Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education
June 2021. Vol 20 (2): 79–109. doi:10.22176/act20.2.79

Studious Play as an *Archê* of Creative Music-Making: Repositing "the Scandal of Democracy" in Music Education

Panagiotis A. Kanellopoulos
The University of Thessaly, Greece

This paper explores aspects of Creative Music in Education [CMinED] practices through a political philosophy perspective based on Jacques Rancière's approach to the notion of democracy. The paper begins with three cautionary tales about the difficult encounter between democracy and music education. This sets the stage for introducing a Rancièrian approach to democracy and music education. On the basis of this analysis, it is then proposed that the musical an-archê induced by Creative Music in Education practices, and in particular, by free improvisation, can be seen as a form of "studious play," a concept that comes from Giorgio Agamben (2005) and has been reworked from a philosophy of education perspective (Lewis 2013, 2014, Jasinski 2018. Jasinski and Lewis 2016). Studious play departs from the imposed repetition resulting from induction into musical traditions, but at the same time, it moves away from views of play as mere self-expression. By suspending but not rejecting musical traditions and practices, it continually moves between making ever new beginnings (αρχές/ archês) and playing with and through the rules (αρχές/ archês). The paper concludes by proposing that CMinED practices centering on experimental composing and improvising might be a means for practicing democracy through a pedagogy of studious play.

Keywords: *democracy, music education, improvisation, political philosophy, studious play, Agamben, Rancière*

The openings induced by the creative turn in music education have roots in the second decade of the 20th century but took a radical turn in the late 1950s. These forward-looking efforts rested on a deep belief in the power of education to produce societal change, the power of music to cultivate more open, creative personalities, and the power of music education to forge pathways that affected musical practice at large. In this paper, I develop a politico-philosophical reading of the democratic potential of the Creative Music in Education tradition—for which the acronym CMinED has been recently proposed (Kanellopoulos 2021)—based on the work of Jacques Rancière and Giorgio Agamben. CMinED originated in the late 1950s, gained momentum in many countries in the 1960s,

and its various developments continue to this day (Kanellopoulos 2011, 2021, Finney, Philpott, and Spruce 2020, Hickey 2015, Heble and Laver 2016, Dean 1989, Stumme 1973, Gagel and Schwabe 2016, Sætre 2011, Spencer 2016, Woods 2020, Schwan 1991). CMinED encompasses a number of music education experiments that shifted toward composing and improvising as a central learning and teaching practice, informed by radical musics of the avant-garde, by various strands of experimental music, and by free improvisation.[1]

One might argue that our current educational climate does not constitute a fertile context for the pursuit of CMinED practices—and this despite important efforts of many music teachers to encourage composing and improvising. The deluge of standardization and accountability is certainly one reason that might account for this. As a result of efficiency-based rationales, progressive openings in educational theory and practice initiated in the 1960s and 70s have often been cursed either as catastrophic or as misguided, short-lived exceptions that ought to be abandoned in favour of a view of educational institutions as loci for "the transindividuation of rational knowledge (opened up by processes of grammatization)" (Ross 2019, 5, based on Bernard Stiegler's 2010 critique of Foucauldian perspectives on education; also see Hirsch 2016). Against this tide, a core concern of this paper is to re-visit aspects of CMinED practices through a particular lens rooted in the political philosophy of Rancière and Agamben, and through this, discuss the links between democracy and music education.

The paper begins with three cautionary tales about the difficult encounter between democracy and music education. These focus on recent framings of creative music education and community music practices, and despite their differences, they each set the scene for discussing the unacknowledged fear of the an-archic element that has lived at the core of democracy since its inception. It is argued that music educators' concern that "too much" emphasis on down-top music creative practices might be *mis*educative (too permissive, too open to students' whimsical wills, too easy, too shallow and superficial, too far away from treasured musical practices that have historical depth), might actually be seen as topical, "educational" versions of the age-old hatred of democracy. Furthermore, this paper, based on Rancière's theory of democracy, suggests that Creative Music in Education practices, and in particular, free improvisation—a musical practice that can be seen as a somewhat neglected part of the CMinEd tradition—may actually represent contexts that bring forward the *an*-archic trouble that the "scandal of democracy" induces. For Rancière, democracy is not the name of a particular

governmental structure but is a set of "singular and precarious acts" (Rancière 2006, 97) that are initiated on the basis of accepting equality as an axiom. Rancière holds that democracy was founded precisely on the absence of any foundations, unsettling any sense of order based on superiority of knowledge, talent, wealth, or heritage: "Therein lies the scandal: the scandal for well-to-do people unable to accept that their birth, their age, or their science has to bow before the law of chance" (Rancière 2006, 40).

On the basis of this analysis, it is then proposed that the musical *an-archê* induced by practicing experimental composing and free improvisation can be seen as a form of "studious play," a concept that comes from Giorgio Agamben (2005, 64; also Agamben 1995, 64–65), and has been reworked from a philosophy of education perspective by Lewis (2013, 2014), Jasinski (2018), and Jasinski and Lewis (2016). Studious play departs from the imposed repetition resulting from induction into musical traditions, but at the same time, it moves away from views of play as mere self-expression. By suspending but not rejecting musical traditions and practices, it continually moves between making ever new beginnings (αρχές/ *archês*) and playing with and through the rules (αρχές/ *archês*). Thus, studious play might be regarded as a condition of musical engagement that functions at the intersection between the two notions of *archê:* the possibility of initiating ever new beginnings, and the process of exercising control on the basis of certain principles [*archês*].

Confronted with the Democratic Scandal: Three Cautionary Tales

I.

Community music practices have been based on ideals of inclusivity, accessibility, and celebration of musical multivocality: to create conditions that allow anyone and everyone to forge living relationships with music-making (Henley and Higgins 2020, Veblen, 2007). In her critique of community music, Alexandra Kertz-Welzel (2016) invokes the notion of a pedagogy of kitsch (Reichenbach 2003) to theorize what she regards as the pitfalls of egalitarianism. Kertz-Welzel accuses community music practitioners and theoretical proponents alike of "a lot of enthusiasm," "lack of critical reflectiveness," romanticizing, sentimentality, shallowness of experience, "oversimplified notions regarding people and musical activities," (Kertz-Welzel 2016, 121) and anti-intellectualism (118). Kertz-Welzel (2016) is critical of community music proponents' "skepticism that might suggest that too much

thinking can destroy the power of emotional and musical experience or disturb successful projects. Furthermore, practitioners often suggest the dominance of practice, proclaiming their projects to be something which cannot be captured adequately through scholarly analysis" (120). Kertz-Welzel fails to take into consideration the deluge of authoritarian, oppressive, and one-sided music education practices that have flourished on the basis of dualistic thinking that regards "intellectual" takes on music as necessarily "superior" to any other (see also González Ben 2016). Moreover, Kertz-Welzel (2016) seems to regard research that foregrounds the always culturally mediated but also deeply personal aspects of musical *experience* as "amateur" (125), and *de facto* unable to meet scholarly criteria; in doing so, she advocates a rather narrow view of research practice. Indeed, a number of efforts within the field of community music to adequately capture the particularities and the problematics of community music practices seem to indicate that a more open approach to research is indeed possible (Higgins 2021, Henley and Higgins 2020, Camlin, Caulfield, and Perkins 2020). However, for the discussion here, what it important is that underneath her claims there lies a more fundamental questioning of the very possibility that one may have meaningful musical experiences that have not been mediated—designed and controlled—by institutionalized forms of music education, as "today's societies do not usually provide the opportunities for natural musical development and socialization" (Kertz-Welzel 2016, 124).

II.

In a number of thought-provoking interventions, Graham McPhail (2013, 2014, 2018, McPhail and Rata 2019) argues for more emphasis on "powerful knowledge" (2018, 187, after Young 2008). McPhail is critical of what he describes as shallow and messy classroom work that seems to be the result of music educators' letting go of control of the kinds of knowledge being taught and their reliance on hands-on experience at the expense of deep knowledge. In my view, this falsely equates "instrumentalism" with superficial knowing devoid of concepts[2]:

> A new overemphasis on instrumentalism or "knowledge in use"—performing, composing, and utilizing music software—while emancipatory in some regards, can also become limiting where teachers decide not to ground knowledge in use in the systems of meaning from which they are derived. (McPhail 2018, 185).

