what this might have taught Amez as he began his own negotiation of a new cultural setting through going to school, listening to music, playing football and a myriad other ways.

My interviews with Amez shed more light on the unusual interest he'd shown in the Gamelan lesson discussed at the end of Chapter 5. I asked him what he had taken from the lessons led by Ms H, the student teacher. He told me that he doesn't normally listen to music from other places in the world, but started to look up African drums and some Latin American music online after the lessons. 'It was interesting because you learned from other people's music . . . I learned some new stuff that I never knew'. His unusual level of engagement in this lesson grew from his experience of music-making as communal, meaningful in its expression and as a means of encounter with other people.

### Interview box 6.3.3 Amex (iii) in-depth interview

KJ You also raised an interesting question in class, about the Gamelan orchestra. You were quite interested if I remember rightly about the social setting. The chap who was the oldest - Amez Ken

KJ The guy was very respected, and if he'd had a sleep in the middle that was OK sort of thing.

Amez I know

KJ Can you say a bit more about what interested you and what you were thinking about?

Amez There was lots of people in the group and the oldest guy, the guy who played the drum – whoever was like, the most, how can I say it? . . . . The person who ken how to play the drums the best was playing and like the oldest, if he fell asleep there was a guy beside him, a guy hired just to poke him to wake up. I thought that was quite rude, but that wasnae . . .and I asked the teacher, if that wasnae rude. She say no, that's what some of them usually do.

KJ Right, so what did that make you think then?

Amez She showed us a clip – they were quite good. And she told us that they usually play for three hours or something. That’s quite a long time.

KJ And what did you think about the fact that that wasn’t rude in that cultural setting, and yet it sounded to me as if you thought that would be rude if it happened here?

Amez I thought it was rude because someone was doing something and you fell asleep, and I don’t know why they fell asleep, but ...I don’t know ...Over here if you fall asleep and someone’s doing something – someone’s talking - it would be rude. I don’t know ... He must be old and just fell asleep.

KJ And do you have older folk in your family – do you have grandmas or grandads who you can imagine falling asleep in a performance of music or something.

Amez My Grandma in Turkey, she’s quite old. She wouldnae fall asleep – she’d just be tired if it was boring.

KJ Right, yeah. And what would it be like in Turkey if it was a performance and she was nodding off. Would it be alright?

Amez I dunno – it wouldnae be alright.

### 6.3.3 Face-to-face encounters and embodied learning in music

The African drumming lesson had caught Amez’s imagination – I hadn’t seen this lesson, but Amez had apparently been captured by having a practitioner in school, telling stories about the drums, setting the musical learning within a meaningful context, by the face-to-face encounter with the visiting musician in school, who set drums before them and, as a master teaches an apprentice, allowed the pupils to learn experientially by touching and playing the drums themselves. Amez commented:

#### Interview box 6.3.4 Amez (iv) in-depth interview

We usually just sit down and the teachers tell us – they show us and we’re new to it. We only see it but we don’t play it. But it felt different ‘cos we played it this time instead of just watching. When you see it you want to like play it – you don’t know how it feels like when you play it. You either like it or you don’t. Instead of just watching it you play it. What they want you to learn is going to be easier - it’s better if you play it instead of just watching it. He told us lots of stories about the drums – so like a very special instrument in Africa, a special kind of drum. Had some special rules. You cannae step over it and it’s like a kinda special instrument in their country.

He had enjoyed the physical sensation of playing the drum and was again intrigued by the social context in which the music-making had been set. For Amez making music is something you do within a communal context, for a purpose. He had witnessed other people negotiate the social intricacies of coming into Scottish culture from another part of the world, retaining their musical voice whilst engaging in a conversation with new cultural expressions and finding a new voice through the encounter. The interview I conducted with Amez’s parents threw further light onto the backdrop to his own experiences.

### **6.3.4 Music-making as a means of having a ‘voice’ culturally and politically**

My visit to Amez’s home clarified the sorts of experiences which might have formed and set Amez’s attitudes towards encountering the Other through music-making. Amez himself exercised his own choice to listen to the chart songs familiar to his peer group, and this formed part of his Scottish identity at school, along with football and many other facets, but was undoubtedly exposed to music from his family home in Turkey.

#### Interview box 6.3.5 Amez (v) in-depth interview

KJ What was it like for you, encountering a different culture when you came to Scotland?  
Amez I never knew any songs in Turkey – I was just a little kid. I started everything in Scotland. I started my football here and I started to listen to music.  
KJ Yeah, so you can’t really remember anything before? How did the rest of your family find it, moving to Scotland?  
Amez My Mum and Dad – I think they found it hard – they had to do different stuff here from Turkey.  
KJ Do you have things that are Turkish in your household that you hold onto, that would be different from another Scottish household?  
Amez The food ... the culture ... dunno, just the food really.  
KJ And do you have a religious side to your family life- do you go to a church or a mosque or anything?  
Amez No  
KJ But you don’t listen to different music?  
Amez I’ll be honest, I don’t listen to any ... only unless my Dad and my Mum are listening to it.  
KJ Right, yeah. So what do they listen to?  
Amez There’s this guy called Ibrahim Tatlis – he’s a good artist in Turkey, a famous artist.  
KJ Is he a singer?  
Amez Yeah  
KJ Is that quite folky, or how would you describe him?  
Amez He does like slow songs and fast songs. I think he does like everything. My Dad usually listens to the slow songs and my Mum likes the faster like – it makes you want to dance to the song.

His parents expressed their commitment to the songs of their home province of Urfa, especially as exemplified by Ibrahim Tatlis, which spoke of the heartache and oppression felt by the Kurds, as well as expressing the whole range of human emotions in daily life. Music for them had to ‘say something’, and was especially powerful when it spoke of suffering and injustice. It strengthened their identity as Kurds and gave a means of articulating their life experience and their aspirations. Their view of much of the contemporary popular music in its various forms which they witnessed Amez listening to,

and which they heard on television on for example *The X Factor*, was that it was empty, meaningless because it spoke to them of ‘nothing’:

Interview box 6.3.6 Amez’s father (i) - music-making in Urfa (family interview through interpreter in family home)

I’ve been looking into these singers, these artists, and the common theme seems to be they had very difficult childhoods – they did suffer a lot in their childhood. So when these artists / singers are singing they are actually crying, they’re so full of emotion, charged with emotion. They’re singing about their life and all the pain that they’ve suffered, the emotional atmosphere.

I mean, for example when I look at X factor I don’t seem the same sort of emotion – it’s laughable in a way, but even my own mother, when she would sing to us when we were children – proper songs. For me, for music to be meaningful, there either has to be somebody who’s in love, for example, that emotion, or people who have suffered, who are trying to express their difficulty in the past. That could be a society that’s been oppressed. And then singing about that.

Here you have music that young people listen to that just destroys your brain – it’s not very interesting, it’s not emotional, you don’t take from it, you don’t give or take, whereas in my opinion for something to be useful it would have to be a heartfelt piece of music.

I’ve looked into why people from Urfa tend to be good singers.<sup>93</sup> Maybe it’s the Kurdish oppression. There’s been a lot of oppression everywhere but there’s not been as much as far as I can see as how the Kurdish people have been oppressed. When people try to explain the past, it automatically becomes a musical composition. Just as when someone dies there’d be a song about them, or if there’s someone in love, or if there’s a fight. For example when I was young there were no musical instruments at weddings for dancing; there would just be somebody singing.

Amez’s mother became very animated as she interrupted to recount the family’s experience of watching the Hollywood portrayal of the life of Scottish hero, William Wallace:

Interview box 6.3.7 Amez’s parents (family interview through interpreter in family home)

Father: We watched a film about William Wallace

Mother: And I cried about that. There was music on the film and I cried a lot about it. I felt for the community that was being portrayed in that film. Because every community needs to be free. So I did identify a lot with that.

---

<sup>93</sup> The interpreter later told me, ‘I was discussing our meeting with my mother and we decided that the musical traditions in Urfa were analogous to those of Wales - in the same way as Welsh men have beautiful voices, and Welsh choirs are renowned etc. so there is a strong musical tradition in Urfa too. Whatever caused this to happen for Wales could be why such a tradition developed in Urfa.’

Her own story as an asylum-seeking Kurd equipped her to recognise the repression of the Scottish nation portrayed in Mel Gibson's epic. The means of story-telling she was familiar with from her home region of Urfa was through music-making, and specifically song, so she noticed and responded to the musical soundtrack of the film. Her customary response to these musical stories of an outpouring of intense emotion enabled her to engage with the history of the people amongst whom she had sought refuge, in an insightful and feelingful way.

A double-paged spread in the Guardian newspaper reports on the cultural oppression of the Kurdish community within Turkey (*Arrests and violence threaten to radicalise a generation*, The Guardian 29/12/2011: 26). Since the Kurdish language was criminalised in 1980 Kurdish children have not been allowed to be educated in their own language, leading to enormous inequalities in achievement and underemployment in the Kurdish areas. The 2008 film *On the way to school* beautifully depicts the absurdity of non-communication and alienation which has resulted from this oppressive measure. The epic singers of the *dengbêj* tradition, which dates back to pre-Islamic times who in living memory used to sing through the night until the dawn, had been silenced apart from those songs the ruling party in government consider politically acceptable. A recent lessening of political pressure means there is now a *House of Dengbêj* where freer expression is allowed. One octogenarian singer, the 'nightingale of Diyarbakir' (the largest city in Turkey's southeastern Kurdish area), explains the function of the epic songs:

When a family member fell ill or was killed, and their pain was too much to bear, they started singing . . . Now you are allowed to sing about love but not about politics. But the essence of the art of *dengbêj* is supposed to express all the sorrows and the worries of the Kurdish people. (ibid: 27)

It was apparent how readily Amez's mother could identify with the Scottish people from the time of William Wallace into recent history, although it was not clear how much of Scotland's history she was familiar with. The speaking of Gaelic was outlawed, for example, and the wearing of Tartan and the playing of the Highland pipes were effectively if not officially criminalised after the battle of Culloden in 1746, just as Elizabeth I had made playing the harp in Ireland a capital offence in 1603 (McCarthy, 1999). The cultural oppression of Celtic peoples within Britain remains a gaping chasm in the history curriculum in schools in England. The Education Reform Act (Scotland) of 1872 ignored Gaelic to the extent that beatings at school for speaking Gaelic survive

within living memory to this day. Only relatively recently has Gaelic as a medium for education become officially re-established in schools. In Turkey the Kurdish language had been banned, in contravention of international treaties which guarantee the right to use one's mother tongue in education.<sup>94</sup>

### 6.3.5 Music as meaningful and 'culturally rich'

Amez's father is concerned about the lack of cultural richness he sees around him in contemporary Scottish media and in the musical expressions which his son enjoys. He doesn't express a concern for Amez to be listening to a different sort of music, or music from his homeland for instance, but rather emphasises the emotional richness and experience which he feels must underpin all musical expression:

Interview box 6.3.8 Amez's father (ii) (family interview through interpreter in family home)

I don't like the fact that the internet and TV captures young people – people are prisoners to all these things. I don't like that. Knowledge is great, but it traps children. Some people learn from life, and it's no good simply learning from theory. They haven't experienced the world. And that's what's going to happen to all the young people here – they're not going to see anything of life, it's going to be empty. Children's brains are like a tape cassette. They record everything and take in everything. I don't think they learn anything from a lot of the music they listen to. That's what I meant by 'empty'. It's not culturally rich. From my point of view, the musicians who I like to listen to all have something to say. For music to be meaningful they need to have something to say, either from their past or giving some kind of information. They say that 50% of the music has to come from within and 50% from around you, from what you're experiencing.

Amez's father expresses concerns about a lack of 'cultural richness' in the musical expressions around him in contemporary Britain which for him reflect a wider 'emptiness' whereby no strong sense of 'meaning' is conveyed. Is this a symptom of the difference in culture between a community in the Urfa area of Turkey where public expressions of intense emotion are commonplace and socially acceptable, and the traditional British (perhaps particularly Scottish) reticence and suspicion of indulgent displays? Or is Amez's father in fact identifying the legacy of relative affluence and peace which has allowed young people to grow up in Britain without an experience of political repression to the same extent as his own community in Urfa? He recognises the

---

<sup>94</sup> Recently the Turkish government overturned a ban on the use of the Kurdish language in schools (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-18410596>; <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/30/turkish-pm-erdogan-reforms>). The banning of Kurdish cultural expressions continues however, for instance the mayor of the city of Mersin has recently prohibited the playing of Kurdish music at public events such as weddings (<http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/turkey/20062014>).

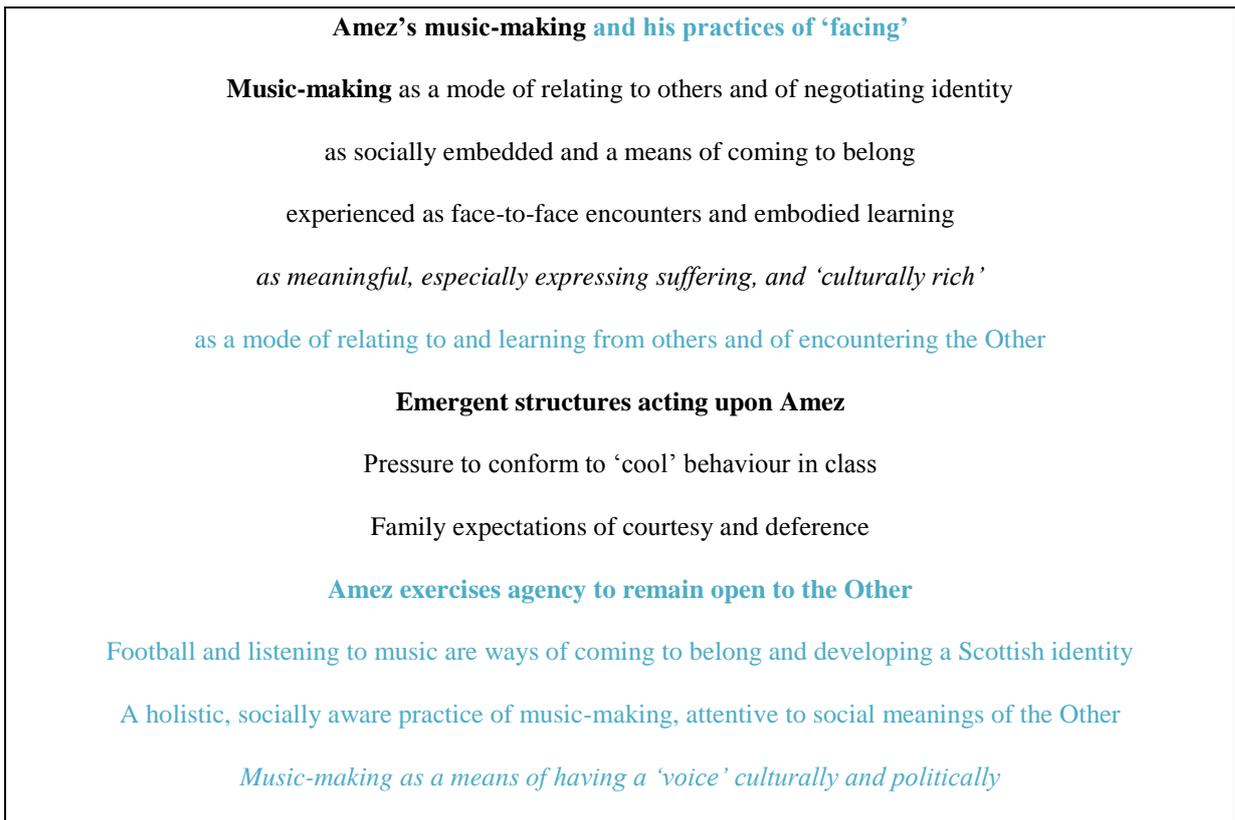
power of music-making to shape minds and to impart values, perpetuate collective memory and impart meaning. He has no understanding of the role of music purely as entertainment, something he identifies as 'empty'.

## **Reflection**

Amez finds himself caught between the culturally determined expectations of his family and the questioning of authority of his school friends and the accompanying pressure to appear 'cool' in the classroom. He tailors his behaviour to both home and school, assiduously avoiding any overlap of the two worlds where his parents might be informed of transgressions in school. He acknowledges the musical heritage which expresses so much of his family's story in Kurdish Turkey, but exercises his own agency to build a Scottish identity through a taking on of shared cultural forms such as the football songs he hears at Scottish Premier League games and listening to chart songs alongside his classmates.

His experience within his family of music as socially embedded and the chief means of expressing powerful emotions and political protest has perhaps sensitised him to the social meanings of music-making in other cultures. Amez is the pupil who notices the hierarchy of age as expressed in the structures of the Gamelan and who wants to explore the social meaning of the respected elder's actions, realising that his behaviour is understood and accommodated through engrained practices in the Javanese ensemble, rather than censored and ridiculed as it might in Western cultures.

Amez expects encounters through music-making; it is natural for him to get to know his African neighbour through learning drumming from him. He responds very positively to the face-to face, hands-on experiential learning from a practitioner visiting the school and fits easily into the role of apprentice to this master of drumming. Music-making is for Amez always set within a rich socio-cultural context and provides a mode of engagement with others and with the Other. He remains open to the Other both in personal encounter and in his attentiveness to seeing sometimes contradictory social meanings in new cultural settings.



**Figure 6:7 Themes emerging from Amez's perspectives**

## 6.4 Kirsty's story

Kirsty came to my attention early on in my year with the S2 class. She was clearly a mature and socially very able member of the class, someone who was able to exert a positive influence upon those around her and therefore shape her own learning environment to a certain extent. I observed a top set maths lesson where Kirsty 'had a laugh' with her desk partner at the beginning of the lesson, but quickly settled him down with a comment which clearly indicated it was time to get working. Likewise in class music lessons Kirsty showed an ability to motivate her classmates and had learned to support and affirm them.

I interviewed Kirsty in a small room off the main library during the weekly English period which was conducted in the library, to encourage pupils to read more widely. Kirsty talked fluently and first of all filled in some of the detail behind her 'musical river' I had previously elicited after a class music lesson. She had learned the double bass whilst at primary school, and had joined the local authority's joint primary orchestra, which she had enjoyed. Now,

though, she had given up the bass as she felt she was needing to concentrate on her academic subjects with starting the examination subjects she had chosen for Standard grades:

#### Interview box 6.4.1 Kirsty (i) exploratory interview

KJ You used to play bass at primary school, is that right?  
KM Yep. And I played bass guitar up until a couple of months ago and I stopped that cos course choices are coming up and I didn't know where that would leave me with the subjects I was taking . . .  
KJ And you're not taking music?  
KM Nope  
KJ So your bass guitar – were you having lessons?  
KM Yes I was.  
KJ And you're not going to be doing that anymore?  
KM I would like to keep doing it but it was interfering with the lessons I was hoping to take next year and me and my bass teacher had a talk about it and she said it might just be better for me to see – that I'd had a good run at it and maybe I should just stop now.  
KJ And was that because you had to go out of certain academic lessons?  
KM Yes

Kirsty explained that she wants to be a psychologist which meant taking two sciences and English at Higher level in order to go to university after school. Kirsty is very focused in her ambitions:

#### Interview box 6.4.2 Kirsty (ii) exploratory interview

I want to be like a teen therapist. Just 'cos this stage in kids' lives is really hard and stuff, with stuff at home . . . just to talk to people about that.

Teachers were not happy for her to be missing their lessons in order to have bass lessons in school and this had become the dominating factor in Kirsty's decision to give up her bass playing.

From Kirsty's interviews three main strands emerged which characterise Kirsty's music-making and her encounters with the Other: 1) Kirsty's music-making is grounded in relationship: it involved her habitual practice of empathic engagement with those around her i) nurturing, ii) giving and iii) having fun, sharing with others. 2) Kirsty's view of music-making is as i) socially situated and functional, ii) as a universal language to which all can have access iii) as primarily a process rather than a product or a work of art iv) where musical fluency and skill acquisition are primarily oriented towards their usefulness in a social context throughout life, v) learning to make music is most effective through a face to face encounter which allows for hands-on, experiential learning. 3) Kirsty's habitual practice of empathic engagement with those around her results in i) an eagerness to learn about other people's ways of living and ii) a desire to draw others into empathic behaviour

iii) a desire for a rich context for learning in music enables learning to be empathic through the arts.

### **6.4.1 Kirsty's music-making is grounded in relationship**

It's a given for Kirsty that music-making occurs in relationship with other people, either in a situation of mutual friendship or as a means of reaching out to a younger relative or to a classmate in a nurturing through a sense of shared enjoyment.

#### **i) Nurturing**

Kirsty shared with me some of her memorable experiences of recent music-making. I asked her particularly about composing and mixing:

#### **Interview box 6.4.3 Kirsty (iii) exploratory interview**

Yeah, bits and bobs from Garageband. I have a Mac laptop at home and I do a little bit on that sometimes . . . with my cousin. He's only about 7 but he picks his favourite songs. He moved to Canada last year, but before that he used to pick his favourite songs and I would mix them up a bit. A Lady Gaga song - we made it really high-pitched and squeaky and fast and he was dancing around to it! It was fun... My friend plays guitar. Sometimes we do a bit of songwriting, depending what she's doing with her guitar lessons. Her sister, they have a band and we listen to them practise.

Making mash-ups was a means of building relationship with and expressing affection towards her younger cousin. In allowing him to choose his favourite songs for Kirsty to rework she facilitated his sense of exercising his own agency whilst she directed the transforming processes to produce a new song which aimed at bringing him pleasure. On one occasion the class were playing back their 'mash-ups' on Garageband. Pupils used the computer software to take extracts from different songs by favourite bands downloaded from the internet and manipulate them using various kinds of sonic transformation. The result was akin to a new composition. Kirsty called across the class to the boy who was preparing to present his work, 'Liam, play them your ending. That's really cool!' Kirsty had already heard Liam's version as pupils shared their work in process with one another, and had identified the most striking section of his remaking of a favourite song. I was interested that Kirsty was so eager for Liam to receive praise from the class, and that she made some effort to make sure he was recognised for his work. Liam was not a close friend of Kirsty's, and was from time to time fairly disruptive to the class lessons, but he gave an impression of vulnerability rather than aggression. I was intrigued that Kirsty almost took on the role of teacher in this situation, and Liam seemed to grow in stature through her intervention and

affirmation.

## ii) Giving

Kirsty recounted the contact she made as a younger girl with the DJ's from her favourite local radio station:

### Interview box 6.4.4 Kirsty (iv) exploratory interview

I went into the [local radio] studio once when I was younger. I really liked [local radio station] and I asked B and D whether I could bring them a cake, and come into the studio, so I got to sit in on the whole show once. I must have been nine. Really nice people. It was cool - I got to have the big headphones on and talk on the radio.

This example from her childhood reveals Kirsty's outward-looking orientation from an early stage; the two DJ's provided her with the music she loved listening to, so she wanted to reach out to them in relationship and give them something of herself, something she could make for them – a cake – and which she knew would bring them pleasure.

## iii) Sharing - music as integral to activities with others

It seems that sharing her music-making with others is what comes naturally to Kirsty. The music-making which Kirsty recounted was always a means of relationship. Her musical memories were embedded in her friendships and family relationships:

### Interview box 6.4.5 Kirsty (v) in-depth interview following self-documentation

KM My friend plays guitar. Sometimes we do a bit of song-writing, depending what she's doing with her guitar lessons. Her sister, they have a band and we listen to them practise.

KM On here is some of my music from my samba class and here is music that I've mixed.

KJ On Garageband? What is the class you do?

KM It's an introduction to Brazilian music, and an exercise class. A person at my Mum's work does it. It's at the church at the West End on the corner, the big Cathedral church. It's good – really interesting.

KJ Do you do it just on your own?

KM I go with my Mum and her friend. But they've kind of given up now, because it's too hard for them. It's proper full-on. You don't stop. They don't teach you the moves or anything, you just have to follow. Hard work. Good fun though.

Some of Kirsty's favourite experiences of music, recounted during a discussion on her self-documentation, are of the sounds she dances to with her friend and both their mothers as they attend a regular dance and fitness session, with high-energy South American music.

## 6.4.2 Kirsty's conceptions of music-making

### i) As socially situated and functional

In a discussion about Kirsty's response to a local musician's visit to school she muses about the social settings for music-making:

#### Interview box 6.4.6 Kirsty (vi) in-depth interview

KJ What role did that sort of music have in the social setting? Did you learn that? With the sort of music that he was demonstrating, what setting would that be used for?

KM I think it was celebration. I think probably it was for like weddings and things like that it was played at.

KJ And did that make you reflect on the social context in which we use music?

KM Yeah, cos we kind of use it as a general thing for mostly everything; they have specific things where they use different types of music.

KJ Yes, that's interesting because it's true that we have music on almost all the time in the shops and restaurants or whatever,

KM And when you don't have music on you're singing songs in your head. Thinking about tunes and stuff.

They have certain rules and stuff when they're doing the Gamelan – you have to take your shoes off before; you're not allowed to step over the instruments; you have to go round because they believe they're connected to spirits in the sky, and if you were to step over them you'd break the connection, because it's about worshipping and stuff.

That's how they think of - the instruments are a way to talk to God and things like that in their religion. It's interesting.

Kirsty could see the social functions of music-making in other cultural settings, but felt that in contemporary British society we have a tendency to use music in an undifferentiated and ubiquitous manner so that its social meaning is disguised or even negated. Her own experience however reveals her use of music for dancing and keeping fit, for building relationships with friends and family and for learning about the cultural practices of others.

### ii) As a process

Kirsty's fondness for making mash-ups on Garageband underlines her understanding of music-making as a process rather than dominated by a finished product (see interview box 6.4.2). Inherently social, music is something you do or make together. A piece of music is living and open to change through another's reworking.

**iii) As language - universal and inclusive**

Interview box 6.4.7 Kirsty (vii) in-depth interview

Everybody has music. Like languages. You have languages to speak to other people. But not everybody speaks a certain language but everybody kind of speaks the language of music because everybody listens to music.

Kirsty sees music-making as universal, something to which all can have access and which has potential to transcend boundaries of difference. In comparing music with spoken language she grasps music's communicative power and impetus. Music is first and foremost a means of reaching out to other people.

**iv) Musical fluency and skill acquisition primarily oriented towards its usefulness in a social context throughout life.**

Kirsty values the opportunities in class music lessons to learn what she calls 'the basics' because, 'If you're ever with friends and just, if you know a bit of like piano and chords or guitar you can always . . .' For her, music is justified in the curriculum because it enables pupils to acquire basic skills which could last throughout their lifetimes. The orientation and usefulness of these skills for Kirsty is always in the service of others. Music-making is rooted in a social context, whether it takes the form of vamping at the piano or playing chords on guitar to accompany others' singing or playing a melody line, or facilitating a communal act of celebration or ritual through the performance of specially conceived sounds associated with specific social functions:

Interview box 6.4.8 Kirsty (viii) in-depth interview

It was good learning about how different cultures appreciate their music, and use some of the music for prayer and for celebrating and stuff, 'cos we just use it generally, really, to dance and then there's church music and stuff but they were using it in rituals and special music for different things – it was interesting.

KJ What were the rituals you remembered?

KM The Gamelan music was for prayer and celebration and stuff – that was good. And the African tribe were doing it for worship and things like that.

**v) Learning to make music is most effective through a face-to-face encounter allowing for hands on, experiential learning**

Kirsty enjoyed the sessions in school when a practitioner came into school to show pupils how to play an instrument from a different cultural context. She commented, 'It makes you more interested in it if you actually get to have a shot rather than just hearing about it'.

#### vi) **Music-making embraces complexity**

In a discussion about the visit of a musician who came into school to show pupils something of West African drumming Kirsty describes her experience of encountering unprecedented rhythmic complexity which challenged her to remain engaged and to embrace a disorientating experience. She appreciated that with a great deal of work it would be possible to enter more fully into this encounter:

##### Interview box 6.4.9 Kirsty (ix) in-depth interview

KM It was a totally different type of music. I don't think you could have one lesson and take it away in your head to play it automatically. I think it was something you'd really need to work at to be able to play properly.

KJ Did that leave you with things in your mind, rhythms or something, that you sort of dwelt on?

KM Well, I think we had done it for the second half of the period, because the first half of the period we had been looking at them playing the rhythms and so he played something. It was really interesting actually. It is really complicated stuff, the drums that they were playing.

He had a set of two or three drums, so they were playing different things. You know how you do the rub your stomach, pat your head thing, or the other way round? It was like that. He was doing this total different thing with one hand with one drum and something. ..And I was like, 'this is impossible!' It's the coordination they have to be able to do this.

#### **6.4.3 Kirsty's habitual practice of ethical engagement with those around her**

Talking through her self-documentation Kirsty described to me how her friends saw her in her interactions with others at school, searching for the right words:

##### Interview box 6.4.10 Kirsty (x) in-depth interview following self-documentation

KJ So how would you describe that? You've put here 'imagine' – are there any other ways of saying what it is that you're doing in that situation?

Kirsty I don't know.

KJ The word that it makes me think of is 'empathy'

Kirsty Yes, Uhuh. My friends call me that sometimes, 'Miss Empathy', because I'm always like, 'Oh no, she feels really bad!' and like 'How do you know that?' and just like, I kind of feel – cos you put yourself – and you like, Oh, I feel horrible now, like imagining that happening to me.

KJ So where does that come from? Where's the ethical sense, where your empathic sense comes from?

Kirsty I don't know. My family have always taught me to make sure that I considered other people's feelings before doing things. And then, you think about everything that's happening

in the world and then you think if everybody thought like that and done that before they made decisions maybe it wouldn't be so bad all the time.

KJ And is that your view of the world, that it's pretty bad all the time?

Kirsty Uhuh, well I don't think the world's bad. A very small minority of people in the world do bad things. But just because the press – you only ever hear about the bad things. It makes people think that the world is much worse than it is. But if it was educated to look at things like that maybe people as they get older, people who commit crimes and stuff, might think before making that action, seeking other ways to make money or that without being responsible for hurting people.

KJ Through which ways could that be taught to people do you think?

Kirsty Well maybe they could teach it in sort of RMPS classes. We're doing this thing at the moment in RMPS – racial thing. As soon as you see the effects it has on people, you tend to go 'Wait, am I starting to do that? Is this how I act towards people?' Maybe if we were to show things that people done that are similar to things that school children do, 'cos I know everybody says that school children are brutal, but it's true. Being at High school's very different from how people see it – it's a scary place. Children have no fear of what they're doing to other people. So educating people to step back and think about what they're going to do – they say it but they don't really enforce it much.

She attributes her empathic, outward orientation to the values instilled by her family as she was growing up. Kirsty is acutely aware of the 'violence' pupils experience in school from one another and has reflected upon how it arises through children's lack of connection with the consequences of their actions. Addressing this habitual behaviour is a burning issue for Kirsty and she expresses frustration that it is not pursued thoroughly enough by school leaders. Her own response to learning about racism was to question her own attitudes and behaviour in a critical act of self-examination which sought to root out anything in herself which might engender oppressive attitudes towards others.

**i) Attentiveness to others and an eagerness to learn about other people's ways of living**

Striking in Kirsty's interviews was her emphasis on the need to take time to be attentive to others, that in remaining open to other people she felt she would be able to relate to them and, bearing her long-term goal to become a psychologist or therapist, to help them. Kirsty's ability to embrace complexity goes hand in hand with her commitment to remain in a place of encounter with another.

During a discussion about how lessons in school might address the ‘violence’ of school life I asked Kirsty about her own response to lessons such as RMPS<sup>95</sup>:

Interview box 6.4.11 Kirsty (xi) in-depth interview

KJ In what way did you feel changed by learning about that sort of thing? Did you come away from that lesson seeing the world differently?

KM It gives you a better understanding of them – you can like relate to people better from different places and religions by thinking of how they do things in a different way but slightly similar to how we do things.

KJ In terms of your everyday life, do you come in contact with people who are very different from you, in that sort of sense?

KM I suppose at school generally you come into contact with people who are from different backgrounds and different cultures and stuff. I suppose if you just take the time to understand where they come from and how they, like how they live their life, you can relate to them in some way.

Are there other areas of the school curriculum that help you do that?

KM Mmm. We have RMPS which is just religious and moral education and we learn about different religions and how similar, how religious stories all kind of connect to each other. I really enjoy that lesson, ’cos especially if I want to be a psychologist, you have to be able to relate to all people with different backgrounds and stuff.

KJ Do you think your music lessons, especially those ones we were talking about with Ms H, do those have an effect on how you relate to people?

KM Mmm, I suppose different music – people use it differently. I think you could understand it if you take the time to just listen to how it was done and how they use it.

Kirsty’s experience of her RMPS lessons is of a narrative which assumes that ‘religious stories all connect to each other’ and tends towards a ‘totalising’ approach where the distinctiveness of different understandings has been lost. Although she learns about ‘people with different backgrounds’ she communicates her sense of a lack of incisive tools in these lessons for effective encounters with difference. More effective are the RMPS lessons which address questions such as racism, whose relevance in school and in wider society is immediately apparent. Here Kirsty responds in a potentially transformative manner to the challenge of the lesson material. She hasn’t previously considered music lessons as having this kind of transformative potential, but in the course of the discussion I ask her to think about how this might come about. Her approach emphasises her conception of music as

---

<sup>95</sup> ‘Religious, moral and philosophical studies’ is the Scottish label for what in England is termed ‘Religious Education’ or ‘Religious Studies’.

socially grounded in its function and of music-making as a means of encountering others. She talks of taking time to see how people make and use music differently.

### **Desire to draw others into ethical habits**

Kirsty's outlook and ethical habits motivate her to influence the attitudes and behaviour of those around her, often intervening boldly. She feels she has made a difference to how her friends treat others at school, but recognises that some young people won't change their behaviour:

#### Interview box 6.4.12 Kirsty (xii) in-depth interview

Kirsty I find myself doing . . . when I see someone about to do something, and I think about what they're about to do, and the effects it will have on the person, and I find myself saying, 'Don't do it!'

KJ You're intervening

Kirsty Like, my friends, I can see, I don't know if it's because of me, but I can see a lot of changes in how they look at things now, that I've stopped and said, 'Wait, how would you feel if that happened to you?' And then if you kind of promote them to think like that then every time they do something they stop and they go, 'Oh wait, that wouldn't be so nice to happen'. But some people never think like that.

KJ So you think you can almost educate people around you?

Kirsty Uhuh, at least I try to. It's probably the best way to get people to think about their actions towards others. I feel that especially at High School people do things without thinking. Say things and react 'cos it's a laugh and people think 'Oh we'll just do this and it will be fun!' But I don't. I think about what it would be like to have that done to yourself. And I think if everybody thought like that there wouldn't be so much bullying and things going on, 'cos you would hate for something like that to be happening to you.

Her emphasis here is on a critical self-reflection and upon individuals taking responsibility for creating a better environment at school through changing their own attitudes and behaviour. Looking into the face of the other is an acknowledgement that they are human and have the potential to be hurt by my actions, just as Levinas talks of the ethical call upon us when we countenance the Other and hear the prohibition, 'Do not kill'.

### **ii) Desire for a rich context for learning in music which enables empathic learning through the arts**

I asked Kirsty whether she could see any role for the arts in educating pupils in this direction of taking responsibility and behaving with consideration for others:

Interview box 6.4.13 Kirsty (xiii) in-depth interview

KJ I'm wondering what's the role of the arts, what's the role of music? Do they have a role in that sort of thing, do you think? Drama's one where there's been quite a lot of role play and putting yourself into someone else's shoes.

Kirsty You would think it would help, but people tend to, they get into this situation where they are someone else and they as soon as they snap out they're not in it any more. Like, you become someone else, you see what's happening and then it's just a different person to you, it's not part of you.

KJ You know when Ms E started talking about the Blues the other day?

Kirsty Yeah and slavery.

(In a louder voice) That was good – that was quite educational on how – she kind of reached on how you would feel. That was good. If she could do that with like different types of music and how they were created and why, how they feel, and then that would be good.

KJ When you say it would be 'good' in what ways do you think . . . do you think that would have an effect on people?

