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# From Tin Pan Alley to the Royal Schools of Music

## **The Institutionalisation of Classical and Jazz Music**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Sociology  
at Massey University

Patricia Rosalind Ubeda  
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## **Abstract**

This thesis argues that the development of both classical and jazz music has been influenced by motivating conditions which have existed within differing and changing religious, social and political regimes. It argues also that the motivating conditions have been generated and regenerated by social forces and factors in society.

Presently, a breakdown of these former modes of regulation, which created a gulf between classical and jazz music, is taking place as both genres come under one institutional administrative locus, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. A focus has been made on new opportunities for the teaching and the learning of jazz piano music generally as presented by this institution. An implication is made that a break-down of attitudes, identified within social class, which previously kept classical and jazz music apart is taking place.

This theoretically driven narrative locates both classical and jazz music against their respective historical backdrops. From this perspective, the ideas of various theorists have been drawn upon in order to make an understanding of how the motivating conditions are perpetuated. Attitudes, opinions and experiences from local classical and jazz music teachers and pupils, past and present, among others, are drawn on to solidify the theoretical arguments made in this thesis.

Whilst an institutional wedding of classical and jazz music has taken place, philosophical artistic difference and intellectual development of each genre based on socialisation, it is argued, will remain.

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With much gratitude in mind, I hope that this story presents a fair understanding of the institutionalisation of classical and jazz music with special focus on private musical education in New Zealand from the beginning of the first European settlers until the present time.

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**The Piano Lesson**

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## Chapter One

# Introduction

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### 1.1 The Perspective

This thesis is about music and society. This thesis is not about music and the divinely artistically inexplicable. It is about music and the earthly explainable.

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) once said:

(I) know that twelve notes in each octave and the varieties of rhythm offer me opportunities that all of human genius will never exhaust (Exley, 1991:9).

Whilst this is undoubtedly so, musical composition, like the writing of literature and the creation of paintings, is bound by the conditions under which it is composed. Nevertheless, endless words are written which suggest that the great artistic creations of writers, painters and musicians have come into existence as a result of some sort of divine inspiration.

Whilst not wishing to undermine the genius of much musical composition and performance, this thesis examines music in terms of the motivating conditions and/or the regulatory regimes, through which classical and jazz music have come into being. Their creation and development are central to this thesis because, having developed culturally, socially and intellectually in contrasting ways, they have recently come together under the one institutionalised administrative locus.

The motivating conditions which have buffered the development of both these genres of music have been identified within differing and changing religious, social, political and institutional regimes. Forces and factors which exist in society and hold these motivating conditions in place are discussed in this theoretically driven narrative. Excerpts from interviews with people who are, or who have been, associated with music teaching highlight this thesis.

## 1.2 The Objectives

Whilst Igor Stravinsky marvelled over the possibilities held within the twelve notes of each octave, it is purported that he also said:

(J)azz opposes our classical conception of music a strange and subversive chaos of sounds ... it is a fashion and, as such, destined some day to disappear (Giddins, 1998:vii).

At approximately the same time, a headline of The New York Times (1926) was:

Cornetist to Queen Victoria Falls Dead on Hearing Coney Island Jazz Band  
(Giddins, 1998:vii).

Much criticism, much humiliation, as exemplified, has been directed at jazz music. Despite seeming incongruity, this musical form, born of complex African rhythms and nurtured by the aural perception of black Americans was, eventually, rationalised, and formally included in institutionalised syllabi.

The rationalisation of jazz music for piano for teaching and learning purposes by the charitable trust and commercially viable British institution of music, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) in the late 1990s in the United Kingdom (among other places) and in New Zealand in the year 2000 is a major consideration in this thesis. Jazz music was, by its inclusion in the syllabi of this internationally acclaimed institution, removed from its original context and institutionalised in the same manner as classical music had been by the ABRSM

over one hundred years earlier. Arising from this institutionalisation are two central questions. The first considers the implications which the coming together of these two major genres of music under one administrative locus generates. The second question asks how the institutionalisation of jazz music alongside classical music reflects the dynamics of contemporary social life in the Western world.

In seeking theoretical explanations for the development and the eventual ‘coming together’ of these two genres of music, consideration is given to known and recognisable influences. For example, people who make major contributions to the sciences are generally considered to be ‘intelligent’. People who make major contributions to the arts are generally considered to be ‘talented’. There appears to be a suggestion that to be a scientist is an explainable condition and that to be an artist is not. Similarities and differences which exist presently, and historically, between classical and jazz music have been identified in this thesis in order to suggest that being a musician is also ‘an explainable condition’.

