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Towards a personal methodology embracing aspects of experimental music practice  
and its impact on children's music making.

Elizabeth Nicholas-Stannard

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Research in New Music

The University of Huddersfield

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## CONTENTS

### Thesis

Abstract	pg 6
Introduction	pg 7
Chapter 1—Literature Review	pg 13
A Lucy Green	
B Keith Swanwick	
C Zoltán Kodály	
Chapter 2—Composition	pg 29
Chapter 3—Band	pg 44
Conclusion	pg 51
Appendices	
Child case study	pg 55
Music Attainment Target Levels	pg 63
Child permission letters	pg 65
Bibliography	pg 76

### Compositions

63 Events (May 2010 – January 2011) For any sound source  
 Violin Accordion Clarinet (December 2010) For Violin, Accordion and Clarinet  
 Noises (February 2011) For any sound source

For Johnny Chang (January 2011-Februaru 2011) For Violin

For Four Voices (April 2012) For Voices

For Edges Voices (February 2013) For Voices

## **CD**

In order to preserve the quality, dynamic range and subtle nuances that occur with music of this nature, I have elected not to compress the audio in any way. Listening on small laptop speakers may result in some quieter passages being unheard. Please listen to this CD on good quality headphones or reference monitors, there is a lot of volume change between tracks.

Track 1. 63 Events  
Edges Ensemble

Track 2. Violin Accordion Clarinet  
Ensemble Plus Minus (workshop)

Track 3. For Johnny Chang  
Johnny Chang, violin

Track 4. For Voices  
Edges Ensemble

Track 5. For Voices  
Edges Ensemble

Track 6. For Voices  
EXAUDI workshop 1 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012

Track 7. For Voices  
EXAUDI workshop 2 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012

Track 8. For Voices  
EXAUDI workshop 3 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012

## **Video Clips on USB Drive**

1 Passing sound some giggles 11/10/12.MOV

- 2 Controlled up to 5 sounds 11/10/12.MOV
  - 3 29/11/12 Discussing group performance using sofa.MOV
  - 4 29/11/12 Further Discussion to add vocals.MOV
  - 5 29/11/12 Result of conversation.MOV
  - 6 Trying to only just make a...Ben's piece 6/12/12.MOV
  - 7 Up to 10 sound improv 13/12/12.MOV
  - 8 Discussion re improv 13/12/12.MOV
  - 9 Stripsody2 31/1.13MOV
  - 10 Chaos children threatened at the end 12/3/13.MOV
  - 11 b number practise sounds 21/3/13
  - 12 Edges voices 21/3/13.MOV
  - 13 Giggle 28/3/13
  - 14 Numbers for piece/instructions 24/7/13.mov
- 
- 15 Vocal piece.m4v
- 
- 16 Listen Listen.m4a

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## ABSTRACT

By combining experimental music and improvisation with voices, objects, games and songs, this research explores how children can develop their abilities without the restrictions of traditional notation.

This research involves children, professional musicians and the Edges Ensemble, a university experimental music ensemble that combines experienced and inexperienced performers. Six new pieces were composed for the project and each explores real-time decisions within a score, asking performers to interact and make each performance of the scores unique. Some pieces were written for specific musicians using original notation with elements relating to their instruments. Others are open to any sound source to allow anyone to access them. The final pieces are text scores for voice. All have a theme of sounds interspersed with silences.

David Blunkett's *White Paper* (2001) states that all children should have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument through whole class lessons. Ofsted's most recent report suggests this has been ineffective and that, overall, children have not found the process easy.<sup>1</sup> This research aims to explore an alternative approach, giving children the skills to take control, to perform, and to respect the musical contributions of others, whether as a pitch on a traditional orchestral instrument, a vocal sound or a stamp in the dark. The research has brought calm where there had been chaos. It has also relieved frustrations around instrumental progress for those who are not able to take instruments home.

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<sup>1</sup> The Importance of Music. A National Plan for Music Education. Department for Education

## Introduction

I have been involved in music since I was a young child as my mother played piano and sang with us at home as well as visiting local music classes as a pre school aged child. I began piano lessons at the age of five but gave them up for the clarinet when I was ten. All the while I was singing and playing the recorder with family and friends.

My own formal training was not always straightforward. I was a first study clarinettist, trained classically at Leeds College of Music. I auditioned at Huddersfield University as an undergraduate vocalist due to problems with my hands. Although I could sing well enough to gain a place on the music degree course, I was not interested in pursuing performance based studies and replaced the performance modules for musicology modules. We did however have a module called 'Improvisation,' directed by Phillip Thomas and Hugh Nankivell. This module allowed me to realise that I could be more flexible with my choice of sound source and contribute in a valuable and significant way to the music, an idea that would prove revolutionary to me as an educator in the future.

During the last year of my undergraduate degree at Huddersfield I started working with a music service. Although I had worked in many schools as part of community outreach projects I had not worked previously worked as a music teacher. I had been teaching a group for three months with limited success, following a traditional wider opportunities whole-class instrumental programme.<sup>2</sup> The difficulties arose as progression required the children to practise their instruments on a regular basis. The pupils had no family support; a lot of them were not allowed to play their instrument at home and so they could not develop and progress through this method. The school was known for having staff who were trained to manage a

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<sup>2</sup> Initiative after David Blunkett's *Schools White Paper (2001)* that all children must have an opportunity to learn an instrument.

variety of behavioural issues and children with difficulties came from all around the area to the school because of this. The pupils often struggled with concentration and a method where no progression was evident meant that the behaviour and concentration levels of the pupils got lower and lower as the class became increasingly bored.

One lesson we put the instruments away and we did a session based on vocal sounds and improvisation. The children loved this, and were able to excel. Even the children who had trouble building and playing their instruments achieved success in these lessons. As a teacher it gave me the ability to change activities quickly and keep the focus of the group, not allowing them to wander. Across a period of three or four weeks, through an open and more inclusive approach, with no wrong answers and no constraints on instrumental technique, the transformation in the class was astounding. The children could be very creative and have control of the music they were making. Thackray (1965) says, 'The teacher can be fairly confident that what a child sings is intended'. This reassures us that children are able to communicate as they wish through this medium, where they might struggle to convey their intentions through an instrument.

From this short experience of the difference in the group's behaviour and concentration following a simple change of approach, I wanted to explore how this might work in different settings.

As an undergraduate I was an active member of the improvisation group at university. This group became the Edges Ensemble for a performance with Fred Frith for the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival in 2007. Following a successful concert, we continued to meet and rehearse and built a substantial reputation in the field of experimental music. We continued to form relationships with both new and established composers, which allowed a unique opportunity to share and test ideas with experienced practitioners. Although we are an established and respected group, we are open to trained and untrained musicians alike, something that contributed to my interest in the parallel between exploring cutting edge compositions with both world-class artists and children with equal validity.

In 2009 I was part of a community outreach programme with the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival working across the Kirklees area with children and teenagers for a performance of the festival finale piece, *Oh Man Oh Mankind*, by Alvin Curran. We explored many different ways of using the voice both traditionally and untraditionally; we used improvisation as a way to explore sounds and we also looked at graphic scores such as Cornelius Cardew's *Treatise* (1963-1967). The group performed alongside the Huddersfield Choral Society and other instrumentalists. We were unsure what the final performance would consist of. We had to prepare the children for any eventuality and with the skills they would need to perform in the appropriate manner alongside other established ensembles and professionals. The final performance included harmonicas, woodblocks, bombilating (grumbly vocal sounds) and singing.

In the last three years I have had the chance to work in another primary school within a deprived area with children aged 8-11 years old. I have an afterschool 'band' that is an opportunity for children to come because they want to, as opposed to during the school day when I also teach them as part of the music curriculum. In our band we explore improvisation and different sound sources. We work on our listening and communication as a group and look into pieces that require us to interpret instructions rather than pieces which prescribe exact notes to perform. The afterschool band is the main platform of inquiry in this research project towards a new methodology in approaching primary music education.

During the three years I have had three distinct groups of children to work with, all very different from each other. However, all have benefited from different elements of this approach. For example, my first group who attended the after school band were quite shy and they were the quiet children in the music class who never really got a chance to shine because of the noise generated by the more dominant characters. However, in the band setting the opportunities to improvise solos and explore dynamics allowed the less confident children to take the lead and gain support from peers.

The second group did much more experimental music in their timetabled whole class lesson time, as their topic was 'Britain in the 1960s'. At this time Cornelius Cardew

was forming his Scratch Orchestra, so we had a plethora of resources to use with the children. One of the key platforms we used for developing their performance skills was improvisation. Children would peer-evaluate work and generate a list of good and bad practice. This provided a common language and standard that, crucially, came from the children, not the teacher. The importance of this was that they developed an ownership over their classroom activities and performances. They felt confident to comment and criticise others in the class as they had their own pre-agreed yardstick to measure them by. In particular, this class topic was about the evolution of Britain since the 1960s, so we looked at the musical climate at this time and also at what happened internationally, such as the composers of the New York School. We discussed this and looked at original works from the period. We looked at how we might approach performing these pieces and spent a lot of time interpreting open scores. Similarly, we made our own graphic scores to explore ways in which we might communicate with other performers without speaking or using conventional musical notation. This developed from an improvisation activity and then asking them to devise a way of telling another group of children in the class what they had been performing. We then swapped these 'graphic scores' and evaluated the performances arising from the new groups interpretations of these scores.

I have worked with the third group of children on and off for the last four years through classroom based scenarios. For a period of time I had the class for two and a half hours per week. They are renowned within the school for being the most difficult class, mainly because they simply do not like each other. They find it incredibly difficult to function together as a unit, and aggression and hostility feature in most exchanges between pupils. The class cannot listen to their teacher because there is always at least one person causing low level disruption which easily escalates.

Children have an ability to think freely about their approach, something that this research has found professional musicians struggling with at times. The pieces I have written for EXAUDI and Ensemble Plus Minus raised obstacles, as it required interpretation and an acceptance of the indeterminacy within the pieces and reading new notation. It has been interesting to observe the children accept things quickly

and move on whilst the professional ensembles have asked more questions and hesitantly giggled over elements of the pieces until they realised that any direction they chose to take was as valid as any other. In track 8 of the CD one can hear laughter at the end, which the singers of EXAUDI had managed to keep in until then. There are parallels throughout the video clips of the children laughing. Music should be enjoyable and I am pleased that through this research project we have all laughed a lot.

I have also included two pieces composed just before the project began—*63 Events* and *Noises*—as they were both pieces we played with Edges and with the school band and they were the beginning of my journey into composing with indeterminacy and trying to engage the performers to interact with each other and the scores.

During the last three years I have also explored the Kodály approach to music education through two study trips to Hungary observing kindergarten and primary age music classes and three British Kodály Academy summer schools. Part of this exploration included gaining a qualification at HE3 level through an accredited course at Roehampton University, and I now sit on the board of trustees to the British Kodály Academy, a charity set up to facilitate training for musicians and teachers.

A key feature of this approach is the use of the voice to teach musicianship in a logical and progressive way, the pace dictated solely by the pupil's ability. Although this type of musicianship training is arguably the 'opposite' of the experience offered through the 'Improvisation' module, in its prescriptive rather than free progressions, I believe there is value in both approaches and have been actively seeking to find the point of equilibrium. An initial link is the use of the voice as a medium to get straight into musical activity without any barriers. Improvisation can be started through children choosing a new action on the spot and singing to the class for them to copy. Through the Kodály Approach students can build their confidence in a very safe environment, and the skills of turn-taking and solos are so helpful in other musical experiences. I have worked in many school situations and have always found that children who lack focus and struggle to sing targeted repertoire (primary school song books or musicals) always respond much more positively to experimental music or

short Kodály songs and games. I believe this is due to the fun element in both and the sense of ownership the children can feel at an early stage following either angle.

The crucial aspects of improvisation generated for me the idea that this could be something beyond the high art environment in which I work with the Edges Ensemble and might become a tool for exploring music in many different situations and with anyone who does not necessarily come from this background. As Prévost (1995) says, “the meta-musical force of free improvisation is available to everyone.”

The precept that music should be for everyone underpins Kodály’s philosophy of teaching and as such formed the basis of this project in each of the performing, composing, and teaching elements.

My use of the term ‘experimental music’ here refers to the works of the 1950s and 60s, including composers such as Berbarian, Brown, Cardew and Wolff. It covers indeterminacy through these pieces and through similar recent pieces such as the works of Lely and the Wandelweiser group of composers. There is also an element of free improvisation. The skills required for all of these things are very much the same. I will discuss the idea of ‘pieces for anyone’ versus pieces which require professionals as some of these will be workable with a group of children, for example, and some would be very difficult.

In the last three years I have worked with children from various situations and backgrounds. I have worked with professional performers through my MA course as a composer and I have performed with Edges and ‘workshopped’ my own pieces with them as a performer as well as those from other composers. Part of what I have been interested to see is how these different groups react and engage with my own scores.

My literature review comes from the view point of a teacher exploring current practice and advice. The approaches and ideas put forth by Green, Kodály and Swanwick differ from each other but the underlying similarities resonate with the elements of experimental music I draw on in this project.

## CHAPTER ONE

This literature review will outline the approaches to music pedagogy of Lucy Green, Keith Swanwick and Zoltán Kodály, with specific reference to the ways in which their pedagogical and theoretical models have informed my teaching.

### Lucy Green

I have chosen to explore the writings of Lucy Green as despite the difference in musical genre and the age range of the children there are a number of parallels which support the ideas behind my project. Green (2008) reports that young people who go on to become skilled musicians in a popular arena were often not inspired by their earlier musical educational experiences. They felt that such training as they had received did not prepare them for the field of music in which they had ultimately become successful. The system is biased towards those who wish to take a more formal traditional and classical approach within the traditional peripatetic teaching system whereas those students who want an alternative route of progression with non classical instruments can still enter the system with the likes of the Rock School syllabus, but it still requires a very formal teaching approach with a one to one setting requiring the passing of exams. As Green suggests, such pupils are not necessarily unmusical but simply do not respond to that particular setting and teaching style.

