



**Girdzijauskienė, R. and Stakelum, M. (2017) 'Introduction', in Girdzijauskienė, R. and Stakelum, M., eds. *European perspectives on music education 7. Creativity and innovation*. Innsbruck: Helbling.**

Publisher website: <http://www.helbling.at>

## ResearchSPace

<http://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/>

This pre-published version is made available in accordance with publisher policies.

Please cite only the published version using the reference above.

This cover sheet may not be removed from the document.

Please scroll down to view the document.

## Introduction

There is probably no one among us who would claim that creativity is not important, that we ourselves are not creative, or that we do not nurture creativity. And yet, despite exhaustive research and the presentation of various theories stressing its different aspects, creativity continues to be an elusive phenomenon cloaked in various myths. One such myth particularly fostered by music educators is that creativity is best cultivated through artistic and musical activity. Is this actually true? What does it mean to be creative in music? What are the characteristics of creative pupils, students, and professional artists? What are the features of a creative music teacher, and what does it mean to teach creatively?

A sizable community of music educators from many countries came together to address these issues during the annual EAS conference held at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in Vilnius, Lithuania. The conference was the culmination of collaborative effort of five universities and academies with responsibilities for music educator preparation in Lithuania: Klaipėda University, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Šiauliai University, and Music Academy of Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University.

In choosing the theme of the conference ‘Looking for Unexpected: Creativity and Innovations in Music Education’, we were united in our intention not to underrate the role of creativity in our lives; it is part of survival in this world. Our aim was to exchange ideas about the concept of creativity, and to share good practices in fostering creativity in a variety of musical contexts. Why creativity? Creativity, inventions and discoveries have determined and will continue to determine a better life. Creativity helps to solve the ever-increasing dilemmas of our world. Creativity is the spring of innovation, which creates conditions for competitiveness. And finally, creations provide joy and make life delightful – at least much more delightful than for those who do not allow themselves to be creative. This, and our focus on innovations - fresh and surprising ideas in music education - have led to the seventh volume in the series *European Perspective on Music Education*.

Chapters for inclusion were selected via a double blind peer review process undertaken by members of the editorial board of the series. We looked for a range of voices explaining musical creativity, sequences and contrasts in its development, repetitions and recapitulation of suggestions for further research projects. Multiple voices such as these make the book complex and multidimensional, encouraging the reader to join a creative journey through different European countries.

The painting on the front cover is ‘Fugue’, chosen from the work of Lithuanian composer and painter Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875-1911). It shares its title with a compositional technique well known to the readers, one which is built on a musical theme followed by connecting passages, developed from previously heard material, alternated until the final presentation of the theme. An analogy for the fugue figuratively refers to the essence of this book, where the subject of creativity and innovation is developed by various authors presenting their concept of creativity from the perspective of their country.

The creative work of one of the most prominent Lithuanian artists can thus remind us that innovations are based on tradition and that creativity does not thrive in vacuum. Artefacts we consider to be creative are perceived in the context of past and present traditions, of artists' lives and works. It inspires us to cherish what we have, what we have created and to take the next step towards building an even more contemporary understanding of creativity and its development.

The book is organised into three sections. In the first of these, *Mapping concepts of creativity in the diversity of practice*, creativity is considered across a range of practice contexts, each one offering chances and possibilities which shape the way in which music teaching and learning can be considered to be creative. The section begins with a chapter by **Pamela Burnard**. She notes the real-world diversity of musical creativities which necessitates a move away from the romantic conception of a singular creativity towards one which reflects a more contemporarised and variegated practice. This diversity can be recognized and communicated in the practices of professional musicians, whether they work in the music industry as performing artists, composers, singer songwriters, originals bands, DJs, live coders, sound designers, music practitioners in community music settings or higher music educational settings, or as music teachers responsible for stimulating diverse types of creativity. It is not enough simply for teachers to identify this diversity, however: what is needed is a radical way of rethinking innovation in music teaching and learning. By re-imagining school music and higher music education, Burnard suggests that different forms of entrepreneurship and discourses of diverse creativities can emerge which will ensure creative sustained futures. She calls for music teachers to think positively about change, and to consider the implications and dilemmas that arise from stimulating and supporting diverse creativities in practice.

The term 'teaching creatively' in both education and music education contexts forms a starting point for the chapter by **Natassa Economidou Stavrou** and **Georgia Kyriakidou**. Their concern is to understand what makes a creative music teacher. In putting forward a profile of the creative and innovative music teacher, they highlight personal qualities, pedagogical practices and communication skills among its characteristic features. They report on a research study which was undertaken in Cyprus to investigate secondary school music teachers' perspectives on aspects of creativity and innovation with particular reference to the use of innovative practices in various areas of their teaching, their attitudes towards trying out new things and the possible barriers they may face in practice. The findings have led them to conclude that the teachers involved in their study tended to be risk averse, preferring to rely on tried and tested approaches rather than moving outside their comfort zone. There are lessons to be learned from this and recommendations for music teacher education and teacher effectiveness regarding teaching music creatively.