Accepting that being a musician is an ‘explainable condition’, this thesis argues that musical composition and performance are the end results of rational thought. They differ little from, for example, the ability to design a bridge, a jet engine or to find a remedy for AIDS. They are all the end products of the circumstances in which they were inspired. Serendipity is likely to have its place in all events. The human beings who were there at the time may be described as being the vehicle for bringing the composition, the performance, the bridge, the engine or the remedy into existence. Therefore, these phenomena may be considered to have an existence *before* the actuality of their creation. It is within creation, however, that the imprints of social class, cultural particularities and philosophical thought begin to make their presence obvious.

By tracing the creation and development of classical and jazz music, this theoretical narrative has considered events, attitudes and philosophical beliefs which have caused jazz music to be accepted *at this time* into formal institutions of musical education in various parts of the Western world. This process is best

exemplified by the ABRSM's recent action of presenting a structured framework of jazz piano for teaching and learning purposes.

### **1.3 Classical and Jazz Music Defined**

For the purpose of this thesis the words 'classical' and 'jazz' are used broadly to distinguish between two distinct genres of music. Firstly, classical music is understood in a general definition as found in the Webster Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary, 1983:273:

pertaining to, or constituting the formally and artistically more sophisticated and enduring types of music, as distinguished from popular and folk music and jazz. Classical music includes symphonies, operas, sonatas, song cycles, and lieder.

An understanding of 'jazz' music is restricted to the defining feature of the new jazz piano syllabus by the ABRSM (Beale, 1998:151) which considers improvisation as its most distinctive feature.

Two major differences between the two genres of music are considered to be firstly, that classical music was, from approximately the 9<sup>th</sup> century, codified and developed accordingly with enormous attention paid to written detail. Secondly, that jazz music has an aural tradition and has developed accordingly with an exceptional need for an immediate understanding of the expectations of fellow musicians.

### **1.4 Context of the Research**

In order to consider the questions outlined in the objectives, it is necessary to provide a contextual backdrop for these two genres of music. Chapters Two and Three present an outline of the origins of each genre whilst focusing upon

motivating conditions for their development. For introductory purposes, it is stated that classical music had its origins in the Christian churches. It developed initially through the patronage of the Catholic Church in Europe from, in the main, the 9<sup>th</sup> century to the time of the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. By this time, music in religious services under the authority of the Catholic Church, became increasingly elaborate to the point that the congregation itself was excluded (Wilson-Dickson, 1992:81). The Reformation and the religious philosophy of Lutheranism, however, encouraged congregational participation by including elements of folk music in their religious ceremonies (Blume, 1974:3). Concurrently, patronage of musicians and composers for secular music came from the aristocracy of Europe. Therefore, it will be argued that religious philosophies and aristocratic preferences affected the development of music because these factors had a confining influence. This is not necessarily to imply that confinement was inhibiting. Indeed, at times the confinements nurtured intense development in the world of music whilst at other times, the development, because of confinement, was pushed in recognisable directions. The results of the confinements may be heard in classical music in its various forms in concert halls, on the air waves and in the teaching studios to this day.

The music which came to be known as 'jazz' developed from communications, by 'hollers', in the plantations of Virginia where the black African people from the West Coast of Africa worked under bondage; it developed from the brothels and the 'ginmills' (public houses) of New Orleans to its respectable 'swing' era in the United States of America and eventually it reached the concert halls of the world (Encyclopaedia Britannica (A) 10, 1980:126). The step into the formal institutions of music through intellectual rationalisation signals 'approval' by the 'experts' of this formerly shunned music.

Approximately 110 years lapsed between the two intellectual rationales which constitute classical and jazz music within the ABRSM. It is argued that classical music was perceived during this time and until recently, by society in general as well as by the formal institutions of music as being socially, emotionally and intellectually superior.

The introduction to New Zealand of the new jazz piano syllabus from the ABRSM in the year 2000 is an interesting time in the development of music teaching and learning in this country. It presents a moment within which to reflect upon that which has been, and that which may come. Music education can never be again as it was, because the classical syllabus now shares a practical and intellectual space with the jazz syllabus. The reasons *why*, and the reasons *what*, pupils may learn and *why* and *what* teachers may offer, are likely to be changing for all time. Therefore it will be argued that the new syllabus induces change to existing social and cultural images and priorities in the world of music. The status of classical music upheld by education in order to perform at certain standards which are, subsequently, acknowledged by success in examinations, has been nudged out of place by a music genre which is noticeably different *and* presented as an equal.

