

Music Education in Times of Change: Challenges & Opportunities

1. Intro

2. Relevance

In these tumultuous times that we live in, one word that I have returned to and struggled with many times, in relation to music education, is 'relevance'. And, as the various headlines on the slide illustrate, I seem to be in good company. I and others worry about the relevance of what we do, in these contemporary times.

My own career has been shaped by what I sometimes call a "relevance crisis" juxtaposed with what my sister assures me is "an overdeveloped sense of service". In my research, this has translated into a deep interest in how we, as music educators and researchers, can remain relevant in times of change, when we face many social and economic challenges that at times feel insurmountable. In seeking relevance my interest has been on pedagogy, and how our pedagogies both reveal and foster specific values and ethical concerns that have implications for the relevance of our discipline.

3. Aim

My presentation today focuses on some of the challenges, as well as the opportunities, in keeping music education - and music educators - relevant.

4. Outline

I will begin by outlining the challenges we face in the context of higher education, highlighting the responsibilities we educators have within that context to train and educate musicians who are equipped to leverage the power of music within the communities they serve – whether those are formal institutional communities, artistic communities, or communities of non-formal music learners, or even informal communities of music-makers.

I will frame my presentation with the concept of artistic citizenship and discuss the implications of this idea for music educators, and more specifically for the pedagogies that we practice in a range of contexts. I will then take a retrospective perspective, looking back at some key themes in my own research career, which, regarded from this 2023 vantage point, show that the themes I have pursued in my own research trajectory can be traced forward to, and understood within, this idea of artistic citizenship.

5. The challenge

First though, I will start by talking a bit about the challenges and opportunities in higher music education, in western contexts.

I suspect that here I am speaking to the converted, when I make that claim that the value of music for inclusive and healthy communities and creative economies is long-established (Fielding & Malli, 2020). In recent years, though, we have witnessed rapid change within the professional music landscape, accelerated by the global COVID-19 pandemic as well as demands for inclusivity and relevance in relation to global and societal challenges. This has had significant implications for higher music education – implications that are certainly related to – but reach beyond – the immediate issue of declining numbers of students in higher music education degrees. Increasingly, attention has turned to our responsibilities concerning inclusion, activism, justice, and social concerns.

Debate and calls to action have focused on our predominantly Eurocentric values, and purpose (Gaunt et al., 2021; Sarath et al., 2016), as well as concerns relating to how we support students' global creative and artistic identities, and how we engage with the multicultural communities in which our music faculties are positioned (Shehan Campbell et al., 2016). Educators, including people like Helena Gaunt and Patricia Shehan-Campbell and others have called for "deep reform in the education of musicians in tertiary level programs", with specific attention to the concepts of diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and creativity (Shehan Campbell, 2016, p. 2).

6. Artistic Citizenship

Within this shifting context the concept of 'artistic citizenship' has emerged and gained traction (Elliott et al., 2016). A primary intention of musicians as artist citizens, according to Elliott et al. (2016), is to make a difference in people's lives by leveraging musical artistry and expertise in the service of personal and community wellbeing and social justice.

There are risks of salvationist narratives in relation to this idea of artistic citizenship. In Canada, we are particularly sensitive to the loaded nature of the word "citizenship" and what that can mean for our Indigenous communities, for example. However, in response, Brydie-Leigh Bartleet highlights that the ethos and practices of artistic citizenship must be community-led, honouring and learning from each community's ways of knowing and being. From this perspective, artist citizens practice musical artistry that is framed by an ethic of care for the audiences and communities being served (Elliott, 2012).

Helena Gaunt has added that while the objectives of artistic excellence and service within communities may traditionally have been uneasy partners, there is potential for these ideals to function in complementary ways, in a version of artistic citizenship she calls 'musicians as makers' in society. And indeed, it may be argued, in 2023, that "a fulfilling life as an artist and music educator depends upon a balance of both" – artistry and service.

