

Introducing “Reports and Practices” and “Roundtables”

THE EDITORS

The current issue of the *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* introduces two new sections to the journal: “Reports and Practices” and “Roundtables.” The *JMHP* has presented articles on a wide variety of topics from a critique of canon formation in jazz history textbooks to an archival study of Donald J. Grout’s historiographical ideas. We introduce these two distinct sections to guide readers to the specific types of articles that will be of the most interest to them.

A journal devoted to teaching will have many contributions on effective teaching strategies in specific classes. In creating the “Reports and Practices” section, the Editors seek both to guide readers to best practices articles and to shape their content and context. The motivation for this stems, in part, from an ongoing debate in other historical disciplines that have a longer tradition of pedagogy scholarship than musicology does. Writing in the *American Historical Review*, David Pace was dismissive of the many history pedagogy articles he found that only described what a teacher thought was effective in his or her classroom.

This type of study lacks the mark of fully developed scholarship because it stands alone without building on the research of others, provides little demonstration of effectiveness of the methods being used beyond the author’s impression that they did or must work, or lacks a clear theoretical framework within which teaching strategies can be situated¹

Likewise, Gary J. Kornblith and Carol Lasser, in their review essay in the *Journal of American History*, “Beyond Best Practices: Taking Seriously the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning,” cite their concerns about some best practices articles:

1. David Pace, “The Amateur in the Operating Room: History and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning,” *American Historical Review* 109, no. 4 (2004): 1175.

2 *Journal of Music History Pedagogy*

Would we see lesson plans for classes presented like recipes in a “best practices” cookbook? Were historians being asked to “dumb down” their specialties in order to don the guise of entertainers who could reach students more accustomed to amusement than to serious intellectual inquiry?²

Kornblith and Lasser singled out those works that were “analytically sophisticated, well grounded in empirical research, and provocative” as their models for the strongest essays.³

Articles on best practices in the *JMHP* will be characterized by their focus on a specific practical teaching concern framed within two contexts. One context is the class itself. “Reports and Practices” articles will often detail a specific problem in teaching music history, offer a particular approach to address the problem that the author has found effective, and provide practical materials to realize that approach. To understand the applied teaching strategy, these articles will often give sample assignments with a grading rubric and explain these assignments within the overall coursework. The second context for articles in the “Reports and Practices” section is the literature on the topic. There is a growing body of pedagogical scholarship in music history as well as a literature of teaching and learning in other scholarly fields. “Reports and Practices” articles will present the author’s ideas and experiences within a review of relevant published scholarship.

In the “Roundtable” section, the Editors intend to document the important role collegial discussions play in developing ideas on teaching and pedagogy. The preservation of discussions and roundtables has a long tradition in published conference reports, such as those of the International Musicological Society.⁴ Although published transcriptions of roundtables from musicological conferences are currently uncommon, those transcriptions that do exist have had a tremendous impact on subsequent scholarship and research. More recently, transcripts of discussions have formed important sections of journals in history, such as the “AHR Conversation” in the *American Historical Review* or “Interchange” in the *Journal of American History* (though these reproduce edited e-mail exchanges, rather than in-person discussions).⁵ In creating a section devoted to reprinting discussions and conversations, the Editors of the *JMHP* seek to encourage scholarly dialogues about music history pedagogy and preserve them for future reference.

2. Gary J. Kornblith and Carol Lasser, “Beyond Best Practices: Taking Seriously the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning,” *Journal of American History* 92, no. 4 (2006): 1356.

3. *Ibid.*

4. See for example Daniel Hertz and Bonnie Wade, eds., *International Musicological Society: Report of the Twelfth Congress, Berkeley 1977* (Bärenreiter: Kassel, 1981).

5. The inaugural publications in these series were C. A. Bayly et al., “AHR Conversation: On Transnational History,” *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (2006): 1440–64 and Robert Begiebing et al., “Interchange: Genres of History,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 2 (2004): 572–93.

The Editors are committed to encouraging and publishing a wide variety of scholarship on teaching and learning in music history. In having clear sections for “Reports and Practices” and “Roundtables,” the Editors will present the best models of these types of research to our readers.