

Oboe Secrets: 75 Performance Strategies for the Advanced Oboist and English Horn Player

by Jacqueline Leclair.

Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2013; <http://www.rowman.com>

Jacqueline Leclair presents a pedagogical text of concepts geared toward oboe and English horn players. Leclair's credentials include eight years with Alarm Will Sound as well as recordings for Nonesuch, CRI, Koch, Neuma, Deutsche Grammophon, and CBS Masterworks. Her performances have been critically acclaimed by *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker*.

After reviewing the author's background, the quality and relevance of the "secrets" contained within are no surprise. Although this reviewer's professional performing experience is limited to the clarinet and saxophone, *Oboe Secrets: 75 Performance Strategies for the Advanced Oboist and English Horn Player* contains significant and helpful knowledge for all musicians and educators.

Leclair organizes the book into nine chapters that discuss aspects of oboe and English horn performance ranging from practice techniques to reed adjustment. Each chapter is divided into easily digestible segments, or "Secrets," which range in length from one to four pages. Leclair's prose is clear and concise throughout. The table of contents makes navigation quick and easy should an oboe student inquire about a particular aspect of performance. The complexities of double reed instruments are often an enigma to music educators. Most music education degrees offer somewhere between three weeks to three months of classroom instruction on the performance and

pedagogy of each instrument. Hence, this work should become an indispensable desktop reference for every instrumental music educator, in addition to its target audience. Also, those instructing woodwind methods courses at the university level will find many of the "secrets" found in Leclair's book both a complement and an enhancement to curriculum reliant on commonly used textbooks such as those by William Dietz and Frederick Westphal.

Oboe Secrets contains a significant amount of relevant performance and practice information. Although outside the scope of Leclair's intended audience, her suggested fundamental practice techniques, general approach to wind playing, and philosophy of practice found in chapter 1, "Practice Strategies," and chapter 2, "Tone and Rhythm Strategies," should engage all wind players in their practice of fundamentals. In fact, all musicians may find her advice helpful. Chapter 4, "Health and Strength Strategies," will also be of interest to readers from outside an oboe and English horn focus. This chapter provides concise information about musician's wellness activities, including body-mapping, Alexander Technique, and yoga. Also, it addresses common vices in oboe and English horn performance that may cause injury or discomfort later in one's career. Many of these are not exclusive

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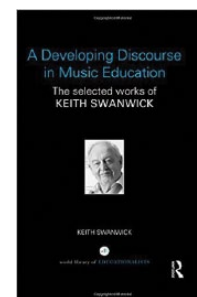
to these instruments, so this is helpful knowledge for all performing musicians.

In summary, *Oboe Secrets: 75 Performance Strategies for the Advanced Oboist and English Horn Player* is a worthwhile acquisition for instrumental music educators ranging from middle school through collegiate levels. Additionally, professional musicians may find Leclair's approach to practice and performance engaging and helpful in their daily lives.

—Christopher Nichols

Assistant professor of clarinet,
University of Delaware, Newark;
crnichol@udel.edu

A Developing Discourse in Music Education: The Selected Works of Keith Swanwick



by Keith Swanwick.
New York: Routledge,
2016; routledge.com

Keith Swanwick (b. 1937) is a British music educator most known for his theory of musical development and

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DOI: 10.1177/0027432116657809
<http://mej.sagepub.com>

its pedagogical and philosophical implications. Swanwick selected the twelve works that compose this collection. The works include the published texts of two public presentations (1982 and 1999), seven chapters drawn from five books (1979 to 2011), and one journal article (from 1986). The selection rationale for each is encapsulated in Swanwick's introductory essay.

The introduction guides readers through the 1980s and 1990s, the two pivotal decades of Swanwick's development as researcher, theorist, and philosopher. Swanwick provides a concise distillation of the development of music education as both a practical and academic field, in various countries, and with various results. This opening chapter provides an illuminating breadth of perspective: It may itself be worth the price of the entire volume. The retail price for the 234-page hardcover edition is \$160, and the e-book is available for approximately \$60. Both are available from the publisher and from other distributors. All reflective music educators will find the book to be approachable, but it is perhaps most appropriate for use in graduate students in music education and related fields.