7. Artistic Citizenship and Higher Music Education

Artistic citizenship brings an expansive dimension to tertiary music education and training, which has been critiqued for its emphasis on “the single-minded cultivation of personal capital” (acquired through traditional individual-focused elite music performance training). In this sense, the development of artistic citizenship, as an alternative, has strong resonance with the pedagogies that are associated with “transformative professionalism” discussed by Gemma Carey (2021), comprising participation, collaboration, cooperation, and activism. Applied to the training and education of musicians, transformative professionalism suggests that higher music education could — or should — equip students as artist citizens with the skills to connect with, learn from, and contribute meaningfully within diverse communities, through extended opportunities that enhance, rather than replace, more traditional performance-based learning outcomes (Carey & Coutts, 2021).

However, the values, knowledge, and skills that underpin “ethically guided [artistic] and transformative citizenship where artistic endeavours are linked with the “social ‘goods’ they embody or nurture” (Elliott et al., 2016, p. 6) have not been recognized widely within HME; nor have the pedagogies of artistic citizenship been explored fully. The development of artistic citizenship is a potentially complex process that is unlikely to happen without scaffolded support in integrating artistry with “other forms of being, knowing and doing” (Silverman & Elliott, 2016, p. 82).

8. How might artistic citizenship be understood, through a pedagogical lens?

In 2020, together with my colleagues Maria Varvarigou and Sue Hallam, I highlighted that HME institutions have a responsibility to reimagine pedagogies that support the development of expansive ‘musical possible selves’ with artistic **and** social purpose. In our vision, expansive musical possible selves were built around **artistry, critical reflection and enquiry, collaboration, and creativity** — the qualities that will support graduates in responding to diverse and complex demands in their professional and artistic lives.

Without knowing it at the time, I think we were grappling with what I now would call the pedagogies of “**Artist Citizenship**” - pedagogies that support the capacity to embrace and respond to unpredictable opportunities, and to effect change in and through music.

9. Research themes

I will use the remainder of this presentation to demonstrate how I arrived at this perspective, in my own research trajectory. I am going to discuss some examples of how our practice as music educators may be framed as artistic citizenship, and how this

idea of artistic citizenship may be revealed and reinforced through our pedagogies, sometimes in small but very significant ways.

The research I will present is drawn from different points in my own research career, and encompasses several different contexts that share some persistent and consistent pedagogical themes. The **four contexts** I will discuss are higher music education, instrumental learning among children and adolescents; adult music learning and participation in the community; and classroom music education in schools. Apart from the first study I will discuss, for the most part I was not framing these research projects with the idea of artistic citizenship – certainly not consciously. However, it has been an interesting exercise to look back and reflect on the way that my thinking about music pedagogy – and my relevance as a music educator – can be understood through that lens. The unifying pedagogical themes that have cut across these studies, and that I believe have relevance for thinking about artistic citizenship, are: **Relationship; Collaboration; Possible Selves**; and **learning as transformation**. These are the overarching themes that provide coherence to *my* particular research trajectory, and that may hold some messages in relation to how we can, as music educators guided by artistic citizenship, remain relevant and responsive to our current context.

10. Study 1: Integrative Review

I will start with looking at the current state of play – considering how Artistic Citizenship is understood in HME, and how pedagogy is positioned in relation to this idea. Over the past few months, my grad students and I have carried out an Integrative Review of literature concerned with the understandings, pedagogies, and practices of artistic citizenship in HME contexts. In accordance with definitions of integrative (as opposed to systematic) review, our aim has been to generate a holistic description, synthesis, and critical analysis of the current state of understanding relating to an emergent phenomenon of interest. Our review has been guided by two questions:

1. Between 2018 and 2023, how have understandings of 'artistic citizenship' and its intersection with musical expertise been articulated in the context of Higher Music Education Institutions?
2. What have been the signature pedagogies that have partnered the values of musical artistry with those of social responsibility, in the development of artistic citizenship?

11. Integrative Review Findings

Following a systematic search, 13 peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters were retained, with most sources relating to studies carried out in European or Australian contexts. Artistic citizenship was conceptualized as artistry (conceptualized as craft, creativity, and excellence) partnered with: 1) moral or ethical action and care; 2) using music for the advancement of social good; 3) leveraging music in such a way as to

engage others through social bonding and bridging of differences; 4) musical activism; and 5) expansive professionalism.

