TEACHING MUSIC PERFORMANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF ARTISTIC RESEARCH

EDITED BY
HELEN JULIA MINORS,
STEFAN ÖSTERSJÖ,
GILVANO DALAGNA, AND
JORGE SALGADO CORREIA

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12. Employability Skills within an Inclusive Undergraduate and Postgraduate Performance Curriculum in the UK

Helen Julia Minors

In aspiring to integrate employability skills[1] into the music curriculum of both undergraduate and postgraduate music students, while, at the same time, working to develop an inclusive curriculum (whereby students can see themselves, their culture, their identity, and their desired career aspirations reflected), I worked on two parallel projects which culminated in two revised modules: one at undergraduate level adding performance to an analytical module, and one at master's level to reflect on the personal performance brand of individuals. Both projects embody the skills outlined in the REACT model, notably requiring the contextualisation of the societal and subject relevance of the skills before exploring those skills practically and before one can share those skills through the dissemination of the project work. Due to the relevance of these projects to the model, I was given a visiting professorship at Luleå University of Technology, Sweden, where the project discussed below have been used both in the doctoral research methods course and in research dissemination as part of the REACT project. Notable for this project is the centre of the model: every learning in the below modules linked directly to the programme outcomes, which were designed to enable students to gain theoretical and practical knowledge and skills that they could apply in their own artistic research and artist practice, enabling them to develop their own artistic voice. Similarly to Chapter 10, this chapter relies on diverse practices within the music degrees, and, similarly to the project described in Chapter 11 (written by my co-worker), the ones discussed here embed critical reflection as part of the entire process.

1 Kingston University, 'Future Skills' (Kingston University, 2022), https://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/future-skills/

https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0398.15

Modification of the curriculum has taken time and research, over more than a decade, leading to revised approaches to module content development that integrate students as partners and peers in the learning journey. I question: how can the curriculum embed employability skills in an authentic manner? In other words, how do I embed employability skills alongside performance technique, aesthetic understanding, and analytical ability? How can these embedded skills be developed in an authentic manner to support students' learning? As both module changes concerned performance, it is important to ask, within the performance curriculum specifically, what might an inclusive curriculum look like?

This chapter explores, first, the challenges in Higher Music Education (HME) and the inclusive-curriculum concerns that led to two interconnected curriculum changes: 1) the funded project 'Taking Race Live' (2014–2018) and the project's associated second year (Level 5) module, 'Aural and Analysis' which became 'Aural, Analysis and Improvisation'; 2) Developing from the lessons learnt from 'Taking Race Live', a concern to advance an inclusive approach in the postgraduate performance curriculum led to module change from 'The Aesthetics of Musical Performance' to a revision entitled 'Critical Aspects of Musical Performance'. Integrating the student as an equal partner and peer in the learning process was important to me. Why? Much research had identified that some students were not seeing themselves reflected among university staff or in the reading lists: for example, critical questions concerning, 'Why isn't my professor Black?'.[2] Or, as one student commented via mid-module review in my class, 'Music and Motion' (a third-year module exploring the interrelations of music and dance): 'that's the first time I've seen someone who looks like me in class'. I had shared an example of Yo Yo Ma, the cellist playing the famous 'The Swan' by Saint-Saens, performing with Lil Buck, a hip hop dancer, to explore connections which are beyond genre limitations.[3] The latter example also, like Chapter 11, ensures we foster broader intercultural experiences and dialogues. And also, that the level of anxiety and wellbeing concerns were increasing and continue to increase amongst young people within the UK.[4] I also wanted to embed approaches to help performers in the module to manage their anxiety.

As such, this chapter is a self-reflection that charts how the lessons learned from both projects informed a revised curriculum development and approach to teaching and learning. I reflect on the curriculum changes and the teaching and learning approaches I developed to support, nurture, encourage, and guide both undergraduate and postgraduate performance students to develop their confidence and resilience; to develop their performance brand, marketing, and confidence; and to advance their

2 Mariya Hussain, 'Why is My Curriculum White?', NUS News, 11 March 2015, http://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/why-is-my-curriculum-white/; Winston Morgan, 'Why is My Professor Still Not Black?', *Times Higher Education*, 14 March 2016, http://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/why-my-professor-still-not-black

3 Lil' Buck and Yo Yo Ma, 'Yo Yo Ma and Lil' Buck Do "The Swan" in Beijing', YouTube, uploaded by Flatone, 7 Nov 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfEYjKWJ56E

4 See Johann Hari, *Lost Connections: Why You're Depressed and How to Find Hope* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018)

critical self-reflection, in a context where they were aware of their wellbeing and had tools to help support anxiety. The chapter is written from the voice of a module leader and lecturer, while I was, at the same time, the School Head of Department and active performer (trumpet/voice) and researcher simultaneously.

