

# Introduction

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The dissemination of an increasing number of musical practices through the globalized media does not seem to provide a clearer understanding of musical creativity. This has prompted me to consider a number of questions: what is musical creativity? How might learners of different ages develop it drawing on their innate musicality? What happens when players, amateur and experienced, improvise collaboratively? How is musical creativity used for a variety of purposes, such as in music therapy sessions? These are just a few of the questions examined in this book, which offers insights from research in the fields of music education and related areas including music psychology and music therapy.

In 11 chapters written by an international team of experts, the book celebrates the richness and diversity of the many different ways in which learners of all ages develop and use musical creativity. The contributions have a broad focus on studies of composition and improvisation, but they also consider collaborative performance and practitioner-led research as a way of advancing pedagogical practice. The chapters include examples from four different continents and a variety of settings comprising primary, secondary, studio, conservatoire, university, specialist music classrooms and music therapy sessions.

All the contributions were commissioned specially for this volume. The authors present accounts of new research combined with reviews of previous relevant studies. They consider practical implications in the light of their work, offering ideas for students, teachers, performers, researchers and practitioner-researchers. I believe the authorship of the chapters is well balanced between established writers and early career scholars, whose work I came across when organizing seminars for the Research Commission of the International Society for Music Education and while working at the Institute of Education in London. The limited space available in a single volume means that many relevant authors (some of whom acted as chapter reviewers) could not be invited this time to prepare a contribution.

The 11 chapters in this volume are organized according to three complementary but flexibly constructed sections – *Conceptualizing musical creativity*, *Examples from practice* and *Paths for further inquiry*. As such, some of the contributions could have been included in other sections of the book. Part I contains two chapters with a focus on examining the concept of creativity in music. The opening chapter rethinks the notion of ‘musical creativity’, advocating for the idea of multiple creativities in music. Chapter 2 presents a study of music teachers’ perceptions of

creativity in English secondary schools, putting forward a dynamic model for the teachers' development of their perceptions.

Part II, 'Examples from practice', offers seven chapters focused on studies of musical creativity practices and development from early years to adulthood. The first two chapters discuss the preparation of the early years mind for musical creativity, drawing on case studies from Australia and a music composition project with 7-year-olds in Portugal. They are followed by a contribution on the central place of revision as a fruitful teaching strategy in music composition pedagogy, which provides examples from a 12-year-old student in a middle school in the USA. Chapters 6 and 7 discuss the engagement of Brazilian adolescents in composing activities in two specialist schools and the concept of empathetic creativity in music-making, including jazz and classical adult ensemble playing and internet-based collaborations between adolescents in two European countries. Chapter 8 examines cognition processes when learning to improvise in adult individual and group contexts. The section closes with an insightful account of the uses of creativity in music therapy sessions, drawing on illustrative UK-based examples of children with Special Education Needs and adults with cancer.

Part III 'Paths for further inquiry', opens with Chapter 10, a discussion of research questions and designs used in practitioner-led enquiries on collaborative composition, drawing on a number of international studies. Chapter 11 considers some of the common themes emerging from the volume's contributions, including the definition of musical creativity, the provision of musical creativity practices across different countries and the importance of emotional engagement for their effective implementation. The book concludes with some implications for practice and a consideration of issues for further research.

Each of the chapters examines how musical creativity practices are used and developed in particular contexts, offering insights on how creative processes work in music and suggesting ideas on how they might be better facilitated. I sincerely hope that readers will find the examples illuminating and will be inspired to think deeply about the many different ways in which musical creativity can be developed by groups and individuals of all ages, and that this will motivate them to explore further.