

The Teaching of Music

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INTRODUCTION

The fact that a chapter in a book concerning curriculum and method for hearing-impaired children should be entitled 'The Teaching of Music' is in itself a phenomenon. Whilst music has been used as an aid to speech development or for therapy for some time, its use primarily for its own sake is a relatively recent event. There are many cases throughout the past century of individual children with hearing difficulties being taught to play a musical instrument, but there are far less examples of music as an integral part of the curriculum in schools for the hearing-impaired, and it is with the latter that this chapter is mainly concerned.

The material used in this account has been obtained through practical experience over the past ten years with pupils aged between eleven and eighteen years whose hearing losses and causes of deafness range over the whole spectrum. While teaching these pupils, focus has been placed upon the development of rhythmic and musical potential rather than upon what can be expected musically from different types of hearing loss. Indeed, the latter approach is far more likely to fail than the former. Innate musicality bears no relationship to degree of deafness. It is there to be exploited.

The hope of the writer is that at least a few people, on reading this account, will be persuaded to take up the challenge and so allow more hearing-impaired youngsters to partake of that wonderful experience, the making of music.

Why Music for the Hearing-Impaired?

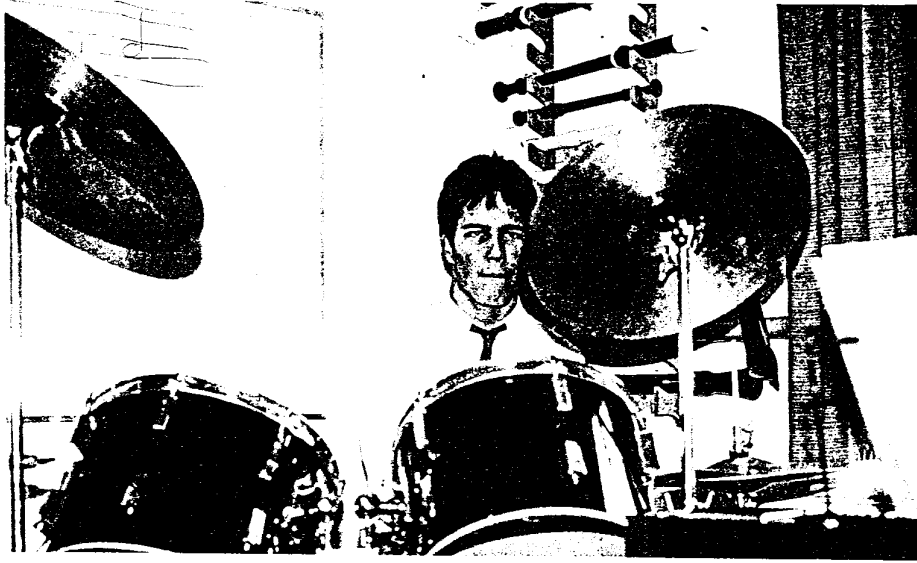
Music, in some shape or form, influences almost everyone from the cradle to the grave, and yet, of all the arts, it is the most difficult to define. It cannot be seen or touched but it can be heard and felt. Music attracts us in an indefinable way. As listeners we are drawn to its rhythms, its moods, its beauty. As performers we feel all these plus an empathy with fellow performers, an indefinable bond links musicians in their common aim of producing music together.

But of what use is this to the hearing-impaired? Can music be of any value to them? To quote, in his own words, a sixth form student at the Mary Hare School, "Music at this stage of my life is something that I can't imagine the world ever being complete without. It is such a pleasure to me, and I can't imagine anyone else not having any musical interest". (John E. Maidens). A fourth form pupil of the school wrote this: "I started music in 1978 when I was eight years-old. My mother had gone to music as a child and she thought that I should not be treated any differently to a hearing child". (Samantha Penney). A wise mother!

I personally would completely agree with these two young hearing-impaired students. This agreement comes not from philosophical speculation or scientific 'evidence' but from the practical experience of teaching, and listening to, hearing-impaired children on the road to music making.

Of all the constituent elements which go together to make music perhaps the most fundamental of them all is rhythm. All music has some rhythmic element in it. Rhythm can also stand by itself, without melody or harmony, thus giving it a certain self-sufficiency. It

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John E. Maidens



Samantha Penney

is also a basic element in all human life. Every society, whether primitive or developed, portrays rhythm among its members. Pre-industrial African tribes show this rhythmic basis in their lives through chant and dance. Kodaly and Bartok discovered highly developed rhythms within the folk music of eastern Europe. In industrialised western Europe and elsewhere young people (and the not so young!) express their feelings through rock music and disco dancing, both of which activities rely heavily on rhythm. Even our everyday actions such as walking are based on rhythmic movement.

If rhythm, then, is so basic an ingredient in human life, it is obvious that human beings with a hearing problem also need to express their feelings through rhythmic activity. Indeed, the frustrations they endure as a result of their disability would seem to make it even more important that they develop their rhythmic sense in order to ease tensions. If we approach the subject of music and the hearing-impaired as a human activity necessary to their emotional development and less as a contradiction in terms, then progress can be made.

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Methods useful in developing rhythmic
sense in hearing-impaired children

We can reasonably assume that rhythmic sense is as old as mankind. Hence, in attempting to develop the rhythmic sense of hearing-impaired children we could do worse than following, in very broad outline obviously, the methods and progress of man through history.

Before musical instruments were invented man used his own body to express his emotions and ideas. When this instrument of expression appeared to need assistance, primitive instruments such as simple drums and bamboo flutes were invented. These acted as extensions or additions to the body as means of expression.

Even with eleven and twelve year-old hearing-impaired pupils, bodily expression through rhythmic activity is often completely undeveloped. Hence it is necessary to go back to man's original musical instrument, his body, and develop that to some extent before moving on to the next stage of development, man-made instruments.

