The International Journal of

Arts Education

Break a Leg
Raising the Curtain on Performance Pedagogy

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Abstract: This paper reports on an action research project designed to develop skills in musical performance pedagogy. The subjects were a group of undergraduate students enrolled in a degree course which included developing vocal and instrumental competence alongside training as music teachers. Despite this being a highly selective course and the level of musicianship high, it had been noted that students' stagecraft was lacking. The situation was deemed unsatisfactory, as the participants would soon be working in schools where they would be expected to work with pupils in setting up musical performance. The project organised a series of lunchtime concerts staged within the university. These events were used to raise issues of performance management, both physical (space, audience, etc.) and aesthetic (musicality, etc.), and to prepare students in both group and solo contexts. Inputs were made to highlight key principles of performance. The students also kept reflective logs of their experience. A major aim of the research was to address musical principles and practice as a focus for pedagogy. The paper reports on the outcomes of the project in terms of participant experience and the theoretical framing for the study. It also outlines the principal components of performance pedagogy for development in future pedagogical contexts.

Keywords: Music Education, Performance Pedagogy, Reflective Practice

Introduction

This article reports on a reflective case research study in the area of music education, involving a group of higher education students training to teach music to secondary school pupils (age 12–18). The focus for the research was *performance pedagogy*. The article begins with some consideration of the significance of this term and the use to which we put it in the research project. We then describe the project itself, the input we gave to the students, their task, and the data we collected and analyzed. We discuss these findings and conclude the article with some consideration of the significance of the results and the next step in the project.

Background

The aim of the project was to explore the underlying elements of performance in an educational context. The term *performance pedagogy* was adopted since it best suited what we intended. However, this deployment is not without a number of epistemological and conceptual issues. Green describes *performance* as "a special ritualistic event as set off, or set apart from, the rest of life. A type of event present in every society."[1]

It follows that we should, therefore, consider performance as an anthropological event, with all that entails in terms of social facticity. If we take performance purely in terms of music, it is clear that a number of elements and processes are involved. As Christopher Small observes, "the act of musicking[2] establishes a *relationship*…between the people that are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance."[3]

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[1]Lucy Green, *Interview with Michael Grenfell. School of Education, Trinity College: Dublin, 2013*. Unpublished mimeograph. Professor Lucy Green, Institute of Education, London, has written extensively on music education and performance.
[2] A term coined by Small to describes all musical activity, including composing, performing and listening.
[3]Christopher Small, *Musicking. The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. (Hanover (N.H.). London: Wesleyan University Press,1998),74

Little wonder, therefore, that Madison and Hamara, in their major overview of the topic, conceptualize performance as how it may be viewed from a number of other disciplinary fields: literature, politics, ethnography, history, and theory.[4]

Pedagogy, on the other hand, is generally recognised to be the 'science' and 'art' of education; although such succinct simplicity clearly belies the wealth of theoretical and practical studies brought to the task of developing educational methodologies to teach.

Combining the two, we also find that the term *performance pedagogy* has a great diversity of definitions and interpretations: Denzin, for example, uses the term to describe the 'politics' and the 'ethics' of performance[5], which is closely allied to Giroux's 'critical pedagogies.'[6] Performance pedagogy is also used with reference to teaching methods that are outcome (i.e. academic performance) driven.

Although all these approaches are pertinent to our own deployment of the term, we are using it specifically in this case to describe 'teaching performance'; in other words, how do teachers teach pupils/ students to perform and about performance? We see this as being distinct from music education where the focus is on musicianship and instrumental competence. With *performance pedagogy*, we are interested in the essential elements of performance and the ways these can be taught in an educational context.

The Project/Methodology

The project involved a reflective case study, conducted with a group of music teacher trainees. In order to move towards performance pedagogy, we first set out to explore the experience and conditions of performance; what these were and how they impinged on what happens. We then wanted the students to use what was understood about performance to actually teach it to pupils: something that raised issues of method, approach, experience and outcome.

All this was discussed with the students as an introduction. They were then divided into groups and given the following challenge:

- To organise a series of performances according to a set of guiding principles provided;
- To keep a learning diary of experiences with respect to organisation and experience of the group performance;
- To consider and develop what was learned from the project in terms of their own teaching of performance with school pupils.