The first ten selections in the book are presented more or less in order from most general to most specific. These are titled "The Arts in Education: Dreaming or Wide Awake?," "The Parameters of Music Education," "The Model in Action," "What Makes Music Musical?," "The Sequence of Musical Development: A Study of Children's Composition" (coauthored with June Tillman), "Musical Development: Revisiting a Generic Theory," "Music Education in a Pluralist Society," "Intuition, Analysis and Symbolic Forms," "Musical Knowledge in Action," and "Musical Value." The final two selections return to the major philosophical themes presented in the early pages of the volume but this time with depth added by the intervening discussions: "Principles of Music Education" and "Music Education: Closed or Open?"

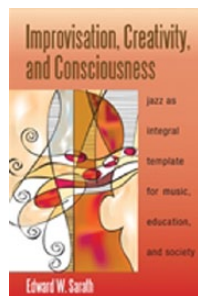
The writings collected here themselves illuminate the "five main strands" of music education in Western society.

Swanwick describes these in the introduction, and they include, in brief: (1) general music as national and/or local curriculum, (2) music ensembles as contributors to the social and aesthetic life of schools and society, (3) individual instrumental or vocal music instruction, (4) music education as a political enterprise for social intervention and arts advocacy, and (5) private music lessons as supplemental to schooling yet exerting influence on the overall enterprise of music education.

The closing page of Swanwick's final selection, "Music Education: Closed or Open?," presents perhaps the most unifying theme of the collection. Swanwick predicts the development of a philosophy for music education that "will have much more to do with promoting varieties of musical discourse in diverse educational settings of which schools will be but one" (p. 221). Swanwick's contribution to this developing philosophy is as evident in the works presented here as it is in our profession's ongoing discussions about the values, structures, and purposes of music education.

—Patrick K. Freer

Professor of music education,
Georgia State University,
Atlanta;
pfreer@gsu.edu



**Improvisation,
Creativity, and
Consciousness:
Jazz as an
Integral
Template
for Music,
Education,
and Society**

by Edward W. Sarath.

Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2013; <http://www.sunypress.edu>

Integral theory is a deep, multifaceted process that describes the many ways human beings use introspective self-reflection, meditation, and continuous personal development as pathways toward inner wholeness. Edward Sarath's book, *Improvisation, Creativity, and Consciousness:*

Jazz as Integral Template for Music, Education, and Society, explores the many potential advantages that embracing these holistic approaches will offer performers, composers, teachers, and administrators in higher education.

Beautifully written and thought-provoking, this book draws on Sarath's nearly thirty years' experience as a jazz trumpeter and professor of music at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor to challenge administrators and department chairs to envision a robust, jazz-infused curriculum that fuses modern improvisation, composition, and performance. Sarath argues that this type of degree program will better prepare undergraduates for the rigors of a changing music industry. Furthermore, Sarath maintains that such contemplative approaches to curriculum design and music pedagogy bring about a positive change in higher education and society.

Highlighting his own experience building the United States' first bachelor of fine arts program in jazz and contemplative studies, Sarath asserts that a wide-ranging, elective-rich set of jazz-centered courses fuses theoretical concepts with composition, ensemble and solo performance, and sophisticated rhythms. Moreover, Sarath describes how incorporating a consistent meditative practice has tangible benefits for all musicians regardless of their stylistic background and preferences.

The book has three main sections: Part I describes the intricate relationship among integral theory, musical creativity, and spiritual consciousness—and how these concepts intersect with jazz. Part II looks at the stylistic merits of jazz, its historical evolution, and the differences between improvisation and musical composition. (In chapter 9, Sarath examines jazz's rich harmonic, rhythmic, melodic, and improvisatory virtues, explaining how these elements offer transformational change in music performance and education praxis.) Finally, Part III presents the inspired and comprehensive musical curriculum of the future. Each chapter has detailed illustrations and a summary to explain the philosophical concepts discussed throughout the work.

Fans of Kenny Werner's *Effortless Mastery* might find some common ground with Sarath's book. It is equal parts complex, highly theoretical, well researched, and deeply inspired. Although it is not a quick and easy read, music administrators and faculty members may find this volume useful to include in a graduate-level pedagogy or seminar course. Indeed, readers will find this book to be a fine contribution to the literature exploring fresh approaches to music pedagogy and curriculum design.