In his affirmation of the value and the role of formal knowledge in music education, he argues for the need to limit "'noise' in the classroom" (McPhail 2018, 179).

McPhail invokes the notion of "noise" here "to describe the accumulation of information where the concepts and principles required to integrate or make sense of that information are missing" (McPhail 2018, 179, after Oates 2011). McPhail concludes that experiential practices often result in noise, as they are not grounded in an orderly curriculum design that enables students to acquire formal knowledge that is generalizable, "context-independent" (McPhail 2018, 187), knowledge that permits abstract and robust musical thinking. Most importantly, he criticizes such noise-inducing practices as failing their expressed mission for advancing a music education linked to the democratic imperative: "we critique the current emphasis on experience to suggest that this approach does not provide the access to transformative knowledge despite claims for its democratic imperative" (McPhail and Rata 2019, 124–25). Although many of the concerns raised by McPhail may be justifiable, on a deeper level, they betray a fear of the uncontrollable aspects of "direct experience" and of the possible ruptures that may result.

III.

Monday's Drop(s) is a free improvisation collective that emerged from a research project I ran between 2012 and 2018.[3] This project sought to research:

> the ways in which preschool student teachers, traditionally identified as "non musicians," develop[ed] their identity as music makers through a sustained effort to create, discuss, and record their own music, creating a window through which everyday cultural and educational realities can be critiqued. (Kanellopoulos 2015, 330)

The group's work included regular meetings, recordings of improvised music, creation of a number of musical happenings,[4] and an unfinished project of creation of free improvised music based on specific verbs related to "order" and "taxonomy" borrowed from Georges Perec's (1985) writings. The group created a space of ease and safety, a context where each one of us played to the best of our abilities (see Small 1998). Our music moved from quasi-minimalistic improvisations to a gradual incorporation of noise. As our work progressed, noise-based improvisations became the rule; unorthodox uses of sound sources and instruments on the basis of a DIY aesthetic induced the creation of convulsive, strange sound-worlds that empowered the group's identity, based "on an egalitarian politics of cultural pro-

duction" (Woods 2020, 3). As the group matured, my role in it became less directive. In our earlier, more melodic pieces, my use of the piano often influenced the overall direction of the piece. As we moved towards more daring improvisations and freer structures, the group members took ownership, and our roles in the group were more balanced. I was very proud of this work, as I felt it was a concrete materialization of Matthew Saladin's (2009) Rancierian reading of free improvisation as a space where "the absence of rules" intertwined with "the absence of a right required to practice it" (148).

Yet at the same time, I had begun to feel a certain unease about what I perceived as my partners' insistence in abstaining from any sort of preparation for performance. Moreover, I felt that I needed to encourage those students to search and reflect on the connections between what we had been doing and the historical dimensions of such practices, but I felt they were reluctant. As a teacher, I felt that they needed to learn more about contemporary music in general and the historical trajectories of free improvisation in particular and had hoped to use ideas emerging from these encounters in our improvised performances. As a musician/member of the group, I also felt that our music needed to come back to the use of melodic material, and I also longed for a more structured approached to our improvisations. Interestingly, when I look back at the data that came from our email exchanges of materials and ideas, I realize that the group members were indeed trying to connect their work to other musics and to their larger everyday life worlds, but it seems that this was done in a way that I could not understand. What is important for our discussion here is that I feared that *too much* freedom had resulted in what I perceived as "closure," and this made me think that I might have somehow failed as a teacher. A persistent question haunted me: if experimental music induces a refusal to engage in ways of music making that foreground traditional pitch and time relationships, as Gilmore (2014) suggests, has the lack of these students' formal musical engagement deprived them of the possibility to experience a conscious denial of and rupture from traditional musical codes that many have seen as the signpost of the experimental music tradition?

A Ranciérian Twist

Undue attention to the authority of the teacher, insufficient transmission of robust musical knowledge, over-attention to whimsical, informal participation, excessive reliance on students' "will": in one word, "too" much democracy, too much, too

hasty, too quick, unreflective, anti-canonic, lacking systematic grounding, not paying due attention to important distinctions, hierarchies, and values. Here, I propose an alternative reading of the cautionary calls that McPhail, Kertz-Welzel and I have, each in our own way, put forward. Underneath accounts that alarm us about the excesses that result from reliance on musical experience not linked firmly to disciplinary knowledge, underneath objections to the supposed anti-intellectualism that accompanies community music, underneath objections to emancipatory potential of egalitarian free improvisation practices in the absence of a clear political and/or educational purpose, underneath the fear that too much independence might lead students to unduly drop the task of learning the tradition and of situating themselves within it, there may lie a deep concern for the calamities that the democratic musical scandal might induce. This kind of fear of democracy is what Rancière provocatively refers to as *hatred of democracy*. Hatred of democracy is used here in the distinctive sense proposed by Rancière (2006). Its use presupposes that we adhere to a Rancièrian conception of democracy (see next section) and should be clearly distinguished from *the discontent of democracy* that Carlo Galli (2011) identified in his same-titled study. It should also be distinguished from superficial lay readings of the term.

All three snapshots presented above seem to share the fear that *too* much democracy in music education might lead to uncontrollable, undesired, and ultimately *mis*educative pathways. Rancière (2006) states that:

> [h]atred of democracy is certainly nothing new. Indeed, it is as old as democracy itself for a simple reason: the word itself is an expression of hatred. It was, in Ancient Greece, originally used as an insult by those who saw in the unnameable[sic] government of the multitude the ruin of any legitimate order. (2)

Rancière (2006) holds that today, the fear of democracy is made manifest at moments when those who hold various positions of power denounce "mass individualism" (2006, 23) and mass consumption, a move that is usually followed by accusing May 1968 for supposedly celebrating a democracy without limits, leading to "catastrophic effects" (66). Inevitably, education has been regarded as an important social institution corroded by the excesses of "false democracy" (Lipovetsky 1983, 146, as cited in Rancière 2006, 67). Rancière cites Jean-Claude Milner's *De l'ecole* (1984) as a characteristic example of this line of thought. *De l'ecole* is a fierce critique of "policies that diluted the disciplinary rigor of the curriculum and undermined the institution's mission to produce intellectually autonomous republican citizens" (Sacks 2017, 53). Milner argues against the corrosion

of teacher's authority that has resulted from lowering "teacher qualification standards regarding disciplinary expertise, a more symptomatic, in his eyes, of the denigration of scholarly knowledge" (Sacks 2017, 53). In a recent book that bears the same title as Milner's, seminal Greek scholar and public intellectual Stavros Zouboulakis (2017) offers a similar critique, lamenting the demise of school authority, expertise, lack of focus on disciplinary knowledge, celebration of informal forms of knowing, and of the need to listen to the student's "voice," arguing that this is but a misguided and misinformed version of a false conception of democracy. For such scholars, "the schoolmaster becomes the last witness of civilization" (Rancière 2006, 26), a vanishing figure that should be recast as a "conveyor of the universal knowledge that renders virgin souls equal" (26). The teacher's role thus conceived is almost extinct, so the argument goes, as a result of democratization of education, constantly under attack by "the adolescent-punk who, against Kant and Plato, demands the right to his or her own opinion" (27). Disrespectful to intellectual tradition, driven by their ignorance, students have been misguided, led to believe that they could be equals to the "master." And the teachers, misguided also, have been led "to discuss things equal to equal with his students, who themselves end up being put in the position of judging their schoolmaster" (Thiriet 1996, as cited in Rancière 2006, 26).