Kirsty Yeah, because we were doing slavery at school, and it's totally changed the way people in my class have looked at things. It's interesting.

KJ So do you think the way of presenting music from a different culture in that way, when you get more into the -

Kirsty How it was created, how they were feeling, why . . . yes, that's good, really good.

KJ Do think that would have an impact on the problem that you've identified, of the lack of empathy?

Kirsty Yes, because then you're . . . even though you weren't there at the time, you can see the pain that's been caused through different like cultures and religions and why they may act in certain ways.

KJ Do you think you can hear that in the music?

Kirsty Way, definitely you can – yes. I really like that.

KJ And were you aware of that before you did the slavery . . . ?

Kirsty Yeah, I was.

KJ You knew that the roots of Blues were in terrible suffering?

Kirsty Uhuh.

KJ So that's quite a strong way in which music could have an ethical dimension, I suppose? What do you think about our ethical responsibility in terms of listening to the music of someone else? You know, that's their music about their suffering? Have we got any responsibility towards them?

Kirsty Definitely! I don't look at it as though we're members of a country. We're member of the world and if we could understand people through different music and things like that I think countries would get on better.

Kirsty identifies the problem of learning through role play, a putting of oneself into the shoes of another in the drama lesson, but failing to carry the learning into one's experience of everyday life. The learning experience has been embodied but not internalised somehow, and is therefore not transformative.

Kirsty responded well to Ms E's presentation of slavery in the context of the roots of Blues music. Kirsty's remarks focus on the process of capturing the *feelings* of the class, specifically those of pain, which she sees as enabling pupils to relate to the historical experiences of distant others. She sees the music as in some way giving us access to the

‘voice’ of the suffering slaves, and Ms E’s techniques of setting the music within a rich context through story-telling and imaginative reflection as facilitating this encounter.

**Kirsty’s perspectives on music-making**

Embracing complexity

Hands on, experiential learning

Music integral to activities with others

Music as socially situated

Music as language, as universal, inclusive

Musical fluency and skill acquisition is primarily oriented towards its usefulness in a social context throughout life.

Her use of musical material in mashing and mixing highlights a view of music-making as concerned with process rather than product (work of art).

Kirsty’s music-making is grounded in relationship: it involved her habitual practice of empathic engagement with those around her i) nurturing ii) giving iii) having fun with others.

**Kirsty’s habits of encountering the Other**

Desire to draw others into ethical habits

Habitual practice of empathic engagement with those around her  
Eagerness to learn about other people’s ways of living

A rich context for learning in music enables learning to be empathic through the arts

**Emergent structures acting upon Kirsty**

‘Being at High school’s very different from how people see it – it’s a scary place. Children have no fear of what they’re doing to other people’.

‘My family have always taught me to make sure that I considered other people’s feelings before doing things’.

**Kirsty exercises her agency to stay open to the Other**

‘I find myself doing . . . when I see someone about to do something, and I think about what they’re about to do, and the effects it will have on the person, and I find myself saying, ‘Don’t do it!’’

**Figure 6:8 Themes emerging from Kirsty’s perspectives**

## 6.5 Finlay's story

Finlay always stood out in class music lessons at school. Continually tapping rhythms out on the desk with fingers, palms or pencils, he exuded musical ease and fluency. Ms E had mentioned him as someone I might like to interview, at the beginning of my time with the class. She told me Finlay's parents were musicians in a successful band and had moved a couple of years previously from Shetland. I was particularly interested in the family's Shetland roots, as my Master's research had been based in the main high school in Shetland and I had gained some insight into the social significance of music-making in the Islands.

Finlay was the only one of my interviewees who saw himself as a 'musician', for whom music-making was central to his daily life. From Finlay's interviews three main strands emerged which characterise Finlay's music-making and his encounters with the Other: 1) Family relationships mediated through music 2) Learning the craft of being a musician 3) Music as socially embedded and a way of encountering the world.

### 6.5.1 Becoming a musician

#### i) Finding a musical identity from within a family of musicians

Finlay has grown up within a family who make music as a way of life at home and perform publicly on a professional basis. While discussing Finlay's 'musical river' he recounted some early associations with performing:

#### Interview box 6.5.1 Finlay (i) in-depth interview

KJ Looking at the musical river you did for me a while back, your first musical memories were of your Mum and Dad's band?

Finlay Yeah

KJ And you said going to Denmark with them. Can you say anything about that?

Finlay I can't remember very much about that, but they were filming and stuff. My first steps were across the stage in Denmark. My godfather Russell said to go to my Mum and I walked across the stage.

Although possibly shrouded in family-lore it is significant that these recollections have set the tone for Finlay's childhood. His parents' successful band and their collaborations with musicians in Shetland, Scotland, England and Denmark have dominated Finlay's early years. At every stage of his development Finlay was surrounded by music-making: if he were to become part of this way of life he would have to either take on his parents' musical habits or find his own 'voice'. From personal experience as a professional musician mother of three

children I understand a little of the double-edged sword that such parentage brings: a wealth of expertise to help and encourage, but a weight of expectation, impossibly high standards to attain and judgements which are hard to contradict. A separate identity as a musician is hard-won, and there is a strong temptation to reject any sense of a musical identity.

I met Finlay's parents at the 'options' parents' evening organised by the school for parents to come in and discuss their child's subject choices for Standard Grades. As Ms E and I greeted the parents it became apparent that Finlay's father is a strong personality, dressing and carrying himself with a 'cool' musician's bearing in leather jacket and smoothed back hair. Finlay's Mum too had an air of sophistication and musical confidence as Ms E tried to draw them into a discussion about Finlay's learning in music at school.

In an extract from my reflective log I described my meeting with Finlay's parents:

Reflective log 6: 2 Finlay (after attending parents' evening)

*It's clear that Finlay's dad is a big personality and a real live wire. While talking to Finlay his dad's shadow seems to fall over the discourse. At parents' evening his Dad seemed fairly impatient with having to be there, and was not interested in talking much, but acted cool in his leathers, with Finlay's mum looking glamorous, but not saying much. There was no opportunity to engage their interest, and I realised I probably wasn't going to be able to access their music-making at home.*

*In reading reviews, listening to tracks and watching videos of their band [band name] it's clear that Paul is the face of the band and drives the performances. The style is described as Celtic Fusion and I note that they are represented by the same agency as other folk musicians I've known and worked with. The difference is firstly I think that Paul stands out much more as a front man, talking in a more show biz way to the audience. Secondly, the musical style seeks to be much more song-based than many other Shetland or Scottish bands and the song style sounds more mainstream America pop, with fiddle, banjo and guitar figuration leaning back towards traditional Scottish / Shetland. There could be said to be a certain dissonance there, a superimposition which makes me wonder at Paul's move with his family to [the city of the site school]. Talking to Finlay I get the feeling that Shetland wasn't big enough for him. The modesty, inclusivity and outward looking aspects of Shetland culture seem to be at odds with Paul's persona.*

Finlay's father seemed a dominant figure, one whose appraisal of his children's musical talents had a significant affect upon Finlay. Ms E had commented to me earlier that Finlay's younger brother was considered by Finlay's parents to be the musical 'star' of the three siblings. Both younger boys had been taught by Ms E at their feeder primary school. She was well-placed therefore to judge the merits of this opinion. Finlay had obviously accepted the family presumption to a considerable extent, telling me in interview that his little brother was 'amazingly good at the guitar'. Ms E however felt frustrated with Finlay's parents as she saw far greater potential in Finlay to develop as a performer, and admired his steady, disciplined way of working at the guitar and drums, in contrast to the rather inflated view of himself that his younger brother had acquired, which led to overblown, overly dramatic performances in the primary school setting.

Class music teacher Ms E recounted her delight at Finlay's performance in the school musical, and compared his performance with that of his younger brother:

Interview box 6.5.2 Finlay (ii) (Class music teacher, in-depth interview)

HE I just thought that his bass playing and his drum playing would be his thing. I had no idea he could act as well. Because he doesn't show off like they do. Often there's so much personality in the room ; 'Oh, you're obviously a drama guy.' But he was amazing. I said to him at the end, 'You were fabulous; I had no idea you could do that, Finlay!' And he's just like 'Thanks'. But the character on stage - he to me was the best. He was always in character, his acting was flawless, he knew his lines really, really well, the odd teeney little thing, but nothing major, and just his whole . . . he looked perfect! Everything was like, 'I can't believe it!' Finlay's that quiet. It was amazing to see him. Just brilliant. A real eye opener.

I think he suffers from inferiority to the extent that he does not put himself in the limelight; the way he thinks his brother is amazing, and his brother is not - his brother, like, yesterday at [the local] Primary school the Primary 6 class did a wee performance to the rest of the school. And Finlay, at one point, just took off - it wasn't planned, he didn't ask if he could, it wasn't part of the routine, they were singing this song, and they had very few actions but he just came out and started this walking across the front of the crowd like the line-up, didn't ask me if he could do it, going 'Hey!' to the audience. I thought, 'You little . . . !' He's a scene stealer. What an earth is that all about? It didn't make sense of the song, it wasn't asked for .

I was really pleased for Finlay to get that moment in the limelight, and I hope next year we'll get him playing more.

## ii) **Building his own identity as a musician**

I asked Finlay how he had begun to be interested in music:

### Interview box 6.5.3 Finlay (iii) in-depth interview

Finlay It was really my Dad listening to music non-stop. And he worked at home. Whenever he was at home he had music going – AC DC and stuff like that.

KJ And did the band reflect that sort of . . .

Finlay No. My Dad does, 'cos he's mental. If you see like a guitar player in AC DC jumping about the stage and stuff, my Dad does all that.

Finlay's younger brother has assumed some of the characteristics of his father, strutting across the stage in rock-guitarist style, but Finlay has shunned the extrovert musical persona and turned his mind to learning the craft of making music. Ironically Finlay is learning to play within the hard rock style which his father listened to and admired but which he hadn't developed, fronting instead a Celtic fusion band. I wonder whether Finlay might challenge his father eventually by achieving what his dad would have liked for himself.

Finlay's first experience of playing with others outside of the family came when he joined the Samba band at his primary school on Shetland:

### Interview box 6.5.4 Finlay (iv) in-depth interview

KJ Was that when you started getting serious on drums?

Finlay That's when I first started wanting to play the drums. 'Cos my Dad said I had good rhythm, and so did my teacher. We all got selected. We had a test, like a rhythm test. There were three people in my class who got 100% so we all got selected.

KJ So you got the chance then. And did you play in concerts and things?

Finlay Yes.

KJ You put down, 'Playing the first concert with Samba band'; was that at Bell's Brae?

Finlay No, at the school music festival when we got like in the paper, saying we were amazing. We got a standing ovation.

Finlay experienced his Dad's and his teacher's affirmation, which shaped his conception of himself as having 'good rhythm'. The typically enthusiastic and celebratory tone of the Shetland Times newspaper reporting and the local community's response at the concert also bolstered his confidence at this early stage.

## **Learning his craft as a musician**

Finlay is constantly listening to music, finding new material through the recommendations of others, and refining his own taste, finding where he might fit as a musician.

Interview box 6.5.5 Finlay (v)in-depth interview

Finlay On my ipod. When I'm walking to school, I listen to my ipod. When I'm walking home from school I listen to my ipod.

KJ Do you change what you've got on your ipod frequently? How do you put stuff on it?

Finlay I buy it off iTunes, whatever I hear.

KJ And do you hear it on the radio?

Finlay When I went to Shetland my mate's big brother was listening to some good music, so I went and got that. When I meet people if they have a new song they show me it and I get it.

KJ And is this one sort of music, or all different styles of music?

Finlay All different styles of music.

Can you describe some of the different sorts of music that you listen to?

Finlay All music apart from heavy metal.

KJ Would that include folk?

Finlay Er..no. Classical, folk and heavy metal.

KJ Jazz?

Finlay Not really. Mostly rock. Half and half rock and pop.

KJ Would you listen to any chart stuff?

Finlay Not really. Well, I'd listen to it, but it's not really stuff that I'd put on my ipod.

KJ Can you tell me some bands you have on your ipod?

Finlay I've got so many. I've got like dance music and then some Jet and Wolfmother and stuff like that. If anyone asks me what sort of music I enjoy I say, 'Big music!' If I like it, I'll listen to it – doesn't matter what it is. Probably if my Dad showed me a really, really good folk song I'd listen to it! Even if it's just once.

KJ Were you brought up listening to folk music and jazz?

Finlay No

KJ So when your Dad listens is it this sort of rock music – is he a connoisseur rock listener?

Finlay Yes, but sometimes he's got like bluegrass. He's in a bluegrass band.

KJ And what do you think of that sort of stuff?

Finlay Rubbish! I hate bluegrass.

KJ And do you think you'd be tempted to listen to more different sorts of music?

Finlay No!

KJ Are you quite set in what you like?

Finlay Yeah.

Although Finlay seems to have positioned himself in the family's musical hierarchy in accordance with his father's judgement, he is finding his own musical 'voice', choosing not to follow the same sort of folk-fusion style of his parents, but listening to bands who are much more rooted in rock styles and moving away from the Shetland roots of his parents' musical voices. He has developed a strong sense of his own aesthetic – he likes 'big music', music which has a great deal to say and which makes a huge impression on the listener. Finlay thinks of himself as an eclectic listener within the rock and pop genres, as he voraciously casts around for new music to get to know. His seeking out of where he fits as a

musician leads him to a position of seeming to be closed to other areas of music-making. As we shall see below, this isn't the whole story.

Finlay works hard in music lessons at school, clearly wanting to hone his skills through learning by aurally working out bass guitar lines under songs, and practising new drum patterns until they became polished. There was a tangible sense in the classroom that here was an emergent musician who had already begun to acquire the discipline and analytical skills to teach himself. He saw the class music lessons as a space to try things out. Ms E created that space for him, allowing him to work freely in the direction he chose:

Interview box 6.5.6 Finlay (vi) in-depth interview

Miss E, when I'm on my bass she'll let me listen to my ipod and see if I can work out the tunes, and I learnt 'Don't stop believing' today. That's kind of a laugh.

Finlay has a band with friends from his primary school, but he doesn't think it's very good, judging with the standards set from his experience at home:

Interview box 6.5.7 Finlay (vii) exploratory interview

KJ Tell me about your band.  
Finlay It's pretty rubbish.  
KJ Why do you say that?  
Finlay 'Cos there are two guys who make up all the songs and stuff and I'm the drummer, and all the songs sound the same.  
KJ Who are the other lads? Are they your age?  
Finlay Yeah.  
KJ So, are you not going to sack them and say you'll make the songs?  
Finlay No, 'cos I can't do them.  
KJ So they make up the songs?  
Finlay Pretty much. We play other people's songs too.  
The better stuff that I do is mostly with my little brother, who is amazingly good at the guitar. I play drums and he plays guitar and sings.  
  
KJ So you've got a mini band there.  
Finlay Yeah, that's better than the other one we have.  
KJ How often do you work with your brother?  
Finlay Every night.  
KJ How long each night?  
Finlay I don't know. Sometimes we sit there for ages

More musically satisfying for Finlay is the practice he does with his brother every evening after school. This provides the setting for Finlay to be able to try things out, to learn by ear, making arrangements of songs and composing his own.

## 6.5.1 Learning from others in music-making together

### i) In a classroom partnership

Finlay had developed an effective working partnership in the music class with Matt, a quiet, conscientious boy, and the two quickly settled into practical tasks with concentration and application. An example is documented in my observational field notes for 4<sup>th</sup> November:

#### Observational field notes 6:1 (after observing Halloween Garageband lesson)

*The class is allowed to get on with their paired working on Halloween pieces using 'Garage band' soft-wear. Most are down to work very quickly – they like this task, and are well-motivated. Scott and Tom are finding it hard to get off the starting blocks – they're still listening to all the tracks and not managing to get on with decision-making.*

*Matt and Finlay, however are intently working on their piece, having already got a long way last time. Finlay has control of the mouse, but Matt is fully engaged in the process. Their conversation is utterly focused on the task.*

*'Try this'*

*'Wait, I've got an idea!' 'Hold on, wait, run with it!' (Finlay)*

*He restructures a section of loops they've chosen, building up two or three layers of rhythm under the main sound effect. They really engage with the structuring of their work, experimenting and finding something satisfying.*

*'That sounds good'*

*'That's really scary!'*

*I'm interested to see that at one stage, when Finlay hears a new loop, he immediately sings it back, repeating it over and over again, with a good feel for the style of the clip. He seems to assimilate rhythms very quickly.*

My reflective log records my thoughts immediately after the observation:

#### Reflective log 6:3 Finlay and Matt (after observing Halloween lesson)

*The Halloween piece is an example of encountering the immediate Other in the sense that pupils work in a friendship pair; Finlay and Matt related in a focused, effective and highly cooperative way, Matt allowing space for Finlay's ideas, having the patience to wait for him to produce the outcome before evaluating. Finlay was open to Matt's comments, and although dominant he didn't crush Matt's ideas or evaluations. This was an impressive working partnership. I'd like to see this in action on performing instruments too.*

I asked Finlay in a subsequent interview about how he works alongside Matt. This learning from each other characterises Finlay's working relationship with his younger brother too. Interestingly though Finlay isn't friends with Matt outside of school:

#### Interview box 6.5.8 Finlay (viii) (in-depth interview after Halloween lesson)

KJ Were you sort of leading the way with Matt, were you helping him along, or..?  
Finlay Kinda, yeah. He can teach me stuff and I can teach him stuff.

KJ So, the two of you play together in the lessons, but you don't play outside school?  
 Finlay No, not really. He lives like in [less affluent area and I live in [more affluent area] and it's ages away.  
 KJ So you don't see much of him outside school.  
 Finlay Not really.  
 Do you see other people from school, outside of school?  
 Finlay Er .. Yeah. But I've got like friends that go to [Catholic school in the city], friends that go to [middle-class dominated city primary school], friends that go to [city private school] and those other schools, so . . .  
 KJ And have you met most of those from [Finlay's] Primary?  
 Finlay Yeah but some of those I've met through skateboarding.  
 KJ Where do you go skateboarding?  
 Finlay Transgression at Ocean Terminal. Two people that I mostly hang out with I met there – they both go to [middle-class dominated city primary school]. One of them stays round the corner from me, and I meet up with them.

Far from being 'ages away' Matt's home is only a few minutes away from Finlay's. Finlay happily recounts the friends he does see outside of school. The estate where Matt lives is on the other side of the social divide from Finlay's home in the more affluent area of the site school's catchment. Even though the boys work so well together Finlay doesn't want to socialise with Matt or play in a band with him, it seems. The out-of-school friends Finlay mentions all go to more middle class schools on the south side of the city.

**ii) Practising with his younger brother**

Finlay practises for many hours on a daily basis with his brother who is two years younger than him. He respects his musicianship, at least partly as a result of his dad's high opinion of Finlay, but when the music-making finishes the normal patterns of sibling behaviour resume:

Interview box 6.5.9 Finlay (ix) in-depth interview

Finlay As soon as he comes up [to high school] he can be in whatever band we have.  
 KJ You get on well with him?  
 Finlay Not really, but . . . whenever we're playing any music then it's fine.  
 KJ You respect him as a musician?  
 Finlay But when we stop he's a bit annoying.

Finlay can work very effectively with his brother while making music, but doesn't really get along with him well at other times. He has a mature, almost professional attitude to the discipline of rehearsing; I wonder whether this has been picked up from observing his parents:

Interview box 6.5.10 Finlay (x) in-depth interview

KJ Do you write songs?  
 Finlay I try. On my drums I make up beats and my brother's quite good at making up songs. But he takes influence from my dad, so it's quite good.

KJ So meeting new people, that brings new musical ideas then? Do you then try different musical ideas that you've come across with your brother?  
Finlay Yeah. Or like old songs that I've not heard for ages, and somebody shows to me, and I'll go right, we're learning this song.

### iii) From his older brother and his friends

Finlay has learnt from his older brother who now works as a DJ, further developing his own sense of an aesthetic:

#### Interview box 6.5.11 Finlay (xi) in-depth interview

KJ So you're developing a quite sophisticated awareness of what works and what doesn't . . .  
Finlay Yeah, because 'cos when my brother's DJ-ing he picks out two songs that go together really, really well, so I just look about and see what works really well.

### 6.5.3 Encountering the new and the unfamiliar

Finlay has developed the capacity to learn quickly from musical material he encounters through his own listening or the recommendations of others, but is insistent that he only likes music within the rock and pop genres. He is clear that he wants to avoid the musical styles of his mother and father, and has quite a sophisticated conception of what his own style entails.

On further questioning however it becomes apparent that he does take aspects from other sorts of music and weaves them into his own music-making. In this extract from one interview I ask him about the student teacher's 'world music' lessons:

#### Interview box 6.5.12 Finlay (xii) in-depth interview

KJ What did you think when you learnt about music from elsewhere in the world that you were doing with Ms H?  
Finlay I kinda like making up the beats on the table.  
KJ Did you find that interesting? Were there ideas you could use at all in your band?  
Finlay Not really.  
KJ What were the other things she did apart from the music from Java? Did she do some West African music with you?  
Finlay Yes, that was with drum beats.  
KJ Did she do a whole class activity with that?  
Finlay Yes.  
KJ Were there rhythms in that you would experiment with on the kit?

Finlay Oh, the only thing that I've heard from any of that stuff is from the Java thing – there's a song by MGMT . . . I can't remember whether it was from Java or not, but there was like a scale of musical notes, and I was thinking that is the exact song . . .

KJ So could you imagine taking something from a lesson on West African music or from Java, and try it out on the drums?

Finlay Yeah, I think I've done that before. I can't remember where it was from, but I think it was in music class there was like a good beat. I'd known that my little brother had been twiddling away on his guitar and I thought that would go well with it.

KJ And did it work?

Finlay Yeah.

Finlay is keen at first to give the impression that he doesn't find the Gamelan lesson interesting (his muttered verdict was 'Boring!' at the time) but on reflection and when pushed a little in questioning he remembers that there was in fact a fragment of melody which captured his imagination. He immediately linked it with an extract of a song by the group MGMT and it lodged in his mind. He recalls having previously taking away a rhythm ('a good beat') from the class lesson to try out as an accompaniment to a fragment of guitar line he'd remembered his brother was developing, realising in class that this rhythm would fit well with his brother's playing, and finding that this was in fact a successful juxtaposition. Finlay's apparent lack of openness to other musical genres (such as folk, jazz or the hated bluegrass of his dad's) seems instead to be merely a form of posturing, of looking 'cool'. I understood it as part of the process of forming his own identity as a musician, independently from his parents' sound world and of finding a place socially at school whilst taking himself seriously as a developing musician.

#### **6.5.4 Music-making rich in shared social meaning**

Finlay's Shetland roots mean that every January he returns on the last Tuesday of the month to take part in the annual Viking fire festival 'Up Helly Aa'.<sup>96</sup> This year his father, Finlay and his brothers had all taken part as members of the Jarl Squad, a high honour. I asked Finlay afterwards about the experience:

---

<sup>96</sup> See Callum Brown's 1998 book, 'Up-Helly-Aa: Custom, culture and community in Shetland'.

Interview box 6.5.13 Finlay (xiii) in-depth interview

KJ What happened at Up Helly Aa last week? There must have been lots of music going on?

Finlay Yeah, we had like an act, our squad, the Jarl Squad, and we had to come in and sing that by ourselves. There are two Up Helly Aa songs – the Up Helly Aa song and the Galley song.

KJ You said you were a fiddle case carrier?

Finlay Yeah, but we don't actually carry fiddle boxes any more. It's the name they give the young people in the squad. I've had to carry my Dad's guitar a bit and stuff like that. But this year he didn't have any for us. My Dad was in the Jarl Squad so he gets a year off from playing.

There are other squads and they go round the halls but we go backwards. So we got to see their acts. There's usually dancing to music.

This annual celebration draws together the whole community in Lerwick (and around Shetland in other local celebrations). Young people are accommodated through the 'fiddle case carrying' which started out as a literal role, but now remains simply as a label. The communal songs are known by heart by all those taking part and these encapsulate the process of community-building that occur during the celebrations. The ritual of playing, singing, dancing and acting in each venue throughout the night means that the whole community shares in the Jarl Squad's performances. The rituals are closely associated with the locality and the music played is rooted in the places the musicians inhabit.

Finlay has turned his back for the moment upon the local musical tradition of the Shetland Islands, although he still loves going back and being part of the communal celebrations. He doesn't enjoy the fiddle music or the traditional influences in his parents' band and would listen to a traditional tune only under sufferance. His conception of what music-making is, however, has been shaped by Shetland's unusually embedded shared social practice of music-making, one deeply rooted in the local landscapes and traditions and held in high esteem by the local community.

### **6.5.5 Music as a means of encountering the world**

Finlay has witnessed his parents gaining access to all kinds of places and people through their music-making, just as many successful Shetland musicians travel widely to play. Music-making is regarded as a high-status occupation in the Islands and an effective way of seeing the world, something deeply rooted in Shetlanders' heritage as so many sailed away from the Islands to work, to explore or to settle.

### Finlay's music-making and his practices of 'facing'

#### Becoming a musician

- i) Finding a musical identity from within a family of musicians
- ii) Building his own identity as a musician
- iii) Learning his craft as a musician

#### Learning from others in music-making together

- i) In a classroom partnership
- ii) Practising with his younger brother
- iii) From his older brother and his friends

#### Encountering the new and the unfamiliar

#### Music-making

- i) rich in shared social meaning
- ii) as a means of encountering the world

Finlay presents as only interested in what he knows he likes, but in practice he learns from those around him and incorporates new ideas from surprising places into his own music-making.

### Structures acting upon Finlay

Outside of school time he abides by the school's apparent social divisions, but in lessons he has developed an unusually effective working relationship with someone who is perceived to be from the other side of the divide

Family circumstance exerts a huge influence upon Finlay in terms of his music-making. He has been brought up with music-making going on around him all the time, and is subject to seemingly irrefutable judgements as to who is more talented in the family.

### Finlay exercises his agency

In order to build an identity as a musician distinct from his parents

Despite his posturing Finlay remains open to new ideas which he will immediately explore and learn from in his music-making.

**Figure 6:9 Themes emerging from Finlay's perspectives**

## Reflection

This chapter has introduced the five pupils who formed the small group of participants within my chosen class during fieldwork. I have told the 'story' of each one and drawn out themes which characterise their perspectives on music-making and their experiences of encountering the Other through music-making. The accounts vary in length and depth, according to how easy it was to secure repeated interview times with each pupil, in terms of absence or changes to school schedules for instance, how comfortable each person was talking to me and the extent to which each engaged with the processes of self-documentation. The pupils' perspectives selected for inclusion in this narrative are taken from a series of interviews with each, and in Tom's case from some of the voice recordings he made during the self-documentation phase. Themes drawn from these have been

considered too in the light of informal interactions in and outside of their formal music lessons too, as relationships had become established and as I began to build up a picture of each pupil from my own observations. Perspectives on music-making and pupils' experiences of encountering the Other have been drawn out and summarised in table form at the end of each section.

The following two chapters form an exploration of these emerging themes; firstly pupils' perspectives on music-making as an encounter with the Other, and then their experiences of music-making as the exercise of agency, are investigated further through the lens of Levinas' thinking. In Chapter 7 the philosophical tools developed through Chapter 3 are brought to bear upon pupils' perspectives, and further strands are identified from this process, whilst in Chapter 8 pupils' experiences are contextualised once more in the wider setting of school, authority and national educational policy (as set out in Chapter 5) to examine how music-making becomes agential for these pupils. Beginning to come into focus are pupils' 'practices of facing', examples of an outward-turned, openness to the Other, which provide the basis for a setting-out in the final chapter of what ethical practices might look like in music classrooms elsewhere.

## Chapter 7:

Discussion of strands - Conceptions  
of and perspectives on music-making  
as an encounter with the Other

---

## Introduction

Chapter 6 presented five cases of pupils from a second-year music class who were interviewed and observed over an entire school year, setting out their perspectives upon encountering the Other through music-making in their daily lives, in order to investigate the second of my research questions:

How do pupils encounter the Other through music-making?

Their conceptions of music-making, their attitudes towards difference and the exercising of individuals' agency were drawn out as threads which now form the basis for a wider discussion in the present chapter. Here, Levinas' thinking provides a lens through which to examine these strands of experience in order to ascertain what insights these might provide in terms of developing ethical practice in school music education, addressing the third of my research questions:

What might characterise ethical music education?

A series of questions, posed throughout the chapter as reflection upon the strands emerging from pupils' perspectives, generates new theoretical conceptions of music-making and aesthetic encounter in the light of a Levinasian ethical orientation.

Chapter 3 explored Levinas' writings, particularly his two most influential works, *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being*, drawing out two central insights. Firstly, the primacy of the act of 'looking into the face of the Other' which goes before any attempts to understand or make sense of the world, in which an 'ethical call' is perceived in the face of the Other. Secondly, the spectrum between *Totality* and *Infinity* which represents the possibilities of a closed, totalising view of the Other at one end and at the other an infinite openness to the Other. These act as tools in the following discussion of Chapter 7's findings, opening pupils' perspectives up to a wider discussion which begins to consider how they might inform present practice in the music classroom.

I discuss four main strands, which I draw from pupils' perspectives, then develop further through a Levinasian outlook: *Music-making as language*, *Music-making as complex and rich in context*, *The infinity of musical knowing*, and *Music as an end in itself*. At the end of each discussion I pose a 'what if...?' question, intending to open up possibilities for fresh understandings of practice in the music classroom, and pointing forwards to the final chapter which sets out an ethical basis for music education in the light of Levinas.

## 7.1. Music-making as language

Amy and Kirsty share a view of music-making as operating as if it were a language, both open to all and at the same time retaining difference.<sup>97</sup> Amy talks of music-making as having distinctive qualities which reflect the diversity of communities around the globe, ensuring that different musical traditions are ‘in a different language’. Yet she conceives of music-making as an activity open to everyone to participate in, regardless of where they are in the world, and she highlights the agential aspects of making music. Music-making as she understands it is universal and empowering, yet distinctly different in its individual manifestations. It is both inclusive of all and yet hard to comprehend from an outsider’s perspective. Her own response has been to actively seek out unfamiliar music to listen to, learning to ‘enjoy without understanding’, developing an openness which allows her to resist early closure, to welcome new sounds and to spend time enjoying them.

Kirsty too talks of the universality of music, but highlights the primary purpose of language in a manner consonant with Levinas:

Everybody has music. Like languages. You have languages to speak to other people. But not everybody speaks a certain language but everybody kind of speaks the language of music because everybody listens to music.

Her comment ‘You have languages to speak to other people’ resonates with Levinas’ thinking: language is first of all a reaching out to the Other - before any intention of communicating meaning, language is first an ‘offering’, a turning outwards towards the world and a reaching out to encounter others. Levinas writes, ‘The ‘vision’ of the face is inseparable from this offering language is’ (Levinas, 1969: 174).<sup>98</sup> For him the act of looking into the face of another is born of the same impetus to reach out that motivates the act of speaking, of using language:

Language does not exteriorize a representation pre-existing in me: it puts in common a world hitherto mine. It is a first action over and above labor, even though, as incarnate thought, it inserts us into the world, with the risks and hazards of all action. At each instant it exceeds this labor by the generosity of the offer it forthwith makes of this very labor. The analyses of

---

<sup>97</sup> I was reluctant to develop this strand from Amy and Kirsty’s interviews, as the notion of ‘music as (a) language’ constitutes a conceptual minefield, having become a hackneyed expression, frequently voicing unexamined, universalist notions. Setting aside my discomfort, I sought to explore their perspectives with the question, ‘in what ways might music be understood as a language?’ rather than ‘should music be conceived of as a language?’ and found that Levinas’ perspectives provided rich conceptual resources. Hence my extended discussion here.

<sup>98</sup> ‘La ‘vision’ du visage ne se sépare pas de cette offer qu’est le langage’ (Levinas, 1971: 180).

language that tend to present it as one meaningful action among many others fail to recognize this *offering* of the world, this offering of contents which answers to the face of the Other or which questions him, and first opens the perspective of the meaningful. (ibid: 174)

Levinas describes here the act of putting ourselves into the world which occurs when we speak, putting ourselves at risk, in an act of generosity to open up a world ‘put in common’.

Levinas is critical of Structuralist thought which sees the components of language as owing their meaning to their internal interrelations, part of a system which ‘thinks in me’ and which leads some Structuralists to talk of ‘the death of man’ ( Llewelyn, 2002 : 119-121). Levinas turns away from such ‘modern antihumanism’ (Levinas, 1981: 127) maintaining that many structuralists embrace this label because they see humanism in Kantian terms, as identifying the human being as first and foremost the author of his acts and acts of speech. Structuralism reacts against existential thinking, which stresses spontaneity and freedom and which understands itself as ‘humanist’ (Sartre, 1948), that is ‘humanism of the first person singular subject’ (Llewelyn, 2002: 121).

John Llewelyn (2002) gives a clear account of Heidegger’s contribution to Levinas’ thinking on language and of how Levinas turned from his teacher’s conception of language as the ‘House of Being’, where we are possessed by language as a way of ‘being with others’ (Farrell Krell (ed.) 1978: 239), to an understanding of this possession by language as being ‘by others’: Heidegger’s account has been superceded by Levinas’ emphasis upon response and responsibility. For Levinas language is a ‘seeing’ and a responding to the Other before all else, an ‘offering of the world to the Other’, where language ‘accomplishes the primordial putting in common – which refers to possession and presupposes economy’ (Levinas, 1969: 173). Using language is an ethical act which opens up a world between myself and the Other.

So what would it mean for us to approach music-making as ‘language’, as Amy and Kirsty see it, in the light of Levinas’ ethical situating of language?

*What would the consequences be of a conception of music-making as Levinas’ ‘speaking the world to the Other’, as first of all an ‘ethical gesture’ (Levinas, 1969: 173-174)?*

Levinas writes, ‘The relationship with the Other, transcendence, consists in speaking the world to the Other’. When considering music in terms of language here, Levinas’ reorientation of notions of language powerfully expresses the vulnerability which music-making entails, as we are ‘inserted into the world’ as we make music, ‘with all the hazards and risks of all action’, in a generous offering of the world, putting a world hitherto mine in common (Levinas, 1969:174). This reorientation would have profound ramifications for an

understanding of the ‘aesthetic’, which would regain its ethical moorings, as making music (and creating ‘art’) would be primarily a response to seeing the face of the Other and would seek to ‘put the world in common’.

What of the distinctiveness of musical voices from different places on the globe? Amy is aware of the limits of understanding as she encounters and enjoys music which is from another cultural tradition; ‘music in a different language’. Tom relishes the distinctions he hears in film scores of the past, where to him the music reflects clearly the places described in the film, and regrets that this has often been ironed out in more contemporary films, with a common sound world wherever the story is situated. Amez’s family cherish their native tradition of heart-felt song which expresses so much of their home community’s experience and suffering. Finlay’s reflections show that within more closely related musical styles the distinctions are still very significant.

Levinas’ ‘looking into the face of the Other’ is an exhortation to attentiveness and to discernment. His notion of *totality* represents the colonising behaviour which seeks to make everything *yours* assimilated into *my* own experience. Instead, the cherishing of local musical voices leaves music as a curriculum subject open to the *infinity* he describes, a never-ending richness of possibility. Music-making transcends borders but pinpoints different voices through distinctive musical styles and timbres. Tom turns to ‘older music’ partly in order to delight in distinctive timbres, finding that the electronic sound world often used in contemporary music blankets over or conceals the immediacy of expression of acoustic sounds, and tends to iron-out distinctive qualities of place or style. Tom finds that these electronic timbres obscure face-to-face encounters in music.

*What would it mean if in the music classroom we understood music-making as first of all an act of reaching out to look into the face of the Other, countenancing difference without totalising practices?*

## **7.2 Music-making as complex and challenging, rich in context**

### **7.2.1 Complex and challenging**

Amy spoke in interviews of ‘enjoying but not understanding’ music from other cultural traditions: Kirsty talked with admiration about how much time and effort she would need to learn to play the complex rhythms of the West African drummer who led a school workshop, and also of coming to understand the different outlooks of those around her at school by spending time and effort on building relationships with them. Behind these perspectives lies

an outlook which countenances complexity and diversity, recognising the benefits of embracing challenges which require a sustained period of engagement, during which an uncomfortable level of disorientation may occur, and after which only partial completion of the task may have been achieved.

