Influential pioneers of creative music education in Victoria, Australia

Harry Burke

Monash University, Australia

Abstract

Throughout history, societies have been fascinated with creativity and the creative personality. Researching creativity and its place in music education however has been fraught with difficulties. After sixty years of intensive study mainly in the USA, there is still no accepted methodology for researching creativity or an agreed definition. In England during the 1960s, innovative and idiosyncratic music-educators acting as their own research practitioners developed a practical based form of creative music education that was applicable to all students. Although still controversial, this model has helped to revolutionize the teaching of general classroom music in England and to an extent Victoria. Australia however was slow to establish innovative concepts in classroom music after the Second World War. Discussions by Peter Maxwell-Davies of his experiences of teaching creative music in England at the 1965 Sydney UNESCO Conference on school music demonstrated to many Victorian music teachers the need to consider establishing creative music in their schools. In Victoria, Frank Higgins, Keith Humble and Geoffrey D'Ombrain, together with a small number of classroom music teachers pioneered creative music education based on the English creative music movement during the 1960s and 1970s. Unfortunately, there was little understanding in Victoria of the difficulties creative music teachers were encountering in England. This paper discusses the development of creative music education in England and Australia and the pioneering work in creative music education undertaken by Frank Higgins, Keith Humble and Geoffrey D'Ombrain in Victoria during the 1960s-1970s.

Key words: Classroom music, contemporary music, creativity, creative music education, innovators, progressive education

Australian Journal of Music Education 2014:2,23-35

Introduction

There has always been an interest in creativity and the creative personality going back to ancient times.[1] By the early twentieth century, writers and researchers began to reflect on creativity in a more scientific manner.[2] The multifaceted nature of creativity and the problem of defining it, has made creativity a difficult field to employ in a school setting. Hargreaves, an English music psychologist writes that, "Creativity is one of the most complex, mysterious, and fascinating aspects of human behaviour".[3] Kneller, an early writer on creativity research, pointed out that verbal skills or quickness of mind are often associated with creativity but do not define it.[4] Albert added that giftedness is no predictor of creativity either.[5] Talent and creativity also present problems. Csikszentmihályi argued that talent, "focuses on an innate ability to do

1. J. Piirto. (1998). *Understanding Those Who Create* (2nd ed.). Scottsdale: Gifted Psychology Press, pp. 8-9.

2. D. Simonton. (1999). Creativity from a Historiometric Perspective. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of Creativity* (pp. 116-136). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 118-119.

3. D. J. Hargreaves. (1986). *The Developmental Psychology of Music.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 143.

4. G. F. Kneller. (1965). *The Art and Science of Creativity*. Los Angeles: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

5. R. S. Albert. (1990). Identity, Experiences, and Career Choice among the Exceptionally Gifted and Eminent. In M. A. Runco & R. S. Albert (Eds.), *Theories of Creativity* (pp. 13-34). Newbury Park: Sage Publications, pp. 13-14.

something very well" which may not be creative.[6] Maslow maintained that there are two levels of creativity, a genius level like Mozart, and a self-actualized model that most people can attain to a degree.[7] Plummeridge, an English music educator noted the pervasive use of the word by actors, sportsmen, teachers and housewives in England during the 1960s.[8] Swanwick, writing in the late 1970s, described creativity as a "fairly vague word" that has led to confusion in music education, as "Expressions like 'creative work' and 'creative music' were employed without qualification or explanation, since it was assumed that their meaning is clear and generally accepted".[9] With all the difficulties faced by psychologists in researching and trying to understand general creativity, music-educators in England faced similar problems in developing creative music education during the early 1960s.

In England, a small number of composer-educators developed a unique form of practical music making for students that was based on their experience of teaching progressive classroom music in the newly established secondary schools in England in the early 1960s. It is difficult to describe many of the creative music activities that naïve lower secondary music students experimented with, for example using sound makers to make music as being creative.[10] Robinson wrote that, "we would only apply the term 'creative work' to the products of conscious and deliberate activity rather than to those of chance, luck or serendipity".[11] Swanwick observed in creative music education, "the emphasis is on learning rather than teaching, on the development of the imagination, on discovery".[12] The term musical problem solving might have been more appropriate than creative music. John Paynter commented, "Creativity' is a word that has caused quite enough trouble. It would seem all too easy for misunderstandings to arise at the merest mention of this topic".[13] Many of the proponents of experimental class music activities were well known as educators and composers. In some instances their charismatic personalities were as influential as their ideas.

The importance of biographies

Biographical studies have become an accepted part of historical studies in music education. Forrest pointed out that, "Biographical research is a branch of historical research that deals specifically with the individuals who make history".[14] Biographies may help to explain some of the contextual detail as to how an event occurred for example, the introduction of creative music education occurred in state secondary schools in Victoria in the 1960s.[15] However, it is not just the figureheads who have worked to implement creative music education approaches in school music, many classroom music educators and teachers and teacher educators have also supported these educational developments. Black and MacRaild have argued that the history of the working person instead of the great men of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has helped to democratize the study of history.[16]