For all these "calamities," *democracy* is cursed as the problem: hierarchy, discipline, disciplinarity, depth, heritage, all seem to have been downgraded or disregarded by a *homo democraticus* that "becomes impatient whenever faced with competence" (Schnapper 2006, 124, as cited in Rancière 2006, 18). But is this the only way we might think of democracy? Is democracy a particular form of governmental ruling that induces a particular form of society? Is democracy both "producing" and produced by particular anthropological types (i.e., the consumerist individual)? Is democracy "an indistinct notion lumping together into a single whole a type of state order and a form of social life, a set of ways of being and a system of values" (Rancière 2006, 92)? If "[d]emocracy is neither a form of government that enables oligarchies to rule in the name of the people, nor … a form of society that governs the power of commodities" (96), then what can we learn from an examination of what democracy might be, and how might this help us to rethink issues of music creative engagement in educational contexts?

From Plato to CMinEd via Democratic *An-archê*

Freedom: An "empty" property

Rancière argues that Plato, who never approved his city's political regime, knew full well that freedom (*eleutheria*) of *demos* (the people) is "an *empty* property" (Rancière 1999, 8). Freedom of anyone to speak, think, and act as equal to anyone else despite objective inequalities of social, educational, and economic status was invented by Plato's fellow citizens as a fundamentally content-*less* concept. Freedom "is merely the position of those who have absolutely no other, no merit, no wealth" (Rancière 1999, 9). Freedom, this empty property, is the only property of demos. Therefore, the creation of demos designated the creation of a community that Aristotle, in his Athenian constitution, says "had no part in anything" (Aristotle, as cited in Rancière 1999, 9). Demos instituted a body that breaks away from arithmetic order, from an order that is based on the law of kinship, of strength, or wealth.

> [W]hat the empty freedom of the Athenians presents philosophy with is the effect of another kind of equality, one that suspends mere arithmetic without setting up any kind of geometry. This equality is simply the equality of anyone at all with anyone else: in other words,... the absence of *arkhê*, the sheer contingency of any social order. (Rancière 1999, 15)

One should bear in mind that the very term that designated equality based on an empty notion of freedom, *democracy*, was not invented by its supporters but by its critics. Plato, its most celebrated critic, reproaches it for that very reason: it is based on the freedom and equality of anyone. It is thus a mode of political action whose foundation is the absence of foundation, thus overturning "all the relations that structure human society" (Rancière 2006, 26).

That is why in Plato's *Πολιτεία* [Republic],[5] the philosopher set himself the task of outlining the principles on which "the divine order of geometric proportion ... regulates the real good" (Rancière 1999, 15). Plato's divine mathematics replaced the crude arithmetic of the oligarchy (whereby power goes to those who have "more") with the divine justice of geometry that was created according to a specific ordering of values (Ἀξίαι/ Axiai). But in doing so, he founded an Ideal city on the basis of the proscription of politics.

The 7th Title: Instituting the Democratic Archê (αρχή)

Plato knew that this divine ordering of the city had to exclude politics and the democratic scandal it induced. But he also knew that the democratic principle that instituted the part of those that had no part in anything could not just be erased from the map of political thinking. So, when he set himself the task of listing the titles on the basis of which positions are assigned, and therefore on which the right to rule was based, he listed seven, not six, titles. These titles lead to seven principles—*archai* (αρχές)—on which the right to rule can be grounded. Rancière invokes Hannah Arendt's (1998, 177, 223) observation that in Greek, *archê* "means at once commandment and commencement" (Rancière 2006, 38).

The seven principles signify who has "the power of commencing in the exercise of commanding" (Rancière 2006, 39). In his Book 3 of *Νόμοι* (The Laws), Plato (2016) discusses these principles: Four of them relate to birth, based on the law of kinship. This leads to the establishment of precedence of something over something else: "such is the power of" (39): 1) parents over children; 2) old over the young; 3) masters over slaves; 4) "highborn people over men of no account" (39.). The next two titles are formed on the basis of "natural" precedence (the law of the "best"): 5) "the strongest [exercise their power] over the weakest" (39), and 6) "those who know [exercise their power] over those who are ignorant" (Rancière 2006, 40).

These six titles are (a) hierarchical and (b) "natural" (adhere to what seems as naturally existing). However, principles 5 and 6 create a rupture with "the law of kinship." They thus invite us to ask: how do we define strength and knowledge? As Rancière (2006) says, "That is where politics begins" (40). It begins right at the moment when the question of excellence is formed, when the question of hierarchical superiority is disjointed "from the sole right of birth" (40). But right at that moment, Plato encounters:

> a strange object, a seventh title to occupy the superior and inferior positions, a title that is not a title, and that, the Athenian tells us, is nevertheless considered to be the most just: the title of that authority that has the "favour of heaven and fortune": the choice of the god of chance, the drawing of lots, i.e., the democratic procedure by which a people of equals decides the distribution of places. Therein lies the scandal. (Rancière 2006, 40)

This is the seventh title: *chance*; that is, "the drawing of lots" (Rancière 2006, 40). For Rancière, the democratic procedure of randomly deciding how people who are considered equal are going to occupy particular roles can be seen as the root of

democracy's scandalous character. The scandal that the seventh title initiates is that it leads to a break away from any hierarchical logic. In this sense, the seventh title is "a title that refutes itself" (Rancière 2006, 41), instituting "the absence of title" (Rancière 2006, 41). Rancière argues that this is the basis of Democracy: the idea that anyone can rule. Thus, "Democracy first of all means this: anarchic 'government,' one based on nothing other than the absence of every title to govern" (Rancière 2006, 41). In this sense,

> Democracy is neither a form of government that enables oligarchies to rule in the name of the people, nor is it a form of society that governs the power of commodities. It is the action that constantly wrests the monopoly of public life from oligarchic governments, and the omnipotence over lives from the power of wealth. (Rancière 2006, 96)

Why did Plato decide to list this "title" that is a non-title among the rest? Was it only because it was practically used in his time? Rancière denies this latter explanation. He tells us that Plato had to list this title because 1) this title that was no title appeared to remain true to a virtue that he considered of utmost importance in relation to the exercise of power, namely, that commandment should not be desired by those who exercise it: "the democratic procedure of drawing lots is compatible with the principle of the power of experts on one point, which is essential: good government is the government of those who do not desire to govern" (Rancière 2006, 43). Moreover, 2) chance satisfies the Platonic imperative for correcting the tendency to identity the "best" with the "richest," that is, of the property-owners by birth. It thus creates "a structural heterotopy between the principle of government and the principle of Society" (45), which puts a limit to the power of wealth.

The Common Base of Art and Democratic Politics

In trying to show why democracy had to be eliminated, Plato reveals what is most important about it: it is founded on the absence of foundation. He thus makes us aware of democracy's uniqueness—the creation of a space where freedom as an empty property belongs equally to all.

Plato did not only proscribe democracy from his ideal city *Kalipolis* (good/virtuous city); he also proscribed the poets. Rancière (2009) insists that we should reject the dominant reading of Plato's stance towards *technai* that sees this as "the

mark of a political proscription of art" (26). Instead, he claims that Plato proscribed both the arts *and* politics in a single stroke, because democratic politics and the arts have a common base.

Let us see what this means. In Plato's *Kalipolis*, the makers of art, the mimeticians, are perceived as dangerous. Why? Because they take on a character other than their own, violating the basic principle of the well-ordered community: that everyone should be assigned a single role in accordance with their nature. Extending this, we could say that art is dangerous because it enables people to experience worlds other than their own. As Rancière (2004) says, "the mimetician is, by definition, a double being. He does two things at once, whereas the principle of a well-organized community is that each person only does the one thing that they were destined to do by their 'nature'" (42). Rancière (2009) argues that democratic politics upset this very principle as well, enabling people to form a space wherein a community of equals thinks and acts politically, a space that enables them to break away from their everyday social position, a space ruled by freedom, that empty principle. Politics enables people to do something other than their work, which has been dictated by their nature:

> The democratic distribution of the sensible makes the worker into a double being. It removes the artisan from "his" place, the domestic space of work, and gives him "time" to occupy the space of public discussions and take on the identity of a deliberative citizen. The mimetic act of splitting in two, which is at work in theatrical space, consecrates this duality and makes it visible. (Rancière 2004, 43)

Here, the bond that links politics and art becomes clear. Plato worried about the "danger" of the arts, their uncontrollable aspects, and the perils of democracy, exactly because both the arts and the political assembly of citizens are two "forms of distribution of the sensible" (Rancière 2009, 26) that share a common root: they are "spaces of heterogeneity" (26), creating a context for freedom––the second [politics] because it enables people to "do something other than their work" (26), and the first [the arts] because within its realm people "might assume a character other than their own" (26). Rancière (2009) puts it this way: "Theatre and assembly: these are two interdependent forms of the same distribution, two spaces of heterogeneity that Plato was obliged to repudiate at the same time in order to constitute his Republic as the organic life of the community" (26).