Since none of my pupils suffered from physical disabilities to their legs or arms we were able to begin at the beginning and use the most basic two-beat rhythm of mankind, walking and then add hand-clapping. Walking 'on the spot' rhythmically became thus a first activity on the music programme. Add to this hand-clapping, firstly separate from and then along with 'on the spot' walking, or marching (proper walking if the room is large enough) accompanied by the teacher playing strongly rhythmic chords on a keyboard or beating a drum, and you have the beginnings of rhythmic development. But even at this early stage some pupils will make faster progress than others (as is the case with 'normal' hearing pupils) so patience plus enthusiasm must

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be the key qualities of the teacher or teachers involved.

As this activity develops so will the sense of group feeling. Ten children moving rhythmically together in this way gives the first primitive experience of communal activity which can grow later into a full empathetic experience which all musicians feel.

Following closely on these activities should be movement of the body itself. Gentle swaying from side to side can produce a sense of sadness, dreaminess or pleasant relaxedness, depending on circumstances. This movement, combined with clapping and/or foot and leg movements, leads to a considerable sophistication of rhythmic development. With steady, enthusiastic coaching, hearing-impaired children can become quite proficient in these movements. It will not be long before individuals within the group want to add their own variations to the activities performed so far. Watch out for this and encourage it. The influence of modern disco-dancing joins hands with primitive body movement to produce an enjoyable experience for the pupils and so encourages the idea that music can be fun.

As these activities develop so will the need to introduce another basic human facility, the voice. To use the voice involves, of course, the art of breathing, another rhythmic activity of mankind. When we speak or sing we interrupt the natural rhythm of breathing in order to produce sound. For the hearing-impaired this activity of producing sound, and of producing intelligible sounds in the form of speech, is a difficult art. Rhythmic activities can aid in the development of speech. But although aiding speech intelligibility can be a result of the rhythmic activities we are here concerned with, it is not our chief concern. It is an important product evolving from the development of rhythmic and musical senses.

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To bring the voice into the rhythmic activities begin by using deep breathing exercises and combining these with the voice. Get the pupils to stand comfortably with feet slightly apart, and then breathe in deeply through the nose (it is interesting how few hearing-impaired children are accustomed to taking deep breaths). Then exhale through the mouth whilst vocalising the sound aaaah. Make this activity amusing by relaxing the body as if falling to the ground or as if enjoying a beautiful smell. Repeat two or three times, then change the sound to eeee, to oooo, and so on, eventually introducing diphthongs such as ai, ou, oi. Such activities should be of short duration, mixed with the other activities performed up to now, and kept joyful. The amount of time needed to arrive at this point of development will vary considerably according to the abilities and keenness of the pupils. It is the teacher's task to bring out the best in them.

The ground has now been prepared for a first venture into 'singing'. I place the word 'singing' in inverted commas because everyone involved with hearing-impaired children knows that a tuneful voice is a tall order! Do not let this come in the way. Most if not all the 'singing' will be chanting, at least in the beginning, but a group of children chanting the lyrics of a Beatles' song at the back of the school bus returning to school after an outing I think will convince the sceptic that enjoyment can be had even at this simple level.

The song that lends itself most readily to the skills learnt so far is "Old MacDonald had a farm". By arranging the sounds used so far in a certain order the pupils can now vocalise ee ai ee ai ou. Now teacher and pupils can take alternate lines and sing:-

Teacher: Old MacDonald had a farm.

Pupils: Ee ai ee ai ou.

Teacher: And on that farm he had some cows.

Pupils: Ee ai ee ai ou.

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AAAAH !

After doing this a few times, teacher and pupils reverse rolls, singing the other parts, and thus the first song is well under way. In subsequent lessons the remainder of the song can be learnt as can other simple songs.





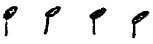
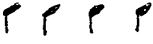


The next step of preparation is for the recognition of music notation. Begin this by getting the pupils to clap two sets of four, thus:

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Follow this with body swaying movements counting two beats to each side, thus:

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Next, 'march' 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 , then repeat the body sway 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 , counting evenly all the time. As the pupils become more skilled at this, show the activity on the black-board or wall-board:

 1 2 3 4	 1 2 3 4	Clap
 1 2 3 4	 1 2 3 4	Sway
 1 2 3 4	 1 2 3 4	'March'
 1 2 3 4	 1 2 3 4	Sway

Gradually the pupils associate the black notes with one count or beat and the white notes with two counts or beats. This preliminary work will be of great use later when music notes on a stave are introduced.

By now, using our analogy of the historical development of rhythm and music, the point has been reached when men began to invent musical

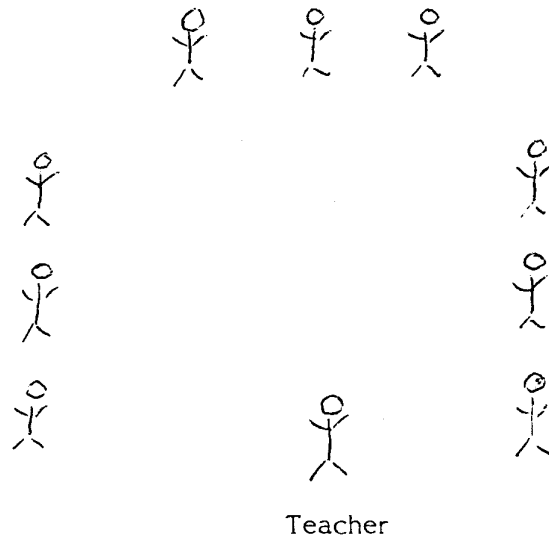
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Clapping and 'Marching'



instruments as 'extensions' to their bodies in order to produce more interesting sounds. Among the earliest of these instruments were drums. For the children we are concerned with, tambourines may be used to serve the same purpose. Up to now also the pupils have acted in unison. The next stage is to prepare for ensemble work.

