

BoomTown Music Education and the need for authenticity – informal learning put into practice in Swedish post-compulsory music education

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The article reports on a 2-year higher education music programme for young rock musicians in Sweden called BoomTown Music Education. The pedagogical philosophy behind this programme is developed from the findings of two Swedish music education researchers, and the programme exemplifies how knowledge about popular musicians' learning strategies in informal contexts can be utilised when designing post-compulsory music education. The aim of the article is to problematise the BoomTown environment in relation to its informality and authenticity. In addition to a description of the programme, the author's experiences from visiting this education programme are laid out in order to provide the ground for such a problematisation.

Introduction

Whilst the inclusion of popular music and popular musicians' informal learning practices into formal, school-based music education is a quite recent topic on the international music education agenda, these issues have been debated for several decades within the music education communities of the Nordic countries. Efforts have been made to shed light on this area from theoretical, research-based and practical angles. For example, as early as the late 1970s and early 1980s, Benum (1978) and Ruud (1983) discussed formal and informal arenas for music learning in terms of intentional and functional music education. The discussion was, among other things, tied to the emerging popular music culture, and the potential overlapping and intersection of the two educational forms was looked into. Furthermore, through early ethnographic studies of rock bands conducted within the fields of musicology, anthropology and cultural studies (Berkaak & Ruud, 1994; Fornäs *et al.*, 1995), the general knowledge about popular musicians' musical development and modes of learning was widened. Likewise, a wide range of teaching material from the past 25 years serves to illustrate how popular music and its related ways of learning have been introduced into Nordic music education classrooms.¹

Many of the topics that have been dealt with within the Nordic countries have recently been actualised and brought to the attention of an international audience by Green (2002, 2008), who, through her research into popular musicians' learning practices and subsequent development and implementation of a classroom pedagogy based on this

research, has showed how knowledge about the learning of music in informal contexts can be utilised within music education in the lower and middle levels of the compulsory school system. While Green has generally been acclaimed, among other things for developing a pedagogy that is responsive towards youth cultures (Clements, 2008) and fit to strengthen already existing music education programmes (Heuser, 2008), critical voices have also been raised, pointing to the dangers of making the role of the teacher too absent (Georgii-Hemming, 2009) and to the challenges of enhancing critical dialogue and consciousness in an approach that mainly takes the adolescents' own favourite music as a point of departure (Allsup, 2008). Scholars have also debated whether informal approaches may still be considered or perceived as informal when being converted into a pedagogy and taking place within the frames of a school (Sexton, 2009).

Although popular music has been included in compulsory school music education in the Nordic countries for decades, institutions for higher education have generally been slower in opening their doors for popular musicians and facilitating for their specific needs. However, in recent years, a more open approach to popular music within post-compulsory schooling has appeared, and in Sweden approaches related to those utilised in Green's pedagogy have been developed within the frames of a university-based higher music education programme, called BoomTown Music Education.

BoomTown Music Education (hereafter abbreviated BoomTown or BTME) is a 2-year higher music education programme for rock musicians, which is connected to the School of Music in Piteå, Luleå University of Technology and situated in the southern part of Sweden in the town of Borlänge (BoomTown, 2009). The programme is research-based in the sense that its working methods and pedagogical philosophy have been developed on the basis of the work of two Swedish music education scholars, namely Anna-Karin Gullberg and KG Johansson. While Gullberg (2002) investigated the musical learning and socialisation of rock musicians, Johansson (2002) looked into such musicians' strategies when playing by ear (for further accounts of these studies, see below). Their knowledge and findings, combined with a practical implementation of a socio-culturally oriented view on learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Säljö, 2000), have provided the grounds for what has become a successful and steadily expanding popular music education programme.

The aim of this article is to problematise the BoomTown pedagogy, focusing especially on its self-claimed informality and authenticity. Further, I wish to relate this problematisation to one of the broader issues brought up in the current, international debate on the inclusion of popular music and informal learning practices in school-based music education, namely that of informal approaches' ability to remain informal when included in formal education. In order to open up the field for the reader, I will first give a deepened account of the research upon which BTME has been developed as well as a description of the education, its aims, philosophy and working methods. Furthermore, the education will be analysed through Folkestad's (2006) four-point definition of aspects of formal and informal learning as well as Hargreaves *et al.*'s 'global' (2003) model of opportunities in music education in order to open up some of the tensions between the formal and informal modes found within it. Next, I will report my own experiences from visiting BTME, and discuss my impressions in relation to theories of authenticity. Finally, an effort will be made to extract some of the findings from the analysis of BoomTown in order to, as mentioned above, contribute to the broader international debate.