The Democratic Imperative of CMinEd: A View from Rancière

Paolo Virno has taught us that the past is not neatly handed down to us; it is always instituted in retrospect through a looking-backwards gaze that is inevitably imbued with concerns of the present:

> One could say that we find ourselves in front of a locked safe whose treasure remains inaccessible because no one can remember the combination. The tradition is instituted retrospectively. The heritage begins to exist only from the moment that it is claimed. The safe's precious contents materialize only when we break into it (Virno in Henninger 2006, 150).

Heritage exists from the moment one situates one's work within it, and Virno insists that this is "a gesture of modesty" (Henninger 2006, 150). Creative Music in Education [CMinED] practices shaped what George Odam (2000) has called "the creative dream." Naturally, such practices induced considerable controversy both in the 1960s and early 70s (see, for example, Lansky 1971, Winters 1970) and at different moments since then. For some, CMinED has been the epitome of progressive education (Odam 2000); others believe that this was yet another failed educational provocation that offered a distorted approach to musical knowledge (Salaman 1983, Rainbow 1996); others think of it as a provocative endeavor that arbitrarily imposed, nevertheless, rationales and concerns of the avant-garde in education (Green 2016). Other studies have focused on the roots, the potentials, and the contradictions that emerged through CMinED practices (Cox 2002, 2006; Finney 2011, Finney, Philpott, and Spruce 2020, Kanellopoulos 2011, 2021; Pitts 2000, Spencer 2016).

CMinED has shaped teaching approaches that foreground improvisation and collaborative composition inspired by the radical openings of avant-garde and experimental musics from the 1960s onwards (Bašić 1973, Barry 1985, Cardew 1969, Friedemann 1969, 1973; Paynter and Aston 1970, Schafer 1965, Self 1967, Tilbury 2008). In creating a context for students to explore, cooperate, co-discover, share, invent, organize, and co-create, CMinED presupposes and, at the same time, cultivates a deep trust in the power of children to spontaneously grapple with issues of expressiveness, form, and meaning. CMinED has cultivated an aura of wonder and admiration—the result of adults/teachers' close attention to the outcomes of children's spontaneity (Pond 1980, Kanellopoulos 2000, Sundin 1997). Such practices maintain complex links with the radical openings of avant-garde and experimental music (Kanellopoulos 2021, Paynter 1972, Self 1967, Hickey 2015, Woods 2020), as well as with free improvisation (Barry 1985, Prévost 1995, Saladin 2009).

Within a Creative Music in Education [CMinED] ethic, experimentation molds a mode of teaching practice that has its roots in Rousseau's dictum that the "'most important rule' for the educator is 'not to gain time but to lose it'" (Shuffelton 2017, 837). This meant that "letting the child's experience follow its course without the interference of the teacher's concepts or precepts" (Løvlie 2002, 337, as cited in Shuffelton 2017, 844) became a guiding principle for a number of approaches that sought to create a meeting point between musical experimentations and young people's thirst for experimentation with the world. This egalitarian orientation has shaped modes of teaching practices that materialize in what Michael Fielding has referred to as "the insistent affirmation of possibility" (Fielding 2007, 551). Acting on the basis of this principle means that one is determined to "open up opportunity in significant part by refusing to adversely label, grade, pigeon-hole or circumscribe persons in the ubiquitous, often subtle, ways to which most societies in the world have become so distressingly accustomed" (Fielding 2014, 91).

The educational vision that was constructed through CMinED practices points towards a democratization of music making in educational settings by creating a context wherein the question of who has the right to create original music has been given a simple, yet profoundly unsettling answer: anyone who engages with music and its learning is a legitimate music creator, as open experimentation with sounds and structures signifies at once both learning and creation. At the same time, CMinED practitioners also wish to establish firm links between educational practices and music practices that break new grounds, question traditional givens, and do not enjoy mass popularity, given their relationship to rather marginal but significant musical and cultural trends. It thus approaches education as a culture-making enterprise and not merely as a culture transmission process; also, it approaches music making and music education as a space of autonomy that resists instrumental approaches. *Democracy*, *creativity,* and *autonomy* should therefore be seen as core and deeply intertwined concerns of a CMinED ethic, even if explicit reference to the political implications of its practices has been rather sparse.

Free Improvisation in Education as the 7th Title: An-anarchic Music Entrance to the Scandal of Democracy[6]

CMinEd brought to the fore the an-archic provocation that each and every child might be a creator and also established firm links with aspects of contemporary culture that endorse an open approach to creation, performance, listening, and

control; therefore, opening up the issue of how concrete music/pedagogical actions might "practice democracy." What I would like to suggest is that free music improvisation, as a music and educational practice that forms an unduly neglected aspect of CMinEd, constitutes "a symbolic and an embodied representation of human potential and freedom" (Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz 2013, 15), and can be seen as a musical gesture that, within the realm of art, occupies a position analogous to that of the Platonic seventh title: a mode of music making that institutes the absence of orderly plan, creates a space of possibilities based on an *archê*, a principle that is none other than the absence of principle. Freedom, in this context, should not be seen as "mere freedom to choose" (Woodford 2018, 35) but as an enabling condition, a condition that makes possible for someone to be-in-music and act-in-music in ways that go beyond what is socially dictated. Free improvisation resists stylistic conventions, initiates a breach of inherited structural logics, reserving for its participants the right to decide "the rules of the game" in situ. This might enable us to also argue that free musical improvisation, by virtue of its being analogous to an *archê* that is none, brings democracy back to the very core of music-making.

Free improvisation is based on the absence of pre-defined principles of action borrowed from extant musical styles. It invites the players to delve into a "designless purpose" (Prévost 1995, 109) where, "though [one] cannot predict how or what [one] will play, every note is intentional" (123), not in the sense that it is preplanned, of course, but in the sense it becomes an irrevocable part of an action that is part of this unpredictable performance and becomes material for a continuous dialectic between heurism and dialogue. Free improviser Eddie Prévost has suggested the notion of heuristic dialogue to refer to acts of discovery that result from the constant interaction between formulation of concrete intentions and the act of letting go, that is, of inviting the "intrusion" of unplanned musical actions. This is a dialogue between the results of unforeseen musical actions and the conscious attribution of meaning; Prévost (1995) regards this as an "inner debate" (3). Further, he refers to dialogical heurism to capture the richness resulting from differing the personal musical intentions of partners in improvisation and of the unexpected sonorities and music configurations resulting from the interaction between inner and outer debate. "Inner debate meets outer debate" (Prévost 1995, 3) in the knowledge that "there is nothing to co-ordinate or synchronise the intentions of the musicians as the music unfolds" (Hodgkinson 2000, 30). Conscious abolition

of pre-defined means that coordinate intentions exist side by side with the irrevocability of musical actions. This induces a particular sense of responsibility in the musical moment and to the improvised performance as a whole; responsibility takes on a particular sense related to the fragility of the actions uttered. Ratté (1997) says that "[a]n action, which cannot be undone, is greeted by a context that shows up the fragility of the justification for the decision that led to it. This fragility, once registered, motivates a concentration of judgement in the decision taker" (31). But the "decision taker" should not be thought of as a fully conscious, bounded self, but as a porous, constantly de-centered self that negotiates "across the boundary between the individual and the pre-individual field that remains with us, inside us, but without being exactly a part of us, forming our individual nature" (Hodgkinson 2019, 4).