Divide the group into three sections:



Each pupil has a tambourine. Show them how to hold it and how to strike it. Then begin by getting them to strike four-beat rhythm ensemble. A piano or electronic keyboard accompanying them is useful because vibrations from such an instrument can often be felt by the pupils as well as be heard via residual hearing if available. (Always make sure that both hearing-aids on each pupil are in working order. I am assuming all the time that maximum use is being made of residual hearing).

Now each section should play when pointed to by the teacher, the other groups watching and listening. This activity can be great fun, especially when it goes completely wrong! But underneath the fun is the serious object of gaining maximum attention and of noting what others do within the group. The activity can be varied by getting one,

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Preparation for Ensemble work.

two, or all three groups playing at one time. Tempo also should vary. Rapid rhythm and rapid moving from one section to another is also enjoyed, and also sharpens reaction from the pupils.

A further development of this activity is to use different instruments in each section. One section could use triangles, another tambourines, the other shakers, or whatever hand-held percussion instruments are available. Then let each section exchange their instruments, thus allowing each pupil to experience all three sounds and tactile sensations for himself or herself. Some pupils will respond more readily to one instrument, others to another. In this way they will have begun the idea of selecting the instrument they most prefer. Later the choice will widen.

These activities prepare the way for more complex ensemble playing, when recorders, melodicas, glockenspiels and drums will be used. Alertness and dexterity in hand and arm are developing. The gross rhythmic movements of the earlier stages are now somewhat refined, and will be further refined as experience is increased.

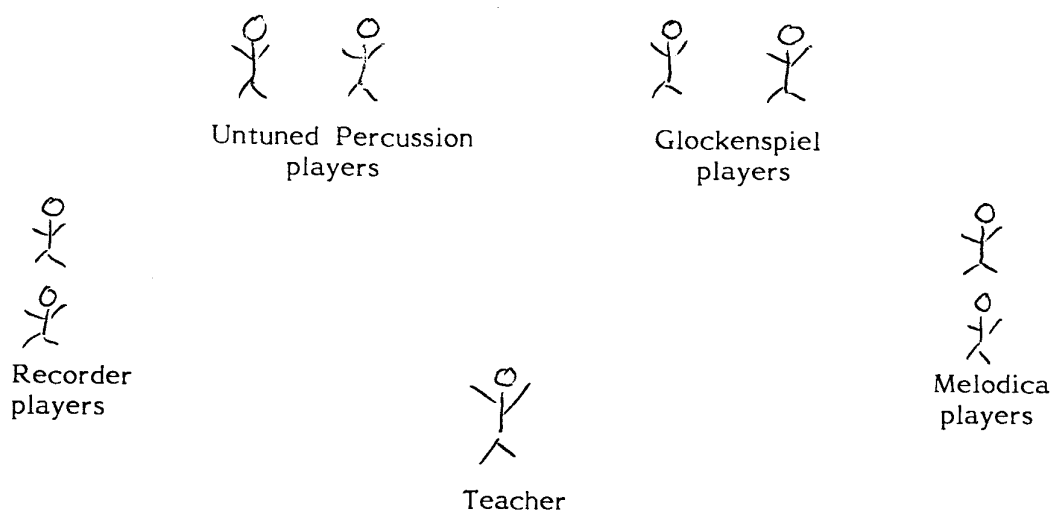
It is noticeable by now that some of the pupils are already progressing at a faster rate than others. Some will find it difficult to keep to the rhythm and tempo. There is nothing unusual in this. Hearing children also experience this. It should be regarded as a natural problem to be worked at steadily, and not be taken as the sign that deafness has conquered. Remember that not all hearing children are gifted musically, so do not expect all hearing-impaired children to be so! It takes time and patience and good humour to develop the rhythmic capabilities of some. Depending upon the rhythmic sensibilities of the group in hand, either continue with further percussion activities of this nature, intermingled with more songs, using congas, bongos, kettle drums, maracas, etc., or go on to the next stage, involving recorders, melodicas, glockenspiels and drums.