In other words, we set the students the challenge of staging their own performance and to use the experience gained of the same to tease out what was most significant in it in order to design a teaching pedagogy for use with their pupils. We did not want to prescribe or proscribe what the students did within the performance, nor how they set about the task of organising it. At the same time, we judged it necessary to provide some guiding principles to frame their work. These principles were based on the researchers' own research musicianship, performance and music education. They were presented and discussed under four headings prior to the students planning their performances:

The Disciplines of the Musician
The Seven Principles of Performance
The Eight Assumptions of Working Together
Planning

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[4]Soniyi Madison. and Judith Hamara, (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Performance Studies*. (London: Sage, 2006).

[5] Norman Denzin, '*The politics and ethics of performance pedagogy – towards a pedagogy of hope'.* In D.S. Madison and J. Hamara eds., (London, Sage, 2006).

[6] Henry Giroux, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*. (New York: Routledge, 2005).

Here, we provide a brief synopsis of the range of issues raised with the students under these headings as they will be taken up in later discussion of outcome and findings.

The Disciplines of the Musician: Head, Hands, and Heart

This referred to actual musicianship i.e. the musical skills that are brought to the task of performing. In addition to the actual functional competence in one's own chosen instrument (hands), there is the conscious engagement with the task from a rational perspective (head), and affective strategic management (heart).

The Seven Principles of Performance

We discussed the nature of music with the students and experience of it: as a performer and audient. We also explored the ways in which music, musician and audience may come together as one. The principles stated below arose in discussion. and are further developed in Grenfell and Kerin[7]. We offer them here in note form only to give an indication of the range of themes, issues and ideas which were explored with the students:

When People Get Together with Music, Something Happens

When people get together, something happens. When people get together with music, something remarkable happens. When musician, audience and music come together in a performance, this *something remarkable* has a quality of its own. The *something remarkable* is Music taking on a life of its own.

In a Performance, Things Come Together and Go Better than We Might Anticipate and Better than We Deserve

In a performance event, the benevolence that gives rise to music brings together musicians and audience. When things come together they often seem to go better than we deserve or expect.

A Performance Can Take On a Life and Character of Its Own

Any particular performance event is unique—with these people, in this place, at this time—that uniqueness defines the conditions of the performance: the *who, where*, *when* and *what* of the event. This is on the outside.

The conditions of time, place and persons do not govern the quality of our experiencing of this performance. Our experiencing is on the inside.

That the event happens is a given. How we participate, listen, respond, is open and available. What happens within the performance, that is, whether the performance comes to life or not, is to be created and discovered.

The performance can take on a life and character of its own.

Any One Performance Is a Multiplicity of Performances

The degree to which we act as one, as a whole person, is a measure of our integration; that is, a measure of our 'Being'. The degree to which the performance is a whole event depends upon the extent to which musician and audience and music are able to be as one.

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[7] ibid

Until this point, the performance event is as many performances as participants. Beyond this point, the whole performance shares something with every performance. So, any one performance is a multiplicity of performances.

The Possible Is Possible

We are able to be with others only to the degree that we are able to be ourselves. This being so, we can only be in the performance to the degree that we can be ourselves: to be who we are.
It is possible to be who we are. So, the possible is possible. We begin with the possible, and move gradually towards the impossible.

The Impossible Is Possible

Normality is what we might achieve, given who we are, what we are, the conditions and limitations of the world we work within. Our 'norm' is what we 'ought' to be. This is what is asked of us: to be who we are. This is already asking a lot: it is impossible.

Nevertheless, we begin with the possible and move gradually towards the impossible; trusting that the Benevolence which gives rise to Music is never far away. So, the impossible is possible.

The Seventh Principle Resides within Silence

The Principles assume a common aim, good will and a willingness to participate in good spirit within the event, and the capacity to do so. When the lowest takes charge, the performance event downgrades; and the possible becomes increasingly restricted.

The possible becomes impossible. The best is then, that the possible remains possible. The worst is that the possible becomes impossible. This is the Null Event: nothing happens. A Null Event has no life span, no persistence, and no present moment of its own. The event disappears, as if it never was; and, really, it wasn't. The Null Event is a complete waste of time and energy. Something is lost.

Next, we considered issues related to working together as a group. The following assumptions emerged:

The Eight Assumptions of Working Together

The assumptions of working together comprise, *Intention, Presence*, *Goodwill, Common Practice, Playing In Tune, Playing In Time, Listening, Assumption of Virtue*.

Intention

Our entry to the performance is intentional. One simple, practical example: when entering the room, crossing the liminal threshold, we pay attention to our first footfall. Our attendance is not by accident, nor is our participation arbitrary. This implies that we have an aim.

