

WHAT ARE SOCIALLY JUST APPROACHES TO MUSIC EDUCATION?

Provocation: What is the place of discussion around 'social justice and music education' in the KS3 classroom?

What characterises Socially Just Approaches to Music Education?

- ▣ The opportunity for young people not only to 'participate' in music education but to be 'included' in it through voices being heard in curriculum and pedagogy and the construction of musical knowledge, understanding and value.
- ▣ 'Creating an atmosphere in the classroom where all musics and pupils are equal- isn't that what KS3 Music is all about?' – MEL Teacher Advocate

Overview

- ▣ Look at two different conceptions of social justice -redistributive and relational-and their implications for music education.
- ▣ How might we 'reimagine' aspects of music and music education in order to articulate and understand social justice in music education.

(Re)Distributive Justice



(Re)distributive Social Justice

How societies material goods are distributed and the tools and processes that we have for ensuring a fairer distribution:

In Music:

- ▣ Access to instruments
- ▣ Access to the pre-existent structures and support systems in music education e.g. curriculum school music/instrumental lessons.

Problems with Distributive Social Justice

Leaves the status quo undisrupted:

- ▣ Leaves unexamined the reasons for the inequitable distribution of resources
- ▣ Takes the present models of music education as fixed
- ▣ Does not examine the structures and pedagogies of music education as the potential source of social injustice
- ▣ Promotes the idea of musical knowledge as fixed

The 'Changing Lives' rhetoric.

Absent from these discourses are:

- ▣ the voices of those whose lives are deemed to be in need of change
- ▣ any sense of reflection on why they consider themselves entitled to identify particular lives and communities as requiring transformation
- ▣ why they and their methods or systems, should be the agents and tools of such transformations.

El Sistema- Changing Lives.

‘One of our first encounters with *Sistema Scotland* involved their presentation of their program plan. To say this was bold is to be somewhat understated: the explicit intention is to “transform lives” and to “empower the community.” ... we articulated some concern that this was likely to be beyond the scope of any program; more importantly, we argued, it was for the community to transform its own lives and empower itself’
(Allan, 2010, p.119)

Social Injustice in Music Education

Rooted in dominant beliefs about:

- ▣ The nature of music
- ▣ What a music curriculum is
- ▣ The relationships that exist between the 'teacher', 'learner' and 'musical knowledge'.

What is Relational Social Justice?

‘Creating an atmosphere in the classroom where all musics and pupils are equal- isn’t that what KS3 Music is all about?’ – MEL Teacher Advocate

All experiences of injustice may be located in the ‘...withdrawal of social recognition, the phenomenon of humiliation and disrespect’ (Honneth and Farrell 1997).

Reimagining Music Education for Social Justice

- Reimagining Music
- Reimagining Curriculum
- Reimagining Relationships

Reimagining Music

Moving from an understanding of music as object to understanding music as a practice.

‘ the extraordinary illusion-for that is what it is- that there is such a thing as music, rather than simple acts of making and receiving it’ (Cook, 2003).

Reimagining Music Through Turino's Four Musical Practices

Music is not a single art form subdivided into various styles and status categories but music making takes place in relation to different realms or *fields* of artistic practice.

- ▣ Presentational
- ▣ Participatory
- ▣ Hi- Fidelity
- ▣ Studio Art

Presentational Practices

Emphasis on presentation to a separate group (audience)

Focus of attention is on the (re) creation of (the precious) musical object

Pre-prepared scripted and closed forms (focus on the idea of music being about 'works or object')

Complexity of form

Technical skills associated with achieving clarity of texture

Clearly delineated musical roles of composer, performer and listener

Participatory Practices

Primary aim is engagement in and with music

Musical lingua franca and artefacts treated as a set of resources 'refashioned anew in each performance like the form, rules and practiced moves of a game'

High value placed on improvisation and extemporisation skills;

Simpler musical forms with a high level of repetition (musical materials organised to encourage participation)

Less clearly delineated musical roles and relationships

Hi Fidelity

using digital technology to:

‘capture’ presentational and participatory events for commoditisation;

‘Capture sounds’ for later digital manipulation;
Skills are characterised by making the technology ‘invisible’;