In her previous book (Green 2002), the author states that the common pedagogical approach to music in the school curriculum only sustains a limited number of students in their musical education. Those whose musical preferences are more vernacular or less formal are not being catered for, as they need music demystified and their own peculiar gifts recognised and enabled in other ways than the more traditional and formal methods available in complementary programmes and

educational opportunities, in order to allow them to explore and fulfil their own musical abilities.

Green (2008) observes that some societies provide a culture in which collaborative music making is the norm. Thus, very young children imbibe musical skills alongside their elders as they would their language skills. Past cultural elements of singing and playing the piano provided good modelling for engaging with music in everyday life. Performance was key as young children would be swept up with adults/family members as they sang, danced and played. Their listening skills develop as they learn from their peers and elders; through being immersed they will be interested and if they wish to develop skills they can then become involved in the more traditional approaches to music education if they wish. This resonates with the Kodály approach to music education, which is the opposite to the way the music curriculum and general instrument tuition is set up in England at the present time. The project which Green engages in here is more similar to Kodály based practice—she exposes the children to musical instruments informally, which she follows up by then introducing more technical elements of music education as and when the young students feel ready to engage and explore the technical elements of playing or repertoire. As Green discusses, the culture of absorbing music is about learning through hearing and doing and building an arena where singing and music are normal everyday occurrences to be enjoyed. This resonates with the Kodály approach, in which music is part of daily activities.

Young people involved in popular music making do not necessarily have an adult or mentor of a higher standard to learn from, so they end up learning on their own or from their peers, who are often no more skilled than they are. Peer-directed learning, as this is known, is an important tool where individuals share and demonstrate knowledge for one another. Group learning is a useful technique whereby young people enhance their own musical skills by talking to and copying their peers as they make music together.

Therefore, performance, composition and improvisation abilities are acquired not only individually, but crucially, as members of a group, through informal peer-directed learning and group learning both conscious and unconscious.

... [A]ll this mainly occurs in the absence of an adult or other person who can provide leadership or bring greater musical experience to bear. (Green, 2008)

Green also argues that by working with peers—often in friendship-based groups—that “co-operation and the ability to be sensitive” with others can affect the musical outcome and approach and directly contribute to the musical production and performance with their ability to work together relating directly to their composition and improvisation output.

Working within the informal realm is beneficial because musical activity is usually undertaken with no outside compulsion, and therefore there is no need to practise as one might for a traditional music lesson. Green suggests that popular musicians do what they do because they want to or for the love of doing it and they are in control to choose the music they explore. Whilst doing this, they can explore other elements of music and become familiar with many other styles, which may include classical music.

Informal approaches usually involve a deep integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing throughout the learning process, with an emphasis on personal creativity. This is distinct from the greater differentiation of skills that tends to mark the formal realm, and its emphasis, very often, on reproduction more than on creativity. (Green 2008)

Within my own methodology there are many similarities to those of Lucy Green in that elements of our approaches are similar, as are the outcomes, however via the different vessel of experimental music. Getting children to take ownership and make their own decisions and discern for themselves what is good practice results from this less formal approach, which Green highlights as well.

Green uses music which is familiar to the students, and they explore ways of creating and reproducing their own versions of known songs. I introduce students to works they will not have previously encountered, but this approach is ‘real-world’, as I can provide videos of me playing similar repertoire. The freedom of the latter

approach is that there is no wrong way of producing experimental music; its very nature is to explore the possibilities of sound and performance. However, the Green approach still requires pupils to attain a certain level, even if this is simply three chords, and there will be children who struggle to access this as they are unable to coordinate themselves.

What I like about the genre I am operating within is that from the beginning— instrument or no, sound or no sound—one is involved and valuable if one is contributing.

Perhaps the difference in age groups here is key, though I would not know for sure until attempting a similar project with year 9s (13-14 year olds). To engage a year 9 pupil there must be something to entice them, and I know from personal experience that they are not easily won over or engaged, and by using a genre very familiar to them with strong links to their culture is definitely a way in to begin.

In primary school one still has slightly more sway, as the possibility to choose subjects does not yet exist, so students know that their participation is mandatory on some level. I have encountered many children who do not want to be involved with music but I have never had one who has not engaged in my sessions. I simply make my expectations clear and make the sessions too exciting to turn down.

### **Keith Swanwick, *Music, the Mind, and Education***

Swanwick (1988) writes about stages of development and raises the concern that within music education there is no clear guideline of expectations to follow as there might be in another subject or situation. In the early years, children learn by listening and soaking up everything they come into contact with.

In *Music, Mind, and Education* (1988), Swanick discusses many issues around the subject of creating a 'purposeful music curriculum' (18). He has written numerous highly regarded texts on music education, but this project will mainly consider his

book *Music, Mind, and Education* (1988). It will also consider parts of his later work *Teaching Music Musically* (2011) to see if any changes have arisen.

In *Music, Mind, and Education*, Swanwick asks 'what makes music musical?' He discusses the arts, mind and education, delving in to areas such as imagination, dreaming and value. There is a lot dedicated to the development of musical awareness and ability, looking first at early years and then beyond infancy, including a look at the work done by Swanwick and Tillman in 1986 on the stages of children's compositions. The second half of the work is more about putting the theory into practice, examining the role of music and music education within society and what its perceived traits and difficulties are. It also investigates how music can transcend its place of origin and how some elements can be encountered. His last chapter looks at curriculum and assessment, what was happening at the time, what the pupils thought of it all and the possible pitfalls and areas for progression.

In *Music, Mind, and Education*, Swanwick considers theories of music education and discusses the different approaches to teaching music which he observed in a research study in the late 1980s. Some of the institutions investigated were led by students and some by teachers, including some schools where students rarely sang and one where students never played any music at all.

Swanwick suggests that some form of musical heritage should be passed on to children, giving them them a foundation of musical skills to develop on their musical journey. He holds up the work of Kodály and in particular the structured approach to learn musicianship through singing both at sight and rehearsed.

Kodály wanted to give access to music to all Hungarians in order to reintroduce them to their own musical heritage, providing tools to read music and sing it correctly, otherwise 'millions are condemned to musical illiteracy, falling prey to the poorest of music' (1974, 11). Kodály felt that any music introduced to children should be of the highest quality, starting first with their own folk music and then moving to the great works of the classical tradition. Swanwick goes on to say that the British school system, being less intensive, still carried the feeling that there should be a level of quality in the music children are exposed to and that some understanding of the

stave should be embedded with an awareness of different instruments and sounds, whilst encouraging children to pursue their interests and learn an instrument. Swanwick comments that the teachers with this view often consider themselves musicians first and teachers second.

The formal approach to instrumental learning, which is established in England through organisations such as the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music, gives the country a system to be proud of. However, this avenue is not accessible to all, as it costs money to buy instruments, lessons and the appropriate books. The question remains, therefore: are there ways to get all children involved in music making?

It is also important to raise the question of the type of musicianship that is being promulgated. Jaques-Dalcroze was appalled at the lack of fluidity in the musicians he was working with. Kodály was also surprised to find his Conservatoire students unable to hear their music without their instruments in hand. Swanwick goes on to discuss the all-access approach of the composer Carl Orff, who in the fifties was encouraging children to lead the way with improvisation and musical imagination, learning through exploration combined with movement, dance and speech (1974, 14).

Swanwick also mentions the work of Paynter in the sixties and seventies, encouraging creativity and an exploration of how music really works through improvisation and decision-making. Swanwick states that

The success of such an approach relies on teachers being exceedingly sensitive to the musical products of students. And indeed, it is these musical products that we must always keep centre-stage (14). The great virtue about the 'child-centred' theory of music education, stressing as it does the individuality and creativity of each child, is that we are encouraged to look and listen more carefully to what students actually *do* (15).

Swanwick' discusses an approach to learning music focused on appreciating and experiencing it. He does not include any skills whereby children are able to hear and

notate music; the approach is very much appreciation-based. This fits in with the traditional British system of teaching music in schools through music examination routes. Within the music GCSE exams there are a mere seven marks around the ability to hear music. The rest are contained in the history, the style and the student's ability to pick out and describe instrumentation. The exam does not concentrate on elements of practical musicianship, which would be useful for students who want to follow a path into music making. See Appendix 1 for a Case Study of a student learning through practical musicianship.

Swanwick has developed a new preface to his book *Teaching Music Musically* reflecting on three main principles for music education. Firstly, he describes what he calls 'care for music as a vital form of human discourse'(xi); secondly, he considers the student's own contribution to the musical output; and finally, he looks at musical fluency.

Musical discourse is the language of communicating in tones and tunes, melding together sounds into musical phrases which pupils can use to compose. He suggests that a good music educator is open to hearing the musical expression of his/her students and working with it. Musical fluency is about facilitating the pupils to perform their compositions well.

Teaching today is generally driven by measurable outcomes for students. These three principles that Swanwick outlines are to some extent observable and measurable in the way which education demands. (See Appendix 2 for National Curriculum levels at time of writing.) Musical discourse—the ability to communicate in tones and tunes—is paramount to musical development, and as such is intrinsic within the music transactions of the classroom. The onus is therefore on the musical educator within the classroom to maximise the opportunity for musical discourse, making sure that student contributions are rewarded and fluency is achievable across all activities. 'The unchanging mission of the music educator is to engage students in musical invention performance and as interpreting listeners' (2011, xiv).

The process and transaction of imparting musicality to young people needs to be creative, active and participatory, and eschewing the three principles will allow evolution of a recreational activity in a fun way.

Swanwick's three principles discussed here support the way my project has engaged with pupils. The children are encouraged to use music to share what they want to, to do it with a confidence and presence. This is done with a group of children all together, and I act as teacher but also as musician with them, playing alongside them, sharing my ideas and allowing them to develop their own sound worlds.

### **Zoltán Kodály**

In the aftermath of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, elite music, Choksy (1974) suggests, was either German or Viennese and the huge wealth of folk music from the Hungarian tradition was sidelined to street music played by gypsies, which was a distorted version possibly from a Romanian source of folk music. Liszt had investigated what he considered to be the Hungarian folk tradition, however his cosmopolitan universal approach sullied the purist traditions of genuine grassroots folk music handed down from generation to generation and was influenced instead by the art movements of the time. Kodály sought to unearth the true folk music of Hungary which he then went on to use as a *resource* for his teaching methods.

Kodály, a noted composer and educator, discovered that musical literacy among students—even academy students—was second-rate and not acceptable for the Zeneakademia, Hungary's highest level music school. His mission became to return musical excellence to the students of Hungary's music schools and to re-engage the population as a whole with its own musical heritage.<sup>3</sup> Thus, although he began by

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<sup>3</sup> Anecdotal evidence from lectures by László Norbert Nemes at the British Kodály Academy Summer School 2012.

improving standards within music education for trainee teachers, his knowledge and love of music led him (along with Béla Bartók) to collect and analyse traditional Hungarian folk music.

According to Choksy (1974) there are presently five volumes of the *Corpus Musicae*, which is a collection started by Kodály and Bartók and continued until the present time by the Academy of Sciences in Budapest. The corpus includes a wealth of children's songs, festival songs, courting songs, wedding songs and laments. Kodály's fundamental idea was that children learnt these songs at their mother's knee whilst imbibing the language, thus the foundations of musical education were inbuilt within the simplicity of language and the pentatonic scale, which would form the basis of any good pedagogical music usage.

Kodály is generally considered as a nationalist in that he had a zeal for the national spirit of his people. Ittsez (2002) suggests that in his composition his desire was to make the voice of Hungary heard, and he wrote of himself that he wanted to be 'praeceptor Hungariae' (teacher of Hungary). His pedagogical ambitions were to teach Hungarians 'to be more Hungarian and more educated in music'.<sup>4</sup> Whilst now this is an approach revered around the world, the aim of his work was purely patriotic and not about worldwide impact.

Historically, Kodály had come to understand the unique geographical and cultural circumstances of Hungary. The longstanding eastern traditions of the Magyar peoples who had migrated intermingle with the Christianised western European traditions from about 1000 AD. The transitory and migratory nature of the people, its traditions and language took on more modern influences and characteristics; however, throughout all these layers of corruption a purer character of the culture existed to be found in the peasant traditions of folklore and folksong.

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<sup>4</sup> Anecdotal evidence from lectures by László Norbert Nemes at the British Kodály Academy Summer School 2012.

Within his research Kodály (1974) discovered the 'anhemitonic pentatony'(11) as a main characteristic of the Magyar tradition. Kodály imagined his national music as 'a special synthesis of oriental and occidental traditions' (Ittsez, 2002). The pentatony that was central to the Hungarian folksongs became his starting point for musical education, and is ingrained in the very heart and cadence and rhythm of the Hungarian soul. His rationale for teaching music was imbued by the deeply ingrained knowledge of the people in the very intimate sounds of their folk traditions. Carl Orff, a fellow composer-educator, suggested that pentatony was the ideal starting point for beginner materials in music education. Kodály was not forcing pentatony as a starting point for other cultures necessarily, especially if there was a lack of pentatonic layer in their own musical heritage. Rather he was suggesting that material for beginners needs to grow out of the indigenous heritage of the pupils.

Kodály's underlying rationale for the showcasing of his musical heritage was intertwined with his idea that any nation can only take its place on the musical world stage if it preserves and builds on its own voice in direct succession from its culture and heritage. Kodály's critics often suggest that his methods do not work universally, whereas in fact Kodály was intimating that the concept of an indigenous 'sound' is the model for a musical pedagogy, not imposing a set method to be emulated.

