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ARTICLE

Power relations in the music teaching studio

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Abstract

Power relations operate in any educational setting, and there may be particular vulnerabilities in a tradition conducted in the relative isolation of the music teaching studio. These vulnerabilities have been highlighted dramatically in recent years through high-profile cases of power abuse, but power is implicated in a wide range of contexts related to the studio, including cultural, gendered, pedagogical, artistic, institutional and interpersonal issues. It may be impossible to divest power of its negative connotations, but there is a good deal of theory focused on power, even if its terms are broadly political or philosophical, and subject to debate. This theoretical paper explores power relations with regard to the music studio, investigating popular conceptions and everyday usage before turning to scholarship focused on interpersonal and broader social perspectives. Some reflections are offered on the uses and abuses of power in the studio. A better understanding of its dimensions and usage can support the ongoing development of studio practices and contribute to the conversation that we need to have about power.

Keywords: Music studio teaching; higher music education; direct instruction in music; authoritative discourse in music

Introduction

Too often, it seems both too easy and too difficult to discuss the music teaching studio in terms of power relations. "Power" is an everyday term with negative connotations, easily provoking opinion and even an emotional reflex; there is a good deal of theory focused on power, but its terms tend to be broadly political or philosophical, and it can be difficult to agree on their meaning and implications. Even so, power is at issue in a wide range of contexts related to music education. Questions have been raised about the conservatoire model imposed on other traditions such as jazz (Bjerstedt, 2016), popular music (Lebler & Hodges, 2017) and indigenous or minority cultures (Ricken, 2006); power imbalances have been explored in relation to gender (Almqvist & Werner, 2022) and studio pedagogy (Gaunt, 2017); entrenched norms in musical interpretation have been questioned (Leech-Wilkinson, 2021); and the dangers of psychological and even sexual abuse have been raised (Fernández-Morante 2018; Hays et al., 2000). Each of these represents and deserves an area of discourse – including scholarship and both professional and public discussion – in itself. The locus of the current paper will be education, in which power relations are always implicated, and in particular the music studio, since there may be particular vulnerabilities in a tradition premised on high levels of commitment, and conducted in relative isolation.

In recent years, these vulnerabilities have been highlighted dramatically in national and international discourses: landmark texts in the UK range from *Keeping children safe in music* (Musicians' Union, 2010), laying out parameters for appropriate behaviour in music teaching and learning, to *Dignity in study* (Payne et al., 2018), noting the high incidence, nevertheless, of inappropriate behaviour in performing arts settings. This suggests a need for institutions to facilitate reporting and codes of conduct, and it also suggests a more fundamental shift in the

culture, and a review of our attitudes and behaviour, by re-thinking for example the one-on-one model (Wickström, 2021), and by reconsidering traditionally conceived aims as a self-evident good for students and society (Tregear et al., 2016). The reported incidents of power abuse in our society have become too frequent and too serious to be dismissed as merely aberrant, and to review our attitudes objectively we need to ask what there is in our cultures that has allowed, and even shielded, the abuse of power relations.

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to such a review, by exploring power relations in the music studio. It begins with a discussion of popular conceptions of power, in relation to music and in everyday usage. An overview of scholarly thinking on the subject is divided between power as domination, which always has negative connotations, and discursive perspectives, in which power can be productive. The possibility of power as a positive resource is important, because without power – as energy, efficacy, the ability to affect change – learning cannot take place; but all conceptions of power allow that it can be both used and abused. A better understanding of its dimensions and implications and a more reflexive consideration of its place in our lives and work can support the ongoing development of studio practices and contribute to the conversation that we need to have about power.