6. M. Csikszentmihályi. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. New York: Harper Collins, p. 27.
7. I. A. Taylor. (1975). A Retrospective View of Creativity Investigations. In I. A. Taylor & J. W. Getzels (Eds.), *Perspectives in Creativity* (pp. 1-36). Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, p. 3.
8. C. Plummeridge. (1980). Creativity and Music Education: The need for further clarification. *Society for Research in Psychology of Music and Music Education*. 8. (1).
9. K. Swanwick. (1979). *A Basis for Music Education*. Windsor: NFER, p. 85.
10. Plummeridge. Creativity and Music Education: The need for further clarification, pp. 36-37.
11. K. Robinson (Ed.). (1989). *The Arts in Schools: Principals, Practices and Provision*. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, p. 30.
12. K. Swanwick. (1992). *Music Education and the National Curriculum*. London: Tufnell Press, p. 22.
13. J. Paynter. (1977). The Role of Creativity in the School Music Curriculum. In M. Burnett (Ed.), *Music Education Review: A Handbook for Music Teachers* (pp. 3-28). London: Chappell, p. 3.
14. Forrest. D. (2002). Biographical Research: A component of historical research in education. In P. Green (Ed.), *Slices of life: Qualitative Research Snapshots* (pp. 138-148). Melbourne: RMIT University Press Melbourne, p. 138.
15. Ibid.
16. J. Black & D. M MacRaild. (2000). *Studying History* (2nd ed.). Hampshire: Palgrave.

Humphreys observed that until recent times, research in music education has not focused on the voice of the ordinary classroom music teacher or lecturer, as is the case with Frank Higgins, Keith Humble and Geoffrey D'Ombrain who helped to develop creative music education in Victoria. Due to the shortage of published data on the early period of creative music in Victorian state secondary schools, their important work of music education in Victorian schools is often overlooked.[17] Frank Higgins was one of the first music lecturers in Melbourne to teach pre-service primary teachers progressive music education that included ideas and activities developed by R. Murray Schafer and the English creative music movement.[18] Geoffrey D'Ombrain taught creative music education in a Victorian state secondary school during the early 1960s, published *Music Now*[19] and then became a lecturer at the State College of Melbourne teaching creative music education to secondary teachers during the 1970s. Although an outstanding musician and music-educator, today, the inspiration of Keith Humble in creative music education in Melbourne in the late 1960s is little known. It is therefore important that such pioneers be acknowledged for the work they undertook in school music during the 1960-1970s in Victoria. As Forrest argued, "It is important that we see ideas, practices and processes from the perspective of the individuals who developed them and the time and place in which they were developed".[20]

The development of the English creative music movement

During the late 1950s, a small number of English (and one Canadian) composer-educators led by John Paynter, R. Murray Schafer, Peter Maxwell-Davies, Brian Dennis and George Self, acting as their own research practitioners began to develop an egalitarian model of creative music education. This model was centered on the concept of avant-garde music; personal development theories and child centered learning practices that were popular in many of the newly established secondary schools.[21] Cox noted the influence John Cage had on Paynter.[22] Cage had explored the concept of using everyday sounds heard in the environment in new music. Cage explained that, "noises are as useful to new music as so-called musical tones, for the simple reason that they are sounds".[23] Cooper explained in the English creative music movement, "from the outset, the pupils were to be encouraged to regard sound as an element for enjoyment, surprise, fascination, and discovery".[24] The creative music educators combined avant-garde composing techniques, the concept of music as a means of self-expression with the music teacher acting as a facilitator rather than an instructor or director. Spruce described the period as the "charismatic' period, where innovations were identified with particular personalities such as John Paynter".[25] Spruce went on to say that these teachers acted as, "a kind of music-teacher-as-apostle".[26] Unfortunately, not every music teacher had the charisma or the composing skills of Maxwell-Davies, Paynter or Schafer.

Until the 1960s, a high proportion of lower secondary students spent most of their time in school music learning music theory. Paynter

17. H. Burke. (2010). *The Introduction of Creative Music Education in Victorian State Secondary Schools 1957 to 1988.* Unpublished PhD. Monash University. Melbourne.
18. J. Ferris. (2006). Personal Communication.
19. G. D'Ombrain. (1969). *Music Now: A discovery course for secondary students.* Melbourne: Cassell Australia.
20. Forrest. D. Biographical Research: A component of historical research in education, p. 146.
21. Burke. *The Introduction of Creative Music Education in Victorian State Secondary Schools 1957 to 1988.*
22. B. Rainbow. (2006). The Experimental Seventies. In G. Cox (Ed.), *Music in Educational Thought and Practice: A Survey from 800 BC* (pp. 327-344). Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.
23. J. Cage. (1968). *Silence: Lectures and Writings.* London: Calder and Boyars, p. 68.
24. R. Cooper. (1969). What's All that Noise About? Part two. *Music in Education.* (July-August), p. 184.
25. G. Spruce. (2002). Ways of Thinking about Music: Political dimensions and educational consequences. In G. Spruce (Ed.), *Teaching music in Secondary Schools: A reader* (pp. 3-24). London: Routledge Falmer, p. 17.p.
26. Ibid.

noted the difficulty many of these students faced if they had little experience of music in their primary school. He pointed out that it was also debatable that the majority of students would make use of this skill in later life either. Paynter explained, "Rarely does school class music teaching alone succeed in giving pupils more than the most limited knowledge of notation".[27] Paynter commented that school music was geared towards students who were likely to have a career in music. He argued that the result of teaching only the talented music student "has been for music to address itself to a diminishing audience—often whittled down to the gifted few probably going on to careers in music".[28] In many disadvantaged state schools in Victorian today, Paynter's prediction appears to be accurate as more and more Victorian state schools are removing generalist music studies from their curriculums in favour of instrumental style programs for the gifted music student.