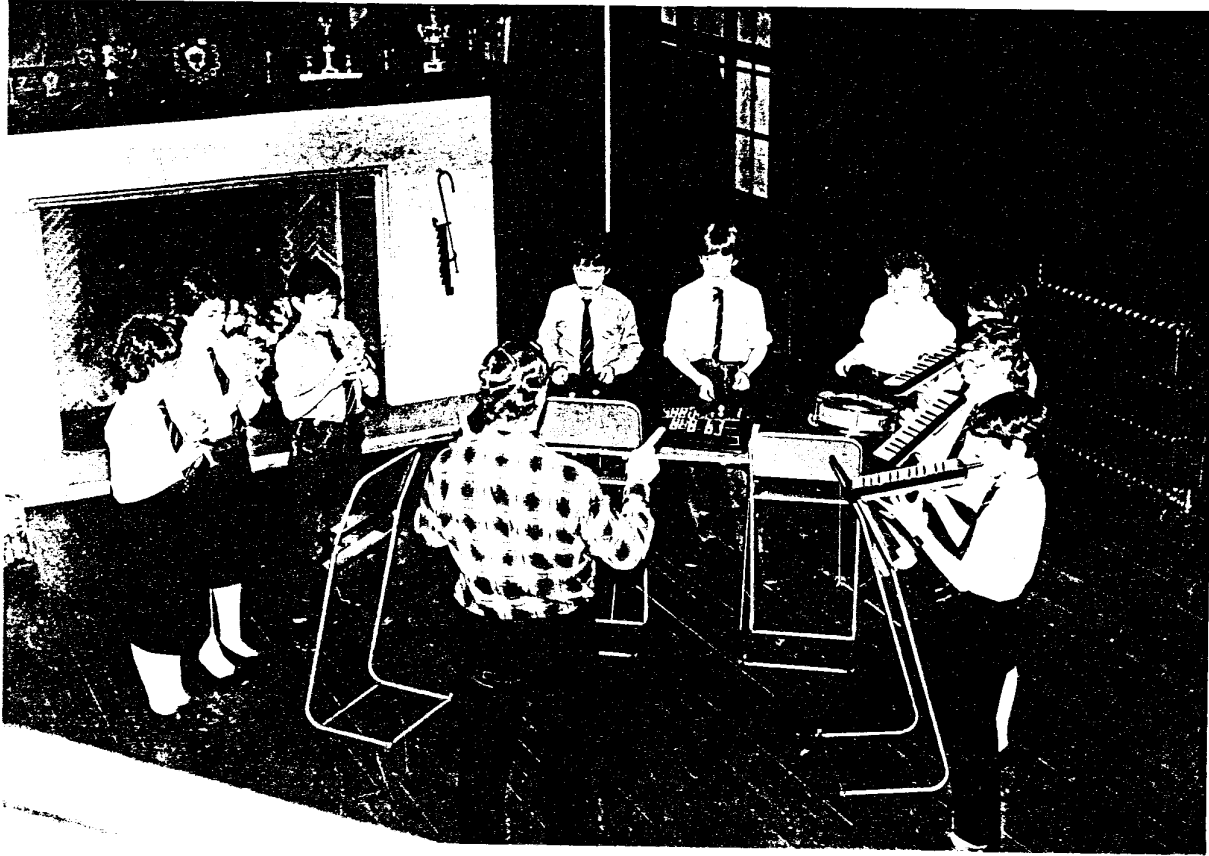
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For the next stage a very useful book of tunes for primitive orchestra is William Salaman's 'Concert Starters'. It can involve the use of descant recorders, harmonicas or melodicas, tuned and untuned percussion and open-string violin. The great advantage of this book is that the number and type of instruments used may vary extensively to enable even the most rudimentary players to participate. Real musical concepts are now gradually absorbed by the pupils. Rhythmically the values of crotchets and minims are introduced in the first book of the series, as are time signatures, barlines and repeat marks. The dotted minim also makes its appearance with the introduction of triple time. The use of the rest does not appear in the initial book. Dynamics and expression marks are not met with at this stage but loud and soft playing can be used by introducing 'echo' effects in the 'Concert Starters' pieces.

By now the pupils have been accustomed to section playing through the earlier percussion work. The actual arrangement of the group as used then can be the basis for this next stage, while using 'Concert Starters'. The extra pieces of equipment introduced now include music stands and music scores as well as new musical instruments. It is an exciting advance and the pupils love it - until difficulties arise! At that point the teacher's ingenuity takes over.

For the sake of description let us take a group of ten children and divide them into sections in order to begin work on such a book as 'Concert Starters'. The arrangement could be:





Complex Ensemble playing.

Each section has its own music stand with the appropriate score. The rhythmic base for each section is the same. Using the knowledge gained so far the crotchets and minims will make rhythmic sense to the pupils, but their pitch will not. Hence begin by getting the whole group to clap the rhythm of the score, one line at a time. Next, get the recorder players to blow their notes to the given rhythm, the rest of the group clapping an accompaniment. The recorder line is the easiest to begin with since the letter names of the notes are given as well as the notation on a staff. Show the pupils the fingering for each note. (There are only three in use at the beginning, the inevitable B A G ! Initial sounds may well be unusual but gradual refinement will follow. Next get the melodicas to play their notes - show them where they are on the instrument and show them how to blow! They can be accompanied by the untuned percussion on first attempts, and then by the recorders also. Finally the patient (!) glockenspiel players are shown their notes and we have lift-off!! First attempts will probably persuade the teacher to transfer to another department, but it is interesting how quickly some semblance of a musical experience can develop, especially when the whole thing is accompanied by the teacher (or assistant teacher if possible) on a piano or other keyboard instrument.

During the first lesson in which this kind of activity is attempted, make sure that there is a spell of singing as well to relieve the tension, since the pupils will find these early ensemble sessions quite tiring (not to mention the teacher!).

After a few sessions of this kind of work pupils often want to swap instruments. Allow this to happen, since it gives each pupil new experiences and helps them to decide which instrument they like best. Strange as it may seem, generally speaking the balance of the instrumental sections ends up reasonably good. On no account should an

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attempt be made to 'match' instruments to hearing loss. Many a disappointed deaf child has been told not to expect to play a guitar or whatever because with his/her hearing loss it is impossible. Why not allow the child to discover for himself whether or not it is possible. Sometimes it is! Enthusiasm and innate musicality can overcome hearing loss.

Amidst these great efforts to produce a piece of music four bars at a time there needs to be brief sessions of 'theory'. This subject usually produces inward groans if not more visual reaction among young musicians, who see it as an evil necessity. But again, if it is introduced gradually and within the context of the work in hand it need not be such a chore. Ask the pupils to point to a G on a stave, or to a minim, or to a treble clef, or draw a stave on the black-board or wall-board, place a G or A or B on it and ask the pupils what they are called - hands usually shoot up to answer. In this way the melodica players learn the recorder players notes, the glockenspiel players notes, and so on. All this needs to be done within an atmosphere of exciting discovery, not of academic seriousness. Also, these questions should come at random, not formally within the 'theory' part of the lesson.

By this stage of development the pupils have begun to learn the joys and disciplines of playing ensemble. The various aspects of reading music will have been achieved to varying levels by the various pupils within the group, while at the same time the fun element will not have (or should not have) been neglected or lost.

Having reached this elementary stage of musical development it gives the pupils a great thrill to make their first public performance. Shouts of feigned horror emerge when the group is informed that they are ready to play for Morning Assembly! "Oh no!" they say,

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but already they are planning to inform mum and dad that they are about to give their first little 'recital'.

