

be seen as having established a rift that generated “a well-worn American-European polemic, as crystallized in Boulez’s and Cage’s mutual critiques” (p. 164). The story is more nuanced. Iverson investigates a larger network that encompasses the WDR studio, the Italian RAI studio, and the New York studio of Louis and Bebe Barron, among others, showing that “their momentary squabbles and polemical insults paled in comparison to the enrichment they received from sharing in an ongoing, contested discourse” (ibid.).

In conclusion, Iverson’s *Electronic Inspirations* provides a compelling contribution to a number of scholarly circles including the STS research community, studies in the creative process and oral history, and the analytical and philological studies of electroacoustic music. It stresses the importance of invisible figures and collaborators in the shaping of cultural and musical history, and even denounces the homogeneity of the studio in terms of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Chapter 6, with its sections dedicated to Cathy Berberian, demonstrates “an exception to the rule” in an otherwise all-male, all-white electronic music society. The only criticism that can be leveled against Iverson’s book is the shortage of details on the technology itself: the construction, functioning, and development of electronic components, and the spaces and accommodations in which these were housed. (In those days, for example, a reverb depended on the size of the echo chamber.) Such details constitute important information, especially when one wants to understand the construction of the aesthetic environment and the actual making of music and sound research.

The timing of this book is remarkable given the recent announcement of the opening of the reconstructed WDR studio. The original equipment will be reinstalled in the Haus Mödrath—Räume für Kunst museum in Kerpen, twenty kilometers southwest of Cologne, in the very building in which Stockhausen was born in 1928 (then a maternity home). Despite a delay in the opening of Haus Mödrath, one can only anticipate the invaluable opportunity to see the original machines firsthand and to consider further questions relating to the creative technical process, specifications concerning machines, and the physical surroundings of the early years. While we wait, Iverson’s book contributes to our excitement by accurately evoking WDR’s ambience and creative dynamics.

LAURA ZATTRA

*Class, Control, and Classical Music*, by Anna Bull. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. xxx, 232 pp.

In *Class, Control, and Classical Music*, Anna Bull poses a key question to classical music stakeholders: “how are musical institutions, practices, and aesthetics shaped by wider conditions of economic inequality, and in what

ways might music enable and entrench such inequalities or work against them?” (p. 1) Through ethnography and careful historical analysis, she interrogates youth classical music programs and explores how they participate in class reproduction, the formation of middle-class selfhood, and classed boundary-drawing.

As a music education scholar, I appreciate the considerable extent to which Bull’s observations, which predominantly target music education, draw upon literature outside the field to produce a robust call to action. She purposefully draws on different disciplines that deepen and add complexity to her approach to core questions about economic inequality and classical musics. Stuart Hall’s theorizing of “articulation,” Georgina Born’s intersecting “planes of mediation,” and Pierre Bourdieu’s approach to class as relational (alongside his work on class reproduction) provide important mechanisms for examining the relationship between classical music and the middle classes.<sup>1</sup>

Her call for change stands as a crucial intervention for music education, and proposes ways forward for classical music education in policy and practice. First, readers are asked to recognize the unequal weighting of resources and institutions toward classical music. Recognition then becomes the first step toward the necessary work of rebalancing resources and institutions across different musical practices. Second, she emphasizes the importance of honoring young people’s musical lives and of drawing upon their musics alongside introducing new musics—a call reminiscent of the push toward culturally responsive teaching in music education.<sup>2</sup> Third, her work identifies the need for cultural and educational institutions to lead on change in classical music education and performance by collecting and publishing data on inequalities, and through revising selection processes, curricula, and pedagogies. Bull notes that music educators can address inequalities through their pedagogies and in their organizational cultures, and further advocates for “more sophisticated ways of including young people’s voices” (p. 189). Drawing on music education scholarship, she suggests a democratic space for music teaching and learning.