The foundations of BoomTown – research and rationale

Despite the general opening towards popular music and its related ways of learning found within the larger Nordic music education community from the late 1970s and onwards, most research at doctoral level continued to focus on more conventional forms of music education. According to Olsson (2005), the focus of the doctoral dissertations published in the period from 1995 to 2005 largely concerned ‘the interaction between learner, teacher and the educational subject-matter’ (Olsson, 2005, p. 22) within formal, rather ‘traditional’ school contexts.² However, the research community at the School of Music in Piteå, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden offered two interesting exceptions, namely the works of Gullberg (2002) and Johansson (2002), mentioned above. In the following, I will give a further description of their studies by laying out their respective research questions, design, methodology and findings.

Strategies among ear players in rock music

As already indicated, Johansson’s (2002, see also Johansson, 2004) study concerned rock musicians’ approaches to playing by ear, and the explicit aim was to ‘describe and explain strategies used by rock musicians to hear and play chord progressions when playing unfamiliar rock songs by ear’ (p. 14). The study was designed using an experimental set-up in which six musicians, all accomplished players of typical rock-related instruments (bass, keyboard and guitar) and styles, were asked to play along to three different rock songs, which were unfamiliar to them and written and recorded especially for the study. The three songs were of increasing difficulty with respect to chord progressions, going from a very simple song ‘using chords in a way that would make it possible for an experienced ear player in the rock genre to play it by ear without problems’ (p. 99) to a very difficult song ‘that would as much as possible *avoid* all harmonic clichés or conventions in rock music’ (p. 99). The participants’ playing was recorded on tape and video and they were also interviewed after having played the songs.

Analysing the interviews as well as the audio and videotapes, the researcher was able to extract two main types of learning strategies, namely listening strategies and playing strategies, each with individual variations. For example, strategies could involve listening for well-known harmonic formulas *or* the bass part and deducing the chord from this, *or* playing chords or melodic figures *or* playing intuitively by means of ‘instant learning’. In summing up his findings, Johansson concluded that, perhaps not so surprisingly, playing by ear is first and foremost learned through playing by ear. Furthermore, learning to play by ear also happens style by style, by becoming familiar with specific clichés, harmonic formulas and other style-related traits.

Johansson’s research can in many ways be said to have built further on the work of Lilliestam (1995). While the latter was one of the first Nordic researchers to investigate processes of ear playing and to describe the three basic and equally important activities necessary for learning within this mode, namely listening, practising as well as performing, the former, Johansson (2002), shows how the processes of learning to play by ear do not only follow certain general steps, but are also style and genre specific and hence contextually dependent.

Musical learning and socialisation among rock musicians

Gullberg's (2002, see also Gullberg & Brändström, 2004) study focused on musical learning and socialisation among rock musicians, and the overarching aim of her study was to show how 'different kinds of musicians have learned to play, understand and value rock music via informal as well as formal modes, and how this learning is related to institutional and non-institutional learning environments' (p. 11). Her research was designed as three separate sub-studies, each with its own focus and methodology. While the first study was a studio set-up in which two different rock bands, one 'institutional' (formed by students of a University School of Music) and one 'non-institutional' (a more regular garage band), were asked to rehearse and record a song that was unfamiliar to them, the second study concerned how higher music education students as well as 'other student groups' (p. 11) valued the two recordings that were made in study number one. In the third sub-study, eight professional rock and pop musicians were interviewed about their learning processes related to becoming a musician and developing musical ideals – all seen in relation to institutional and non-institutional learning environments.

Overall, Gullberg's findings in many ways resembled those of Green (2002), showing that the rock musicians' learning mainly took place through solitary listening, copying and playing, and also through collective, peer-based activities while playing in a band. While institutional settings were perceived by the interviewees as 'good at offering training and knowledge on an intra-musical level' (Gullberg, 2002, p. 202), parts of the inter-musical and most of the extra-musical knowledge needed in order to become a rock musician was 'primarily learned by active participation in the non-institutional music life' (p. 202). Consequently, the musicians interviewed in Gullberg's study who had made it into the University School of Music did not find that kind of 'academic music education' satisfactory.

