

ManyMusics Action Programme

MUSIC EDUCATION RESEARCH PROJECT

Report from John Drummond, Co-ordinator

Research has been undertaken so far in two forms: a survey sent to selected correspondents in twenty countries across the world, and a scan and analysis of published articles and conference papers dealing with the topic of diversity in music education. In summary, the conclusions we have so far reached indicate that:

- global musics dominate school curricula
- school teachers are inadequately prepared to teach a wide range of musics in schools
- comparatively few resources are available for teaching a wide range of musics in schools

In our view, the education systems of the world are in general doing little if anything to encourage musical diversity.

The survey

We have received a limited response to our survey, but it does include contributions from Europe, North America, Asia, Africa and Oceania. As more information comes in it will be interested to see the extent to which the conclusions drawn so far are further validated. The main results of the survey are as follows:

Range of musics taught in schools:

In order, the most widespread musics included in school music are:

- Western classical music (most widespread)
- International popular music
- Contemporary classical music
- Local traditional music
- Local popular music
- Jazz
- Other traditional musics (least widespread)

Range of musics included in pre-service teacher training

In order, the most widespread musics included in training are:

- Western classical music (most widespread)
- Contemporary classical music
- Local traditional music
- Jazz

- Other traditional musics
- International popular music
- Local popular music (least widespread)

Comparing the data on these two results suggests that
 (1) teachers are less well prepared to teach international popular music than they are to teach contemporary classical music, even though they will find themselves teaching more of the former than the latter

(2) teachers are not being well prepared to teach local traditional musics or other traditional musics

These conclusions are supported in the next findings.

Range of resources* available to support teacher training

In order, the most resources available are in:

- Western classical music (most available)
- contemporary western classical music
- jazz
- international popular music and local popular music
- local and other traditional musics (least available)

*Resources include instruments and study resources (books, tapes, videos etc)

Range of resources available for teachers in the classroom

In order, the most resources available are in:

- Western classical music (most available)
- jazz
- international popular music
- contemporary western classical music
- other traditional musics/local popular music
- local traditional music (least available)

We have asked whether the musics less available in school are more available to learners in the community. The survey suggests that this is only partly the case.

Range of musics available to be learnt in the community

In order, the most widespread musics available through community learning are:

- Western classical music (most widespread)
- local traditional musics and international popular music
- jazz
- contemporary western classical music and local popular music

- other traditional musics (least widespread)

Festivals and competitions are widely available in all musics, providing a useful stimulus to music learning in the community.

Government funding for music learning goes more into Western classical music and contemporary classical music than into other styles and genres.

Conclusion

In order for musical diversity to be sustained and encouraged in the educational systems of the world, governments must take responsibility to (a) make at least their own traditional musics a curriculum requirement, and (b) ensure that adequate training and financial provision is made to deliver education in musical diversity in the classroom and in the community. Currently governments are not doing this. IMC has a task to perform.

Papers

Over the past ten years a large number of papers have been given at music education conferences, and articles written for journals, which address the issues emerging from the survey. Some of the leading materials are available for those attending the music education section of the Montevideo Conference.

Many of these presentations address serious issues relating to the implementation of wider diversity within music-education settings.

- Cultural diversity can be viewed as an identity issue: our self-identity as individuals and groups is usually defined as something separate from other-identity, and other-identity may be essential to the definition of self-identity. To what extent does the study of other's musics threaten our own identity?
- Is the study of diverse musics merely an extension of social studies or cultural studies? Does it matter if it is?
- Is the inclusion of diverse musics in the Westernised setting of the school a form a neo- or re-colonisation? Can we increase diversity in music education without diversifying education itself?
- Does increasing musical diversity mean breaking down the barriers between formal and informal education?
- Cultures are organic: they grow and change over time. Often cultural change is the result of cultural interchange. As we bring

more musics into educational settings, what effect does that have on the musics themselves? Does it accelerate the creation of new musical cultures and the disappearance of old ones? Does it create the conditions for the replacement of the musics we teach by other ones? Does teaching musical diversity increase or decrease musical diversity itself?

- The more musics we teach in a limited time the less time we spend on each. Is it better to have a little knowledge of many or more knowledge of a few? If it is better to focus on a few, how do we choose which ones to give priority to? Does it matter which ones we choose as long as we do more than one music?
- If music teachers are ill-equipped to teach a wide range of musics, shouldn't we ask them to work to their strengths and not attempt to teach what they cannot do?

Others address practical issues.

- How and where can teachers gain the competence to teach a range of musics, or even to select appropriate study resources?
- Who takes responsibility for supplying resources? How can we know what is authentic?
- How can we teach in a way that respects cultural attitudes and cultural ownership?
- Can we assess music learning in all cultures in the same way? To what extent do musics define their own evaluation methods?
- How can we value culture-bearers properly in educational settings? What issues of respect (financial and educational) need to be addressed, and how do we address them?

Conclusion

These issues and concerns need to be discussed and addressed at the local level. Nonetheless the IMC can take a lead in encouraging debate and in sharing the views internationally. It can also take a lead in proposing workable solutions to many of these problems, drawn from the most useful experiences and examples to be found across the world.

It is hoped that the Montevideo Conference will amplify and develop these questions further, and will move towards the drafting of a plan of effective action to further the cause of musical diversity in the world. The Music Education Group will continue to assemble data and examples of good practice, in support of international action.