Power relations in music

Power relations in the music studio are almost legendary. In the public domain, this highly specialised tradition has been depicted as intense and esoteric, with participants driven by ambition, suffering privation and meeting gruelling demands as they seek entry to the upper echelons of a mysterious art form. Salient examples on film include *La pianiste* (Haneke, 2001) and *Whiplash* (Chazelle, 2014), both of which feature spectacularly domineering and abusive teachers, but the prototype may be the figure of Svengali, villain of a bestselling nineteenth-century novel. In *Trilby* by George du Maurier (1894, p. 12), Svengali is almost a caricature of the cultural other, playing on contemporary anxieties about race and about an imagined underworld of artists and musicians: as he is introduced, even his appearance is immediately alienating, his "thick, heavy, languid, lustreless black hair [falling] down behind his ears on to his shoulders, in that musician-like way that is so offensive to the normal Englishman." Under his thrall, Trilby becomes a great singer, hypnotism having "[given] her voice the discipline it lacks in waking life" (Stern, 2010, p. 563); when Svengali dies her abilities collapse, and she languishes and dies herself (Drabble et al., 2007). The success of the novel has been linked to popular conceptions of the musical world: the notion of talent as a mysterious possession, along with imagined links between hysteria and artistic genius (Nunan, 2013) and assumptions about a "Bohemian" culture among artists, all combined to titillate the middlebrow Victorian public (Tickner, 2011).

Trilby is all but unknown today, but "Svengali" now refers to anyone who exerts a sinister control over another. To date, music education research has provided few concrete examples of such cases, but a group of professional musicians interviewed by Hays et al. (2000, p. 9) reflected on their experience of dominating teachers as "'guru', 'tyrannical', 'authoritarian' and 'Svengali like'"; one musician referred to "a dominating personality, extremely manipulative emotionally and a parent figure that managed to run my life," and another mentioned a state of dependency on the part of the protégé (p. 8). Teachers may have contradictory views of dependency: in views reported by Gaunt (2008, p. 230-1), for example, there was a reaction to the notion of students "[seeing] you as a fountain of everything that's true and right," alongside a description of the teacher's role as parental, "guiding, nurturing and moulding." This touches on an emotional element in the teacher-student relationship that in principle, could be open to exploitation.

A caricature of this notion may be found, again, in the figure of Svengali, whose use of hypnosis has erotic connotations (Grimes, 2008). Hays et al. (2000) assert that sexual exploitation is an

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"obvious hazard" of an emotional involvement between teacher and student, quoting one rather indirect report:

> "I think what can change a mentor relationship is when the relationship becomes sexual. You can get someone (mentor) who has the appearance of being a good mentor and then the protégé feels a loss of trust and sense of agony." (Hays et al., 2000, p. 9)

It seems significant that this example is presented as a case in which the teacher's authority is extended beyond its professional remit, so that the normal relationship becomes sexual: thus, as Schneebaum (2015) explains, sex within authority relations (SAR) should be understood not as a sex offense per se but as an abuse of office. Schneebaum draws on Weber (1922) to distinguish among power bases and their claims to legitimacy: whereas "traditional" authorities exerted an holistic domination of their subjects, modern "bureaucratic" authorities are expected to be demarcated and limited. The bureaucratic authority of teachers, doctors and employers is not personal in nature, but endorsed by social norms, and significantly, SARs are defined by neither coercion nor a lack of consent:

> Criminal law assumes that, in everyday life, subordinates find it hard to act upon the rational assumption that the person standing in front of them asking for sex is operating in his capacity as a private person and should be acknowledged as their equal rather than an authority figure. . . . At the moment of truth, they tend to perceive the authority figure as holistically powerful rather than merely professionally authorized, and certain officeholders on their part take advantage of this tendency and manipulate subordinates into having unwanted sex. (Schneebaum, 2015, p. 379)

It is important to note that the defining feature of SAR is not the presence of authority, which is an indispensable resource for teaching and learning, but an abuse of it. Sexual exploitation in the context of studio teaching is abhorrent and indefensible, and it should be unnecessary to ask studio teachers to reflect on their behaviour in these terms. However, the principles involved can be applied by analogy to any perceived imposition on the student, from teachers exceeding their domain of authority. There must be many ways, in varying degrees, that a teacher can impose on a student, consciously or unconsciously, and many concessions that a student might make in deference to an admired and accepted figure of authority. The difficulty of determining what constitutes an imposition can be compounded by contrasting perspectives from teachers and students, and from participants and observers, and anyone's perspective may be affected in turn by time, distance, objectivity, and the terms of inquiry.