In summing up her findings, Gullberg wrote: 'If knowledge of informal learning in music and a curious, open-minded and outgoing personality are not encouraged within the music colleges, these people will search for other pedagogical possibilities than the music teacher programmes' (p. 201). Since the learning processes and strategies of the rock musicians she interviewed, and the context they needed for their further musical and professional development seemed to differ quite a lot from what was allowed for and offered within the institutions of higher music education, Gullberg predicted that change would be needed if rock musicians should wish to remain part of the Academies of Music.

Shortly after defending their dissertations in 2002, Anna-Karin Gullberg and KG Johansson had the opportunity to contribute to developing an 'alternative higher music education' that took rock musicians' specific needs into account through what has now become BTME.

Introducing the BoomTown Music Education programme

BTME is a 2-year-long higher education programme for young musicians playing rock and related genres such as pop, hip hop and heavy metal. According to the school's website, it 'combines the advantages of formal music education with the strengths of informal learning' (BoomTown, 2009). The aims of the programme are presented as: (a) to

offer a process-oriented university education for bands and musicians of rock music and related styles, on the music's own terms; (b) to emphasise music-making in groups and attend to peer-directed learning and aural traditions; (c) to welcome a multiplicity of musics and let the students, to a great extent, create their own learning environments, formulate their own knowledge and skill-related ends – and even choose the means by which to reach them; (d) to support the enhancement of musical knowledge by offering courses in songcrafting, sound engineering and entrepreneurship; and (e) to offer cognitive tools for understanding one's own operations and encourage creativity and autonomy in thoughts and deeds (Boomtown, 2009).

The programme is primarily applied to by already-existing bands, and during the entrance exams the focus is more on originality and personal expression than on technical skills or knowledge of a certain kind of repertoire. When accepted, each band gets its own rehearsal room, to which the band members have 24-hour access. However, this is not a rehearsal room of the old conservatory style, it is also a fully equipped recording studio, so that the students always have the chance to record, mix and remix their work. The importance of process is emphasised throughout the programme, and instead of having ready-made ends and means, these are, as pointed out above, decided by each student for him or herself.³ With this freedom follows also the responsibility for assessing whether or not you are progressing according to your plan and to what extent you have reached your goals.⁴ The opportunity for choosing one's own means and ends also implies that the musicians who are accepted into the education may decide to absorb themselves completely in one specific musical style. Thereby they can avoid becoming stylistically diverse, something which might otherwise often be required if attending more traditional performance-based or music-teacher training programmes. Furthermore, BTME employs no 'regular teachers', and the selection of supervisors, speakers, guest musicians and pedagogues is customised according to the needs of the students.

The educational philosophy of BoomTown

The educational philosophy behind BTME is built on a socio-cultural perspective (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Säljö, 2000), which emphasises the situated nature of learning and the development of knowledge as relational and contextual. Along with explaining in more detail the two interrelated theoretical perspectives underlying the BoomTown philosophy, efforts will be made to show how these perspectives are related to the research of Johansson (2002) and Gullberg (2002), and how the theory and research, combined, have been utilised for developing the BoomTown philosophy and environment.

In the epistemological perspectives of Lave and Wenger (1991), learning is seen to come about through individuals' 'legitimate peripheral participation' in specific communities of practice. Learning is *not* perceived as 'acquisition of knowledge', and the practices have no persons positioned as 'teachers'; rather knowledge enhancement is assumed to happen when the communities' members relate to its activities, identities and artefacts. Furthermore, newcomers will often be introduced to the practice and little by little reach the stage of '*full participation*' (p. 37) by observing the conduct of old-timers. A central task for the newcomer is to learn how to behave within a particular discourse and negotiate ways of being a person in a particular communal context. In Lave and Wenger's words,

learning to become a legitimate participant in a community 'involves learning how to talk (and be silent) in the manner of full participants' (p. 105). In short, their epistemology emphasises learning as situated, in other words as 'an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world' (p. 35) and changing locations and perspectives, either by participating in several social practices or adopting several positions within one particular community of practice, is seen as part of actors' 'learning trajectories, developing identities and forms of membership' (p. 36).