**Jo Stijnen** and **Stijn Vervliet** argue that, while creative processes in the field of music are commonly associated with the act of improvisation or composition, playing from score tends not to be seen in the same light. Yet there is much about it that is intrinsically a creative musical behaviour: creative aspects involved in playing from score can be a pathway to a more profound and authentic artistic performance and can reach beyond the threshold of improvisation and composition. They have constructed a theoretical framework for nourishing creativity as a basis for some pedagogical reflections that call into question classic instructional instrument teaching. In advocating for sustainable learning strategies, they challenge the instrumental teachers to train young musicians' (self) reflective capacities, and to enhance their critical attitude. One outcome of this would be looking at the instrumental teacher

not as a guide but as an artistic coach who unlocks the musical potential of each student by means of mediated quality reflection.

In his chapter on locating creativity in curriculum and assessment, **Martin Fautley** reports on a study undertaken in the classroom context in England where music encompasses three main components; performing, composing, and listening. His concern was to investigate whether teachers organised their lower secondary school curriculum around thematic areas, and what role creativity played in this. He found evidence that teachers did indeed do this, and that there was a close overlapping between teachers as to the topics of themes. Assessment was found to be based on matching school expectations of predicted grades, and teachers were not easily able to diverge from these. The place of creativity is questioned in this study, as many of the teachers reported that they have to work in a mechanistic fashion, so that the demands of simple assessment modalities have a backwash effect on the curriculum, reducing opportunities for true creative impetus.

The music competition has much to offer the developing musician and yet, as **Rūta Girdzijauskienė** and **Sandra Rimkutė-Jankuvienė** assert, one of the most challenging tasks facing adjudicators is to agree on criteria for evaluating creative output. In their chapter, they report on a study set in the context of a composition competition with clearly defined rules about eligibility for entry and found that, while all members of the jury were highly competent in their professions and had a shared understanding of quality, there were interesting differences in how they expressed their preferences. From the competitor perspective, Girdzijauskienė and Rimkutė-Jankuvienė noted that the informal feedback given by the adjudicators post competition came to be held in higher esteem by the competitors than the mark or grade awarded. Their conclusion is that the structure of the competition might be adapted to allow for these discussions to be put on a more formal footing.

In the second section *Innovative ways of looking: creative teaching and teaching for creativity*, chapters are connected by a concern with innovation and creativity in classroom practices. **Mary Stakelum** draws on Sternberg's concept of person-environment fit to compile an interpretive account of the attitudes and beliefs one teacher, Mike, brought to bear on his practice. The study at the centre of the chapter was undertaken over six weeks in the final stages of pupils' engagement with music as a statutory subject in England's secondary school system. With illustrative examples taken from classroom observations and from interview, she explores themes of meaningfulness, progress and work orientation as they are played out in the classroom to provide an environment that is conducive to creative success.

**Michaela Schwarzbauer** describes an arts education project which set out to observe, describe and analyse the process leading up to specific aesthetic decisions. Her interest in the project grew from her experience of the social interaction of two groups, one an art class and the other a music class. She found that each group responded in significantly different ways to a stimulus for creativity, with tensions emerging when teachers found that the aesthetic standards and expectations of their students differed from their ideals. She makes recommendations for practice and emphasises the importance of creating meeting places with various forms of artistic expression in the classroom situation.

**Maria B. Spychiger** focuses on musical self-concept and its role in learning and development. Her chapter begins with an overview of how the notion of self-concept found its way into education and tends to be domain specific,

such that a person has different ideas about himself according to which domain of life and self is concerned. She situates her argument within a constructivist and social-constructivist perspective, where an individual experiences his or her actions through interaction. In contrast to a view of development as an unfolding process of individual giftedness, she believes that what children think about themselves concerning their musical ability and attitudes grows and changes, not directly with their musical activities and experiences but with the social interactions they encounter in the related situations. In order for this changing view of development to become a reality and impact on practice, she argues that it is imperative for the music educator to understand the importance of musical self-concept in shaping the learner.