Instead of naïve lower secondary students spending considerable time learning the rudiments of music, the English creative music educators argued that it would be more appropriate for them if they gained knowledge and experience in practical music making. Paynter reasoned that students with little experience of school music would benefit by first become aware of how sounds and silence are used in the environment as, "The true 'rudiments' of music are to be found in an exploration of its materials–sound and silence".[29] Schafer held similar views on music education to Paynter, maintaining that, "It is my feeling that one learns practically nothing about the actual functioning of music by sitting in mute surrender before it". Schafer went on to say, "the sounds produced may be crude, they may lack form and grace, but they are ours".[30]

With little research or evaluation, creative music education was quickly introduced to schools in England. As there was little examination of its efficacy for classroom music, a rift developed between traditional and progressive music educators and teachers.[31] Traditional music teachers emphasized the need for lower secondary students to learn basic skills in music notation before they attempted to compose or participate in creative music activities.[32] Rainbow saw a connection between the introduction of progressive education in England and the lowering of standards in music education. He remarked, "Theories that children should not be pestered to learn to spell, write grammatically, or learn multiplication tables later found a musical counterpart in arguments against teaching the use of notation".[33] The trend of naïve lower secondary students functioning as composers incensed traditional music educators. For a child to be called a composer, traditional music educators argued that there needed to be a polished piece of work not just experiments with sound makers. Jones commented, "It is not sensible to suggest that children with a minimal musical education, engaged in activities of exploration and discovery with little idea or form and structure, are working like composers".[34] Plummeridge remarked, "there are important differences between the child who is 'experimenting with' or 'exploring' the materials of music and the established composer which cannot be ignored".[35] Many music teachers

27. J. Paynter. (1970). *Creative Music in the Classroom.* Unpublished PhD thesis. University of York, p. 14.

28. J. Paynter. (1978). *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum. Working Paper 7: A Place for Music in the Curriculum?* York: York University, p. 2.

29. Paynter. *Creative Music in the Classroom,* p. 17.

30. R. M. Schafer. (1976). *Creative Music Education: A Handbook for the Modern Music Teacher.* New York: Schirmer Books, p. 49.

31. Plummeridge. Creativity and Music Education: The need for further clarification.

32. Ibid.

33. B. Rainbow. (1989). Appendix 1: Onward from Butler. School Music 1945-1985 *Music in Education* (pp. 342-354). Aberystwyth: Boethius Press, p. 351.

34. Jones. (1986). Education for Creativity. *British Journal Music Education.* 3. (1), p. 66.

35. Plummeridge. *Creativity and Music Education: The need for further clarification*, p. 38.

were not trained in composition and had little understanding or appreciation of avant-garde music.[36] Walker noted the difficulty of attempting to establish Cage's philosophy in a school setting as the majority of students and parents would be unfamiliar with avant-garde music.[37] Musical problem solving might have been a better way to describe the activities students were engaged with rather than creative music education.

With the changing philosophy in education in England in the late 1970s, a music curriculum based on only one kind of activity became questionable. Swanwick questioned the ability of the creative music movement to develop a relevant basis for music education that only concentrated on one aspect of music education.[38] Arguing for a more popular basis for classroom music Swanwick commented that after engaging in creative music activities at school, "students went home and played the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, or perhaps they taught themselves to play the music that really mattered to them, where metric rhythms and tonal tensions were the norm".[39] Although investigations had commenced to determine effective procedures for teaching school music in primary and secondary schools in England in the late 1960s, economic and political interferences delayed the investigations resulting in little change to classroom music occurring until the introduction of the National music curriculum nearly thirty years later.[40] In Australia during the 1960s, there was an urgent need to establish a more practical based classroom music curriculum for lower secondary students to replace the outdated course on music theory.

36. S. Pitts. (2000). *A Century of Change in Music Education: Historical perspectives on contemporary practice in British secondary school music.* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, p. 122.
37. R. Walker. (1983). Innovation in the Music Curriculum: 1. New ideas from Canada and Great Britain. *Psychology of Music.* 11. (86), p. 88.
38. Swanwick. *A Basis for Music Education.*
39. K. Swanwick. (1999). Music Education: Closed or open? *Journal of Aesthetic Education.* 33. (4 Winter), p. 128.
40. G. Cox. (2001). "A House Divided"? Music Education in the United Kingdom during the Schools Council Era of the 1970s. *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education.* XXII. (2).

The significance of the 1965 Sydney UNESCO Conference on Australian creative music education

Classroom music in Australia was slow to adjust to the changes that were occurring in school music overseas after the Second World War.[41] Cathie, a future Victorian state Labor Education Minister commented, "Even our most advanced States lag far behind countries such as Great Britain, Japan, and the United States in our attempt to educate children musically".[42] Where school music was taught, the emphasis was placed on music theory, literature and history. Music education was far behind the innovations made by visual arts teachers. van Ernst observed, "In the visual arts, we have no trouble accepting children's drawings, no matter how simple they may be".[43] She went on to say, "we seem to have a reluctancy to allow the students to produce their own musical statements (or compositions), with their simplicity or naivety".[44] For years, Donald Peart, Professor of Music, University of Sydney and Chairman of the 1965 Sydney UNESCO Seminar, recognized that school music needed to establish more innovative ways of teaching that included contemporary and creative music education. With this aim in mind, he invited Peter Maxwell-Davies and Professor Wilfrid Mellers, two distinguished English music educators and innovators in creative music education to speak at the 1965 Sydney UNESCO Conference on creative music education. Until this Conference, the majority of Australian music educators had only a vague idea of what was happening in English schools regarding creative music education.[45]