Studio Art

The technology is **foregrounded**

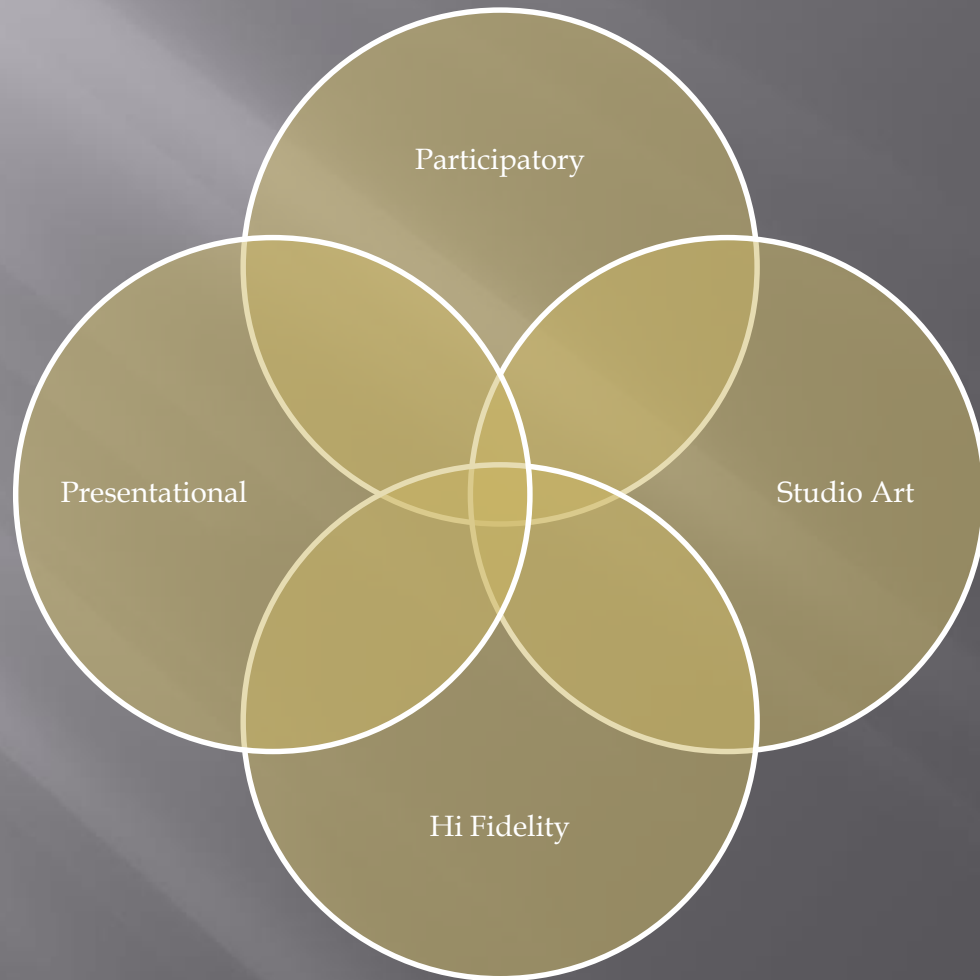
The creation and manipulation of sonic material which is distinctive and not necessarily imitative of acoustic or conventional electronic instruments (New sound worlds)

Potential to combine digitally produced sound with live electronic or acoustic performance

Web-based collaborative composing and performance;

'Fuzzy' delineation of between performer and composer;

Relationship of Practices



Reimagining the Music Curriculum

The curriculum is not something which is fixed but is dynamic and flexible and emerges within and from musical encounters in and beyond the classroom

Teachers are not just deliverers of curriculum or methodologies but creators of contexts for music making and musical discoveries and contexts where the voice of the student is heard. This leads to...

Reimagining the relationships between knowledge, learner and teacher.

Musical knowledge being created anew in each musical encounter. The teacher is not the bearer of knowledge which she deposits into the learner, but rather pedagogically creates (knowledge)-rich musical encounter where knowledge is created and developed both for learner and teacher.

The teacher creates 'dialogical spaces' within which the young person's voice can be heard.

Dialogical Musical Spaces for Social Justice.

- ▣ Dialogical spaces are spaces within which there is 'dynamic and continuous emergence of meaning...from the interplay of two or more perspectives' (Wegerif 2011)- teacher, learner and 'musical knowledge'.

Finally...

Social Justice in Music Education is not an 'end-state' but an ongoing, dynamic process. It is rooted in discourse both spoken and musical and in the local and the particular.