The amount of ground covered at this point can take eleven and twelve year-old pupils anything from one to four school terms to achieve. The rate of progress will depend upon the abilities of the various groups. One outstanding first form group of mine advanced as far as one of the second year groups within its first term of music. The rate of progress, while obviously necessary in order to maintain interest, should not become more important than the fun and satisfaction which should emerge from the weekly music session. The degree of enjoyment is very largely in the hands of the teacher, and the wear and tear on him/her is considerable!

It was mentioned earlier that the voice is a part of the human being's equipment as a music producing animal. In this field we are very conscious of the obvious limitations in the pitching of the voices of hearing-impaired children, but this should not distract from the immense amount of pleasure that they can get from learning the lyrics of songs and 'singing' them to the best of their ability. There are a few books of songs which can be of use at this stage, including 'Apusskidu' and 'Folk Songs for the Recorder'. The latter is of particular value because it gives the melodic line along with the lyrics, and also guitar chord indications. Both the melodic line (for recorder or other instrument) and the guitar chord indications can be of use at a later stage of development.

Action songs are popular even among eleven and twelve year-olds. They thoroughly enjoy singing 'Kumbaya', for example, to actions invented by themselves or the teacher. One profoundly deaf group of mine made up the whole of the actions for "He's got the whole world in his hands". It served for a long time as a very good final

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number to the group session since they invariably departed in a good mood even if not everything within the period had gone too well. They also enjoyed 'Banks of the Ohio' with its boy-girl theme, which appealed to their emerging emotional development in this area of life. The problem of holding the long notes, the semibreves and beyond, has already been mooted in the early efforts concerning 'Old MacDonald had a Farm'. Knowledge of music notation, which is steadily increasing, helps the pupils to determine where the long notes come in the lyrical line. Kodaly hand-signs for raising and lowering the voice pitch can also be of value when attempting to improve the singing voice. But whatever the result, do not give up singing because the voices are not in tune. Most of the hearing world would have to be excluded on that score. Hearing-impaired children will sing anywhere if they know song lyrics. Many a parent has revised his or her knowledge of 'Old MacDonald' during school holidays! Pupils have informed me that they sing at night before going to sleep. They laugh when I first ask them "Do you sing in the bath?" But put the idea to them that singing is an activity of pleasure which may be indulged in anywhere, as long as it is socially convenient to do so, and they will respond.

The First Music Lesson - What It Contains

One of the most difficult problems in a music programme is, how to begin. The short answer to this is that there is no single answer - it will depend considerably upon the personality and ability of the teacher as well as the type of children being taught. However, the following method is based upon personal experience and may help some people to decide on their approach.

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As the new group of first form pupils enters the music room for the first time, all kinds of emotions and reactions will be present among them. In the case of eleven year-olds they may already have had some kind of musical experience in the past, or they may have had none. In each group there is, more often than not, a majority who have little or no idea as to what is involved. Thus, the first impressions gained will be of great importance. Will it be dull, hard work, easy? Maybe few will consider that it could be fun. ('Fun' is not a word used greatly in educational circles I'm sorry to say).

So, as the pupils arrive in the music room a cheerful greeting is important. They will look around them, seeing, most likely, a music room for the first time in their lives (though happily this is becoming less likely as music education for the deaf increases). Some will express delight at the sight of drums, keyboards, recorders and so on. Others will look rather bemused and a few rather scared.

After the initial greeting and exchange of names it is a good idea to show the pupils the various instruments by holding them up to view or, in the case of the larger ones, pointing to them and asking if anyone knows what they are called. Play a note or two on each to give them some idea of the kind of sounds they make. Then ask whether or not anyone has ever played an instrument before, and if so which instrument. This may give the teacher some idea of placement within the music ensemble of the future.

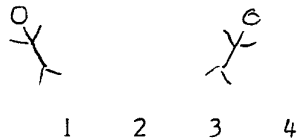
All this is by way of preliminaries. Now to begin. Ask the pupils to relax, to stand with their feet slightly apart, with their arms by their sides and take a deep breath through the nose. Exhale to aaah - using the voice. First efforts may be feeble. Encourage the use of the voice. Some will shout, but gradually obtain the dynamic you want. Use the various vowels and diphthongs with this exercise.

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Next get the pupils to clap their hands, giving them the rhythm and tempo by clapping yourself or by playing chords on a keyboard, or both if you have an assistant. Count one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four, and so on. (Do not use triple time at this early stage as it is more difficult to cultivate than two or four beat time). Hand clapping may then be followed by marching on the spot or walking, depending upon the space available. Next combine clapping with 'marching' and counting aloud one, two, three, four, etc.

All this should be performed within an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment. Do not worry over-much about those pupils with two left legs - there are always those, both hearing-impaired and hearing, who lack a good rhythmic sense. They need to have much encouragement.

The body itself should be exercised next. Stand with feet slightly apart and sway the body gently from the hips, counting two beats to each side - Left one two Right three four, Left one two Right three four.



Now is the time, generally to change activities since variety is necessary at eleven years old! Return once more to the voice and, using the vowels and diphthongs practised earlier, begin work on singing 'Old MacDonald had a farm', by getting the pupils to sing alternate lines with the teacher:

Teacher: Old MacDonald had a farm

Pupils: Ee ai ee ai oh

and so on.

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Swaying.



If the group proves adept at this, add hand clapping on the accented syllables, thus:

Old MacDonald had a farm,

Ee ai ee ai o - oh, and

On that farm he had some cows

Ee ai ee ai oh - oh

Note the two claps on 'oh' - the beginning of work on longer notes and longer held breath.

This amount of material is normally enough for the average group, perhaps a little too much for some, and occasionally not enough for a few. It is up to the teacher to gauge for himself or herself the amount of ground to be covered by the particular group participating at that particular time. There is no race to complete a syllabus, only a desire to encourage children to enjoy music.

It is very likely that the group will ask, during or at the end of the session, when they will be allowed to play the instruments. "Very soon. When we have learned to clap and march and sing a little better. Perhaps in two weeks time", is my usual reply.