Presence

We cultivate a sense and awareness of our personal presence, of the performance and our place within it. This is determined and governed by the quality of our volitional attention. We can begin by intensifying our personal presence, extending that out into the room and returning to ourselves.

Goodwill

We participate in a spirit of goodwill. We leave any negativity at the door, outside the room, and enter holding goodwill towards the others in the performance: without judgment, without criticism, without hostility. The quality of our feeling lives is revealed in the quality of sound we produce from our instrument: the depth and richness of timbre. This is the personal correspondence to playing in tone.

Common Practice

We assume familiarity and a sufficiency of competence in the elements of a common practice:

Playing in Tune

This is indicative of our personal state.

Playing in Time

This is indicative of our personal harmony. One practical example: punctuality.

Listening

This is indicative of our station, our level of Being.

The Assumption of Virtue

The word 'assumption' has different meanings. For example, it can mean something 'taken for granted'; or, a theory/ supposition. Both are good and are relevant to working together: we assume these assumptions in each other as a basis for work; we understand them in theory. Another definition, however, is 'to take to or upon oneself'. That is, these are not things that we 'do' but 'are'. We embrace them; we submit to them. The eighth assumption—'of virtue'—can, therefore, apply to the other seven: 'assumption of intention', 'assumption of presence', etc.

Preparation

This heading related to what can be prepared before a performance: *the space*, *the audience*, *the instrument* and *themselves.*

   Having discussed all the above with the students, they were sent away to plan and prepare their performances. Eleven trainees including two Erasmus students formed themselves as three groups. They had total control over program content and performance format. The only given was that each performance should take place within a 13.00-14.00 lunchtime slot over a six week period. There was also total autonomy in organising the necessary planning meetings, rehearsals, etc. In order to facilitate our research, trainees were instructed to keep 'learner diaries' in which they recorded their thoughts, experiences and reflections at every stage of working on the project. These diaries were subsequently analysed for common categories and themes. These are reported on next.

Findings

The specific focus of this, our preliminary analysis, is on how the trainees used the inputs—*the disciplines, the principles, the assumptions* and *the areas of preparation*—to reflect on their experience. The diary entries describe their growing awareness of the essential elements of performance and the emergence of their understanding of the epistemic knowledge pertaining to

performance pedagogy. For ease of narrative, we group our analysis under the four input headings and include comments from individual group members on how the principles and assumptions were observed in practice. For one group of students, all of the inputs provided a structure for a focused discussion at their first meeting:

> Our preparatory lecture made clear to us the essential elements in planning and staging an effective musical performance. The concepts of 'head, heart, hands; the 'magic of performance'; the 'seven principles and assumptions of performing music together' as well as considerations such as, space, time and target audience, gave us plenty of topics to discuss at that first meeting.

Interestingly this group devoted their first meeting to a discussion of the intrinsic elements of performance rather than to the intended programme content or to the individual musical expertise of group members. This indicates a willingness to take on board the information which was presented to them during tutorials and a commitment to a successful performance regardless of the particular resources available or of the conditions afforded to them by chance.

First, we examined how the participants responded to the tutorial content regarding *the disciplines of the musician.*

The Disciplines of the Musician

In their analyses of the experience, trainees regularly referenced the *disciplines* as follows:

> In our initial meeting we covered the head aspect when we decided on the programme. At rehearsal, we concentrated on the hands, focussing on our technique, but we never lost sight of the heart, as we felt that it is through expressing emotion in music that performers connect with the audience.

The participants here were not simply referring to the disciplines but they were beginning to identify and articulate their sense of a hierarchy, or value system, in relation to their understanding of what would make a successful performance arguing that although there was a place for organization and rehearsal, the commitment to communicate the music would be, for them, the most important consideration of all.

Another group also expressed the importance of the disciplines as follows:

> In choosing the programme we used the head to inform our choices taking into account a programme that would be meaningful for the audience of fellow students, lecturers and drop-ins. we must be open to all genres of music, regardless of our own personal preference.

The same group mentioned the discipline of the hands stressing the need to rehearse together:

> If I was to do this project again, I would rehearse even more as a group. I would appoint an MC[8] outside of our group to allow us more time to focus on our music performance.

The trainees began to understand the need to have all aspects of the music performance well-rehearsed beforehand so that the focus and confidence they need to perform is not undermined by being nervous or distracted:

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[8] Master of Ceremonies

> By preparing as much as possible you have the ability to deal with anything that might happen; you'll be more confident, you'll enjoy your performance more and the audience will have a better experience.