What is to be done? Teach music and singing at school in such a way that it is not a torture but a joy for the pupil; instil a thirst for finer music in him, a thirst which will last for a lifetime. Music must not be approached from its intellectual, rational side, nor should it be conveyed to the child as a system of algebraic symbols, or as the secret writing of a language with which he has no connection. The way should be paved for direct intuition. If the child is not filled at least once by the life-giving stream of music during the most susceptible period – between his sixth and sixteenth years- it will be hardly of any use to him later on. Often a single experience will open the young soul to music for a whole lifetime. This experience cannot be left to chance, it is the duty of the school to provide it. (Kodály, 1974, 120)

Kodály's method did not rely solely on the folk tradition. Music as art was to be encouraged, and thus there was a necessity for contemporary music for children to

sing. Kodály, therefore, began in 1923 composing works for children's choirs. He is notorious for saying 'no one is too good to write for children'<sup>5</sup>. When he taught composition at the Liszt Academy in Budapest he gave his composition class the task of composing for children. The task was to arrange a folk song. One of his pupils said that they were not there to learn how to write songs for children but to be a proper composer. This is when Kodály said, 'no one is too good to write for children', and as a result of this activity Hungary has an enormous wealth of repertoire for children's choirs. (This anecdote comes from Sarolta Platthy, a teacher from the Kodály Institute in Keszthely. She shared this during one of our musicianship classes at the British Kodály Academy Summer School 2013.)

Kodály's impetus for his methods was to encourage the musical literacy of every child in Hungary so that as adults they would be able to look at musical scores and 'think sound' (Choksy 1974). Musical literacy would be as prevalent as reading and writing.

Kodály's instructions and theoretical methodology were extensive in their detail. For example, in his practical guides to his material he expounded his theory of the use of relative solfa (moveable doh) and the pentatonic scale as an essential basis of the musical vernacular of the Hungarian child. It is here that Kodály first referred to the results of musical education in England, in particular to the tonic solfa (moveable doh) and the results achieved through its use by John Curwen.

Using solfa to express a melody, for example, gives the musician an understanding of the form and tonality on which the music has been built, as opposed to learning a tune by rote. Kodály was a great proponent of part-singing at an early age because early understanding of the relationship between pitches can train a child's ear to an awareness of intonation and prepare them better for further musical development.

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<sup>5</sup> Anecdotal evidence from seminars by Sarolta Platthy British Kodály Academy Summer School 2013.

Kodály had a passionate belief that children should imbibe music alongside their language development. He encouraged the teaching of music at nursery level and created music for very young children within their own terms of reference Kodály (1974, 92). According to Kodály, children begin to develop all facets of their abilities simultaneously, for example their musical aptitude, their hearing acuity, their conditional reflexes and their emotional development. In this perception he was ahead of his time, as such notions are now incorporated within the curriculum, although not specifically linked to music.

Kodály's understanding that musical development in a child encompassed so many educational developmental facets underpins his theories and exemplifies his practice. From the age of three the human brain is most able to take on new information, whereas later it becomes more difficult to take on new ideas. So Kodály suggested that children should be encouraged at this very early age to expand their musical ability, which will develop quite naturally alongside their linguistic, emotional, and other areas of development. Susan Young (2003) has proven, in a classroom situation, that younger children have a better memory for learning, and the older they become the more repetition and consolidation they require.

Kodály maintained (1974, 117) that a child should not begin to learn an instrument without being first able to read music. His theory was that elements such as the voice, pulse, rhythm, pitch and tempo should be a known language so that all that is left to learn is the mechanics of the instrument. By having advanced aural training, students would be able to sing any given piece of music so that when they come to play it they will be able to hear if what they have played is correct or not. Without this prior learning they have no reference point from which to assess its correctness or otherwise.

Kodály insisted in a lecture given at the Liszt Academy in 1946 that 'with a good musician the ear should always lead the way for those mobile fingers. The ability to read scores away from an instrument ensures a better understanding of the performer's text' (1974, 191). In a further lecture given in 1953 he went on to say that good musicianship is improved and consolidated by familiarity with the old clefs that choral singing is important and it is necessary to listen to poetry and immerse

oneself in literature to attune the ear to the sounds and attributes that make up the music of one's vernacular language. '[A] cultured ear, a cultured intellect, a cultured heart and cultured fingers. These four need to be developed simultaneously and kept in constant equilibrium' (Szonyi 1973).

The impact of the Kodály approach on my own teaching has been significant. At first it seemed so far removed from the musical worlds I was used to operating in (experimental music, for example). I came to realise that this is very much a child-led approach, albeit a formal and classical one. Children get choices; which song, showing rhythm or beat, with hand signs or solfa ... the activities feel very much as though they games to be enjoyed but can be used as tools to teach the fundamentals of music. My improvisation activities are often absorbed by the children in a similar way, as I present new ideas in a playful way, and either of these approaches will entertain a classroom when a quick focus activity is needed.

The Kodály approach has offered me a tried and tested methodology to use to teach the curriculum within a primary school setting. I have been converted to this over any other way of teaching the elements of music. These elements, learnt in this way, then lend themselves well to being used in a more creative manner. This approach is not limited by cost or parental support and involvement as it is all accessed through the voice, which everyone has. I have benefited immensely as a musician from following this approach and feel a much better musician than I was at the start of this journey three years ago. I have just passed my Intermediate musicianship exam with the British Kodály Academy, gaining skills I would never have dreamt learnable in the system I grew up in. This gives me the excitement and energy that I also find in improvisation and experimental music. For this reason, I feel that I can make it work with the children; they know if their teacher is enjoying something and they feed on that.

## Summary of my role as teacher

There are many skills a performer must have in order to navigate successfully the often sparse instructions in a score with control and purpose, skills such as the ability to interpret instructions, take responsibility for one's own ideas, but most importantly to develop an acute awareness of other performers, their contributions and to speculate about their intentions. It is not just children who often lack this skill. The classical musician will be trained to develop two of the four key areas of musicianship that Kodály has prescribed.

Kodály (1974) characterises a good musician as having:

1. A well-trained ear
2. A well-trained intelligence
3. A well-trained heart
4. A well-trained hand

All four must develop together in constant equilibrium. As soon as one lags behind or rushes ahead, there is something wrong. So far most of you have met only the requirement of the fourth point: the training of your fingers has left the rest far behind. You would have achieved the same results more quickly and easily, however, if your training in the other three had kept pace. (197-198)

In the UK, we teach music as if we were preparing our pupils for a performance, in that music lessons are often centred around the sound produced and the realisation of a score in an authentic way. The market for instrumental examinations in England is dominated by ABRSM,<sup>6</sup> and their system is valued all over the world.

In my own experience I have seen the flaws of this system. I met a pupil who had achieved her ABRSM Grade Three Flute certificate and was working on her Grade

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<sup>6</sup> Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music

Four pieces. She performed her pieces to me with confidence, with a clarity of sound and with the presence one might expect from a much more mature student (this girl was only twelve years old). With great excitement I placed another piece of music in front of her of a similar standard to hear her interpretation. It was then that I discovered that she could not read music or play anything I put in front of her. I tried some scale and arpeggio requests and allowed her to use her own scale book and despite looking at her book (on which she had written note names which were not all correct) she played every one of them incorrectly. This left me as a teacher in a position where I had to explain that, through no fault of her own, she had not been taught music but only to recite the three necessary exam pieces each time.

This proves that the ABRSM system is not a true musical test but can potentially produce musicians with limited ability to read music or hear music. It is like learning a beautiful Italian poem with correct pronunciation but with no idea what it means or the ability to read another poem in the collection. The reason for this is that the onus is on the pieces in these exams; if the pieces are performed well enough one can pass the exam even if the sight-reading and aural tests have been failed.

The other side of this is those who have been taught to read music so well that they are completely dependent on notation. I have heard students perform very accurately and with confidence but with no passion or connection to the musical mood. Whilst these exams are relatively easy to pass with either approach they do not necessarily require the pupils to show the feelings behind the music as long as all the notes happen in the correct time and place, rather like reading the Italian poem and understanding it but with a monotone which does not impart the sentiments behind the language.

Unfortunately, it is a rarity to find a product of this system comfortable with all areas. As an improviser, the subject of improvisation will often come up in conversation with other adult musicians. I have heard musicians I highly regard crumble at the idea and refuse to participate if there is no traditional notation for them to follow. One may argue that the well-trained ear and heart simply mean the injection of passion and 'soul' into the interpretation of a score. However, my experience through performing with the Edges Ensemble has meant that I have had to look more deeply at these

aspects of being a musician when prescriptive music is far less valuable than an individual's own ideas and responses.

For example, during one of my first improvisation lectures I was instructed to 'play now' as a soloist without any music in front of me; I felt a sense of blind panic. This is not uncommon and my experience as a professional musician has lead me to work with many musicians who ask, 'but what do I play?' when confronted with a creative studio session or impromptu jam during a gig.

It is interesting that when put in this situation now I feel far more able to contribute valuably with a considered musical response. The skills that I have developed in order to do this are not necessarily related in any way to technical proficiency on an instrument that I acquired through the ABRSM system. In the same way, I have sought to develop the skills of children I teach in the same manner so that they can operate as performers without being hampered by the potential cost and time investment associated with learning an instrument in the conventional British manner.

## CHAPTER TWO

My composition and performance have evolved through my experiences with the Edges Ensemble. I have had the opportunity to explore many types of indeterminate and experimental scores with varying instrumentation, from Christian Wolff's *Stones* (1969) to Jürg Frey's *Un champ de tendresse* (2011), in which we played leaves. Some of these scores require very close attention, such as Christian Wolff's *Changing the System* (1973-1974), in which we had very prescriptive parts to play as quartets whilst other quartets performed their parts simultaneously, or John Cage's *Variations II* (1961), which required an immense effort to take a random dispersal of lines and dots and translate them into precisely timed sounds. On the other hand, some pieces could be performed with less preparation, such as Sam Sfirri's *The Undulating Land*, for two ensembles (2010). This piece has a beautiful simplicity, as two rows of performers stand across from each other; in pairs they play sounds in unison followed by the next pair; once the end of the line is reached the performance is reversed. Each performer chooses their own sound, which allows anyone to access the piece whether they are singing or ringing a child's toy bell, as a non-musician or established one.



Figure 1—Edges Ensemble performing *The Undulating Land* at the Site Gallery in Sheffield, May 2010

Having experienced the work of different composers' and having improvised with many people, my own skills have developed and my understanding of what music can be has evolved.

The pieces that struck me the most as a composer and inspired me to explore similar ideas with my own compositions were by members of the Wandelweiser collective. I was most struck by Manfred Werder, who said to me, at the Site Gallery in Sheffield (about his piece *2008(1)*) that we [Edges Ensemble, dispersed amongst a crowd in a gallery opening] 'should create a ripple in the room; as soon as we are loud enough for them [the audience] to notice us we should stop as they question whether they missed anything at all'. This seems to be much more about the intention to play and less about the sonic outcome. This is certainly a piece which anyone could play, and in fact a piece I use on a daily basis in a classroom situation when I suspect the children are not listening. I do not need to shout; I can simply play a quiet note or play a soft sound and get their attention and most are not sure how I managed it. Whilst it has this effect on an audience, as a performer the control and thought required is immense: 'How do I know when I am too loud or noticeable?'

Edges have spent a lot of time on Ben Isaac's *Between II* (2009), which explores the movement from inaudible to audible.

'Move (as smoothly as possible) from inaudibility to audibility as many times as there are performers. Never loud, usually high.'

Having performed this with both Edges Ensemble and children, the energy around when the sound might become audible requires a certain amount of focus and control<sup>7</sup> but can also be entertaining as sometimes it comes out more loudly than expected or not as you intended. Pieces like this, which explore the extremes of something—for example sound, duration, etc.—give the performer a chance to learn

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<sup>7</sup> See 6 – on the USB 'trying to only just make a sound'

something new about their instrument, and this piece is an excellent one to use with a new group of children playing instruments for the first time, as they learn how to make a sound and how to stop it.

There are too many pieces to mention individually, but I have considered what makes something a piece 'for anyone' as opposed to a piece for professional musicians.

A piece which has unspecified instrumentation or duration could be suitable for all. A piece which uses unconventional sound sources—for example, leaves—and gives text or graphic instructions on how to perform the piece, rather than traditional notation, could be suitable for all.

My journey as a composer has been the greatest over the last three years. During my undergraduate composition work I used traditional notation but played with it, stretched it and tried to achieve the sort of effect found in a graphic or text score through a five-line staff. I was trying to find a way of capturing the 'essence' of an improvisation or indeterminate piece.

My earlier indeterminate pieces *63 Events* and *Noises* were written for Edges Ensemble and were my first pieces without traditional notation. With *63 Events* I first explored blocks of sound (events) divided with silence. I wanted the audience to be able to start to identify when an event they had heard before had come again.<sup>8</sup> *Noises* was written for an Edges rehearsal when Philip Thomas asked us to come with noise making things. It allowed us, as performers, to identify where in the score fellow performers were, which enabled us to choose whether to join them, to do something different, or just listen.

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<sup>8</sup> Track 1 on the CD

Whilst composing my piece for Ensemble Plus Minus, *For Violin, Accordion, Clarinet*, I knew I was writing for specific instruments and I wanted to write for their unique properties. I attempted to create the environment of improvisation through real-time choices. At the end of each sound event the performers had to interpret the next situation and decide how to proceed. The score gave instructions to the performers but they were choices for the performers to make—e.g. ‘hum a new pitch’—so the performers had to then make a choice on how to proceed. In this way the performers had to be focused for each instruction and make clear decisions before making their sounds. They were unable to learn what comes next, as opposed to a more traditionally notated piece that could be memorised.

I spent a long time on the notation for this piece, trying to keep it as simple as possible without using too many pieces of paper, and I wanted to have all players able to see what instructions the others were following too. The notation morphed from three semibreve-looking shapes in a space to something that looked a lot less like traditional notation.

