The Psychology of Musical Development

The Psychology of Musical Development provides an up-to-date and comprehensive account of the latest theory, empirical research and applications in the study of musical development, an important and emerging field of music psychology. After considering how people now engage with music in the digital world, and reviewing current advances in developmental and music psychology, Hargreaves and Lamont compare ten major theoretical approaches in this field – including cognitive stage models and neuroscientific, ecological and social cognitive approaches – and assess how successfully each of these deals with five critical theoretical issues. Individual chapters deal next with cognition, perception and learning; social development; environmental influences on ability, achievement and motivation; identity, personality and lifestyle; affect and emotion; and wellbeing and health. With an emphasis on practical applications throughout, this book will be essential reading for students and scholars of music psychology, developmental psychology, music education and music therapy.

David Hargreaves is Professor of Education at the University of Roehampton, London, and a chartered psychologist and fellow of the British Psychological Society.

Alexandra Lamont is Senior Lecturer in Psychology of Music at Keele University and recent editor of the journal *Psychology of Music*.

The Psychology of Musical Development

David Hargreaves
University of Roehampton, London

Alexandra Lamont
Keele University

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

This book is dedicated to the memory of
Mollie Hargreaves (née Metcalfe), 1923–2016

Contents

Contents ix

Figures

Tables

Preface

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

From *As You Like It*, spoken by Jaques to Duke Senior, act II, scene 7
William Shakespeare, 1564–1616

Shakespeare's famous and often-quoted poem is remarkably insightful, especially in that it was written at least 300 years before the advent of the discipline of psychology. His idea of seven ages of man is not essentially dissimilar from the view that some developmental psychologists might have of lifespan development today, and his central analogy between life and the stage also has a great deal in common with some contemporary ideas in social theory, including role theory, the notion

of identities, and the importance of narrative in explaining human development. In *Acts of Meaning* (1990), for example, Jerome Bruner suggests that 'People narrativize their experience of the world and of their own role in it' (p. 115), and adds that 'The fact that the historian's "empirical" account and the novelist's imaginative story *share* the narrative form is, on reflection, rather startling' (p. 45). The poem is also of more specific interest here because Shakespeare makes four different references to music, or at least to vocalisation: to the infant's mewling, the schoolboy's whining, the lover's ballad, and the 'childish treble' voice of old age.

The basic questions we answer in this book are how and to what extent people engage with music in different ways across the lifespan, from infancy to old age, and what effects these engagements have on different aspects of their behaviour and experience. Developmental psychologists still have not reached agreement about the possible existence, nature, and number of developmental stages today, and we could say a lot more about the possible validity of Shakespeare's seven proposed stages – although doing so may not add a great deal of insight. This is partly because our emphasis here is less on the details of age-related changes in musical development and more on how different musical competencies develop at different ages, and how these manifest themselves in different aspects of behaviour. As we shall see, music has a role to play in our physical development and our neural functioning; in the development of our perception, thinking, and learning; of our motivation and emotion; of our personality, social development, and sense of identity; and of our health and wellbeing. The ways in which it does so form the essence of this book.

If our main task is to investigate how music can influence these many different areas of our lives as well as the converse – i.e. how these different aspects of behaviour form different parts of our musical lives – then we need to be more precise about what we mean by 'engagement with music'. In the past, the distinctions between musicians, composers, improvisers, performers, and listeners were fairly straightforward, and most members of all five groups would probably have been clear about which group, or groups, they belonged to. Recent changes in our understanding of these concepts, many of which derive from psychological insights, mean that these distinctions have now become much more blurred. For example, it would previously have been widely agreed that the term 'musician' meant someone who was actively involved in producing music: composers, improvisers, and performers would all have been included and listeners or audience members took a more passive and reactive role. However, Nikki Rickard and TanChyuan Chin (2017) have recently argued that it is possible to define musicianship in terms of listening with just as much validity as it is in terms of production skills. They suggest that a 'musicianship of listening' exists alongside the more conventional 'musicianship of production', and that the widespread use of the term 'non-musician' should therefore decline: we wholeheartedly agree with this perspective.

Another related view is that 'we are all musical': that 'every human being has a biological and social guarantee of musicianship … and that the technical and expressive aspects of musical performance demand skills that everyone is capable of learning given the appropriate environmental intervention' (Hargreaves,

MacDonald, & Miell, 2012a, pp. 129–130). This view is gaining support from a growing number of researchers exploring the foundations of musical behaviour. In particular, Colwyn Trevarthen's research (e.g. Trevarthen, 2002, 2012) has shown how the earliest communication between caregiver and child is essentially musical. This communication, which consists of vocal, visual, and gestural interplay, has more in common with musical interaction than with spoken language, and research evidence has demonstrated this to be the case by means of detailed microanalyses of communicative interactions.

Although we all have the potential for musicianship, the problem is that many of us do not fulfil this potential because musical talent and ability tend to be defined in terms of high-level performing skills. Although provision is made in schools and other institutions for children who show promise to develop their musical skills, many others start to see themselves as being 'unmusical', fail to develop their early potential and follow a downward spiral in which lack of musical self-esteem and motivation leads to lower levels of performance, which leads to still lower self-esteem, and so on. In Pablo Picasso's words, 'Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.'