In his book *Facing the Music: Shaping music education from a global perspective* Huib Schippers discusses the experience of music students who embrace complexity as they seek to learn music-making in a different cultural context. He writes of the 'value of confusion as a powerful instrument in learning music' where students experience cognitive dissonance as they grapple with a wholly different sound world whose structures and techniques are not at all apparent at the outset: 'It can lead to a process of highly motivated internal analytic activity, which may make students achieve above their expected level' (Schippers, 2012 : 83-84) although he notes that this ceases to be an effective strategy when applied too frequently.

My interviewees' willingness to countenance complexity means that as learners they are situating themselves towards the *infinity* end of Levinas' spectrum of Totality and Infinity. They are content not to have to 'master' other people's music in order to enjoy it, but they are willing to listen attentively and to remain engaged in learning something of the playing techniques required to begin to share in this particular form of music-making. This confusion or cognitive dissonance is sometimes a discomfiting experience, one which resonates with Levinas' 'itch under the skin' used to describe the hold of the Other upon him, whose ethical call is inescapable and compels a response (Llewelyn, 2000: 121-2).

The complexity which Amy and Kirsty are prepared to countenance within music-making contrasts with easily assimilated material and basic tasks they are required to perform in the class music lesson, where the learning objective is set at the beginning of the lesson and must be fulfilled by the end. The task set must be entirely achievable within the set parameters of the lesson, and the temptation is therefore to set more easily approached tasks which can be grasped immediately in their entirety. There is no provision in this protocol for open-ended learning where the lesson objective may be undermined or even superseded by events unfolding, as pupils respond to the lesson material and the teacher adapts accordingly to lead the way down unexpected paths of learning. When Amez's interest was aroused concerning the shared social meanings of the practice of the Gamelan musicians, there was no space for his nuanced enquiry to bear fruit.

## 7.2.2 Rich in context

In a discussion about my sample class's Blues lesson, as recounted in section 6.2.5, Tom insisted:

You shouldn't just scrape the top off music. You should go down into it into it and see where it came from and that – it gives you a better understanding and different views of what's happening.

Tom sees music as rich in context, not to be abstracted and taken only as a thin layer leaving much behind. This is consistent with his own habits of attentiveness to the wider world, where art galleries, museums, history and political news help him to make deeper sense of his everyday experiences: 'They tell the story of everything that's happened in the world'. He recognises the importance of seeing from several different points of view, embracing a complex whole which he may not fully grasp, but towards which he seeks to 'go down into', indicating that Tom desires rich and deeply contextualised understanding.

Throughout the recounted experiences and perspectives of the five pupils I interviewed in depth music-making was seen as deeply embedded in social context. Kirsty saw value in finding out about the way other people live and see the world as a means of learning to in some way build a relationship with them: 'If you just take the time to understand where they come from and how they, like how they live their life, you can relate to them in some way'. Finlay had from an early age experienced music-making as part of a community's expression of shared social meaning in Shetland, as Amez had in the singing traditions of Urfa. Both boys had experienced music-making as a means of relating to and learning from others, even the stranger from a very different cultural background, as when Amez got to know his downstairs neighbour through learning from him a little of how to play his West African drums.

Levinas exhorts us to look into the face of the Other as our primary experience as human beings and to respond to the ethical call we hear when we do so. For the young people I interviewed music-making is a mode of encountering others and the Other – a communal expression and a means of relating to an unfamiliar, perhaps distant Other. In their lesson on the Blues the class I observed started to learn to listen for the voice of the Other through their brief exploration of the story of slavery. They began to engage with the places and the testimonies of terrible injustices and cruelty, and to listen with new ears to the music which developed out of the black communities of the southern states of America. In the lesson on

the Gamelan Amez had begun to wonder at the different order of shared social meanings he could discern within the community of performing musicians he was watching, and to ask questions which opened up the Infinity of the Other.

What would it mean if music-making was approached as an encounter with the Other? How may pupils be encouraged to listen out for the voice of another? Tom offers a way forwards in his discipline of resisting early closure, and staying open in the face of the perspectives of others, and cultivating a habit of remaining attentive to the rich context around him which ‘tells the story of all that’s happened’ in order to hear the voice of the Other. Rich contextualisation resists totalising practices.

*What would it mean for music to be embraced as complex and rich in context within the music classroom?*

### **7.3 The Infinity of musical knowing**

As discussed in Chapter 5, at 5.1 and 5.4, a commitment to make music as an examination subject more accessible to a wider spectrum of pupils has led in some quarters to a reduced conceptualisation of ‘musical knowing’. The Scottish Higher music examination, for instance, taken by pupils at the age of sixteen or seventeen, includes a listening paper where all the questions require the ticking of a box. The syllabus prescribes a list of ‘concepts’ which must be ‘learned’, and it is from this list that the multiple choice options are drawn. The last question on each paper requires pupils to compare two extracts of music and tick which ‘concepts’ they hear in both extracts and which only in one or the other. The following extract recounts a lesson observation where my chosen class were given an exam-style question to try:

Throughout my year-long observations the music teacher sometimes introduced a listening task as a lesson-opener for 10 or 15 minutes. Using the exam board’s own commercially produced CD, with extracts of music from contrasting genres and cultural expressions, she posed questions which required pupils to identify the extracts within a choice of categories. On one of these occasions an extract of music from the show ‘Riverdance’ was played, and pupils were asked about which instruments they could hear. The tone was one of warm affirmation of pupils by the teacher. She kept a fast pace, demanding that they retrieve knowledge from past lessons and glean helpful information from displays around the room. The tone was supportive and there was a sense of expectancy. Almost all the girls in the class responded to the music by dancing in their seats. A frisson went round the room as the castanets entered and two girls on the far table pretended to play them, hands held high in the air. Yet, the task at hand was now to identify which sort of music this was. ‘Folk’ most pupils suggested as they enjoyed and identified with the ‘Celtic’ sounds underlying the music’s foreground. ‘It’s the rhythm they make in Latin America’ the teacher corrected, insisting on

upholding the neat categorisation into which the exam board had squeezed this track. I empathised with the slightly dazed, deflated response to this outcome prevalent amongst the class. They had enjoyed the music. Some had responded physically and with pleasure, feeling that this was in some way ‘their music’, but they had reached the ‘wrong’ answer. Their responses must be corralled into one of the exam board’s own categorisations. The pupils’ openness to and encounter with the music had been shut down prematurely. The required answer was quite clear, it seems. (Jourdan, 2012: 382)

This lesson-opener involved the class being given a set of multiple choice-styled options in order to categorise the music. The pupils, however, wanted to engage more deeply. They were beginning to respond with enjoyment, physically and emotionally. The learning had barely begun when receptivity was quickly shut down by the need for a simple ‘answer’.

This practice leaves no room for a nuanced understanding of the music, which invites many different but valid responses which could be given. In making the exam more accessible the board have reduced *musical knowing* to narrow and perhaps ultimately meaningless parameters. The more familiar a pupil is with playing and listening to music the harder it will be to choose between options, none of which might describe the musical feature uppermost in the pupil’s mind as they listen. No extended writing is required or indeed allowed in the exam, so there seems to be no space for any sort of personal response or higher-order thinking.

The prescription of limited options and the tying-down of musical knowing to tidy ‘concepts’ limits the ‘language of the curriculum’ (Standish, 2008) to a totality which remains closed to the wider whole of music which can never be fully grasped. The more a pupil enters the *infinity* of music as a subject area the less this form of examination enables them to demonstrate their learning. The Higher exam encourages a closed approach where knowing the manner in which the exam board uses their own terminology is paramount. The engagement with a broader *musical knowing* finds no home.

Standish elucidates Levinas’ distinction between Totality and Infinity, articulated in Levinas’ essay of 1957 ‘Philosophy and the idea of Infinity’, as he describes the two directions the philosophical spirit can take:

In the first, the thinker maintains a relation distinct from him, other than him. It involves a movement that must lead us beyond the nature that surrounds us and towards a beyond: it goes towards the stranger in a kind of perfectionism towards the divine. This is heteronomy itself. Levinas identifies this thinking in terms of a relation to *infinity*. In the second, the thinker freely assents to propositions that are then incorporated in such a way that his nature is preserved: it thereby brings into the same what was other. It moves towards a kind of autonomy in which

nothing irreducible would limit thought. Disparate and diverse events are incorporated into a history; this might be seen as ‘the conquest of being by man over the course of history’ (Levinas, 1987: 48). This is a thinking in terms of *totality*. (Standish, 2008:58)

Levinas is not advocating heteronomous practices such as slavery or indoctrination, but rather questions the kind of freedom within the frame of *totality* where too strong a faith in autonomy and mastery is rooted. Levinas’ conception of freedom is on the realisation of one’s responsibility out of prior obligation (ibid).

Standish gives the example of a teaching colleague who, having completed a PhD, professes to be able to teach because he now ‘knows everything’ in a particular subject area, and who is symptomatic of such totalising attitudes. His subject area has been put into a box, dealt with and now understood. Pupils in Scotland and more widely in the UK are similarly led into totalising ways of thinking by the exam system which seems to be a game to be played, rather than an opportunity to reveal their discoveries so far in learning something of the infinity of their subject area.

*What does it mean for knowing in the music classroom to be open to the Infinity of the subject?*

## **7.4 Music as an end in itself**

### **7.4.1 The importance of developing performing techniques**

At a first glance this strand from pupils’ perspectives on their own daily music-making would seem to be the antithesis to music being rich in context. Finlay’s commitment to learning the craft of a musician and concentrating upon one area of special musical interest might seem at first to preclude the richer setting for music-making discussed above. The apparently opposing poles of ‘music in context’ and ‘music as an end in itself’ recall the polarised debate of recent decades between the view of ‘music as praxis’ and ‘music as aesthetic education’. Each view tends to privilege one aspect in a totalising limiting of the Infinity of music-making. Tom and Amy touched upon this strand in conversation with me:

Tom: But some people totally, not block out the history or anything, but just want to play on the instruments.

Amy: Maybe from the point of view of someone playing the music they just want to know how to play the notes, and that’s it and don’t really want to learn about the music.

James: Try to be perfect, type thing.

They recognise that some pupils aren't interested to learn about the context of the music they are working with in class, but are focused solely on the technical 'mastery' of the music. Finlay may seem to be one of these pupils. Yet might this pursuit of technical excellence and enjoyment of beauty and perfection actually enable the reaching out that is music-making to happen, and sensitise us to listen out for the voice of the Other? Can we harness this practice of skills acquisition and set it in a richer context of purpose?

#### **7.4.2 Excellence in performing set within the context of relating to the Other**

It is especially interesting that Finlay has had the unusual experience of having grown up in an environment in the Shetland Isles where music is taken very seriously both 'for its own sake', where pupils achieve a high level of performance skills through practice over many years, and within a rich context in which the community has invested shared social meanings of celebration of belonging and place. Furthermore, music-making has become a means of Shetlanders reaching out to the outsider or the incomer.

Young people travel widely from the Isles to places all over the globe taking with them their fiddles and other instruments in order to make music with distant others. Music has become a mode of encounter with others, including those who travel to the Islands, to take part in the many music festivals there each year for instance, and with those who settle in Shetland and who experience a *hospitality* (Higgins, 2012, 2007) and a means of belonging through the shared cultural forms of the local musical traditions.

The variety of annual music festivals on Shetland reflects the interaction of local musical traditions with musical influences from overseas. There is a long history of Bluegrass, Country and Western and Nordic musical influences for instance which frequently become evident in the music-making of Shetland bands, many of whom have become internationally successful. The emphasis on learning instruments in the Islands' schools, facilitated by the resources available through oil revenues over the past four decades, has resulted in a young generation of musicians whose facility in their local musical styles and traditions has led them to embrace music-making from other traditions.<sup>99</sup> Musical fluency provides these

---

<sup>99</sup> In an interview with the head of Music at the high school in Lerwick I heard how pupils there would regularly bring into school music which they wished to play from all sorts of genres, unconstrained by chart hits and the music of celebrity artists.

young musicians with the skills they need to explore widely and enter more deeply into the *infinity* of music-making. In working hard in learning to play and sing these young people are developing the sensitivity to listen out for the *voice* of the Other and to respond by drawing the Other into a conversation within a face to face encounter, or by reflecting upon aspects of the Other's musical language in their own music-making, as reflected in the face to face encounters of the 'session', a regular habit amongst Shetland musicians.

### **7.4.3 Fluency in performance enables a reaching out to the Other**

Finlay's endless experimentation with sound and technique on the guitar and drums on his own, in partnerships and in his band, enables him to develop well-honed skills which mean that he can offer something of himself in playing to others. The risks involved in live performance may also be described in the terms Levinas uses of language:

It puts in common a world hitherto mine. It is a first action over and above labor, even though, as incarnate thought, it inserts us into the world, with the risks and hazards of all action. At each instant it exceeds this labor by the generosity of the offer it forthwith makes of this very labor. (Levinas, 1969: 174)

Finlay's habits of working hard at developing his performance skills enables him to find and articulate his own voice, his particular style and sound which positions him within the wider musical community and allows him to take part in the 'conversation', on his own and making music with others. As he learns his craft Finlay works towards 'mastery' of his instruments in terms of overcoming various technical difficulties and developing new facilities. At the heart of a musician's identity however is the never-ending quest for playing better and seeking out new ways of understanding and sharing.

### **7.4.4 Fluency in performance enables a sensitivity to the Other**

In the course of these processes Finlay is lost in the sounds themselves; he develops a sensitivity to the quality of sound, to what is effective, what is beautiful and what enables the listener to receive what Finlay wants to offer in his music-making. This sensitivity begins to be developed when for instance pupils are brought face to face with nature, when as the deputy head of my site school talked of, 'getting the kids' jackets on and going outside to learn from what is happening outside', with visual artworks, poetry, drama, dance, or when

they are encouraged to take notice of or take pleasure in striking or awe-inspiring features in other subjects, maths, geography or in the science lab. In these situations pupils begin to be sensitive to different qualities they experience through their senses as they are struck, arrested.

In a critique of Terry Eagleton's account of aesthetics as 'the way reality strikes the body', Jane Bennett finds that he overlooks the term 'sensibility' which she says 'resides between a striking reality and a stricken body' (Bennett, 2001: 150). Her 'sensibility' is close to what I have termed 'sensitivity'. She writes:

Sensibility, a refinement or new assemblage of sensible primordia, is culturally encoded and temperamentally delimited, but it is still educable to some uncertain degree. (ibid)

Jane Bennett talks of the 'enchantment' which occurs when we become open to the wonder of everyday moments, 'Enchantment as a state of openness to the disturbing-captivating elements in everyday experience . . . a mood with ethical potential' (ibid: 131). She sees potential in not just nature and art but also within modern technology, advertising or even bureaucracy. Her contention is that this re-enchantment of the world leads individuals to be motivated ethically to look after their surroundings and to care for others – her 'ethical energetics'.

*What if aesthetic encounter were understood as ethical endeavour?*

Bennett surveys the discourses of the past concerning the relationship between aesthetics and ethics from Kant onwards but particularly of Foucault as 'heir to Schiller's project of aestheticising ethics' (ibid: 133). She is interested that Schiller attempts:

To combine Kant's idea that the rational will is morally autonomous with his own sense that an aesthetic disposition must augment reasoned principle if the latter is to be ethically effective. (ibid: 132)

Schiller saw the aesthetic as a disposition to be cultivated through a combination of self-inducement and cultural education – beauty is 'at once our state and our act' (Schiller, 1794/2006: 122).

As part of the postmodern thinking, which has brought about an aestheticisation of ethics, breaking down distinctions between high and popular art forms, Foucault asks why everyone's life couldn't become a work of art; others have responded in Marxist terms that most people's lives are still shaped by their lack of access to productive resources and their need to sell their labour in order to live (Callinicos, 1989:91).

### 7.4.5 Levinas' ethics as an underpinning for aesthetics

Levinas challenges Kant's view of the self as morally autonomous, and encourages us to see the already-existing responsibility towards the Other which shapes our existence, so that our freedom flows from our responsive relation to the Other. Our sense of self is formed from the very outset by the presence of the Other. Rather than Schiller's conception of aesthetics as the development of a sensibility which augments reasoned principle to ethical effect, Levinas' work points towards the practice of aesthetic encounter as a training which enables us to look more fully into the face of the Other, to hear their *voice* and to respond. Our responsibility towards the Other is the underpinning of aesthetics. This vision unmask alternative conceptions of autonomous aestheticisation presented to us by Foucault or Baudrillard.<sup>100</sup> A Levinasian reading breaks open a self-centred aesthetic as the infinite of the Other ruptures our autonomy.

*What happens if we understand musical performance as drawing others into a face-to-face encounter with the Other?*

What light does Levinas shed on Finlay's hard work towards technical mastery and musical identity, and on my broader observation of the potential for pupils to develop an aesthetic sensitivity? Firstly Levinas' vision, drawn out by Standish as the *infinity* of a subject within the school curriculum, would point towards Finlay as willing to embrace this concept of unending possibility and richness which constantly challenges him in its otherness. By eventually becoming a 'master' Finlay will still be looking into the *infinity* of music which will remain unending in its possibilities and otherness, but he will be further along the continuum and will increasingly be able to act as a conduit for others to come face to face with music's *infinity*. Performance is a reaching out to others, in an act of making oneself vulnerable which Levinas describes as 'putting a world in common' through 'incarnate thought' as a response to looking into the face of the Other, compelling this generous 'offering', which exceeds parameters of content.

*Is musical performance akin to teaching in its presenting of the Other?*

---

<sup>100</sup> See Bennett (1996) 'How is It, Then, That We Still Remain Barbarians?' Foucault, Schiller, and the Aestheticization of Ethics; Baudrillard, 1983.

[The] voice coming from another shore teaches transcendence itself. Teaching signifies the whole infinity of exteriority . . . [The Other's] alterity is manifested in a mastery that does not conquer, but teaches. (Levinas, 1969: 171)

Developing here is a Levinasian way of looking at musical performance, a vision of a fresh orientation for music-making. During musical performance the musician(s) take(s) the listener through an experience which opens up new worlds of possibility, of celebration, of feasting, of suffering and pain. The musicians travel with the listener, while having in some sense gone before them in preparation for the performance and in their past experience of entering more deeply into the infinity of music. The Other Levinas speaks of here may be understood on diverse levels; as the musician (the teacher) who draws others ever deeper into the what the music expresses; the music itself which operates as an Other as it speaks in its expressive discourse to the listener and players; the Other who listens and to whom the musician is making an offering of a world hitherto their own, and the Other whose voice may be heard through the music, understood as composer as well as the human experience they seek to draw us into an encounter with.

Listeners and performers alike open themselves to the *infinity* of the music's discourse and expression in an experience which does not legislate a response but allows the freedom to engage individually. Critically, however, these processes take place within a joint act underpinned by a taking on of responsibility to respond to the ethical call of the Other. Performers take on the responsibility to lead listeners into a face to face encounter, and this is the ongoing purpose of their many years of developing mastery of their instruments and voices.

The exteriority Levinas exhorts us to practise involves an orientation towards the Other on the behalf of the composer too, taking the example of orchestral music-making in the classical tradition, which forms most of my own professional experience. Levinas could only be reconciled with art within the context of ongoing criticism which he sees as a mechanism for accountability. In this way the 'parallel reality' of the creative imagination is anchored and the artist is held responsible to the Other, the performer, the listener and the aspects of our human experience which the art form speaks of. Underlying everything, the call upon the composer is to reach out in an ethical act, before any expressive discourse follows.

Within this conceptualisation of music-making, performers too reach out first in an ethical gesture towards the Other – towards each other and towards the listener. They join with the

composer in the impetus to reach out, making decisions as to how to articulate the composer's discourse in order to speak more effectively to the listener. The leadership of the conductor in an orchestral context invites the players to respond by giving of themselves in an ethical act. The conductor looks into the face of their players and draws each, together, into a deeper encounter with the infinity of the music, shaping the performance through the skill of the conductor in communicating their vision, where new expressive discoveries are made, facilitated by the commitment of each to respond in giving of themselves (see Appendix 6 for an article discussing a Levinasian approach to performing and conducting).

The self-giving act of the player is made possible through the taking on of responsibility by the conductor, by a commitment to a self-giving in turn which accepts and treasures the player's offering and allows their voice to signify richly in the performance, weaving this with the voices of the other players into a fresh imagining of the composer's creation. Controlling or too tightly shaping these voices brings destruction. Imposing a conception without drawing gently out of each player destroys the trust which lies at the heart of this endeavour.

## **Reflection**

This chapter has drawn out key strands from the pupils' perspectives gathered during fieldwork, reflecting upon these using the thinking of Emmanuel Levinas as a tool. As the view widened, the implications for conceptualising music-making outside of school education have been glimpsed, posing questions which probe at the foundations of aesthetics and lie at the heart of music-making at all levels, including the wider music profession. Let us consider them again, along with a couple of new questions:

- What would the consequences be of a conception of music-making as 'speaking the world to the Other', 'putting in common what was hitherto mine', as first of all an 'ethical gesture' (Levinas, 1969: 173-174)?
- What would it mean if in the music classroom we understood music-making as first of all an act of reaching out to 'look into the face of the Other', countenancing difference without totalising practices?
- What would it mean for music as a subject area to be embraced as complex and rich in context within the music classroom?

- What would it mean for *knowing* in the music classroom to be open to the ‘Infinity’ of the subject area?
- What if aesthetic encounter were understood as ethical endeavour?
- *What if the striving for technical perfection were seen as ethical endeavour?*
- What happens if we understand musical performance as drawing others into a face-to-face encounter with the Other?
- What happens if we conceive of musical performance as akin to teaching in its presenting of the Other?
- *What if we allow the music profession to be transformed by this reorientation?*

These reflections have involved taking Levinas’ thinking on into areas with which he was reluctant to engage explicitly. His contradictory and problematic views on ‘art’ have been clarified by various commentators, especially Sean Hand (2009). In this chapter I wonder how Levinas’ conceptions of the aesthetic might have developed had he come into dialogue with more recent orientations of music-making as relationship and encounter (Small, 1998; Bowman, 2001).

Taking Levinas’ ‘ethics as first philosophy’ as underpinning every aspect of existence, every subject area and discipline, I raise the question of whether this ethical grounding not only *anchors* aesthetics - the way we understand our perceptions in terms of beauty and affect and which underlies the way we think about aesthetic encounters in music-making and the practice of other art forms - in the way Levinas acknowledged art criticism to, but in some sense *generates* all aesthetic encounter and experiences of art and specifically music-making through the initial ethical impulse to reach outwards towards the Other. This conceptualisation is prior to ideologies or ways of understanding music-making as for instance ‘praxial’ or as an expression of shared cultural meanings or as aesthetic experience. This Levinasian orientation both transcends and underpins diverse conceptions of how music-making operates. Within the wider discourse of music education in school Levinas’ ‘looking into the face of the Other’, with its initial impetus to reach out, allows for a life-giving, holistic and sustainable underpinning which precedes and embraces epistemological diversity.

## Chapter 8:

# Discussion of strands: Music-making as an exercise of agency

---

## Introduction

The last chapter reflected upon pupils' perspectives on music-making drawn from interviews during fieldwork, considered insights emerging from this reflection through the lens of Levinas, and saw a coming together of the two seemingly disparate strands of 'music set within a rich context' and 'music as an end in itself'. The setting of music within a rich context in order to hear the voice of another is drawn together with the notion of music as an end in itself, where the honing of technical and interpretative skills and the quest for the beauty of perfection which Amy and James had discussed are oriented towards a more effective 'reaching out to the Other' through performance.

Chapter 6 presented the pupils' stories using experiences and perspectives gathered in interviews, drawing out firstly their practices of music-making and of 'facing' - how they 'look into the face of the Other'. Secondly it uncovers some of the emergent social structures acting upon the pupils as individuals and as a group within the class at school, and significantly for the present chapter, how each pupil responds to these structural forces and exercises their agency. These are summarised in Figure 8:1:

### **Emergent social structures acting upon Amy**

Selection through testing for local authority instrumental tuition breeds an exclusive conception of music-making

Peer group social positioning – the pressure to conform in order to align with those powerful in the year group and to publicly assent to their totalising practices

Pupils' collective resistance to unfamiliar music which influences which music is used in the public life of the school

### **Amy exercises agency to remain open to the Other**

Conception of musicking as universally inclusive

Nourishing her own practice of private, adventurous listening where she is open to the Other

Accepts and is open to complexity, eschewing the need for easy assimilation - able to enjoy without mastering

### **Emergent structures acting upon Tom**

Pressure to conform (to a conception of masculinity?) amongst his peers in the music class

Perception of 'violence' inherent in contemporary culture from which he seeks refuge in cultural expressions of the past

### **Tom exercises agency to remain open to the Other**

Staying 'wide-awake' to the world i) taking an interest in news, politics and what is going on in the wider world ii) visiting museums and galleries to learn what they tell us about 'the history of everything that's happened'.

Cultivates a discipline of resisting early closure and staying open in the face of the perspectives of others

'Sometimes small people can make a change'

### **Emergent structures acting upon Amez**

Pressure to conform to 'cool' behaviour in class

Family expectations of courtesy and deference

**Amez exercises agency to remain open to the Other**

Football and listening to music are ways of coming to belong and developing a Scottish identity  
A holistic, socially aware practice of musicking, attentive to social meanings of the Other  
*Musicking as a means of having a 'voice' culturally and politically*

**Emergent structures acting upon Kirsty**

'Being at High school's very different from how people see it – it's a scary place. Children have no fear of what they're doing to other people'.  
'My family have always taught me to make sure that I considered other people's feelings before doing things'.

**Kirsty exercises her agency**

'I find myself doing . . . when I see someone about to do something, and I think about what they're about to do, and the effects it will have on the person, and I find myself saying, 'Don't do it!''

**Structures acting upon Finlay**

Outside of school time he abides by the school's apparent social divisions, but in lessons he has developed an unusually effective working relationship with someone who is perceived to be from the other side of the divide

Family circumstance exerts a huge influence upon Finlay in terms of his music-making. He has been brought up with music-making going on around him all the time, and is subject to seemingly irrefutable judgements as to who is more talented in the family.

**Finlay exercises his agency**

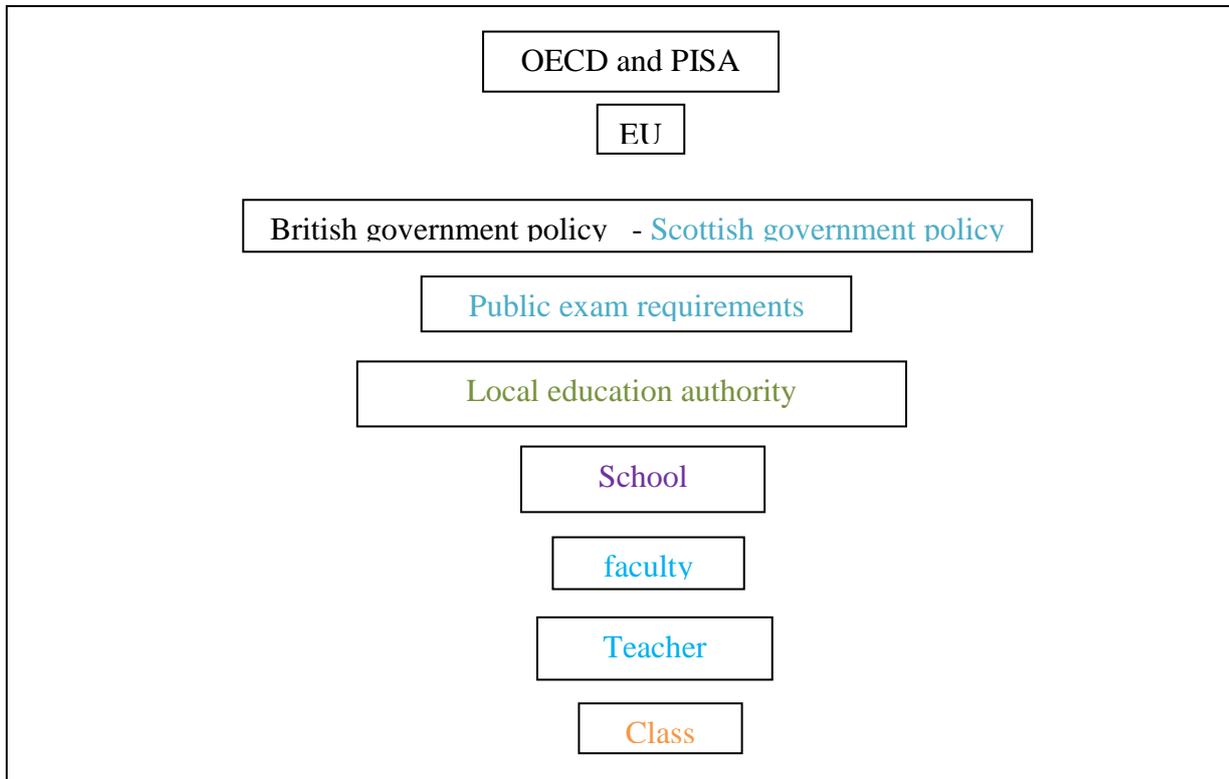
in order to build an identity as a musician distinct from his parents  
Despite his posturing Finlay remains open to new ideas which he will immediately explore and learn from in his music-making.

**Figure 8:1 Emergent social structures and pupils' exercise of agency**

This chapter gathers significant and recurring strands from pupils' perspectives presented in Chapter 6 and now explores their music-making as *agential*, as the exercising of agency within or against structural constraints, set in the context of a discussion of strands emerging from Chapter 5, relating to the structural forces exerted through the wider educational context. Insights are explored through the lens of Levinas. His notions of infinity and totality elucidate the effect of structural forces upon the pupils' experience of learning to make music and the ethical impulse of reaching out to the Other is considered in terms of its agential effect.

Returning to the stratified reality of chapter 5, in which the pupils' experience of music-making takes place, each perceived structural level (Fig. 8:2) is considered again, followed by an exploration of how the pupils interviewed respond agentially to the forces exerted upon them, beginning with those exerted by the local education authority and following through to those forces created by and acting upon the music class I followed. A series of diagrams in Figures 8: 5 to 8:10 represent the dynamic of 'upwards' and 'downwards' interplay of structural forces and individual and group agency, with arrows suggesting the

‘downward’ exertion of social forces, while upwards arrows signify the exercise of agency to resist, subvert or transcend these influences and social realities.



**Figure 8:2 Structural layers** (reiterating Figure5:1)

### **8.1 National Government and the Local Education Authority: the shaping of notions of ‘being musical’ and their subversion**

The experiences of school music-making within the small group of pupils I interviewed are shaped by the policies and practices of the local education authority and the interplay between these and the policy directives from the devolved Scottish Government. Chapter 5 explored two strands of issues concerning the practices of the Local Education Authority which had arisen during interviews with members of the music staff at the site school; firstly, an abiding commitment to free tuition, which was now considered by many music practitioners to be unsustainable, and the seemingly consequential, proposed cuts to music services; secondly, a reluctance to implement new management practices combined with a high-handed way of managing instrumental staff which was causing personal distress (Fig. 8:3).

A commitment to free instrumental tuition endangers wider provision - budgetary cuts have an impact upon pupils' music-making

The local authority's management practices cause distress to individual instructors - reluctance to adopt new management structures

**Fig 8:3 Local authority** (taken in part from Figure 5:2, box 2)

Reflecting upon interviews with pupils, the question of who learns instruments and who doesn't through the authority's music service seemed to exert considerable influence over which pupils were considered, or labelled themselves 'musicians', shaping thinking about who might be considered to be 'musical'. Before 2003 the local authority had, along with many other LEA's, selected a small group of pupils in each class to have the opportunity to play an instrument, on the basis of 'aptitude tests'. Just a few children each week would benefit from instrumental tuition, taken out of curriculum lessons away from the rest of their peer group.

A commitment to inclusivity: i) accessible public music exams ii) Youth Music Strategy leading to the Youth Music Initiative with the aim of widening access to instrumental learning

The legacy of industrial staff amongst teaching staff

**Fig 8:4 Scottish Government** (taken in part from Figure 5:2, box 1)

At national, devolved Scottish Government level, First Minister Jack McConnell announced in 2003 that he wanted to 'put music at the heart of young people's learning' and established a scheme, the Youth Music Initiative (YMI), to encourage local authorities to offer instrumental tuition to every primary child by the time they reached Primary 6 (10-11 years old) (Fig.8:4).<sup>101</sup> This national scheme was delivered through local authority bodies, with a substantial overlapping of instrumental instructors between LEA and YMI provision. The vision of the national initiative was an offer to every upper primary aged child in the country, working to ameliorate the situation of rationing which arose in each LEA school,

---

<sup>101</sup> Youth Music Initiative - In February 2003, the Scottish Executive committed £17.5 million to improve the quality and availability of musical experiences to children and young people in Scotland (the main success criteria being the P6 target). The initial three years of funding were extended by another two years until 2008, with £10 million available each year. The Scottish Arts Council administers this funding through the creation of the YMI team. Its English equivalent is YMUK. (<http://www.scottisharts.org.uk/resources/publications/Music/pdf/Retuning%20YMI%20final%20report.pdf>, accessed 20/04/2013)

and seeking to overcome the boundaries between the various and diverse bodies involved in music education around Scotland:

The National Youth Music Strategy lays out a vision for youth music in Scotland and promotes an infrastructure and common understanding between all providers so that the distinctions between the various learning environments become redundant. Music education is defined in its broadest sense, embracing all areas of music-making: from early years through formal education (embracing the principles of the *Curriculum for Excellence*) to community projects or contexts where young people work without adult supervision. (Scottish Arts Council, 2006: 2)

A report by the Scottish Arts Council (now Creative Scotland) showed that in 2006-7 the majority of councils in Scotland had met this target. By 2011 however budgetary cuts began to come into effect across Scotland (and the rest of the UK), reducing the number of music instructors delivering the Youth Music Initiative in an on-going programme reaching into the next few years. The difficult decisions the LEA had to make concerning budgetary cuts to the local government funds available, cuts that had been put in place by the Westminster Government as the awarding body, were directly impinging upon their ability to deliver locally the Scottish Government's priorities for inclusive music-making amongst young people.

### **8.1.1 The effect upon the pupils of the sample class and the exercise of pupils' agency – Amy, Tom, Amez, Kirsty and Finlay**

Four out of the five of my small group of interviewee pupils had benefitted from instrumental tuition in some form during their primary schooling in the local educational authority. Amy had tried trumpet and violin but had given both up before too long; Tom played the saxophone but was too reticent to play in an ensemble and simply took informally-arranged lessons from the class music teacher after school: Kirsty had learned the double bass, and then bass guitar, playing in the authority's primary schools' orchestra, but had recently given up as a response to curriculum teachers' pressure: Finlay plays the drums and electric guitar, having recently started lessons at school with the LEA's visiting instructor.

Only one continues to play in an authority ensemble in secondary school, however: Finlay performs with the Samba Band, which rehearses in its local school groups, led by the authority's inspiring percussion teacher (who also teaches Finlay on an individual basis), then comes together as a large ensemble to give public performances such as the one I heard

in the city's main concert hall where the combined forces gave a rousing and impressive start to the annual, evening concert of local authority groups.

In order to uncover the effects of the various structural levels bearing upon this group of pupils in their experience of music making, and to highlight their individual agential responses, Amy's experience gives a useful starting point.

**i) Amy**

Amy apparently blames herself for not continuing with learning an instrument, citing her 'lack of concentration span' but her other two comments are telling. She isn't 'captured' by 'classical music' which she seems to associate with learning an instrument, and she labels herself as 'not very musically talented'. Despite the implementation of local authority policies which have apparently been effective in providing Amy with opportunities, Amy's instrumental education has not continued outside of the classroom and she feels distanced from instrumental music-making and from the whole genre of 'classical music'. Amy had been given the opportunity to try out lessons in violin and then trumpet at Primary 4 or 5 level, but saw herself as 'failing' and not being suited to learning an instrument. Having a fixed orthodontic brace fitted was the deciding factor in her finally stopping trumpet lessons.