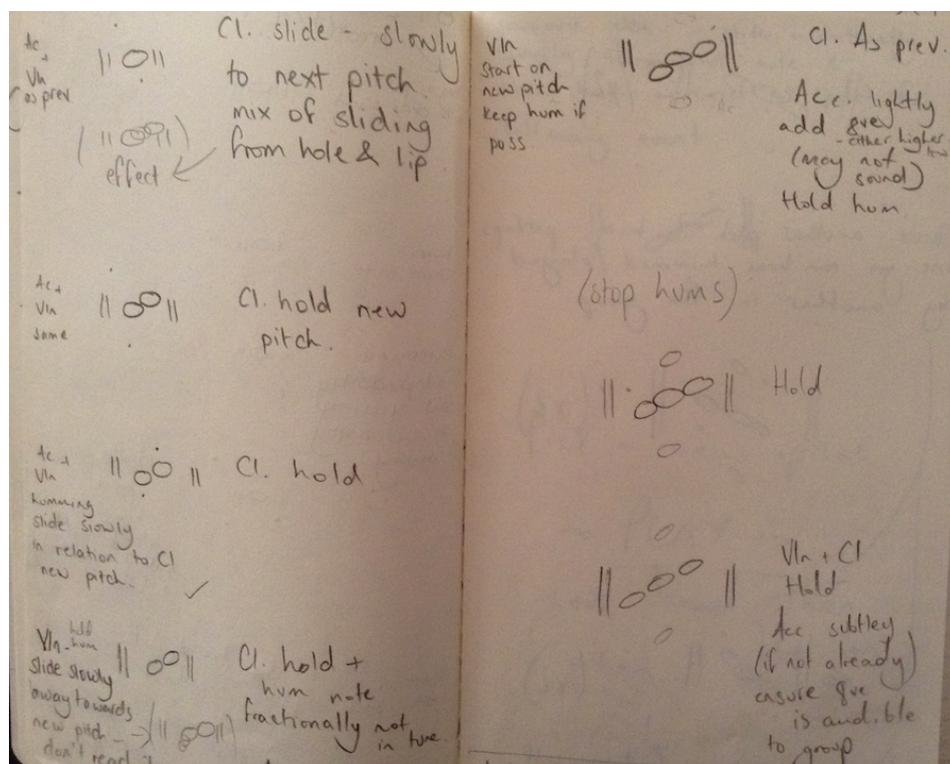


Figure 2— Initial composition sketch for *Violin Accordion Clarinet*, attempting to show how the sounds move away from unison with semibreve-like notation.

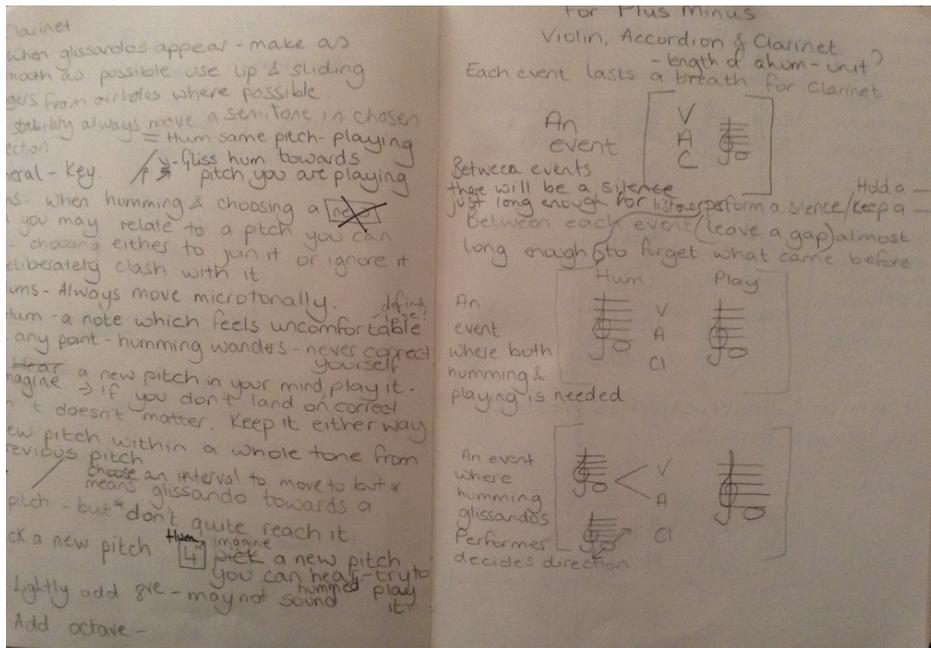


Figure 3— second composition sketch for *Violin Accordion Clarinet*, attempting to show more information and independent instructions for each of the instruments.

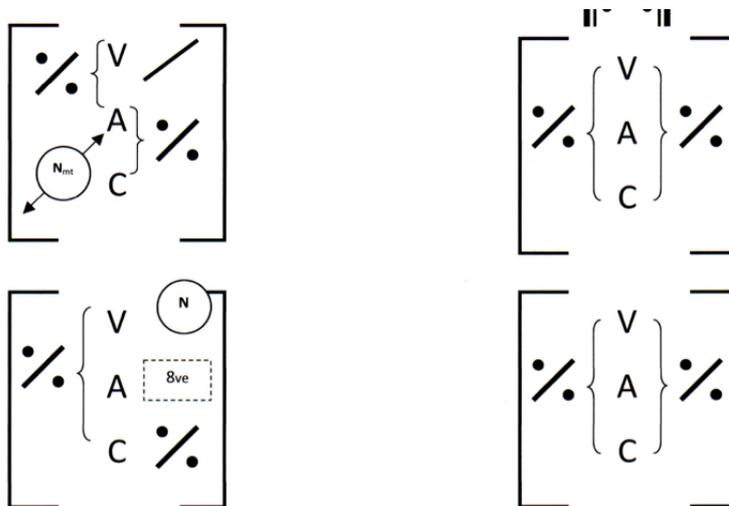


Figure 4— Extract from final score for *Violin Accordion Clarinet*, showing how the notation can give different instructions to each instrument. For a key, please see composition portfolio pages 9-10.

The reason for writing in this way was so that the performers could never completely relax. The performance, even when practised, should never be the same twice.

With *For Johnny Chang* I wanted a similar feel of real-time decisions.<sup>9</sup> I used the notation setup from the piece for Ensemble Plus Minus and then added a few string-specific ideas.<sup>10</sup> I know that Johnny Chang wrote out the score in a different way for performance, simply writing in a list the decisions he needed to make—for example, ‘glissando to a new pitch microtonally away’—so it could fit on one sheet of paper, as the spacing on my score filled two pages and for the performance he would have a lot of scores to handle. He did this after he had seen me and we had discussed how the piece might be approached. As the piece was only to last 30 seconds, he did not have long to make the decisions, and having them closer together was easier for the eye.

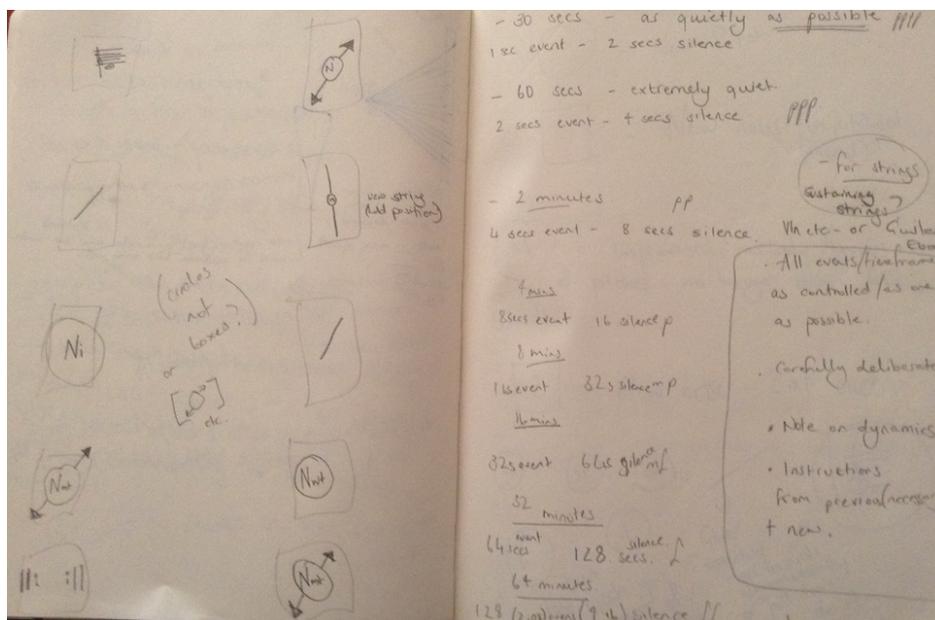


Figure 5— composition sketch from *For Johnny Chang*, considering how to show instructions and how timings might work for a longer version.

<sup>9</sup> CD track 3

<sup>10</sup> See page 13 of *For Johnny Chang*.

The most work went into my score *For Four Voices* for EXAUDI (a professional vocal group with a specialism in new music), as it became the main platform for exploring the idea that everyone can get involved in this approach to music making. Everyone has a voice, and therefore this was the perfect opportunity to make something that I could use to cross the boundaries of my various roles. I wanted to challenge myself to write something that would work not only for EXAUDI but also for the children I taught and the Edges Ensemble.

This piece was the most challenging for me as a composer, and it had the most different draft versions through which it developed. Some were colourful, some were prescriptive, and through many variations I arrived at a text score.

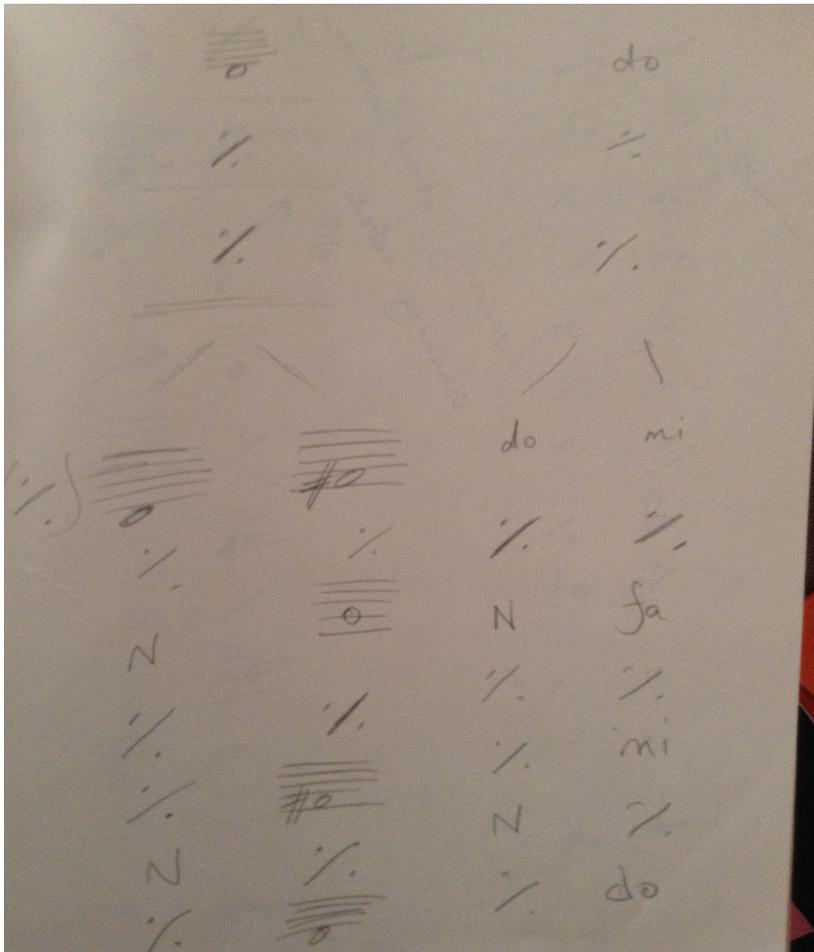


Figure 6— Extract initial draft for EXAUDI piece using similar notation to earlier pieces.

This initial idea seemed too complex.

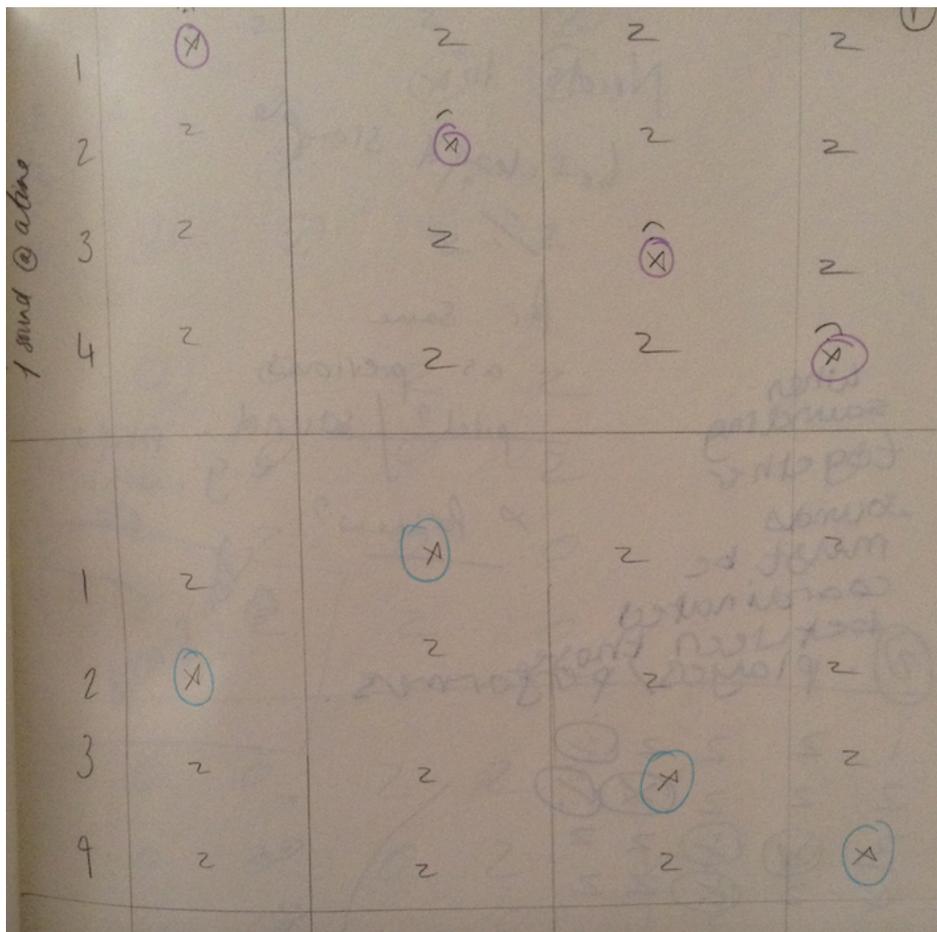


Figure 7—Sketch for EXAUDI piece. Circles indicate the leader of the sound and who should be singing but not what choices they are making.