HEI Challenges and Models of Inclusion and Performance in the Curriculum

An inclusive curriculum needs to ensure that all students see themselves represented. This part of the practice needs to be embedded in all dimensions of the REACT model (see the Introduction of this volume). Building the curriculum from their starting point means integrating their culture, their experiences, and their background. But most music courses had been largely limited by genre barriers; modules explored traditional and largely Western concepts. But moreover, courses often taught performance and theory separately: assessments on live performance were often in one module and assessments exploring critical reflection and analysis are often in another, creating a perceived barrier between the two. The relationship between the critical dimensions of the curriculum in theory and practice is often delineated. As Jerrold Levinson outlined, the interpretation of music is divided between the pure critical and performative.[5] Stefan Östersjö clarifies that the 'distinction between the two rests on the relation between verbal interpretation as an act of translation, which characterizes "critical" interpretation, while a "performative" interpretation takes shape within the artistic domain and therefore evades translation'.[6] As I note elsewhere, if every act of musical interpretation is a form of translation, then translation is never evaded, but how we enact the process changes.[7] In other words, one is spoken and written, the other is embodied and lived through the performative act. In a teaching context, therefore, it is imperative that we encourage students to know and be critical in both a thoughtful and practical manner, through speaking/writing and through making/doing. These multiple literacies are the core of our experience as musicians. And we should be approaching music students as future performing musicians, training them for the professional music industries. Indeed, as Östersjö extends: 'The ability to move between different forms of knowledge is a factor in artistic research that remains in its infancy'.[8] Nevertheless, many have asserted the need to disseminate knowledge in the art world,

5 Jerrold Levinson, 'Performative vs. Critical Interpretations in Music', in *The Interpretation of Music*, ed. by M. Krausz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 33–60.

6 Stefan Östersjö, 'Art Worlds, Voice and Knowledge: Thoughts on Quality Assessment of Artistic Outcomes', *Online Journal for Artistic Research*, 3/2 (2019), 60-89 (p. 64).

7 Helen Julia Minors, 'Introduction', in *Music, Text and Translation*, ed. by Helen Julia Minors (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 1-6 (p. 1).

8 Östersjö, p. 71.

through the applied practice, as a fundamental part of the research.[9] This approach, whereby knowledge is demonstrated through performance and not only through text, is vital to enabling students and artists to enact criticality in their art world. It is a principle which became core to the module changes I made and which I discuss below.

There is a liminal space between the learning outcomes of a module within an institution and the art world outside the institution (illustrated under Sharing, in the REACT model, see Introduction) whereby artistic practice is situated. Indeed, as Megan McPherson has shown, the 'university studio prepares art students for the art worlds' that are in industry and that are important to art cultures.[10] Indeed, these art studio practices are detailed in validation documents for degree programmes, represented through learning outcomes (or, put another way, what students will have achieved and demonstrated when they pass the module) and programme handbooks (which detail programme level learning outcomes, which include a detailed summary of the skills and qualities students gain and develop throughout the acquisition of the degree). Recently, in the UK, employability skills in particular have been legitimised institutionally via the graduate attributes that are declared by each UK institution. During this research, those attributes were named as positive and aspirational 'future skills' at Kingston University, as we piloted and embedded these employability skills into the Music Technology undergraduate degree. I, as the head of department, and course leaders met to rewrite all the learning outcomes for modules to ensure they were cohesive, consistent, and utilised the language of the graduate attributes, to ensure both module leader and student could see exactly where these skills were to be taught and supported, and also to generate a consistent language to articulate those skills which are often transferrable.[11] The resulting work saw first-year students discussing their learning: 'it's very important knowing your worth ... it's all about networking, knowing how to talk to people in the right sort of way ... how can I overcome [anxiety]?'. The career adviser noted that students 'being able to talk about the wider career world and also about themselves' is important.[12] The Vice Chancellor, Stephen Spier, hosted a delegation of local MPs to share the work of students and careers staff. He noted that the 'future skills report clearly shows what businesses say they need to meet the challenges of the future'.[13] This report is one strategic output from many years of work at Kingston University, with colleagues

9 *Artistic Research in Performance through Collaboration*, ed. by Martin Blain and Helen Julia Minors (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2020).

10 Megan McPherson, 'In-Between Practice and Art Worlds', in *Creativities in Arts Education, Research and Practice: International Perspectives for the Future of Learning and Teaching*, ed. by L. R. de Bruin., P. Burnard, and S. Davis (Leiden and Boston: Brill Sense, 2018), pp. 33-45 (p. 35).

11 For more on this revision, called 'Navigate', see Kingston University, 2022, 'Kingston University's Navigate programme to prepare students for career success by embedding future skills across curriculum', https://www.kingston.ac.uk/news/article/2747/16-nov-2022--kingston-universitys-navigate-programme-to-prepare-students-for-career-success-by-embedding-future-skills/

12 Kingston University, 'Lib Dem MPs visit Kingston University to hear how Future Skills are being embedded into curriculum', YouTube, uploaded by Kingston University, 14 Nov 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8gy54op2FE

13 Ibid.

working to develop their inclusive curriculum framework and working with industry to reflect on how to modernise a curriculum.[14] It has, undoubtedly, been integral to my own development as my own work was within and in parallel to this context.

