

A VOLUME IN **NEW DIRECTIONS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP:**
INNOVATIONS IN RESEARCH, TEACHING, AND LEARNING

**EDUCATIONAL
LEADERSHIP
AND MUSIC**

*Lessons for Tomorrow's
School Leaders*

edited by

Terri N. Watson | **Jeffrey S. Brooks**

Floyd D. Beachum

Educational Leadership and Music

A volume in
*New Directions in Educational Leadership:
Innovations in Research, Teaching, and Learning*
Noelle Witherspoon Arnold, *Series Editor*

This page intentionally left blank.

Educational Leadership and Music

**Lessons for Tomorrow's
School Leaders**

edited by

Terri N. Watson

The City College of New York

Jeffrey S. Brooks

Monash University

Floyd D. Beachum

Lehigh University



INFORMATION AGE PUBLISHING, INC.
Charlotte, NC • www.infoagepub.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A CIP record for this book is available from the Library of Congress
<http://www.loc.gov>

ISBN: 978-1-68123-855-5 (Paperback)
978-1-68123-856-2 (Hardcover)
978-1-68123-857-9 (ebook)

Copyright © 2017 Information Age Publishing Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

*I dedicate this work to my mother, Theresa J. Watson. Thank you
for your unwavering love and support. I am because you are.*

— Terri N. Watson

*To the members of Team Rainbow: Melanie, Holland, Bronwyn, Clodagh,
and Jürgen—We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams.*

— Jeffrey S. Brooks

*This work is dedicated to George Suggs, Patricia Oates, Chester Beachum, Jr.,
and all of those family members who are no longer with us. You are not forgotten.*

— Floyd D. Beachum

This page intentionally left blank.

CONTENTS

Foreword: “Playing the Changes”: Building Strong Communities Through Innovation and Improvisatory Leadership.....	xi
Introduction.....	xvii
1 Leadership as Jazz: Critical Servant Leadership and the Music of John Coltrane	1
<i>Judy Alston</i>	
2 Public Enemy, Education, and Leadership: Muse-Sick or Mess-Age?	11
<i>Floyd D. Beachum</i>	
3 Keeping the Beat: Why Music Drives Leadership and Life	19
<i>Ira Bogotch and Louis M. Ruccolo</i>	
4 Which Song Do You Hear?: Using Music As Artmaking to Explore Social Justice and Equity in Schools.....	33
<i>Christa Boske and Jay Liedel</i>	
5 The Evolution of a Revolution: Leadership Lessons From Al Jourgensen and Ministry.....	47
<i>Jeffrey S. Brooks</i>	
6 The Potency of Love and the Power of a Thousand: Reflections on Gustav Mahler and Leadership for Social Justice.....	55
<i>Katherine Cumings Mansfield</i>	

viii ■ Contents

7	Beyond Ropar Bar: Transcultural and Transformative Collaborations of the Australian Art Orchestra and the Young Wagilak Group.....	67
	<i>Leon R. de Bruin</i>	
8	Tupac Shakur: A Lesson in Critical Reflection, Truth-Telling, and Advocacy.....	79
	<i>David E. DeMatthews and James Coviello</i>	
9	Insights From the Flow of the Teacha': Considering Hip-Hop in Education.....	91
	<i>Sean Dickerson, Omar J. Salaam, and Adrian Anthony</i>	
10	The Leadership Identity Dilemma: Franz Schubert and <i>Winterreise</i>	101
	<i>Lisa Catherine Ehrich and Fenwick W. English</i>	
11	The Missed Education: Leadership Lessons From Lauryn Hill's <i>Everything is Everything</i>	115
	<i>Soribel Genao and Pedro "Dro" Genao</i>	
12	Improvisation and Leadership: Lessons About Direction and Influence From Sonny Rollins	127
	<i>Stephen Jacobson</i>	
13	"A Fairy Tale in a Song Is No Message": Leadership Lessons From Oliver Mtukudzi and the Black Spirits.....	137
	<i>Christopher Knaus</i>	
14	Bono: Unapologetically Human.....	149
	<i>Ellyn Lyle</i>	
15	Kendrick Lamar: An Authentic Leader in the Hip-Hop Community	157
	<i>Samuel Martin, Heather Wynne, and Carlos R. McCray</i>	
16	Jill Scott: A Champion of Affirmation and Empowerment Lessons for Leaders on Mindfulness and Professional Self-Care	171
	<i>Patrice A. McClellan</i>	
17	From "Smooth Operator" to "Young, Gifted, and Black": Understanding Big Daddy Kane's Evolution as a Metaphor for a Praxis of Critical Care in Leadership	185
	<i>Alprentice A. McCutchen and Rosa L. Rivera-McCutchen</i>	