The pedagogies that supported artistic citizenship were framed by experiential and relational learning involving building **collaborative relationships**, for example through collaborative pedagogies and multicultural opportunities such as workshops and community engagement; exploring **possible selves** through critical reflection, identity work, and inquiry; **learning as transformation**, achieved through situated learning in real-world contexts. I interpret these themes as pedagogical opportunities, where artistic citizenship may be foregrounded and nurtured.

I am now going to jump back to the start of my formal research career, when my principal interest was in the relational dynamic of learning. At that point, I had given little thought to the idea of artistic citizenship, although I had already become involved, in my other life as a professional musician, in the activist community music movement of the 1980s, in the UK. When I embarked on research, I was fascinated first and foremost, with the ways in which engagement in learning might be (I speculated) embedded within a relational context.

12. Study 2: Dynamics and Harmony

Theme – Relationship

Context - Instrumental teaching and learning –

Outcomes - musical attainment, motivation, self-efficacy, love of music, personal and professional satisfaction?

13. Methods:

Phase one of this research employed quantitative questionnaires for parents, teachers and pupils. The questionnaire was constructed around the two interpersonal dimensions of responsiveness and control, which are concepts that are found across research concerned with **interpersonal relationships, family communication patterns, effective teaching and home-school relations**. The pupil questionnaire also included a qualitative element in the form of drawings, which I later analysed using a content analysis method.

Phase two comprised qualitative interviews and observational methods to explore the processes by which these dimensions were operationalised within teacher-pupil-parent case studies.

Using a cluster analysis, to create a typology of 'interaction types', and learning or teaching outcomes associated with each of these were identified.

14. Model:

The clusters differed according to the ways in which teachers, parents, and pupils were aligned, and according to pedagogical practices. For example, while cluster 1 was characterized by the parent and pupil aligned, with both showing strong deference towards the teacher, alongside a hierarchical pedagogy, cluster 2 saw the parent and teacher aligned closely, with the pupil in a somewhat passive, receiving mode.

The data showed that these 'types' were flexible, in the sense that individuals were not fixed within one or other category – rather, the type was an emergent property of qualities of the learning and teaching **relationships**. Therefore, teachers, parents or pupils could – and sometimes did - re-frame their interaction style and thus alter the course of their potential learning outcomes.

The most positive outcomes, (controlling for age) overall, were in Cluster 6. It is worth noting that students in Cluster 6 had better overall musical achievement (although this was not my primary focus), even when they practised less than comparable students in some of the other clusters. Cluster 6 pedagogy can be described as responsive leadership, a collaborative pedagogy, where students were facilitated in developing their critical and inquisitive skills.

Responsive leadership:. Again, while I did not frame it this way at the time, I now look back and interpret responsive leadership as a form of artistic citizenship, where student-centred learning was scaffolded and facilitated by teachers who practised a pedagogy that offered care, guidance, and a sense of belonging, while also providing the space for learning to be autonomous, exploratory and student-led.

15. Study 3: Creative Later Life

Theme: Transformative learning

I will jump forward now to my third example, demonstrating the theme of transformative learning. Fast forward to 2016, when I took up a Canada Research Chair in Music in Community, at Université Laval in Quebec City. This study followed an earlier study I had been involved in, in the UK, with Maria Varvarigou and Sue Hallam – the Music for Life Project, where our principal focus had been on music as a vehicle for social, emotional, and cognitive wellbeing. Over the course of that study, I had become increasingly interested in the musical learning and opportunities for creativity among older adults, and the pedagogies that could frame those opportunities, and that became the focus of the Creative Later Life project, with an additional perspective on the technologies that could mediate learning.

16. Objectives

The Creative Later Life Project was a multi-site participatory action research project, focusing on **the ways in which we, as music educators, might work to deepen the creative learning and engagement of older people** in our digital age.

Our overarching objectives, which united several case study projects across the country, were (refer to slide).

17. Methods (refer to slide)

18. Key findings Example 1

We found strong evidence of what I would call 'mini-c' moments of creativity. These moments transformed the daily experience of many older people, providing them with the space within which to experience a sense of purpose, shared joy, community, and curiosity that are all associated with creative activity. In each instance, the pedagogies were flexible and very much focused on, and led by, the participant rather than the demands of specific instruments and so on. We found that a range of different technologies, for example iPad Apps, Soundbeam technology, electronic instruments, and in some cases acoustic instruments, offered participants with the choice of ways into creative musical expression. The facilitation approaches again were shaped by the principles of choice and autonomy alongside a sense of connection and community, and scaffolded activities that supported a real sense of musical development. As artist citizens, these facilitators created opportunities for their participants to experience creative musical expression, in defiance of what I often refer to as narratives of decline and decrepitude that are associated with older adults.