As with Lave and Wenger (1999), Saljö (2000) emphasises the situated nature of knowledge and the necessity of participating in specific social practices for being able to access the knowledge integral to and inherent in those practices. However, in more specific ways than the scholars referred to above, he shows how 'human knowledge, insights, conventions and ideas are built into apparatus' (p. 82), and hence how artefacts, including intellectual tools,⁵ gain a crucial role in a community of practice's mediation of knowledge. Furthermore, Säljö considers language as humanity's 'mediating tool' par excellence, and highlights its distinctive role in processes of knowledge development: 'Language is the most unique component in human knowledge-building and, more generally, in our ability to gather experiences and to communicate these to one another. Words and linguistic statements mediate the surrounding world to us and make it appear as meaningful. By communicating with others, we are introduced to ways of designating and describing the world which are functional, and which enable our interplay with fellow human beings in various activities' (pp. 84–85). Consequently, in order for learning to take place, also within a community of practice, it is of utmost importance that its members are offered opportunities to communicate and share thoughts, feelings, ideas and experiences.

Johansson's (2002) research shows how playing by ear is situated knowledge in the sense that it can only be learned by *doing it in context*. Also, the clichés and formulas learned – the intellectual-musical tools – are style-specific and thereby contextually (and communally) dependent. As a consequence, the BoomTown students are offered opportunities for immersing themselves completely in the musical style of their choice. Since their ways of learning music are mainly ear-based, learning is probably also most effectively performed when each student is allowed to engage directly and heavily in his or her germane music. Furthermore, Gullberg's (2002) research emphasises the solitary as well as the peer and group-based development of knowledge among popular musicians and also how much of their learning takes place in communities of practice, such as the band or bands to which they belong or the larger rock scene. Hence, instead of creating a more traditional educational practice, with ready-made classes and regular teachers, BoomTown is very much structured as an 'educational community of practice'. Old-timers, in the sense of professional and experienced musicians and producers are brought in as examples of individuals who have reached the stage of 'full participation' in the rock community, and the students learn by engaging with them – socially and musically. In addition, the students are allowed to use quite a lot of time in what is perhaps their most significant music-related community of practice – the band. The physical context of BoomTown is equipped with style-specific artefacts, in other words the electronic equipment needed to play certain popular genres, and the insight that language is crucial for the development of knowledge – individually as well as communally – is operationalised into making the regular writing of a diary the programme's most important obligatory task. The diary-writing serves two

purposes: Firstly, it is seen as a way of letting the students come to grips with their own thoughts, judgements and ways of approaching the world. Secondly, it is utilised as a means and a point of departure for group reflection in order to develop, jointly, awareness of how different forms of music-related learning and creative processes impact on the students' own music making.

BoomTown as seen in a theoretical perspective – formal, informal or something in between?

In an attempt to sum up the basic criteria of formal and informal learning situations, Folkestad (2006, pp. 141–142) acknowledges four determining aspects, namely: (1) the *situation* – does the learning take place inside or outside institutional settings; (2) the *learning style* – is the music learned through playing by written notation or by ear; (3) the *ownership* – who owns the decision of the activity, the learners or the teachers; and (4) the *intentionality* – is the mind directed towards learning how to play or towards playing?

Applying these criteria to BoomTown it is evident how this education, at least at first glance, may be claimed to function in an *informal* mode mainly, especially when the latter three aspects are concerned. Firstly, the most common learning style among the BoomTown students is, because of the stylistic traits and traditions of the music they play, to a great extent ear-based. While it of course can be claimed that the chord charts and different kinds of tab notation used for writing down and remembering rock music may count as 'written notation', the music is not mainly learnt by playing for example notes written on a score, such as within the Western classical tradition, and the amount of time spent playing by ear is considerable.

Secondly, efforts are made throughout the programme to ensure that the students maintain ownership of the activities. This is evident in how the students choose means and ends as well as assess their own work, but does also come through in the decision to customise the staff according to the students' needs and thereby avoid having regularly employed teachers. The consequent lack of long-lasting teacher–student relationships might minimise the risk of teachers 'owning' activities as well as students (the latter sometimes being a danger of more master-apprenticeship oriented teaching and learning practices). Nevertheless, BoomTown is still an *education*, which means that the students also have to meet certain criteria and participate in certain activities that are set and decided by administrators and staff. Hence, the ownership is not entirely in the students' own hands, even though it is perhaps more so than in many other kinds of higher music education.

Thirdly, while the aim of the BoomTown students certainly is to enhance their skills as musicians, it seems that the intention might be directed more towards *playing* and *reflecting on playing* within a musical framework rather than towards *learning how to play* through more traditional forms of rehearsing and within a pedagogical framework. Still, it is hard to say anything about students' intentions without having interviewed them with this in mind, and besides, what *is* the BoomTown educational philosophy if not a pedagogical framework?