18	Faith and Leadership: Elements of Fred Hammond’s Life and Lyrical Influence on the Development of Educational Leaders	197
	<i>Jason McKinney and Kimberly Starks Berglund</i>	
19	Mahalia Jackson Exemplifies Leadership Through Gospel Music and Negro Spirituals	207
	<i>Anthony H. Normore and Gaetane Jean-Marie</i>	
20	The Making of Matisyahu: Music Laying the Foundation for Re-Inspiring Social Justice Work in Education	217
	<i>Azadeh F. Osanloo</i>	
21	Interrogating Punishment Through Race, Raptivism, and Youth Leadership of Jasiri X	227
	<i>Darius Prier</i>	
22	Lessons in Leadership From the “Thunder God”	241
	<i>Whitney Sherman Newcomb, Stephanie Blackburn, and Jason Newcomb</i>	
23	Kirk Franklin: Lessons From Gospel Music for Transformational Educational Leadership	249
	<i>LaBotta Taylor and Mackie V. Spradley</i>	
24	Revolution 9: Lessons in Leadership Provided by the Beatles	259
	<i>Lucas Walsh</i>	
25	Lessons for School Leaders From Sister Sledge: “We Are Family”	275
	<i>Terri N. Watson</i>	
	Epilogue: “Tell Them About the Dream, Martin”: When Homophily Happens and Music and Educational Leadership Meet Destiny	283
	<i>Tj-Ron M. O. Douglas</i>	
	About the Editors	289
	About the Contributors.....	291

This page intentionally left blank.

FOREWORD

“PLAYING THE CHANGES”

Building Strong Communities Through Innovation and Improvisatory Leadership

Mitchell Robinson
Michigan State University

The real power of music lies in the fact that it can be “true” to the life of feeling in a way that language cannot; for its significant forms have that ambivalence of content which words cannot have.

—Susanne Langer, 1942

Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.

—Victor Hugo, 1864

The notion that music may provide lessons for educational leadership is a powerful one and offers rich possibilities for school leaders willing to think in creative ways about their practice. For me, the true power of music is found in its ability to help us express ourselves when our feelings are complicated, and sometimes contradictory. As Jeffrey Brooks points out in his chapter on the band Ministry, conflict and tension in music are often great sources of productivity, but are generally avoided in education circles: “In

education, it is particularly interesting to reflect on the oft-espoused value of having consensus before moving an initiative forward. Ministry reminds us that at times great results can come from working under great pressure” (Brooks, this volume, p. 51).

I have found that tension can indeed be a source of creative energy in my work as an educator and school administrator, and have studied this idea in my own scholarship. My dissertation research focused on the nature of the relationships present in complex, nonhierarchical organizational structures, specifically examining the metaphor of “tensegrity.” Tensegrity is a contraction of “tensional integrity,” and was first popularized by the American architect and engineer R. Buckminster Fuller (1895–1983). Tensegrity is a structural concept “based on principles of continuous tension and discontinuous compression. For Fuller, the concept manifested his philosophy that nature uses tension primarily and compression secondarily, whereas humans often misguidedly do the reverse” (Robinson, 2005, p. 12).