—**Daniel A. Walzer**

Assistant professor of composition
for new media,
University of Massachusetts Lowell;
Daniel_Walzer@uml.edu



**We Shall Overcome:
Essays on a Great American Song**

by Victor V. Bobetsky. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015;
<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781442236028/We-Shall-Overcome-Essays-on-a-Great-American-Song>

Over the years, publishing companies in the United States have made it a priority to provide materials to music educators that facilitate the study of African-American history, culture, and music to fulfill what some see as an “obligatory” multicultural inclusion in music and general education programs. Although the intent is good, the materials provided are often shallow studies of a culture that has greatly influenced our country; many times, they only scratch the surface, providing students with no lasting or meaningful exposure. Such is *not* the case in the book *We Shall Overcome: Essays on a Great American Song*. Victor V. Bobetsky has presented us with a valuable resource to be used not just in the music appreciation or general music classroom but in any class that seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the African-American civil rights movement

and the song central to its conflict that has been used “to inspire people around the world who struggle for peace and justice.”

The author presents an opening chapter that effectively establishes connections between the Italian hymn tune “O Sanctissima” and “We Shall Overcome,” examining the melodic contour and the underlying harmony, melodic rhythm, and intervallic motive. Many graphics and figures illustrate the connections between these two songs as well as cross-relationships with others, including “No More Auction Block,” “I’ll Be Like Him Someday,” and “I’ll Overcome Someday.” This chapter could serve as a resource for both a collegiate music appreciation class and a secondary general music or social studies unit on African American history and culture.

Subsequent chapters compiled by Bobetsky, such as “A Folksong in Flight: Pete Seeger and the Genesis of ‘We Shall Overcome,’” “The SNCC Freedom Singers: Ambassadors for Justice,” and “Beyond ‘We Shall Overcome’: The Lasting Legacy of Freedom Songs,” cover various historical and cultural integration topics. Other chapters, such as “The Missing Blue Note” and “Analysis and History of Major Choral Arrangements of ‘We Shall Overcome,’” are a more specific analysis of the song itself and of reputable arrangements for choirs and students of all ages and levels of experience by arrangers such as Roy Ringwald, Robert DeCormier, and Ruth Elaine Schram. Details including range and tessitura are provided for each.

In the chapter “The Making of a Symposium,” Bobetsky describes a daylong symposium on the origins and ancestry of “We Shall Overcome” presented at Hunter College of the City University of New York on May 1, 2013. The structure of this chapter and discussion of the event can easily serve as a model for a graduate student preparing a topic for thesis or dissertation or for any secondary public school teacher seeking to enrich students’ music education through integration with other academic areas. Special attention was given to the application of the cultural diversity measures contained in the National Standards for

Arts Education through the planning and execution of the symposium.

Victor Bobetsky’s book is a valuable resource for teachers in performance, music appreciation, or general music classrooms. The volume’s many references and citations lead in a variety of directions that could provide a primary or secondary educator with substantial material to enrich their students’ education.

—**Michael K. Lisi**

Director of choral activities,
Avon Lake High School,
Avon Lake, Ohio;
mklisi65@gmail.com



**Musical Creativity:
Insights from Music Education Research**

Edited by Oscar Odena. New York: Ashgate/Taylor & Francis/Routledge, 2012;

<https://www.routledge.com/Musical-Creativity-Insights-from-Music-Education-Research/Odena/p/book/9781409406228>

Musical Creativity: Insights from Music Education Research is a volume in the *SEMPRE Series on Studies in the Psychology of Music*. The series is designed to clarify the links among music, education and psychological research. This volume focuses on what those disciplines can tell readers about musical creativity. The chapter authors display a broad range of interests and views on musical creativity. They live in many different geographical locations and represent researchers at the beginning of their careers, those in mid-career, as well as very experienced thinkers and writers.

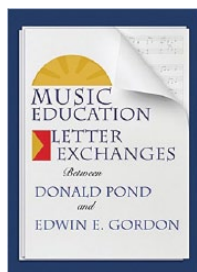
Margaret Barrett’s chapter offers a practical and very readable summary of the research on creativity done prior to 2012. She draws lovely parallels between young children’s exposure to words and their exposure to music. The short narratives she presents are particularly

compelling. Gabriel Rusinek provides an excellent synopsis of the differences between teacher research and action research. I also enjoyed his description of composing in groups. Similarly, Frederick Seddon's chapter has a concise discussion of the constant comparative method and an equally brief description of empathetic intelligence and how it differs from being sympathetic. He presents an elegant model to use when comparing musicians' modes of verbal and nonverbal communication (p. 136). Peter Webster's chapter on the pedagogies of revision would be an important read for anyone teaching composition. He writes, "What I have in mind is more of a style of interaction with children that, on the one hand values their voice and, on the other hand, guides their thinking in ways that deepen and enrich their world of sonic possibilities." Pamela Burnard's chapter sets the stage very nicely for her later book, *Developing Creativities in Higher Music Education* (Routledge, 2014). Perhaps writing this chapter prompted her to pursue this.