Fragility of justification, vulnerability of musical actions, abolition of secure means of controlling development, experimentation with the unknown––these aspects of the improvisation experience seem to point towards what French musician and theorist Mathew Saladin (2009) refers to as improvisation's "lack of identity" (148). Saladin argues that this lack of identity in free improvisation seems to express its political dimension (148). He also notes:

> This constituting lack is not a gap which should be bridged within free improvisation; on the contrary, this lack is the empty space which allows it to exist. This empty space manifests itself both in the absence of rules which would come to outline its contours and in the absence of a right required to practice it. (Saladin 2009, 148)

Not only absence of rules, reliance on the "drawing of lots," (Rancière 2006, 40) but also, absence of any exclusivity over who has the right to practice it: it is in this sense that free improvisation might be apprehended as an *an-archic* musical mode of action. In free improvisation, freedom emerges as an empty property, as that "quality" that is shared by anyone on the basis of equality (see Kanellopoulos 2016, Kanellopoulos, Wright, Stefanou, and Lang 2016, Niknafs 2013). But equality should be understood in a very specific sense: as an axiom, as a principle that is presupposed and not as an end-moment, as a state towards which we are driven. Equality as an axiom means that it is "a point of departure, a supposition to maintain in every circumstance" (Rancière 1991, 138; Rancière 2010, Kanellopoulos 2016); it also means that actions based on this axiom are acts of verification of equality, actions that directly confront particular forms of inequality; it is in moments where inequalities meet with the creation of scenes that verify equality that

the possibility for rupture emerges. For "the construction of scenes of equality is dependent on what existing forms of inequality bring to it" (Rancière 2012, 112).

Studious Play as *An*-Archic Pedagogy

The foregoing analysis suggests that Creative Music in Education, and in particular, free improvisation, may actually be seen as contexts that bring forward the *an*-archic trouble that the scandal of democracy induces. The space of freedom that opens up on the basis of *an-archê suspends given uses and hierarchi*es of sounds, materials, and forms of organization. An important question that can be posed is this: *how could one conceive of the process of pedagogy that centers around an an-archic treatment of music*? This pedagogical process can be characterized as *studious play* as conceptualised by Giorgio Agamben (2005, also Agamben 1995, 2007) and applied in the field of philosophy of education by Lewis (2013, 2014), Jasinski (2018), and Jasinski and Lewis (2016).

For Jasinski and Lewis (2016), studious play paves a distinct pathway that breaks away from both ritual and play. Whereas ritual fixes patterns and meanings of human activity, play demolishes those very structured pattens: "play is a kind of suspension of ends or of predetermined uses that are set by the normative pressures of ritual" (Jasinski and Lewis 2016, 544). At the root of ritual schooling lies disciplinary knowledge that shapes systematic curricular instruction: "ritual schooling—as social baptism—transmits cultural traditions" (Lewis 2014, 203). Free play, on the other hand, "refuses to transmit anything beyond the event of play itself" (Lewis 2014, 203). Studious play breaks through this polarity, opening up another possibility. Here, the focus is neither on transmitting elements of the tradition [ritual], nor in mere ludic acts of self-expression. Lewis states that "[a]s a third option, studious play is neither the transmission of specific content (specific norms, values, and ways of being in the world), nor is it the impossibility of transmission" (Lewis 2014, 206).

Studious play suspends the ordinary canonic use of knowledge, performing an act of profanation. Suspension is an act of "de-privatization, de-socialization or de-appropriation; it sets something free" (Masschelein and Simons 2011, 158). Profanation, in Agamben's (2007) sense, is an act of moving beyond the sacred character of knowledge, freeing it from its canonic, hierarchal use and function, opening it up for playful engagement "at everyone's disposal for 'free use'" (Masschelein and

Simons 2011, 159). Profanation induces playing with ideas, studying them in unexpected ways, studying them away from their formal function and application. Lewis (2014) states that "studious play heals the laceration by proposing attentiveness to the potentiality of things and signs suspended from any determinate use" (204). Based on a sharply different reading of the profane/sacred distinction than the one advanced by Durkheim—used by McPhail and Rata (2019, 120) in their effort to build an argument about the democratic potential of disciplinary knowledge—Agamben (2007) sees profanation as an act of opening up and as sharply distinct from secularization. "Secularization is a form of repression" (76), whereas profanation:

> neutralizes what it profanes. Once profaned, that which was unavailable and separate loses its aura and is returned to use. Both are political operations: the first guarantees the exercise of power by carrying it back to a sacred model; the second deactivates the apparatuses of power and returns to common use the spaces that power had seized. (Agamben 2007, 76).

Secularization removes past knowledge from the historical roots of its meaning, but commodifies it, rendering it as means to the end of producing "flexible" knowledge consumers within the sacred ruling of market ideology (see also Zartaloudis 2010). Profanation frees an object, or an idea, from acceptable uses and sets it free "as means without an end" (Zartaloudis 2010, 308).

A pedagogy of studious play seeks to pave a way that cuts through both the imposed repetition that results from induction into musical traditions and from problematic notions of creative music-making as mere self-expression. In a pedagogy of *studious play,* aspects of tradition—musical knowledge and musical practices that have been developed by other people in other contexts over time and in different places—become playful resources put into unexpected uses; they are means for making ever new beginnings (αρχὲς/ *archês*) by profane acts of music making that play and re-turn the rules (αρχὲς/ *archês*) of tradition. Thus, a pedagogy of studious play operates at the intersection between the two notions of *archê*: creative music making becomes a source of new beginnings (*archês)* through a playful engagement with the rules [*archês*] of music. What I argue here is that a pedagogy of studious play nurtures modes of pedagogical action that center on this ambiguity between setting a creative process into motion and playing "with the rules," continually creating meaning and destroying it. It is in this distinctive sense that CMinED practices centering on experimental composing and improvising might be seen as holding the potential to stage the scandal of democracy, creating

a context for the appearance of what Rancière (2006) calls the "democratic excess" (41), exploring potentiality without pre-determinate ends. For as Lewis (2014) asserts:

> Studious play is the transmission of whatever remains effective within the crumbs of tradition—the crumbness of tradition. This is a strange operation whereby the impossible is given back to itself as a positive ground for experiencing potentiality without submitting this potentiality to any pre-determinate force. (207)

In this way, music education might indeed need to be conservative (Ferm-Almqvist, Benedict, and Kanellopoulos 2017), but in a very specific sense: resisting neoliberalism, it needs to conserve the spirit of openness that the scandal of democracy has made available, an openness that free improviser and community musician Paddy Gordon (2017) has described thus:

> and then all of a sudden the unknown presents not as a void into which one might tumble, a disorienting and anxiety-bound severing of convention, but rather a blooming space of childlike wonder and delight, where in each instance we can make and remake without conventions that initiate foreclosures of possibility, knowing without knowing that we will always respond appropriately because we are always responding intuitively. (3)

This approach makes it possible to move beyond restrictive polarities such as those which place "the canon or the kids" (McPhail 2013, 7) at the center of the discussion. It allows us to suggest that *neither* the canon, *nor* the kids, but studious play with sounds, and the ways that these sounds have and can be placed together and in relation to human beings who play and/or listen to them, opens up an uncharted but immensely creative territory. From a philosophy of music education perspective, the pedagogy of studious play that I have tried to sketch in this paper might be seen as extending Randall Allsup's (2013, 2016) perspective on the pedagogy of open texts and its emphasis on unbounded musical events, on tradition as guest, on student as host, and on "teacher as guide" (2013, 67). Building on Allsup, one could suggest that teaching does not seek control over the learning process to ensure that disciplinary knowledge is passed on; rather, teaching initiates studious play and renders it a core quality of "the four resources that fund student learning: communication, inquiry, construction and expression" (Allsup 2016, 96). In this view, what appears as unstructured may be the result of the muddiness of the democratic scandal that studious play brings to the process of education. It allows techniques and ideas to be put into unexpected uses; it profanes them, easing them out (Lewis 2013), making them available for free use. To use Jasinski's

(2018) formulation, it permits "finding new (profane) uses of established (sacred) practices" (63).