Again, this study was not conceptualized as being about artistic citizenship, but with my 2023 eyes and understanding, I would argue that it was a study very much focused on the ways in which music educators could act as artist citizens, by using their expertise to enable various later-life communities, irrespective of cognitive or physical "limitations", to experience the transformative joy of creative learning and participation in music.

19. Example 2

20. Study 4: Musical Futures

Theme: Musical Possible Selves

Musical Futures is 'an approach to teaching and learning... that brings non-formal teaching and informal learning approaches into the more formal context of schools'.

Musical futures emerged from and has built upon the work of Lucy Green, whose research was concerned with how popular musicians develop their musical expertise, and whether those approaches could be transposed in to formal school contexts.

So, some key principles that underpin Musical Futures are playing by ear; peer learning; structures that promote self-directed and autonomous learning; and practical experience, including imitation and exploration.

In 2008, the PHF asked us to carry out a more indepth longitudinal study, exploring some of these issues.

21. Aims and Method

This study was phase 2 of research funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, looking at the ways in which Musical Futures was being implemented in UK schools. The aim in phase 2 (undertaken between 2008-2011) was to provide an in-depth account of the processes underpinning the Musical Futures initiative. The research was based in seven key case study schools. Data were collected across the 3 year period using questionnaires (music teachers, other teachers and pupils), interviews (music teachers, members of the senior management team) and focus group interviews (pupils). Observations were also made of classroom practices.

I want to focus here on one of our Key findings, concerned with progression. The choice to continue with music relates directly, I believe, to the ways in which students are facilitated in conceptualizing, accessing, and articulating their MUSICAL POSSIBLE SELVES. To function as motivational drivers, musical possible selves need to be valued, but they also need to be understood in elaborate detail – in other words, students need to formulate a clear sense of specific steps to success, and how to experience those steps.

What Musical Futures has achieved has been to broaden the vision of what a musical possible self can look like within a formal institutional context, while also bridging the in-school and out-of-school musical identities that students develop.

22. Key findings - progression

This was borne out by the progression findings of our study – in year 3 of the study, we found greater numbers of students progressing to KS4 music courses (optional courses) (14%, in GCSE compared to a national average of approx. 8% and a further 9% in vocational BTEC performance, music tech, creative media.

23. Factors that contributed to the success of Musical Futures were:

Practical music making (including performance); Focused on developing practical knowledge through experiential learning. 'I think the performance aspect of it is really important. The students know that at the end they have to perform. They've got x number of weeks and then they're going to perform. At the back of their mind they're thinking, well, hang on, in a few weeks time I'm actually going to have to stand up in front of my classmates, my peers, and perform, so there's an impetus to really get something done.'

Fun: Most students enjoyed their music lessons and wanted to do well. The main reasons that students gave for enjoying lessons were **the independence** that they were given, **being able to work with friends** and being **able to choose** the music that they worked on.

Opportunities for autonomous learning; Students reported that they valued the autonomy that the approach gave them. Girls in particular valued student-led groupwork. Being given opportunities to learn informally, working with friends, working on creative tasks such as composition, and having control of their own learning seemed to increase students' pedagogical capital (Wright, 2015; Hallam et al., 2016b). However many also wanted more help, indicating that they also needed and recognised the value of the care, guidance and leadership that more knowledgeable others could offer. The kind of support that students indicated that they needed generally related to formative assessment. In other words, students sought responsive leadership.

Creativity – opportunities to explore, to discover and play with new ideas.

Overall, the Musical Futures research again demonstrated that music educators can function as artist citizens through practising pedagogies that make an arguably transformative difference in the lives of those they serve. These pedagogies foster autonomy and enquiry in experiential learning environments. These are pedagogies that are framed within a relational context where teachers are responsive to student needs, encourage a community of peer learning, and offer an ethic of care, guidance, and leadership.