Finally, although BTME, at least to a certain extent, facilitates informal learning practices, there is no doubt that when it comes to the first of Folkestad's four aspects – inside or outside institutional settings – this Swedish education is *formal* and located safely

within the framework of a university. The fact that it is a university programme is even utilised as part of its marketing to attract potential students.

When relating BTME to Hargreaves *et al.*'s (2003, p. 158) 'globe model'⁶ of opportunities in music education, this produces approximately the same answers as above: BTME offers professional training of performing musicians, and although the students assess themselves there are examinations, among other things through public performances. Hence, the education can be placed on the 'formal' side of the globe leaning towards the statutory, 'in-school' side. However, the learning that takes place within the frames of BoomTown can also be characterised as largely self-directed and 'third environment'⁷ related, something which places the education on the 'informal' and elective, 'outside-school' part of the globe. Relating to the discussion above, a relevant question to ask in this regard is of course whether the learning is *experienced* as informal and self-directed by the students when someone has already decided for them, by designing the educational environment, that these should be the learning conditions. Nevertheless, from theoretical comparison BTME appears as it is marketed on its homepage, namely as combining the strengths of informal learning with the advantages of formal education: Neither formal nor informal – rather something in between.

Experiences from visiting BoomTown

In the previous section, I discussed BoomTown's informality in relation to two different models or theoretical points of departure. In the following, I will provide the ground for a discussion of its authenticity by sharing my experiences from visiting the school.⁸ In the spring of 2008, I had the good fortune of visiting BTME and meeting some of its administrators and students. From this trip I recall having two main impressions.

Firstly, I was immediately impressed by the quantity of 'gear' that was available, understood as all kinds of technical equipment designed for recording, making and mixing music. Not only did each band have its own rehearsal room/recording studio, in addition the school was about to build a large studio containing several sub-studios with possibilities for digital as well as analogue recordings. There was also a studio especially designed to meet the needs of hip-hoppers. All in all, these technological artefacts made the creation and performance of a vast variety of pop and rock-related styles possible.

Secondly, when I met the students, they were very keen to emphasise the way in which their education differed from the traditional conservatory style of educating musicians. Phrases like 'this is something completely different', 'I would never have chosen to attend the conservatory or any kinds of 'traditional' university music courses' or 'this education allows me to do my own thing, musically speaking' were common. Curious to know more about their everyday lives as students, I asked them what an 'ordinary day' would look like. Interestingly, they replied with examples that strongly reminded me of my own experiences as a student within the traditional conservatory system. Most of the time they practised their main instrument, either alone, in their regular band or with other fellow students. Then, they would attend lectures, classes and instrumental lessons plus occasionally participate in larger performances organised by the school. In addition, they would keep up a busy musical life outside of the school itself. When I replied that their descriptions of 'the everyday life of a BoomTown music student' reminded me very much of my own education

as a classical singer, they sounded absolutely horrified: 'No way, your studies must have been completely different, it cannot be compared to our form of education'.

BoomTown and the need for authenticity

In general, I consider bringing experiences from informal learning practices into post-compulsory music education as useful and necessary. However, from my own experiences as well as previous research (e.g. Kvale & Nielsen, 1999; Nerland, 2004) I know that such practices are already there, also within the more 'traditional' conservatory system. How come then, that the conservatory environment – despite having its own 'informality' – did not seem meaningful to the BoomTown students?

In my opinion, the success of BTME lies not only in building on informal learning practices; it is also to be found in the way the school is marketed as offering an 'authentic', 'alternative' and 'non-institutional' education and probably also in that the learning environment is *experienced* as such by the students who choose to enrol in the programme. Taylor (1991) reminds us that one of the most powerful discourses of modernity is that of authenticity and the necessity of cultivating an authentic self – an identity. He further connects authenticity with freedom: 'Authenticity is itself an idea of freedom; it involves my finding the design of my life myself, against the demands of external conformity' (pp. 67–68). Furthermore, as Ruud (2002) points out, the notion of authenticity is inevitably connected to music and to the interrelationship between music and identity.

To the BoomTown students, the conservatory tradition obviously represented a most unwanted instance of 'external conformity', while the BTME learning environment was something they could identify with, an 'educational umbrella' under which they felt that they could freely explore and articulate their own musical identities and thereby learn music. Whether or not BoomTown really *is* authentic or what a definition of authenticity in this regard might imply is perhaps of lesser significance. The important thing for the students was that it fulfilled *their* need for authenticity and corresponded with *their* musical identities.