Having explored Amy's perspectives on using her music-making to negotiate 'belonging' I wondered whether the manner in which the instrumental tuition took place may not have provided an effective learning environment for Amy. What would have happened if every pupil was taught an instrument in school instead of just a few? Would a more socially-oriented context for learning have brought about Amy's sustained engagement with instrumental instruction? Would Amy have found a meaningful social setting for learning an instrument in more of a 'community'? Did it create a tension within her borne of external expectations which she could not fulfil and which seemed to set her up to 'fail'? She was not 'captured' in this local authority intervention open to a few, even though she was chosen to take part. The YMI initiative didn't manage to reach her, although as someone who had already been offered LEA instrumental lessons she would have not been eligible for the YMI scheme in the first instance.

**ii) Becoming a 'musician'**

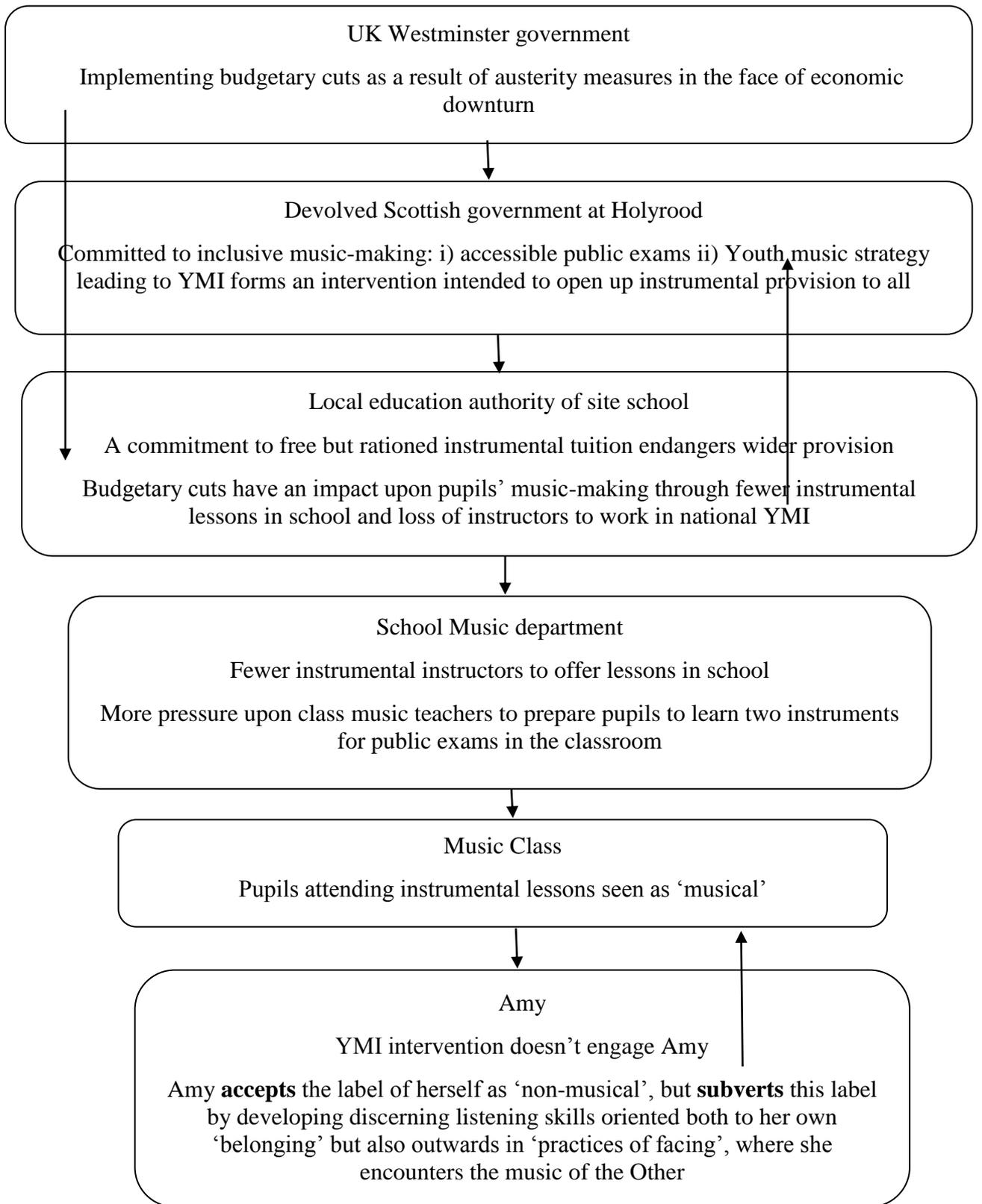
Amy speaks of herself as 'not musical' in the context of instrumental music appearing to give access to 'classical music' and of playing an instrument as seeming to be the means of

forming an identity as a ‘musician’. She has clearly taken on perceptions formed around her, and bearing down on her from higher structural levels, where nurturing young musicians has been prioritised through instrumental learning. Setting Amy’s perspectives in a theoretical framework of critical realism however allows for the contradictions and nuances of her experience to be uncovered as complex and shifting,

Amy has applied to herself the labels handed down from a perspective where ‘being musical’ depends upon playing an instrument. She regards her experience as a failure. Yet she subverts this descriptor through her rich, creative and empowering practices of listening, practices which in fact employ her early instrumental experiences as a starting point and a resource. Amy’s experience reveals practices which not only contribute to her own sense of who she is through belonging to the listening community of her peer group; Amy goes further in embracing new and unfamiliar sounds from more distant contexts in a reaching beyond herself towards the Other.

Amy’s skill in negotiating social identity at school, in terms of belonging to the ‘mainstream’ groupings within her peers, and her parallel abilities to retain a private realm of exploring difference in new sound worlds, reveal a complex response to the structural forces exerted upon her through the LEA’s policy of selection for free instrumental tuition and the attitudes shaped by this reality. Amy has both acquiesced to ‘failure’ within this structure *and* has subverted its effects through adventurous and imaginative listening. Her life is rich with ‘musicking’, even though she identifies herself as a ‘non-musician’.

Not only does Amy reveal a skilful habit of discerning listening, she has developed abilities to engage with new musical sounds from unfamiliar traditions without needing to ‘understand’ them, skills which enable her to remain open to the *infinity* of music-making, and to identify and resist ‘totalising’ practices in those around her at school. She talks of music in terms of a ‘language’ which all can access and use. Amy has developed ‘practices of facing’ through her music-making which break open narrow conceptions of what it means to be ‘musical’. In an orientation of openness to the infinity of musical possibilities Amy’s music-making becomes an exercise of agency.



**Fig 8: 5 Structures for instrumental music provision affect Amy's sense of being a 'musician'**

## **8.2 The school: the structural effects of the contested role of music in the curriculum – the resistance of pupils to totalising practices**

When the class were making their decisions as to which curricular subjects they would take to public examination level, it became clear that only two had chosen to continue with music. I asked pupils why they had decided against taking music and parental guidance was a significant factor for many. Liam told me, for example, ‘My Mum says Media Studies is more important than Music’. Kirsty told me that she had given up playing the double bass and bass guitar because her subject teachers didn’t like her going out of their lessons for her instrumental lessons, and that she didn’t want to irritate the teachers of those subjects she wanted to take for her examination options.

From these responses it would seem that within the community of teaching staff and within the parent body there are many who regard music as an unimportant part of the curriculum, and learning to play an instrument as an obstacle to more significant learning in higher-status subject areas. Amy confirms this outlook amongst the pupils themselves, as we have seen in section 6.1.2:

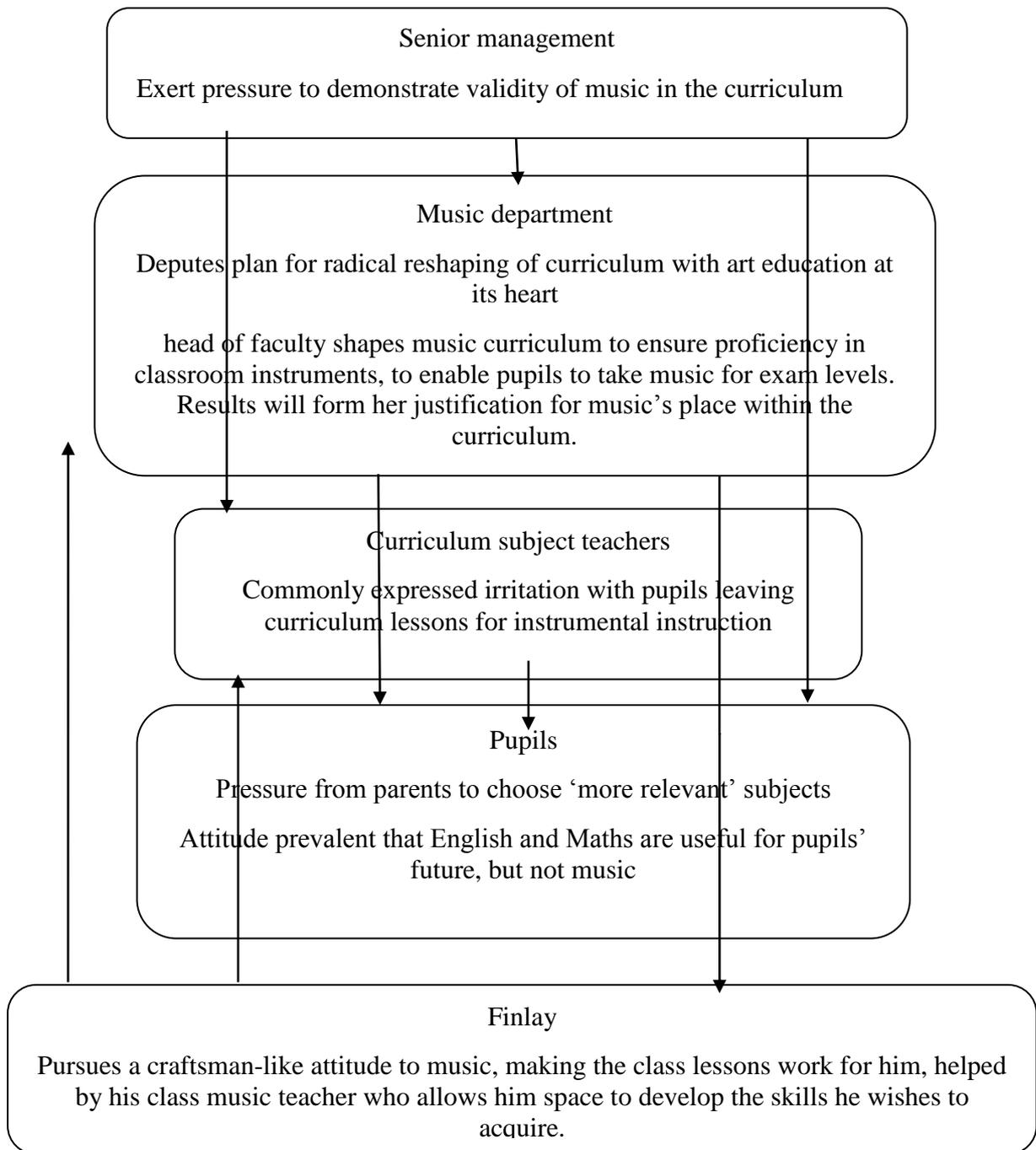
I think in English you would feel, alright I have to have this qualification if I get a job, but music – oh, music’s nothing. I don’t want to be a singer, so I won’t do music. I think that’s how it’s perceived anyway. I think people think that English is definitely more important, but music, well I know a lot of people who would skive music just ‘cos they don’t rate it.

Music isn’t regarded as ‘leading anywhere’: instrumental attitudes to what is learned at school prevail, so a view of music as enjoyable and worthwhile carries no weight.

The deputy head talked at length about her vision, shared with her depute colleague, for a curriculum which would place learning in and through the arts at its core: ‘Maybe instead of getting seven or eight periods a week of English and Maths they could get seven or eight periods a week of the creative subjects’. The head of faculty however, responsible for the music curriculum, had emphasised the need to prepare pupils efficiently to be able to choose and succeed in public exams in music, producing results which would then justify music’s inclusion as an ‘academic’ subject. There seemed to be no widely agreed, coherent conception of the aims of music education at my site school and the responses and choices of most pupils acquiesce to this structural force which shapes outlooks and behaviour within the school and attitudes at home to the school’s curriculum.

Finlay however resists these structural forces in his ongoing task of developing the skills he needs to make music, enabled by the experiences he has had from his earliest memories of being involved with his parents' music-making, and his daily habits of playing and composing together with his brother or friends. As discussed in chapter 7 however the structural forces of his parents' own bias towards the perceived abilities of his younger brother may be seen as exerting a negative effect. Ms E recounted her sadness when Finlay's mother sat in her car outside the city's main concert hall while Finlay performed with the Samba band drawn from all the LEA schools. It was an exciting opportunity and a wonderful sound, yet his mum wouldn't come in to the building to listen, staying in her vehicle with Finlay's younger brother.

Finlay has also acted against these effects too, to move forwards with hard work and commitment to a craftsman-like attitude to learning in and outside of school. He exercises his agency in music lessons as he learns to steer the class's tasks to his own aims, supported by Ms E who allows him the space and freedom to hone his playing and inventing skills often in partnership with Matthew. Finlay has learned how to make school music work for him.



**Figure 8: 6 The contested role of music in the school curriculum and one pupil's determination to develop musical skills**

### **8.3 The music department: totalising conceptions of ‘musical knowing’ and pupils’ actions to subvert these: the drive for accessibility, the effects of performativity and the drive to be relevant**

Three strands of practice are drawn out from the fieldwork interviews and observations in the music department of the school and are explored here, setting them in the vertical context of the layers of educational realities which bear upon them, and the effects of individual and departmental agency in response to these structural forces. The resulting models of musical knowing in evidence in the music department are examined through the lens of Levinas’ ‘totality and infinity’, and in the light of his vision of teaching as ‘the breaking in of Infinity into the closed circle of Totality’.

#### **8.3.1 The drive for accessibility**

The current SQA Music Higher examination and the now obsolete Standard Grade Music exam which was still being taken at the time of my fieldwork, were reconceived in 2005 in order to allow those who did not learn a musical instrument outside of the classroom to be able to choose music as a curriculum choice at S3 (Year 9). The standard required to fulfil the exam requirements for the practical assessed element was reduced from about a Grade 7 ABRSM equivalent to Grade 4 for the Higher exam, and a grade lower for the Standard grade.

This had an effect upon the listening paper also, especially in view of the fact that pupils playing instruments previously at a more advanced level have often had to pass a Grade 5 theory of music examination through the ABRSM system.<sup>102</sup> The listening paper therefore had to be reshaped in order to accommodate a less advanced knowledge of how the notation of music and of how harmony functions. The format for the listening paper is now one of multiple choice questions, filling in missing terms and ticking boxes in a comparison exercise.

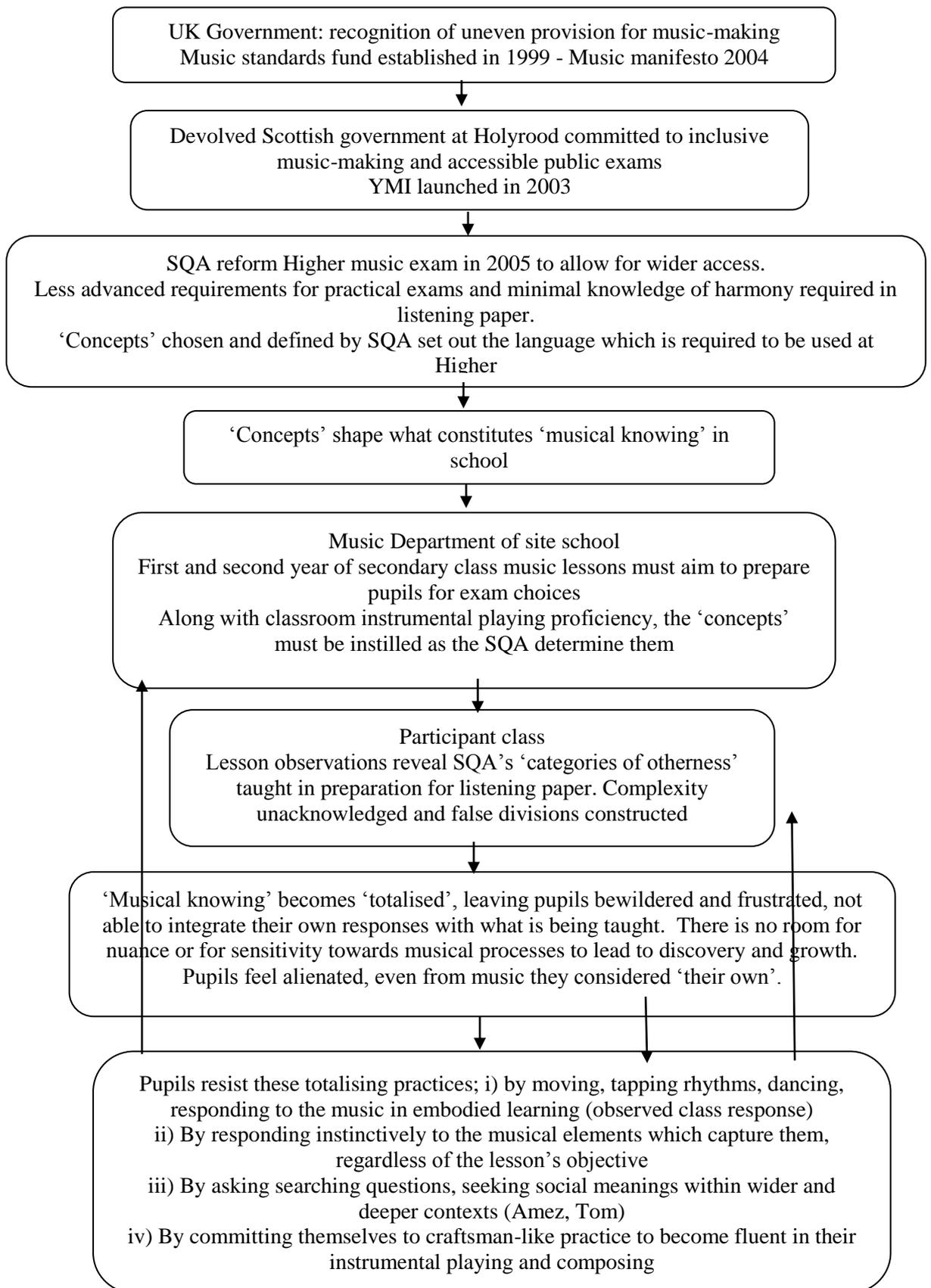
The SQA have chosen to employ a range of musical terms in a particular manner and pupils must be taught these ‘concepts’ and their specific definitions, which may diverge from other widely-held meanings for these terms. A ‘walking bass’ for instance is applied by the SQA to music from the Baroque period just as readily as to music from the blues and jazz eras. A

---

<sup>102</sup> Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music

designated ornamental ‘turn’ in an extract of music in an examination paper recently could in fact more readily be described in terms of the use of passing or auxiliary notes within the shape of a melody by another pupil, drawing upon a wider knowledge of musical terms. Yet there is no room in the exam question format for the written expression of nuance; candidates must simply choose which term suits the answer the best. In aiming to give clear definitions which can be easily learned in order to tackle the exam the SQA have settled upon meanings which have lost connection to wider musical practice and which have sometimes become nonsensical. They have constructed their own musical totality.

This phenomenon is clearly seen in the participant class’s response to an SQA-produced practice question which asked them which genre of ‘World Music’ an extract could be described as belonging to (discussed in chapter 7). The pupils heard familiar features Celtic sounds which evoked Scottish and Irish traditional music; they enjoyed the extract and expressed a sense of identification with this style as in some sense ‘local’ to them. The SQA however had categorised this extract as from Latin America, indicated by the background rhythms, but the music was in fact drawn from the Irish dance show ‘River Dance’, and had Celtic modalities, and traditional Irish instruments throughout the score. The pupils had picked out the attributes most obvious to them and had not labelled the music in the same way as the SQA, whose totalising practices left no room to acknowledge the validity of these pupils’ responses.



**Fig. 8: 7 Totalising practices in the shaping of 'musical knowing'**

### 8.3.2 The effects of performativity

Chapter 1 set out the wider political and educational landscape from the 1980's onwards in Britain, as in other Western nations, where increasingly market-oriented discourses affected how learning was conceived in schools. The notion of 'performativity' was discussed as a means of describing processes within contemporary educational systems whereby:

Through technological progress, the grand narratives of the enlightenment . . . have been superseded by an economy that privileges utility over truth, success over justice and information over knowledge.

(Munday, <http://www.philosophy-of-education.org/pdfs/Saturday/Munday.pdf> )

Practices associated with notions of performativity are in evidence as the pupils' experience of music-making in my site school are examined and set within the layered structures of the educational context. The drive to make music 'prove itself' as a curriculum subject, always apparently at the front of the head of faculty's mind when we talked in interviews, shaped the musical learning in school. Methods of assessment needed to be found to demonstrate that attainment in music could be as rigorous and quantifiable as in other subjects. The numbers of pupils opting for music as a choice for Standard and Higher grades must be kept up, and their results must show that the department is 'pulling its weight' alongside the other curriculum subjects.

The faculty head's approach has been to provide pupils with a workbook for learning basic musical notation, whilst developing early instrumental skills on instruments accessible within the classroom, alongside learning to categorise orchestral instruments in preparation for a future listening test required by the examination board. Lesson objectives, in accordance with school policy, are written upon the smart board at the outset of each lesson, with a requirement for pupils to record in their planners at the close whether this aim has been achieved or not.

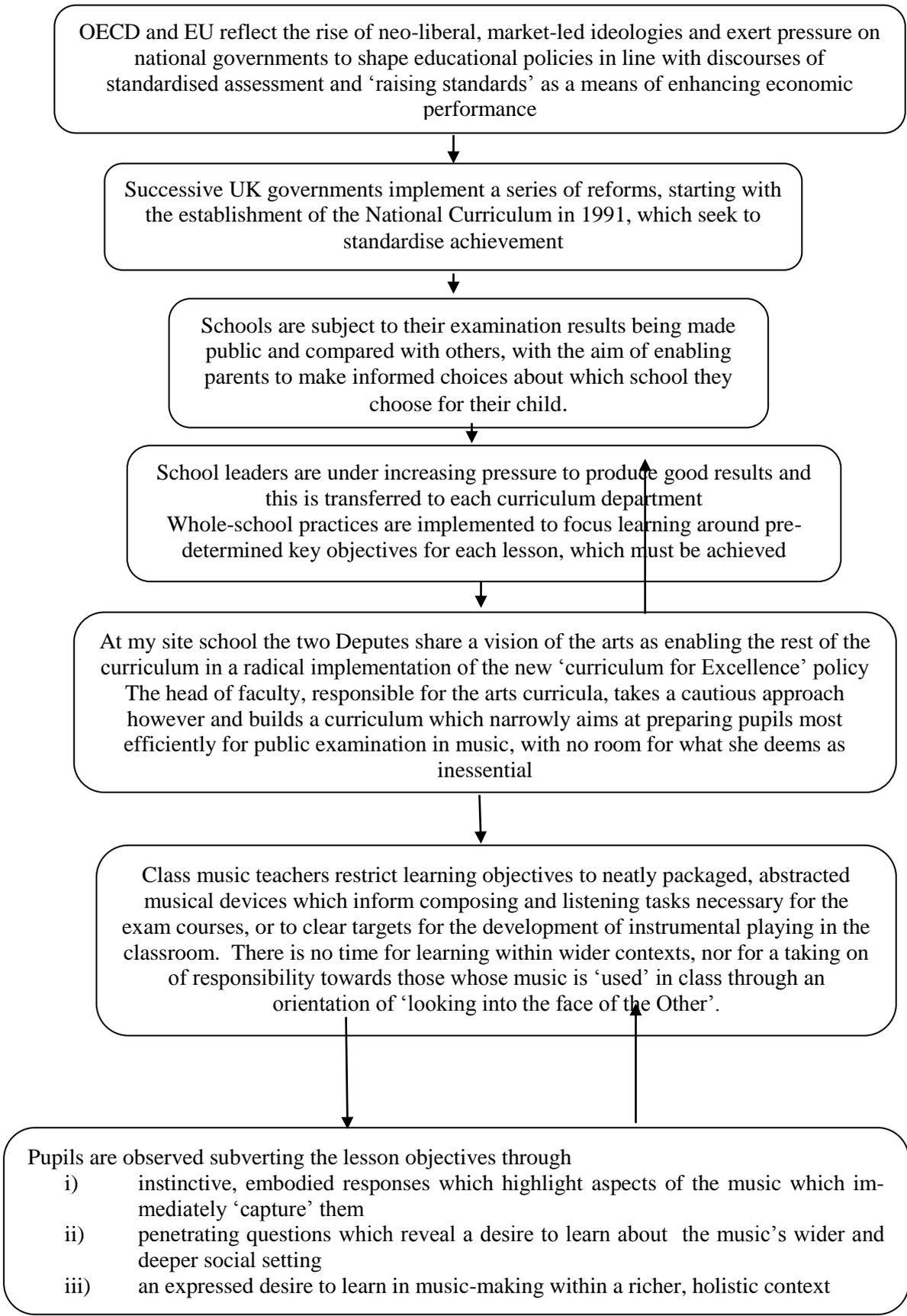
The music curriculum for the last two years of statutory provision at the school allows very little time for exploring musical expressions from around the world, as these are seen as relevant to so few marks on the examination papers that they could not justify inclusion in the curriculum, as explained to me by the class music teacher. There is no vision for the value of musical engagement with anything other than what is perceived to be directly applicable learning objectives shaped by the later examination courses.

### 8.3.3 Abstracting from another's whole

Classroom observation of the Gamelan lesson by a student teacher reveals examples of the various ways in which pupils endeavour to engage in a wider experience of learning than was scheduled through the lesson plan.

- i) The tapping out of rhythms, joining in with the performance on video, the unself-conscious trying out of hand gestures from the dancing point to an instinctive, embodied response to this new expression of music-making, which threatened to break open the lesson objective, which was to practise a pattern of pitches derived from the performance.
- ii) Amez's questions concerning the social relations and shared meanings amongst the performers of the Gamelan point to an attempt to deepen understanding in a broader context than was intended at the outset of the lesson, and his questions went largely unaddressed. An opportunity to look into the face of the Other, and a starting point for rich learning, was lost.
- iii) Tom's comment that 'You shouldn't just scrape off the top of the music' points to a desire to situate musical learning more deeply within a wider social, historical, and ethical setting in order to encounter more fully its meanings, in the faces of those who perform, share and generate these – to hear the voice of the Other.

The effect of the lesson, which otherwise held the pupils' attention and drew them into a place of encounter where my impression was they would happily have remained, was an abstraction of one musical device considered useful to pupils' learning from a rich whole which might have borne fruit in many possible directions musically, socially, philosophically and much more, for these pupils. This practice of abstraction indicates an unwillingness to look into the infinity of music in the face of another in the drive for efficient learning. In their observed actions and in their perspectives shared in interviews the pupils express a desire for a more holistic encounter, a call to responsibility to the teacher, pointing to a richer conception of music education which leads them to look into the face of the Other and draws them more deeply into the Infinity of music-making. Amez's questions, the embodied class responses and Tom's vision of richer learning reveal pupils exercising their agency against the prevailing educational forces which would bring about a 'narrowing set of truths' (Finney, 2011:130), an exercise of agency which seeks the 'the presence of infinity breaking the closed circle of totality' (Levinas, 1969: 171).



**Fig 8:8 The effects of 'performativity'**

### **8.3.4 The drive to be relevant**

The third example of totalising practices concerning musical knowing in the music department of my site school became evident as I watched an end of term, fun lesson. As recounted in section 5.6.2, Ms J took one boy's ipod as a punishment for noisy behaviour, and proceeded to present a quiz based upon the recorded tracks she found on the device. There was an apparent assumption that this would be relevant to the whole class, that everyone there would be familiar with these songs, that everyone listened to the same music outside of school and would be able to access this task.

She created a 'totality' in the lesson through her assumptions of Sameness, of what music was acceptable in school, of what is 'our music'. But there were many in the classroom who found themselves outside this totality, myself included. This time I observed no apparent examples of pupils finding ways to break out of this, except to withdraw from participation, sitting passively with an uncomfortable sense of exclusion and alienation, with teaching practices which oppressed, rather than drawing pupils to look into infinity in the face of the Other.

It is Tom who perhaps reveals an agential response to this kind of experience of totalising practices in music-making. He finds 'contemporary styles' to be violent and offensive and looks to 'music of the past' as a means of encountering the infinity of music-making, experiencing contemporary music as in some sense a deliberate turning away from the face of the Other, where electronic sounds replace acoustic ones, which he sees in terms of losing the sensitivity to timbre and to 'real sounds', a distancing from the face to face encounter.

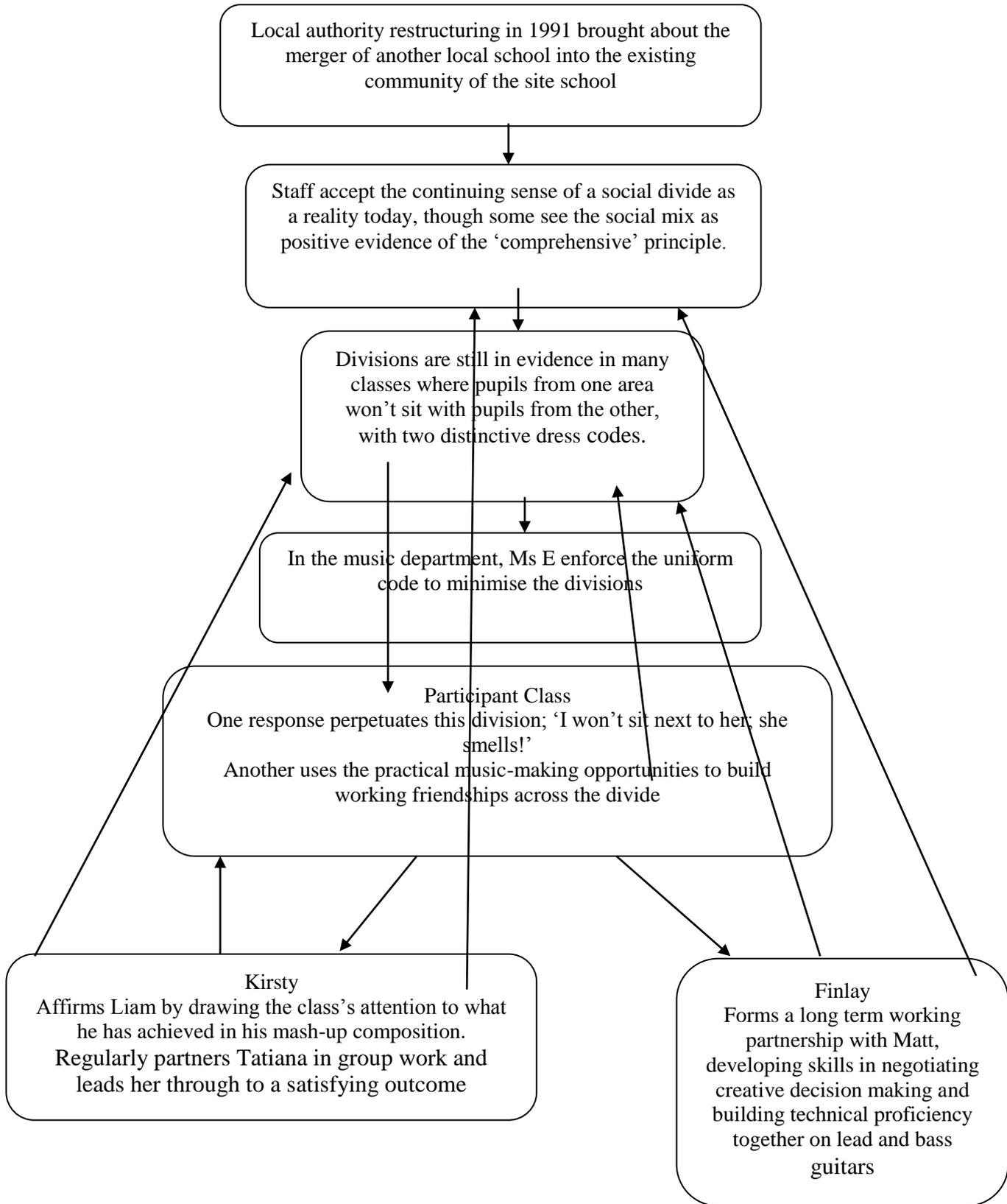
## **8.4 The sample music class**

### **8.4.1 The breaking of infinity into the closed circle of totalising social practices**

The head of Art's comments to me had helped me to make sense of the major social divide within the school discussed in chapter 7, but unusually my class were considered a much more integrated group. On reflection and in the light of perspectives drawn from pupils in interviews I began to see the ways in which individual pupils exercised their agency to counter this divisive social effect.

Kirsty and Finlay both chose to work with partners from across this social divide. Finlay has developed an effective and fruitful working relationship with Matt, producing some outstanding work together in a mature and skilled partnership. Kirsty chose regularly to work alongside Tatiana in a much more supportive role, leading Tatty gently through the practical task they'd been given, building her confidence and allowing her to feel good about a well-formed outcome. Kirsty's affirmation of Liam discussed in chapter 9 was striking in its public exhortation to him to show everyone how good his work was.

Kirsty's orientation towards those around her in the music lessons was one of openness, reaching out to those around her, especially those who were in some sense perceived as vulnerable, and self-giving in building up others. I witnessed this in other subject area lessons, but could observe the effects on a sustained basis only in music lessons. She was able to steer others into positive experiences of learning, affecting the atmosphere of the whole class. Through the exercise of her agency Kirsty in particular managed to counter the effects of the school-wide social divide. Her ethical orientation had a profound and lasting effect on the class throughout the academic year.



