



The Origins and Foundations of Music Education: International Perspectives. 2nd ed. Edited by Gordon Cox and Robin Stevens. London: Bloomsbury, 2017. 290 pp. ISBN 978-1-4742-2908-1 (paperback).

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Following on a 2006 proposal to the History Standing Committee of the International Society for Music Education, plus a 2008 international symposium focusing on the historical roots of music as a mandated part of curriculum in compulsory schooling, Gordon Cox and Robin Stevens compiled papers of 14 prominent scholars who wrote on those historical roots in their respective

nations to produce *The Origins and Foundations of Music Education: International Perspectives* in 2010. Cox and Stevens's second edition (2017) updates several chapters of the original volume to include recent history, introduces chapters on four more countries, and adds a concluding chapter intended to draw together the contributing scholars' thinking on shared issues. The book is an exciting and important contribution to music education history, a field that has long tended to focus on events within nations rather than bringing together parallel histories of different nations and drawing connections among them.

Chapters in the new edition have been grouped into sections devoted to nations in Europe (Britain, France, Germany, Ireland, Kosovo, Lithuania, Norway, and Spain), the Americas (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, and the USA), the Middle East (Israel and Turkey), plus Africa and the Asia-Pacific region (Australia, China, and South Africa). Contributing writers were asked to explore "core issues" in their chapters, including their own historical and political contexts; aims and content of music as a compulsory subject there; teaching methods; training of teachers; experiences of pupils; and reflections on the present state of music education in the light of past developments. With this organizing scheme as a departure point, the writers nevertheless gave their various chapters somewhat different emphases, owing to their different national circumstances. Still, all contributed insightful and valuable overviews of the history of music in compulsory schooling in their respective nations.



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Cox and Stevens acknowledge in their introduction that “music education is a somewhat complex and problematic field for investigation,” and they explain that, in order to “keep this study within bounds,” the contributing writers have “to a large extent focused upon what might be called ‘generalist classroom music’ for all . . .” (pp. 1-2). This explanation accounts for what makes the book both pleurably informative and tantalizing; the different chapters shed light on how music education in the different nations has been both defined and changed by religious, social, political, and economic forces, but, since each nation has been afforded only one chapter, readers are likely to find themselves both feeling enlightened and wanting more. Indeed, the book’s focus on “generalist classroom music” has surely bracketed out issues associated with music performance and academic music studies (which often involve contrasting and conflicting worldviews), and its focus on compulsory (government-funded) music education has no doubt excluded consideration of teaching and learning of any musics that do not represent large segments of society in the nations under study. Furthermore, much remains to be reported about music education in nations that are not represented in these chapters.

Still, readers will learn a great deal from this book about the influence of religious motives for music education (e.g., in Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, and the USA), how music education has been valued and promoted for its social influence (e.g., in Brazil, Britain, and Germany), how political interests have brought about concerns with identity in music education (e.g., in China, Cuba, Germany, Kosovo, and Israel), and how various factors have influenced government funding of education and, hence, music education (e.g., in Australia, Spain, and the USA). Accounts of teaching methods in the various chapters reveal how ideas generated in Europe (where compulsory schooling began) have influenced practices of music education in nations elsewhere (where they have sometimes gone hand-in-hand with colonialism). Additionally, readers will learn how the generalist/specialist divide in teacher training varies internationally, and they will discover that knowledge of students’ experiences of music education is limited owing to inadequate research.

In their concluding chapter, Cox and Stevens briefly revisit the book’s stated “core issues” and draw threads between the varied accounts of the contributors, also making connections with recent, related writings of other scholars. The many topics touched upon include internationalism, nationalism, and localism; colonialism and the dominance of Western-oriented musical skills and concepts; and the subsumption of music education into generic “artistic education” in nations where the leaders of market-driven economies view education as an investment from which they expect to derive economic benefits.

Cox and Stevens observe, “[I]t appears that those pioneers who introduced music into the curriculum subscribed to a common view that music [is] related to the shared values of nation

and community building.” Acknowledging a related, unresolved tension in the recent history of the field, they acknowledge, “Today, that link is at risk.” (p. 274). They do not, however, speculate on factors that may have engendered that risk. Had they asked the contributing scholars to take into account the effects of computers and media on music in their various nations (i.e., in their “reflections on the present state of music education”), they might have drawn further important connections for the field, since the automation and social detachment to which those technologies have given rise have contributed to advancing individualism and masking human dependence on community worldwide.

The Origins and Foundations of Music Education: International Perspectives (2017) is a provocative introduction to the parallel histories of music education in 18 nations and a valuable resource for scholars, students, and teachers wishing to gain an internationally informed perspective on music education in compulsory schooling. This well-grounded text should inform ongoing discussions about the effects of globalization on music education as a field of practice. Here’s hoping there will be further expanded editions.

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