The two genres of music cannot remain as they were because, either a climate of postmodernity has brought into focus new norms, or reinforcements of the climate of modernity have dislodged some old norms and widened the perspective. Whichever way the argument is framed, old norms of classical music, steeped in absolute truths as perceived by a mentality with roots in modernity and enlightenment thinking, have lost the poignancy of their focus.

It is through the piano, specifically, that jazz music has been placed on *au pair* with classical music within the ABRSM. However, the piano (fortepiano<sup>1</sup>), invented in 1732, is preceded by the origins of both classical and jazz music. This instrument became major in the expression and performance of classical music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and of jazz music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century although the following for each genre appears to be separated by major divisions both socially and culturally. For example, in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the piano:

betokened the self-satisfaction with which the well-to-do ... regarded themselves. The object was an unquestioned occupant of every *salon*, drawing room, living room, or parlour' (Loesser, 1954:430).

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<sup>1</sup> Fortepiano: Early name for the piano. Later to become the pianoforte (Hurd, 1979:264-265).

On the contrary, the 20<sup>th</sup> century popularity for jazz piano may be traced to the piano players found in:

‘brothels, gambling joints, saloons, and clubs of the big city ghettos ...’  
Collier, 1978:44).

## 1.5 Thesis Structure

Chapters Two and Three look at the worlds of classical and jazz music historically from the 9<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and from the arrival, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, of the black African people as slaves in the United States of America. A discussion about these genres of music is meaningless without being located within this wide and expansive view. The historical account is pushed forward by social, religious, political and institutional influences. Alan Hunt’s concept of *modes of regulation* (1993) will be used as an analytical tool in order to look at these influences. They will be used in this thesis to identify motivating conditions for the development of both forms of music.

Whilst, for a long period within a climate of modernity, the idea that an absolute truth about ‘music’ may have been considered to exist, the climate of postmodernity, embracing a plurality of logics, offers new perspectives. Chapter Four attempts to understand recent changes within the world of music by looking at both classical and jazz music as they may be understood within these logic systems. Commercialism as it affects the development of music induces a major leap in understanding priorities about music as an artistic expression. Embracing the imagery of ‘gate-keeping’, the social implications of music as a commodity in the market place are considered.

*Strategies of socialisation and disciplinary devices* are two major interlocking concepts considered in this thesis to hold the motivating conditions for the development of music in place. They are identified as being religious and institutional in character. Chapter Five discusses these concepts in order to isolate some motivating factors which have propelled the teaching and learning of



classical music. A particular focus is made of the contribution to music teaching in New Zealand by the religious communities of the Catholic sisters in this country from the time of the arrival of the first European settlers. These women played a large part in the teaching of the piano since they arrived here in the 1830s (Lovell-Smith, 1998:45). The contention is that the philosophical foundations of their religious practises based on personal self-discipline and believing in the absolute existence of 'God', carried over into their music teaching. This, it is argued, is evident in their attitude to teaching which projected a mentality that a 'truth' also existed about the absolute nature of music. The discussion about music teaching by the Catholic sisters in this country in this thesis demonstrates the modes of regulation which still exist, in the world of music teaching and learning.

The concepts of *strategies of socialisation and disciplinary devices* are also employed in order to consider the world-wide success of the ABRSM as an institution which reinforces its own knowledge to amateur musicians, in the main, through its own examination system. These concepts also invite a consideration of social class and music preferences. It will be argued that the institutionalisation of jazz music itself will affect music preferences in society, and consequently, social class imagery. This idea is discussed further in Chapter Six.

Chapter Six considers *credentialism and prestige* as concepts which formally create and control the institutionalised world of classical music teaching and learning. The implications for jazz music teaching/learning under this formal system of control are considered because hitherto, this world of music *has* functioned successfully, albeit, informally.

The concepts of *strategies of socialisation and disciplinary devices* and *credentialism and prestige* are seen as underlying forces in society which hold the motivating conditions for the development of music in place.

Chapter Seven presents an overview of the discussion whilst making some concluding observations. It also presents insights from two major jazz musicians/educators into the direction which they think 'classical' and 'jazz' music may be heading in light of the institutionalisation of both genres.

This thesis clings to chronology, where appropriate, but leaps geographically and conceptually. Cross-cutting time are the two separate developments of classical and jazz music understandings. Located within the timeframe is the presentation, or visibility, of these two music genres as their development has been experienced in New Zealand. This thesis also leaps temporally and spatially in Chapters Five and Six when the development of music is considered generally in relation to forces and factors which bring about, or have brought about, religious, personal and/or social-class identity. These ideas are exemplified within local New Zealand teaching practices.