In a quite recent contribution Wenger (2006) connects identity, learning, meaningfulness and education, or in his terms 'social learning systems', in the following way: 'I argue that when it comes to the production of meaningfulness, learning is subsumed under identity and [I argue] that social learning systems provide the context for this process' (p. 17). In other words, in order to be experienced as meaningful, an educational context must exist, which takes into account the close and interwoven connections between identity and learning. This includes offering students the opportunity to be socialised into communities of practice which correspond with their identity(ies) – musical or otherwise.

Looking once again into the environment of BoomTown, it is evident how this education enables such a socialisation, among other things by (1) letting the students participate in several 'popular music communities of practice' – either the band or the larger group of students; (2) bringing in old-timers (experienced professionals) who can act as role models and guides for the newcomers (the students) on their way into the larger popular music community; (3) being equipped with popular music style-specific 'gear' – also known as artefacts – which mediates much of the knowledge necessary for mastering the particular popular music practices; and (4) training the students in mastering the style

and practice-specific language by letting them reflect, extensively, on their own music making and creative development.

In other words, BoomTown is a learning environment which is experienced as authentic and meaningful by popular music students because it takes into account their identity as popular musicians and provides them with the tools to become such and to work efficiently within the wider popular music communities of practice.

Conclusion

While the aim of this paper was to problematise the BoomTown education from the angles of informality and authenticity, I will in this last section extract some insights gained through these efforts and address one of the key topics brought up in the debate surrounding Green's (2008) work, namely whether informal approaches will still remain or continue to be perceived as informal when included or converted into a pedagogy (Sexton, 2009).

As can be seen from the application of the formal/informal criteria to the BoomTown environment above, this particular education ends up somewhere in between, being built on principles found within informal arenas mainly, but still unable to escape its formality. Similar outcomes would probably have been found if a parallel analysis had been undertaken on Green's pedagogy. However, in relation to the perceived meaningfulness and outcome of music education, whether on the post-compulsory or compulsory level, the question of formal or informal might be irrelevant or at least not the right one to ask. Rather, we should ask how we might create meaningful learning environments in terms of fulfilling students' need for authenticity and corresponding with as well as contributing to developing their identities. Then, mixing features from formal as well as informal arenas for learning seems a fruitful place to start, trusting that they will complement and enrich, not defeat, each other.

Notes

- 1 Most of the scholarly contributions in this area as well as the teaching material have been written in Nordic languages and have therefore been largely unavailable to an international audience. For earlier attempts at communicating this 'Nordic approach' internationally, see for example, Folkestad (2006), Väkevä (2006) or Westerlund (2006).
- 2 In later years, the scope of Scandinavian music education research has been widely expanded, and nowadays studies can be found which investigate, for example, hip-hop musicians' educational strategies (Söderman, 2007); learning among music festival attendees (Karlsen & Brändström, 2008); musical online communities as an arena for development of musical skills and knowledge (Salavuo, 2006); the learning of musical conventions and codes through computer games (Wingstedt, 2008); and the local choir as a medium for socialisation (Balsnes, forthcoming).
- 3 The ends and means are not only related to the students' individual goals, but also to the shared goals of the musical group to which they belong – the band.
- 4 Similar approaches are also utilised in a popular music programme in one Australian conservatorium (Lebler, 2007).
- 5 Säljö (2000) defines as 'intellectual tools' models that constitute 'resources for thinking' (p. 102). Examples of such tools in a musical context may be clichés, scales or fixed harmonic formulas.

- 6 In an article about music education in the 21st century, Hargreaves *et al.* (2003) draw up a 'globe' model of opportunities in music education with three main bipolar dimensions. The vertical dimension 'distinguishes between formal and informal opportunities' (p. 158) so that the 'northern part' of the globe is reserved paths that lead to qualifications and careers while the 'southern part' represents informal opportunities. The horizontal dimension distinguishes between 'statutory and elective provision' (p. 158), in other words the 'western side' is dedicated to 'in-school provision in all its forms' (p. 158) while the 'eastern side' denotes all opportunities selected by the students themselves. Finally, two circles exist, an inner and an outer, which represent 'generalist' and 'specialist' opportunities respectively.
- 7 The authors define 'third environment' as 'social contexts in which musical learning takes place in the absence of parents or teachers' (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2003, p. 157).
- 8 I was not visiting BoomTown for the purpose of conducting research. Hence, the experiences and observations made were informal and not subject to any strict methodological procedures. However, explained in research terms, the observations made could be classified as conducted by a 'peripheral-member-researcher' (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 379).

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