

**Musical Creativities in practice, P. Burnard, OUP, Oxford (2012). xv+308pp., Price: £41.99 (paperback), ISBN: 978-0-19-958394-2**

Despite a substantial literature challenging myths that about creativity, in music education the assumptions that students make about their own musical creativity are set against hierarchies of cultural values, that elevate particular individuals, masterworks and particular music practices such as notated composition. In *Musical Creativities in Practice* presents a sociological framing of creativity, which draws on Bourdieu's thinking tools to examine a spectrum of contemporary and music practices. These include: the originals bands, singer-songwriters, DJs, contemporary music composers, improvising musicians including musicians who work with technologies and live coding, and media based audio designers working in the adaptive audio field of computer games. Drawing on the voices and values expressed across this huge diversity of music practices, *Musical Creativities in Practice* argues for a pluralist view of musical creativities. Adopting a questioning style it establishes the central concerns by asking how 'contemporary players conceive of musical creativity in performance? What effects do social aspects of performance have on musical creativity? How are we to understand the nature of music creativity in relation to practices of improvisation and composition in the age of multimedia wherein the elements of a 'transformative culture', of mashups and bastard pop, friendly record companies and the fan remix are proliferating technological mediations?' (p12).

Though there is a growing field of research investigating creativity in and through music, Burnard observes that this work does not 'address musical creativity with the clarity and relevance that might attract the music specialist, music researcher, composer, songwriter, sound producer, and music editor.' (p4); the book is aimed at all musicians, though the links to music education are especially strong. The passionate introduction, presents the personal voice and pedagogical motivations of a musician, accomplished scholar and renowned ambassador of music in education.

The book presents 10 chapters divided into 3 parts. Part 1, *The Field of Music*, includes two chapters that contextualize myths about musical creativity; seeding the argument for a pluralist view of musical creativities. Introducing Bourdieu's thinking tools of 'field', 'habitus', 'capital', and 'practice' as the theoretical lens, it begins to unpack a spectrum of musical creativities, showing how they are situated in contemporary music practices. Part 2, *Narratives of practice*, presents an extensive collection of real world case studies. These narratives feature interviews with 19 musicians, foregrounding their voices in this discourse. Each chapter concludes with an outline of the key points and questions for the reader; to prompt an immediate reflection on our personal values and assumptions. Part 3, *The field of music in education*, includes the views of musicians, teachers and children, articulating how they value and evidence musical creativities in their practice. These concluding chapters offer practical models and strategies for unpacking and mobilizing musical creativities within education practices.

While other texts have challenged myths about creativity, the opening part of this book explores how such myths have become dominant in our music cultures, and how such established assumptions influence the individual's perceptions of their own musical creativity. Considering our incredible diversity of music practices part one maps the terrain for a pluralist perspective of *creativities* in a way that considers the social, temporal and technological dimensions of musical *creativities*, observing the sociological interrelationships that constitute our *creativities* and transformative cultures. Also building on Amabile's 'sociopersonal perspective' (1996) a sociological framing establishes important links to contemporary music practices in a way that recognizes how, for example, fields of music production such as games audio or DJ practices are framed by new technologies, social media, and mix cultures: how technically mediated music practices, digital societies, and music making communities emerge through interrelationships across cultures, communities and consumers.

The voices of contemporary music practice are drawn into the center of work, foregrounding real practitioners and their reflections on the spectrum of contemporary music *creativities*. Burnard's use of Bourdieu's thinking tools of 'field', 'habitus', 'capital' and 'practice' provides a deeper sociologically framed exploration. Presenting a greater challenge for readers unfamiliar with Bourdieu, or sociologically framed theory and research more broadly Burnard has included an extremely valuable appendix which explains the use of Bourdieu's work and how it has framed a 'light touch' analysis of the data. The resulting discussions cannot be considered 'light', however, as this sociologically informed analysis offers substantive insights with weighty implications that are presented with clear conclusions, and invitations for the reader to revisit through their own lens.