**Fritz Höfer** argues that there are chances and possibilities that popular music can offer when used to foster creativity in music education. He points to the elusiveness of terms like ‘popular music’ and ‘creativity’ when applied to a school setting. Drawing on Poincare and Webster to review key concepts underpinning the creative process in the context of popular music and band work, he notes the implications for music educators at every level of professional practice and across a range of creative learning environments. What emerges is a set of guiding principles for teachers and a call for more intense cooperation between creativity research, research in popular music, music pedagogics and music didactics.

In her chapter, **Marina Gall** weaves together aspects of her personal and professional journey to contextualise the use of assistive technologies in supporting the music education of young people with SEN/D. She identifies the concept of innovation in thinking, in musical ‘tools’ and in macro and micro educational approaches in evidence across a range of institutions, groups and individuals. As teacher educator, her belief in the importance of providing the emerging professional with a diversity of rich music education experiences has led her to investigate the impact of exposure to technologies on trainee teachers taking her programme. She reports on a number of studies she has undertaken in this area, with particular reference to two of these, *Clarion* and *Open School Orchestras*, noting the affordances of the *Clarion* project, and the impact of *Open School Orchestras* on the young people involved.

The third section *Towards creative music teacher education* contains chapters which focus on teacher education. In the first of these, **Magne Espeland** claims that the discourse on teacher education has become somewhat narrowly focused on certainty and prescribed practices. He reminds us that being a well prepared music teacher means acting meaningfully and responsively to situations and argues that, given its potential for answering questions about uncertainty, the skill of improvisation can play a central part in this.

Although the concept of improvisation is well known to music teachers in the field of music practice, the concept of ‘improvisation’ as a teaching skill is less so. He calls for a renewal of music education which is built on the concept of improvisation, drawing evidence from ‘Improvisation in Teacher Education 2012-2016’, a research project whose focus was to study and develop teacher education in Norway as a collaborative, dynamic and relevant practice.

**Jon Helge Saetre** observes that undergraduate music teacher education is concerned to a large extent with preserving the typical conservatoire tradition of music education. Informed by evidence from research carried out in a Norwegian context, he suggests that music in teacher education seems to be carried out as ‘mini-music conservatoires’ emphasizing the full range of the typical music disciplines (including for example music history,

theory, aural training and main instrument,), and emphasizing practice-based knowledge at the expense of research-based knowledge. Furthermore, there is evidence that many teacher educators are increasingly worried about the quality of the programmes, citing in particular a lack of time devoted to music education in the curriculum and a fragmentation of the content. He looks at alternatives and puts forward a compelling case for focusing on core practices in teaching.

**Anna Houmann** considers ways in which student music teachers might be encouraged to identify and respond to unexpected micro-moments that emerge in the course of teaching a music lesson. She describes how she works to achieve this in her own practice. By using role-play, forum-theatre and critical incident technique, she raises awareness among her students of the differences between the planned lesson and the lived lesson. She cautions against adopting an ‘anything goes’ mentality among her students however, and underlines the importance of teacher and students working together in a trusting and respectful relationship, with due regard to the development of a learning environment which nurtures risk taking in a supportive way.

Using her experiences as teacher educator to observe that creativity has become increasingly more important in Dutch primary education, **Ellen de Vugt** focuses on the need to include the teaching of creative processes in generalist initial teacher education. Her chapter describes a practice based research study carried out within the training generalist student teachers in music in her professional context. Findings show that the students needed considerable support in recognising themselves as creative persons and in developing awareness of the scope of their own musical creative processes. Alongside this, they needed to understand that, as teachers they have a role to play in encouraging children to fulfil their musical creative potential. The chapter ends with a reflection on the impact of the research results on curriculum development within the institution at the centre of the study.

Creating music with children means moving through a process of exploration, drafting, developing, refining and fixing. It is an engaging and challenging task which requires both artistic and pedagogical skills.

This is the premise of the final chapter in the volume. It is written by **Margarete Stumpfögger** who has discerned that, between the spontaneous actions and interactions of children playing with sounds and the presentation of a chosen musical form to an audience, there is a long process which can be stimulated, supported and guided by adult musicians. She describes how professional training can develop the skills necessary to effect this, and can provide a general approach applicable to collective learning and teaching situations.

This book would not exist without the help of number of people. Most of all we are indebted to authors who have given so generously of their time and expertise in the preparation of this book. We thank Verity Stofell and Marina Gall who did the English editing, and M. K. Čiurlionis National Art Museum for permission to use the painting ‘Fugue’ of Čiurlionis on the front cover. We also extend our thanks to the European Association for Music in Schools and our institutions, Klaipėda University and Bath Spa University for supporting our work. Finally, we are deeply grateful to Lukas Christensen from Helbling Publisher for his expert guidance, unwavering encouragement and careful attention to detail in the final shaping of the book.