**Figure 8.9 A fault line through the school: the effect of a longstanding social division and the agential acts of pupils to transcend this**

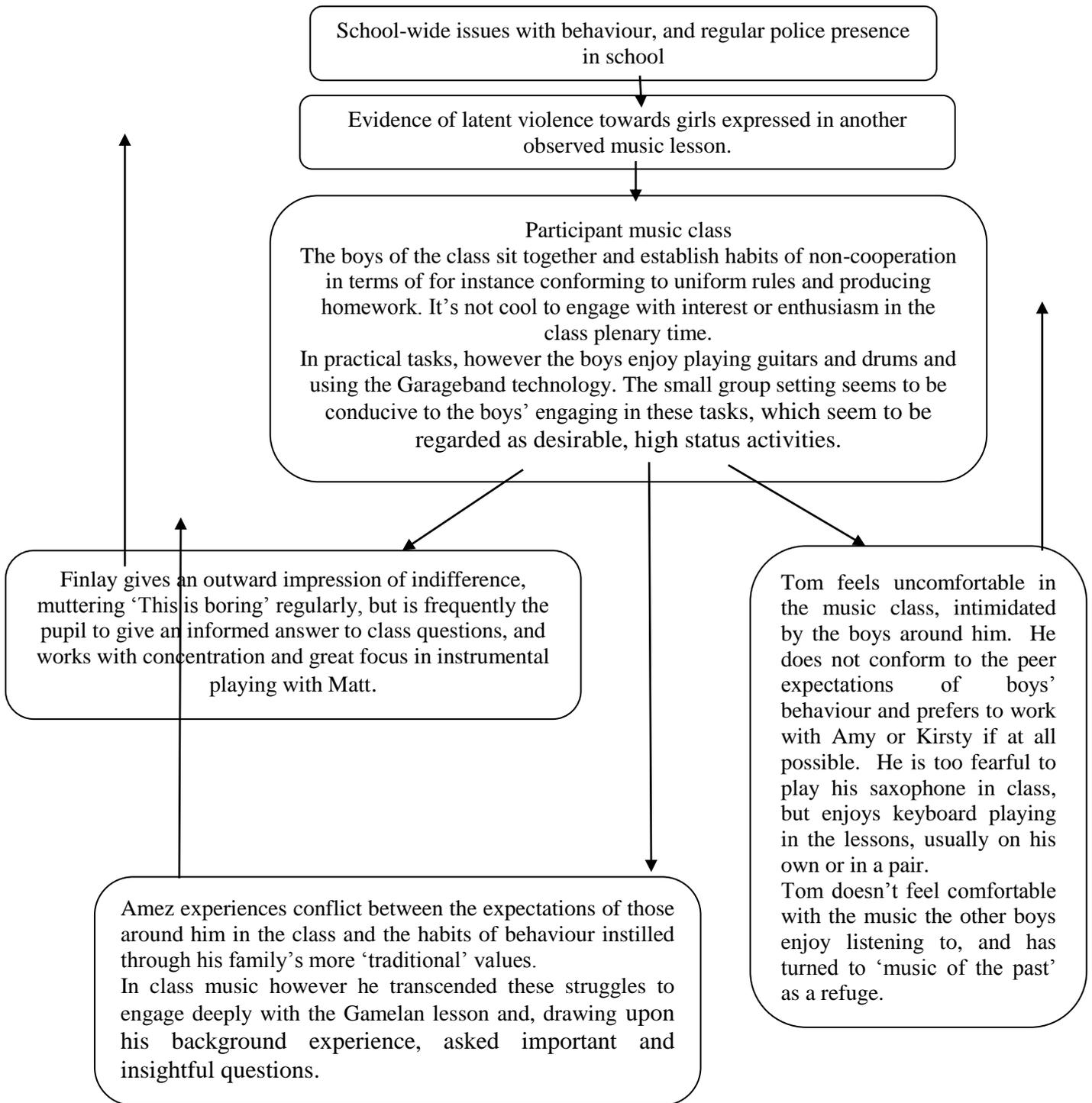
### **8.4.2 Peer expectations of boys' behaviour: struggles against totalising attitudes and practices**

The boys of the participant class seem to have established expectations of how boys should behave in music lessons. Every period would begin with an exchange with one or more concerning non-uniform items, for instance. Defiance would be sustained for as long as possible. A nonchalant and uninterested attitude was *de rigueur*, which served to heighten moments of deeper engagement.

Amez struggled with what seemed to be an inner tension between the respectful behaviour of his younger self, learned at home, and this surly, non-cooperation he witnessed around him in class. He would oscillate in his orientation from lesson to lesson, poised on a fulcrum. Occasionally Amez was really captured by an aspect of music-making and became completely caught up in the encounter with something new and unfamiliar, as in the lesson on Gamelan.

In interviews Tom alluded to the fact that I would be able to discern those boys around him in the music class who he felt uncomfortable alongside: 'I think you know who I mean'. Tom didn't conform to the expectations of the boys around him. On the whole they left him alone, but he was acutely aware that he didn't seem to belong in the group of the rest of the boys. Tom's response to this was similar to his response to the 'contemporary music' he disliked for what he perceived as its 'offensiveness': he delved into his own preferences for music from past times, where he felt more at home.

Alongside this seeming retreat, however, Tom had developed habits of remaining open, of respecting the views and preferences of those around him and of seeking engagement with the world around him. In this exercise of his agency Tom showed courage and resilience in resisting the totalising practices he saw around him and remaining open to the Other and to the infinity of the world around him.



**Fig. 8:10 Expectations of boys' behaviour in the music class: three pupils find ways of resisting the totality**

## Reflection

This chapter has sought to set the study of pupils' experiences and perspectives of music-making within the framework of a critical realist study, where face-to-face research encounters are placed within a vertical representation of emergent structural layers of reality which exert social forces upon the pupils, upon their teachers and upon the authorities who provide and shape the educational environment. Following the thinking of Margaret Archer (1995) these layers interact with the groups and individuals concerned, who may exercise their agency to resist the structural forces, and eventually to change and reshape them. These structural forces are 'relatively enduring' and exert influence over varying time-scales, so that a complex picture of a stratified reality emerges, always provisional and transient, but allowing significantly for the transcending of social situation through the exercise of the agency of groups and individuals.

Margaret Archer emphasises the important role critical realism plays, in contrast to social constructionism, in allowing for the possibility that people will seek to replace societies' rules and change their practices through the exercise of their agency, 'forged in the space *between* the self and reality as a whole' (Archer et al, 2004: 66). My study has not been extensive enough to be able to trace through any transformation of emergent forces through the exercise of pupils' agency, but in exploring how pupils in this study respond to emergent social forces acting upon them in their experience of music-making at school, valuable insights are gleaned which provide a basis for establishing practices of ethical music-making in the classroom. Their abilities to subvert totalising practices and open windows of possibility can shape a vision for the role of the music teacher and for bringing into the classroom the *infinity* of music-making through 'practices of facing'. The following chapter draws together these insights into recommendations for future practice and resituates the discussion in the wider context of national and international policy-making for education.

# Chapter 9:

## 'Practices of facing'

---

## Introduction

The previous chapter set pupils' experiences of music-making within the layered social structures which form 'relatively enduring' forces acting upon them. It explored the ways in which the pupils taking part in my study exercised their agency to subvert 'totalising' practices and to transcend the 'narrow set of truths' offered in their music classroom. This concluding chapter draws together my findings presented in Chapters 5 to 8 and considers how the study as a whole has addressed the third research question:

What light does Levinas shed on conceptualisations of music-making as 'ethical encounter'?

How do pupils encounter the Other through music-making?

**What might characterise ethical music education?**

The early stages of the thesis set out the current educational policy priorities both nationally and internationally, identifying the emphasis on assessments, standards and performativity as problematic for arts and music education in particular. This introduced the milieu within which music education operates at present in Britain, highlighting the challenges faced by music teachers and the need for an ethical basis for music education.

Thinking in music education research over the past three decades was set out in Chapter 2, tracing the development of conflicting conceptions of music education through to the current situation where notions of 'musicking' as modelling ideal relationships (Small, 1998), music-making as 'hospitable' (Higgins, 2007) and as 'ethical encounter' (Bowman, 2000) constitute the conceptual starting point for my study. In Chapter 3 two main strands of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas were explored to form a theoretical lens through which to view my findings before a critical realist framework and the research design for the fieldwork were set out in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 situated my fieldwork within the social and educational structures surrounding my pupil participants' experience of music-making. The stories of these pupils were told in Chapter 6, and their perspectives on music-making and experiences of encountering the Other through music-making were subjected to the Levinasian lens in Chapter 7 to bring to light pupils' 'practices of facing'. Chapter 8 makes explicit pupils' resistance to 'totalising' practices and their practices of 'staying open' as an exercising of their agency in response to the structural forces acting or having the potential to act upon them. Drawing insights from pupils' 'practices of facing' this concluding chapter seeks to take forward notions from the literature of 'music as ethical encounter',

pointing to a reorientation of thinking about music education where ‘practices of facing’ might shape ethical practice in the future.

## **9.1 Reflection on findings: Contribution to thinking within music education**

Chapter 7 closed with a series of questions arising from the exploration of pupils’ perspectives on music-making and their encounters with the Other through the theoretical Levinasian lens developed in Chapter 3:

- What would the consequences be of a conception of music-making as ‘speaking the world to the Other’, as first of all an ‘ethical gesture’ (Levinas, 1969: 173-174)?
- What would it mean if in the music classroom we understood music-making as first of all an act of reaching out to ‘look into the face of the Other’, countenancing difference without totalising practices?
- What would it mean for music to be embraced as complex and rich in context within the music classroom?
- What would it mean for *knowing* in the music classroom to be open to the ‘infinity’ of the subject?
- What if aesthetic encounter were understood as ethical endeavour?
- What if the striving for technical perfection were seen as ethical endeavour?
- What happens if we understand musical performance as drawing others into a face-to-face encounter with the Other?
- What happens if we conceive of musical performance as akin to ‘teaching’ in its presenting of the Other?
- What if we allow the music profession to be transformed by this reorientation?

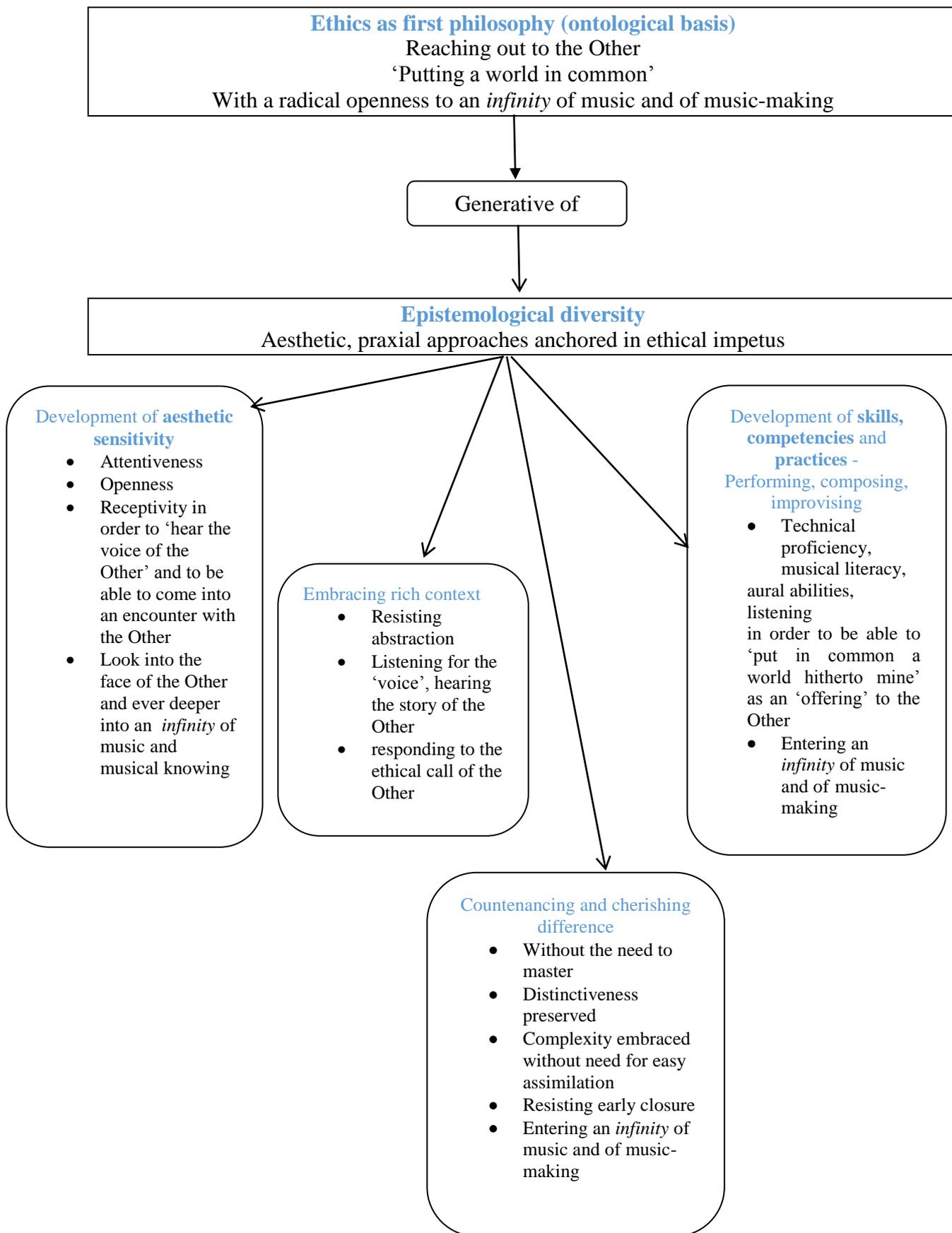
These questions reflect the process undertaken in Chapter 7 of extending Levinas’ thinking into areas of aesthetic experience with which he was reluctant to engage, and of considering his work in the light of more recent conceptualisations of music-making as *modelling ideal relationships*, as *ethical encounter* and as the practice of *hospitality*. The following section makes explicit the steps taken in this study in developing further these strands through the thinking of Levinas and sets out how *practices of facing* within a Levinasian *looking into the face of the other* might provide a robust ethical underpinning for thinking about and for reorienting practice in music education, in particular bringing together aesthetic and praxial notions as stemming from one initial ethical impetus – the reaching out to the Other and *putting a world in common*.

### 9.1.1 Music education *Otherwise*: An ethical basis for music education in the light of Levinas

- In bringing the work of Levinas to bear upon thinking in music education research this study suggests that the primary orientation of music education, and of education more widely, should be to bring pupils into an encounter with the Other, enabling ‘the presence of infinity breaking the closed circle of totality’.
- ‘The Other’ indicates a spectrum from:
  - i) my immediate neighbour: the pupil next to another pupil in the classroom, the pupil in relationship with me as teacher, the neighbour who teaches Amez the drumsto:
  - ii) the more distant Other of the ‘world music’ lesson, whose musical expressions are brought into the classroom, and into an encounter with whom the teacher seeks to draw the classand:
  - iii) the infinite Other that is music-making as a social activity, a discipline, an area of the curriculum and a ‘musical work’, which teachers seek to draw pupils further into, and into which teachers themselves seek to enter further, with no end to the processes of learning.
- This underlying ethics forms an ontological basis for music education which generates diverging epistemological approaches.
  - i) *Aesthetic models of music education* emphasise the development of *aesthetic sensitivity*, drawing pupils into the infinity of music as they look into the ‘face’ of the Other as they make music together, whose music is being explored, or into a work of art, functioning as an Other with form and expressivity, through which the voice of another may be heard. As aesthetic sensitivity develops pupils are more able to discern the face, or the ‘voice’ of the Other and to be responsive to the ethical ‘call’ they find there.
  - ii) *Praxial models of music education* emphasise the learning of skills within a tradition of music-making which enable pupils to ‘offer the world to the Other’, ‘putting in common a world’ hitherto their own. The pursuit of excellence in performing and composing allows pupils to come into encounter

with the Other more fully as they become more proficient in drawing in their audience to the 'world' they share with them.

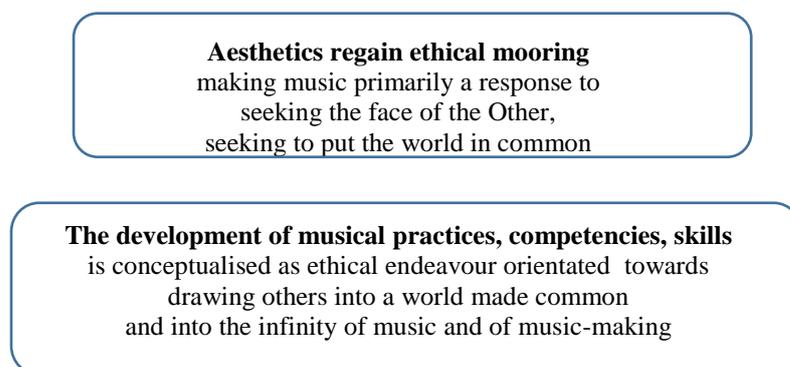
- A radical reorientation towards openness to the infinity of the Other allows pupils to encounter the music of other cultural settings without needing to colonise or dominate. The voice of the Other is allowed to speak within their own rich, cultural context and leaves a 'trace' which changes pupils, musically and ethically.
- In this journey of encounter and responsivity pupils don't 'return to the same place', as Ulysses did, but find themselves changed, in a different place as Abraham did, deeply challenged, able to experience a transcendence of their own situation and circumstances, finding new musical worlds, new strengths or sensitivities, deeper relationships and responsibilities.
- The *hospitality* of which Lee Higgins writes is a response to the ethical call in the face of the Other. Shared cultural forms allow the Other to come to belong as well as to remain distinctive, different.
- The outward-turning nature of this Levinasian orientation within music education grounds musical experience in terms of relationship with and responsibility towards the Other. It reorients the intention of self-expression towards a 'putting a world in common with the Other', giving a fresh rationale for developing technical skill and excellence.



**Figure 9:1 An ethical basis for music education in the light of Levinas**

Levinas' thinking offers us a re-envisioning of music education where his 'ethics as first philosophy' underpins our understanding, as represented in Figure 9:1. Prior to any ways of conceptualising how music education functions is the primary orientation outwards, towards the Other, and the first ethical impulse to reach out and 'put a world in common'. This requires a 'radical openness to infinity' of music-making as a practice and music as a discipline, a subject, a curriculum area. This 'ontological basis' generates a plurality of epistemological approaches which enable and explore different aspects of music-making, but which all spring from the initial ethical impetus of music-making as 'putting a world in common'.

A shared orientation grounds contrasting practices and conceptualisations and renders them compatible, complementary and consonant with one another, recontextualising the contested ideologies explored in Chapter 2 (Figure 9:2). The development of *aesthetic sensitivity* through an appreciation of music as 'works' to be explored, conceptualised as the *infinity* of an Other, for instance, enables the *skills* required for pupils to come into encounter with the Other, to discern the Other's voice, to engage, stay in the present moment and respond musically and ethically. A growing sensitivity towards musical timbre and form enables us to perceive the 'face', the 'voice' of the Other. The development of compositional techniques and the pursuit of excellence in performance skills is oriented towards encounters with others and the Other of the music.

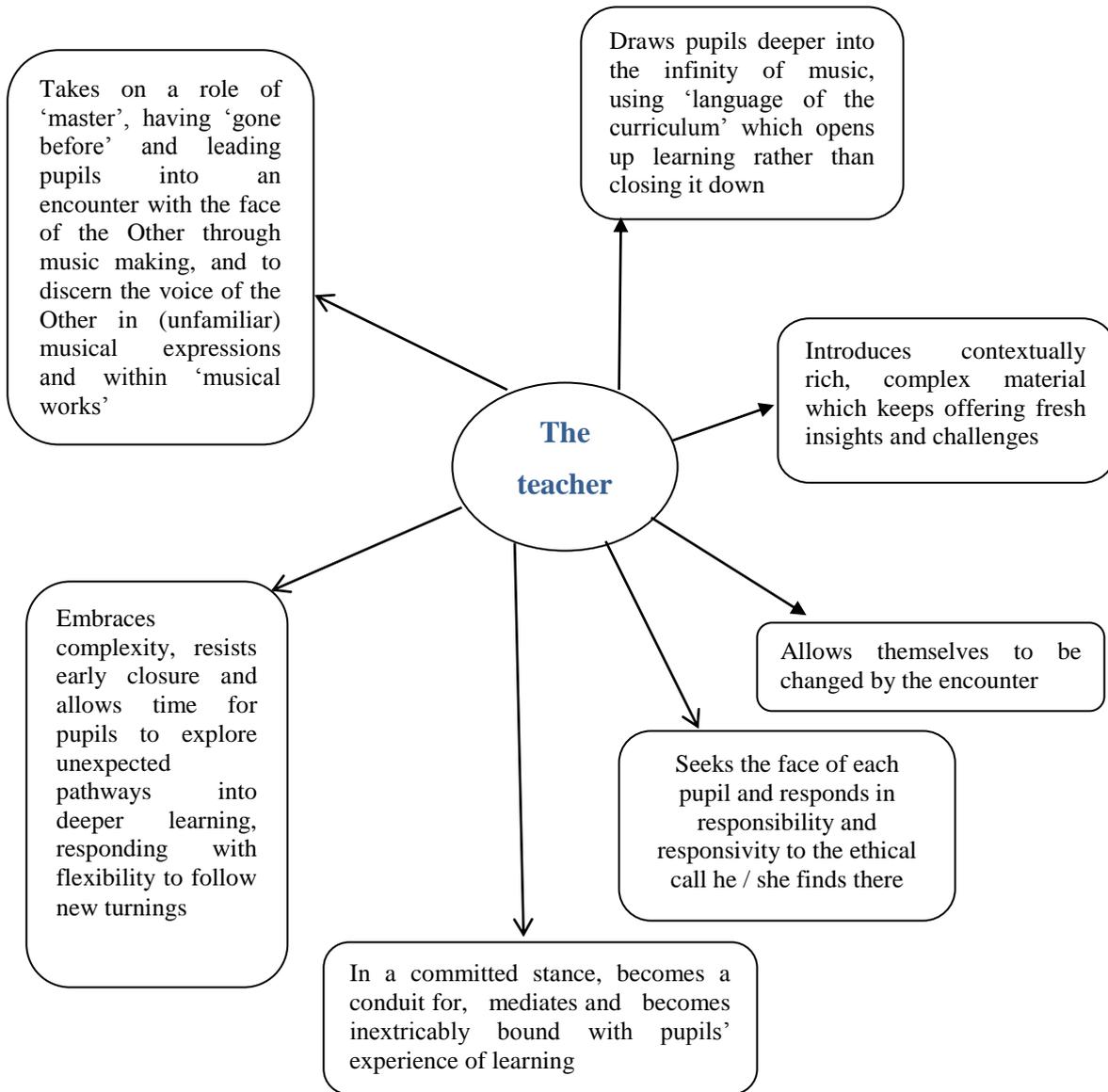


**Figure 9:2 Contested notions recontextualised**

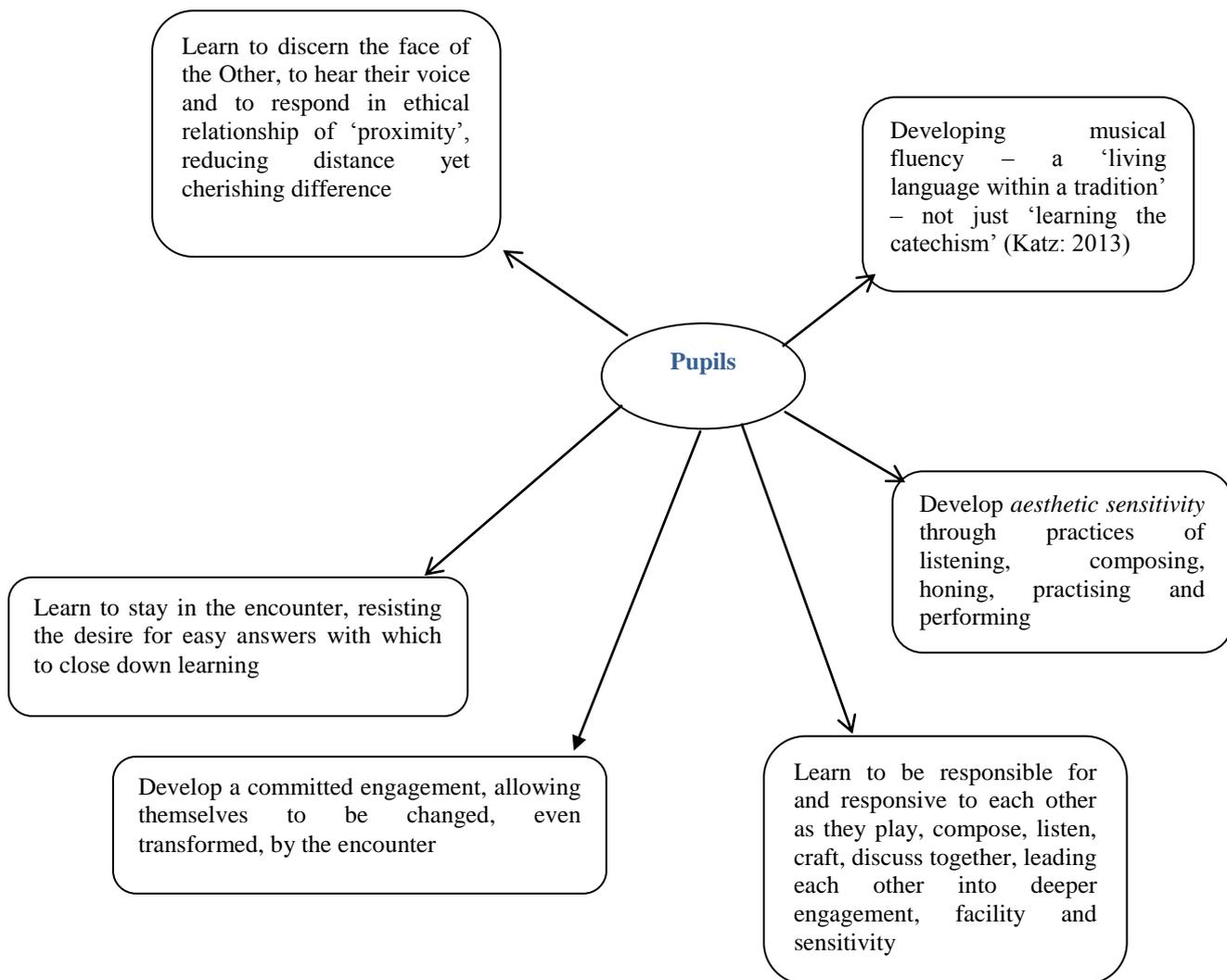
### **9.1.2 What might characterise ethical practice in the music classroom?**

Figures 9:3 and 9:4 suggest the orientation of teacher and pupils in the light of this study's findings. The teacher's role presented here stands in direct conflict with elements of current practice, where lesson objectives must be stated then assessed at each end of the lesson, where prescribed terminology must be used within parameters set by the Scottish

examination board for instance (SQA) and which tend towards the choice of easily assimilated and assessable tasks and musical material.



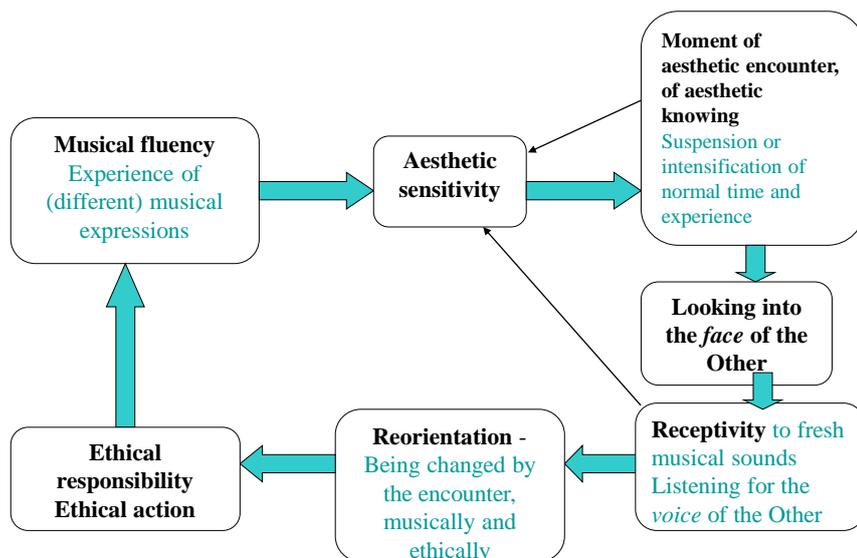
**Figure 9:3 Orientation of the teacher**



**Figure 9:4 Orientation of the pupils**

Pupils will enter this *infinity* of musical experience to varying extents, in contrasting ways, exploring different aspects and areas. All may not develop a technical proficiency such as Finlay's or be able to discern social meanings in the way Amez sought to do, nor will every pupil seek to build up their peers through critical appraisal of their music-making as Kirsty does. The Levinasian underpinning suggested here however allows for a rich diversity of musical experience in the classroom within a well-grounded ethical context. Figure 9:6 develops this outlook to conceptualise what happens when pupils come into an encounter with the Other (as set out in 9.1.1) in their class music lesson, or in the course of music-making beyond the classroom. As pupils build up experiences of listening, performing and composing they develop musical fluency in playing, listening to and talking about music through which aesthetic sensitivity can grow, which enables them to embrace arresting

moments of intensification allowing pupils to perceive the *face* or the *voice* of the Other and to linger and be responsive.<sup>103</sup> This involves both a musical response where new sounds and devices are encountered, embraced and explored, and opens up possibilities for an ethical response - a reorientation and a ‘being changed’ – having the potential to develop into something richer perhaps than the notion of what curriculum documents have sometimes termed ‘cultural understanding’.<sup>104</sup> The smaller arrows in the diagram represent the virtuous circle as the practice of one aspect feeds backs into the further refinement of another. An experience of ‘being changed by the encounter’ has the potential for ethical action understood both as a response to the near or distant human Other and as an entering further into the *infinity* of music and of music-making. Such experiences have the potential to lead to deeper, more transformative subsequent encounters as skills are honed and practised.



**Figure 9:5 Model of ethical encounter in the music classroom**

<sup>103</sup> Figure 2:6 suggests that *aesthetic sensitivity* denotes an attentiveness to localised meanings and the ability to gather in the riches of the physical and the spiritual.

<sup>104</sup> For instance the National Curriculum for Music document of 2007 which had included ‘Cultural understanding’ as one of five ‘key concepts’.

## 9.2 Reflection on findings: Contribution to thinking about music-making and about *musicking*

At the close of Chapter 2 the clarification of terms in Figure 2:4 makes clear that my preference for the use of *music-making* over Christopher Small's *musicking* aims to allow room for *aesthetic* processes, understood as *agential*. It allows for the possibility that ethical encounters might be understood to take place in any context of music-making, even the Western concert hall. Small criticised the practices of the concert hall as dehumanising in that the audience remains supposedly inert. These practices, he maintained, prevent the communication between the participants of the 'music event'. Odendaal *et al* (2014) however suggest:

In a more extensive sense, it should make no difference what musical-cultural genre is in question: there can be practices of musicking in any culture, and it is the task of general music educators to help people to participate in them. While Small builds his argument against dehumanising musical practices on the empirical differences he finds between (certain) African or Afrodiasporic and European musical systems of agency, his more general argument seems to be that whatever music we are involved with, there is always a possibility to 'do' it in a way that promotes ethical relationships between people immersed in community life (Odendaal *et al*, 2014:172).

Small avoids engaging with ethical considerations, with how 'doing it' might be characterised.

Levinas reacted strongly against the idea of the 'art religion' spawned by nineteenth century German aesthetics,<sup>105</sup> but brought into conversation with Small's thinking Levinas' philosophy opens out possibilities for music-making in any cultural setting to take on an ethical orientation.<sup>106</sup> While seeking a conceptualisation of music-making which does not allow a Western 'aesthetic' outlook to dominate our understanding of all music-making, ethical practice may be found amongst Western art musicians too. Small's conception is of meanings generated as people come together to make music:

---

<sup>105</sup> 'In art-religion, instead of art being an aid to ritual or worship. . . art itself became an object of devotion' . . . Carl Dahlhaus traces the term 'art-religion' to Friedrich Schleimacher's 1799 lectures on religion (Dahlhaus, 1989:89)' (Warren, 2014:145).

<sup>106</sup> In recent years I have witnessed examples of ethical practice in the course of my professional life within the traditional, nineteenth-century-rooted 'classical' music world. Appendix ( ) gives a description of two contrasting settings where young conductors have established practices of 'looking into the face of the Other' which have brought about new social and *aesthetic* ways of knowing.

Musical performance is an encounter between human beings where meanings are being generated, and that those meanings are bigger than simply the meanings of which a musical work is assumed to be the bearer. Like all human encounters it takes place within a physical and a social space, and that space makes its own meanings, which have to be taken into account as well when we ask what meanings are being generated by a performance (Small, 1999:13-14).

He goes on:

The experience of musicking is much richer and more complex than conventional Western aesthetics allows, since in experiencing the relationships of the performance we are experiencing the relationships of the wider world as we conceive them to be and as we believe they ought to be. Once again, we are not observing those relationships from the outside but are actively involved, each one of us, in their creation and their maintenance (ibid: 19).

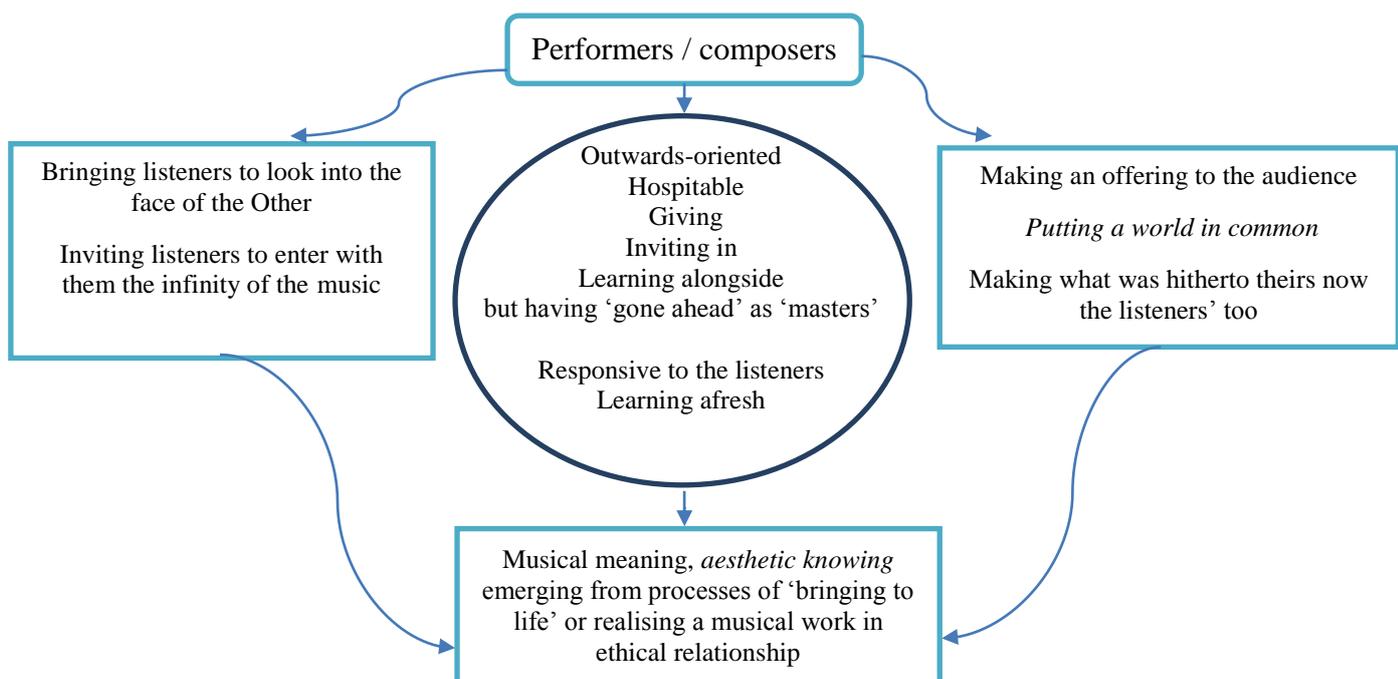
Small stresses the embodied, working out and emerging of socio-musical meaning through the processes of making music together.<sup>107</sup> Taking Small's contention that music-making is 'much richer and more complex' than a Western outlook has often allowed for, the conclusion of this thesis is that the Levinasian reorientation developed throughout this study provides an ethical underpinning for Small's 'musicking', a philosophical basis for 'an individual's, and a society's, quest for those right relationships which most of us spend our lives seeking' (ibid: 20), where *practices of facing* bring about a *looking into the face of the Other* in music-making:

- A conception of music-making as at its first impetus 'speaking the world to the Other', as first of all an 'ethical gesture', reorients the performer and the listener towards outward-turning and receptivity. A performance is an 'offering', a 'making common what was hitherto mine'. This lays an ethical imperative upon performers, but also upon composers (in traditions where these roles are distinct) to develop an outward-turned orientation, putting themselves at risk in an act of generosity.
- Performers and composers invite the audience to join them in their encounter with the infinity of a piece of music, where musical meaning takes shape through the ethical relating between performers and with the audience, who experience a deepening of *aesthetic knowing*.

---

<sup>107</sup> 'The act of musicking will bring into existence a complex web of relationships for the duration of the performance. At the centre of that web are the relationships that the performers create between the sounds. Radiating out from these, and feeding back to them, are the relationships among the performers, between the performers and the listeners should there be any apart from the performers, and with the composer, should there be one apart from the performer, and with anyone else who may be present' (ibid:16).