41. D. Peart. (1965). *Australian Panorama.* Paper presented at the Australian UNESCO Seminar on School Music. Sydney Teachers' College and University of Sydney.
42. I. Cathie. (1967). *The Crisis in Australian Education*. Melbourne: Cheshire, p. 5-6.
43. B. van Ernst. (1990). *Composing-the Ultimate Music Learning Experience?* Paper presented at the X11 Annual AMEL Conference Music Education Towards 2000. Melbourne, pp. 1-2.
44. Ibid., pp. 1-2.
45. Peart. *Australian Panorama.*

Maxwell-Davies riveted the attention of the participants with his talks on teaching creative music at Cirencester grammar school during the late 1950s.[46] Unlike other English creative music educators, Maxwell-Davies had a different approach to teaching young students creative music. Teaching at a selective grammar school he was able to focus on students with musical ability rather than on general classroom music *per se*.[47] Difficulties with the scores that were available for school orchestras at that time led him to start arranging and composing music for his students. Maxwell-Davies pointed out, "It was here that the *creative* work with music in the school began-born of sheer necessity".[48] Pehkonen commented that *O Magnum Mysterium,* a Christmas composition that students helped Maxwell-Davies to write and perform, "marked the beginning of a new era in school-music".[49] Unlike some of the other composer-educators, Maxwell-Davies first gave his junior students a firm understanding of the fundamentals of music, as without this basic knowledge he believed that students would not be able to mature as future musicians or composers.[50] Instead of concentrating on contemporary music, Maxwell-Davies focused on music from the 16th and 17th centuries, arguing that students would not consider it 'school music'.

A major impediment to implementing creative music education in England and Australia was the emphasis on music theory in lower secondary music curriculum. Maxwell-Davies highlighted to the Sydney audience, the concerns for teachers of only teaching the rudiments of music to students in their formative years. He commented, "I quite believe that the examination system, as it stands, is very largely the cause of our children not being able to improvise and compose as freely as they can paint and write and enjoy other forms of art".[51] Professor Karl Ernst, another distinguished overseas guest at the 1965 UNESCO Conference and President of the International Society for Music Education agreed stating that, "the overriding dominance of an external examination system has a tendency to stifle the creative teacher and to place undue emphasis upon information as such".[52] This concern was also prominent in Victorian music education. It was a requirement that all students in the compulsory years of music in state secondary schools study grades 2-5 of the Australian Music Examination Board theory syllabus.[53] This resulted in few students electing to study music in the middle and senior school.[54] Unfortunately, some participants at the Sydney Conference misunderstood Maxwell-Davies paper on creative music and the need to teach basic skills. Some thought that he had suggested abandoning teaching any theory and harmony to students. In reply, Maxwell-Davies remarked, "the rules which I would like to see abolished are rules of thumb, which have nothing to do with the perceptions of the child involved".[55] Maxwell-Davies' trip to Australia was important for the introduction of creative music education in Victorian schools during the 1970s.[56]

46. Ibid.
47. P. Maxwell-Davies. (1963). *Music Composition by Children.* Paper presented at the Fourteenth Symposium of the Colston Research Society. Bristol University.
48. Ibid., pp. 108-109.
49. E. Pehkonen. (1971). Cirencester School Percussion Ensemble. *Music in Education.* 35. (350), p. 530.
50. Maxwell-Davies. *Music Composition by Children.*
51. W. Mellers & P. Maxwell-Davies. (1965). *School Music and the Contemporary Composer.* Paper presented at the Australian UNESCO Seminar on School Music. Sydney Teachers' College and University of Sydney.
52. K. D. Ernst. (1965). *Instrumental Group Teaching and Playing.* Paper presented at the Australian UNESCO Seminar on School Music. Sydney Teachers' College and University of Sydney, p. 275.
53. Victorian University and Schools Examination Board. (1967). *Courses of Study: Forms 1 to IV.* Melbourne: Victorian University and Schools Examination Board.
54. Mrs. Vanson. (1975). Keeping it Kontemporary. *Agitato.* (3).
55. P. Maxwell-Davies. (1965). *Creativity in School Music. Summary session.* Paper presented at the Australian UNESCO Seminar on School Music. Sydney Teachers' College and University of Sydney, p. 183.
56. F. Callaway. (1969). *Foreward: First National Conference: Music in General Education.* Paper presented at the ASME National Conference. University of Queensland.

Innovators in Victorian creative music education

During the early 1960s, a small number of Victoria music-educators, noting the concerns of teaching the rudiments of music to students, were advocating and teaching progressive music education. Frank Higgins was the Head of the Music Department at the Burwood Teachers College in suburban Melbourne where he taught pre-service primary students. He was in advance of other tertiary lecturers in Melbourne at that time by incorporating child centered learning and creative music education in his teaching.[57] Jill Ferris, then a student at Burwood Teachers College remarked that Higgins gave the students material from Schafer's book, *The Composer in the Classroom*[58] to experiment with.[59] Ferris considered that this was quite a radical approach to music education at that time. She commented, "Burwood Teachers College was slightly more innovative than many of the other teachers colleges in Melbourne were at that time".[60] Similar to the advocates of the English creative music movement, Higgins argued that, "Music has lagged behind most other subjects of the curriculum because teachers are frequently trying to teach a course based on diluted adult standards instead of a course related to child-growth and ability".[61] He went on to add, "a child needs to experiment with sound, producing it from a variety of materials, struck, twanged, or blown. This is a necessary and most important stage in the child's musical development".[62] Higgins then pointed out, "the time will come when the child will need to be able to read music to further his musical advancement. But before he is actually taught this technique he should be given many and varied experiences in practical music making".[63] Similar to the composer-educators in England, Higgins argued that classroom music education should be for all students not just the talented. He pointed out,

> *It is not the purpose of school music to produce skilled specialists, nor should the content of the courses be based on the abilities of the gifted few. The purpose rather should be to give joy and satisfaction to all children, providing them with a variety of musical experiences which will enable them to grow in their love and knowledge of music.*[64]

Higgins believed that skill development in music education was essential; otherwise students became discouraged from learning music.[65] Similar to Maxwell-Davies and Plummeridge in England, Higgins explained, "Some writers have tended to give the impression that he should be completely free, without guidance or direction from the teacher; but if this is permitted he will not progress, and boredom and frustration will eventually be the result".[66] Keith Humble was another leading music educator who held similar concepts on school music.