The classic example of Svengali is complemented by landmark interview studies of teacher-student relationships, in which Manturzewska (1990) described master teachers who at once inspired, challenged and in many ways controlled their students, and Sosniak (1985, p. 421) described students perceived as "slaves to music," and the teacher an "an impossible taskmaster." Such attitudes are no doubt dated, and certainly have been challenged in recent years; but power relations may be found in any music studio, and although the effects are usually less dramatic, they can be more subtle and pervasive. Much of my own research has described studio behaviour in higher music education, with evidence of power relations emerging almost incidentally in lesson observations and interviews with undergraduate students. Teachers normally dominate verbal lesson behaviour, for example, but in one case study a student complained instead about the dominance of teacher demonstration: "he didn't actually say do it faster there, or don't do that, or do this, but his guitar was speaking to me and commanding me" (Burwell, 2016a, p. 503). Conversely, several undergraduates actually expressed a preference for teachers to dominate, with one confessing "I need to be forced to do well" (2016b, p. 468) and another "I prefer to be dictated to" (Burwell, 2005, p. 209). A lack of teacher approval could be a source of anxiety (2016a, 2016b, 2019), and

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raising concerns about teacher behaviour could be a difficult and delicate matter (2017). This reminds us that power relations may be institutional as well as interpersonal, affecting and regulating participant expectations and behaviour. Burwell et al. (2019) have argued that cultural assumptions are endorsed by the isolation of the music studio, which in some cases might seem to shield and even encourage dominating behaviour from teachers.

Thinking about power

What issues do we mean to raise when we talk about power in the music studio? The term is deeply rooted in everyday life and may have multiple uses, but everyday usage often draws on just one or a selection of them. When Allsup (2012, p. 173) divides power, "in the popular imagination, [among] control, force or rule," these need not be synonyms but distinct possibilities: an everyday reference to power might be about "control" in the sense of restraint, perhaps with a teacher proscribing certain repertoire choices; or "force" effecting change, perhaps urging a more energetic commitment; or "rule" to govern conduct, perhaps inculcating a particular regime of practice. Considering everyday usage more deeply, Ricken (2006) asserts that "power" is assumed to be a capacity that is personally attributed and asymmetrically distributed; it is intentional or purposeful, conflictual and political in nature; and it has negative connotations. On this view, power would be vested in studio teachers rather than their students and would be used purposefully for the teachers' advantage – perhaps advancing their own careers or satisfying their egos – rather than the students' benefit. Imagining power as a personal property of the teacher heightens the implication of repression, of doing violence to the students' interests. Ricken encourages us, however, to note some of the ambiguities of power. If power is conceived not as the teacher's property but as a relation, then teacher and student might contribute in various ways and to varying degrees to the inherent push-and-pull of studio activity, with power exercised rather than owned. This reinforces the view that in effecting change, power is productive and necessary, and might be interpreted as more or less positive or negative: drawing on Ricken again, the way it is understood by studio participants will depend on their understanding of themselves.

A further everyday use of "power" connects it to enforced traditions, and in particular, to conservative approaches to education. For example, Allsup (2012, p. 172) mentions "the excesses and abuses of conservative teachings," and plays on "conservativism" and "conservatory": the roots of these words are the same, clearly concerning protection and maintenance, and Kingsbury (1988) has argued that conservatory practice is oriented towards the maintenance of the institution of the conservatory itself. However, the original meaning of "conservatoire" referred to the support of orphans and other needy children in sixteenth-century Italy, including a high-level provision of music education (Latham, 2011), and it might be unfair to attribute this to ulterior motives on the part of an established elite. Young and Muller (2010, p. 15) suggest an essential distinction between the *social* conservatism that might seek to guard the privileges of powerful groups, and the *structural* conservatism that might be found in any institution of education, seeking to sustain and pass on its knowledge and skills from one generation to the next, and – surely, in many cases – adhering to the original intention to care for students.

