

Reviewed by Nicola F. Mason

Teaching General Music: Approaches, Issues, and Viewpoints

Edited by Carlos R. Abril and Brent M. Gault
New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016

The most recent addition to the repertoire of scholarly writing on general music education is the masterfully crafted text, *Teaching General Music: Approaches, Issues, and Viewpoints*, edited by Carlos R. Abril and Brent M. Gault. The impressive coterie of contributing authors includes current scholars and educators of contemporary approaches in general music education.

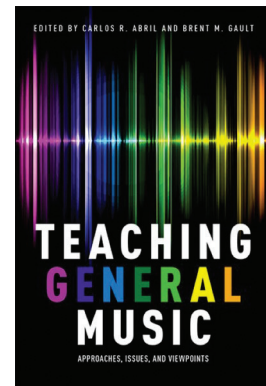
Abril's introductory chapter clearly defines the term general music education, provides a summarized overview of key historical events in general music education in the United States, and sets an engaging tone for the subsequent chapters that begin with the Orff Schulwerk and include the Kodály Approach, World Music Pedagogy, Dalcroze Approach, and Music Learning Theory. These chapters are complemented by seemingly less traditional approaches, including social constructivism, digital media, interdisciplinary approach, and informal learning.

As expected, each chapter provides an overview and unique characteristic of the approach. In "Orff Schulwerk: Releasing and Developing the Musical Imagination," Amy Beegle and Judith Bond emphasize the unique characteristics of the approach, highlight primary source materials, briefly review research, and

discuss the approach's application to broader educational concepts. Jackie Wiggins' "Teaching Music with a Social Constructivist Vision of Learning" is rich in content on the processes of learning that support the understanding of experiences from the constructivist perspective. Co-editor Brent Gault's "Kodály-Inspired Teaching" focuses on the tensions created by the adaptation of the Kodály approach in a global society and a discussion on music literacy and folk music as they relate to a culturally diverse society.

Fittingly authored by Patricia Shehan Campbell, "World Music Pedagogy: Where Music Meets Culture in Classroom Practice" examines the reality of meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Campbell transitions seamlessly from a discussion on the key events in world music history and the role of ethnomusicologists therein to the role of World Music Pedagogy (WMP) in bridging the gap between theory and practice. An overview of the five phases of WMP provides a clear picture of the approach to those unfamiliar with its tenets.

In Evan S. Tobias' "Learning with Digital Media and Technology in Hybrid Music Classrooms," he defines hybrid as "...a comprehensive curricular model that allows for students to emphasize particular foci or specializations while developing multifaceted or hyphenated musicianship in varied contexts" (p. 113). He highlights the use of digital media as a tool for supporting music education with regard to musical engagement and music literacy. Through vignettes and clear, simple examples, Tobias highlights the use of digital media as a tool for supporting music education relative to musical engagement and music literacy, and describes the pedagogical foundation of a hybrid approach to teaching with digital media supported by current techniques, including student collaboration, modeling, scaffolding, and assessment. "The Dalcroze Approach: Experiencing and Knowing Music Through Embodied Exploration" by Marja-Leena Juntunen



discusses the intersection of the approach with constructivism, the benefits of the approach for students within a musical and nonmusical context, and the application of the approach to different levels of general music education.

Janet Barrett's powerfully persuasive "Adopting an Interdisciplinary Approach to General Music" lays the foundation, aims, and characteristics, and provides guidelines of and for the approach. "If we teach music as cloistered, separate from other realms of knowing, we diminish its vitality and dynamic presence. If we fail to attend to the ways students connect music to their lives, we leave relational meaning to serendipitous chance and private musings" (p. 180).

Arguably, the most research-based theoretical framework for general music education is Cynthia Crump Taggart's "Music Learning Theory: A Theoretical Framework in Action." Taggart provides a guided tour through the fundamental assumptions of the approach, its close connection with language, components of instruction and assessment, and includes an overview of its application outside the general music classroom. The first half of the text concludes with "Informal Learning in General Music Education" by Ruth Wright.

The second half of the text provides more critical examination and individual perspectives on general music education from some of music education's most industrious authors, all of whom have impressive resumes of published works in their respective fields.

At first glance, *Teaching General Music: Approaches, Issues, and Viewpoints* might appear tantamount to other scholarly general music resources. Abril and Gault's collaborative editing, however, produced a uniquely organized collection of contemporary writings that comprise candidate discussions on the limitations and challenges of commonly used approaches as well as a companion website that includes lesson plans and/or videos of representative activities for the Orff Schulwerk, Kodály, World Music Pedagogy, and Music Learning Theory approaches. Subtle advocacy is regularly interjected with appropriate vignettes strongly supported with empirical research by the consummate collection of authors who provide meaningful writing true to the title. *Teaching General Music: Approaches, Issues, and Viewpoints* balances prevailing theories with contemporary issues to produce a body of work that secures its place on the bookshelf of music educators who seek to stay abreast with current trends, reflect on past and current practices, and be challenged by their views of general music education. ■

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