It must be emphasized that such a vision, which builds on and radicalizes the CMinED heritage that sought to build important links between democracy, creativity, and autonomy, retains a deeply critical stance toward market-based instrumentalization of music learning resulting from the deluge of neoliberalization of education that "amplifies *voice*, while paradoxically curtailing *agency*" (Schmidt 2021). Neoliberalization of education imposes a mechanistic framework that severely undermines the democratic mission of education (Ball 2003, Gielen 2013, Rüsselbæk Hansen, and Phelan 2019). It also trivializes "creativity" by viewing it as an integral aspect of the entrepreneurial mindset that, as we are told, needs to be cultivated in an education that prepares the young for 21st century challenges (for a critique of these developments see Baldacchino 2013, Darras 2011, Kalin 2018, Kanellopoulos 2015, Kanellopoulos and Barahanou 2020).

Despite their differences, the rationales that underpin the cautionary tales forming the first part of this essay share a strong commitment against instrumentalization of creative engagement in music education, which, of course, does not mean that they are immune to "hatred of democracy," as I hope to have shown. The "muddiness" of democracy has always puzzled educators. Often, it has been seen as threatening, inducing fear, even in cases where teaching has actually tried to encourage the appearance of the "democratic scandal." Hence, we, music educators, often choose to be on the safe side, preferring to "include" creative activities in the curriculum rather than to explore the radical potential of composing and improvising with our students. Against this preference for safety, I have tried to show in this essay how CMinED practices might be a means for practicing democracy through the emergence of a pedagogy of studious play: this in the knowledge that I fail daily in the task proposed here. However, I still believe that the topical and ephemeral moments of democratic education I and many other music educators have experienced are to be treasured as immensely valuable experiences for us and our students alike.

Kanellopoulos, Panagiotis. 2021. Studious play as an *archê of creative music-making: Repositing "the scandal of democracy" in music education*. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 20 (2): 79–109. doi:10.22176/act20.2.79

Acknowledgements

To the three anonymous ACT reviewers whose critical commentary has been immensely helpful. To Deb Bradley for her meticulous editorial care. To Niki Barahanou, Cathy Benedict, Niki Nikonanou, Charis Raptis, Patrick Schmidt, Lauri Väkevä, Ruth Wright, Francesco Serpetti, and the SMI mus-ed research study group in Stockholm (led by Ketil Thorgersen), for granting me the privilege to discuss with them aspects of this work during the various stages of its development.

About the Author

Panagiotis (Panos) A. Kanellopoulos serves as professor of Music Education at the University of Thessaly, Greece. Active as a researcher and a music maker, Panos is particularly interested in politico-philosophical, theoretical and field-based explorations of creative music making, its educative uses, mis-uses, and potentialities. His work has been published in major international journals (such as PMER, ACT, BJME, EPT, RSME, EJPAE) and edited volumes. Recently he co-edited *The Routledge Handbook to Sociology of Music Education* (Routledge, 2021), together with Ruth Wright, Patrick Schmidt and Geir Johansen.

References

Agamben, Giorgio. 1995. *Idea of prose*. Translated by Michael Sullivan and Sam Whitsitt. New York: State University of New York.

Agamben, Giorgio. 2005. *State of exception*. Translated by Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Agamben, Giorgio. 2007. *Profanations*. Translated by Jeff Fort. New York: Zone.

Allsup, Randall. 2013. The compositional turn in music education: From closed forms to open texts. In *Composing our future: Preparing music educators to teach composition*, edited by Michele Kaschub and Janice Smith, 57–74. New York: Oxford University Press.

Allsup Randall. 2016. *Remixing the classroom: Toward an open philosophy of music education*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Arendt, Hannah. 1998. *The human condition*. Second edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Baldacchino, John. 2013. What creative industries? Instrumentalism, autonomy and the education of artists. *International Journal of Education through Art* 9 (3): 343–56. https://doi.org/10.1386/eta.9.3.343_1

Baldacchino, John. 2020. Education's experience in an age of anti-politics: Reading John Dewey in the third decade of the 21st century. *Sisyphus Journal of Education* 8 (3): 41–64. https://doi.org/10.25749/sis.19986

Ball, Stephen. J. 2003. The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy* 18 (2): 215–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093022000043065

Barry, Malcolm. 1985. Improvisation: The state of the art. *British Journal of Music Education* 2 (2): 171–75. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051700004782

Bašić, Elly. 1973. Improvisation als schopferische mitteilung. In *Über improvisation*, edited by Wolfgang Stumme, 46–63. Mainz, Germany: Schott.

Butler, Judith. 2020. Is the show finally over for Donald Trump? *The Guardian*, November 5. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/05/donald-trump-is-the-show-over-election-presidency?CMP=share_btn_fb&fbclid=IwAR2AtcFGhQ14K-7ByxMPnifn_DhVpd3wrdoXwOxToZyP74vUfWnTmwQ0D-0

Camlin, Dave, Laura Caulfield, and Rosie Perkins. 2020. Capturing the magic: A three-way dialogue on the impact of music on people and society. *International Journal of Community Music* 13 (2): 157–72. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm_00017_1

Cardew, Cornelius. 1969. A scratch orchestra: Draft constitution. *The Musical Times* 110 (1516): 617+619.

Cox, Gordon. 2002. *Living music in schools 1923–1999: Studies in the history of music education in England*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Cox, Gordon. 2006. Historical perspectives. In *The child as musician: A handbook of musical development*, edited by Gary McPherson, 397–413. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Darras, Bernard. 2011. Creativity, creative class, smart power, social reproduction and symbolic violence. In *The Routledge international handbook of creative learning*, edited by Julian Sefton-Green, Pat Thomson, Ken Jones and Liora Bresler, 90–8. London: Routledge.

Dean, Roger. 1989. *Creative improvisation*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Emlyn-Jones, Chris, and William Preddy. 2013. General introduction to Plato's *Republic*, vol. I: Books 1–5. Edited and translated by Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy (vii–xxv). Loeb Classical Library 237. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ferm-Almqvist, Cecilia, Cathy Benedict, and Panagiotis A. Kanellopoulos. 2017. Pedagogical encounters in music: Thinking with Hannah Arendt. *European Journal of Philosophy in Arts Education* 2 (1): 1–48. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3384931

Fielding, Michael. 2007. On the necessity of radical state education: Democracy and the common school. *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 41 (4): 539–57. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2007.00593.x

Fielding, Michael. 2014. 'Bringing freedom to education': Colin Ward, Alex Bloom and the possibility of radical democratic schools. In *Education, childhood and anarchism: Talking Colin Ward*, edited by Catherine Burke and Ken Jones, 86–98. Abingdon: Routledge.

Finney, John, Chris Philpott, and Gary Spruce, eds. 2020. *Creative and critical projects in classroom music: Fifty years of sound and silence*. London: Routledge.

Finney, John. 2011. *Music education in England, 1950–2010: The child-centred progressive tradition*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Fischlin, Daniel, Ajay Heble, and George Lipsitz. 2013. *The fierce urgency of now: Improvisation, rights, and the ethics of cocreation*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Frankfurt, Harry. 2005. *On bullshit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Friedemann, Lilli. 1969. *Kollektivimprovisation als studium und gestaltung neuer musik*. Vienna: Universal Edition.

Friedemann, Lilli. 1973. *Einstiege in neue klangbereiche durch gruppenimprovisation*. Vienna: Universal Edition.

Gagel, Reinhard, and Matthias Schwabe, eds. 2016. *Improvisation erforschen—improvisierend forschen / Researching Improvisation–Researching by Improvisation: Beiträge zur Exploration musikalischer Improvisation / Essays About the Exploration of Musical Improvisation*. Austria: Transcript Verlag.