Scholarly thinking about power falls largely into the liberal tradition, in which power relations have negative connotations: individual freedom is prized, and power is said to be exercised only when it is contrary to the subject's best interests (Marshall, 1990, p. 25). The notion of power as domination owes much to Weber's seminal work *Economy and society* (1922/2019), which characterises the power bases of authority in terms of "ideal types" which may be legal, traditional or charismatic, and which may be applied to various social settings, including the music studio. Through "legal" rule, the conservatoire legitimises and regulates musical activity, and studio teachers might seem to be anointed through their personal pedigrees. Through "traditional rule," there is a living history of studio practice and concert performance, in which teachers might

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present a formidable model, calling for a competitive drive from aspiring students. Through "charismatic" rule, drawing on personal and emotional inspiration, teachers might play on the vulnerability of students passionately devoted to the discipline. However, although the classic definitions might offer some insight into aspects of studio practice, they are not sufficient to account for its complexity, nor the nature and function of power within it. When, for example, can teachers be characterised as dominating, as acting in their own interests instead of the students' own? How, and by whom, are students' best interests to be identified? And if regulation, motivation and emotional commitment are tools for the teachers' purposes, are they not, equally, tools for the students?

In the scholarship that followed Weber, sociologists began to address this kind of issue by identifying multiple dimensions of power, often distinguishing between *power to* and *power over*. The first of these is the more general, simply indicating a capacity to effect change, but this use of the term is not contentious, and in the present discussion not particularly interesting. More significant is *power over*, though it is conceivable that studio teachers might have power over students without having to enforce their will against resistance, and conceivable that students, like du Maurier's Trilby, might be mesmerised or at least persuaded into compliance. It is possible too that students might be willing and even enthusiastic collaborators in studio practices that strike observers as doing violence to their interests. Thus, Persson (1994, p. 226) reported on the case study of "Mrs Greenfield," a clarinet teacher who explicitly eschewed "'Svengali' approach": her students "cherish[ed] her commitment and readiness to help," but Persson himself was concerned that they were being dominated, their initiatives quashed and their compliance demanded as they were "overwhelmed by Mrs Greenfield's intense charisma and never-ending flow of hints, tips and suggestions." Similarly perhaps, the guitar student who complained that he was commanded by his teacher's demonstrations (Burwell, 2016a, p. 503) seemed to be contradicted by peers who were warmly positive about the same teacher's "laid back," "relaxed," "encouraging" temperament, and observations of their lessons suggested that those peers were happy to collaborate with the teacher's signature style (Burwell, 2019, p. 7).

Insofar as students are complicit in their teachers' behaviour, it is worth asking whether power relations should be regarded as collaborative, even if their exercise is not symmetrical. Arendt (1958) argued that power can be both positive and communal, thus adding *power with* to the range of possibilities (Haugaard, 2012). This conception of shared power stepped away from the assumption that power flows in one direction only and opened the possibility that it is typically more diffuse. In broad terms, for example, there is evidence suggesting that advanced music students actively participate in power relations by seeking and supporting authority in their studio teachers (Nielsen, 1999). A more specific example comes from a case study of an undergraduate soprano who asserted that she needed more support and direction, while her teacher felt forced by the student's passivity to adopt a commanding attitude in lessons (Burwell, 2016b). Like all social interaction, power relations are negotiated, contingent on a push-and-pull between teacher and student: if the student had no active part to play, literally no scope for affecting an inevitable outcome, then it could hardly be said that *power over* had been exercised by the teacher. The classic definition of power as domination holds that the exercise of power effects outcomes that would not have occurred otherwise (Haugaard, 2012; Lukes, 2005).