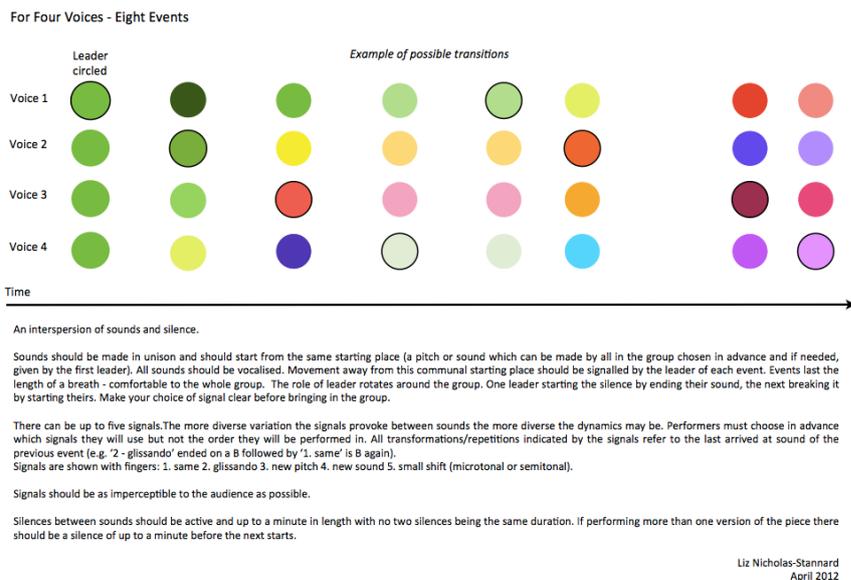


Figure 8—This was the score initially sent to EXAUDI. Its colours are suggestions of how the sounds may shift rather than something to follow.

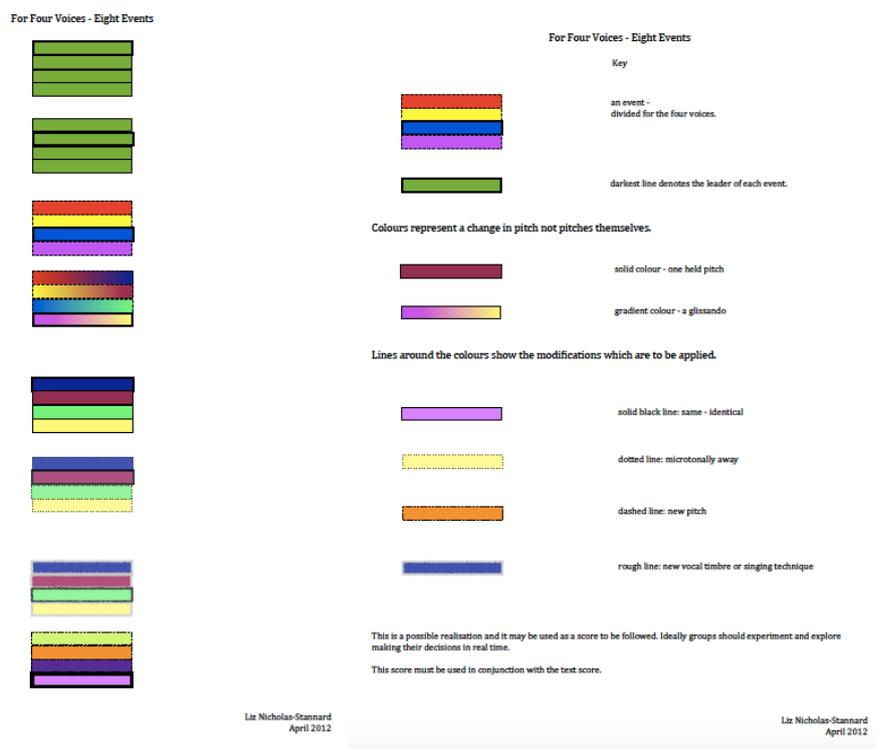


Figure 9—Alternative score written to accompany the text score; colours show possibilities and gradients of colour glissandi, different borders to the boxes indicating a new pitch or a microtonal shift.

In the end I decided that my trying to make it 'simpler' I was over complicating things, and that having shown the score to my primary school band the resulting complexity added too much to the discussion and did not help the performance. We used only the text score from then on.

Inadvertently, this text score was very traditional in its similarity to works by the Wandelweiser composers or other contemporary text scores. This is a world within which I have performed for a long time and it has impacted my vocabulary as a composer.

What was created was a text score which was very formal. There were suggestions during my workshop with EXAUDI that the wording could be more playful and childlike, so I took the score to my class band to see what they thought. We chatted through the score to see what they understood. We learned some new vocabulary, such as 'timbre' and 'glissando', and they grasped it well. They were keen to try it straightaway, excited by the opportunity to conduct the group and choose the instruction to change the sound of the group themselves. So I decided to leave the score as it was.

The score presents each performer with the chance to conduct the rest of the group, and with that the power to choose what should happen next. There are five options the conductor can indicate when it gets to their turn.

1. same pitch
2. slightly different pitch
3. glissando
4. new pitch
5. new vocal timbre

(These instructions relate to the end product of the event before.)

I tried many ways to show that the performers had choices to make and also that those choices should relate to the sound they made at the end of the previous event. There are at least four versions of the score before I came to the text version. I considered also how to adapt it for Edges Ensemble and for others, and then came

the second version *For Edges Voices*, which allows for 'as many events as there are voices' to make the piece accessible to any size of group. Making the text score with only five things to remember also made the piece accessible to those who do not remember their music, or, thinking of the school children, do not have the support at home to come with all the necessary equipment. A vocal piece requiring no score once its instructions have been introduced worked well for my school children, which can be seen in the video shouting what each number means.<sup>11</sup>

The issue or question around this research has often been how to measure the success of a performance when looking at such different performers and what constitutes a quality performance. Prévost (1995, 133) says, 'one moral decision above all determines the internal success of an improvisation: the decision to pursue sincerity of action'. Whilst my composition is clearly not an improvisation, the instructions I have given have been intended to create in the performer the sort of real-time situation one might encounter in an improvisation. I am less interested in the sonic outcome of a performance than in the commitment of an ensemble to focus and perform together with the intention to perform as accurately as possible.

On the DVD<sup>12</sup> there is a clip of the band performing the EXAUDI piece in its final version; *for any number of voices with as many events as there are people*. Whilst this is not a polished performance, it shows the children communicating with each other and enjoying the piece.

The way in which the different groups responded to the score *For Four Voices* was very interesting. Initially EXAUDI seemed to struggle with the playful nature of the work. Once they realised that it was acceptable to laugh and to enjoy the process of

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<sup>11</sup> 11 on the USB – I say the number and they sing it. 14 on the USB I say the number and they shout what the instruction should be.

<sup>12</sup> 15 on the USB.

performing it the flow of the piece arrived and they seemed to be able to embrace the possibilities open to them as they had fun.<sup>13</sup>

My notes written just after the EXAUDI workshop:

*Started well - they had prepared the original with circles score and I said 'i've written you a new score'.*

*They read it through. I think that they were definitely over complicating things. They wanted to predetermine more than they needed. E.g. not just which modifications they were going to choose from but the order they would be used for each event.*

*Then when they started the first person who could choose modifications went through a number of them!*

*Initially silences were very short and very regular. As versions progressed they played a little more with the durations of silence maintaining that a minute of silence is a 'long silence'. (8 minutes is a good length for a silence!)*

*In the final version there was the most contrasting silences - the longest being approximately 28 seconds.*

*There was however one event which went straight on to another catching them out slightly which was nice.*

*Edits to make to the score:*

*simplify it further - for a 5 year old as james says*

*create clarity for 8 events*

*link to the graphics in some way?*

*use of sounds and events in sentence about dynamics*

*perhaps an instruction to not perform with the score?*

*All performers said to me that they had enjoyed the piece. One comment was that it was 'fun to do' and 'hard not to laugh out loud at the different sounds people were making'. The general consensus was that it was nice to do it without being too serious. That it was fun. I had a lovely conversation with Gareth, who sang the piece, about how it was nice that it didn't take itself too seriously. The conversation went along the lines of i enjoyed the piece, it was fun, the funniness came from people trying to maintain different timbres or pitches exactly and their 'failure' to do so was what was funny' The piece, as*

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<sup>13</sup> No. 13 on the USB band singing first sound and then laughing

*are all my current pieces, is about intention. Intention to achieve what has been asked of you, making a good attempt and sticking doggedly to whatever the outcome of it may be, the hilarity that ensues is simply a bonus.*

*For me as a teacher and as a composer and as a performer music has to be fun. Life has to be fun otherwise what is the point? If I want to write music which both children, amateurs and professionals can engage with on a common platform there needs to be some fun. Fun allows inhibitions to lessen, for things to be tried safely as any 'failure' can be construed as funny and part and parcel of the learning and exploring process.*

*If I can't present fun into a situation how can I expect engagement from the groups I am working with?*

*next get recordings of kids*

*what sorts of sounds are they using?*

*how controlled can they be?*

*how long a silence can it be?*

*explore these possibilities before they get to hear the recording!*

Whilst writing the piece I had tried out some ideas with my school children. At this time I was working with the second group of children I mentioned in the introduction. They were quite familiar with indeterminate scores and the necessity to make choices about their own performances. I used my time with them to try out what would happen if I conducted them with the same choices which were presented in the score. The question was: could they remember from one sound to the next which pitch they had ended on? Could they grasp the idea that where they arrived at the end of one event was where they started from in the next? This did seem to be the hardest part for them to absorb, but through practice they managed to achieve it. The children enjoyed coming out to the front of the class and choosing the instruction for the rest of the group to follow, and so the piece was formed.

There are three tracks of the EXAUDI workshop on the CD enclosed with the portfolio.<sup>14</sup> There is some discussion and laughter as the group get their heads

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<sup>14</sup> Tracks 6, 7 and 8 – track 8 has a full performance of the piece; in tracks 6 and 7 it is interesting to hear how they try things out and how we unpick the instructions on the score.

around what is required, but within the tracks there are some good complete performances of the piece. Edges Ensemble did not struggle with the logistics of the piece (the format of signalling instructions to the group, altering their pitches and durations of silence, etc.). We have performed other pieces that require communication across a group and real-time choices, such as Michael Winter's *Small World* (2008)<sup>15</sup>, in which the score is a series of numbers joined by lines, with each number indicating something different and the performer moving down the lines from number to number. There are often options to choose which way to go and which number to play next.

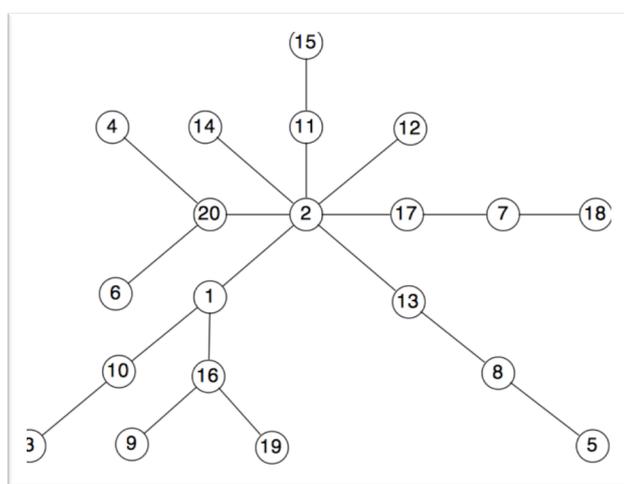


Figure 10—Extract of *Small World*, by Michael Winter

*Small World* (2008) involves a similar sort of real-time choice as those within my EXAUDI piece. However, we are not a group who usually use our voices, so some members were more hesitant to be involved than others. We managed a number of beautifully controlled renditions in rehearsals.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.mat.ucsb.edu/~mwinter/works.html> - [http://www.mat.ucsb.edu/~mwinter/small\\_world.pdf](http://www.mat.ucsb.edu/~mwinter/small_world.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> The CD within my composition portfolio has a track (5) recorded unfortunately on a day when we had a loud marimba playing in the next room. This meant we had many distractions and succumbed to the comical elements of the piece with giggles when one

The school band were probably the most at ease with the piece written for EXAUDI. As mentioned earlier, we spent some time examining the score and discussing what might be required of us. The hardest part was remembering what the five choices of instructions were. As we are not a band that uses scores and music stands, we worked on getting to grips with what the piece required and then performed it. By the end of our time together they were able to call out each number and which instruction it related to. The favourite instruction became 'a new vocal timbre', and they often felt the need to add an action to the sound effect.<sup>17</sup>

I can attribute some of their ease to the fact that they sang with me every week. This set the band apart from the Edges Ensemble, as the band was accustomed to being in a situation where I was leading them and they were required to follow my instructions. With this came a trust that I was setting them up to succeed; such should be the teacher-pupil relationship. It is predominantly through the Kodály approach that I have built this confidence with them and their trust in me to make them successful. Edges, and particularly EXAUDI, did not have this prior relationship with me as a composer, and certainly no connection to me as a teacher, so the reassurance of past experiences with me in this role was not there.

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singer chose a new vocal timbre with an eccentric action to match his sound effect. This shows that all groups have found keeping a straight face tricky at times whilst working on this piece.

<sup>17</sup> No. 12 on the USB

## CHAPTER 3

### Band

Throughout this chapter I shall be discussing the third group of children I have worked with, partly as my approach has evolved through exploration with the other groups, and partly because my approach seems to have had the biggest impact on this particular group. I will also compare them to previous groups of children as well as the Edges Ensemble and other professional groups I have worked with.