This book underscores the importance of understanding that different musical and social identities are not valued equally across education, policy, and other mainstream institutional arenas, or even by young people themselves. “[T]he unspoken value of classical music continues to generate

1. Stuart Hall, “Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-structuralist Debates,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 2, no. 2 (1985): 91–114; Georgina Born, “After Relational Aesthetics: Improvised Music, the Social, and (Re)Theorizing the Aesthetic,” in *Improvisation and Social Aesthetics*, ed. Georgina Born, Eric Lewis, and Will Straw (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 33–58; Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241–58.

2. See Vicki R. Lind and Constance L. McKoy, *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education: From Understanding to Application* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

further rewards for the already-privileged young people who participate in it” (p. 190). Bull proposes a reframing of public funding advocacy that assumes every child should have an opportunity to learn an instrument. Instead, she argues that a public system should “sustain and develop more representative, cross-cultural, and innovative musical cultures” (p. 191). Rather than valorizing the “conservatoire ‘superstar,’” pedagogues and institutions should support the development of the “creative musician with a wide set of competencies” (p. 192). She further argues that diversifying classical music will require changing its aesthetic:

In order to address inequalities evident in classical music education and its cultural institutions, we need to disrupt the aesthetics of the music itself rather than continuing to produce perfect versions of the canonic repertoire. The boundary-drawing that I have described, which safeguards classical music’s cultural prestige, needs to be loosened, and the “treasures” guarded by it must be let out for us to play with. (p. 192)

Such a multifaceted call for change thus demands a reenvisioning of music education policies and practices.

Bull’s overview of key moments in the histories of various institutions shows how critical changes led to the consolidation of values that are now taken for granted in classical music. She explores how nineteenth-century practices and institutions have cemented ideas about class into classical music in ways that make them appear “natural, inevitable, and right” (p. 29). Thinking of these systems, practices, and institutions as an ecology links the Victorian period to the present and leads readers to question whether practices that have been consolidated currently make sense.

In the central chapters of the book, Bull offers a historical perspective on the way present-day institutions consolidate and disrupt classed practices. Chapter 2 describes three key moments that both cemented and challenged the connection between the middle classes and classical music. Bull identifies the 1830s and 1840s as the moment when the bourgeoisie established classical music institutions whose practices included distinguishing between rehearsals and performances, and establishing the conductor as an autocratic figure distinct from the ensemble. She points to the emergence several decades later, during the 1880s and 1890s, of silent listening practices, the sacralization of music as art, and credentialing in music through graded exams, while from the late 1950s to the 1970s, we see the rise of new institutions in music education including local authority music services. Throughout these three periods, the articulation between classical music and the middle classes was not only contingent; it was also consolidated and disrupted in multiple ways. By historicizing her call for change, Bull helps classical music stakeholders understand how taken-for-granted practices became ingrained and highlights their continued reinscription of oppressive relations. Failing to question these practices strengthens the social capital of the middle classes and excludes those without

capital from participating. Once music educators can map the consolidation of these practices, they might move to consider when they no longer make sense or when challenging them becomes appropriate and necessary.

Bull's ethnographic approach underscores her call for change. During her fieldwork, she observed four youth classical music organizations—a youth choir, two youth orchestras, and a youth opera group—and conducted interviews and focus groups with ensemble participants, in addition to the adults involved in running the ensembles. These interviews, which are expertly interwoven throughout the book, facilitate an understanding of the connections between class structure and classical music as seen from the perspectives of youth participants. Participants were predominantly white and middle class, with an even gender balance, and were based in the fictional town of Whitchester, whose significant youth classical music scene existed alongside “high (although hidden) levels of inequality between young people across the county” (p. xxiv). These narratives ground a call for change, as they illustrate how classical music promotes classed boundary-drawing and how middle-classness is mobilized as social capital.

Throughout the book, Bull problematizes the idea of musical standards as maintained by musicians, not to mention practices valorized for their connection to attaining aesthetic beauty. Her ethnography further highlights the inequities that underlie music rehearsals and suggests that rehearsal practices would benefit from radical reenvisioning. In the final empirical chapter, she reveals how young people in the study experience emotional depth through the music, and how they value their emotional depth above that of outsiders to classical music. Bull challenges the hierarchy latent in viewpoints that position youths who play classical music as superior to their peers who do not. Ethnographic data from youth participants bring taken-for-granted practices into stark relief and urge the reader to reconsider how classical music operates.