Becoming subject

Thus far, power relations have been discussed chiefly as dyadic, as if they were a personal matter between teacher and student only; but the notion of *power with* reminds us that like any social relation, power relations are situated, their nature and function contingent on the social context (Wartenburg, 1988). It has been noted that the perceived legitimacy of studio teachers' authority might rest, variously, on their position with respect to the institution, their pedigree in the

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apprenticeship tradition, and their stature in concert performance, and it has been hinted that both teachers and students might participate in power relations in response to their perceived expectations of the studio setting. Lukes (2005) has proposed that the exercise of power need not be direct – that it can function by shaping perceptions, cognitions and preferences. Teachers may take a more or less active and intentional role in persuading students to adopt internal constraints, so that they accept and even prefer to follow the course that seems to be laid out for them, but this cannot be an entirely personal matter: rather, the workings of power are embedded in the discourse.

In a pioneering study, Nerland (2007) explored music studio behaviour as a discursive practice, institutional in character and bound by tradition. In one case, she described a premise of the profession as hierarchically organised – a discourse put into action through an emphasis on solo repertoire, with the teacher holding students accountable for regulating their own work, and providing exemplary models of music performance. Intriguingly, these attitudes were reflected in the use of studio space, with the student positioned as if onstage and the teacher sitting five metres away, acting as a critical audience – surely a position of power. This was contrasted with the practice of another studio teacher, who tended to focus on ensemble repertoire and who typically sat beside the student so that they could work more collaboratively to solve problems. Thus, the use of space reflected the aims and values of each studio practice, the participants reporting satisfaction with its conduct (Nerland, 2001), though to some extent they must have taken the associated values and dispositions as given. As Nerland (2007, p. 413) acknowledged, "students who share the teacher's way of thinking and are familiar with the dominant discourses [are] likely to benefit more easily from the teaching." This was borne out in a case study of two clarinet students and their teacher, in an English university (Burwell, 2012): lesson observations and interviews suggested that they all assumed an underlying goal of becoming a concert soloist, like the teacher himself, with lessons conducted accordingly; but while this excited and inspired one student, who met the challenges of the discourse with enthusiasm and confidence, it appeared to leave the other anxious and confused. It is a commonplace that achieving professional solo status is a near impossibility, and Jørgensen (2009, p. 179) has warned against an institutional tendency "to be too narrow-minded and focussed on one and only one outcome: The performer of high quality", but the signature pedagogies of the studio have been developed to support tradition and may be embedded even in its characteristic spaces (Shulman, 2005; Burwell et al., 2019).

The cultural embeddedness of power has been described by Foucault (1980, p. 39), whose widely quoted assertion was that "power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their very actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes, and everyday lives." Rather than asking how the powerful secure compliance, he attempted to understand how power functioned, eventually preferring the term "governmentality" to "power" (Pasquino, in Lukes, 2005, p. 158). For Foucault (1980), power shaped not only intentions and preferences, but knowledge itself – what is taken to be true or normal about the social world and the subject's place in it. In the context of the advanced music studio, the student who enters the conservatoire, responding to its call and engaging with its practices, becomes one of its subjects, and subject to its discourse. Butler (1997) argues that humans are vulnerable to subjugation because we seek recognition of our own existence in categories and terms not of our own making. This seems a basic human need, but might be a particularly sensitive issue for musicians, who must rely on expert others recognising their talent which, after all, is a social construct (Kingsbury, 1988). Arguably, if such claims can never be established concretely, once and for all, we might continue to rely on signs of affirmation and reassurance, not only from the powerful gatekeepers in the conservatoire but long after our student days; and this might be the source of ego anxieties even among musicians who have become gatekeepers themselves. This might help to explain the attitudes of great musicians who feel the need repeatedly to establish their superiority, through "subjugation and devaluation of others for the purpose of egocentric self-stabilisation and self-enhancement" (Ricken, 2006, p. 555) – like Busoni (1866–1924), who teased a disciple with

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absurdities and then "called him an *insect*" for believing them (Schnabel, 1934/1988, p. 65; emphasis added), or Heifetz (1901–1987) whose mockery of students in masterclasses created "an embarrassment almost beyond endurance" (Agus, 2001, p. 60).