Keith Humble (1927-1995)

Keith Humble was a prominent Australian composer-educator and advocate for creative music education. He influenced a generation of music educators. McCaughey pronounced that Humble was, "a stimulus and an agent for change for a generation of contemporary music"[67] The composer and critic Felix Werder, described Humble as being, "without question the finest all-round musician this country

57. J. Ferris. (2002). *Classroom Music in Victorian State Primary Schools 1934 to 1981: Curriculum Support.* Unpublished PhD thesis. Monash University. Melbourne, pp. 112-113.
58. R. M. Schafer. (1965). *The Composer in the Classroom.* London: Universal Edition.
59. J. Ferris. (2006). Personal Commun ication.
60. Ibid.
61. Higgins. (1973). *Music Education in the Primary School* (1973 ed.). Melbourne: Macmillan, p. 12.
62. Ibid., p. 11.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., p. 10.
65. Ibid., p. 99.
66. Ibid.
67. J. McCaughey. (1995). A Stimulus and Agent for Change. *The Age,* 15.6.1995, p. 16.

has produced since Percy Grainger".[68] Born in Geelong, Victoria in 1927, Humble learnt the piano from an early age, wining a number of piano competitions that included the ABC Concerto and Vocal competition in 1949. During the 1940s, he played piano in different jazz bands in Melbourne that gave him the opportunity for learning improvisation. He entered the Melbourne University Conservatorium of Music in 1947, winning the Ormond prize twice. Humble left Melbourne in 1949, first to study at the Royal College of Music London, then to study composition as well as conducting in Paris with Rene Leibowitz, a pupil of Schoenberg and Webern in the early 1950s. On returning to Melbourne University in 1956, as the chief study teacher for the piano as well as lecturer in harmony and counterpoint, he quickly became disillusioned with the conservative and cultural cringe that was present in Melbourne at that time.[69] In an article in the *Australian Women's Weekly*, Humble explained that this period for him in Melbourne, "was quite shattering, I discovered I didn't have enough practical or organizing experience, so I went back to France to finish my studies".[70] On his return to Paris, he established the Centre de Musique at the American Centre for Students and Artists in 1959.[71] After a short visit to Melbourne in 1964, a branch of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) was established, based on the ideas he had developed at the Centre de Musique. He returned once more to the Melbourne Conservatorium in 1966, as Senior Lecturer in composition. Whiteoak described this move as, "a major turning point for contemporary music in Melbourne".[72] Not long after his return, the Society for the Private Performance of New Music was formed. In 1971, Keith Humble convened the National Seminar on Electronic Music in Education in which D'Ombrain delivered a paper on electronic music and creative music education. Throughout his career, Humble emphasized the importance of the community musician. This was evident in his involvement in music as a composer, conductor, pianist, teacher, music theorist and administrator.[73] Unlike many of his colleagues, Humble considered teaching to be an essential part of being a musician.

Whilst working overseas Humble had noted the interest and development in creative music education.[74] He observed that, "This is part of the general trend in education, to be creative rather than interpretative".[75] Similar to the English composer-educators, Humble argued students who were not gifted in the manipulative skills on an instrument were being neglected in school music.[76] Many performers also received a very restricted music education that was limited to learning performance-based skills. Like Paynter and Schafer, Humble argued that, "Sound', i.e. 'composed sound' has mainly been neglected in our education, and 'creative' music making is a way of directly approaching this problem".[77] In an interview with Whiteoak, Humble remarked, "I think of composition as being a process, and exchange of concepts, and an exchange of ideas".[78]

In 1967, Keith Humble commenced teaching students aged 7-14 creative music education at the Grainger museum in Melbourne. He pointed out the classes were, "all ingredients of

68. J. Whiteoak. (1995). *Keith Humble, the Music-Maker with a message*. Retrieved 29.8.2012, from http:search.informit.com.au/documentSummary.

69. J. Whiteoak. (1989). *Interview with Keith Humble.* Retrieved 29.8.2012, from www.rainerlinz.net/NMA/repr/Humble-interview.html.

