

Editorial

In December 2002, William Salaman and Piers Spencer completed their five-year term as joint editors of the *British Journal of Music Education*, having presided over an innovative period in the journal's history. They brought to their task a wide range of experience in music teaching, teacher education, and inspection, which also informed their highly readable and often provocative editorials. Under their editorship, *BJME* embraced new technology, so that the journal is now available online supported by MP3 files, and features an occasional accompanying CD of musical examples.

BJME has been a highly respected forum for reflection and development in music education ever since it was founded in 1984 by John Paynter and Keith Swanwick to 'help us towards a better-informed and possibly more cohesive profession'. The breadth of activity and thinking in music education that Paynter and Swanwick noted in their first editorial has grown exponentially in the intervening years, so that more recent articles have considered music education at all levels and in diverse settings. Under Salaman and Spencer, there has been a noticeable increase in articles about instrumental teaching and learning, as well as a preoccupation with the National Curriculum and its assessment and inspection. These are set alongside continuing debates about music as aesthetic education, considerations of gender, world music and community music, and research into composing, improvising and listening.

The best research in music education does several things well: it reflects in detail on specific educational circumstances, it relates these to existing knowledge and research, and it offers ways forward for researchers and educators. *BJME* has enabled such research to flourish for nearly 20 years (more on that anniversary in future issues). It is our intention to nurture and develop that quality, and we welcome submissions from researchers and practitioners internationally who can contribute to that ambition. As incoming editors, we want to be inclusive and imaginative in our definitions of music education. Our first initiative in this regard is a Special Issue, to appear as part two of this Volume, for which we have invited a number of leading researchers in related academic disciplines to offer their perspectives on music education. We are supported in our task by a distinguished Editorial Board and International Advisory Board, who are actively involved in the process of reviewing submissions. Papers that are submitted to the journal are reviewed by both editors and two referees, so that writers can receive constructively critical peer reviews of their work, and readers can be assured of the journal's commitment to high-quality, accessible and meaningful research.

Each article in our first issue illustrates one of the many valuable approaches that can be taken to research in music education. In their study of practitioners' beliefs about effective instrumental teaching, Janet Mills and Jan Smith use a variety of analytical tools to allow individual teachers' voices to emerge from a larger overview in a highly informative way. Andrea Creech and Susan Hallam present a literature review on the interactions between parents, pupils and instrumental teachers which goes beyond familiar sources to place thinking about instrumental learning in a new theoretical context. Susan Young takes a qualitative research approach, documenting the minutiae of classroom life in a way that is helpful for practitioners, who are usually too busy to see their environment in such detail, and for researchers, who need real-world perspectives if ideas and theories are to

thrive and develop. From Young's focus on early years, we move to the training of teachers, with Michael Lynch's historical account illustrating the considerable potential of archival research to shed new light on present educational dilemmas. Colin Durrant then uses diaries and participant observation to bring to life a rich musical experience from beyond the classroom, as he recounts the musical and cultural discoveries made by a group of young performers on a tour of South Africa. These authors communicate the importance of music education in different and equally effective ways.

Educational research has the potential to be highly controversial, and articles appearing in *BJME* have sometimes excited strong opinions amongst the diverse readership that the journal serves. A particularly memorable example was the dialogue that emerged when Malcolm Ross asked 'What's wrong with school music?' in 1995, and Vic Gammon, Charles Plummeridge and John Finney met his challenge through papers in subsequent issues. We would like to foster academic debate of this quality in future volumes of the journal, giving readers the opportunity to offer alternative opinions and responses to the 'Points for Debate' articles that will appear in the journal. The first of these debate articles appears at the end of this issue, as Vic Gammon laments the patchy subject knowledge amongst applicants to the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses with which he is involved. He identifies a disjunction between the definable subject knowledge necessary to teach music within the National Curriculum and the academic relativism of music in universities, so raising questions that have relevance for teachers, teacher trainers and university music lecturers. We would welcome responses to this article, and will be publishing a selection in future issues to stimulate discussion, so continuing the tradition of rigorous debate for which the journal is renowned.

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