It is important that in exploring the possible perspectives on power and seeking to explain it, we do not explain it away. Nor is it sufficient to attribute the incidence of abuse to a few difficult personalities. The tradition of classical music draws on a network of hierarchies, including standards of skill, attitudes of perfectionism, family trees descending from great figures of the past, performances subject to examination or professional criticism, and competition for performance platforms. Within this meritocracy, there is a strong perception that "people attain power and authority because they deserve it, because they're better" (Kingsbury, 1988, p. 124), and this, along with the physical and social isolation of the studio, leaves too much scope for the abuse of power. Students in such a setting are vulnerable, partly because of an affective investment in music that is likely to become long-standing and deep, but also because of the trust that must be granted to the teacher and the practice: trust that compliance will, after whatever amount of time and effort, prove rewarding. The trusting student is in the teacher's hands. There is potential here for mismanagement, particularly given that teachers may be more or less conscious of student perceptions and expectations, and more or less able and willing to offer them sensitive and effective support. As Foucault has asserted (in Rabinow, 1984, p. 343), "[the] point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous."

Use and abuse

How is the danger of power abuse to be identified? It has been noted that undergraduates can be reluctant to challenge their teachers' approaches in studio lessons, with one student remarking "You can't just come out with it" (Burwell, 2017, p. 197). The anecdotes about Busoni and Heifetz appeared only posthumously, when their authors were well-established musicians themselves and perhaps feeling the security of distance, though in Agus's (2001) account of her experience with Heifetz, a vivid impression of trauma remains clear. In recent years, with sea-change movements such as #MeToo, it has become possible for more musicians to step forward, their courage and integrity helping, in turn, other victims of abuse to speak out (for example, Gallagher and Manning, 2013).

The reluctance in "calling out" abusive behaviour might be a matter of loyalty, or an affective attachment to the studio regime: abusive studio practices have been likened to the relationship between master and slave, as previously noted, and Hegel (in Butler, 1997, p. 3) asserted that "The master, who at first appears to be 'external' to the slave, reemerges as the slave's own conscience." Equally, pride might be a constraint, in that criticising a better-established figure is "not a good look." Thus, a critic of Toscanini's conduct was himself criticised: "it was hardly admirable of Chotzinoff, when he had found it advantageous to do so, to have accepted mistreatment he could have chosen not to accept, and [only now] reveal his bad behaviour to the public" (Haggin, 1979, p. 171). Chotzinoff's (1956) biography may or may not have been unfair to Toscanini, but to assume that it is a simple matter to "choose not to accept" dominating behaviour is to overlook the dynamics of power relations.

Adult students, more than children, may have the personal resources to cope with difficult behaviour from others, though equally, they may be sophisticated enough to rationalise their situation, for better or worse. Weber (2019: 66) asserted that rationalisation serves not just to explain a situation but to show that there are no "enigmatic and unpredictable forces" at work, and by analogy, no arbitrary use of power. Consent and resignation are also common responses to feelings of powerlessness: Lukes, (2005, p. 132) refers to a range of "cosmological, religious, moral and political ideas" that might make domination tolerable; Bourdieu (2000, p. 172) notes the "extraordinary inertia" that results from the internalisation of social structures; and Weber (2019,

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p. 383) remarks that under charismatic rule, "the great mass of disciples and followers wish in the long run to make their living from their 'calling'."