Bull deliberately engages class and social inequality through an intersectional lens. For instance, her discussion about class is richer for its intersections with gender and race, which are woven throughout the text and highlight class relations in important ways. Similarly, observations about whiteness and classical music have implications for economic inequality. When Bull calls for change, she accounts for intersecting identities in relation to classical music. Accounting for the middle-class, white, and gendered nature of classed boundary-drawing in classical music means that her demand for change is centered on justice for raced, classed, and gendered identities and their intersections.

Gender analysis and its intersections with class are woven throughout the book. In chapter 2, for example, Bull foregrounds the intersection of gender and class to examine how classical music in the Victorian period was read as a “marker of ‘respectable’ or ‘proper’ femininity” (p. 28). With respect to male authority, her analysis reveals the embodied authority of the male conductor and its effect on the young men and women in the ensembles. She

describes how the male conductor “draws on qualities that are already carried by middle- and upper-class men, and are therefore accessed more easily by them” (p. 112). Class and gender thus remain inextricably intertwined.

Although her race analysis is less prominent than her gender analysis, Bull further attends to the whiteness of classical music. In chapter 5, she draws on Kulz and Dyer to point to both the “controlled, compact, and concise” compartmentment of whiteness and the ability of white people to “transcend their raced bodies” (p. 104).<sup>3</sup> This race analysis furthers her articulation of classed boundary-drawing. The intersectional analysis and the way such analyses reveal stark power relations add complexity to her calls for change. Classical music, Bull elucidates, provides a comfortable space for some bodies—those of white middle-class men—over others. Understanding classical music’s exclusions and inequities intersectionally attunes our attention toward the demand for action that permeates this book.

Bull demands a complete reenvisioning of music education and a re-balancing of resources and institutions away from classical music. She advocates for making the inequities in music institutions plain and working against them. Her proposed agenda resists the privileged place of classical music in the hierarchy of musics in music education while pushing toward an approach that attends to students’ musical practices and supports developing creative competencies that take account of student preferences. Bull’s demands echo many calls for change in music education, which have moved recently toward issues of social justice.<sup>4</sup> While some of her suggestions resonate with those of critical music education scholars, her contribution is unique in that her call is multifaceted: she combines the need for culturally responsive teaching with a demand to counter institutional inequities through reforms that advocate changing classical music’s aesthetic altogether.

Importantly, Bull examines the classical music world as an insider: she was a participant-observer in most ensembles she observed. Her ability to move within that world makes her critiques all the more significant, as she can trade in the social capital she opposes. Where outsiders to the classical music world may demand change without much effect, as an insider Bull is able to recognize classical music’s value and still argue for change on the

3. Christy Kulz, *Factories for Learning: Producing Race and Class Inequality in the Neoliberal Academy* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2017); Richard Dyer, *White* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

4. See Cathy Benedict, Patrick Schmidt, Gary Spruce, and Paul Woodford, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), and Elizabeth Gould, June Countryman, Charlene Morton, and Leslie Stewart Rose, eds., *Exploring Social Justice: How Music Education Might Matter* (Toronto: Canadian Music Educators’ Association, 2009).

basis of her observations of the ways in which youth classical music practices reinscribe uneven social capital and oppression. By virtue of their conservatory-type training in higher education institutions, most music educators in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom are also classical music insiders. Bull shows educators that one can value a practice and also recognize when it is time to set it aside in favor of an approach that better serves young people. Classical music practices still put “music first.” Bull, in contrast, urges music educators to challenge inequities by taking a “students first” approach.

While there are differences between the way classical music is taught in the United Kingdom and in the United States, I recognize US practices in Bull’s ethnography and see alignments between the historical establishment of classed boundary-drawing and US institutions. Bull’s calls for change reach broadly and music educators would do well to redirect “adult-driven, correction-oriented modes of pedagogy” (p. 190) toward approaches that account for all of the rich musical and lived experiences that youths bring to their education.

JULIET HESS