These graduate attributes are refined and unique to each institution, setting out their unique selling points, but essentially, they all show the skills which students need and should acquire as part of their degree to best support their progression into graduate employment. The graduate attributes at my present institution are vital for artists working in the art worlds, but they are equally transferable qualities for all, and are certainly pertinent to this volume. The attributes are under the following headings: 'confident', 'authentic', 'resilient', 'enterprising', and 'professional'.[15] For an institution with a social justice remit in all we do, York St John University encourages everything we do to follow the same approach as the inclusive curriculum: to include all, to make a positive change, and to support the future change needed to align learning to industry needs. In other words, we are making our graduates into self-sufficient lifelong learners, critical thinkers, problem solvers, and creative collaborators.

Since first becoming a degree-programme director (2008, Roehampton University), I started to consider how music was not only used *as* the curriculum, but that—in schools, colleges and university—it was also used *in* a broader curriculum; music was used to teach research skills and personal skills *through* practice. Indeed, the faculty at the time were exploring how music was used in education *as an* education, and even *for* education, as part of their working in school music education.[16] It is significant that these prepositions were also central to Christopher Frayling as he defined the categories of arts research in his seminal report of 1993: 'research into art and design, research through art and design and research for art and design'.[17]

University programmes have been adapting their courses to ensure they prepare their students for employment. In UK Higher Music Education departments and institutions, there is a priority to ensure that graduate outcomes are strong. The outcomes consist of the data regarding the kind of employment students go into and their earnings. These metrics feed league tables and are used politically to argue for the value of certain degrees. We want the best for our students. Alongside this, it is imperative that we work to make the curriculum inclusive and accessible, and that we support the

14 Kingston University, 'Inclusive Curriculum Framework', 2023, https://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/our-inclusive-curriculum/inclusive-curriculum-framework/

15 York St John University, 'Graduate Attributes', 2022, https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/careers-and-placements/graduate-attributes/

16 R. Purves, N. A. Marshall, D. J. Hargreaves, G. Welch, 'Teaching as a Career? Perspectives From Undergraduate Musicians in England', *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 161/162 (2004), 1–8.

17 Christopher Frayling, 'Research in art and design', Royal College of Art Research Papers Series, 1/1 (1993), pp. 1–9 (p. 5).

inclusion of collaborative working and digital technologies.[18] Indeed, the most recent Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) 'Benchmark Statement for Music', against which all music degrees are validated, notes that: 'Music graduates develop transferable skills of analytical thinking, problem-solving, leadership, cooperation and communication'.[19] In charting the subject knowledge and skills, the benchmark also notes that: 'All music graduates are expected to be able to engage with music critically, confidently and creatively'.[20] The wording aligns closely to Kingston University's institutional graduate attributes. Interestingly, the benchmark does not refer to equality at all, and, when diversity is mentioned, it concerns the diversity of courses and provision, and of the 'diversity of approach' with the degrees, but there is no requirement to specifically embed teaching and outcomes which reflects the students' diversity.[21]

There have been pressures to expand genres, styles, and multiple literacies (and rightly so), but the issues and challenges have been how to do so within a single degree. As Celia Duffy and Joe Harrop have shown in their exploration of academic studies for performers, there have been 'recent moves to unite distinct strands of musical study within a single curriculum'.[22] Combining multiple literacies and approaches for performers means that we must enable students to develop their own approaches, their own specialisms, and, therefore, as academics, we must build into programmes the ability for students to make their own choice (of modules, of assessment types, of specialisms) which enables them to meet the learning outcomes on their personalised journeys. Only by supporting their needs, their career aspirations, and journeys, in parallel with offering a range of technical, critical, reflective and applied skills, will students be able to create their own authentic journeys which are meaningful to them.

Pedagogic Aims and Roles—Applying the Models

Lived experience is vital to the educational process for performers. Feeling, hearing, understanding, and sensing the artistic knowledge in all forms ensures that the knowledge spreads across the performative act: in doing the performance, in the art world, through engagement with the instrument (the genre, the setting, the venue), and through thinking about the context, background, and theories applied in the practice. Many art scholars have iterated this in the ways they model education in relation to the art world (notably,

18 For an overview of these drivers, see H. Gaunt, C. Duffy, G. Delgado, L. Messas, P. Oleksandr, and H. Sveidahl, 'Musicians as "Makers in Society": A Conceptual Foundation for Contemporary Professional Higher Music Education', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12/713648 (2021), 1–20 (see p. 2).