After the First Lesson

As the musical development of the pupils unfolds it is a good idea to break the regular routine of the music session from time to time and have a surprise. Children very quickly build up a routine in whatever they do and it soon becomes habitual for them to come into the music room, take up their customary stance or pick up their usual instrument and prepare for the lesson. It is quite possible that some will find this monotonous after a few weeks. It is for the teacher to decide when this attitude is developing and be ready to deal with it.

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The pupils love a noisy percussion session once in a while and it does no harm to indulge in this.

For such sessions allow the pupils to enter the music room in the usual way and then ask them: "Shall we have a go on the drums and things today?" Immediate cheers is the usual response. Allocate to each pupil a drum, conga, bongo, tambourine or whatever is available. Invariably several want to try the same instrument, usually the drum kit! Get round this problem by saying that everyone will have the opportunity to play the drums because after a short spell on one instrument, everyone moves one place to the next instrument, and this will continue until everyone has tried every instrument.

When ready to begin, the teacher asks the pupils to listen to him/her playing on the keyboard, and when they feel or hear the rhythm, to join in. The din is usually quite something! Next get them to play quietly - sshh - 1 2 3 4 and so on, with the keyboard playing quietly but teacher saying 1 2 3 4 to aid rhythm. Then play loud. Then all change instruments. Continue this through the range of instruments, then finish up with a song or disco dance movement, or both. By such sessions the pupils learn to relax and to enjoy rhythmic actions, thus aiding their development.

Concerning relaxation, it is possible to get sixteen and seventeen year-old pupils to do this even when they are not used to it. We recently had a group of German and Dutch hearing-impaired pupils of this age visit the music department to hear the school band in rehearsal. The visitors were new to the idea of music and the hearing-impaired and so did not know what to expect.

After playing a few numbers for them some began to sway their bodies or betray rhythm urges by tapping a foot or clapping their hands. Seizing the opportunity I invited all of them to join me in

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clapping the rhythm of the next song while the band played. Initial shyness was soon overcome so I next invited them to use a tambourine or other percussion instrument. Band members of the percussion section gave assistance and soon all were fully involved. I then taught the Band members to say eins, zwei, drei, vier, to the delight of the German visitors (the Dutch also joined in this) and soon everyone clapped and chanted eins, zwei, drei, vier whilst I hammered out chords on a keyboard. Everyone enjoyed themselves. The result was an invitation to take the Band to Germany, to their school. We accepted!

The point of all this is - keep the freshness of approach alive. Never let music sessions become routine and dull. I use the term 'session' rather than 'lesson' deliberately, since each lesson period should be an experience, not a chore. This is, of course, a tall order, but it is important that a constant effort is made* to bring this about. The fact that music at Mary Hare School is voluntary from Form Three onward has taught me to constantly keep music fresh, otherwise there would be no Band, Recorder Consort or anything else!

Later Development

So far we have been concerned with the initial stages of rhythm and music. The question is, where do these initial stages lead us? The answer is, as far as the developing talents allow.

As the first and second year ensemble work in class grows, it becomes apparent that certain pupils show more musical abilities than others. It is these pupils that form the basis for future development. As certain pupils show promise in recorder playing or melodica playing or percussion playing, begin to form them into separate groups outside curriculum time and help them to develop at a rate faster than that which is possible within the curriculum group. A recorder group

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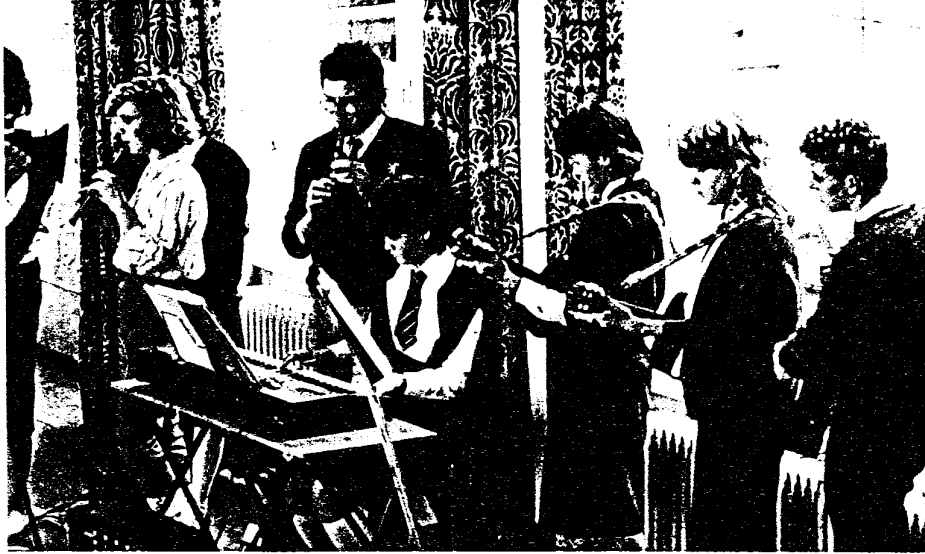
of six or seven players meeting for a half-hour each week during lunch-hour or after school can be encouraged to play very pleasantly. Maybe one or two percussion players would benefit from private tuition. Others will ask about piano lessons. Seize any opportunity to encourage musicality. It becomes possible later to form a Band consisting of drums, congas, bongos, recorders, synthesizers (piano pupils can play other keyboards with a little help) and any other instrument to hand. It is also possible to develop the recorder group into a consort playing two, three and even four part music of the sixteenth and seventeenth century type, such as galliards, pavans, rondos and branslas. Steve Rosenberg's collections of recorder pieces are excellent in that they are of graded difficulty, beginning with unison descants and leading via duets and trios to four-part pieces. In developing these more complex works begin by transferring one or two descant players to the tenor, which has similar fingering and eventually one or two to the treble (this needs to be taught separately at first), thus leading to bass playing. But complexity for its own sake is not to be sought. A group of players performing two-part descant pieces may well be the level of playing for a considerable time before talent grows further. What matters is that music is being played and enjoyed.