While the participants mentioned head, hands, and heart they were unanimous in assigning pride of place to the heart:

> ...it is the performers' responsibility to captivate the audience, to express something unique, to invite them into the music...this will happen if we make an absolute commitment to communicating with each other and the audience.

In analysing the responses to the content relating to the principles of performance, we noted that while the participants commented on the first four principles, no mention was made of the final three, which they indicated, later, in discussion, were considered redundant for their purposes.

The Principles of Performance

When People Get Together with Music, Something Happens

Trainees expressed their developing sense of the significance of public music performance. The following comment refers to the final concert which took place in December:

> The Irish musician Bono said that "music can change the world because it can change people." The atmosphere at this concert certainly indicated that, for this 40 minute period, College was transformed and ready for Christmas.[9]

Difficulties arose amongst the members of one particular group which resulted in disaffection and disagreement and when things did not go according to plan, trainees referred to the second principle for an explanation.

Things Go Better than We Deserve

> The concert went well considering that none of the members of our group agreed on the programme. In the end, we allowed Anna to have her way but because we didn't feel that we had anything to contribute, we cared less and less. It really was a surprise on the day that the performance went as well as it did as there certainly was no "buy-in" from the members of the group.[10]

The trainees also not only experienced first-hand the number of variables which can affect the final performance, but also the fact that consequently each live performance is unique:

Every Performance Is a Multiplicity of Performances

> We were afraid to over-rehearse because we wanted to sound fresh. Now we realise that every performance is different; different audience, different atmosphere...

Although the trainees encountered this principle before, the first-hand experience has consolidated their understanding. The dichotomy of, on the one hand, committing to a tight

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[9] The final concert took place in a public area of the college, immediately before the Christmas break.
[10] One group encountered difficulty in working together. In this case the leader decided unilaterally to include a genre of music with which the others were unfamiliar and consequently personal conflicts ensued.

rehearsal scheme to assuage nervousness and promote confidence, and on the other hand, the need to accept the fact that each performance has its own unique character was experienced by the trainees at first-hand, affording them a deeper insight into the nature of performance.

The comments received from the participants relating to the *eight assumptions of working together* indicate an exclusive focus on the first four with participants indicating in discussion afterwards that the final four which related to *playing in time, in tune* and *listening* were in their opinions as musicians, common sense! The final assumption of *virtue* was considered by the group as too nebulous for comment.

The Assumptions of Working Together

One particular student found the experience quite disconcerting but her ability to reflect on *the assumptions of working together* provided her with a lens through which she was able to consider what went wrong for the group:

Intention

> As a group we did not co-operate very well; there were times in the planning when there was a serious lack of communication...the third member of the group …never even inquired about rehearsal times and had no intention of voicing an opinion or seeking clarification on the status of the preparation.

Another member of the same group had similar recollections of the preparatory period and again referred to the *first assumption* to make sense of what happened:

> And there wasn't one moment when all three of my group were in the same rehearsal at the same time. I just took it for granted that someone else would make notes. This was a big mistake as we had to ad lib on the day of the performance and now I know that no matter how great a musician you are …this will not compensate for a lack of planning.

This diarist seems to equate intention with commitment, describing the difficulties experienced by the group when individual members lacked intention or commitment. This led to another comment from the same participant:

Presence

> It seemed that, although there were several strong performers in Celticfuse,[11] there were also some participants who seemed uncomfortable and disconnected from the project. Although they made an effort to participate fully in the performance, they seemed ill-at-ease and dismissive both during the concert and afterwards when we discussed their performances. Each performer, regardless of the part they play, needs to be fully present at rehearsal and in performance if the confidence of the group is not to be eroded.

The *assumption of goodwill* which was embraced wholeheartedly by one of the groups served to maximize productive rehearsal sessions and promote cohesion and positivity:

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[11] Each programme had a theme e.g. *Let's Dance, Music from the Movies* etc. *Celticfuse* involved a fusion of Irish and Scottish and Jazz music.

Goodwill

> We applied the assumption of goodwill to our rehearsal time. If a member couldn't make it we would practice the parts that directly involved the players that were present and so, nobody ever felt under pressure.