Rather than avoiding tension, structures designed as tensegrity arrays absorb and distribute forces, using them “to mechanically ‘tune’ the whole system as one” (Ingber, 1998, p. 56). Educational leaders can reconcile the presence of tension and conflict in their institutions by reorienting how they view the inevitable conflicts that arise in the daily course of their practice. Rather than perceiving these points of tension as undesired sources of friction, conflicts among coworkers can be viewed as opportunities for forging new understandings.

Judge (1998) suggests a three-step process for channeling creative tensions in a productive fashion:

1. Understanding and ordering differences.
2. Observing a degree of sensitivity regarding diversity when ordering differences.
3. Basing differences on an underlying unity of mission.

While school leaders who follow Judge’s advice should notice improved levels of communication, they may not notice a decreased level of disagreement. Embracing creative tension as an engine for productivity and diversity of thought is often frustrating and time consuming. It does offer, however, the promise of better and more creative results than a simple quest for consensus.

This approach to conceptualizing differences as a positive aspect of school leadership is conducive to enhanced levels of risk-taking, and expanded horizons for personal and professional growth. It also offers a sense of empowerment for school personnel who can provide the necessary counterbalance to the natural inequities in power, resources, and prestige often found among the members of a school community.

Floyd Beachum suggests another perspective on the relationship between conflicting constructs in his chapter on the group Public Enemy. Beachum identifies the two principles that characterize the group's music and career, unity and critique, resisting the urge to present these concepts as simplistic notions, and providing fulsome explanations of each idea from a critical stance. The chapter concludes with this probing and insightful analysis.

The hip-hop music industry in general began to overemphasize material pursuits over the pursuit of economic social freedom (Dyson, 2004; West, 2008). West (2008) further indicated that,

the recording industry is so interested in pacifying, distracting, and ensuring that the strength, grace and dignity of young people is not affirmed. They would rather keep them locked into a narcissistic, materialistic, and individualistic orientation. . . . *The legacy of Public Enemy is a continuous fight to emphasize the former and eliminate the latter.* (p. 127, emphasis added)

Both Brooks and Beachum remind us that nothing about educational leadership is simple or uncomplicated, and that much of what we deal with as leaders is paradoxical as well as idiosyncratic. The unique nature of leadership in schools requires a more complex and multifaceted approach to responding to situations and issues than that followed in other professions, an approach based on the recognition of multiple realities, diverse contexts, inequitable power relationships, and ever-changing conditions.

School leadership also requires a Janus-like sense of perspective, looking simultaneously forward and backward to establish a sense of historically-informed context. As Terri N. Watson notes in her chapter on the R&B group Sister Sledge, “Historical analysis such as this is an underutilized tool in educational leadership research and can be used to expand our knowledge base in meaningful ways.”

In a larger sense, music when taught well provides the “antidote” to many of the problems that pervade education and schooling in the “accountability era,” among them an obsession with standardized testing, draconian teacher evaluation systems predicated on junk science (i.e., value-added measures), attacks on veterans (read: “expensive” teachers), and a narrowing of the curriculum to a barren educational menu of math and reading at the expense of music, art, physical education, and any other “non-tested” subject. Music making demands creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration—the very skill set that business leaders and corporate education reformers claim to value—and yet music is often a casualty of the reforms being forced into the schools.

As Soribel Genao alludes to in her lyrical chapter on Lauryn Hill, students, parents, teachers, administrators, and anyone challenging the corporate education reform agenda often wonder, “Who made these rules?”

We're so confused." It is as if the rules are being made up as we go, that our goals as teachers and administrators are moving targets, and that those of us entrusted with the education of our children have little power to affect change on the profession to which we have committed our careers. Adrift in a sea of frustration ("It seems we lose the game before we even start to play"), I believe that music offers a powerful metaphor for school leadership that can provide a moral and ethical compass to guide school leaders' efforts in a time of near-constant turmoil and change.

