



University of Huddersfield Repository

Pulman, Mark

Rehearsing popular music: Exploring opportunities for supporting learning in the pop/rock band

Original Citation

Pulman, Mark (2009) Rehearsing popular music: Exploring opportunities for supporting learning in the pop/rock band. Palatine.

This version is available at <https://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/9182/>

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>

PALATINE

[pic]

Rehearsing popular music: Exploring opportunities for supporting learning in the pop/rock band

Dr Mark Pulman, Senior Lecturer in Popular Music, University Campus Barnsley, University of Huddersfield

Start date: 1/10/2009

There seems little reported about group-based rehearsals of popular music and the peer learning opportunities that might arise from this activity. Although there are an increasing number of studies exploring approaches to the assessment of musical ensembles, these often focus on performance rather than rehearsing and, typically, do not specifically address popular music courses (Hunter, 2006). Indeed, Lebler (2008) describes popular music as being usually learned in the broader community as a self-directed activity, sometimes including interactions with peers and group activities, but rarely under the direction of an expert mentor/teacher. The role of the tutor, in facilitating learning opportunities that may be available for students working in popular music genres within a band rehearsal context, can be quite different to that required for rehearsing repertoire which might be described as being drawn from western art music traditions. If so, and given the apparent lack of literature on, and pedagogical resources for, band rehearsing of popular music (Lebler, 2007) within the HE curriculum, the aim of this project is to provide a contribution towards filling that gap.

It is possible to identify a number of starting points, arising from the context of band rehearsing, that lead to activities and opportunities for supporting peer learning. One of these may involve establishing the assessment criteria relevant to the rehearsing. Engaging individuals and their bands in the activity of formulating their own rehearsing assessment criteria also raises questions about how the tutor might best facilitate this process.

Another starting point might involve an exploration of the learning opportunities arising from the interaction between individual members of pop/rock bands as they participate in the complex 'life-world' of the rehearsal. Exley & Dennick (2004) propose that the 'optimum size' for small group teaching 'is between 5 and 8 per group' (p.2), which is also, happily, the typical size of a pop/rock band line up (vocalist, drummer, bass, keys, and two guitarists, for example). Bringing with it a variety of musical and rehearsal experiences, the pop/rock band-rehearsing context clearly suggests opportunities for supporting peer learning. Not only, for example, might band members learn from each other, but individuals, additionally, may also learn much about themselves from this participatory experience. Indeed, Bryan (2006) suggests that, within group work, students might develop and acquire important collaborative skills such as communication, negotiation, self-initiative, resourcefulness and conflict management – all highly relevant and useful qualities for working in bands. If so, how best might a tutor facilitate the support of these qualities in this peer learning popular music rehearsal context? This is the focus of the project.

Theoretical/conceptual framework

This project is situated within social constructivist pedagogy (Vygotsky, 1976; Bruner, 1986;

Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Learning and acquiring knowledge is created in the participatory social activity of band rehearsing. The learning context arises from small group activities that are characterised by social and interpersonal communication. Individuals may develop an awareness and knowledge of themselves and of their band members (involving, for example, their attributes, skills, interpersonal communication, etc) through band rehearsing. In short, band members 'learn by doing' through their engagement in the social learning setting that characterises pop/rock group music making. Tutors, similarly develop/create awareness and knowledge of themselves, as well as each band member, arising from their involvement and interaction in the rehearsal.

References

Bruner, J. (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bryan, C. (2006) Developing Group Learning Through Assessment. In Bryan, C. and Clegg, K. (eds) *Innovative Assessment in Higher Education*. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group Ltd.

Exley, K. and Dennick, R. (2004) *Small group teaching*. Abingdon: Routledge Falmer.

Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. (1994) Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage.

Hunter, D. (2006) Assessing collaborative learning. *British Journal of Music Education* 23/1: 75-89.

Lebler, D (2008). Popular music pedagogy: peer-learning in practice. *Music Education Research*, Volume 10, Issue 2 June 2008 , pages 193 - 213

Lebler, D. (2007). Student-as-master? Reflections on a learning innovation in popular music pedagogy. *International Journal of Music Education*, 25(3), 205–221.

Vygotsky, L. (1976) *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, USA: Harvard University Press.

Expected outcomes

Resource bank and booklet (PDF), video (Quicktime).

PALATINE is part of the Subject Network of the Higher Education Academy

PALATINE, The Great Hall, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YW
t: +44 (0)1524 592614 (Barbara Hargreaves) | palatine@lancaster.ac.uk