- Performers seek to draw their audience further into the infinity of the music, having gone before as ‘masters’ in a relationship akin to teaching, whilst at the same time learning afresh alongside the audience in a responsive relationship of responsibility.
- In the context of music-making in a concert hall the conductor’s role is akin to the teacher’s – one who has gone before and who through their experience can invite players further into the infinity of the music, in a journey where processes of learning for both performers and conductor never end.
- Just as learning is inseparable from the ‘face’ who teaches, so in the Western concert hall the conductor mediates the experience of the music, staying responsive to the needs and expressivity of players, changing and shaping the musical discourse in an ethical relating.



**Figure 9:6 Model of ethical encounter in music-making**

## 9.3 Implications of this study

### 9.3.1 Two further implications for thinking within music education research

The Levinasian orientation to music-making and music education developed throughout this study offers a philosophical underpinning to thinking within the field of music education, an ethical basis on which to build *practices of facing* woven throughout contrasting epistemological approaches and diverse cultural practices. Building upon this reorientation set out in 9.1.1 and upon the recontextualisation of contested notions of Figure 9:3, two further implications are considered here:

i) **An ethical underpinning for empathic learning in music education**

Valuable research in recent years has thrown light on the links between musical engagement in groups and increased levels of empathy in children, in the work of Laurence (2005, 2006) and of Rabinowitch, Cross and Burnard (2013) for instance. For Levinas however empathy is fraught with dangers of ‘reducing the Other to a common ground with the self’ (Todd, 2012: 51) as discussed in section 4.4.6. Todd sets out contrasting conceptualisations of empathy and elucidates how Levinas’ thinking goes beyond these:

Feeling with others cannot lead to transcendence, for it blurs the distinction between self and Other that Levinas is so adamant to maintain. What matters for empathy in this view is not whether it bridges the divide of difference . . . but to what degree it maintains this divide through respecting the Other’s alterity (ibid: 52).

Todd suggests, ‘The point is not to see empathy as the starting point for moral concern’ and continues, ‘Learning through empathy cannot but mask . . . the Other’s radically different feelings, experiences, and needs as unique’ (ibid: 63):

The emotional responses of pupils to the experiences of others become the starting point for our ethical adventure with the Other, and for our pedagogical work . . . This is the time in which we begin to help them make connections to their own implications in the lives of others. Thus every emotional response is pedagogically fruitful, since it reveals an implicit struggle with the ethical aspects of encountering difference’. (ibid: 146)

These emotional responses are elicited through a deepening aesthetic sensitivity which learns to perceive the *face of the Other* in and through music-making. The Levinasian orientation offered here grounds these responses conceptually in an ethical framework of responsibility to the Other in their alterity - a radical openness to *infinity*.

ii) **A valuing of *aesthetic sensitivity* and *aesthetic knowing* as agential**

Chapter 8 draws out pupils' exercising of their agency through music-making in order to 'come to belong' within social groupings in school as with Amy, or to become 'Scottish', positioned within a local social grouping of football supporters and to build relationships with his neighbour as with Amez, to linger or take pleasure in new sounds, as with Amy, to take new musical experiences and assimilate them through practising in and outside of the classroom, as with Finlay in order to identify as a *musician*, or to build up others in the classroom setting, as Kirsty does. Here aesthetic engagement is not detached from but intimately bound up in pupils' negotiating of their everyday experience in the active shaping of their lives.

Aesthetic sensitivity becomes agential, even subversive of oppressive discourses. Tom resists conformist social and commercial pressures by treasuring sounds from the 1940's and 50's which seem to embody values he holds to. The pupils who *move* to the SQA's CD track, tapping, playing 'air castanets' and swaying, subvert the intended outcome of early closure by a form of aesthetic knowing which claims the music as their own, resisting the 'right answer' as prescribed by the exam board. Aesthetic sensitivity becomes agential in resisting pressures of performativity which tend to offer an impoverished experience of encountering the *infinity* of music-making through totalising conceptions of *coming to know* (Marcuse, 1974, 2007; Abbs, 2003).<sup>108</sup>

### **9.3.2 Implications for the classroom**

Following section 9.1.2 and Figure 9:1, which set out a reconceptualisation of music education in the light of Levinas, five implications for practice in the music classroom are considered here:

i) **Class music teacher as a *master who has gone before***

The Levinasian orientation developed throughout this study suggests the role of teacher as *master* rather than the *facilitator* of community music practice (Levinas, 1969:180; Higgins,

---

<sup>108</sup> For Abbs the subversion extends to consumerist culture (Abbs, 2003: 2). Perhaps *aesthetic sensitivity* might be cherished in school as offering a critical response to prevailing cultural pressures of consumerism which come to bear upon pupils.

2012:147-166).<sup>109</sup> For Levinas the master is radically Other to the student and poses as ‘the necessary outside from which any knowledge of the world is made possible for the student’, teaching ‘nonviolently’, radically opposed to the exertion of power or control (Todd, 2008: 173-5).<sup>110</sup> It is through the encounter with Otherness that learning occurs. Robert Gibbs observes:

Teaching in Levinas’ sense teaches me the possibility of an otherness that does not stand on the same plane as me, does not contest me, but opens me and in so doing finds me’. (Gibbs, 2000: 33)

The teacher has *gone before* and can bring pupils into an encounter with the face of the Other, the *infinity* of music and music-making through experience and training, and the face or *voice* of the human Other, near or distant. At the same time the teacher learns alongside their pupils, always entering more deeply into *infinity*, always open to being transformed - changed too by the face-to-face encounters with pupils and their music-making.

#### **ii) Being responsive, allowing *infinity* to break in**

The music teacher’s role is to welcome the ‘presence of infinity breaking the closed circle of totality’ in the classroom (Levinas, 1969: 171), taking time for instance to explore the pupil’s question which doesn’t fit into the lesson objective, as Amez’s question didn’t fit, but which might lead to a deeper learning; or to enjoy difference, what’s strange and unfamiliar, without the need to ‘understand’, to categorise or tidy up as Amy had learned to do, leaving *knowing* open and unfinished.

#### **iii) Embracing complexity**

Musical material offered to pupils in the class lesson is rich and complex. The teacher doesn’t ‘scrape off the top’ as Tom observes but makes connections and sets the music within a wider musical, social and political *infinity*. This doesn’t mean that what is encountered should be difficult to gain access to as, through the *language of the curriculum*, the music teacher responsibly and responsively brings pupils to look into the face, or rather

---

<sup>109</sup> Todd explores Levinas’ notion of the teacher as *master*, described by Derrida as a ‘strange and difficult thought of teaching – a magisterial teaching’ (Derrida, 1999:17). Todd writes, ‘The shift away from an idea of teaching as facilitation to teaching as that which comes from the Other – the master and stranger – is, perhaps, at first glance a particularly unappetising morsel to swallow. Indeed as a model for education it seems downright indigestible’ (Todd, 2008: 172).

<sup>110</sup> ‘The teacher does not rule over the pupil in any way, nor does the *master* constitute itself through a Hegelian relation of interdependence’ (ibid).

to hear the voice, of the Other, into *infinity*. This may be hard to assess in easily assimilated criteria, but will have the potential to draw pupils into deeper and deeper learning as they enter further its *infinity*.

**iv) A living language – not just *learning the catechism***

As a teacher and teacher-trainer Levinas considered the learning of ancient Hebrew in the context of a Jewish education to be of vital importance in enabling pupils to enter into ‘living conversations that keep the text dynamic rather than static’. He contrasts the *static* catechism which is taught within Catholic schools to the *opening up* of the text which occurs when the original language is learned, allowing ‘multiple voices and interpretations to emerge’ (Katz, 2012: 214). If pupils within the music classroom are encouraged to develop a *musical fluency* in performing, listening and composing, attentive ‘to the relationships created between people, sounds and places’, learning the ‘common tongue of musicking’ (Odendaal et al, 2014: 173), and an accompanying *fluency in talking together about* and finding meaning in music-making, then its *infinity* of social, political, historical, aesthetic, emotional and spiritual meanings opens up to them ever more deeply.

**v) Avoiding early closure - questions which *open up* rather than *close down***

When the pupils whose music class I observed in my field study were faced with categorising an excerpt from an examination type question set by the exam board, they experienced the ‘violence’ that Levinas described as resulting from ‘totalising’ practices. Their recognition of this music as in some sense ‘theirs’, and their joyful, embodied responses to it, was closed down by the assertion of the ‘correct’ label. Yet the excerpt might have yielded whole worlds of musical exploration, and discovery too of what had occurred as one culture’s musical expressions had met another’s. Instead pupils were crestfallen and sensed they had ‘failed’. Similarly when SQA listening examination paper questions require ticks in multiple choice boxes they leave no room for another response which might be equally valid in a wider musical context. This is an ethical question. Forms of musical knowing which shut down learning and disallow alternative interpretations are doing violence to the pupil.

### 9.3.3. Implications for educational structures

What implications does this study have for educational structures such as those identified as exerting influence upon the experience of pupils' music-making at school in my field study? What would it entail to establish 'practices of facing' within these?

#### i) **The model of knowing in the classroom – an ethical issue**

There can be no reconciliation between totalising practices of knowing and a fruitful *cultural understanding* or *social cohesion* agenda, as totalising forms of knowing do violence to the Other under this Levinasian perspective. Returning to the discussion in Chapter 1 (section 1.2.3) of the role of the arts in policy aims, neither can innovative communities be effectively encouraged through learning within totalising models. The experiences of the participants in my field study, for instance Amez's more searching questioning, suggest that pupils must fight against totalising discourses in the classroom in order to think more widely and creatively. What sort of model of *knowing* is prescribed by policy-makers for the classroom is an *ethical* issue.

#### ii) **Educational policy makers must allow for the *messiness* and the *costliness* of ethical encounters in learning**

If the presence of *infinity* is to be allowed to 'break the closed circle of totality' in the music classroom then lesson aims and objectives must be *responsive* to infinity breaking in. The tyranny of tidy predictions of outcomes may inhibit deeper learning as Amez found, and the quest for easily achievable, assessable objectives may tend towards moulding lesson tasks into abstracted, decontextualized exercises which deny the 'whole' and don't attend to the 'voice' of the Other (See section 5.6.1). Levinas insists that the relationship to the other is not a comfortable one, but costly and transformative. Meaningful encounters require lingering in the place of perceiving and looking into the face of the Other and responding to the ethical call found there. The student teacher I observed in my field study had effectively brought pupils to an encounter with the face of the Other but had to hurry them on to more tangible and assessable tasks.

#### iii) **Taking responsibility**

A Levinasian outlook involves teachers taking on a *responsibility* beyond that of delivering curricula and fulfilling lesson objectives. Returning to Chapter 1's discussion of Biesta's quest for a way through *managerial accountability* and Bauman's assertion that 'the rules do

not save us from responsibility', this study's findings imply a rekindling of teachers' professional judgement in taking responsibility both for how and what kind of *knowing* is nurtured in the music classroom and for pupils' ethical relating to the near or distant Other in their music-making. Todd suggests:

Responsibility needs to be rethought in terms of the pull teachers and students experience between their institutional duties and the personal, inter-human dimension of classroom relationships . . . The danger is that teacher responsibility is subsumed under institutional life, making it impossible to think seriously about how individuals not only supersede their institutional roles but also how such superseding is considered ethically exigent and morally worthy on occasion (Todd, 2003:142).

She turns to Bauman who observes the 'moral confusion' over the function of our institutional roles and points out that 'obeying institutional law alone depersonalizes our moral responsibility', causing responsibility to 'float', detached from the individual moral agent, perceived as a job which needs to be done for the institution (Bauman, 1993: 18-19).

In the Levinasian model developed throughout this study the teacher's stance is a deeply committed one, open to being transformed and to unending learning alongside their pupils – costly and challenging. Ms E needed to protect her pupils from the violence done to them through the SQA's totalising model of *knowing* for instance, allowing infinity to break in. The individual act of morality, Bauman suggests, is what holds at bay the potential for institutions to erode our sense of individual responsibility. The further challenge of Levinas is for institutions to become more responsible for and responsive to the individual acts of responsibility of teachers, upholding their agency in 'looking into the face of the Other' and protecting them from totalising practices through which they may be de-professionalised and dehumanised.

#### **iv) Non-totalising assessment**

Chapter 5 recounts many instances in my fieldwork study in which the nature of musical knowing has been shaped by assessment processes higher up the school, so that public examinations dictate first and second year curricula. A wealth of riches has been brought to light in terms of my participant pupils' resourcefulness in subverting totalising practices and in their agential actions in encountering the Other despite school structures. The challenge from this Levinasian reorientation is to rethink assessment to be able to celebrate these abilities, such as Kirsty's perception, analysis and intentionality when commenting upon Liam's mash-up, or Tom's sensitivity to timbre and his sophistication in linking this to societal values. These are complex and unquantifiable parameters here which rely upon the

professional judgement of the deeply-engaged class music teacher, yet these instances reveal skills which may certainly be considered to contribute to the development of creativity and innovation alongside social cohesion and ‘cultural understanding’, but which are not currently elicited through the conventional PISA study, for instance, nor are they through the SQA’s Higher music examination. More research is needed here to develop forms of assessment which might capture these wider skills without ‘doing violence’ to pupils.

**v) The capacity for *creativity* to escape from *performativity* narratives**

Chapter 1 introduces the notion of *performativity* within education as representing the tightening control over curriculum and pedagogy to meet externally imposed targets (Craft, 2005: 128-129). Munday however contrasts this conception with a broader version where *performativity*:

Characterises a condition in which effectiveness has usurped Enlightenment narratives of truth and justice and ultimately comes to shape our understanding of the world. On this view, target culture is not the whole of *performativity* but merely a symptom or manifestation of it (Munday, 2013:2).

Lyotard describes how truth and justice have been replaced by effectiveness and efficiency as goals in *performativity* discourses, in fact *performativity* now functions as a sort of grand narrative, ‘just a hollowed-out one’ (Lyotard, 1984:46 and 231).<sup>111</sup> Munday goes on to demonstrate how current *creativity discourses* reside within the culture of effectiveness that has permeated society to such an extent that it is almost impossible perhaps to distinguish policies which promote *performativity* from any others. ‘Creativity’ writes Munday, ‘would presumably generate more effective performances in the wider economic sphere. Creativity may be an ally to *performativity* after all’, in fact *creativity* may have become an instrument of ‘effectiveness’ culture:

It seems as though the arts and indeed *creativity* generally have come to be seen as effective economic resources. This is good news for arts funding but is it good news for art itself? (ibid: 6)

---

<sup>111</sup> Munday comments, ‘Lyotard’s *performativity* diagnosis is not wholly original. What he describes is, in certain respects, analogous to Nietzsche’s account of nihilism, Heidegger’s discussion of the “technological understanding of Being” and various distressed discussions of the state of modernity written by the founding members of the Frankfurt School’ (Munday, 2013:5).

Creativity has become caught up in discourses of efficiency and profitability and there are dangers that art might lose any possibility of having a voice in terms of ‘truth and justice’.

The strands of Levinas’ thinking which have provided the theoretical lens for this study derive from his desire to address the ‘crisis of humanism’ he perceived in 1946 as he began work as a teacher after the Holocaust (Levinas, 1987:127), a crisis which might now be articulated as the usurpation not only of man from the centre of our thinking, but now of truth and justice from our public discourses too. Levinas’ conception of humanism involved questioning that ‘the humanity of man resides in the positing of an I . . . The source of humanity is perhaps the Other’ (Peperzak et al (ed.) 1996: 14). The Levinasian challenge here is to find ways for creativity to be set free from these discourses of efficiency and profitability to explore, even establish humanism afresh, now re-grounded in the relation to the Other – an Other humanism.

## **9.4 Limitations of this study**

Having reflected on this study’s findings I have put forward a Levinasian conceptualisation of music education and music-making and outlined the implications of this reorientation for thinking in music education research, for classroom practice, throughout the wider educational structures surrounding my participant pupils’ music classes, including the processes of policy making discussed in Chapter 1. The discussion now turns to consider the limitations of the study, conceptual, methodological and ethical and points to areas for further research.

### **9.4.1 Conceptual**

This study took as its starting point the question drawn from my Master’s research of how pupils encounter difference through music-making. The philosophy of Levinas promised a rich vein of enquiry in terms of providing thinking tools with which to approach this question, now conceptualised as an encounter with the Other, but at the same time this narrowed the focus of the study to one particular conceptual lens and shaped my study to take classroom observations and pupils interview perspectives to a background level of philosophical scrutiny. Todd writes:

It is only by anchoring ethics and education to the tangibility of people’s lives and their interactions that we might explore hopeful possibilities for living well together (Todd, 2003:1)

Levinas offered a fresh orientation through his radical ‘ethics as first philosophy’ which has the potential to transform how we might live, teach and learn.

A plethora of contrasting approaches are available to the researcher wishing to explore the question of pupils encountering the Other in the music classroom. Levinas however has become increasingly influential in the wider field of education in recent years. Within research into the philosophy of music in particular two volumes have been published over the past two years, *Ethics and Music* (Cobussen and Nielsen, 2012) and *Music and ethical responsibility* (Warren, 2014), both of which use Levinas’ thinking throughout. The philosophy of Levinas is generating new avenues for research in neighbouring fields and my study brings his thinking into music education research, building upon Higgins’ discussion of Levinas in work on community music (Higgins, 2007: 2012).

### **9.4.2 Methodological**

The conception of my fieldwork as a case study of one class at one school inevitably brings limitations in terms of generalisability but the opportunity to remain in the field for an extended period of time and to build relationships with pupils and staff yielded in-depth accounts which have enabled the forming of an ethical model which may be applied to other diverse situations. The choice of sample class and smaller group of participants proved fruitful, although the self-participation methods were only of limited success (only three out of the five smaller group participants engaged in these) with technical problems concerning disposable cameras and mp3 players. Photos and recordings were of poor production quality but still provided the basis for helpful interview interactions. This stage of the research process was by far the most fruitful for the pupil participants, they reflected later, as they came to understand how far they had been able to develop their skills at observing and evaluating themselves.

The choice of a critical realist framework for analysing the field study was fraught with risk as there are no models to work from in the music education research literature. It proved invaluable however. The layered nature of social reality it opens out brought into sharp focus the agency of pupils and offered the possibility that a Levinasian ‘looking into the face of the Other’ should emerge as agential. This study only begins to engage with critical realist analytical processes, however. A more extended study would have possibilities to evaluate ways in which pupils’ and teachers’ agential acts might over time change the nature of the educational structures and practices around them.

### 9.4.3 Ethical

Undertaking any kind of research which seeks to categorise, analyse, summarise and abstract is problematic within a Levinasian outlook. Todd asks two questions; firstly whether as researchers we are ‘enacting violences upon others as we engage their stories and narratives . . . despite our best intentions. That is, in seeking to learn about them, can we be negligent of learning *from* them?’ and secondly, how we might ‘attend to the Other and preserve alterity as a nonviolent alternative’ while working towards aims of improving educational practice and social change? (Todd, 2003: 3). Through keeping closely to the words uttered by pupils in interviews and by reading the transcribed text in whole sections I sought to do as little violence to the Otherness of my participants as possible. I was pleased at Amy and Tom’s reflecting with surprise at how their research skills developed over the course of the fieldwork, and at their identification of processes and abilities they had no previous idea they were capable of through the self-documentation. I was humbled and delighted to uncover the quotidian *practices of facing* of all the pupils I interviewed at length and at having my eyes opened to pupils’ daily acts of agency in their music-making.

### 9.4.4 An impossible demand?

Levinas has plenty of critics and many would censure the use of a Levinasian lens in this study. Michael Bonnett writes of the:

Growing movement in educational philosophy and theory to see the self as relational to the extent that it possesses little or no internally maintained steady identity and is constantly reconstituted by external agencies in a variety of ways (Bonnett, 2009:357).

He investigates the contribution of Levinas’ thinking to this movement and refutes the very ‘thin conception of subjectivity’ he perceives there (ibid: 367).

The ‘de-nucleating’ of subjectivity in the presence of the other is intimately related to the matter of the banishing of the idea of a human essence . . . But should the quarrel be not so much with the idea of a human essence *per se* as with totalising versions of what this might be? (ibid: 366)

He concludes:

Ultimately the decentred and de-nucleated conception of the self to which its argument leads is both phenomenologically untenable and educationally stultifying (ibid: 357).

A refutation of Bonnett’s argument goes beyond the scope of this concluding chapter, but three points serve in response. Firstly, the formation of a sense of self, of subjectivity through interactions with different others, lay at the heart of my Master’s study, where again

and again I heard in interviews that the strong identity of Shetlanders and their hospitable musical practices had been forged over generations through being positioned at a crossroads in the North Atlantic and through the huge annual influx of foreign fishermen and women who swelled the main town's population by five-fold each summer during the herring season. This overwhelming of Self by Other had moulded a subjectivity characterised by habits of outward-looking and welcoming-in.

Secondly, Small's notion of musicking considers music as a system of multi-level relationships between sounds, people and the physical field of musical action where meaning emerges from webs of relationships as people make music together and a sense of identity is affirmed through relating to others: 'For Small musicking is an 'event' in which people explore, affirm and celebrate these systems of relationships for affirming their identity' (Odendaal et al, 2014:172).<sup>112</sup> Bonnett strongly disagrees with any conception of educational practice which *decentres* the pupil as *subject* in the manner in which he considers Levinas' work to advocate. This study explores the notion however that Levinas' orientation of *looking into the face of the Other* is not just an impossible ethical demand upon teachers and upon pupils, but may be understood as an *agential act* in the course of which pupils' subjectivity and freedom is constituted in ethical relation to the Other, as for instance pupils break open *totalities* imposed upon them through educational structures driven by managerialism and performativity discourses.

Thirdly, Levinas' text is presented in a hyperbolic mode of expression, and to experience it is akin to reading scripture. Nevertheless the question remains, is Levinas' an impossible demand? Levinas' thinking has been dismissed as such by many who see only a vision which has little relevance to contemporary society in an age characterised by pragmatism or performativity. Levinas however formulated his thinking as a response to the most systematic working-out in history of practices of totalisation – the *Shoah* (The Holocaust). For him there is an overarching need to reawaken other ways of seeing the world and our orientation towards those around us. There is no option to accept contemporary political reality without pointing to another way.

---

<sup>112</sup> Odendaal *et al* consider the pedagogical implications for the class (general) music teacher of Small's notion that 'whatever music we are involved with, there is always a possibility to 'do it' in a way that promotes ethical relationships between people immersed in community life'. They consider that Small's orientation allows him to escape the aesthetic / praxial dichotomy, but suggest that he still faces the tension between 'music as a study subject and a student as the subject of learning' (Odendaal et al, 2014:172).

So is Levinas' 'impossible' vision of relevance to thinking about contemporary educational practice? In a discussion of democracy Derrida talks of the notion of the 'gift' as always 'to come': Higgins writes that the gift, 'exists within the structure 'to come' and as such operates in the realm of the impossible, a structure of openness to the future (Higgins, 2012: 169; Derrida, 1997). Strands of this insistence upon openness to unending possibilities are evident in corners of the literature on thinking within music education. Lee Higgins draws upon Derrida's notion of 'The impossible' when he writes of what it means to be a community musician:

Community musicians work through music to present daring ways to imagine the future. They are dreamers at heart who exercise a passion for the impossible (Higgins, 2012: 171).

Higgins describes the aspiration, inherent in community musicians' practice, towards future possibilities as yet undreamt of:

Unconditionality approaches a transcendental idea, one toward which we might aspire, even though it remains inaccessible . . . I am suggesting that by reaching out beyond what may be thought possible, new and interesting things can happen . . . Unconditional hospitality embraces a future that will surprise and shatter predetermined horizons (ibid: 139)

Levinas' thinking makes us look to the future with unending openness. Standish explores what this means for education:

The sense of unattainable height and the sense of mystery that are so strongly evident throughout Levinas' work point to a kind of perfectionist education (Standish, 2001: 346).

Standish suggests that this impossible vision is only perceived as such because our thinking is so strongly determined by the philosophical currents which Levinas sought to question:

All this can seem wildly implausible, or hyperbolic to say the least. But might it not give us pause to consider how far this very sense of implausibility is itself the product of our being steeped in those assumptions of modernity that are at issue here, assumptions so deep that we do not notice them? How difficult it is for us to think of the world other than in terms of inert matter to which we subsequently attach value, and how difficult for many not to think that it might be most rational to view others initially in terms of the cold light of 'objectivity', before particular obligations and attachments are taken into account! (ibid: 343)

Standish believes that Levinas' thinking offers an invaluable opportunity for totalising practices within education to be unmasked and for pupils to be unfettered from practices which serve the purposes of political targets through discourses of performativity:

Education at its best (indeed, as properly understood, I would like to say) must be suggestive of the good life and of the compelling and absolute obligation that this imposes on us. Its vision must be such as to expose the limitations of performativity (of clear objectives that must be hit, of competencies to be attained, efficiently and effectively), where things are geared ultimately to secure my (or someone's) place in the sun.<sup>113</sup> Think for a moment what that models for the learner! . . . Education must expose the limits of totality through its sense of infinite responsibility (ibid: 346).

## Final reflection

Returning to the class of Year 9s at the Cambridgeshire school of my main teaching practice nearly twenty years ago I remember vividly my encounter with *totalising* practices, which I sought to subvert through the lessons I taught there, without being able to identify at the time exactly what it was that I was resisting. In response to the tightly controlled, competency-based 'world music' lessons I observed I decided to use widely-ranging materials of different media including, in a lesson on polyrhythms and West African drumming traditions, a clip from a travel programme which showed French tourists visiting the 'point of no return' at a former trading post on the coast of Ghana. The site's caretaker was admonishing the tourists for their disrespectful demeanour in the light of the traumatic happenings there in previous generations.

This was strong stuff for my pupils and elicited a lot of discussion which continued into their practical task of polyrhythmic drumming patterns. Sometime later in the lesson the door opened unexpectedly and a new girl was ushered in by a senior member of staff – a black girl in an overwhelmingly white school. The atmosphere in the classroom as she walked in was something I have never forgotten, a moment which in a flash clarifies why being a teacher remains infinitely rewarding. For these pupils had been on a journey of encounter through our 'world music' lessons, one in which they had come to 'look into the face of the Other' and had heard and responded imaginatively to an ethical call emerging from the suffering they had found there. When taken by surprise by a new, black classmate they found that the ground had shifted from under their feet and that they now saw through different eyes.

---

<sup>113</sup> ' "That is my place in the sun." That is how the usurpation of the whole world began' (Pascal's Pensees, 112). Levinas prefaced his second major work *Otherwise than Being* with this quotation. Standish reflects, 'Ethical naturalism, the satisfaction of need and want, is here implied to lead to an avaricious or grasping relation to the Other' (Standish, 2001: 345).

In taking on Levinas' orientation music educators are grounding their work in an ethical position which allows a robust turning away from instrumental views of other people's 'culture' and experience simply as commodities for our own consumption, delight or betterment. This study is offered to the field of music educators as a step towards this 'good life' in full awareness of 'the compelling and absolute obligation that this imposes on us' and as an encouragement towards *practices of facing* through which we and our pupils can learn to 'look into the face of the Other' in our music-making and to come into ethical relationship one with another.

# References

---

- Abbs, P. (2003). *Against the flow. Education, the arts and postmodern culture*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Adorno, T. W. (1998). *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*. R. Tiedemann (Ed.) Transl. Edmund Jephcott. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- (1997) *Aesthetic theory*. G. Adorno and R. Tiedemann (Eds.). Transl. Robert Hullot-Kentor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Agar, M. H. (1996). *The professional stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Albertini, F. (2009). The language of meeting with the Other and the phenomenology of Eros. Traces of aesthetic thinking in the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. In J. Hansel (Ed.) *Levinas in Jerusalem: Phenomenology, ethics, politics, aesthetics* (pp. 157-170) Netherlands: Springer.
- Allsup, R. E. (2010) Philosophical perspectives of music education. In H. Abeles & L. Custodero (Eds.), *Critical Issues in Music Education: Contemporary Theory and Practice*. New York & London: Oxford University Press.
- Alperson, P. (1991). What should one expect of a philosophy of music education? *Journal of aesthetic education* 25 (3), 215-243.
- Alvesson, M. (2002). *Postmodernism and Social Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Alvesson, M. & Sköldberg, K. (2009). *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) London: Sage.
- Apple, M. (2000). Can Critical Pedagogies Interrupt Rightist Policies? *Educational Theory*, 50 (2), 229-254
- Archer, M.S. (2003). *Structure, agency and the internal conversation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1995) *Realist Social Theory: The Morphogenetic Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, M. Bhaskar, R. Collier, A. Lawson, T. & A. Norrie (Eds.) (1998). *Critical realism: Essential readings*. London: Routledge.
- Archer, M.S., Collier, A. and Porpora, D.V. (2004). *Transcendence: Critical realism and God*. London: Routledge.

- Aristotle (n.d.) *Metaphysics*. Retrieved from <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.1.i.html>
- (1998). Nichomachean ethics. J. L. Eds. Ackrill & J. O. Urmson, Transl. D. Ross. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of education policy* 18 (2), 215-228.
- Baker, P. (2005). *Deconstruction and the ethical turn*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.
- Barnet, M. N. & Finnemore, M. (1999). The politics, power and pathologies of international organizations. *International Organization*, 53 (4) 699-732.
- Baudrillard, J. (1983) *Simulations*. New York: Semiotext.
- Bauman, Z. (1992). *Intimations of postmodernity*. London & NY: Routledge.
- (1993). *Postmodern ethics*. Malden, MA, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Becker, H. S. (1990). Generalizing from Case Studies. In E. W. Eisner and A. Peshkin (eds.) *Qualitative Research in Education: The Continuing Debate* (pp. 233-242). New York: Teachers College Press,.
- Bell, T.H. (1983). *A Nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Retrieved from [http://datacenter.spps.org/uploads/sotw\\_a\\_nation\\_at\\_risk\\_1983.pdf](http://datacenter.spps.org/uploads/sotw_a_nation_at_risk_1983.pdf)
- Benhabib, S. (2002). *The claims of culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Benjamin, Walter. (1968). *Illuminations*. Ed. H. Arendt. Transl. H. Zohn. London: Fontana Press.
- (1977). Hope at the present. In *Present hope: Philosophy, architecture, Judaism* (pp. 1-25). New York: Routledge.
- Bennett, J. (1996) 'How is It, Then, That We Still Remain Barbarians?' Foucault, Schiller, and the Aestheticization of Ethics. *Political Theory*, 24 (4), 653-672.
- (2001) *The enchantment of modern life: Attachments, crossings and ethics* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Benson, P. & O'Neill K.L. (2007). Facing risk: Levinas, ethnography, and ethics. *Anthropology of consciousness*, 18 (2), 29-55.
- Berger, P. L. & Luckman, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Garden City: Anchor Books.
- Bernasconi, R. (1989). Re-reading Totality and Infinity. In A.B. Dallery & C. E. Scott (Eds.) *The question of the Other* New York, SUNY Press.
- Bhashkar, R. (1978). *A realist theory of science* (2nd ed.) Brighton: Harvester Press.
- (1989). *Reclaiming reality: A critical introduction to contemporary philosophy*. London: Verso.
- (1998). *The possibility of naturalism*. London: Routledge.

- (2011). *Critical realism: A brief introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Biesta G. (2004). Education, accountability, and the ethical demand: Can the democratic potential of accountability be regained? *Educational Theory*, 54 (3), 233-250.
- Blair, T. (1996). Speech given at Ruskin College, Oxford. Retrieved from <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/speeches/1996ruskin.html>
- Blaikie, N. (1993). *Approaches to social enquiry*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bonnett M. (2009). Education and selfhood: A phenomenological investigation. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 43 (3), 357-370.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). The essence of neo-liberalism. *Le Monde Diplomatique*. Retrieved December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014, from <http://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu>.
- Bowman, W. (2001). Music as ethical encounter. The Charles Leonhard Lecture, School of Music, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. *Bulletin of the Council for research in music education* 151, 11-20.
- (2006a). Musical experience as aesthetic: What cost the label? *Contemporary Aesthetics*, 4 (4) 1-13.
- (2006b). Music, beauty and privileged pleasures: Situating fine art and ‘aesthetic experience’. *Action, theory and criticism for music education*, 5, (1), 2-22.
- (2009). No one true way: Music education without redemptive truth. In T. A. Regelski & J Terry Gates (Eds.) *Music education for changing times: Guiding visions for practice* (pp.3-16) New York: Springer.
- (2014). The ethical significance of music-making. *Music Mark magazine* 3, 3-6. Retrieved from <http://www.musicmark.org.uk/research-and-resources/research/ethical-significance-music-making>
- Bresler, L. (2005) What musicianship can teach educational research, *Music Education Research* 7 (2), 169-183.
- Bresler, L., & Stake, R. E. (2006). *Qualitative Research Methodologies in Music Education*. In R. Colwell (Eds.), *MENC Handbook of Research Methodologies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brinberg, D. & McGrath, J.E. (1985). *Validity and the research process*. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.
- Britton, A. (1958). Music in Early American Public Education: A Historical Critique. In *Basic Concepts in Music Education*. Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education (p. 207).
- Brown, C. (1998). *Up-Helly-Aa: Custom, culture and community in Shetland*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Buber, M. (2004). *I and Thou*. London: Continuum.
- Burnard, P. (2000). How children ascribe meaning to improvisation and composition: rethinking pedagogy in music education. *Music education Research* 2 (1), 7-23.