Our after-school music band met weekly for most of an academic year. Although we were known as a 'band', more often than not we did not use instruments. This is in part due to the children's instrumental abilities and their frustrations with physically playing an instrument, but mainly due to the fact that they were equally happy without. We explored different sound sources and we spent a lot of time working on listening and turn taking. This is now something the children seem to be able to demonstrate when performing a piece or activity.

As mentioned in the introduction, this third group are notoriously difficult. The main problem as a teacher or bandleader is the dissonance within the group. In between activities, the children often reverted to shouting at each other. In my teaching time with this class I explored a number of ways to try and get them working together. To exemplify their situation, we had a week where I swapped our usual activities for those I would traditionally do with five-year-olds in an attempt to get them playing (as in games, not music) together. We sang a simple song that involves rolling a ball to a friend in the circle at the end of a short sung phrase. I altered it slightly so that the children had to say something nice about the person they were rolling the ball to. The children struggled immensely; at least 50% of the group could not think of a single nice thing to say to each other. One child, despite being given examples such as 'very nice to see you today' sat completely incapable of one nice thing to say to any one person in the class of thirty! She was not being malicious or uncooperative, but seemed genuinely perturbed. This demonstrates that the group found it very difficult to communicate with each other.

They were a mixed year group class, combining year five and year six children (making the age range nine to eleven year olds). Within that group there were a number of sibling groups, which exacerbated the situation. Simple tasks like the attendance register invariably took around fifteen minutes due to the interruptions and poor behaviour from the majority of the children. Within the classroom we had spent time predominantly on daily activities. We had explored some indeterminate scores but as a group they struggled with improvisation. I feel that this was because they did not know how to take turns in their interactions. I have spent more time in the after-school band working on improvisation and experimental music.

My foremost purpose in working with this group was to enable them to work harmoniously. I was not necessarily concentrating on curriculum matters; the challenge, before any aspect of the curriculum could be addressed, was to engage them in music together. There is a sequence of videos showing a trio of children, who do not usually interact well together in the classroom, often arguing, first discussing their group performance, then trying it out and discussing it some more. The video clips exemplify how the children start to interact with each other as performers, how they make choices for themselves and incorporate elements covered in curriculum sessions (solfa) with improvised solos of instrumental and vocal sounds.<sup>18</sup> The children who came to band learnt not to be so troublesome as the other children, and I was able to challenge their ability within the classroom more as they were not so threatened by having to perform. For example, one child, who in previous years had been the most disruptive child, having attended the band, became much more aware of what was required to produce successful performances.

When we tried Cathy Berberian's *Stripsody* (1966) in class she took charge of her group (who were not band members) and enabled them to stand in front of the class

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<sup>18</sup> 3, 4 and 5 on USB

and show off their interpretation of a graphic score confidently, where some groups had struggled.<sup>19</sup>



Figure 11 —Photo of some of the band proudly displaying the sheets they had chosen to perform from Berberian's *Stripsody* 1966. (January 2013)

It is evident therefore that the band has allowed children to try things and take charge of their own situation, which has enriched my role as leader and consequently the children's own capabilities. The classroom teaching has been limited by the other children's behaviour and thus the content of lessons is to some extent dictated by this. This impacted the way I worked as a teacher with the group, as I was aware that any lessening of pace and activity might degenerate into bedlam.

In contrast, the children who came to band, although they still presented with difficult behaviours at times, had to abide by different rules. For example, they can be fired from band in a way they cannot be fired from the classroom (by me or their peers), they are there voluntarily and they can be rewarded for special efforts. The atmosphere can be more relaxed and rules do not apply in the same way, so the process of teaching becomes different and more enjoyable for children and teacher alike. The role of the teacher is variable in this situation as I can switch from being teacher to performer to co-performer, which gives the children a different perspective

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<sup>19</sup> 9 on USB – girls performing *Stripsody*

than the one in the classroom. They might engage differently with the pieces or activities as they are not being told what to do but being asked if they would like to participate. It also provides me, as a teacher, with a different viewpoint on the children, unaffected by the dynamic of their classroom environment.

The idea of working towards a personal methodology through this approach will be a continuous project for me. Over the last three years there have been activities which have proved successful and I have used them again and again. I include below some of the elements and steps we have explored.

## **Silence**

For the first few sessions we explored 'silence'.

Silence is the backbone of meta-music. It gives every sound its aural dimension. It is the space where the meta-musician places his thoughts. It is the starting point and the finality. ... For the meta-musician, silence at the beginning describes a controlled sense of open anticipation which he knows will energise and shape subsequent work. Silence at the beginning means not knowing, not wanting to know, not wanting the music to move in a pre-ordained direction. (Prévost 1995, 131)

All but one of the children struggled; they demonstrated that they could not handle silence by fidgeting or laughing or by trying to divert the attention of the others. This was expected as this was their normal state. However, one child sat blissfully in the circle and was able to maintain a state of relaxed focus regardless of any other distractions. Whilst this child does not usually cause conflict or disruption in normal lessons, she does display frustration and appears anxious whenever disruption is taking place in the classroom. In the 'silence' setting she seemed tranquil and at peace which, I believe, was a new experience for her. We started to improvise within a clear structure. Each person had five counts within which they may choose to make up to two sounds. We discussed that these sounds could be made in any way and that they could choose to make them both or just one or none at all. Each child

in turn performed their five counts, during which time every other child in the class had to sit silently and listen.<sup>20</sup>

Children—indeed most people—have no silence in their lives. In order to consider and place sounds one needs to start here. The groups I have worked with have had very mixed reactions. Some love it, as the classroom situation does not have space for it; some do not know how to handle it and become more disruptive as a result. I have found, as with all good teaching, modelling the behaviour you require works the best.

### **Exploring the extremes**

Of sound, duration and more. The exploration element gives anyone the opportunity to get to know their voices or instruments better through ‘how quiet can I be?’ ‘how long can I hold a note for?’ etc. For this we particularly use *Between II* (2009).

### **Improvisation**

To start off I offer parameters for the children to play within. These parameters might be, for example:

- In 3 minutes you can make up to five sounds.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> No. 2 on the USB – listening to what the other children are doing.

<sup>21</sup> No. 2 on the USB

- 'Pass the solo' first to the person next to you then to anyone but the person next to you. This encourages children to watch, wait and listen to a soloist and communicate an exchange of turns ready for the next solo to start.
- Make up to 10 sounds in a group improvisation.<sup>22</sup>

Through the idea of making 'up to' a number of sounds the child can choose to play or not and what constitutes a sound. As the children realise this could be anything, their personalities start to show. Some will always play an instrument, some will choose to create unpitched sounds with objects such as chairs and some will sing as they realise all are viable. 'A free improvisation is a vehicle for personal expression' (Prévost 1995).

We explore free improvisation and its possible dialogues. Using our skills of sound and silence acquired in other exercises we can make choices about interacting with others. In this way I have seen a group of fifteen children sit for an hour making sounds which are barely audible listening intently to each other and their own sounds. I have also experienced the sheer cacophony created when every instrument in the school comes out!

## Scores

There are a great number of scores I have used with children. The complete list of scores is included in the bibliography; almost anything indeterminate enough to have been used in Edges Ensemble I have tried out with the children. Some favourite scores and composers are:

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<sup>22</sup> no. 7 on the USB is a group performance where they can make up to 10 sounds, no. 8 on the USB is a discussion after the performance where we discuss what they liked and what they might think about next time.

- Cathy Berberian *Stripsody* (1966)
- Earle Brown *4 Systems* (1954)
- Cornelius Cardew *Treatise* (1963-1967)
- Daniel Goode *Stamping in the Dark* (no date)
- Ben Isaacs *Between II* (2009)
- Manfred Werder *2008(1)* (2008)
- Christian Wolff *Stones* (1968-71), *Edges* (1968)

## Conclusion

Throughout this research I have examined the different areas of my work as a teacher, a performer and a composer. I have examined the writings of well regarded music education authorities, all different but all with strands which support my approach.

Green (2008) suggests that there are children who need a different approach to music education, those that the standard way does not suit. Some learn better by listening to each other and being able to try out their own ideas rather than performing pieces which have been written by other people (for example a beginner clarinet study). Green's notion that one size of music education does not fit all supports my finding that for some groups I was working with I found a need to change my approach. I needed to offer them opportunities to make music which was not based on whether they could all accurately play one tune but on whether they were able to explore different ways of making sounds and music together.

Swanwick suggests that creative and explorative approaches to music making with children 'relies on teachers being exceedingly sensitive to the musical products of students' (1988, 14). This is important in supporting why the band setting worked for the children: it allowed them my undivided attention to their musical ideas.

Kodály (1974) reinforces that music should be a joy and that it should be accessible to all, primarily through the voice. One of the main reasons I was excited to be writing for EXAUDI as a vocal ensemble was because it was the perfect platform to work on with the band pupils too.

When taking on board my experiences as a performer, having been fortunate enough to be a founding member of the Edges Ensemble and to have worked with so many different composers and performers, I consider myself very lucky. I have

absorbed so many things through HCMF<sup>23</sup> before even starting this Masters degree which have informed me as a composer, performer and teacher. I have been allowed to explore alternatives to traditional notations and see how professionals and children alike react to it.

Being privileged enough to have a supportive school I was already working in before starting this Masters meant I could pose questions to the children and try ideas out and form an after-school band solely for the purpose of my research.

As a result of opportunities to explore alternative situations to those presented in the classroom, the band found its own dynamic and consequently were able to achieve more in the band sessions. As Cardew (1971) said, 'improvisation cannot be rehearsed. Training is substituted for rehearsal, and a certain moral discipline is an essential part of this training'. This 'moral discipline' is what I wanted my children to experience and is akin to what Green (2008) talks about with her research. By the end of our sessions together the children knew what was necessary to perform together with respect for each other and to convey this unspoken sense of discipline. This is most evident with those children who still struggle to contain themselves. In the beginning, when performing as a group and waiting for their turn, they would giggle incessantly throughout. Now, whilst it is apparent that giggling is on the verge of spilling over, I can observe that they are able to contain it so as not to ruin the piece and impact on someone else's turn<sup>24</sup>.

According to Prévost (1995), 'improvisation allows for and nurtures a sense of play and fun'. The classical/formal route can hamper the possibilities for improvisation. 'Any sort of strict classical training does seem to be the biggest single handicap to improvising' (Bailey, 1992). The ABRSM system, whilst not being universally

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<sup>23</sup> Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival

<sup>24</sup> No. 1 on the USB – passing sound but some giggles.

accessible, also trains people to perform from scores where the composer is the origin and legislator of the performance. Bailey (1992) says:

He [the improviser] is expressing a recognition that music is, of its nature, not fixed and is always malleable, changeable. Performance in classical music seems designed to disprove that idea. In the straight world the performer approaches music on tiptoe. Music is precious and performance constitutes a threat to its existence. So, of course, he has to be careful. Also, the music doesn't belong to him. He's allowed to handle it but then only under the strictest supervision. Somebody somewhere has gone through a lot of trouble to create this thing, this composition, and the performer's primary responsibility is to preserve it from damage. At its highest, music is a divine ideal conceived by a super-mortal. In which case performance becomes a form of genuflection.

The situation present in a classroom of new musicians—with or without instruments or training—is wide open to an approach incorporating the practical musicianship methodology of Kodály and the open ended possibilities my addition of indeterminacy has brought to the classroom. It is similar to a world of imagination and play, a world which children especially should be allowed to access alongside the constraints and pressures of levels and SATS. The opportunity to take control for once and to command and communicate viably with others is possible through sound and silence. The creative opportunities give even a beginner the chance to build a musical identity within their first musical experiences.

The outcome of this research has been that it is possible to create something for all backgrounds to engage with on a similar level. I have worked with a number of children across the last few years, all with different needs, and all have benefitted in some way from an approach that allows the exploration found in experimental music and improvisation. There are many avenues I feel this project could have gone down and there are many things we have explored that did not make it into this thesis. On reflection I feel that my aim has been to try and recreate the experiences I have had as a performer for other performers, whether they are professionals or children. What excites me is the feeling of possibility, which is not necessarily present in any

other form of music making. This has saved me as a musician and kept me involved as a valuable member of a group. A feeling of value and participation does not need to be reserved for professionals or university-level work. The options for children's music making abound, and what a more experimental approach can offer is access for all, from one slide of a coffee cup on a surface (Saunders, 2010) to a virtuosic cadenza of shouts and whistles (Parkinson, 2011).

## APPENDIX 1—Child Case Study

L was seven years old when I started working with him, and I have worked with his class once a week, every week for two years.

(I would propose that he is 'gifted and talented' in music.)

L presented as an unconfident child who rarely joined in, although he was content to be in the sessions. At first he didn't volunteer for anything, but when it came to activities which involved solo opportunities he would participate in a low monotone. However, his actions were often appropriate and to the beat. Whilst that gave me something to highlight and praise, his role as leader gave him the opportunity to see his own skills reflected in his classmate's echoes. Their voices responded in an equally monotone way, with actions highlighting the difference in their response to his versus another child's lead. Over the course of the first term his confidence to volunteer in the sessions grew and his voice was more confident but still very low and monotone.

Until recently, the school promoted the idea that some can sing and some cannot. Kodály said, 'on the basis of more than fifty years' observation I claim that there is no tone-deaf ... child' (Kodály 1974). My work within the school, which, overall, follows the principles of the Kodály approach, has shown that this is not necessarily the case. Now there is a healthy 'all involved' atmosphere, however there is still an auditioned school choir. This has been a point of contention as it might promote a different message than the one I aim to promote through my curriculum teaching. Despite being in the school for only one day a week, I am responsible for the music curriculum, and I am the one who has to pick up the pieces for the children who are not accepted into the school choir.