One thing I found a bit unsettling about the book was how the sections of implications for music education get labeled in the various chapters. In most chapters, they are clearly labeled as implications for practice, but in several they are included in the discussion or labeled in some other fashion. There are also a few inconsistencies in how the in-text citations and references are handled, but these do not distract from the reading.

Of particular interest to researchers might be editor Oscar Odena's chart on p. 207. In a concise space, it provides a great many topics for future exploration as well as things to keep in mind when attempting to develop music creativity. Because this is a compilation, certain chapters may appeal more to one type of reader than to others, but this book would make a good supplemental textbook for graduate-level classes in research, creativity, and related topics.

—**Janice P. Smith**
Queens College,
City University of New York,
New York City;
janice.smith@qc.cuny.edu



Music Education Letter Exchanges between Donald Pond and Edwin E. Gordon

by Edwin E. Gordon. Chicago: GIA Publications, 2014; <https://www.giamusic.com>

[giamusic.com](https://www.giamusic.com)

It's a music education rite of passage: The bewilderment accompanying many music teachers' first experiences reading (and rereading) the work of Edwin E. Gordon. Seemingly, Gordon provokes more thought with a single incisive paragraph than many a writer can manage in an entire manuscript. In *Music Education Letter Exchanges between Donald Pond and Edwin E. Gordon*, pedagogical doctrine yields to collegiality. Gordon presents a transcription of charming letters he exchanged with eminent music educator Donald Pond (1906–1983) between 1979 and 1981. The two intended to provoke one another regarding music learning in early childhood and hoped that their correspondence would eventually form the basis of a coauthored book.

The initial letters, while amusing for their nostalgic formality and contrast between Pond's florid writing and Gordon's verbal precision, contain little substantive content. In fact, fewer than ten of the forty-five letters Gordon features are of sufficient length and relevance to be valuable to most historians or music learning theory enthusiasts. The handful of more meaningful letters show Pond and Gordon discussing (and at times vigorously debating) the role of music "babble" and delineations between creativity and improvisation, among other topics. However, the philosophical divide between the two men is most prominent in the domain of harmonic implication. While Gordon asserts the predominance of underlying tonal relationships in determining how children perceive and explore music, Pond maintains that certain intervals—such as the minor third—hold special significance

in the musical spontaneity of children regardless of harmonic context.

Music Education Letter Exchanges is enlightening as much for its content as for its portrayal of the mutual respect and affection between Gordon and Pond. While the book is of limited value for most music educators, many historians and lifelong devotees of music learning theory will find it to be a fascinating and enjoyable read. Alternative sources that offer a more thorough treatment of early childhood music education include *Learning from Young Children: Research in Early Childhood Music* (S. L. Burton and C. C. Taggart, eds., Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2011) and Gordon's *A Music Learning Theory for Newborn and Young Children* (GIA Publications, 2013).

—**Josef Hanson**
Assistant professor of music,
Department of Performing Arts,
University of Massachusetts Boston;
josef.hanson@umb.edu



Soundtracks of Asian America: Navigating Race through Musical Performance

by Grace Wang. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014; <https://www.dukeupress.edu/Soundtracks-of-Asian-America/>

[Soundtracks-of-Asian-America/](https://www.dukeupress.edu/Soundtracks-of-Asian-America/)

Scholars of Asian music in the United States most often approach their topic by analyzing musical scores and recordings or investigating the relationship that performance practices have to diasporic identities. *Soundtracks of Asian America* falls into this second category, as author Grace Wang treats musical practices as reflective of Asian American cultural experiences. Wang's ethnographic observations and interviews with amateur and professional musicians reveal race-based exclusions and musical communities among her middle- and upper-class Chinese and Korean American

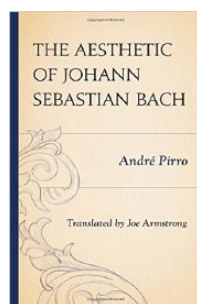
and immigrant subjects. Wang stresses that music aids in the construction and naturalization of the multiethnic Asian racial category in the United States. Similar to Deborah Wong's *Speak It Louder* (the current authoritative volume on Asian American performance practices), Wang's book does not address any one genre that might be identified as "Asian American music" but explores how Asian musicians navigate multiple race and class positions in the United States.

