

Music Education in England, 1950-2010: The Child-Centred Progressive Tradition

John, Mr Finney

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John Finney examines the child-centred progressive tradition to create a fresh way of evaluating ideas and practices that have evolved since 1950, that have shaped the lives of music teachers and their pupils, and that have now become disfigured, residual and altogether lost in the light of social, cultural and political change. The book is a critique of the present situation with an intention to expose the dangers in our current pursuit of future gains that are thought to serve the making and sustaining of the social order. The project draws in major debates of the period, along with their protagonists, counter-pointed by the voices of teachers and pupils. At the same time, the structuring voices of policy and governance become ever louder as we reach the present time. Finney presents a compelling, analytical account through a series of six episodes, each seeking to capture the spirit and fervour characteristic of a particular phase within the period studied.

In the concluding chapter the narrative developed is reviewed. From this the idea of music education as an ethical pursuit is proposed. Finney argues that classroom relationships can be thought of as playfully dialogic, where teacher and pupil remain curious, and where there is serious attention to what is to be taught and why. This will always need to be negotiated, with the expressed and inferred needs of children working together to find a critical approach to what is being learnt. Finney's book provides fresh inspiration for practitioners and new challenges for researchers, and as such is a landmark in the field of arts and music education.



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