Galli, Carlo. 2011. *Il disagio della democrazia*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore.

Gielen, Pascal. 2013. Artistic praxis and the neoliberalization of the educational space. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 47 (1): 58–71. https://doi.org/10.5406/jaesteduc.47.1.0058

Gilmore, Bob. 2014. Five maps of the experimental world. In *Artistic Experimentation in music: An anthology*, edited by Darla Crispin and Bob Gilmore, 23–30. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

González Ben, Antía. 2016. Response to Alexandra Kertz-Welzel, "Daring to question: A philosophical critique of community music." *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 24 (2): 220–24. https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/633501

Gordon, Paddy. 2017. The blooming of forgetting: Deep play as a focus for improvisation in community music. *Critical Studies in Improvisation / Études Critiques en Improvisation* 12 (1): 1–7. https://www.criticalimprov.com/index.php/csieci/article/view/4282/4193

Green, Lucy. 2016. *Music education as critical theory and practice: Selected essays*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Heble, Ajay, and Mark Laver, eds. 2016. *Improvisation and music education: Beyond the classroom*. New York: Routledge.

Henley, Jennie and Lee Higgins. 2020. Redefining excellence and inclusion. *International Journal of Community Music* 13 (2): 207–16. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm_00020_1

Henninger, Max. 2006. The tradition of critical thought; idle talk and curiosity; language on stage: Three essays by Paolo Virno. *Forum Italicum* 40 (1): 147–70. https://doi.org/10.1177/001458580604000110

Hickey, Maud. 2015. Learning from the experts: A study of free improvisation pedagogues in university settings. *Journal of Research in Music Education* 62 (4): 425–45. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429414556319

Higgins, Lee. 2021. Note 57: Hospitable approaches to community music scholarship. *International Journal of Community Music* 13 (3): 223–33. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm_00022_1

Hirsch, Eric Donald. 2016. *Why knowledge matters: Rescuing our children from failed educational theories*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hodgkinson, Tim. 2000. A rich field of possibilities: Strategies and indeterminacy in free improvisation. *Resonance* 8 (1): 30–31.

Hodgkinson, Tim. 2019. Free improvisation, modes of playing, gestures. Paper delivered at *Internationale Tagung "Improvisation als Gestaltungspraxis,"* Hochschule Düsseldorf, May 3. http://www.timhodgkinson.co.uk/articles.html

Jasinski, Igor, and Tyson E. Lewis. 2016. Community of infancy: Suspending the sovereignty of the teacher's voice. *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 50 (4): 538–53. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12154

Jasinski, Igor. 2018. *Giorgio Agamben: Education without ends*. Cham: Springer.

Kalin, Nadin M. 2018. *The neoliberalization of creativity education: Democratizing, destructing and decreating*. Cham: Palgrave.

Kanellopoulos, Panagiotis. 2000. *Children's understandings of their musical improvisations*. PhD diss., University of Reading.

Kanellopoulos, Panagiotis A. 2011. Cage's short visit to the classroom: Experimental music in music education—A sociological view on a radical move. In *Proceedings of the 6th International Symposium on the Sociology of Music Education*, edited by John O'Flynn, 234–254. Dublin: St Patrick's College.

Kanellopoulos, Panagiotis A. 2015. Musical creativity and 'the police': Troubling core music education certainties. In *The Oxford handbook of social justice in music education*, edited by Cathy Benedict, Patrick Schmidt, Gary Spruce, and Paul Woodford, 318–39. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kanellopoulos, Panagiotis A. 2016. Problematizing (musical) knowledge–power relationships: A Rancièrian provocation. *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 24 (1): 24–44. https://doi.org/10.2979/philmusieducrevi.24.1.04

Kanellopoulos, Panagiotis A. 2021. Cage(d): Creativity and 'the contemporary' in music education—A sociological view. In *The Routledge handbook to the sociology of music education*, edited by Ruth Wright, Geir Johansen, Panagiotis A. Kanellopoulos, and Patrick Schmidt, 377–392. London: Routledge.

Kanellopoulos, Panagiotis A., and Niki Barahanou. 2020. The neoliberal colonisation of creative music education in cultural institutions: A hatred of democracy? In *Difference and division in music education*, edited by Alexis A. Kallio, 144–62. London: Routledge.

Kanellopoulos, Panagiotis. A., Ruth Wright, Danae Stefanou, and Jennifer Lang. 2016. Pictures of ignorant freedom: Music improvisation and informal music pedagogy. In *21st century music education: Informal learning and non-formal teaching approaches in school and community contexts*, edited by Ruth Wright, Betty Anne Younker, and Carol Beynon, 187–205. Waterloo: Canadian Music Educators' Association.

Kelz, Rosine. 2016. *The non-sovereign self, responsibility, and otherness: Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler, and Stanley Cavell on moral philosophy and political agency*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kertz-Welzel, Alexandra. 2016. Daring to question: A philosophical critique of community music. *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 24 (2): 113–130. https://doi.org/10.2979/philmusieducrevi.24.2.01

Lansky, Paul. 1971. Review of 'experimental music in schools' by Brian Dennis; 'sound and silence' by John Paynter and Peter Aston. *Perspectives of New Music* 9 (2) & 10 (1): 340–44. https://doi.org/10.2307/832152

Lewis, Tyson E. 2013. *On study: Giorgio Agamben and educational potentiality*. New York: Routledge.

Lewis, Tyson E. 2014. Education as free use: Giorgio Agamben on studious play, toys, and the inoperative schoolhouse. *Studies in the Philosophy of Education* 33 (2): 201–14. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-013-9365-4

Lipovetsky, Gilles. 1983. *L'ère du vide. Essais sur l'individualisme contemporain*. Paris: Gallimard.

Løvlie, Lars. 2002. Rousseau's insight. *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 21 (4–5): 335–41. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1019822122800

Masschelein, Jan, and Maarten Simons. 2011. The hatred of public schooling: The school as the mark of democracy. In *Rancière, public education and the taming of democracy*, edited by Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons, 150–65. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

McPhail, Graham, and Elizabeth Rata. 2019. The knowledge democracy connection and music education. *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 27 (2): 112–32. https://doi.org/10.2979/philmusieducrevi.27.2.02

McPhail, Graham. 2013. The canon or the kids: Teachers and the recontextualisation of classical and popular music in the secondary school curriculum. *Research Studies in Music Education* 35 (1): 7–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X13483083

McPhail, Graham. 2014. Pathways to powerful knowledge: A case for music's 'voice'. In *Knowledge and the future of the curriculum: International studies in social realism*, edited by Brian Barrett and Elizabeth Rata, 123–35. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

McPhail, Graham. 2018. Too much noise in the classroom? Towards a praxis of conceptualization. *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 26 (2): 176–98. https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/704998

Milner, Jean-Claude. 1984. *De l'école*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Niknafs, Nasim. 2013. Free improvisation: What it is, and why we should apply it in our general music classrooms. *General Music Today* 27 (1): 29–34. https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371313482921

Oates Tim. 2011. Could do better: Using international comparisons to refine the national curriculum in England. *The Curriculum Journal* 22 (2): 121–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2011.578908

Odam, George. 2000. Teaching composing in secondary schools: The creative dream. *British Journal of Music Education* 17 (2): 109–27. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051700000218

Paynter, John, and Peter Aston. 1970. *Sound and silence: Classroom projects in creative music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Paynter, John. 1972. *Hear and now: An introduction to modern music in schools*. London: Universal.

Perec, Georges. 1985. *Penser/classer*. Paris: Hachette.

Pitts, Stephanie. 2000. *A century of change in music education: Historical perspectives on contemporary practice in British secondary school music*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Plato. 2016. *Laws*. Edited by Malcolm Schofield. Translated by Tom Griffith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pond, Donald. 1980. The young child's playful world of sound. *Music Educators Journal* 66 (7): 39–41. https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432113519066

Prévost, Eddie. 1995. *No sound is innocent: AMM and the practice of self-invention. Meta-musical narratives. Essays*. Matching Tye: Copula.