70. M. Bang. (1971). Even cooking is music to him. *The Australian Women's Weekly*, p. 7.

71. Whiteoak. *Keith Humble, the Music-Maker with a message.*

72. Whiteoak. *Interview with Keith Humble*, p. 21.

73. C. François. (1995). *In Memoriam Keith Humble.* Retrieved 29.8.2912, from http://jstor.org/stable/822706.

74. K. Humble. (1969). Creative Music in the Classroom. *Australian Journal of Music Education.*

75. Bang. *Even cooking is music to him*, p. 7.

76. Humble. *Creative Music in the Classroom.*

77. Ibid., p. 12.

78. Whiteoak. *Interview with Keith Humble,* p.13.

a pot-pourri: the development of a program of enthusiasm, utilizing the available material in a positive and a direct way-instead of taking an academic approach" to teaching young students music.[79] In these classes, Humble incorporated child centered learning techniques. He argued that, "The student should be encouraged to find-live her life, rather than have me just put across my own particular preference".[80] Robin Stevens who was completing his undergraduate degree at Melbourne University at that time commented that, "Humble was the most influential musician I worked with regarding creative music education".[81] Once more, dissatisfied with the progress of contemporary music in Melbourne, Humble left to go to the USA in the early 1970s.[82] In 1974, he returned from the USA and became the Foundation Professor of Music at Latrobe University, retiring in 1989. He was awarded the Order of Australia in 1982.

Geoffrey D'Ombrain (1931-)

Geoffrey D'Ombrain was one of the first Victorian music educators to teach and write on creative music education. During the early 1960s, he began to teach creative music education in a state secondary school in Melbourne and later in the decade, taught students creative music at the Melbourne State Secondary College. His book, *Music Now*[83] was one of the first books to give music teachers practical examples and activities for creative music education. van Ernst recalled the importance of the work he was undertaking in creative music education in Victoria during the 1960s.[84] Whilst teaching music at Chadstone High School during the early 1960s, D'Ombrain combined the techniques of Orff, Kodály and the English creative music educators. In his reflection on music education in Australia, Robin Stevens commented on the part D'Ombrain played in introducing the Orff method of music education to Victorian schools that then provided the catalyst for the introduction of creative music education in Victorian schools in the early 1970s.[85] Other programs, for example the Contemporary Music Project a scheme that placed young composers in schools to assist teachers in developing contemporary compositional techniques were also being taught in Melbourne during the 1970s.[86]

Similar to Professor Peart's discussion at the 1965 UNESCO Conference in Sydney, D'Ombrain also noted that the majority of classroom music teachers he met during the early 1960s knew very little about creative music education or contemporary music.[87] It was not until 1966, that the first contemporary composition, Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jüglinge* was included in the year 10 classroom music syllabus for Victorian students.[88] In 1968, D'Ombrain was asked to give a demonstration on contemporary music education for Melbourne music teachers. The annual Report of the Victorian Education Department for 1968 noted that Year 10 students from Chadstone High School, "presented examples of their own compositions in music concrete [*sic*], electronic music, and serial music".[89] It appears that some of the music teachers who attended this demonstration were not convinced of its efficacy for classroom music education. One music teacher commented that, "this kind of activity had no place in music education and should be stopped".[90] On

79. Ibid.
80. Whiteoak. *Interview with Keith Humble.* p. 7.
81. R. S. Stevens. (2006). Personal Communication.
82. Whiteoak. *Keith Humble, the Music-Maker with a message.*
83. G. D'Ombrain. (1969). *Music Now: A discovery course for secondary students.* Melbourne: Cassell Australia.
84. B. van Ernst. (1990).*Composing-the Ultimate Music Learning Experience?* Paper presenterd at the X11 Annual AMEL Music Conference Towards 2000. Melbourne, p. 1.
85. R. S. Stevens. (1993). Music Education in Australia: Reflections on the Past and Present. In E. P. Errington (Ed.), *Arts Education: Beliefs, Practices and Possibilities* (pp. 57-68). Geelong: Deakin University, p. 63.
86. Ibid., p. 58.
87. G. D'Ombrain. (1971). *A Document of Personal Experience of Electronic Music in Education.* Paper presented at the State of the Art of Electronic Music in Australia. University of Melbourne.
88. Ibid.
89. Victorian Education Department. (1968). *Report of the Minister of Education (1967-1968).* Melbourne: Victorian Government, p. 48.
90. D'Ombrain. *A Document of Personal Experience of Electronic Music in Education,* p. 6.

the other hand, drama teachers were more familiar with electronic music than music teachers were at that time. D'Ombrain realized that it would take time and effort to change the attitude that many music teachers had in regards to progressive music education.[91]

Tertiary creative music education

By the early 1970s, creative music education at tertiary institutions in Victoria had developed significantly since the early 1960s. Creative music was popular with students at Melbourne University, the Hawthorn Teachers Centre and the Geelong State College (now Deakin University) as well as in the local schools in Geelong.[92] Jill Ferris recalled that when she was a student at Melbourne University during the early 1970s, creative music education had become an important part of music teacher education.[93] Graham Bartle, a senior lecturer in music at Melbourne University had established creative music education for students through the concepts of Paynter, Self, and Schafer. Ferris commented, "I thought it was great. I particularly liked soundscapes. I thought the fundamental focus on the nature of sound, particularly Schafer's approach and how it could be used in schools was exciting". She went on to add, "For me, it was the reaction against that very conservative approach to music education. By the 1970s, I thought we should be doing something different other than just singing with the students, and listening to classical music".[94] Ferris considered that this approach would be of great assistance to lower secondary music teachers as, "These secondary teachers were very keen to look for some alternative to the old course" of teaching music literacy.[95] Robin Stevens, teaching at Deakin University Geelong campus remarked that it was a stimulating time in classroom music education as there was more autonomy in what lecturers could do in music education. He commented, "Money was not a problem. We had the equipment. There were Moog synthesizers, tape recorders, and a recording studio. It is not possible to do that today".[96]