19 QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for UK Higher Education), 'Subject Benchmark Statement: Music', December 2019, p. 6, https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-music.pdf?sfvrsn=61e2cb81_4

20 Ibid., p. 10.

21 Ibid., p. 17.

22 Celia Duffy and Joe Harrop, 'Towards Convergence: Academic Studies and the Student Performer', in *Musicians in the Making: Pathways to Creative Performance*, ed. by John Rink, Helena Gaunt, and Aaron Williamon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 271.

the aspect of Sharing, in the REACT model is particularly pertinent to my case studies and to the UK pedagogic approach to embedding employability). They refer to the ways in which we are 'thinking-in-art'[23] and 'thinking-through-art'[24] but also to how we are 'doing-thinking'[25] as art practitioners and as educators. These different prepositions reveal the ways in which we need to consider how we teach performance. Educating music performance relies on all the senses and, so, for an authentic experience and understanding that is relatable to the art world, the learning and, in turn, assessment must be embodied.

The aim for these two modules and their associated projects, discussed below, was to ensure that students can see themselves reflected in the curriculum and see themselves as part of the art world in a way which is meaningful to their career aims, to their experiences. The objective included enabling students to expand their knowledge and experiences, and so to ensure the learning is embodied in the art practice. As such, it was imperative that the learning environment, the learning outcomes, and the assessment facilitated a process whereby, in performance classes and practical music-making sessions, 'tacit knowledge can be translated into discursive knowledge'.[26] This aim meant that I needed to identify where students could not see themselves represented, where barriers existed in the curriculum, but also, in cases where assessment used traditional forms of writing and reflection, how I could ensure that learning was also embodied. Integration was and is central: the curriculum now integrates critical-thinking skills (REACT model, Contextualization), applied music-making skills, cultural and societal awareness into a 'deeply interconnected ecology'.[27]

Project 1: 'Taking Race Live', Integrating Soundpainting into an Inclusive Undergraduate Curriculum

Taking Race Live (2014–2018) was a four-year funded project that aimed to utilise performance experiences[28] of race, ethnicity, identity, culture (in an intersectional

23 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans. by Richard McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

24 Stefan Östersjö, 'Thinking-through-Music: On Knowledge Production, Materiality, Embodiment, and Subjectivity in Artistic Research', in *Artistic Research in Music: Discipline and Resistance: Artists and Researchers at the Orpheus Institute*, ed. by Jonathan Impett (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2017), pp. 86–107.

25 Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), p. 3.

26 David Gorton and Stefan Östersjö, 'Austerity Measures I: Performing the Discursive Voice', in *Voices, Bodies, Practices*, ed. by C. Laws, W. Brooks, D. Gorton, T. T. Nguyễn, S. Östersjö, and J. Wells (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2019), pp. 29-82 (p. 38).

27 Duffy and Harrop, p. 72.

28 H. J. Minors, P. Burnard, C. Wiffen, Z. Shihabi, Z., and J. S. van der Walt, 'Mapping Trends and Framing Issues in Higher Music Education: Changing Minds/Changing Practices', *London Review of Education*, 15/3 (2017), 457–73. Helen Julia Minors, 'From Women's Revolutions Per Minute through Taking Race Live to Co-Founding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Music Studies Network', in *Routledge Companion to Women and Musical Leadership: the nineteenth century and beyond*, edited by Laura Hamer and Helen Julia Minors (London and New York: Routledge, 2024), pp.624–633.

approach) to develop an inclusive, equitable curriculum, with a specific aim of removing the awarding gap (the gap between the attainment of UK White domicile students, and student from Black, Asian Ethnic Minority Backgrounds) in that curriculum.[29] Alongside this, I had hosted the International Soundpainting Think Tank and developed an extra-curricular ensemble whereby we were testing our own creativity in an improvisatory setting to see how we could create music between stylistic boundaries.[30] These two experiences led to questions about the implementation of societal-change-informed pedagogic approaches. In order to develop the aims of 'Taking Race Live', my research collaborators and I linked the research to second-year level 5 modules in our associated subject (in music, sociology, dance, media, drama). Ultimately, the project aimed to remove the awarding gap between the different performance achievements of different demographics of students, to ensure equity of experience and opportunity. As such, I chose to link this to the module 'Aural and Analysis' for two reasons: 1) The awarding gap was the widest of the modules I led, and 2) the mid-module review had shown that, although students were enjoying the classes, they could not see the module's relevance to their future careers. 'Taking Race Live' recruited students' partners, who were paid, to lead meetings, to lead the end-of-year symposium, and to work with colleagues as peers in reassessing the ways in which our lived experience could be utilised in learning. Through discussion with students, it was clear they wanted to do something, to make things, and to use their performance skills. As such, I choose to consider how we might bring improvisation into the module and its assessment, as a way to bring in individual voices, experiences, cultures, and preferences into learning about structure, form, style, and how to discern those facets aurally.