This book has its origins in *The Developmental Psychology of Music*, by one of us (David Hargreaves, 1986a): this book was published more than thirty years ago, and was intended at the time to be a first attempt to delineate the field as such. At that time the scope of music psychology in the UK was very limited in comparison to today, and a major role in its development was played by the Society for Education, Music and Psychology Research (SEMPRE). The changes that have taken place since then have been expertly documented by Gordon Cox, Leon Crickmore, Charles Plummeridge, and Desmond Sergeant, all early stalwarts of the Society, in their article 'SEMPRE: 40 years on', which was published in the special issue of the Society's journal *Psychology of Music* to celebrate its fortieth anniversary. Cox et al. (2012) identify one of the central concerns in the 1980s as being the debate about the relationship between theory and practice, and John Sloboda, in his second issue as editor of the journal, raised this question in an open letter to members of the Society about 'achieving our aims in music education' (Sloboda, 1986). This produced a number of responses, including an article by David (Hargreaves, 1986b) on 'developmental psychology and music education', which summarised many of the concerns and issues set out in the earlier book.

Cox et al. describe the rapid growth and diversification of music psychology and music education which has occurred since then, and we have both played our parts in this, as editors of *Psychology of Music* (David between 1989 and 1996 and Alexandra between 2012 and 2016), and as members of the Music Development Task Group of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in England in the 1990s, a 'think tank' whose aim was to translate ideas and methods from music psychology and other fields into practical applications for the classroom. David had also begun to introduce musical content into his teaching of developmental psychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Leicester, and when he left that post in 1998 for Durham, the Open University, and eventually

the University of Roehampton, Alexandra was appointed as his replacement in the Leicester Music Research Group, working alongside Adrian North and Mark Tarrant. Alexandra and Mark both moved to lectureships in psychology at Keele University in 2001 to join John Sloboda in the Unit for the Study of Musical Skill and Development, and we both collaborated on research described later in this book on children's musical engagement along with Mark and a new colleague of David's, Nigel Marshall, at Roehampton. Our somewhat intertwined careers have thus spanned some of the major centres of music psychology research in the UK.

Our own personal stories of musical development have also had an inevitable effect on the contents of this book. David studied the piano from a very early age, and soon became more interested in improvising and playing by ear than in playing the pieces he was set, and was never entered for any of the ABRSM grade examinations. He went on to study the oboe at secondary school (including performing in the school's wind quintet, at the school's 450th anniversary, for an audience including Queen Elizabeth II), playing in many orchestral concerts, but it was not until his arrival as a student at Durham University in 1966 that his future activity as a semi-professional jazz musician began to crystallise: this new direction was given a fortuitous boost by the appointment of John Booth Davies as David's first psychology tutor, and also as his first bandleader, in the Durham University jazz quintet. Alexandra, on the other hand, had a rather more traditional career in classical music beginning with recorder at school, piano lessons (and many grades) from the age of six, and picking up (and putting down) the violin from the age of nine, sticking with it when she joined Trinity College of Music's junior department at the age of thirteen. After a degree in academic music which was accompanied by many classical performance opportunities, she left the world of practical music behind for many years. However, like many adults, she subsequently returned to performing, and now spends much of her spare time playing the violin in classical symphony and chamber orchestras and in a small band accompanying a range of indie pop musicians.

Over the years we have been fortunate to work with and alongside a number of different colleagues and research students who have helped shape our thinking about musical development, many of whom are cited in the bibliography of the present book. It is of course invidious to pick out individuals, but those whose input has been most influential for one or both of us include Adrian North, Mark Tarrant, John Sloboda, Jane Davidson, Raymond MacDonald, Dorothy Miell, Ian Cross, Graça Boal-Palheiros, Patrik Juslin, Göran Folkestad, Ambjörn Hugardt, Gary McPherson, Bengt Olsson, Sandra Trehub, Glenn Schellenberg, Frances Rauscher, Allan Hewitt, Karl Maton, Alinka Greasley, Adam Ockelford, Emery Schubert, and Arielle Bonneville-Roussy. We should like to acknowledge our debt and gratitude to all these collaborators, as well as to Steven Caldwell Brown, Gary McPherson, Adam Ockelford, Arielle Bonneville-Roussy, Jon Hargreaves, and an anonymous reviewer, who have kindly given us their constructive comments on drafts of the book. Due to our own artistic and technical limitations, sincere thanks to Niall King for help with illustrations. Our thanks also go to the staff at

Cambridge University Press, especially Hetty Marx and Janka Romero, for their wisdom and support from beginning to end. Any errors that remain are of course our responsibility.

On a more personal note, David would like to acknowledge the unstinting support and help of Linda, Jon, and Tom Hargreaves, who have contributed to his thinking about and experiences of music, psychology, and education over many years, and who are now joined by two more formidable family members, Ruth Newton and Holly Mathieson. Jon and Tom's songs and drawings formed a memorable part of the 1986 book, and David's practical knowledge of musical development in the early years has been given a vigorous recent update by his grandchildren, Sam and Rowan, who have their own powerful and distinctive views on many issues! Alexandra is hugely grateful to Niall King for his sustained support, encouragement, and motivation. Thanks are also due to her friends, many of whom are actively involved in music, for their constant questioning: first about the progress of the book, and second about ensuring important issues are addressed particularly in the realm of music education – a discipline and an activity under considerable threat in the UK throughout the time of writing. 'I hope you've put in something about …' has become a familiar refrain over the past few years, and, at the end of this endeavour, we hope we have.