- (2011). Creativity, performativity, and educational standards: Conflicting or productive tensions in music education in England? In P. G. Woodford (Ed.) *Re-thinking standards for the twenty-first century: New realities, new challenges, new propositions*. Studies in Music from the University of Western Ontario, 23. London, Ontario: University of Ontario.
- Buzzelli, C. A. (2005). Moral Reflections from a Primary Classroom: one teacher's perspective, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 6 (1), 92-101.
- Callaghan, J. (1976). *Towards a national debate*: speech by Prime Minister James Callaghan at the foundation stone-laying ceremony at at Ruskin College, Oxford on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1976. Retrieved from <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/speeches/1976ruskin.html>
- Callinicos, A. (Ed.) (1989). *Marxist Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carr, W. (2007). Philosophy, methodology and action research. In D. Bridges & R. Smith (Eds.) *Philosophy, methodology and educational research*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Caygill, H. (2002). *Levinas and the political*. London: Routledge.
- Chaffee, D. & Lemert, C. (2009). Structuralism and poststructuralism. In B. S. Turner (Ed.) *The new Blackwell companion to social theory*. Oxford & Malden MA: Blackwell.
- Charlton, B. G. (2002). Audit, accountability, quality and all that: The growth of managerial technologies in UK universities. In S. Prickett & P. Erskine-Hill (Eds.), *Education! Education! – Managerial ethics and the law of unintended consequences* (pp. 13-28). Thorverton, UK; Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic.
- Choate, R. A. (1968) *Documentary Report of the Tanglewood Symposium*. Music Educator's National Conference: Washington, D.C.
- Chua, D. K. L. (1999). *Absolute music and the construction of meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2009). Beethoven's Other humanism. *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 62 (3), 571-645.
- Clarke, T. (2001). The knowledge economy. *Education and training*, 43, (4)189-196.
- Cobussen, M. & Nielsen, N. (2012). *Music and ethics*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Cohen, R. (1986). *Face to face with Levinas*. Albany, NY: State University of New York (SUNY) Press
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education* (5<sup>th</sup> edition) London: Routledge Falmer.
- Collier, A. (1994). *Critical realism: An introduction to Roy Bhaskar's philosophy*. London: Verso.
- Cook, T.D. and Campbell, D.T. (1979). *Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Cope, P. & Smith, H. (1997). *Selection and equity in Standard Grade Music*, retrieved from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000000816.htm>

- Council of Europe (2009) Cultural education: The promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education. *Report of the committee on culture, science and education*. Assembly debate on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009 (30<sup>th</sup> sitting). Retrieved from <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=17773&lang=en>
- Crabtree, A., Hemmings, T., Rodden, T., Clarke, K., Dewsbury, G., Hughes, J., Sommerville, I. (2002). *'Sore legs and naked bottoms': using cultural probes in dependability research*. Paper presented at the 1st DIRC conference on Dependable Computing Systems, The Royal Statistical Society. London: UK.
- Craft, A. (2005). *Creativity in Schools: Tensions and Dilemmas*. London: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among the five traditions*. London: Sage.
- Critchley, S. (1992). *The ethics of deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Critchley, S. & Bernasconi, R. (2002). *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crotty, M. (2005). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage.
- Cruickshank J. (2003) *Critical Realism: The Difference it Makes* (Routledge, London)
- Curriculum Review Group, (2004). *A Curriculum for Excellence*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive. Retrieved from [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/26800/0023690.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/26800/0023690.pdf)
- Danermark B. (2002). Interdisciplinary research and critical realism. The example of disability research. *Journal of Critical Realism*, 5, 56–64.
- DES. (1988). *Education Reform Act* (London, HMSO). Retrieved from <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/contents>
- (1985) *Music from 5 to 16: Curriculum matters 2*. London: HMSO.
- DfEE. (1999). *National Curriculum for England* (London, DfEE).
- DfE. (2013). *National Curriculum for England: music programmes of study*.
- Denzin, N.K., and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.) (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) London: Sage.
- Derrida, J. (1978). *Writing and Difference*. London: Routledge.
- (1997). *Politics and friendship: A discussion with Jacques Derrida*. Retrieved from <http://hydra.humanities.uci.edu/derrida/pol+fr.html>
- (1999). At this very moment in this work here I am. In R. Bernasconi & S. Critchley *Re-reading Levinas* (pp. 11-48). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- (2005). Violence and metaphysics. In C. E. Katz & L. Trout (Eds.), *Emmanuel Levinas, phenomenology and his critics*. (pp.88-173). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Derrida, J. & Dufourmantelle, A. (2000). *Of hospitality*. Transl. R. Bowlby. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New York: Macmillan. Retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/852/852-h/852-h.htm>
- (1925/1958). *Experience and Nature*. New York: Dover Publications Inc.
  - (1934/2005). *Art as experience*. New York: Perigree books.
- Dissanayake, E. (1988). *What is Art For?* Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- (1992). *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why*. New York: Free Press.
- Downward, P. & Mearman, A. (2007) Retroduction as mixed-methods triangulation in economic research: reorienting economics into social science. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 31 (1), 77-99.
- Eagleton, T. (2009). *Trouble with strangers*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Eastwood, J. G., Jalaludin, B. B. & Kemp, L.A. (2014). Realist explanatory theory for social epidemiology: A protocol for a mixed method multilevel study of neighbourhood context and post-natal depression. *SpringerPlus* 3:12. Re-trrieved from <http://www.springerplus.com/content/pdf/2193-1801-3-12.pdf>
- Elder-Vass, (2010). *The causal power of social structures: Emergence, structure and agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Elliott, D. J. (1994). Music, education and musical values. *Musical connections: Traditions and change: Proceedings of the 21st world conference of the; International Society for Music Education*. Tampa, Florida: ISME.
- (1994). Re-thinking music: first steps to a new philosophy of music education. *International Journal of Music Education*, 24, 9-20.
  - (1995). Elliott, *Music Matters: A New Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Elliott, D. (n.d.) <http://www.davidelliottmusic.com/music-matters/what-does-praxial-mean/> Retrieved 07/08/2013.
- Ely, M. (1991). *Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles*. Philadelphia: Falmer.
- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed.) (pp. 119-161). New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Farrell Krell, D. (Ed.) (1978). *Martin Heidegger, Basic Writings*. London: Routledge.
- Fetterman, D. M. (2008). Ethnography. In L. Bickman & D. Rog (Eds.) *The Sage handbook of applied social research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fielding, M. (2007). The human cost and intellectual property of high performance schooling: Radical philosophy, John MacMurray and the remaking of person-centred education. *Journal of educational policy*, 22 (4), 383-409.
- Finney, J. (2002). Music education as aesthetic education: a rethink. *British Journal of Music Education*, 19 (2), 119-134.

- (2003). From Resentment to Enchantment: What a class of thirteen-year-olds and their music teacher tell us about a musical education. *International Journal of music and the arts*, 4 (6), 1-23.
  - (2011). *Music education in England, 1950-2010*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Fleetwood, S. & Ackroyd, S. (Ed.s) (2004). *Critical realist applications in organisation and management studies*. London: Routledge.
- Ford, D. F. (1999). *Self and salvation: Being transformed*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1987). *The aesthetics of existence. History of Sexuality*, 3 volumes: *Introduction, The Uses of Pleasure, and Care of the Self*, translated by Robert Hurley, New York: Vintage Books, 1988–90
- Friedman, M. (1951). Neoliberalism and its prospects. *Farmand*, February 17th, 89-93 (A. Nyqvist and J. Peck trans.).
- Fromm, E. (2007). *Fear of freedom*. London: Routledge Classics.
- Gadamer, H.- G. (1975). *Truth and method*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Gadamer, H. - G. (1991) *Truth and Method* (2<sup>nd</sup> revised ed.) Transl. J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall. New York: Crossroad.
- Gaver, W., Boucher, A., Pennington, S., & Walker, B. (2004). Cultural probes and the value of uncertainty. *Interactions*, 11 (5), 53-56.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic books.
- Gerwitz, S. (2002). *The managerial school: Post-welfarism and social justice in education*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Gibbs, R. (2000). *Why ethics? Signs of responsibilities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Goehr, L. (1992). *The imaginary museum of musical works: An essay in the philosophy of music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Great Britain. Education Reform Act (Scotland) (1872).
- Great Britain. *Education (Scotland) Act* (1996). Retrieved from <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/43/contents>
- Green, L. (2002). *How popular musicians learn: A way ahead for music education*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- (2008). *Music, informal learning and the school: A new classroom pedagogy*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on the arts and social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Grek, S. (2009). Governing by numbers: the PISA effect in Europe. *Journal of education policy*, 24 (1) 23-37.
- Guba, E. G. (Ed.) (1990). *Paradigm dialog*. London, Newbury Park CA: Sage.
- Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1983). *Effective evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Habermas, J. (1985). *The philosophical discourse of modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Haig, B. D. (1995). Grounded theory as scientific method. *Philosophy of education*, 28 (1), 1-11.
- Hall, W. D. (2012). *Paul Ricoeur and the poetic imperative: The creative tension between love and justice*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Hand, S. (2009). *Emmanuel Levinas*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Handelman, S. (1990). Facing the Other: Levinas, Perelman and Rosenzweig. *Religion & Literature* 22 (2/3) *Religious thought and contemporary critical theory* 61-84.
- Harland, J., Kinder, K., Lord, P., Stott, A., Schagen, I., Haynes, J., with Cusworth, L., White, R. & Paola, R. (2000). *Arts Education in Secondary Schools: Effects and Effectiveness*. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research.
- Harrison, C. (1997). How Scottish is the Scottish curriculum: And does it matter? In M.M. Clark & P. Munn (Eds.) *Education in Scotland: Policy and practice from pre-school to secondary* (138-155). London and New York: Routledge.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Hegel, G. W. F. (2009) *Phenomenology of spirit*. Transl. J.B. Baillie. Digireads.com
- Hennessy, S. (2001) Research and development in music education. In Philpott, C. and Plummeridge, C. (Eds.) *Issues in music teaching*. (pp. 238-251) London: Routledge Falmer.
- Henry, N. B. (Ed.) (1958). *Basic concepts in music education*. (Fifty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, part I. Committee on basic concepts in music education) Chicago NSSE: University of Chicago Press.
- Higgins, L. (2007). Acts of hospitality: the community in Community Music. *Music Education Research*, 9(2), 281-291.
- (2012). *Community music in theory and in practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hughes, C. (2004). New times? New learners? New voices? Towards a contemporary social theory of learning. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 25 (3), 395-408.
- Jacobi, C. What do Baudrillard's theories of simulation and hyper-reality tell us about the information society?

- Jaccuard, J., Jacoby, J. (2010). *Theory construction and model-building skills: A practical guide for social scientists*. New York: Guildford Press.
- Jameson, F. (1998). *The cultural turn: Selected writings on the postmodern, 1983-1998*. London & NY: Verso.
- Jeffrey, B. & Troman, G. (2004). Time for ethnography. *British Educational Research Journal* 30 (4), 535 – 548.
- Jenkins, R. (2000). Disenchantment, Enchantment and Re-Enchantment: Max Weber at the Millennium. *Max Weber Studies*, 1, 11-32.
- Jorgensen, E. R. (1997). *In search of music education*. Urbana & Chicago: Illinois University Press.
- Jourdan, K. (2008). *The view from somewhere: Coming to know the 'other' through the indwelling of a local musical tradition* [M Ed thesis] faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.
- (2012). Towards an ethical music education? Looking through the lens of Levinas. *Music Education Research* 14 (3), 381-399.
- Kant, I. (1973). *Critique of judgement*. Trans. J.C. Meredith. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaplan, A. (1964). *The conduct of inquiry: Methodology for behavioral science*. San Francisco: Chandler.
- Katz, C. E. (2012) Turning toward the Other. In S. Davidson & Diane Perpich (Eds.), *Totality and infinity at 50*, 209-226
- Kirk, J. & Miller, M. L. (1986). *Reliability and validity in qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Korsmeyer, C. (2004). *Gender and Aesthetics: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Langer, S. K. (1942/1990). *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*. (3rd revised edition) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- (1953/1977). *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- (1967, 1972 & 1982). *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling* (Three volumes). Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press.
- Lauder, H., Young, M., Daniels, H., Balarin, M. & Lowe, J. (Eds.) (2012) *Educating for the knowledge economy? Critical perspectives*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Laurence, F. (2005). *Music and empathy: A study of the possible development, through certain ways of 'musicking', of children's empathic abilities, responses, motivation and behaviour within a primary school context*. [PhD thesis] School of Education, University of Birmingham.
- (2006) Making space for Toby: Musicking and empathic experience and inclusion in the classroom. *NAME Magazine*, 19, Matlock: National Association of Music Educators.

- (2010) Listening to children: Voice, agency and ownership in school musicking. In R. Wright (Ed.), *Sociology and music education* (pp.243-262). Farnham: Ashgate.
- LeCompte, M. D. and Preissle, J. (1993). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) San Diego: Academic Press.
- Leibniz, G.W. (1714) *Monadology*
- Lenz, W. von. (1855-60). *Beethoven: Eine Kunststudie*. (6 pts. in 5 vols.) Cassel, Balde & Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe.
- Levinas, E. (1962). Transcendence and height. In A. Peperzak, S. Critchley & R. Bernasconi (eds.) (1996). *Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- (1969). *Totality and Infinity: An essay in exteriority*. Transl. A. Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- (1971). *Totalité et infini: Essai sur l'infini*. Dordrecht: Kluwer academic.
- (1981). *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*. Trans. A. Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- (1985). *Ethics and infinity*. Trans. R. A. Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
- (1987). Language and proximity. In *Collected philosophical papers*. Transl. A. Lingis (pp. 109-126). Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff.
- (1987). Philosophy and the idea of infinity. In *Collected philosophical papers*. Transl. A. Lingis (pp. 47-60). Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff.
- (1987). Reality and its shadow. In *Collected Philosophical Papers*\_ Transl. A. Lingis (pp 1-13). Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff.
- (1988) The paradox of morality, an interview conducted by T. Wright, P. Hughes and A. Ainley. In R. Bernasconi and D. Wood (eds.) *The provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*. Transl. A. Benjamin and T. Wright (pp. 168-180). London and New York: Routledge.
- (1990). *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*. Trans. S. Hand. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- (1993). *Outside the Subject*. Transl. Michael B. Smith, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, Meridian.
- (1994). *Nine Talmudic readings*. Transl. A. Aronowicz. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- (1996). *Proper Names*. Transl. M.B. Smith. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- (1998a). Philosophy and the idea of infinity. In *Collected philosophical papers*. Transl. A. Lingis (pp. 47 – 60) Pittsburgh PA: Duquesne University Press.
  - (1998b). Discovering existence with Husserl. Transl. R.A. Cohen & M.B. Smith. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
  - (1988c). *Autrement que savoir*. Paris: Osiris.
  - (2001). Existence and existents. Transl. A. Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
  - (2003). *Humanism of the Other*. Transl. Nidra Poller. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
  - (2006). *God, death and time*. Transl. B. Bergo. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
  - (2008) *Outside the subject*. Transl. M. B. Smith. London: Continuum
- Lingard, B. & Grek, S. (2007). The OECD, indicators and PISA: An exploration of events and theoretical perspectives, *Fabricating quality in European education*, ESRC/ESF Working paper 2. Retrieved from [http://www.ces.ed.ac.uk/PDF%20Files/FabQ\\_WP2.pdf](http://www.ces.ed.ac.uk/PDF%20Files/FabQ_WP2.pdf)
- Lingard, B., Taylor, S. & Rawolle, S. (2005). Bourdieu and the study of educational policy: introduction. *Journal of education policy*, 20 (6), 663-669.
- Llewellyn, J. (2000). *The hypocritical imagination: Between Kant and Levinas*. London & New York: Routledge.
- (2002). Levinas and language. In Simon Critchley & Robert Bernasconi (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas* (pp.119—138). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (2002)
- Locke, K. (2008). Music education and ethical judgement in the postmodern condition. *Action for change in music education* 7 (1), 74- 87.
- Løgstrup, K. (1997). *The ethical demand*. Introduction by Hans Fink and Alasdair MacIntyre. Notre Dame & London: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Lyotard, J-F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Transl. G Bennington & B. Massumi. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Malka, S. (2006). *Levinas: His life and legacy*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- Marion, J-L. (1991). *God without Being*. (2<sup>nd</sup> revised ed.) Trans. T. Carson. London & Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mark, M. L. (1982). The evolution of music education philosophy from utilitarian to aesthetic. *Journal of Research in Music Education* 30 (1), 15-21.
- MacIntyre, A. (2007). *After Virtue: A study in moral theory* (3rd ed.) Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press.
- Manicas, P.T. (2006). *A realist philosophy of social science: Explanation and understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Martens, K. (2007). How to become an influential actor – the ‘comparative turn’ in OECD education policy. In K. Martens, A. Rusconi and K. Lutz (Eds.) *Transformations of the State and Global Governance* (pp. 40-56). London: Routledge.
- Maxwell, J.A. (2004). Causal Explanation, Qualitative Research, and Scientific Inquiry in Education. *Educational researcher*, 33 (3), 3-11.
- (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) London: Sage.
- McCarthy, (1999). *Passing it on: Transmission of music in Irish culture*. Cork: Cork University Press.
- McGuire W. (2006). Beyond EBM: critical realism as the foundation for evidence-based public health. In Cohen J, Keelan J, (Eds.) *Comparative program on health and society*. Lupina foundation working papers series (pp. 2004–2005) Munk Centre for International Studies, University Of Toronto: Toronto.
- Meyer, L. B. (1956). *Emotion and meaning in music*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Mirowski, P. (2009). *Postface: Defining neoliberalism*. In P. Mirowski & D Plehwe (Eds.), *The Road from Mont Pelerin: The making of the Neoliberal thought collective* (pp. 417-456). Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Modell, S. (2009). In defence of triangulation: a critical realist approach to mixed methods research in management accounting. *Management Accounting Research* 20 (3), 208-221.
- Moore, R. (2004). *Education and society: Issues and explanations in the sociology of education*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Moran, D. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Morgan, M. L. (2011). *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Munday, I. (2013). Creativity: Performativity’s poison or its antidote? *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 44 (3), 319-332.
- (n.d.). *Performatives and Performativities in Three Scenes from Schooling*, online essay, Retrieved from <http://www.philosophy-of-education.org/pdfs/Saturday/Munday.pdf>
- Nagel, T. (1986). *The view from nowhere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Noddings, N. (1984/2003). *Caring: A feminist approach to ethics and moral education*. London: University of California Press
- (1992). *The challenge to care in schools*. (2nd revised ed.) New York: Teachers’ College Press.
- Nordtug, B. (2013). The welcoming of Levinas in the philosophy of education – at the cost of the Other? *Theory and Research in Education* 11 (3), 250-268.
- Nóvoa, A. & Yariv-Mashal, T. (2003). Comparative research in education: A mode of governance or a historical journey? *Comparative Education*, 39 (4), 423-438.

- Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms? In H. Roberts (Ed.) *Doing Feminist Research* ( pp.30-61). Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.
- Odendaal, A., Kankkene, O.T., Nikkanen, H. M., Vakeya, L. (2014). What's with the K? Exploring the implications of Christopher Small's 'musicking' for general music education. *Music Education Research* 16 (2), 162-175.
- O'Dowd, J. (2008). Music education. In T.G.K. Bryce & W. M. Humes (Eds.) *Scottish Education: Third edition – Beyond devolution* (pp.534 – 539). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- O'Neill, O. (2002). *A Question of Trust: The BBC Reith Lectures 2002*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (n.d.) *Our mission*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/about/>
- (1996). *The knowledge based economy*. Paris: OECD.
- (2011). *Education for Innovation: the Role of Arts and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Education*. Workshop summary report, 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> May. Paris: OECD Publishing. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/edu/cei/48252279.pdf>
- Osborne, M., P. Broadfoot, E. McNess, B. Ravn, C. Planel, and P. Triggs. (2003). *A world of difference? Comparing learners across Europe*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Parsons, T. (1967). *Sociological theory and modern society*. New York: Free Press.
- Pascal, B. (2006). *Pensées*. (1958) Introd. By T.S.Eliot. New York: Dutton. Project Gutenberg eBook. Retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/18269/18269-h/18269-h.htm>
- Paterson, L. (1997). Policy-making in Scottish education: A case of pragmatic nationalism. In M. M. Clark & P. Munn (Eds.) *Education in Scotland: Policy and practice from pre-school to secondary* (138-155). London and New York: Routledge.
- Pawson, R. (1996). Theorizing the Interview, *British Journal of Sociology*, **47**, 296-314.
- Pawson, R. & Tilley, N (1997). *Realistic Evaluation*, London: Sage.
- Phelps, R., Sadoff, R.H, Warburton, E.C., Ferrara, L. (2005) *A Guide to Research in Music Education*. Scarecrow Press: Maryland.
- Pitts, S. (2001). Whose Aesthetics? Public, Professional and Pupil Perceptions of Music Education. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 17, 54-60.
- Plato (1988). *The Republic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Plummeridge, C. (1999). Aesthetic education and the practice of music teaching. *British Journal of Music Education*, 16 (2), 115-122.
- Polanyi, M. (1975). *Meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Porter, S. (2002) Critical realist ethnography. In *Qualitative research in action*. May, T. (Ed.) Sage: London (pp. 53–72).

- Poulson, L. (1996). Accountability: A Key-Word in the Discourse of Educational Reform. *Journal of Education Policy*, 11 (5), 580-592.
- (1998). Accountability, Teacher Professionalism and Education Reform in England. *Teacher Development*, 2 (3), 419-432.
- Powell, V. & Spellman, K. (2004). The knowledge economy, *Annual review of sociology*, August (30) 199-220.
- Rabinowitch, T-C., Cross, I., Burnard, P., (2013) Long-term musical group interaction has a positive influence on empathy in children, *Psychology of music*, 41 (4) 1-15.
- Regelski, T. A. (2000). Accounting for all Praxis: An essay critique of David Elliott's *Music Matters*. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 144, The Dallas papers of the Mayday Group, 61-88.
- (2005). Curriculum: Implications of aesthetic versus praxial philosophies. In D. J. Elliott (Ed.) *Praxial music education: Reflections and dialogues*. Oxford University Press: New York (pp. 219-248).
- Reid, L. A. (1985). Art and knowledge. *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 25 (2), 115-125.
- Reimer, B. (1970/1989). *A philosophy of music education*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- (2003) *A philosophy of music education: Advancing the vision* (3rd ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- (2009). *Seeking the significance of music education: Essays and reflections*. Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield (in partnership with MENC).
- Ricoeur, P. (1977). *Freud and philosophy: An essay on interpretation*. Transl. D. Savage. Yale: Yale University Press.
- Robson, C. (2002) *Real world research*, (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rowland, G. (1995). Archetypes of systems design. *Systems practice* 8 (3), 277-288.
- Runciman, W. G. (1983). *A treatise on social theory: Vol 1. The methodology of social theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Sartre, J-P. (1948). *Existentialism and Humanism*. Transl. P. Mairet. Brooklyn: Haskell House Publishers.
- Sayer, A. (1992). *Method in social science: A realist approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) London: Routledge.
- (2000). *Realism and social science*. London: Sage.
- Schiller, J.C.F. von (1794/2012). Upon the aesthetic education of Man. New York: Dover. Retrieved from [http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/On\\_the\\_Aesthetic\\_Education\\_of\\_Man.html](http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/On_the_Aesthetic_Education_of_Man.html)
- Schippers, H. (2010). Facing the music: Shaping music education from a global perspective. Oxford & New York, Oxford University Press.

- Scotland. *Scottish Qualifications Authority Act* (2002). Edinburgh: The Stationery Office. Retrieved from <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2002/14/section/6>
- Scott, D. (2005). Critical realism and empirical research methods in education. *Journal of philosophy of education* 39 (4), 633-646.
- (2010). *Education, epistemology and critical realism*. London: Routledge.
- Scott Goble, J. (2003). Perspectives on practice: A pragmatic comparison between the philosophies of David Elliott and Thomas Regelski. *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 11 (1), 23-44.
- Scottish Arts Council (2006). *National Youth Music Strategy 2006-2008*. Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council.
- (2007). *Retuning: An evaluation of Scotland's Youth Music Initiative 2003-2006* (prepared by the Centre for public policy, Northumbria University). Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council. Retrieved from <http://www.scottisharts.org.uk/resources/publications/Music/pdf/Retuning%20YMI%20final%20report.pdf>
- Scottish Executive, (2004). *Curriculum for Excellence*. Blackwells. Retrieved from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/doc/26800/0023690.pdf>
- Scottish Executive Education Department, (2000). *Teaching Profession for the 21st Century: Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Professional Conditions of Service for Teachers (the McCrone Report)*. HMSO: Edinburgh.
- Scottish Office Education Department, (1992). Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland: National Guidelines: Expressive Arts 5-14 (Curriculum and assessment in Scotland: a policy for the 90s). SOED: Edinburgh.
- Seale, C. (1999). Quality in qualitative research. *Qualitative inquiry* 5 (4), 465-478.
- Seely, A. & Jenkins, P. (1995). *The citizen's charter*. Research paper 95/66 25<sup>th</sup> May 1995. Business and transport section, House of Commons Library.
- Sheridan M. & Byrne C. (1997) *Music: A Source of Deep Imaginative Satisfaction?* Paper presented to the Scottish Educational Research Association Conference, University of Dundee.
- Simon, R. (2003). Innocence without naïveté, uprightness without stupidity: the pedagogical *Kavannah* of Emmanuel Levinas. *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 22, 45–59: 46).
- Small, C. (1998). *Musicking – The meanings of performing and listening*. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press.
- (1999). Musicking - the meanings of performing and listening. *Music education research* 1 (1), 9-22.
- Small, Chris (2011, April 15). *Music cuts strike a bum note*. Times Education Supplement. Retrieved from <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6078011>

- Chris Smith and Tony Elger (2013). Critical Realism and Interviewing Subjects. In P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney, & S. Vincent (Eds.), *Critical Realism in Action: a Practical Guide* (pp. 109-131) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stake, R. (2000). Case Studies. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook for qualitative research*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) London: Sage.
- Standish, P. (2001). Ethics before equality: Moral education after Levinas. *Journal of moral education*, 30 (4), 339-347.
- (2008). Levinas and the language of the curriculum. In D. Egéa-Kuehne (Ed.) *Levinas and education: At the intersection of faith and reason* (pp.56-66) Abingdon, Oxon & NY: Routledge.
- Steger, M. & Roy, R. (2010). *Neoliberalism: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stones, R. (2009). Theories of social action. In B. S. Turner (Ed.) *The new Blackwell companion to social theory* (pp. 83-105) Oxford & Malden MA: Blackwell.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An over-view. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273-285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Strhan, A. (2007). 'Bringing me more than I contain . . . Discourse, subjectivity and the scene of teaching in *Totality and Infinity*. *Journal of philosophy of education* 41 (3), 411-430.
- (2012). *Levinas, subjectivity, education: Towards an ethics of radical responsibility*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Szego, C. K. (2002). Music Transmission and Learning: A Conspectus of Ethnographic Research in Ethnomusicology and Music Education. In R. Colwell and C. Richardson (Eds.) *The New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning* (pp.707-729). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, C. (1992). *Sources of the self: The making of the modern identity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Todd, S. (2003). *Learning from the Other: Levinas, psychoanalysis and ethical possibilities in education*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- (2008). Welcoming and difficult learning: Reading Levinas with education. In D. Egéa-Kuehne (Ed.) *Levinas and education: At the intersection of faith and reason* (pp.170-185) Abingdon, Oxon & NY: Routledge.
- Uljens, M. (2007). The hidden curriculum of PISA: The promotion of neo-liberal policy by educational assessment. In S. T. Hopman, S. T., G. Brinek, & M. Retzl (Eds.) *PISA according to PISA. Does PISA keep what it promises?* (pp. 295-303). Vienna: LIT Verlag.
- Walker, R. (1996). Music education freed from colonialism: a new praxis. *International Journal of Music Education* 27, 2-15.

- Warren, J. (2014). *Music and ethical responsibility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Watson, T. J. (2003). *Sociology, work and industry*. (Fourth edition). London and New York: Routledge.
- Weber, M. (1946). *Essays in Sociology*. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Transl, & Eds.). NY: Oxford University Press
- (1976) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (Second edition) London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Westerlund, H. (2002). Bridging experience, action and culture in music education. *Studia Musica* 16, Helsinki: Sibelius Academy Music education department. Retrieved from <http://ethesis.siba.fi/ethesis/files/isbn9529658982.pdf>
- Reconsidering Aesthetic Experience in Praxial Music Education. *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 11 (1), 45-62.
- Wheeler, T. R. (2006). Wheeler, T. Ray. *Toward a Framework for a New Philosophy of Music Education: Løgstrup as Synergy Between the Platonic and the Aristotelian Perspectives in the Music Education Philosophies of Bennett Reimer and David Elliott*. Denton, Texas. UNT Digital Library. <http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc5425/>. Accessed November 1, 2014.
- Williams, B. (2002). *Truth and truthfulness: An essay in genealogy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Winner, E., Goldstein, T.R. & Vincent-Lancrin, S. (2013) *Art for art's sake? The impact of arts education*. Educational research and innovation. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2009) *Philosophical investigations* (4<sup>th</sup> rev.ed.) by P.M.S. Hacker & J. Schulte (transl.) Oxford & Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Woodford, P.G. (2005). *Democracy and music education: Liberalism, ethics and the politics of practice*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press
- (2011). (Ed.) *Re-thinking standards for the twenty-first century: New realities, new challenges, new propositions*. Studies in Music from the University of Western Ontario, 23. London, Ontario: University of Ontario.
- Wolcott, H. (1990). On Seeking– and Rejecting–Validity in Qualitative Research. In E. Eisner and A. Peshkin (Eds.) *Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate*, pp. 121–52. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wolterstorff, N.P. (1980). *Art in action: Toward a Christian aesthetic*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.
- Wright, R. (2008). Kicking the habitus: power, culture and pedagogy in the secondary school music curriculum, *Music Education Research*. 10 (3), 389-402.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

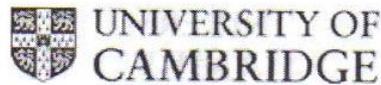
# Appendices

---

## Appendix 1: Methods employed in two studies providing a model for research design

John Finney 2003	Ruth Wright 2008
One class of year 9 pupils and their music teacher	One class of year 9 pupils and their music teacher
Participation observation	Participant observation
Interviews	Interviews
Study of pupils' materials	
Involved as mentor an musician	
Weekly observation over 20 weeks from New Year into summer term	October to May
Opportunistic observation outside classroom	
Observation of other lessons and form tutor time	
Questionnaire on range of musical experience, aspirations, views on music lessons and teacher	Questionnaire
Interviews in groups of 2-6 after each music lesson, lasting 40-50 mins. Almost all pupils of class interviewed, most more than once. Second time interviews checked validity of data and shifting perspectives.	Interviews conducted individually to triangulate responses to the questionnaire. Focus group interviews.
Two one-hour interviews with music teacher, structured with questions to create dialogue between musical life-history, teaching of class and professional concerns. Delayed until sufficient data collected from pupils, and informal conversations with teacher built understanding of teacher's perspective.	Interviews with music teacher
Unsolicited spontaneous conversation in other lessons	Interviews with school management
Pupils remained anonymous and chose pseudonyms	Pupils and teacher remained anonymous and were allocated pseudonyms
Validity checks – lesson observations, interview transcripts and filed notes read weekly by staff, providing scope for reflection and ongoing discussion. Drafts of final report read by colleagues of differing epistemological outlooks.	

## Appendix 2a: Information letter to participant pupils



### Information sheet for pupils taking part in the music education research project

As you know I'm working on a music education research project at the University of Cambridge. I've been following your class music lessons throughout this academic year, and have asked a small group of you to take part further by taking part in up to three interviews during school time.

I'm eager to find out how music-making works in your life, both in and especially outside of school; how you make music yourself and in relationship with others; what happens when you encounter unfamiliar music, different people and how does this affect the way you see the world? I'm interested in an ethical understanding of music-making in school; what our responsibilities are to those around us as we make music, and especially towards those distant from us, whose music we may encounter and 'use', for instance music from a different culture.

As well as my observations and your perspectives, which you share through the interviews, I'm suggesting that you do some of your own research, on yourself, by keeping a log, a diary, over one week this term, noticing what you listen to, when and under what circumstances. When do you play an instrument or mix some tracks? Are you with friends or alone? How do your friendships reflect shared interest or contrasting interests in music? How do you find new musical material? What is the effect on you when you come face to face with something strange? Do you meet people who introduce you to new sorts of music, or who you get to know through music-making? How do you build up a picture of the world through your listening and playing, and does how this change with new experiences?

You can use any recording devices you may have yourself which I might be able to access through a memory stick for instance, phones, ipods etc, or I can give you a disposable camera, notebook and basic recorder.

I hope it will be interesting for you to be able to reflect on an aspect of what you do in everyday life. We will have a look together at what you come up with, and possibly discuss the results as a group, if you feel comfortable with this. You'll be developing research skills of your own in terms of thinking about methods, analysis and reflection, which will stand you in good stead for other projects in the future, at school and beyond.

Don't forget, you don't have to do this if you feel uncomfortable in any way, even if you are part-way through. You may however find it pretty rewarding. I hope you will.

Thanks,  
Kathryn Jourdan

## Appendix 2b: Consent form for participant pupils



### Consent form for pupils participating in the self-documenting of music-making in and outside of school

**Project title:** In what ways do young people use music in their everyday lives? In what ways does an encounter with the Other occur in young people's music-making?

**Name of pupil participant:**

**Name of researcher:** Kathryn Jourdan

1. I give my consent to take part in this project, the details of have been explained to me. A written copy of the information has been given to me to keep.
2. I authorise the researcher to use the audio recordings and diary entries created by me and audio or video recordings of interviews for the purposes of this study. This may include use with groups of other staff and students within the University.
3. I acknowledge that:
  - (a) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation and to withdraw any data that has not yet been examined.
  - (b) The project is for the purpose of research;
  - (d) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;
  - (e) I will be referred to by a pseudonym of my choosing in any publications arising from the research.
  - (g) Video and audio recordings made for purposes of this project will not be publicly broadcast or made available on the Internet.

This project meets the standards required by the British Educational Research Association Revised Ethical Guidelines (2004).

**Pupil's signature:**

**Date:**

## Appendix 2c: Example of a letter to the parents of pupil participants

Faculty of Education  
184 Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 8PQ, UK



1<sup>st</sup> March 2010

Kathryn Jourdan  
48 Morningside Park  
Edinburgh  
EH10 5HA  
0131 447 0284  
07920 402840  
kathryn@jourdan.me krj20@cam.ac.uk

Dear Mr and Mrs J,

I am writing to ask your permission for Finlay take part in a piece of educational research. I have been observing Finlay's class music lessons at [his school] over the past three months, by kind permission of the head Teacher, as part of a PhD research project I've undertaken through the faculty of Education in Cambridge. I have undergone enhanced disclosure checks through the school in order to take part in this research. The aim of my project is to investigate the music-making of a class of S2 pupils, in and outside of school, and to examine how this might relate to the music curriculum as it is delivered in school and also to the stated aims in policy documents such as the Curriculum for Excellence.

I am hoping to focus on the experiences and perspectives of about 5 pupils in particular, and have asked Finlay if he would be willing to participate. This would involve two or three interviews during library period time on a Wednesday afternoon between now and the end of the academic year, which Miss McC (Finlay's English teacher) has agreed to, during which I would be asking Finlay about his perspectives especially on encountering other people and fresh musical ideas through listening to and making music. I'd like him to take a recording device home, and a disposable camera to capture something of his own music-making outside of school in a sort of diary for a week, and to perhaps meet up with the other pupils and myself for a hot chocolate at Costa or Starbucks in [local area] on a Friday afternoon at some point, for a more informal discussion.

My Master's research involved going into Anderson High, Lerwick, to observe and interview in September 2007, so Finlay's Shetland background forms an interesting link with my own research. I would be fascinated to hear your own perspectives as musicians if you felt able to contribute at all by chatting to me at some point. My focus is on music-making as a means of encountering others, local and more distant, and on music education's potential to open windows for pupils into new perspectives on the world around them. I am a viola player, mainly freelancing with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and a trained secondary music teacher.

I hope you will feel able to respond via the accompanying SAE or by email.

Many thanks,

Kathryn Jourdan



## Appendix 3b: Grouping strands from interview transcriptions

# conflict with SMT  
 lack of respect  
 has to impose decision she doesn't agree with  
 Need for SMT to 'look reflectively on our practice'.

management of people is dependent

# ChorE requires changes  
 document in terms of 'speaks'  
 - a 'refresh'  
 - only 1<sup>st</sup> year - just to survive at present.