Participants learned the importance of working together of mutual respect and joint ownership through the adoption of the assumption of goodwill. Another participant reported that:

> Although the actual performance occurred one afternoon in December, the preparation began long before that. The assumption of goodwill, meaning that the performance will never fall below a certain standard, despite any personal feelings at the time and the idea that each player must listen attentively to each other and play in tune and on time, informed our rehearsals as well as our performance.

Trainees expressed the importance of team-work, the promotion of corporate commitment and a sense of mutual purpose in the run up to a performance.

Common Practice

The challenge of creating a programme which would integrate very different music backgrounds was experienced by one of the groups. They described the notion of *common practice* as being "the most important":

> Of the 7 assumptions, common practice was the most important for our group, since we were all very different musicians coming from classical, Scottish traditional and jazz backgrounds. We never managed to embrace this concept and eventually the other two group members opted out and I had no choice but to include guest musicians in our performance.

This participant regrets the lost opportunity to unite her group affording her "no choice but to include guest musicians ". In discussing the situation after the event, the participant commented on her own limitations as group leader and offered at that point a greater insight into opportunities for group cohesion which she had overlooked.

The trainees demonstrated a transformed way of understanding, interpreting and viewing *performance*. Therefore they began to show insight into, not just the knowledge associated with participating in a performance but with their intention and ability to undertake such a project with their own pupils in a school setting and also with the significance and value of live performance in the context of school:

> This module has given me a terrific insight into how I may someday go about organising musical events in a school setting.

> Having to perform in front of my peers reminded me of just how nervous students may feel in a school concert.

> Watching how the other groups worked together gave me a valuable insight into the challenges of putting on a truly meaningful, memorable performance.

However, while participants articulated their confidence in understanding the complexities of staging a performance, they need many more opportunities to repeat this experience if they are to become proficient, effective and authentic performance pedagogues.

Planning

In analysing the diary entries on *planning*, the researchers noted the opportunities that were embraced by the participants for meta-cognition.[12] Trainees commented on the preparation, which is essential for staging a successful event, focusing on *space, audience* and *being in tune with yourself.*

Space

> ...if we had given some thought to the seating plan it would have made a huge difference to the atmosphere we were trying to create.

Yourself

> I need to work on being more assertive. I cannot expect to be able to take on the role of teacher when I let people walk all over me. I do feel that I have learned a huge amount about myself from this concert.

Audience

> …knowing that our audience would be an eclectic mix of ages, music experience and taste, we chose repertoire which we felt would appeal to the widest spectrum.

The introduction and explanation in our concert programme ensured that the audience understood our purpose.

> The amazing thing about Group Three was that although this group are all brilliant musicians individually….. they chose a very middle–of-the-road programme. They may have been trying to connect with the audience, many of whom would not have been musicians. The effect of that connection was amazing.

The group arranged music for the performance which focused on audience appeal. They chose music from TV advertisements and also included seasonal music, which was perceived as being very successful. The importance of performers connecting with the audience was noted by many of the participants.

An Expanded Perspective

All of the students agreed that the thoroughly practical approach which demanded that they stage a group performance was the catalyst behind their improved understanding of the fundamentals of *performance pedagogy*:

> When I was in school the show or performance was the most important part of Transition Year. As students we were never aware of the various parts of the performance, we took direction and played our part. Now as the teacher I would focus on the process more than the product, especially in the early stages. I would create opportunities for regular short public performances where I would give the students the experience of taking risks and experiencing all the anxiety associated with ownership of this type of public venture. Then, towards the end of the term, I would concentrate on the big musical performance.

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[12]Meta-cognition or 'knowing about knowing' refers to the trainee teachers' ability to reflect on and become aware of their own learning.

One student commented on the effectiveness of staging a *participatory performance:*

> I think it was an excellent idea to have the audience participates in the song "Siúil a Rún". It brought a new fresh dimension to the performance especially as a number of people from the audience actually sang in harmony with us. This added a magical touch to the overall effect and I believe it created an intimate, relaxed ambience rather like an Irish traditional music gig. Afterwards when we discussed the performance with our tutor, a number of people mentioned this aspect of our performance, saying that they too intended to include audience participation also.

The experience of *participatory performance* as opposed to *representational performance* was reported by a participant who was not aware of one of the current debates in music education, a topic highlighted particularly in the writing of ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino, who recommends that performance should be: more about the doing and social interaction than about creating an artistic product or commodity.[13] This development in insight was further demonstrated in the emergent themes as trainees differentiated between *performing* and *performance:*

> The secondary school music syllabi at both junior and senior level, emphasize the importance of the development of performing skills, yet the actual terminal assessment is focused on the student's ability to present a convincing musical performance**.** Music teachers need to provide their students with opportunities for staging performances and for reflecting on their own performance and on the performance efforts of their peers if they are to be adequately prepared for the examination.