L had been labelled as a child with no musical potential, because he could not sing. Whilst I will never be one hundred percent sure that this had not been said directly to him, it was apparent through the reactions of the other children towards him within our sessions that there was an awareness of 'other' around his contributions as they were so different from those in the group. L is a bright child and whilst none of the children directly said anything derogatory about his contributions within our music time their reactions spoke for them.

With this overall awareness of singing ability in the school and pretense around those 'who could' and those 'who couldn't', it was quite difficult to involve him in activities to start off with. The challenge was to create an atmosphere in which he felt happy to share his contributions through providing opportunities which supported many different types of involvement.

Outside of school I am aware that L has many anger issues, is violent at home, and has been involved with the police. There are interventions with the school and home looking at anger management issues. The school have incorporated different schemes to improve his attendance and to try to manage his behaviour at home. While he can be violent and dismissive in other lessons, I have never seen this side of him, since I started writing this L has been taken in to foster care and no longer lives at home.

During his first year with me it became clear that, despite being unable to pitch his singing voice to mine, he could engage with and follow the sessions. At every stage within the lesson, both in the preparation and the presentation of pulse and then rhythm, L managed to excel above his classmates. I was able to highlight his abilities and his successes as an example for the class to follow. Across the year, his confidence grew. I encouraged more opportunities for L to sing, especially as we moved on to pitch. Activities which enable development of solo performances were useful for all children and allowed me to ask; "Who can sing higher or lower than the last person?" This gave an opportunity for lower singing to be as valid and correct as any other singing. L was often chosen for the lower singing option. This offered an opportunity for L to be the soloist, because other children in the class could not sing as low as he could. It also put him in the spotlight as he could do something others

could not with a positive outcome. This activity demonstrated that the ability to alter pitch range was something that voices could do. With the understanding that pitch can be high or low and still be correct, the class discovered how to use their voices in different registers. I believe this highlighted a potential for change for L and a greater acceptance of his singing voice amongst the rest of the class.

During the course of the year, L started to sing out at his own pitch and often with the correct intervals. He excelled when we used stick notation (using rhythms but not pitch)<sup>25</sup>, as his inner hearing was by far the best in the class. Kodály, talking about Schumann's *Jugendalbum*, writes, 'developing the ear is the most important thing of all' (Kodály 1974). When we made use of tonic sol-fa and using hand signs, L was able to show what he was hearing inside; it did not matter that he could not articulate it vocally. The tools of the Kodály approach helped L because he was able to use them to show what he was hearing on the inside.

Only by practising this (sol-fa) for a long time does the musician develop his ability to transform the notes into sounds and the sounds heard into written notes. In no one is this ability innate; it can be acquired by hard work only... As a matter of fact, this is the only thing that can be taught. (Kodály 1974)

As L had such a good grasp of the tools we had been using during the year, I had the idea of using more instruments within the lesson. The older children in the school have access to wind band instruments. I decided to introduce recorders to the year three children in order to prepare them for using the band instruments later. As L's only problem was singing at pitch, I hoped that he might succeed in transferring his musicianship skills onto an instrument.

The musicianship skills were taught in this order:

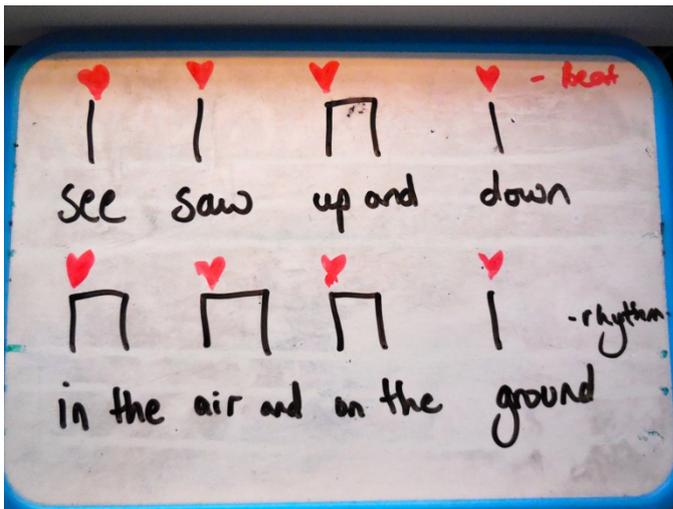
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<sup>25</sup> Showing rhythms as sticks with no dots on the bottom and not using a stave.

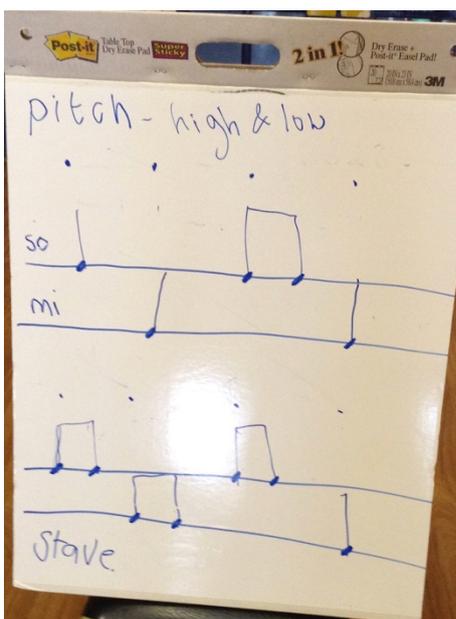
First an awareness of beat, finding the beat and showing the beat.

Then once the beat was well grounded we introduced rhythm and differentiated between beat and rhythm.

We started to use stick notation to show the rhythm of a song and how it fit into the beats:

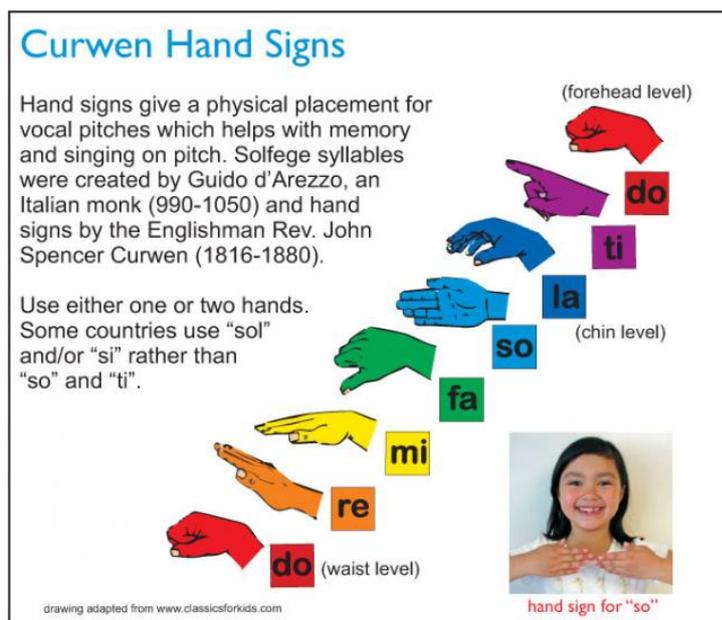


Next we introduce pitch, first with only two pitches and establishing whether they are high or low. We identify them and so and mi (using relative solfa; where do can move and be any note as opposed to the fixed do system):



The more pitches the class learn the more lines in the staff we have. The approach is designed to keep things simple, only giving the children what they need so they are not overwhelmed and can take it all on board.

We explore pitch not only through notation but also through the hand signs created by John Curwen<sup>26</sup>:



During the first year, as the children were able to identify pitches we started to play the recorder. In lesson one I taught them how to play so and mi (in this case C and A) on their recorders. L played the first song. As he had these musicianship skills internalised he could sing in his head and play all the songs we had learnt with those pitches straight away. He was able to listen, concentrate and achieve a good sound

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.startsateight.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/curwen-hand-signs1.jpg>

on his recorder. L was able not only to use these tools to hear the music in his head but was also able to use them to articulate what he could hear in his head to the class through the use of an instrument. He could do this in the same way as everyone else had been able to do with their singing. But his grasp of the skills and how he transferred them to the recorder was far quicker than the other children in the class and it became L that the children looked to to lead the way in the music sessions from then on.

L is now in his second year with me and is a year four student. He continues to have the best grasp of the tools I have taught the class. He is the most able of the children to identify the pitches in a song by ear. For example, I taught a new song containing four pitches (so mi re and do), we sang it together and made our actions fit first to the beat and then to the rhythm. I then asked, 'is there anyone who could tell me what the relative solfa is for the first part of the song?' L put his hand straight up and showed that it was so and mi through hand signs. He was also able to identify the rest of the song, and I could see him showing me the hand signs whilst I looked around the room to see if anyone else had the answer.

In the audio clip of L singing on his own<sup>27</sup> his pitching is not perfect; it is quite a recent recording. I have found that when I start him lower than he sings on this track, his ability to pitch is better. In this track he is consciously trying to sing higher than he might, which gives him difficulties in control. It shows that he is consciously singing higher and that through his use of sol-fa we know he is aware of which pitches are in the song.

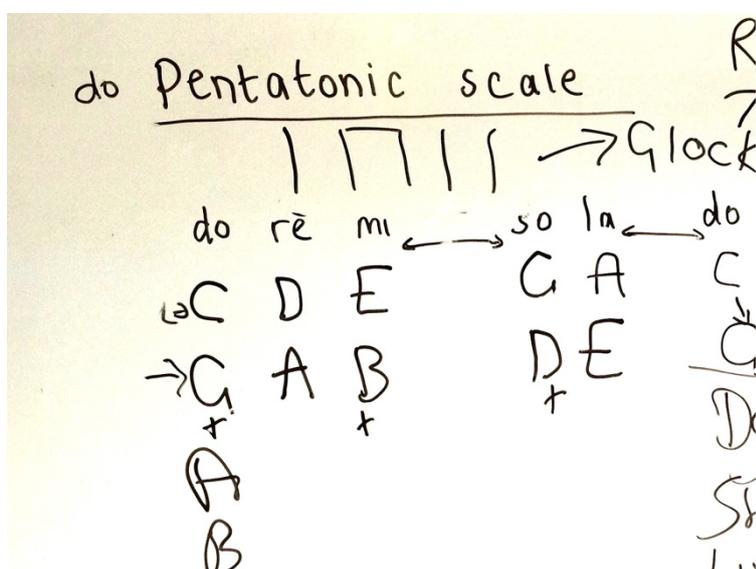
Not only has L's ability to keep up with the musical concepts presented to him continued, he has also been able to transfer all of his skills directly onto his recorder. In the last term L has been able to alter his voice. I have often seen him trying to sing higher; he clearly realises that his voice is pitched lower than the other children's. His

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<sup>27</sup> (USB '16 Listen Listen' ),

understanding that his voice is lower is reflected in his constant effort to get his voice higher. He is now starting to sing well at a higher pitch. Unfortunately he is not yet with the group, however he is pitching higher than he was when he started. He is able to sing within a pentatonic scale at his own pitch when I give him a starting note. He has a good ability to pitch the intervals within the pentatonic scale, and has a clear understanding that his voice needs to change in order to be able to sing the things that he can play.

This is the board after the class had been looking at pentatonic scales:



Looking at the national curriculum for music attainment target level descriptions (see Appendix 2), L is able to cover both level one and level two target descriptions. However, one of the level three descriptors is, 'they sing in tune with expression'. Because of the way the national curriculum has been written and the fact that L cannot sing in tune, he cannot progress beyond level three.

However, within levels four, five and six there are many elements that L can achieve comfortably (highlighted in Appendix #). Within level six it says, 'they select and make expressive use of tempo, dynamics' it also says 'they make subtle adjustments to fit their own part within a group of performance' and 'they use relevant notations to plan, revise and refine material'. All of these are elements at which L excels and that he fully understands. This shows that he is working in some ways at level five and six in music, which puts him alongside some of the children in year six at school. It also justifies my proposal that, despite his difficulties in singing, he would still class as 'gifted and talented' in music within the school. It is my hope that as he has shown such efforts in changing his singing voice that by the end of the year he might achieve the level three requirement that 'they sing in tune'.

It is interesting to note that if we were not using the Kodály approach and only considered the national curriculum and the work of English Musical Education writers then it might not have been achievable for L to ever pass level three. I hope to be able to teach at the school for the next few years, which would allow L to continue on his musical journey. If he can master singing in tune, continue with his abilities to transfer it onto his recorder and then transfer his tools to a wind band instrument, he could become a very accomplished musician.

I am well aware that L has many difficulties outside of school, but I have never seen them within my sessions. Music is an empowering subject. It can help to build confidence, and I have seen his confidence grow immensely across the last year and a half. It would be lovely to think that if L can succeed in a subject such as music it might give him an outlet to channel his emotions later in life. Also, I understand that there are not many other subjects in which L excels at the moment. The possibility of being cast as 'gifted and talented' in music might encourage him to apply himself to another subject as well as he does in music.

In conclusion, through L's exposure to this approach, and his grasp of the tools which enable him to have 'a well-trained ear', I feel hopeful that L will continue to progress and will one day be recognised against the national curriculum for all his musical ability.

## APPENDIX 2—Music Attainment Target Levels

[ARCHIVED CONTENT] Attainment target level descriptions – Schools

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### Music: Attainment target level descriptions

Page 7 of 7

**Multi-page article**

Updated: 25 November 2011

#### Table of Contents

[Music](#)

[Programme of study](#)

[Attainment target level descriptions](#)

Following the Government's decision not to proceed with the revisions to level descriptions consulted on in 2009, schools should use the level descriptions contained in the secondary curriculum handbook for end of Key Stage 3 statutory assessment at the end of Year 9 from 2011 until further notice (from 2010 for schools which have a compressed, two-year Key Stage 3).

A consolidated set of the level descriptions which should be used are set out below. These are drawn from the primary curriculum handbook (1999) for levels 1-3, and from the secondary curriculum handbook (2007) for levels 4-8 and exceptional performance.

#### Level 1

Pupils recognise and explore how sounds can be made and changed. They use their voices in different ways such as speaking, singing and chanting, and perform with awareness of others. They repeat short rhythmic and melodic patterns and create and choose sounds in response to given starting points. They respond to different moods in music and recognise well-defined changes in sounds, identify simple repeated patterns and take account of musical instructions.