## **1.6 Methodology**

As a theoretically driven narrative, this thesis has been informed by specific ideas from a number of theorists. Of particular significance is the concept as presented by British socio-legal theorist Alan Hunt (1993) of 'modes of regulation'. Hunt's concept provides a framework within which a scrutiny has been made of the historical forces and factors which provided the motivating conditions for the development of both classical music and jazz music. The complexities of institutionalisation of music, a late influence in the world of music, is also analysed according to Hunt's framework of modes of regulation.

The works of other theorists are used to bring some understanding to how the motivating conditions for the development of classical music generated and regenerated themselves. For example, in Chapter 5, Max Weber's (1958) description of a religious 'calling' presents an understanding of an era of music teaching in this country which lasted for over one hundred years. Similarly, the works of Michel Foucault (1995) and Nikolas Rose (1990, 1999) on group subservience have been incorporated into this theoretical framework. A mentality beneficial to the acceptance of knowledge as presented by institutions to the point that examinations are a desirable ordeal may explain the teaching methods of the Catholic sisters as well as the successful functioning of the British institutions of music.

Zygmunt Bauman's (1987, 1992) ideas about the construction of 'knowledge' within the climates of modernity and postmodernity are useful in this thesis. His theories are considered in order to understand the nature of the knowledge as presented by the ABRSM, both before and after the presentation of the new jazz piano syllabus. Bauman also introduces the idea of market forces as modern gatekeepers of knowledge within the arts. Of interest to this theory-driven thesis is Bauman's suggestion that reality has a place within shared imagery which comes into existence as a result of constructed understandings about knowledge. This idea is used to demonstrate the construction of meaning about examination success.

French theorist, Pierre Bourdieu, (1984) with his focus on the obtaining of various 'capitals' offers much to the understanding of why people might learn a musical instrument and/or subject themselves to the stress of sitting music examinations. Brint, (1994) Witz, (1992) Etzioni, (1969) and Weber, (1978) all offer definitions in relation to perceptions of occupations. Music teaching as an occupation is considered in light of their theories.

These theorists and their theories offer explanations about the generation and regeneration of the motivating conditions which contribute to the development of music.

In order to gauge the appropriateness of these theoretical explanations for the development of music, a number of interviews were carried out. Excerpts from sixteen interviews conducted locally have been included in order to highlight possible explanations to propositions as well as to illustrate particular points. The discussion may represent music teaching and learning in any number of countries of the world. The geographical immediacy of the interview participants *is* considered to be representative of that wider world.

Interviews, specifically, have been conducted with, firstly, four sisters from various orders of Catholic religious communities. The reasons why the sisters, in general, taught music was discussed. The sisters were personally contacted. Three sisters are referred to as Sister Mary A, B, or C. Sister 'Mary Joan' agreed to the

using of her name. Secondly, five pupils personally known to be former pupils of the sisters were asked for their opinions. Although all agreed to be identified, given names only have been used.

Contact was made, anonymously, with jazz teachers through the New Zealand Examinations Administrator of the ABRSM. Four interviews, subsequently, took place with teachers who had submitted candidates for the first jazz piano examinations which were conducted in Auckland in October 2000. One jazz teacher known personally, was interviewed. Pseudonyms are used in all cases in order to protect anonymity.

Jazz piano examiner from the ABRSM, Charles Beale, and jazz musician and university lecturer in jazz music, Phil Broadhurst, agreed to be interviewed and to be personally identified.

Three people of significance within the world of music teaching in Auckland showed little interest in being interviewed whilst not actually refusing. The idea was dismissed after two or three failed attempts to secure an interview time.

Permission to interview was formally obtained from all who responded to the invitation to take part. The invitation was on official Massey University-headed paper and indicated the area of research and the appropriate conditions. All interviews were conducted within the stipulations and guidelines as set out in the *Code of Ethical Conduct for Teaching and Research involving Human Subjects*, by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. Written permission to record each interview was gained from each interviewee. All interviews were subsequently transcribed by the writer before being erased to ensure confidentiality.

## 1.7 Abbreviations

The British institutions of music, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music<sup>2</sup> and the Trinity College of Music London, which feature significantly in this thesis, are referred to in full at each first mention in each chapter. Thereafter that are referred to as the ‘ABRSM’ and the ‘TCL’.

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<sup>2</sup> The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music is comprised of the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama