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Review of Advances in Social Psychology and Music Education Research

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BOOK REVIEW

TITLE: *Advances in Social-Psychology and Music Education Research*

AUTHOR: Patrice Madura Ward-Steinman

YEAR: 2011

PUBLISHER: Ashgate

ISBN: 978 1 409 422 761 Hbk

NUMBER OF PAGES: 261

KEY WORDS: motivation; ability; musicality; spirituality; self-concept

The book, or Festschrift as the contributors refer to it, is a tribute to the life and work of Charles P Schmidt, former professor of the Indiana University (IU) Jacobs School of Music, whose main area of scholarly research is in the socio-psychology of music. Motivation in music learning, applied music teaching behaviours, personality, and cognitive style in music teaching and learning are among the subtopics of this broad area of research. There are three parts in the book: 1) social-psychological advances in music education 2) social environment for music education and 3) advancing effective research in music education. Twenty internationally renowned music education researchers, including Estelle Jorgensen, have contributed by creating a new work based on one of Schmidt's main research topics. This review focuses on parts one and three as they involved the broad range of articles on the social-psychology of music and its research, in contrast to part two which is concerned with specific social environments.

Part one includes a diversity of articles which offer an excellent overview for the music educator/researcher of the advances made in the field of socio-psychology. It commences with an enlightening early article by Schmidt himself that provides a model of social-psychological processes and musical ability, and this in turn, identifies the main issues for music education. The article addresses Kemp's (1996) research into musical personality; it also describes musical ability, cognitive styles pertaining to the question of "how", and motivation wherein he identifies self-concept as a key motivational factor in musical ability.

Miksza and Watson's article offers a deeper exploration into the Schmidt's earlier work by investigating the advances in the social-psychology of music teaching and learning, which includes the graduate music education curriculum taught by him at IU. Duke and Chapman further develop Schmidt's research from when he started his career as an instrumental teacher, by offering a mechanism for observation, evaluation and practice of teaching skills based on descriptions of an artist-teacher's work with four instrumental students of varying levels of experience. This would be particularly valuable for the novice teacher who wishes to develop their pedagogical expertise by emulating the teaching of the best in the field. It offers sound advice on practice, technique and the psychology of teachers who strive to encourage their students to develop independent thinking.



An enlightening contribution by Estelle Jorgensen critically explores the work of Seashore and Mursell. She examines their differences and similarities on the nature of musical experience and maintains their differing views provided a basis for contrasting ideologies of music education. Jorgensen presents an excellent overview of each aspect of their work and the implications for music education.

Apart from the academic worth of this book it has a very human aspect which is found particularly in Kemp's journey in search of the meaning of music. It is a philosophical piece outlining the author's search for meaning in his own life both in terms of musicality and spirituality. Similar in nature is Brink Fox's interview in part three with Schmidt's about his own journey from clarinet student to teacher and ultimately to scholar. It provides a "real" story for the aspiring researcher of how he developed a researcher identity, became a research advisor and attained national recognition.

All part three should be essential reading for the researcher. It focuses on the advances in research in music education with contributions by Journal of Research in Music Education (JRME) editors and includes analysis on the code of ethics. The research is primarily concerned with America, as are most of the references and literature, which alters its criteria in terms of music education and research in Europe. Nonetheless the articles are extremely well-researched and comprehensively presented in terms of content and analysis – a very commendable and scholarly resource for music educators, psychologists and researchers.

REVIEWER:

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