#### Level 2

Pupils recognise and explore how sounds can be organised. They sing with a sense of the shape of the melody, and perform simple patterns and accompaniments keeping to a steady pulse. They choose carefully and order sounds within simple structures such as beginning, middle, end, and in response to given starting points. They represent sounds with symbols and recognise how the musical elements can be used to create different moods and effects. They improve their own work.

#### Level 3

Pupils recognise and explore the ways sounds can be combined and used expressively. They sing in tune with expression and perform rhythmically simple parts that use a limited range of notes. They improvise repeated patterns and combine several layers of sound with awareness of the combined effect. They recognise how the different musical elements are combined and used expressively and make improvements to their own work, commenting on the intended effect.

#### Level 4

Pupils identify and explore the relationship between sounds and how music reflects different intentions. While performing by ear and from simple notations, they maintain their own part with awareness of how the different parts fit together and the need to achieve an overall effect. They improvise melodic and rhythmic phrases as part of a group performance and compose by developing ideas within musical structures. They describe, compare and evaluate different kinds of music using an appropriate musical vocabulary. They suggest improvements to their own and others' work, commenting on how intentions have been achieved.

#### Level 5

Pupils identify and explore musical devices and how music reflects time, place and culture. They perform significant parts from memory and from notations, with

awareness of their own contribution such as leading others, taking a solo part or providing rhythmic support. They improvise melodic and rhythmic material within given structures, use a variety of notations, and compose music for different occasions using appropriate musical devices. They analyse and compare musical features. They evaluate how venue, occasion and purpose affect the way music is created, performed and heard. They refine and improve their work.

#### Level 6

Pupils identify and explore the different processes and contexts of selected musical styles, genres and traditions. They select and make expressive use of tempo, dynamics, phrasing and timbre. They make subtle adjustments to fit their own part within a group performance. They improvise and compose in different styles and genres, using harmonic and non-harmonic devices where relevant, sustaining and developing musical ideas, and achieving different intended effects. They use relevant notations to plan, revise and refine material. They analyse, compare and evaluate how music reflects the contexts in which it is created, performed and heard. They make improvements to their own and others' work in the light of the chosen style.

#### Level 7

Pupils discriminate between and explore musical conventions in, and influences on, selected styles, genres and traditions. They perform in different styles, making significant contributions to the ensemble and using relevant notations. They create coherent compositions drawing on internalised sounds. They adapt, improvise, develop, extend and discard musical ideas within given and chosen musical structures, styles, genres and traditions. They evaluate, and make critical judgements about, the use of musical conventions and other characteristics and how different contexts are reflected in their own and others' work.

#### Level 8

Pupils discriminate between and exploit the characteristics and expressive potential of selected musical resources, styles, genres and traditions. They perform, improvise and compose extended compositions with a sense of direction and shape, both within melodic and rhythmic phrases and overall form. They explore different styles, genres and traditions, working by ear and by making accurate use of appropriate notations. They both follow and challenge conventions. They discriminate between musical styles, genres and traditions, commenting on the relationship between the music and its cultural context, and making and justifying their own judgements.

#### Exceptional performance

Pupils discriminate between and develop different interpretations. They express their own ideas and feelings in a developing personal style, exploiting instrumental and/or vocal possibilities. They give convincing performances and demonstrate empathy with other performers. They produce compositions that demonstrate a coherent development of musical ideas, consistency of style and a degree of individuality. They discriminate and comment on how and why changes occur within selected traditions, including the particular contribution of significant performers and composers.

**Appendix 3 – Permission Letters for Children**

**University of Huddersfield**  
**School of Music Humanities and Media**  
**Research ethics Review for Postgraduate Students**

**TITLE OF PROJECT** Experimental Music Practices and their Impact on Children's Musicianship  
**NAME OF RESEARCHER** Elizabeth Nicholas

**Parents/child consent form**

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research project and consent to my child taking part in it.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw my child from the project at any time without giving any reason, and a right to withdraw their data if I wish.

I give my permission for my child's sessions to be recorded; audio and video.

I give permission for my child to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). E.g. First name initial.

I understand that the recordings and videos will be held in accordance with the University of Huddersfield's data protection policy.

**Declaration:** I, L. Siebert the parent of Christina Webster Siebert confirm that I give consent for my child to take part in this project and hereby assign to the University all copyright in their contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my child's moral right to be identified as the "performer" in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

I understand I have the right to request that my child's identity be protected by the use of pseudonym in the research report and that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

Child's signature:

Name of Parent/Guardian:

Name of child:

Signature

Date 28/9/12

Name of researcher: Elizabeth Nicholas

Signature

Date

28/9/12.

**University of Huddersfield**  
**School of Music Humanities and Media**  
**Research ethics Review for Postgraduate Students**

TITLE OF PROJECT      Experimental Music Practices and their Impact on Children's Musicianship  
 NAME OF RESEARCHER   Elizabeth Nicholas

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I give permission for my child to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). E.g. First name initial.

I understand that the recordings and videos will be held in accordance with the University of Huddersfield's data protection policy.

Declaration: I, Jackie Wooller, the parent of Libby Woodward confirm that I give consent for my child to take part in this project and hereby assign to the University all copyright in their contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my child's moral right to be identified as the "performer" in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

I understand I have the right to request that my child's identity be protected by the use of pseudonym in the research report and that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

Child's signature: L Woodward.

Name of Parent/Guardian: J Woodward  
 Name of child: Libby Woodward

Signature [Signature]

Date 28 9 12

Name of researcher: Elizabeth Nicholas

Signature [Signature]

Date

**University of Huddersfield**  
**School of Music Humanities and Media**  
**Research ethics Review for Postgraduate Students**

**TITLE OF PROJECT** Experimental Music Practices and their Impact on Children's Musicianship  
**NAME OF RESEARCHER** Elizabeth Nicholas

**Parents/child consent form**

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I understand that I have the right to withdraw my child from the project at any time without giving any reason, and a right to withdraw their data if I wish.

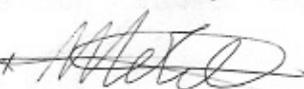
I give my permission for my child's sessions to be recorded; audio and video.

I give permission for my child to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). E.g. First name initial.

I understand that the recordings and videos will be held in accordance with the University of Huddersfield's data protection policy.

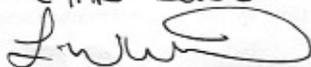
**Declaration:** I, Lucy Williams the parent of Megan Lowe confirm that I give consent for my child to take part in this project and hereby assign to the University all copyright in their contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my child's moral right to be identified as the "performer" in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

I understand I have the right to request that my child's identity be protected by the use of pseudonym in the research report and that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

Child's signature: 

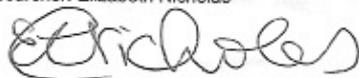
Name of Parent/Guardian: Lucy Williams

Name of child: MEGAN LOWE

Signature 

Date 04/10/2012

Name of researcher: Elizabeth Nicholas

Signature 

Date

**University of Huddersfield**  
**School of Music Humanities and Media**  
**Research ethics Review for Postgraduate Students**

**TITLE OF PROJECT** Experimental Music Practices and their Impact on Children's Musicianship  
**NAME OF RESEARCHER** Elizabeth Nicholas

**Parents/child consent form**

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I give permission for my child to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). E.g. First name initial.

I understand that the recordings and videos will be held in accordance with the University of Huddersfield's data protection policy.

**Declaration:** I, J. Hughes the parent of ERIN WALSH confirm that I give consent for my child to take part in this project and hereby assign to the University all copyright in their contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my child's moral right to be identified as the "performer" in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

I understand I have the right to request that my child's identity be protected by the use of pseudonym in the research report and that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

Child's signature:

Name of Parent/Guardian: Jennifer Hughes  
 Name of child: Erin Walsh

Signature J Hughes

Date 24.09.2012

Name of researcher: Elizabeth Nicholas

Signature E Nicholas

Date

**University of Huddersfield**  
**School of Music Humanities and Media**  
**Research ethics Review for Postgraduate Students**

**TITLE OF PROJECT** Experimental Music Practices and their Impact on Children's Musicianship  
**NAME OF RESEARCHER** Elizabeth Nicholas

**Parents/child consent form**

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I give permission for my child to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). E.g. First name initial.

I understand that the recordings and videos will be held in accordance with the University of Huddersfield's data protection policy.

**Declaration:** I, Donna Dobbins, the parent of Raige Dobbins, confirm that I give consent for my child to take part in this project and hereby assign to the University all copyright in their contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my child's moral right to be identified as the "performer" in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

I understand I have the right to request that my child's identity be protected by the use of pseudonym in the research report and that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

Child's signature:

Name of Parent/Guardian: Donna Dobbins

Name of child: Raige Dobbins

Signature Donna Dobbins

Date 25-9-12

Name of researcher: Elizabeth Nicholas

Signature E. Nicholas

Date

**University of Huddersfield**  
**School of Music Humanities and Media**  
**Research ethics Review for Postgraduate Students**

**TITLE OF PROJECT**      **Experimental Music Practices and their Impact on Children's Musicianship**  
**NAME OF RESEARCHER**      **Elizabeth Nicholas**

**Parents/child consent form**

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I give permission for my child to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). E.g. First name initial.

I understand that the recordings and videos will be held in accordance with the University of Huddersfield's data protection policy.

**Declaration:** I, Debra Mullin the parent of Alisha Maddock confirm that I give consent for my child to take part in this project and hereby assign to the University all copyright in their contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my child's moral right to be identified as the "performer" in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

I understand I have the right to request that my child's identity be protected by the use of pseudonym in the research report and that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

Child's signature:

A Maddock

Name of Parent/Guardian: DEBRA MULLIN

Name of child:

ALISHA MADDOCK

Signature

Debra Mullin

Date

24/9/12

Name of researcher: Elizabeth Nicholas

Signature

E Nicholas

Date

**University of Huddersfield**  
**School of Music Humanities and Media**  
**Research ethics Review for Postgraduate Students**

**TITLE OF PROJECT** Experimental Music Practices and their Impact on Children's Musicianship  
**NAME OF RESEARCHER** Elizabeth Nicholas

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I give permission for my child to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). E.g. First name initial.

I understand that the recordings and videos will be held in accordance with the University of Huddersfield's data protection policy.

**Declaration:** I, Lisa Sixsmith, the parent of Jacob Kymacou, confirm that I give consent for my child to take part in this project and hereby assign to the University all copyright in their contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my child's moral right to be identified as the "performer" in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

I understand I have the right to request that my child's identity be protected by the use of pseudonym in the research report and that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

Child's signature:

Name of Parent/Guardian: Lisa Sixsmith

Name of child: Jacob Kymacou

Signature: L. Sixsmith

Date: 27/9/12

Name of researcher: Elizabeth Nicholas

Signature: E. Nicholas

Date:

**University of Huddersfield**  
**School of Music Humanities and Media**  
**Research ethics Review for Postgraduate Students**

**TITLE OF PROJECT** Experimental Music Practices and their Impact on Children's Musicianship  
**NAME OF RESEARCHER** Elizabeth Nicholas  
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I give permission for my child to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). E.g. First name initial.

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**Declaration:** I, Kelly Bailey, the parent of Josh Phillips, confirm that I give consent for my child to take part in this project and hereby assign to the University all copyright in their contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my child's moral right to be identified as the "performer" in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

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Child's signature: Joshua Phillips

Name of Parent/Guardian: Kelly Bailey

Name of child: Joshua Phillips

Signature: K Bailey

Date: 20/9/12

Name of researcher: Elizabeth Nicholas

Signature: E Nicholas

Date:

**University of Huddersfield**  
**School of Music Humanities and Media**  
**Research ethics Review for Postgraduate Students**

**TITLE OF PROJECT** Experimental Music Practices and their Impact on Children's Musicianship  
**NAME OF RESEARCHER** Elizabeth Nicholas

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I give permission for my child to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). E.g. First name initial.

I understand that the recordings and videos will be held in accordance with the University of Huddersfield's data protection policy.

**Declaration:** I, Sir Thomas.....the parent of Hollie + Jamie..... confirm that I give consent for my child to take part in this project and hereby assign to the University all copyright in their contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my child's moral right to be identified as the "performer" in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

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Child's signature: Hollie Thomas

Jamie Thomas

Name of Parent/Guardian: SOZANNE THOMAS

Name of child: HOLLIE THOMAS, JAMIE THOMAS

Signature S Thomas

Date 27.9.12

Name of researcher: Elizabeth Nicholas

Signature E Nicholas

Date

University of Huddersfield  
School of Music Humanities and Media  
Research ethics Review for Postgraduate Students

TITLE OF PROJECT Experimental Music Practices and their Impact on Children's Musicianship  
NAME OF RESEARCHER Elizabeth Nicholas

Parents/child consent form

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I give permission for my child to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). E.g. First name initial.

I understand that the recordings and videos will be held in accordance with the University of Huddersfield's data protection policy.

Declaration: I, Susan Saul the parent of William, Abigail & Natalie Saul confirm that I give consent for my child to take part in this project and hereby assign to the University all copyright in their contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my child's moral right to be identified as the "performer" in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

I understand I have the right to request that my child's identity be protected by the use of pseudonym in the research report and that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

Child's signature: [Signatures] Natalie Saul Abigail Saul

Name of Parent/Guardian: Susan Saul

Name of child: William, Abigail & Natalie Saul.

Signature [Signature]

Date 26-9-12

Name of researcher: Elizabeth Nicholas

Signature [Signature]

Date

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- Lely, J. (2006) *Desk Bells*
- Lely, J. (2006) *Second Symphony*
- Lely, J. (2009) *Symphony in E*
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- Parkinson, T. (2011) *song for many*
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- Saunders, J. (2009) *imperfections on the surface are not always apparent*
- Sfirri, S. (2009) *Delicious Instants*
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Shim, K. (2000) *Happy for no reason*

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Staebler, G. (1986) *Hart auf Hart*

Susam, T. (2009) *for maaike schoorel*

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