I have attempted so far to give a few general outlines of possible paths in the development of music with hearing-impaired children of the ages eleven to eighteen. For children younger than this obviously considerable adaptation of these outlines would be necessary, but the general pattern of progress from the body to musical instruments still holds good.

The following sections of this chapter are brief indications of points and techniques useful in specific areas of tuition.

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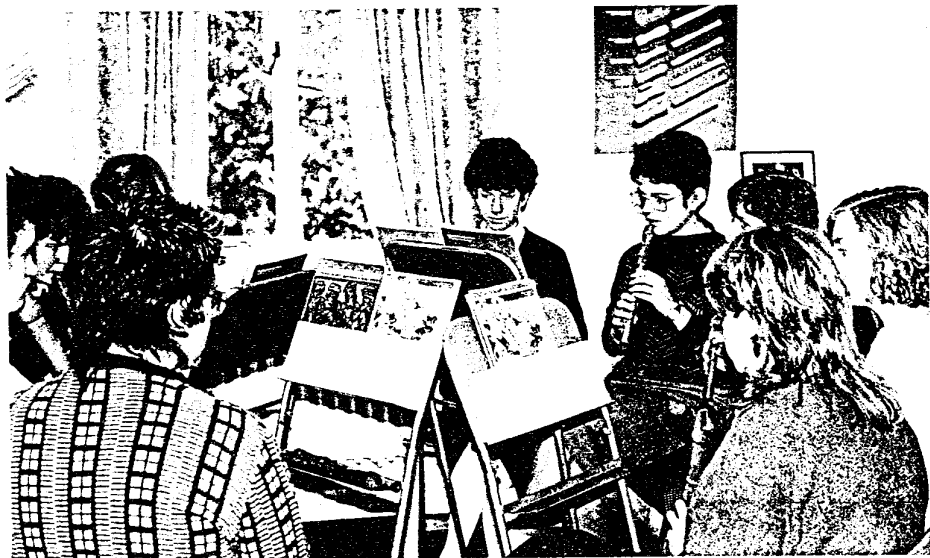
Some of
the
Band
members.



Concentration in
the percussion
section of the
Band.



The Recorder
Consort at
rehearsal



Teaching the Piano to Hearing-Impaired Children

A steady stream of letters arrives on my desk from music teachers asking how to teach a deaf child to play the piano.

Perhaps the first response to this question should be, do not worry overmuch about the actual deafness, but concentrate at first on establishing a good relationship with the child. From the very first lesson some simple basic points of playing and technique should be attempted, but some time must be given to communication. Make sure that the child can see your face when you speak to him/her, and make sure also that the light, whether from the window or lamps, falls on your face and not directly on the child's, since his whole visual contact may be spoiled by this. It is also important to get the child to check his hearing aid or aids, since low-running batteries will reduce his use of residual hearing, which must be used to the full.

It is important also for the teacher to have a cheerful appearance, so as to attract the child's attention. An introverted, over-quiet approach may not give you the contact you require.

Find out also whether or not the child's parents, brothers or sisters are musical and whether or not they play the piano since this also can assist in your approach. If any of the family are musical, make contact with them so that they too may encourage the deaf child in his efforts.

The next question is, which tutor book to use. One of the best is Michael Aaron's Course, but supplementary material may have to be used from time to time, since it is sometimes necessary to give more examples of a particular point in the development of technique.

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Another good point is, use duets from the beginning if at all possible since music fundamentally is a thing to be shared, especially in performance. There are many elementary duet books on the market and the teacher should judge for him/herself which is the most appropriate. It can also be fun for two pupils to play duets, either hearing or hearing-impaired. - No need to discriminate in music!

It is also important to develop music theory alongside playing. Make sure that the child can recognise crotchets and minims, can recognise barlines, clefs and so on as they occur in the texts. This should be done in a fun way, not with deep academic seriousness, and as casually as possible.

Rhythmic sense is of basic importance to a young musician, and should not be neglected. Get the child to clap to the rhythm of a piece played by you; and talking of the teacher playing, it is important that the child see that teacher also enjoys playing the piano. Like religion, music can be 'caught' as well as 'taught'. Likewise get the child to play his latest piece while teacher claps the rhythm. The occasional deliberate mistake by teacher can help build up the child's confidence too! Let it be fun.

Another useful aid is to get the child to 'sing' the words often found in the very early pieces in tutor books. Either teacher play and pupil sing, or vice versa, or child or teacher do both. There are numerous permutations available, and each one adds to the child's experience and practice.

After the first few lessons are completed and the teacher-pupil relationship has stabilised it is possible to give the child little 'tests'. In my experience hearing-impaired children do not mind doing little theory tests during lessons so long as they do not go on for too long.

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At a later stage it is often useful to enter the child for Grade 1 theory as well as Grade 1 piano exams since they do love a challenge. But this should not be pushed. It will be obvious to a perceptive teacher which of his pupils should do this.

It will have become obvious by now to the reader that almost everything I have stated so far is equally applicable to hearing pupils. Quite so. Teaching a deaf child to play the piano must obviously bear some relation to 'normal' practice. It needs a few adjustments, but then 'adjustments' are made for practically all pupils, hearing or deaf, since each individual has his/her own particular problems to overcome en route to music-making. I recently took on a hearing pupil who had reached Grade 7 Associated Board but was on the point of giving up because an hour's lesson of sitting at the piano and playing continuously for the teacher was 'boring'. By discovering that she had always wanted to play a few popular songs as well as Mozart, and that she knew a little bit about the recorder, her lessons with me became, she stated, much more interesting. She is now doing music theory, scale playing and aural tests with enjoyment because she can now see a point to them all. A pupil's imagination must be allowed to operate, and, especially at the higher levels, choice must be theirs too. No aspect of music is dull to a stimulated pupil.