The music practice case studies that constitute part 2 open with overviews of the multiple *creativities* that they evidence; starting with *collective creativities, fan-generated participatory creativity, entrepreneurial and collective creativities* in chapter 3. A discussion of the originals band explores power, agency and cultural capital, showing how their *creativities* are motivated by a quest to be 'trail blazing' in this field. *Intercultural creativities* are examined in chapter 4, which presents interviews with two popular music songwriters that show how culturally framed repertoires come to shape 'self-making' and 'self-extension'. The DJ practices discussed in chapter 5 provide a substantial challenge to 'Romantic' notions of musical creativity, since the *transformative performative creativities* displayed here are not connected to a specific composition, composition process or individual quality. The 4 DJs share values and dispositions that shows *creativities* emerging through interrelationships with 'place, sound, and scene', the use of a variety of production and performance methods (production, turntablism and mash-up), and the *sociospatial performance creativities* that characterise DJ practices. Returning to a more traditional concept, the music composer, chapter 6 shifts challenges any prioritisation of the composed creative output, exploring ways in which composition is improvisational and socially mediated as well as notated. This chapter explores specific examples composers creating in social spaces, and how the process of composition is de-individualized and adaptive; 'revitalized in and by performance'. Throughout the book the reader is asked to question the

hierarchies of power and value that might be associated with composition, performance and improvisation in their own practice; chapter 7 presents a particular extension of improvised music creativities contexts. Case studies include the electro-acoustic, community, folk/tradition and computer music creativities of David Toop, Rod Paton, Hazel Fairbarin, Andrew Brown and Nick Collins. In particular, this discussion shows how no single creativity defines live performance, since improvisational creativities are mediated and constituted through performance inter-relationships, and inter-relationships with technologies (such as in live coding). Exploring the social interplay, and this 'flux' of creativities further in chapter 8, Burnard addresses the social and commercial forces shaping practice in fields of audio design: commercial media and computer games audio platforms, sharing 'user-generated' creativities and 'collective' creativities. The book displays remarkable academic breadth, however, by addressing these music practices in context (with particular attention to contemporary digital technologies), it presents a sociologically informed analysis of relevant contemporary practices that cements the case for a pluralist view of creativities, and a need for a vocabulary of musical creativities.

Part 3 presents a detailed and illustrated framework for understanding this spectrum of musical creativities. It also presents Burnard's theoretical elaboration of Csikszentmihalyi's systems model of generic creativity (1999), drawing on Bourdieu's notions of 'field', 'capital', and 'habitus', to incorporate 'rules', 'practices' and 'values'. Together they constitute a substantive and original contribution to creativity research, and also to music education in a way that has significant implications for musical creativities in practice and education, and for further research in fields of creativity and as well as music education.

Taking care not to be prescriptive part 3 speaks directly to music educators; to address creativity myths and foster a pluralist view of musical creativities. Chapter 10 includes a collection of narratives and vignettes that reflect the concerns and issues addressed in earlier chapters, and the children's accounts of musical composition practices are particularly fascinating as they mirror many of the musical creativities presented in the professional narratives. Considering: how creativity is currently framed in music education, the 'experiential dimensions of musical creativities', and implications for teaching and assessment, Burnard offers specific suggestions for teaching musical creativities as part of a valuable set of tools that will certainly to stimulate new pedagogies.

This text could not have presented a more academically rigorous or relevant reorientation on the topic of music creativity. The remarkably diverse collection of music practice case studies place the voices, and the values of real contemporary musicians squarely in the center of this emerging creativities discourse and Burnard makes a passionate call, for education peers, students and professionals to revisit and reflect on our assumptions around musical creativities in practice.

## **References**

Amabile, T. (1996) *Creativity in Context: Update to the Social Psychology of Creativity*. Colorado: Westview.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999) Implications of a systems perspective for the study of creativity. In R. Sternberg (ed.) *Handbook of Creativity*, pp.313-35. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press