In making the assessment work inclusively, I needed to find a way to integrate their critical thinking through writing and talking, as much as through the creative work in their art world[31]—that of making music. As such, the module changes, shown in Table 12.1 below, moved the learning outcomes from rigid recognition of small- and large-scale structure to a more open approach in order to understand a range of structural attributes that are relevant to different musics, thereby expanding the potential for a wider number of musical genres to be included. Different improvisation approaches were included in the class, including Soundpainting, Conduction, free improvisation, and improvising over a figured bass/ground bass/groove.

To integrate improvised performance approaches, I decided to apply a guided method—one which emphasised coaching students into finding their own performance voice and facilitating them in listening to each other and co-constructing music in

29 S. Sharma, E. Catalano, H. Seetzen, H. J. Minors, and S. Collins-Mayo, 'Taking Race Live: Exploring Experiences of Race through Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Higher Education', *London Review of Education*, 17/2 (2019), 193–205.

30 Helen Julia Minors, 'Soundpainting: A Tool for Collaborating during Performance', in *Artistic Research in Performance through Collaboration*, ed. by M. Blain and H. J. Minors (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2020), pp. 113–38.

31 Östersjö, 'Art Worlds'.

the moment. I was aware this would mean introducing a new musical approach and another musical literacy, that of Soundpainting. Students already were reading scores, reading tab, using graphic notation, using various software (Logic and Protools mainly), so they had different forms of musical literacies. I chose to add another, which was embodied and physical. Multiple literacies, or perhaps it is best described as a 'communal meta-language',[32] I saw it as a benefit for musical education as it encourages the student to see, hear, feel, understand, and critique the many aspects of what is happening. The senses work in combination to make the learning applied.

The approach taken was collaborative in that no student was asked to perform alone. By using guided methods, through the signed coded gestures of Soundpainting, the entire class could experiment together to find their sound and to find a way this could work for them. The importance of the individual was central to developing the inclusive framework, which asks, among other things: 'Are a diverse range of assessment styles (including choice) used to reduce the need for reasonable adjustments and ensure that the assessment medium reflects their own strengths and educational backgrounds?'.[33] By offering choice in assessment, students could explore within one-to-one tutorials and in groups, according to their preferences. They could utilise peer support and dialogue. Moreover, in working as a group, I was hoping to reduce anxiety in assessment through art-world application by giving the opportunity for group, and not only solo, performance. As such, I hoped that I met the inclusive curriculum aim of 'involv[ing] in real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills'.[34] In other words, I wanted students to use problem solving, creative tools, dialogue, collaboration, and their individual instrumental performance skills to create a coherent piece of music in the moment. Interestingly, despite the option for group or solo improvisation, only one student across four annual iterations of the module chose a solo performance to improve over a ground bass; all other members of these cohorts choose, as a group, to create a Soundpainting. Mid-module feedback from 2014–2015 was that, as the creation was 'guided', it 'enabled everyone to have a voice and a sound', it gave 'freedom of style' and it was 'open to any mistake being revised in the moment – essentially, you could create to avoid a musical error'.

The central aim was for students to be critically aware of the structure, style, rhythm, melody, and harmony of the work and to offer a creative performance in which they co-constructed the development of the piece. My approach was similar to Duffy and Harrop's in that the learning outcomes and aims of the module revision defined a creative performance as: 'one that is somehow independent, individual, challenging, thoughtful, risky, enlightening and disturbing, offering new light on the music'.[35] Similar qualities are listed in the QAA benchmark, in fact, for exploring performance

32 Ibid., p. 46.
33 Kingston University, 'Inclusive Curriculum Framework'.
34 Ibid.
35 Duffy and Harrop, p. 272.

skills, ensuring collaborative performance, enabling interpretative performance, and discerning new music in different settings.[36] With this agenda set in the module, we listened and created music each week, varying approaches. But, on a weekly basis, the module group listened to new music, were introduced to different analytical approaches, and created music on their chosen instrument.

McPherson's definition of an art space within education is what this module and the associated changes achieved and aspired to: 'The creative ecology generated in higher education art schools is in space and place, with matter and mattering that position artists in, with and outside boundaries, borderlands and the in-betweens of creative practices'.[37] Or, phrased in line with the REACT model, the educational spaces need to encourage the learner to be a confident and resourceful artistic researcher and practitioner through their learning, by engaging across the intersectional dimensions of the model (see Introduction). Through encouraging individual performance approaches to guide critical listening and creativity, individuals were shown as valuable. Through 'Taking Race Live', the students had the opportunity, additionally, to engage with guest talks, pop-up performance events, and focus groups, to explore how their learning had been supported. One student partner, in reflecting on the module and the project summed it up as: 'it was an amazing opportunity for everyone to voice their experience'. In response to specific requests for self-reflection about how the module had expanded their experiences, another student said: 'I developed a talent that I'm trying to express myself through music ... as part of a culture ... [while] trying to analyse, from outside, what we do'. This response is directly related to the revised learning outcomes, which, as Table 12.1 shows, requires students to analyse and critically reflect on music through analytical models and through improvisation. As referred to elsewhere,[38] the second-year modules associated with 'Taking Race Live' all removed the former awarding gap, showing that equity of opportunity had, at the time, been achieved.