Creative music in Victorian secondary schools

By the middle of the 1970s, increasing numbers of state secondary school teachers were teaching creative music education. Bartle pronounced that the introduction of creative music education was, "the most striking new development in this country in the past five or six years".[97] Teacher Mrs. Vanson at Essendon Secondary School recalled the difficulties she had in teaching the old prescribed music syllabus in the time allotted to classroom music during the early 1960s. After attended a presentation of contemporary music, most likely by D'Ombrain she began to introduce creative music to her students. Vanson remarked, "I find that now I get students who wish to continue to H.S.C. (year 12) with music. In the bad old days, compulsory music in form III (year 9) made them so fed up they lost interest".[98] Anne Hrabe at Altona High School introduced Schafer's vocal workouts to her students. She found that students enjoyed the activity. Hrabe commented, "Schafer has been most useful to me in suggesting activities which involve my classes in experiencing basic music principles rather than listing them neatly in a notebook".[99] Unlike many other classroom music teachers, Peter Crompton at Parkdale High School in South East Melbourne had good accommodation and resources for creative music. He was familiar with

91. Ibid.
92. Stevens. (2006). Personal Communication.
93. Ferris. (2006). Personal Communication.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Stevens. (2006).
97. G. Bartle. (1974). Music in Australian Education Institutions: The secondary schools. *Australian Journal of Music Education.* 15. (July), p. 21.
98. Mrs. Vanson. (1975). Keeping it Kontemporary. *Agiatato.* (3), p. 18.
99. A. Hrabe. (1975). When Words Sing at Altona High School. *Agitato.* (3), p. 23.

the writings of Paynter. Crompton considered that music lessons should be a "music experience" for students.[100] Douglas Heywood teaching at Norwood High School in outer eastern Melbourne described creative music education as being one "where students are actively involved in the exploration and organization of sound".[101]

Small group work

To help manage the large class sizes, the shortage of suitable accommodation and resources for creative music education, Victorian music teachers, like teachers in England frequently employed small group work and integrated music with other Art subject.[102] Although small group work can make it easier for inexperienced lower secondary students to participate in creative music education, a number of concerns arose. Les Zimmer who was teaching at a country school in North West Victoria in 1975 had a limited amount of space in the music room for small group work.[103] This required the small groups to rehearse in the corridor and the tiny music store room making supervision difficult as he had to move from group to group to keep students on task.[104] Another concern was that classroom music was part of an integrated Arts component that limited the time available for music education to six weeks. Resources for music were also very restricted. Zimmer commented that attempting to teach creative music education at a school with poor equipment, unsuitable space for rehearsals and a short time frame for music limited the quality of the work students could complete.[105] Heywood also noted the difficulty of teaching creative music with large numbers of students in a class, a shortage of equipment and accommodation. He remarked, "how is it possible to actively involve 35 students in exploring and organizing sound without the venture becoming chaotic"?[106] It can also be difficult to get students to work effectively and cooperatively in small groups. van Ernst noted that many students preferred to work alone, rather than in groups when composing.[107] For small group work to be effectual, suitable soundproof practice rooms close to the main music room need to be available as well as modern computer operated music equipment.

Old habits die hard

The difficulties and concerns that had developed in the English creative movement also occurred in Victoria. As research in music education in Australia was just beginning in the late 1960s, there was little knowledge of what was happening in creative music education overseas.[108] Unlike England where guidelines were developed for teaching composition during the 1990s, Victoria has not yet established effective strategies for the teaching of composition in the primary years and for students in years 7-10.[109] Sadly, after decades of stagnation in state secondary education, with the introduction of progressive secondary education in the late 1960s, the Victorian Education Department had little knowledge of contemporary music education and was unable to assist music teachers in developing curriculums for creative music education during the 1970s.[110] As the majority of music teachers at that time were not familiar with, or

100. P. Crompton. (1975). Unashamedly Experimental. *Agitato.* (3), p. 18.

101. D. Heywood. (1975). "Self" Expression: Some thoughts on classroom creative music via the ideas of George Self and Brian Dennis. *Agitato*. (2), p. 3.

102. Burke. *The Introduction of Creative Music Education in Victorian State Secondary Schools 1957 to 1988.*

103. L. Zimmer. (1975). Electronics and Silence (Almost!)-or how to make one small classroom into five music rooms. *Agitato*. (5).

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid.

106. Heywood. (1975), p. 4.

107. B. van Ernst. (1991). *A Study of the Learning and Teaching Processes of Non-Naïve Music Students Engaged in Composition*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Latrobe University. Melbourne.

108. W. R. Lett. (1980). *A Survey and Report on the Needs and Priorities for Research in Arts Education in Australia, 1980.* Melbourne: LaTrobe University.

109. Burke. *The Introduction of Creative Music Education in Victorian State Secondary Schools 1957 to 1988.*

110. Ibid.

educated in developing their own curriculums, assessment and accountability issues began to arise in creative music education as they had in England.[111] Many music teachers had difficulty in developing a balanced curriculum with some teachers teaching nothing but creative music education to lower secondary students, whilst others taught no creative music education. Good examples of the concerns with creative music education in Victoria are revealed by the experiences of Greg Hurworth and Noela Hogg. Hurworth had been a pupil of Paynter at York University during the 1960s. After completing his studies, he taught creative music in schools in England until he immigrated to Victoria in the middle of the 1970s to teach school music in state secondary schools.[112] When Hurworth began to teach music in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne in 1975, he was surprised to find that little creative music was being taught. The majority of music teachers he worked with spent most of their time teaching the rudiments of music to lower secondary students that Maxwell-Davies had noted problems with at the Sydney UNESCO Conference in 1965. The teachers Hurworth worked with at that time were unfamiliar with composing, or how to get children to undertake any activity other than re-creative music education.[113] Inadequate staffing in schools for classroom music, accommodation and resources also contributed to the problems Hurworth encountered in teaching creative music. Noela Hogg's study on school music in Victoria in the 1980s revealed that little had changed in classroom music since the late 1960s. Her study revealed that many Victorian classroom music teachers were still adamant that creative music was only for students who had developed skills in music literacy.[114] She explained that "some of the 'composing' activities observed could only be described as exercises in the use of music notation, the worst type being so restrictive as to demand the use of a given rhythm, beginning and ending with middle C and moving entirely by step".[115] Changes to the Victorian curriculum in the 1990s also seriously affected the teaching of creative music education in many disadvantaged state schools.