Participants also mentioned the need for *authenticity* in relation to staging a performance that is meaningful for pupils:

> I felt very self-conscious and uncomfortable singing in the Scots/Gaelic tradition but, since I had missed most of the preparation meetings, I had no choice in the matter. I believe it is very important that students are encouraged to take ownership of school performances and that they are comfortable with the type or genre of music. I know I was less than enthusiastic about my group's efforts and my lack of interest badly affected my motivation.

This trainee's opinion concurs with the research findings of Lucy Green, who highlights the importance of authenticity, stressing the importance of incorporating the students' music preference into their learning of music especially in adolescence:

> By allowing learners the personal autonomy to explore authentically that aspect of musical autonomy, we open their ears to the possibility of imbuing music with a much wider variety of delineations than children and young people usually realise are available. In so doing we also make available a new wealth of responses not only to music, but also to the social, cultural, political and ideological meanings that music carries.[14]

This project afforded the trainees the opportunity to engage with an important aspect of their professional education, namely, staging a public performance and making meaning of the experience. The skills that they routinely use in music performance as they study at conservatoire

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[13]Thomas Turino, Music as social life: The politics of participation. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 25
[14]Lucy Green, Popular music education in and for itself, and for "other" music: current research in the classroom. International Journal in Music Education 24(2):118, 2006

level may never surface to consciousness; consequently, without opportunities to reflect on their own performances, the fundamental principles, or essential elements of performance, may be impossible to describe and difficult to teach[15]. Real learning requires venturing into the unknown; true scholarship is concerned with encountering the unknown[16]. For trainee teachers, this experience was expressed as a most important point of learning over the course of the year, and essential to fully appreciate the significance of school music performance:

> After our performance there was a tremendous "high". As a group we felt relieved but also extremely proud of what we had accomplished and we were basking in pure joy. This experience is what students remember about music in school.

Conclusion

Our findings show how trainee teachers expressed a certain changed understanding of the nature of performance as a social, relational and responsive activity, involving not just themselves but all of the individuals taking part in that performance. They stated that having the experience with their colleagues was the source of this change. On further probing in group discussions, however, factors such as reflection, dialogue and interaction with theory during the seminars were also assigned significance in the context of instigating change.

At the end of the project, further discussion prompted the participants to reflect on how they could use this experience to teach others, what they had learned about staging a public performance. While participants mentioned the need to address the number of variables involved in any one performance (principles), the need for goodwill to sustain the momentum and ensure participation and joint ownership (assumptions), the importance of rehearsing, citing the head, hand and heart elements (disciplines), and high levels of organization in terms of the publicity and venue (preparation), they were unanimous in thinking that this form of knowledge could only be fully exploited in the context of the opportunity afforded to them to plan, stage and reflect on a series of performances themselves. While the diaries indicate an increased understanding amongst trainees of the mechanism of performance, the notion of teaching *performance pedagogy* over the course of one module is one we would contest, preferring to postulate the need for the trainees to experience staging a performance during their school placement experience and repeating that experience over time as essential in developing fluency. This was merely the first step.

The project points to the need for higher education undergraduate courses in music education to embrace more progressive and innovative pedagogies in attempting to prepare teachers to meet the contemporary challenges of the profession. Although musical performance is not explicitly addressed in the secondary school music syllabus, there is an implicit expectation from school staff, students and parents, that the music teacher will take responsibility for the staging of liturgical, celebratory and seasonal musical performances.

We would argue that practitioner research facilitated an opportunity for the inclusion, in this undergraduate course, of a vital opportunity for professional growth not otherwise addressed in music education. Further work exploring the impact of this *performance pedagogy* module on the trainees' school placement experience, and how this experience impacts their teaching, will be conducted in the next stage of the project.

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15 Kari Batt-Rawden and Tia DeNora. *Music and informal learning in everyday life.*(Music Education Research, Vol 7 no. 3 2005 pp 289-304)

[16] Ray Land. *Threshold Concepts Symposium Presentation* (University College Cork Oct, 2011)

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The International Journal of Arts Education is one of four thematically focused journals in the collection of journals that support the Arts and Society knowledge community—its journals, book series, conference and online community.

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