But how had these activities responded to the inclusive-curriculum framework set out by Kingston University, within which the project 'Taking Race Live' was hoping to develop meaningful learning and research? The framework 'promotes a universal approach to course design intended to improve the experience, skills and awarding of all students'.[39] As such, it offers guidance but allows the subject experts to create the content. Three key aims are issued: 'Create an accessible curriculum; Enable students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum; Equip students with the skills to positively contribute to and work in a global and diverse world'.[40] One student partner reported that the approach helped them to develop a 'refreshed enjoyment' of their studies,

36 QAA, UK Quality Code for Higher Education: The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies, October 2014, https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf

37 McPherson, p. 34.

38 Minors et al.; Sharma et al.

39 Kingston University, 'Inclusive Curriculum'.

40 Ibid.

creating a sense of belonging in the group and in their cohort. In equipping students to work independently in the future, it was noticeable that, in the focus groups, student partners referred to their future. One was convinced that 'it's definitely going to help in the future because of that personal development'.

Guided by critical questions to help the module leader and course leader to question the subject-specific needs, the inclusive curriculum framework supported an open approach to reflecting on curriculum design that avoided and managed unconscious bias. For example, 'Have you checked all the content is accessible to different groups of students and materials adhere to best practice for disabled students and students with a learning difference?'.[41] Interestingly, in the focus groups in 'Taking Race Live', the participants recognised that 'it was about me'.

Original Module	Aural and Analysis (as revised in 2011) (This module had also been revised in 2014 to include an arrangement but this was lasted only the year as this skill was moved into its own module)
Original Learning Outcomes	With respect to music from a variety of genres, identify aurally both large-scale and small-scale structures and patterns, as well as instrumentation and stylistic characteristics; Interrogate musical scores in order to discern structure, use of compositional devices and deployment of instrumental forces; Present clearly their own analysis of a piece using world and diagrams.
Original Assessment	A listening test, 50%; A portfolio of short analyses, 50%.
Modified Module	Aural, Analysis, and Improvisation (revised in 2014).
Modified Learning Outcome	To further develop students' skills in critically listening to music and in reading, writing and analysing it; To introduce students to analytical methodology; To enable the students to understand the philosophies underpinning a variety of different approaches to improvisation; To enhance creativity through the exploration of a variety of improvised techniques and styles.
Modified Assessment	Aural test and improvisation (practical), 70% assessment—consisting of aural awareness and understanding test (30%) and an improvisation (40%) (the style and manner of which is chosen by the student; Analysis folio (30%) (students choose the music to analyse from a prepared selection).
Level FHEQ (2014, Online)	Level 5, second year of a full time three undergraduate year degree).

41 Ibid.

Identifying significant curriculum content change	Introduction of applied learning through creating music through guided improvisation; considering analysis through listening, writing, reading, and doing; offering choice within the assessment whereby students chose which form of improvisation to use from those introduced, and where students choose which pieces/styles to analyse; a change to assessment weighting to bring in the practical art world experience of creating music into the assessment through performance with an audience, removing the notion of the exam.

Table 12.1. Aural, Analysis, and Improvisation, second-year module.

Project 2: Developing an Inclusive Postgraduate Performance Curriculum

An outward facing approach to research, practice, and teaching is important. In other words, the institution, within which the work is being created and the ideas being taught, cannot close itself off from the wider art world. The pedagogic practice needs to encourage a student to look outwards to that art world, and inwards to their own response and approach to it. As Marina Cyrino asked for her own PhD studies and her institution, it is necessary to remember to ask oneself: 'what does artistic research ... have to say?'.[42]

The challenges of integrating a personality into the interpretation of music, of helping students' find their personal voice, was outlined by Janet Ritterman. She was aware that there is a balance between personal voice, technical knowledge, and performance practices being taught within specific cultures: 'young performers need to be helped to acquire this knowledge gradually and to wear it lightly: it cannot be a substitute for musical instinct, or become so weighty that it silences the personal voice'.[43] In reflecting on how to develop an inclusive curriculum for the postgraduate music performance students, I was clear that it needed to go beyond performance and include critical, analytical, and reflective skills. These had always been part of the longstanding Master's in Music Performance at Kingston, but the aesthetic module, which I had been teaching since 2010, had been written to largely look at Western, classical traditions. It struck me during 'Taking Race Live' that the reading and examples were limited and not inclusive. So, alongside the above module, I decided to work with colleagues in developing my master's module, which had been entitled 'The Aesthetics of Musical Performance'. This was retitled 'The Critical Presentation of Performance' (see Table 12.2) to acknowledge that its scope included the students'

42 Marina Cyrino, 'An inexplicable hunger – flutist)body(flute (dis)encounters', PhD Dissertation (University of Gothenburg, 2019), p. 25, https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/59147

43 Janet Ritterman, 'On Teaching Performance', in *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understandin*g, ed. by John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 75-88 (p. 84).

own experiences, their voice, their futures, and their need to develop explicit and tangible employability skills.