Rainbow, Bernarr. 1996. Onward from Butler: School music 1945–1985. In *Teaching music*, edited by Gary Spruce, 8–18. London: Routledge/Falmer.

Rancière, Jacques. 1991. *The ignorant schoolmaster: Five lessons in intellectual emancipation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Rancière, Jacques. 1999. *Disagreement: Politics and philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Rancière, Jacques. 2004. *The politics of aesthetics*. New York: Continuum.

Rancière Jacques. 2006. *Hatred of democracy*. London: Verso.

Rancière, Jacques. 2009. *Aesthetics and its discontents*. Cambridge: Polity.

Rancière, Jacques. 2010. On ignorant schoolmasters. In *Education, truth, emancipation*, edited by Charles Bingham and Gert Biesta, 1–16. London: Continuum.

Rancière, Jacques. 2012. *The method of equality: Interviews with Laurent Jeanpierre and Dork Zabunyan*. Cambridge: Polity.

Ratté, Michel. 1997. Improvisation as form. *Resonance* 6 (1): 28–31.

Reichenbach, Roland. 2003. Paedagogischer kitsch. *Zeitschrift für Paedagogik* 49 (6): 775–89. https://www.pedocs.de/volltexte/2011/3902/pdf/ZfPaed_6_2003_Reichenbach_Paedagogischer_Kitsch_D_A.pdf

Ross, Daniel. 2019. From 'dare to think!' to 'how dare you!' and back again. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 52 (4): 466–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2019.1678465

Rüsselbæk Hansen, Dion, and Anne M. Phelan. 2019. Taste for democracy: A critique of the mechanical paradigm in education. *Research in Education* 103 (1): 34–48. https://doi.org/10.1177/0034523719836671

Sacks. Leon. 2017. The ignorant schoolmaster: Intellectual emancipation in circular form. In *Understanding Rancière, Understanding modernism*, edited by Patrick M. Bray, 51–72. New York: Bloomsbury.

Sætre, Jon Helge. 2011. Teaching and learning music composition in primary school settings. *Music Education Research* 13 (1): 29–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2011.553276

Saladin, Matthieu. 2009. Points of resistance and criticism in free improvisation: Remarks on a musical practice and some economic transformations. In *Noise and Capitalism*, edited by Mattin and Anthony Iles, 133–49. Gipuzkoa: Arteleku Audiolab.

Salaman, William. 1983. *Living school music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schafer, R. Murray. 1965. *The composer in the classroom*. Toronto: BMI.

Schmidt, Patrick. 2021. Diluting democracy: Arts education, Indigenous policy, and the paradoxes of participation. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 20 (2): 30–59. https://doi.org/10.22176/act20.2.30

Schnapper, Dominique. 2006. *Providential democracy: An essay on contemporary equality*. Piscataway: Transaction.

Schwan, Alexander. 1991. *Improvisation und komposition im musikunterricht allgemeinbildender schulen der sekundarstufe I: Ein beitrag zur paedagogischen elementarisierung ausgewaehlter ansaetze in der neuen musik nach 1945*. Franfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Self, George. 1967. *New sound in class: A practical approach to the understanding and performing of contemporary music in schools*. London: Universal Edition.

Shuffelton, Amy. 2017. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the mechanised clock and children's time. *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 51 (4): 837–49. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12246

Small, Christopher. 1998. *Musicking: The meanings of performing and listening*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Spencer, Piers. 2016. Post-war modernism and the music classroom. *Journal of Biomusical Engineering* 4 (1): 1–5. https://doi.org/10.4172/2090-2719.1000113

Stiegler, Bernard. 2010. *Taking care of youth and the generations*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Stumme, Wolfgang, ed. 1973. *Über improvisation*. Mainz: Schott.

Sundin, Bertil. 1997. Musical creativity in childhood: A research project in retrospect. *Research Studies in Music Education* 9 (1): 48–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X9700900106

Thiriet, Jean-Louis. 1996. L'école malade de l'égalité. *Le Debat* 92 (5): 24–34.

Tilbury, John. 2008. *Cornelius Cardew (1936–1981): A life unfinished*. Matching Tye: Copula.

Veblen, Kari K. 2007. The many ways of community music. *International Journal of Community Music* 1 (1): 5–21. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm.1.1.5_1

Winters, Geoffrey. 1970. Review of 'experimental music in schools' by Brian Dennis; 'sound and silence' by John Paynter & Peter Aston. *Tempo* 92 (Spring), 43+45–46.

Woodford, Paul. 2018. *Music education in an age of virtuality and post-truth*. New York: Routledge.

Woods, Peter J. 2020. The aesthetic pedagogies of DIY music. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*: 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2020.1830663

Young, Michael F. D. 2008. From constructivism to realism in the sociology of the curriculum. *Review of Research in Education* 32 (1): 1–28. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X07308969

Zartaloudis, Thanos. 2010. *Giorgio Agamben: Power, law and the uses of criticism*. London: Routledge.

Zouboulakis, Stavros. 2017. *Για το σχολείο* [Concerning school]. Athens: Polis.

Notes

[1] This, of course, does not mean that CMinED followed a uniform trajectory of development; quite the contrary: it flourished in a number of places and contexts, more than what is usually assumed in the dominant literature, and of course it has not been devoid of failures, contradictions, and partialities.

[2] See John Baldacchino's (2013, 2020) reference to instumentalism as "that ability by which human reason comes to experiment, discover and assemble" (2020, p. 52), emphasising the materiality of concepts. As Baldacchino notes, in Dewey's universe "instrumentalism stood for a conceptualization of production that aligned itself to experimental concepts of knowledge and education that articulated and expressed the idea of a common spirit reflecting common needs." (2013, 349).

[3] "The Scandal of (Musical) Democracy," University of Thessaly, see http://www.ece.uth.gr/main/content/695-scandal-musical-democracy-collective-composing-and-improvising-early-childhood-universit

[4] These include: (a) "Elevated music" an improvised performance that took place in an open-air shopping mall in Volos, Greece (7/7/2016), in collaboration with

free improvisation group Acte Vide, and composers Dora Panagopoulou and Tim Ward; (b) music for two performances by Natassa Avra Dance Company: "Rearrangement 2" (2017), http://www.dancepress.gr/?i=news.el.performances.4056 and "Co-existence" (2012), http://www.dancepress.gr/?i=news.el.performances.1796; (c) Piecemeal II—a graphic score performance, open to all participants of the 3rd International Conference on Ambiances, held at the department of Architecture, Thessaly University, 2016. In 2018 the group released a sample of its music in the French label Armures Provisoires: https://armuresprovisoires.bandcamp.com/album/three-improvisation-moments

[5] In the introduction of Plato's *Politeia*, the editors state that the original title of the work, *Πολιτεία* [*Politeia*], should better be rendered as 'the State', 'Government' or 'Citizenship', and that its translation as *Republic* derives "from the Latin, of Cicero's *De Republica*" (Emlyn-Jones and Preddy, 2013, vii) and is rather misleading.

[6] Every time one attempts to bring back to the table the right of *any*one to forge an equal voice, a skeptic warning arises that this opens the door to populism, Trumpism, bullshit (Frankfurt 2005), an anything goes stance, mediocracy, meaninglessness, and so on. As response to this claim, it can be argued that the problem with populism is neither that one does and talks as they please, nor its disregard of "high" art forms and standards of excellence. Various elites perform both of these without being "populist." The problem with populism is that it fervently wishes to gain power and disrupt all other points of view, all differences, shutting down dialogue, erasing plurality. Incidentally, this is the reason for Trump's preference for engaging in legal proceedings every time a law prevents him from doing as he pleases (Butler 2020). Responding to similar accusations regarding "indiscriminate openness towards the demand of the other" Rosine Kelz (2016) has argued that "this concern … could be mitigated when we recall the philosophical starting point of the notion of otherness. The disposition towards the other where otherness cannot be denied wants to avoid a way of thinking that would reduce the other to the same" (105).