Modern societies have drawn increasingly clear lines about acceptable behaviour in any setting, particularly regarding children, and in recent years closed settings – which may be domestic as well as educational – have become exposed to increasing scrutiny, with participants held to account for their behaviour. These lines must account for formal, legal and moral standards, but cannot include the myriad of micro-aggressions and potential misdemeanours, which remain a matter of professional principles and personal responsibility. Once again, the interpretation of micro-behaviours in the music studio may depend on the position taken by the observer, who can take a view but cannot decide unilaterally whether they are dominating or not. The key criterion, no doubt, is whether any particular approach works towards the student's benefit, though that too can be difficult to determine. Freire (1970, p. 42), with Marxist conviction, argued that pedagogical oppression occurs whenever students are prevented from "becoming more fully human." Arguably, in the context of the music studio, entry to the inner circles of artistic practice might be regarded as deeply humanising, but such entry has a cost. One of these may be dependency, which appears to be a common feature of the personalities of adolescent musicians, characterised by Kemp (1997) in terms of conformity, control and conscientiousness; another is discipline, which is treated by both Weber (2019) and Foucault (in Rabinow, 1984) as a procedure of power, and which is required for the mastery of complex skills over an extended period of time.

Both dependency and discipline are associated with direct instruction, which has had some bad press because of its embedded power relations, but which has been described as "the method of choice" for cultivating musical skill (Colwell, 2011, p. 128). Recent case studies have explored the procedures of direct instruction in advanced studio lessons, describing some sophisticated and productive interactions in which teachers use a series of precise instructions to scaffold the student's own thinking and performance activity (Burwell, 2018, 2021). Such procedures are highly asymmetrical – teacher talks, student performs – and may be challenging and demanding, but they can be positive and constructive, and eventually empowering to the student who internalises the discipline. Such asymmetrical lesson behaviour is nevertheless closely collaborative, arguably matching the concept of *power with*, associated with Arendt (1958).

In the spirit of remaining alert to danger rather than explaining it away, we should nevertheless ask *when* direct instruction might become problematic. In terms of personality, it seems likely that some students might find it more difficult than others to navigate the transition from adolescent dependence to professional independence; and that teachers as well as students may find it difficult to judge when and how to adapt the balance between the two, as the student matures. Direct instruction and closely controlled scaffolding might be necessary for technical development – Duke and Simmons (2006) describe three leading artist-teachers offering their students no choices at all, regarding technical matters – but presumably there should be an element of negotiation where interpretation or expression is involved, that again should alter as the student matures. Finally, although there may be long-term as well as short-term goals in view, teachers and students should be prepared to reflect critically on the outcomes of their collaboration, whether technical, expressive or personal. While a focused commitment to the regimen of a particular studio can be fruitful and even necessary in some cases, there must come a time when it would be advantageous for the student to distinguish her own goals and the means of pursuing them, seek advice elsewhere, and eventually proceed on her own.

Concluding remarks

We need to talk about power relations. On the view that all social action is powered, and all educational practices asymmetrical, the pedagogical traditions of the music studio, supported and protected by its relative isolation within music education, call for a reflective and critical attitude,

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not only to avoid power abuse but also to expose micro-behaviours that may be undermining the musical and personal lives of others, and in supporting those, to optimise the collaborative use of power. Foucault was pessimistic about the scope for resistance and for deinstitutionalising established discourses (Marshall, 1990), but argued that studying them could make underlying assumptions visible and therefore open to critique. He added however that critique and transformation cannot be achieved separately: "It is not therefore a question of there being a time for criticism and a time for transformation, nor people who do the criticism and others who do the transforming" (Foucault, 1990, p. 154). Since all studio participants are implicated in studio practices, this would suggest that both students and teachers should be involved in such critical, reflective work. The musical project represented by each individual pupil should include the gradual acquisition of autonomy and critical thinking; studio teachers can invest in their own professional development as reflective practitioners; and the institution should be providing the tools, spaces and structures to support the continuous development of both.

A role for research and scholarship is implicated here. Given the paucity of evidence to date, more descriptive studies are needed to explore the varied manifestations of power, distinguishing with care between productive and problematic behaviours, and exploring their implications for studio practices. If hierarchies are inevitable in education, and specifically in practices premised on the pursuit of excellence in the music studio, then the inherent dangers of power relations need routinely to be taken into account.

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