As Table 12.2 shows, the module wording was also changed to become more inclusive by avoiding specific reference to any styles or genres, removing the debates which had benefitted those more confident speakers and had prompted much anxiety in the cohort (as reported in end-of-year module reviews). By integrating the students' own performance aims and career goals, I was able to retain a focus on aesthetics but relate this directly to their chosen instrument, style, genre, and skills. Additionally, the graduate attributes concerning confidence, resilience, development, and wellbeing were supported by developing personal SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analyses.

Original Module	The Aesthetics of Musical Performance (revised 2013)
Original Learning Outcomes	Demonstrate awareness and understanding of a range of issues relating to the study of the aesthetics of musical performance; Evaluate and assess a range of texts and other materials from an aesthetic standpoint; Engage in debate on the roles, values and practices of musical performers in a critical and informed manner; Express arguments relating to the aesthetics of musical performance in an appropriate academic written format.
Original Assessment	2 Debates, 30% (formed from 50% written and presented component and 50% active participation in the debate); Essay, 70%, *c*. 2,500 words.
Modified Module	Critical Aspects of Musical Performance (revised 2018)
Modified Learning Outcome	To develop in students an awareness of psychological issues relating to musical performance; To enable students to develop positive mental performing beliefs and strategies; To develop skills of critical and analytical thought in relation to the aesthetics of musical performances; To develop professional promotional strategies and materials throughout the year.
Modified Assessment	Critical reflection on a musical performance on video, 60%; Folio of promotion materials (including website, social media channels, SWOT analysis and marketing brief) 40%.
Level FHEQ (2014, Online)	Level 7, postgraduate 1 year degree programme (full time, or 2 year part time study)

Identifying significant curriculum content change	Removal of debates and replaced with an individual, personally bespoke critical development and reflection on their own performance brand and a development of a professional folio which includes website and social media channels; Essays on aesthetics replaced by an analysis of a performance which applied aesthetic understanding, bringing the performance to the centre of the activity.

Table 12.2. The Critical Presentation of Performance, master's module.

SWOT analysis involves a self-assessment of one's own strengths and weaknesses in order to explore learning needs, but it also encourages students to be authentic and honest with themselves as they start to plan the next steps of their professional careers. As Aaron Williamon advises in his research into musical excellence, all teachers and students in performance should 'carry out a realistic assessment of individual strengths and weaknesses in skill'.[44] As part of the revised module, I gave models for how to do a SWOT analysis, both on the virtual learning environment, with templates for completion, and also in class for group discussion, with large sheets of paper for small groups to work on, to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses that need to be considered. The peer observation and peer feedback seemed most helpful, with students regularly asking others for thoughts on their own ideas.

The module fundamentally changed how students explores the aesthetic. Instead of analysing an essay of others' examples, an activity students had verbally described as being 'abstract', the revisions brought into focus self-awareness, self-assessment, self-learning, and self-branding. Interestingly, by moving the essay to the analysis of a video recording and allowing students to choose (with guidance) the performance to analyse, almost all chose a video related to their own instrument. They fed back that the choice would 'inform' their own work, 'be supportive' of their listening, and 'broaden' their experience.

Importantly, though, to ensure this module engaged with graduate attributes in a meaningful way, the revised content now included advice and approaches for mental practice. It included discussions about Mikhail Csikszentmihalyi's notion of flow[45] and his ideas that one's creativity and performance intersect with the cultural context. By raising these topics, we discussed the points at which students' began to feel anxious during the preparation for performance and during the performances themselves. We discussed and practised breathing techniques. During the Covid-19

44 Aaron Williamon, 'A Guide to Enhancing Musical Performance', in *Musical Excellence: Strategies and Techniques to Enhance Performance*, ed. by Aaron Williamon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 3–18 (p. 13).

45 Mikhail Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997).

pandemic when we were in a national lockdown and teaching online, I supplemented weekly classes with online rehearsals, whereby anyone could join to say hello, touch base, and, while on mute, rehearse in their own homes with the knowledge that others were also rehearsing at the same time. This idea I took from my own orchestra, the Aldworth Philharmonic Orchestra, where we often meet online to rehearse, to generate a community of support to encourage practice. Knowing someone else is there and committing to someone else was a good driver in encouraging practice. Considering that some of the top 10 future skills identified by employers and businesses[46] include resilience, adaptability, digital skills, and creativity, it was important for me as a lecturer to embed these qualities into my teaching.