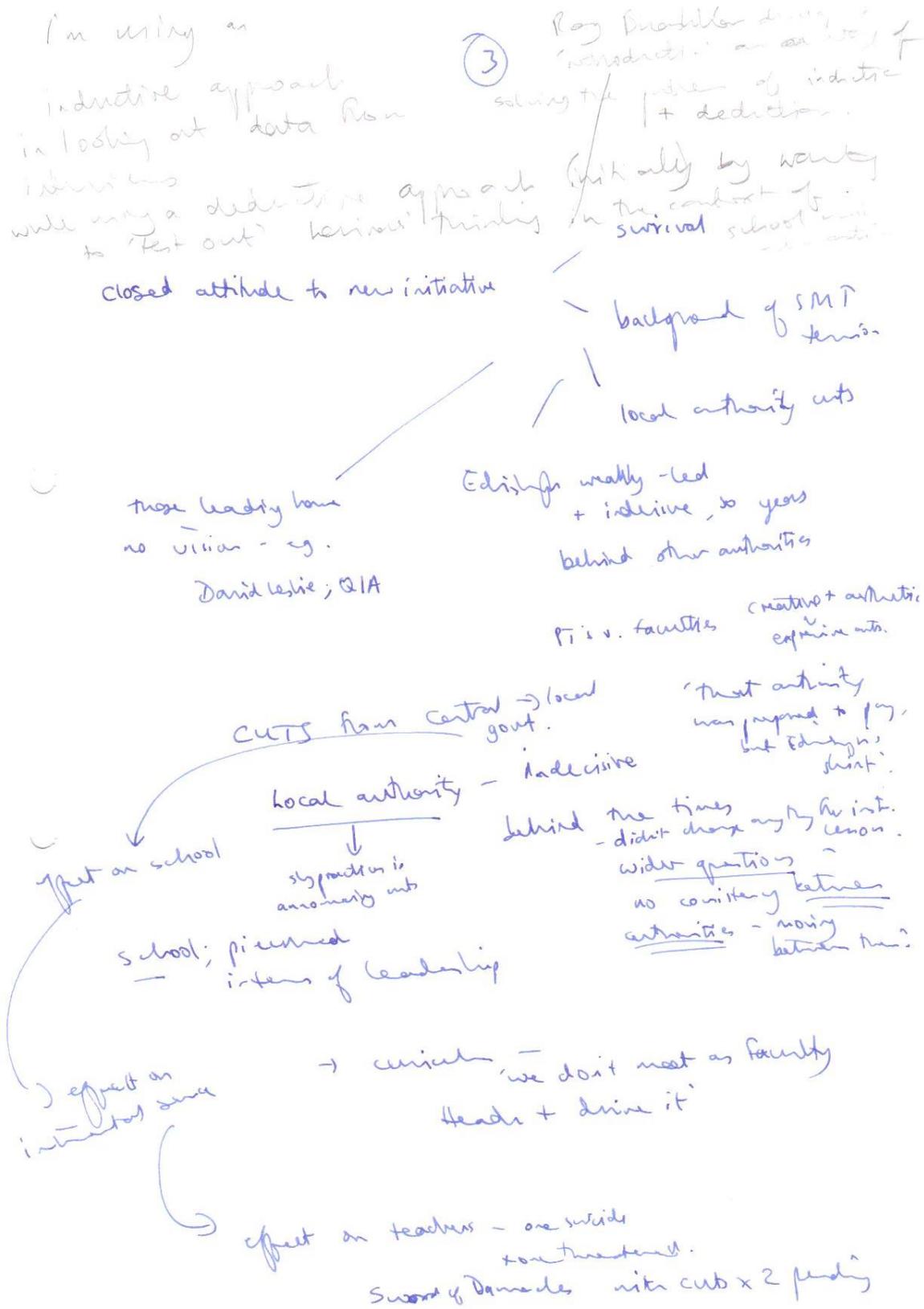
new initiative boiled down to reality terminology

• fall-out from SMT terms -  
 concerts + public events don't 'count'

• fall-out from industrial action of 80s  
 → sports day reinstated by new member of staff  
 ↓  
 using ChorE as basis

# Interdisciplinary aspects  
 'won't be replicated in any other school'.  
 (→ where's the responsibility for this?)  
 - 'can't wait to see the 'models' that come out'  
 - down to SMT to timetable  
 - 'they have to be clever, innovative....'

# Appendix 3c: Exploration of strands of coding annotated with theoretical memos which reflect on the process of analysis



## Appendix 4a: Example of observation notes written up afterwards

4<sup>th</sup> Nov.

As I walk in this morning Mr H greets me with a smile, and comments, 'You've chosen an interesting day to come in!'

Chaotic day – opening of the new school. Changed timetable.

There is a ceremony at 11am with the head of the Scottish Football Association officially opening the new school building.

I glean this information from Ms. R who teacher physics and who is the cover teacher for [sample class]'s lesson. She obviously thinks it's an odd choice of VIP, which will alienate a proportion of the school body, but says it's probably to do with the setting up of the football academy at the school, to go alongside the music and dance specialisms.

Only a selected set of pupils will attend – it looks like the music school is providing some sort of entertainment.

Ms E is away on a course (for 3 days), so student teacher Ms H takes the class.

I come in a bit late. Ms H is trying to take the register. The class are pushing the boundaries. She insists on 'Here, Miss' but it takes a while, and chatting goes on underneath, along with a bit of back-talk – 'Are you Irish, Miss?'. 'Do you believe in leprechauns' 'I believe in leprechauns!'

There is no getting out of planners, writing in objectives. The class is allowed to just get on with their paired working on Halloween pieces using 'Garage band' soft-wear.

Most are down to work very quickly – they like this task, and are well-motivated. Scott and Tom are finding it hard to get off the starting blocks – they're still listening to all the tracks and not managing to get on with decision-making.

Matt and Finlay, however are intently working on their piece, having already got a long way last time. Finlay has control of the mouse, but Matt is fully engaged in the process. Their conversation is utterly focused on the task.

'Try this'

'Wait, I've got an idea!' 'Hold on, wait, run with it!' (Finlay)

He restructures a section of loops they've chosen, building up two or three layers of rhythm under the main sound effect. They really engage with the structuring of their work, experimenting and finding something satisfying.

'That sounds good'

'That's really scary!'

I'm interested to see that at one stage, when Finlay hears a new loop, he immediately sings it back, repeating it over and over again, with a good feel for the style of the clip. He seems to assimilate rhythms very quickly.

Class work continued, but end and beginning not orderly, so Finlay and Matt leave without picking up belongings – Finlay has left his planner and will be in trouble next lesson. Have they forgotten about our break-time appointment? Or do they not want to take part? I ‘m inclined to think it’s the former.

Have asked Kirsty and Tatiana to talk to me during break next week – I wonder if I can manage 2 sets of 2 doing critical incident charts at the same time.

### **Reflections**

The Halloween piece is an example of encountering the immediate Other in the sense that pupils work in a friendship pair; Finlay and Matt related in a focused, effective and highly cooperative way, Matt allowing space for Finlay’s ideas, having the patience to wait for him to produce the outcome before evaluating. Finlay was open to Matt’s comments, and although dominant he didn’t crush Matt’s ideas or evaluations. This was an impressive working partnership. I’d like to see this in action on performing instruments too.

Will collect a copy of their piece, and I hope Tatiana’s and Kirsty’s.

## Appendix 4b: Photo of music classroom



## Appendix 4c Example of a reflective note on development of theoretical framework

**Taking stock: August 09**

The English National Curriculum puts knowledge and understanding at the heart of every subject in the curriculum (DfEE, 1999). But what kind of knowledge and understanding is this? (John Finney, 2002: 120).

As music has taken its place in the National Curriculum, music educators have had to grapple with how pupils may be assessed in a discipline which may be recognised as an aesthetic discipline, where aesthetic judgements are personal, communicable, open to inspection and to capable of negotiation (Preston, 1986: 10).

Dewey had encouraged the shift from 'knowledge' to 'knowing', a move that gives status to awareness and perception, recognising the involvement of states of mind, contrasting with other ways of knowing where words and propositions held sway.

Reid

Reimer presents Damasio and Armstrong's arguments.

'To the degree Armstrong (and Damasio) are correct in their argument that each culture, and its music, shapes and forms its members' particular psychic reality, we are presented with a difficult predicament. Each of us has been deeply formed by our culture, so deeply that at that level we are largely unaware of how and why we think, feel and act as we do. If this is the case (and I believe that it is to a significant degree), how can we expect to be able to create, respond to, or understand the music of a culture not our own? If our culture has done what it is supposed to do, does it, therefore, prevent us from being able to think, feel, 'be', as a different culture does? Can we change our stripes from our own culture's to another's at will?' (Reimer 2003:178)

Reimer asks;

'Are we not being hopelessly idealistic to think we can be 'multicultural' at will but also disrespectful to each culture's music outside our own, treating it as so much 'material' to be homogenised, or cloned, into a resemblance of familiarity so we can treat it as a tamed, comfortable variation of what we already know?' (Reimer, 2003:179)

He addresses this issue by presenting both sides – 'contextualist' and 'universalist'

### References

Finney, J. (2002) Music Education as aesthetic education: a rethink, *British Journal of Music Education* 19:2, 119-134

Preston, H. (1986) *Assessment and progression in Music Education* Music Advisors' National Association

## **Appendix 4d: Example of additional memos reflecting on the practicalities of the fieldwork process, and emerging strands of significance**

**Sept 09**

One of the underlying structures;

The force exerted upon all students of majority outlook, predominant experience, (shared cultural forms?) attitudes and cultural orientation.

Choices of drums, guitars, keyboard in class music.

Practical – can get somewhere without too much specialist input.

But sets up a particular cultural outlook and closes off other musical experiences. No string lessons offered. Brass lessons offered, and a little w. wind.

**Oct 09**

Talking with Finlay – neighbours complain of the noise of the family's rehearsals in their house, even though it's detached – down [local street] (it must be the modern town house on its own). But they carry on anyway.

Finlay's band made up of friends from [local] Primary School, rehearse at his house.

**Nov 09**

Chaotic day – opening of the new school. Changed timetable.

Ms E is away on a course (for 3 days), so student teacher Ms H, takes class, with cover staff sitting in.

Class work continued, but end and beginning not orderly, so Finlay and Matt leave without picking up belongings – Finlay has left his planner and will be in trouble next lesson. Have they forgotten about our break-time appointment? Or do they not want to take part? I 'm inclined to think it's the former.

Have asked Kirsty and Tatty to talk to me during break next week – I wonder if I can manage 2 sets of 2 doing critical incident charts at the same time.

**How do I manage to find time with pupils to do all the interviewing I need to?**

**How do I communicate with them – email?**

**Must contact class teacher and Year head soon. Ms S has not answered my email yet from last week.**

**Ask class teacher about communication?**

## Appendix 4e: Example of interview transcription

### Interview with Kirsty

#### Library period - in the library

KJ You used to play bass at primary school, is that right?

KIRSTY Yep. And I played bass guitar up until a couple of months ago and I stopped that cos course choices are coming up and I didn't know where that would leave me with the subjects I was taking . . .

KJ And you're not taking music?

KIRSTY Nope

KJ So your bass guitar – were you having lessons?

KIRSTY Yes I was.

KJ And you're not going to be doing that anymore?

KIRSTY I would like to keep doing it but it was interfering with the lessons I was hoping to take next year and me and my bass teacher had a talk about it and she said it might just be better for me to see – that I'd had a good run at it and maybe I should just stop now.

KJ And was that because you had to go out of certain academic lessons?

KIRSTY Yes

KJ So what sort of subjects are you choosing

KIRSTY Well, I want to be a psychologist – I want to go to university after high school, so I have to do two sciences and English in Highers. They're offering psychology this year as well.

KJ Can you take that as a standard grade?

KIRSTY Yes, then you can go on to do that as a Higher.

KJ Have they offered it as a Higher before?

KIRSTY No, it's a new subject altogether this year.

KJ And were you interested in psychology before you . . .

KIRSTY Yep.

KJ And what sort of psychologist?

KIRSTY I want to be like a teen therapist.

KJ A teen therapist?

KIRSTY Yeah. Just cos this stage in kids' lives is really hard and stuff, with stuff at home . . . just to talk to people about that.

KJ That's very interesting. I've been sitting in on some of the PSE lessons for parts of your year and you're dealing with some pretty hard stuff.

KIRSTY Yeah

KJ How do find those lessons – do you find them interesting?

KIRSTY Yeah, I do find them interesting. We've done the depression thing and stuff in the lessons and it was interesting to hear about that.

KJ It sounds to me as if you're the sort of person that's quite interested in other people, which is interesting from my point of view because I'm looking at how you engage with the other, with difference, new things, things that aren't you. In your music lessons this year I've been noticing that a lot of the time you're working on the sort of music that we might all be most familiar with and playing instruments that we hear all the time like bass guitars, guitars, keyboard and everything. I wondered how you find school music lessons where you're learning to play instruments so that you might be able to take standard grade music in this sort of music. How do you find the sort of things that you're doing at the moment?

KIRSTY They're good – they make it easy so that you can learn the basics and then you get a shot across all the instruments and you get a shot on Garageband. It's not just the instrument side of music - you get chance to do the technical side as well.

KJ With the Garageband?

KIRSTY Yeah

KJ And have you done much composition? Garageband's like composition isn't it?

KIRSTY Yeah, bits and bobs from Garageband. I have a Mac laptop at home

KJ Oh do you?

KIRSTY And I do a little bit on that sometimes . . . with my cousin.

KJ Is that a boy or a girl cousin?

KIRSTY Boy – he's only about 7 but he picks his favourite songs. He moved to Canada last year, but before that he used to pick his favourite songs and I would mix then up a bit.

KJ So you're quite skilled at that?

KIRSTY A Lady Gaga song, we made it really high-pitched and squeaky and fast and he was dancing around to it! It was fun.

KJ So you're pretty good at mixing?

KIRSTY I quite like it.

KJ That's great. And have you got any recordings saved?

KIRSTY Yeah, uhuh.

KJ So if I gave you a memory stick?

KIRSTY Yeah, I could find some for you – I could make up a couple at the weekend. I was making one in music today.

KJ So that's one sort of outlet that you have – doing that sort of mixing and stuff. Do you sing or play with anybody outside of school?

KIRSTY Erm, not overly. My friend plays guitar. Sometimes we do a bit of songwriting, depending what she's doing with her guitar lessons. Her sister, they have a band and we listen to them practise.

KJ Are you involved – do you ever sing?

KIRSTY No, not really.

KJ And when you're writing songs with your friend, what sort of style of music . . . ?

KIRSTY Just kind of poppy – just radio stuff.

KJ What radio station do you like listening to?

KIRSTY Forth One and Galaxy and things like that.

KJ I went into the Forth One studio once when I was younger. I really liked Forth One and I asked Brig and Dingle whether I could bring him a cake, and come into the studio, so I got to sit in on the whole show once.

KJ How old were you then?

KIRSTY I must have been nine. Really nice people.

KJ Did that have an effect on you – did you want to work more in that area?

KIRSTY It was cool - I got to have the big headphones on and talk on the radio.

KJ So when you say this gives you the basics, the basics for what? What can you see that's helping you to do? If you think of your music lessons in terms of the rest of your lives, what do you think it's building up for you?

KIRSTY That's a hard question. Maybe it's quite good for enjoyment as well – if you're ever with friends and just, if you know a bit of like piano and chords or guitar you can always . . .

KJ You can sort of muck in?

KIRSTY Yeah.

KJ Now when Ms H. came she did something a bit different. And I think probably a bit different from what you'd done last year as well?

KIRSTY Uhu

KJ The world music stuff?

KIRSTY Yeah, that was good.

KJ Tell me about how you responded to those.

KIRSTY It was good learning about how different cultures appreciate their music, and use some of the music for prayer and for celebrating and stuff, cos we just use it generally, really, to dance and then there's church music and stuff but they were using it in rituals and special music for different things – it was interesting.

KJ What were the rituals you remembered?

KIRSTY The Gamelan music was for prayer and celebration and stuff – that was good. And the African tribe were doing it for worship and things like that.

KJ Yes, I missed that. So tell me about – there was the African music and the Gamelan, was there another one?

KIRSTY There was the Java music.

KJ Yes, I think that was the Gamelan music.

KIRSTY I think there was Japanese music – Eastern music.

KJ So what was the most striking thing out of those lessons for you?

KIRSTY I really like the African tribe music, cos it was remarkable how they didn't read and write in English but they could learn all these songs like slow songs in English and they had these like amazingly done all coordinating while they were singing stuff – it was really good.

KJ So was that all singing or was that singing with instruments?

KIRSTY I think some of the boys in the group had drums.

KJ Was that something you watched on a screen?

KIRSTY Yeah, we watched it, and the boy who was leading, he just said a word and each verse had a word at the start and he mixed them up so it wasn't a song. It had verses and he would say a word and they would all know what verse it was - it was never the same every time they done it. It was really interesting. Somehow they managed to memorise it all.

KJ That is interesting. One or two of the others were telling me that there was a chap who came in to demonstrate some drumming and you then had a go at that. What was that like?

KIRSTY It was nice – it was different. When Ms H came in we just got to see it and hear it. Then it was different because we got to take part in it as well.

KJ Had she arranged that?

KIRSTY It was part of – we were doing a world countries week.

KJ At school?

KIRSTY Yeah, and we had different classes and different workshops and that was one of the workshops.

KJ What was the difference in your learning experience having somebody there doing it with you? As opposed to looking at it on the screen?

KIRSTY I suppose it was probably easier to learn having someone sit with you then talk you through the stages of how to do it.

KJ And what was the difference in how you learned – the fact that you actually had a drum - did you have a drum each?

KIRSTY Yes, well we were in partners and we swapped part-way through the lesson cos there wasn't that many for a big class.

KJ Did that have an impact on what you took away, how you learned?

KIRSTY Cos it makes you more interested in it if you actually get to have a shot rather than just hearing about it.

KJ Was the West African drumming music unfamiliar to you or had you heard that before?

KIRSTY I'd heard it before in movies and stuff.

KJ Through media generally?

KIRSTY Uhuh

KJ Were there complicated rhythms that you had to work at or was it quite straightforward?

KIRSTY It was quite straightforward stuff. He showed us some really complicated thing but it was mostly quite straightforward.

KJ When he showed you the complicated thing, had you got enough of the basics you were talking about, that you sort of build-up in the music lessons at school, had you got enough of that to be able to sort of assimilate it, to know how that worked? Or was it completely outside of your rhythmical knowledge?

KIRSTY It was probably – it was a totally different type of music. I don't think you could have one lesson and take it away in your head to play it automatically. I think it was something you'd really need to work at to be able to play properly.

KJ Did that leave you with things in your mind, rhythms or something, that you sort of dwelt on? Or was it just a general experience?

KIRSTY Well, I think we done it for the second half of the period, because the first half of the period we had been looking at them playing the rhythms and so he played something. It was really interesting actually. It is really complicated stuff, the drums that they were playing.

KJ Yeah. It's a level of rhythmic complexity that we're not really familiar with, isn't it? And were there layers of rhythms – were there different rhythms going on at the same time?

## **Appendix 4f: Example of further questions arising from earlier pupil interviews**

### **Follow-up questions for Amy –**

1. Tell me more about music bringing back memories of when you were little
2. Can you remember a time when you were really struck, stopped in your tracks by some music, or by any other intense learning experience? When it changed the way you saw things?
3. Can you say a bit more about ‘if you and another person had their differences, music is another way they could communicate’?
4. How has your musical identity changed this year?
5. How would you sum up how you use music / what it means in your life? eg helps you belong . . . ?

### **For Finlay**

1. Tell me about how your musical identity? How has it changed over this year?
2. You’ve experimented with using bits of ideas from other music, unfamiliar to you. What about blues? You seem comfortable with that? How do you think about/ feel towards the people who developed the blues, and what you know of their background?
3. Can you tell me about a time when some music stopped you in your tracks with a wow! factor?

## Appendix 5 A taxonomy of triangulation

(adapted from Downward and Mearman, 2007)

### 1. Data triangulation

Involves gathering data at different times and situations, from different subjects.

### 2. Investigator triangulation

Involves using more than one field researcher to collect and analyse the data relevant to a specific research object. Asking scientific experimenters to attempt to replicate each other's work is another example.

### 3. Theoretical triangulation

Involves making explicit references to more than one theoretical tradition to analyse data. This is intrinsically a method that allows for different disciplinary perspectives upon an issue. This could also be called pluralist or multi-disciplinary triangulation.

### 4. Methodological triangulation

Involves the combination of different research methods. For Denzin, there are two forms of methodological triangulation. **Within method triangulation** involves making use of different varieties of the same method. **Between method triangulation** involves making use of different methods, such as 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' methods in combination.

Downward and Mearman argue that approaches such as grounded theory and case study require framing within more explicit ontological referents. They argue that embracing contrastive explanation in critical realism requires embracing the process of retrodution as an organising epistemology. It is this that makes the ontological constraints upon research design clear and yet does not place an a priori constraint on the specific methods employed, nor their extent. This simply requires due care being paid according to the level of abstraction required (ibid: 95).

## Appendix 6: Musicking Otherwise: Ethical encounters in music-making

Published in the National Association of Music Educators' magazine Issue 1, Spring 2013, p 34, available at [http://musicmark.org.uk/sites/default/files/content-assets/research-resources/MUSIC\\_MARK\\_SPRING\\_2013.pdf](http://musicmark.org.uk/sites/default/files/content-assets/research-resources/MUSIC_MARK_SPRING_2013.pdf)

Permission to reproduce this article has been granted by John Kelleher,  
Content Editor for Music Mark

### PAGE 34

Musicking otherwise: Ethical encounters in music-making

I have been working on this new scheme for three years now and I have noticed that teachers need less support and children sing much more in tune. Solfa helps a lot when it comes to playing instruments, too. I still use it when I have to sight read and find it invaluable. I have to admit it gets more challenging in Years 5 and 6 but, at the beginning of each term, I have a meeting with the teachers teaching from my lesson plans and explain every detail needed to ensure that they are confident enough to pass on the knowledge. (Sometimes I find them in the staffroom practising rhythm exercises...!)

I believe that if we want our children to enjoy music, lessons should be age-relevant and accessible to all. Singing should always be at the centre of a lesson accompanied by lots of easy but fun games. Singing should also be of good quality with children becoming more in control of their voices through focusing on breathing, sound quality and intonation. Children should feel able to use music in all areas of their lives whether in class music lessons, in the playground or at home.

If one were to attempt to express the essence of this education in one word, it could only be – *singing*

... It is our firm conviction that mankind will live the happier when it has learnt to live with music more worthily. Whoever works to promote this end, in one way or another, has not lived in vain. (Kodály 1974: 206)

### Reference

Kodály, Z. (1966) *The Selected Writings of Zoltan Kodály*. New York: Boosey & Hawkes.

More information about the British Kodály Academy can be found at <http://www.britishkodalyacademy.org/>.

Rita Howell has been the Music Coordinator and a class teacher at Katesgrove Primary School, Reading, since 2003. She previously taught in a primary school in Budapest, Hungary.

## Musicking otherwise: Ethical encounters in music-making

KATHRYN JOURDAN

*In Issue 36 of the Magazine the story of the Big Noise Raploch was told, and now Kathryn writes about the much awaited meeting with Gustavo Dudamel and his musicians and how together they learnt in preparation for performance. Set alongside this is Kathryn's analysis of the conductor Robin Ticciati's orientation towards his players and the music being performed at the Edinburgh Festival. These experiences are understood through the lens of philosopher Emanuel Levinas who places responsibility to the 'Other' before all else.*

### Venezuelans in Raploch

Last summer brought experiences of a profoundly different quality of music-making, which have left me moved and exhilarated, as if something new and life-giving has been awakened. The first of these was during the Simon Bolivar Orchestra's residency amongst Sistema Scotland's Big Noise community in Raploch, Stirling as part of the 2012 Cultural

Olympiad. Conductor Gustavo Dudamel spent one morning rehearsing with a 'pop-up orchestra' drawn from teenage musicians from all over Scotland, playing alongside about forty members of his own *El Sistema*-trained orchestra. The repertoire was firstly Beethoven's *Egmont* Overture, to be performed a couple of evenings later by the children of the Big Noise and the Bolivars at the huge, open-air televised concert on the opening night of the Olympiad, and secondly the first and second movements of the *Eroica* Symphony.

### A new conception of the *maestro*

Gustavo's rehearsal style immediately revealed his distinctive orientation towards the players. Leaving behind any autocratic model of the *maestro*, and exhibiting something I can only describe as grace, he conducted with a compassionate and enabling mode of leadership, engaging the players with gentleness, humour and a lightness of touch which freed the young musicians to play in a manner

far exceeding their own expectations. As the combined forces worked through *Egmont*, the Venezuelans' vibrant sound and incisive energy spurred on the teenage Scottish musicians to play more expressively and extrovertly.

It was wonderful to hear a string section's sound blossom, and individuals in the wind and brass begin to play beyond what they had previously thought possible. Alwin on first horn rose impressively to the occasion when the rehearsal moved on to the *Eroica*'s first movement and gave his all until his lip started to go after an hour or so. Young Scots had been paired with Venezuelan orchestral members for maximum impact.

### Embodied learning

At around eleven o'clock children from the Big Noise, who were playing two evenings later at the Big Concert, started filing in to the gallery of the hall with Sistema Scotland musicians



© Frank Dipolo

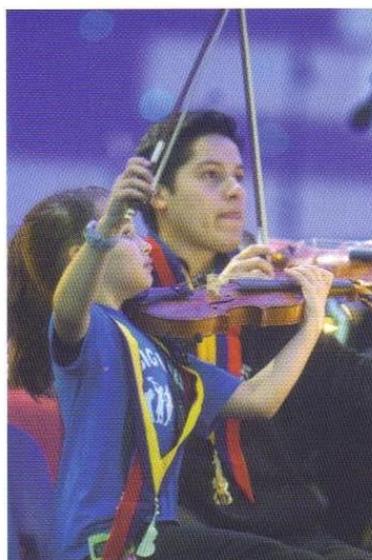
and other staff members. They were transfixed by the sounds of the rehearsal going on beneath them, with violinists and viola players straining over the balcony to take part, miming their parts and 'air-bowing' with perplexed expressions when the Venezuelans' bowing directions and patterns diverged from those they were used to.

The Raploch children were moving – they felt the music in a physical way and couldn't help but respond. I recalled seeing first violinist Luke at the rehearsal the previous Saturday, when the Big Noise children had rehearsed alongside these teenagers drawn from Scotland's regional and national ensembles, moving with the music as he played the part expressively and skilfully, while the teenagers around him sat much stiller. Now, however, the infectious generosity and energy of movement of the Venezuelans was rubbing off on the teenagers too.

Luke had been expertly taught the bowing techniques required by the Egmont part in a specialized and informed manner, so that he played with the articulation of a Nikolaus Harnoncourt rather than the more old-fashioned and restricted upper bow articulation that many of the teenage violinists were attempting. This left Luke and his fellow Big



© Frank Dipolo



© Marc Marnie

Noise players relatively technically unconstrained in their expression of the music and able to enter the flow of its discourse.

The Raploch children have taken this music into themselves and have found a compulsion to express themselves freely through movement, a striking feature of the Venezuelans' style but noticeable too in world-leading ensembles such as the Berlin Philharmonic, where a committed, soloistic style of playing is more common than in many British orchestras, illustrating a confidence in their belonging and in the value of their individual contribution to the orchestral whole.

#### An ethical encounter

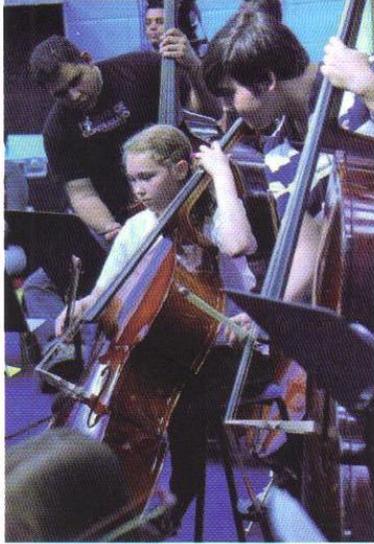
There was something deeper, however, when the Venezuelans played with the Scottish youngsters, something I had not witnessed before and which many of us watching the rehearsal found profoundly moving. The South Americans played in such a way as to be attentive, hospitable and above all *nurturing* to their young desk partners. This was an instinctive and embodied way of relating, entirely without words as many of the Venezuelans had little English. They leant in towards the children, and somehow gently led them into a deeper engagement with the music, physically, technically and in terms of musical commitment. I have never seen anything like it.

#### Beethoven and the struggle for social change

Somehow the music of the *Eroica* seemed to heighten the sense of something new being forged



© Marc Marnie



© Frank Dipolo

out of tremendous struggle and transformation. Here were young professionals from Venezuela who had risen through a social transformation programme that took them from a variety of backgrounds, including situations of poverty and danger, and set them upon a life-changing course through a musical education. They had come to play with and encourage the children of the Big Noise, Raploch, who are also fighting against disadvantage and learning to play and to live within the community of an orchestra, but they had come also to share exuberantly with the wider, generally more advantaged youngsters of Scotland's musical scene, who may in turn perhaps benefit from a more holistic conception of what music is all about, one which challenges stereotypes of privilege and social class and which offers a holistic and ethical mode of encounter with others different from themselves.

As the *Eroica's* music was explored and honed, it seemed that this monumental expression of Beethoven's, which revolutionized European art music at a time of great social upheaval, was an ideal vehicle of encounter for these diverse musical communities. This is why classical repertoire can provide a powerful medium for social transformation. The music

invites a deep emotional response, allows for complex discourse and a transcending of barriers of language while resonating with deep and difficult concepts that in some way express how we may live together. Here was an outworking of Christopher Small's 'musicking' in modelling 'ideal relationships', as practices of hospitality and nurturing transcend and transform all sorts of social and cultural barriers (Small 1998).

I was not the only one to be moved – many I spoke with in the following days expressed similar responses. A colleague from a specialist music school commented that he just didn't want to leave the rehearsal as what he had seen was extraordinary. We had experienced a new way to relate to each other in music-making.

#### Ethical encounter at the Edinburgh Festival

The second experience of the summer was during the last week of the Edinburgh International Festival. The Scottish Chamber Orchestra rehearsed with principal conductor Robin Ticciati in preparation for a final concert of the Festival, a programme including Mahler arranged by Britten, Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich. Although I'd worked with him previously, the process of putting together this challenging programme threw a spotlight upon Robin's orientation towards his players and towards this repertoire.

Perhaps the contrasting, rich and sensual sounds of the Mahler, and the energy and folk-inspired innocence of the Tchaikovsky violin concerto provided a perfect emotional foil to the despair of the Shostakovich, but the range of expression in this concert was huge. How does a young conductor contain within himself, and draw the players into, the depth and breadth of these emotional and spiritual worlds, and how does he remain with this interior orientation throughout the rehearsal week whilst maintaining a normal existence, and at what cost? This is not a self-directed enterprise; the goal of the performance is to reach out to the audience in an act of generous

hospitality, inviting them to travel with us and to look with us into the face of despair on the one hand, and exhilarating sensuality and joyful brilliance on the other.



© Chris Christodoulou

Shostakovich's 14th Symphony is set in a bleak and traumatic context of sung poems of death in various languages and from contrasting perspectives. Robin expressed his conception of one movement to us in early rehearsals, yet when our soloists arrived the soprano saw her movement in a different light. Robin took a moment to reflect and then allowed her the freedom to shape the character as she had envisaged, recrafting his own responses so as to convey the expression she desired.

The symphony presents a pocket of particular difficulties of metrical irregularity within a sparse, exposed texture. Playing under the batons of other conductors I have experienced many instances of growing hostility, scorn or even contempt towards players from the podium, as difficult passages refuse to be adequately assimilated to allow for successful musical expression. It is tempting for conductors to project their anxiety and frustration onto the players. It is less common to see a disciplined taking-on of responsibility, with an openness that invites players into the processes of rehearsal.

With grace and integrity, Robin maintained his habitual orientation of drawing us into the piece through the working-out of his musical

imagination, taking full responsibility so as to invite us to play freely and with commitment. We left rehearsals one evening without resolving the difficulties of one tricky passage and with a distinct feeling of having left the burden upon Robin's shoulders. The following morning saw a falling into place of the rhythmically irregular string interjections, as if we could now see and hear clearly. There was a sense of growing expectation and the evening's performance was powerful. At the close of the Symphony Robin held the immense silence of the hall before allowing our musical journey together to come to a close. He had found the means to an ethical and life-giving encounter with his players, his audience and with the music.

### Reflection

So what was happening in these two contrasting experiences of music-making? How can we understand what was going on and why it seems significant? What occurs as we play or listen together in the concert hall and in daily life and what does it say about how we treat each other? The thinking of a French Jewish philosopher of the last century and a British community musician turned academic researcher provide tools with which to investigate further.

Writing from the perspective of a community musician, Lee Higgins talks of the act of *hospitality* that lies at the heart of the practice of community music-making, drawing upon the work of French philosopher Jacques Derrida (Higgins 2012). Outsiders are invited in to participate, welcomed over the threshold to come to belong or to remain separate.

Derrida's teacher Emmanuel Levinas (1969/1998) argues that our relation with the Other is the first concern of our existence – ethics as 'first philosophy' – before any ideology or means of understanding the world comes into play. Levinas makes a powerful critique of the history of Western philosophy, where he sees a drive to make the 'Same' of others' difference, bringing others into our domain under our rules, leading to

endless cycles of domination and oppression.

Levinas exhorts us to a different orientation; to 'look into the face of the Other' where we perceive a profound 'ethical call' which, when heeded, draws us into a relationship of unending responsibility towards the Other without seeking to make the 'Same' from the 'Other', subsuming their experience and denying their infinite difference from us. This is not a comfortable 'celebration of difference' as some commentators have assumed, but a costly commitment to honour the radical otherness of the Other. It is an ethical orientation that underpins all of life before anything else matters.

What light does this shed upon music-making? How are we to make music together ethically, taking care to 'look into the face of the Other' and to respond in a relationship of responsibility? Levinas's suspicion of the 'parallel reality' of art stemmed from the Jewish revulsion against idolatry traditionally associated with art forms. Art seemed to him to remain outside the realm of ethical responsibility, yet throughout his life he turned again and again to literature for examples of 'looking into the face of the Other'.

Levinas understood the use of language as an ethical act at its core – a reaching out to the Other before any meaning is communicated. Can we conceive of music-making in this way – a breaking out of our own 'totality' in order to reach out and look into the 'infinity' of the face of the Other?

Reading Levinas in the light of more recent conceptualizations of art – especially of music-making as activity rather than finished product – culminating in Christopher Small's conception of 'musicking', Levinas's vision of ethical encounter acts as a tool which unlocks for us the web of relating which occurs in the concert hall as well as the classroom or community workshop.

### Music-making as 'looking into the face of the Other'

What happens if we see an orchestral concert as an act of hospitality where listeners are invited in to join the orchestra's journey of encounter with the musical expressions of various composers? The music functions as one Other though which we can glimpse the face of another, opening us to the infinity of experience which music can express and draw us into. Music that the composer had originally conceived is offered afresh through the reaching out of the players to the listener.

At the heart of the experience of music-making in the concert hall is often the role of the conductor, who shapes the performance and enables the articulation of a composer's musical imagination through drawing together a fresh creative act of the players. Orchestral musicians often respond negatively to any suggestion of being 'taught' or 'treated like a youth orchestra', yet Levinas portrays a teacher as a 'master' who draws pupils into a face-to-face encounter with the Other, learning alongside them in an orientation of profound openness, yet having in some sense 'gone before' them in their depth of knowledge and experience.

Robin Ticciati's practice last summer demonstrated something of this ethical orientation as he took responsibility for drawing out players' musical expression, and brought others into a face-to-face encounter with the composers' conceptions, whilst safeguarding the freedom for players and listeners to give and to respond without the danger of domination or assimilation. Robin achieved this with great charm and courtesy, reminding me of Levinas's quip, presumably with a twinkle in his eye, that his entire philosophy may be summed up simply in the exhortation 'After you!' which, under all its everyday banality, reveals the depth of the ordinary call to goodness where the other precedes my freedom and is more important than myself (Filipovic 2011: 59). Here, as with Dudamel, we find a fresh understanding of what it means to be a *maestro*.

And what of Dudamel and the moving encounter with the young Scottish musicians in Raploch last June? Dudamel and the Bolivars grew up as musicians within the nurturing Sistema community where the mentoring of younger players is second nature and the pursuit of excellence goes hand in hand with care and support for others. The joyful, light touch with which Dudamel led and inspired the young musicians spoke of a holistic outlook where an ethical orientation towards the Other is woven throughout his music-making. As the Bolivar players leaned in towards the Scottish teenagers they gently drew them into an encounter with the infinity of Beethoven's

musical expression and discourse, and through their physical warmth and presence affirmed and taught them, encouraging risk-taking in learning which brought undreamed-of achievements for the younger players as their vibrant sound supported and did not mask the musical 'voice' of the young Scots.

The music-making we witnessed that day was an experience of ethical music education – a life-giving act of hospitality, where musicians came from across the globe to 'look into the faces' of our children, to nurture their musical voices and to bring them into an encounter with the infinity of musical expression.

## References

- Filipovic, Z. (2011) Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas: 'After you, sir!' in *Moderna språk* (105 (1) 58-73).
- Higgins, L. (2012) *Community music in theory and practice*. Oxford: OUP.
- Levinas, E. (1969/1998) *Totality and infinity: An essay on exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP.
- Small, C. (1998) *Musicking: The meanings of performance and listening*. London: Wesleyan Press.

More photos at <http://makeabignoise.org.uk/photos/>

**Kathryn Jourdan teaches academic and chamber music at a school in Edinburgh and performs as a viola player with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.**

[kathryn@jourdan.me](mailto:kathryn@jourdan.me)