The Place of Theory of Music

The part played by theory of music in the general musical education of children is rarely of a satisfactory nature. Often it is completely neglected until the Grade 6 practical appears on the horizon and Grade 5 theory has to be passed in order to go ahead. Then follows a cram course of theory, nasty but necessary, in order that practical work might continue and theory once again disappear into oblivion. 'I don't like theory' is a common complaint, and, judging by the way it is usually taught, understandable.

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But theory of music should go hand in hand with practical work. Theory of music is rather like a dictionary when learning a foreign language - it enables one to better understand what one is reading and thus leads to further enrichment of the subject. Whether teaching one pupil at a time, as with piano (generally speaking) or other instrument, or teaching a group in class, theory of music should go along with whatever else is going on. The recent innovation by Associated Board examiners of asking questions about the music in front of the pupil, and of including score-reading in theory of music examinations is a positive step in the direction of bringing to the fore the true value of theory of music, that of making the score more intelligible.

Public Music Examinations and the Hearing-Impaired

Each year a growing number of hearing-impaired children take public music examinations such as those provided by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Within my own experience I have entered pupils for piano examinations up to and including Grade 5 and also Theory of Music to the same standard. The prospect of reaching higher standards among the pupils I tutor is promising over the next couple of years. Up and down the British Isles there are individual cases of hearing-impaired pupils reaching higher standards than this. The most outstanding example of success in this field is that of Evelyn Glennie from Aberdeen, who recently graduated from the Royal Academy of Music with great success, being awarded several prizes for outstanding ability. There is also the example of Paul Whittaker, the young organist from Huddersfield, who is due to graduate from Wadham College, Oxford, shortly with a degree in music.

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Public examinations are not meant to be the only aim for pupils, whether hearing or hearing-impaired, but they do have a place in the scheme of things. In the first place they provide an aim, a target, for those pupils who enjoy the challenge of examinations. They also assist in the provision of material at the appropriate level for the individual pupil. Knowing that a pupil's standard of performance is around grade two or three or whatever can be of assistance when sifting through music in a music shop trying to find suitable material. The graded examinations also keep before the teacher the manifold aspects of music, such as technique, interpretation, dynamics and theoretical standards which can easily be overlooked save by the most alert. By attending to all these various aspects, the half-hour or hour lesson can (and should) be a time of interest and variety rather than a rather dull exercise in 'improving' the latest piece.

Another useful part of the public examination system is the general inspection of a school's music by the Associated Board. For this inspection the teacher may choose those aspects of the music which he or she considers worthy of consideration, whether individual or group work. The Board makes a basic charge for an hour of inspection and then issues a certificate of assessment, not on a pass or fail basis but a report on the inspector's findings. This again can be of value to the teacher. An outside opinion is useful in that it can bring to light points which otherwise may have been overlooked.

Having said all this, some people may ask of what value are these certificates of musical attainment to a hearing-impaired youngster seeking employment on leaving school? The direct answer to that is, they are of no apparent value. But of what value are other individual certificates of attainment. Of what value will 'O' level History or Art be to the school leaver wanting to become an engineer or typist? On the other hand, how much less rich in experience would that

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person be if he or she had only studied 'useful' subjects. Most of what we learn at school, or, for that matter, at university, is of necessity going to be of little direct application to future employment, or unemployment. But the sum total of all school subjects and activities must surely add dimensions to life not otherwise attainable. None of my ex-pupils from the music department have become professional musicians, but many of them have written to me to say how much they enjoyed their music and how much it means to them. Many of them are also struggling to keep up their playing in their new surroundings; not always successfully but nevertheless wanting to. The young hearing-impaired, musical, school-leaver is a growing phenomenon, and one which will need investigation as time goes on.

Public examinations then, have a place in the life of young musicians provided that they are used judiciously and not as an end in themselves.

Conclusion

Should all deaf children be taught music? This is the question which arouses most controversy. There are many in the field of deaf education who would deny music a place in the curriculum of a deaf child, and there are many deaf adults who see no place for music in the life of a deaf person at all. In the United States of America it is among the deaf themselves that the loudest criticism is heard, and there are many in Britain, who would agree with them.

Among teachers of the deaf there are many who would state that the basic need in the education of the deaf is to build up their linguistic abilities, and that this is such an all-absorbing task that to give time to music is sheer waste. Some headmasters of schools for the deaf support this view and so do not allow music to be a part of school life.

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In the hearing community, to mention 'music' and 'the deaf' in the same breath is to arouse surprise, and often disbelief. "If the deaf cannot hear, what is the point of teaching them music?" is a common reaction.

It would be possible at this point to indulge in the centuries-old arguments concerning methods of educating the deaf. Should the aural/oral approach be used? Can deaf children using Total Communication be sufficiently aware of aural perception to appreciate music, and so on. I wish to avoid all this and try to give a straightforward answer to the question. Should all deaf children be taught music? The answer surely is the same as for hearing children; all deaf children, nay all children, should be given the opportunity to develop their innate rhythmic and musical senses as far as in them lies.

The question of music for the deaf should not raise the problem of the hearing or non-hearing of musical sounds - that approach is to look at the matter from outside the person. Rather, we should be looking at it from the inside. Does the deaf child need to express himself or herself musically? The answer surely is, yes, to the degree to which each child finds this possible.

The deaf child is first of all a child, like all other children, and it is transparently obvious that children need to, and do, express themselves musically. Observe a group of children in any playground. What are they often doing? - Chanting, singing, playing rhythmical games. Do not deaf children need to do this? Are they different in this respect? The answer so obviously is no, they are not different in this respect. They do need to express themselves in these ways, but they are not always given the opportunity to do so, hence frustration can be caused, at least in part, to the lack of ability to fulfil this basic need. It is our task to unlock the door which hinders deaf children from partaking of these natural human activities.

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Schott.