As such, I guided these students in how to create their own performance websites, including social-media channels and with a complete marketing brief—a first step in helping them establish their professional portfolio for the future. And it had a hidden bonus I had not anticipated. To these websites, they uploaded videos of performances, events, rehearsals, blogs, vlogs, and even TikTok videos, creating a one-stop archive of their performance work and a location, for those who were ready, to promote their teaching, their live events (though these were paused during the Covid-19 pandemic), and their album launches. As one student noted by email, following graduation: 'I'm still using my website we created for assessment, it's set me up well for being a freelance musician'. By encouraging students to perform self-analysis as well as analyses of others, they were constantly encouraged to reflect on their place in their art world, within the industry of their performance mode of study. One benefit of working in lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic was that, with the reduced time spent commuting, students began to engage more with online platforms, and we used the virtual learning environment's discussion board to share videos of performances individuals found significant. The additional discussion positively impacted peer-to-peer learning and support. Though it is difficult to refer to metrics regarding the issue of confidence at the end of that 2020–2021 academic year (the one most impact by online learning), everyone in the class had reported in module feedback an improvement in confidence and resilience.

Concluding Reflections

In essence, what I have discussed above is an approach to teaching, learning, and assessment that aligns with Small's idea of 'musicking'[47]—that is, in whatever we are creating, doing, and making, we are part of the musical activity in various ways. All aspects of our work link to it. We are doing music, and specifically, we are doing music

46 Kingston University, 'Future Skills'.

47 Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Press, 1998).

in the space of the art world as much as possible, not only in the synthetic context of the classroom.

To say this again, in relation to the REACT model (see Introduction), the learning process ensures critical thinking at every stage in order to enable students to develop new practices in full awareness of their own subjectivities. It facilitates students in exploring and experimenting to create their own individual artistic voice, while recognising the need to do so in a way which is ready and fit for their artistic world, to ensure they will be able to disseminate and share their work professionally in the future. The model is important in illustrating the intersections between all aspects of the learning process, and, also, though in different terms, it shows the integration of employability skills. This latter is so vital in the UK pedagogic practice for undergraduate degrees, as these are assessed on their outcomes in terms of graduate salary fifteen months after graduation. The model speaks in terms that are transferable across the continent of Europe (the setting of the project) and beyond. The inclusive language of the model and of the project are deliberate to ensure we ourselves share the practice within the art world and the educational world.

The quality of the student's work in each module and each assessed project was paramount: ensuring they could meet the learning outcomes and that they could develop their understanding in a critical way, which would benefit their future employment, making then autonomous and lifelong learners, was central to the changes being made in these projects. Embedding the graduate attributes in an explicit way was important to reveal where these skills were being taught, as previously they had seemed implicit, and students could not always see the relevance of what was being asked of them. Although the assessments in performance courses are held in higher education institutions for the purposes of grading, we must make the assessment practice as authentic as possible, to replicate the art world outside the institution. To this extent, many institutions, including Kingston, supported students in performing externally to the university and encouraged them to do so as part of their performance modules. This was particularly revealing in the students' websites, as they shared images of the venues, or the programmes and marketing material for all the work they were creating in the art world, for the purposes of academic assessment. As Östersjö concludes in his research, the artistic quality must be understood 'within its art world'.[48] Assessing a performance in a venue and with an audience is a priority. Creating and enabling an in-person and virtual audience for the music is so important in today's global music-streaming context. Music is the topic of their chosen degree course. The ideas and experiences are lived in practice, 'thought through music'.[49] The 'through' part of this process is integral, and this is why the assessment in both modules focussed on the process and the application in both the learning outcomes and in the choice of assessment. Or, as Gaunt and colleagues noted in their research,

48 Östersjö, 'Art Worlds', p. 82.
49 Cyrino, p. 26.

integrating musicking into Higher Music Education learning is 'a partnering of artistic and social values in order to enable HME to respond dynamically to societal need, and to continue to engage with the depth and integrity of established musical transitions and their craft'.[50]

To ensure participation and inclusion of all, there needs to be a starting point which is aligned to the cohort and the individual students. Each student needs to develop critical awareness of not only the subject matter but also their own performance skills and approaches, with an understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses and with a plan to develop personal quality through practice, testing, sharing, reflection, feedback, and support. Advocating for a regular peer-to-peer dialogue was one way of supporting students outside as well as inside the classroom. Higher Music Education is, like all areas of higher education, 'characterized by fast moving change, the imperative for networking and innovation, and the necessity of being able to negotiate cultural differences'.[51] This is vital to a learning environment which includes global concerns. Changing the wording of validation documents, learning outcomes, and assessments to declare more clearly the employability skills being trained is vital to support students' understanding and to guide everyone through their personal journeys to reach their potential. Embedding discussions on wellbeing, self-awareness, resilience and coping strategies, can help build confidence. Being authentic in teaching is also about sharing personal experiences and to offer advice beyond the theoretical and enable students to test out ideas.

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50 Gaunt et al, p. 1.

51 Helena Gaunt and Heidi Westerlund, *Collaborative Learning in Higher Music Education* (London: Routledge, 2016). p. 1.

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