Current trends in classroom music in Victorian state schools

The introduction of standards-based Arts education and the consequent reduction of time for classroom music in Victorian state schools since 1995 has seen little curriculum development for students in the primary years and for year 7-10 students. Although guidelines are being developed for an Australian National Arts Curriculum that includes creative music activities, it is unsure when the policy will be implemented in Victorian state schools. With the emphasis firmly placed on accountability and standards in literacy and numeracy as well as further cutbacks to state classroom music this decade, there has been a return to teaching more traditional forms of music. In many disadvantaged state schools, it appears that a curriculum model of the 1950s is returning where only selected students are being taught school music. Today, in Victoria, there is little scope for a 1960s model of practical music making for naïve lower secondary music students who have few skills in music.

Although there have been difficulties in establishing creative music education in state schools in Victoria, by the middle of the 1970s, curriculum material for teaching creative music education began to be published in Victoria. In 1974, Latham and Hanson, members of the Victorian Music Branch[116] published *A New Program for Teaching Music*, that was written for the non-specialist primary school music teacher who may

111. Ibid.

112. G. Hurworth. (2006). Personal Communication.

113. Ibid.

114. N. L. Hogg. (1991). *Music Education: A matter of the human spirit.* Paper presented at the Music Educators, Reflective Practitioners. Association of Music Education Lecturers. Hobart.

115. Ibid., p. 17.

116. The Music Branch was staffed by experienced music educators who offered assistance to general primary schools teachers in Victoria until it was disbanded in 1978.

have had little experience teaching school music.[117] The authors' underline the point that students should make music, as "children will learn about music best of all through first hand experience".[118] *A Guide to Music in the Primary School,*[119] again the work of the Music Branch suggested teachers, "Provide opportunities to explore the use of non-traditional sound sources and unconventional ways of playing instruments".[120] The *Upbeat: Music Education in the Classroom* series by Jeffrey Leask and L. Thomas, based on *A Guide to Music in the Primary School* contained tapes of the activities presented in the book.[121] Over the years, the *Upbeat* publications have been very popular with primary school teachers. The release of Arts Framework curriculum in 1988 supported creative music activities and integrated Arts programs for students in Preparatory-year 10.[122] In his 1993 publication, *Music in the Primary School*, Graeme Askew argued, "You cannot expect a pupil's musical experience and understanding to develop if you restrict activities to parts such as music scales and notation".[123] In 2011, composing and improvisation were introduced in the music syllabus of the Victorian Certificate of Education.[124]

117. G. Latham & G. Hanson. (1974). *A New Program for Teaching Music.* Melbourne: Music Branch In-Service Education Team, Victorian Education Department.

118. Ibid., preface.

119. Department of Education Victoria. (1981). *A Guide to Music in the Primary School*. Melbourne: Department of Education Victoria. Ferris (2006) commented that A Guide to Music in the Primary School was really a compilation of everything people in the Music Branch had been carrying out for the last ten years.

120. Ibid., p. 18.

121. J. Leask & L. Thomas. (1983). *Upbeat Music Education in the Classroom.* Mooroolbark: Bojangles Music.

122. Ministry of Education Victoria. (1988). *The Arts Framework: P-10.* Melbourne: Ministry of Education Victoria.

123. Graeme Askew. (1993). *Music Education in the Primary School.* Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, p. 36.

124. Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. (2010). *Music:Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design.* Retrieved 14.1.2011, from vcaa,edu.au.

Conclusion

The introduction of creative music education in Victoria has been a mixed blessing for school music. Similar to the experiences of classroom music teachers in England, difficulties in defining creative music education, its place in school music, the shortage of resources and teachers educated in composition effected how creative music was established and taught in Victorian schools. As research of music education was a new field of study in Australia in the 1970s, there was little awareness of what was happening in the English creative music movement. After decades of neglect in Victorian state secondary education, many classroom teachers were unprepared for the introduction of progressive music education in the 1970s. Inadequate accommodation and resources for classroom music in many state schools also made it difficult for teachers to develop an effective curriculum for creative music education. With the introduction of standards-based education in Victoria in the 1990s, the philosophy of egalitarianism and personal development initiatives in school music became archaic. There was also the move away from avant-garde and experimental music education in secondary schools back to a more traditional and conservative model of music education that focused once more on students learning the rudiments of music. Today, the classroom music curriculum in many state schools is very similar to that of the 1950s. It appears that we are going around in circles in an ever-increasing number of Victorian state schools. Knowledge of past practices can offer understanding to present day school music operations and hopefully identify looming pitfalls.

Harry Burke completed his PhD in music education at Monash University in 2010. He has taught classroom and instrumental music in Victorian state secondary and primary schools since the middle of the 1980s. His research has included the history of curriculum developments in classroom music education in England, Victoria and the USA from the 1900s.