Soundtracks of Asian America follows the desires and struggles of immigrant parents and their musician children who excel in their music training but remain racialized outsiders within arts institutions. These first-generation Americans therefore share their perspectives and feelings by using media technologies and popular music forms. My review is limited to the first half of the book—the portion that most directly addresses music education. The first two chapters document strongly held beliefs by middle- and upper-middle-class Asian immigrant parents about Western music instruction as a means to safeguard their children from the cultural exclusions that they experienced by displaying their literacy in Western cultural codes. The value that they place on music training responds to lingering stereotypes about tiger moms, model minorities, and "yellow peril" anxieties. While the first chapter describes how some Asian parents have resignified Western art music as an Asian cultural practice by making their children visible participants, the second chapter links the perceived overrepresentation of Asian classical musicians to dominant racial ideologies that ultimately dehumanize and excuse exclusions of Asian musicians in the professional realm. Interviews and the career patterns of Yo-Yo Ma, Lang Lang, the Ying Quartet, and other artists deliver compelling evidence of how the alignment of classical music with dominant ideologies both enables and contains Asian artists.

The most significant contribution of this volume is Wang's interrogation of American stages as racialized spaces. The book speaks to the color-blind

racism that persists at all levels of music education in the United States. For this reason alone, the book is a valuable addition to research in American music education, particularly to the limits of multiculturalism and diversity training in the arts. Wang locates cultural biases in American pedagogies that conceal how race and class operate, including pervasive stereotypes about Asian discipline and competitiveness that deny these musicians recognition of their creativity and passion. The belief that Asian musicians lack artistic traits that are necessary for professional ascent triggers personal blame among those who do not succeed at the same rate as their white classmates. *Soundtracks of Asian America* challenges music educators to both recognize differences in racial experiences and resist race-based assumptions so that we can better advocate for our Asian students.

—Elizabeth Whittenburg Ozment
Assistant dean, College of Arts
and Sciences,
University of Virginia, Charlottesville;
ewo5n@virginia.edu



The Aesthetic of Johann Sebastian Bach

by Andre Pirro;
translated by Joe
Armstrong. Lanham,
MD: Rowman and
Littlefield, 2014; [http://
www.rowman.com](http://www.rowman.com)

This English translation of Andre Pirro's *The Aesthetic of Johann Sebastian Bach* is a significant volume on the music and aesthetic of J. S. Bach (1685–1750), a musical giant whose baroque compositions are an integral part of modern American society and an important component of music education at many levels worldwide.

The book's author, Andre Pirro (1869–1943), was a founding scholar in musicology in France, and he wrote this study as his dissertation in 1907. Pirro studied law and letters at the Sorbonne

and attended the organ classes of Cesar Franck and Charles-Marie Widor at the Paris Conservatory. Pirro eventually taught organ and music history and later became a professor of music history at the Sorbonne.

Translator Joe Armstrong (b. 1944) is a flutist who since 1972 has specialized in teaching the Alexander Technique in the Boston, Massachusetts, area. The English translation reads well and is smooth and revealing of Bach's music and ideas. Many works are discussed, including especially the *Christmas Oratorio*—a personal favorite piece that I've had the honor to participate in as a timpanist in the past with the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra.

Pirro examines a number of Bach's vocal works, his cantatas, and several of his large compositions. There is considerable discussion of the religious texts Bach used and even a segment on the composer's religion. Footnotes are carefully done, with BWV numbers and measure numbers to clarify specific points. The author takes a deep look at the texts of many of the works examined, making the volume of special interest to vocal teachers.

The Aesthetic of Johann Sebastian Bach is well titled. Pirro points out numerous instances of Bach's development as a composer. Aesthetic beauty is of utmost importance in Bach's music, whether instrumental or vocal. The author proceeds to specify how the composer pulls it off through his music.

The book is of special value to classical musicians but can also enlighten present-day composers, especially in the areas of counterpoint and text use. I give this book an A+ for both relevance and importance to the music education field. *The Aesthetic of Johann Sebastian Bach* is a must-purchase for research libraries for use by scholars. Its genius is that it is also very readable for the classroom music educators, to who whom I highly recommend the book.

—Geary H. Larrick
Assistant professor of music, retired,
University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point;
Geary.Larrick@uwsu.edu