As a former music teacher and school administrator and now as a music teacher educator, I see the real value of music as a metaphor for school leadership less in the products that we create as musicians, and more in the creative processes in which musicians engage when performing, improvising, arranging, and producing music in a multitude of ways. Stephen Jacobson identifies two characteristics of the jazz great Sonny Rollins that encapsulate the power of these processes: innovation and improvisation.

INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP

Rollins had a rare ability to take existing musical material and by applying his prodigious talent and knowledge in fresh and innovative ways breathe new life into it. Jacobson offers the example of Rollins's reinterpretation of the tune "I'm an Old Cowhand, a song originally made famous by Bing Crosby and then Roy Rogers":

Anyone familiar with the song will quickly recognize the beginning and end of this rather hackneyed piece of fluff, but what happens in between as Rollins deconstructs and then reconstructs the melody is nothing short of magic.

I would suggest that this "magic" was actually the result of countless hours of what jazz musicians refer to as "woodshedding"—the often tedious process of listening, transcribing, and practicing short "licks" and musical motifs, transposing these melodic ideas into new keys in order to develop one's technical skills, and then rearranging these "musical germs" into new and previously unimagined forms, styles, and genres.

Innovative school leaders will recognize the parallels to their own work: careful and attentive listening to the various stakeholders that contribute to their school communities, considering the merits and values of these contributions, and finding ways to honor these voices in the crafting of new policies and procedures that strengthen and advance student learning and growth. As Jacobson points out, innovative leadership is a blend of art, science, and craft—or, as musicians might conceive of it, feeling, thinking, and doing. Just as music teachers have nothing to apologize for in helping

children learn how to “feel” more and better, innovative school leaders should not apologize for recognizing the importance of valuing the importance of “feel” (art), in addition to that of data (science) and expertise (craft) in building strong learning communities.

IMPROVISATORY LEADERSHIP

One of the “knocks” on improvisation is the notion that improvising involves simply “making stuff up.” While there is certainly an element of spontaneity involved with musical improvisation, the idea that improvising does not require careful planning, preparation, and practice could not be further from the truth. For educators, part of the misunderstanding here comes from our confusion between the terms planning and preparing.

Just as with musical improvisation, pedagogical improvisation is based on deep and thorough knowledge of the material to be taught, and extensive study and practice of these materials. Improvisatory teaching also requires an immersive approach to lesson preparation and doesn’t really allow for linear lesson planning or a teacher-centered instructional style (Snow, 1998).

The process of improvisatory music teaching becomes, in effect, a re-creation of the composer’s compositional process—or the improviser’s creative process. It also requires a “flattening” of the hierarchical structures often present in classrooms, and an egalitarian approach to cultivating a learning culture rather than an authoritarian style of classroom management.

For school leaders, improvisatory leadership relies on deep knowledge of one’s learning community, a commitment to a “flat” administrative hierarchical approach that empowers all members to develop their own leadership skills and abilities, and the confidence to allow others to lead. Just as with jazz improvisation, taking these risks while “on the bandstand” can be frightening. But as any jazz musician will tell you, the only way to get better is to play with better players—and to challenge yourself by playing harder tunes with harder “changes.”

Improvisatory school leaders “get better” by surrounding themselves with excellent colleagues, listening to these colleagues as they “play the changes” to difficult educational problems, and using their deep knowledge of educational leadership theories and practices to develop new and innovative approaches to school governance. Innovative and improvisatory school leadership, like music, promises to provide an “antidote” to the challenges we face as a profession, by responding with creativity, connectivity, and collaboration.

REFERENCES

- Dyson, M. E. (2004). *The Michael Eric Dyson reader*. New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books
- Hugo, V. (1891). *William Shakespeare, Part I, Book II, Chapter IV* (M. B. Anderson, Trans.). Chicago, IL: A.C. McClurg.
- Ingber, D. E. (1998, January). The architecture of life: A universal set of building rules seems to guide the design of organic structures—from simple carbon compounds to complex cells and tissues. *Scientific American*, 48–57.
- Judge, A. J. N. (1998). Living differences as a basis for sustainable community. *Transnational Associations*. Retrieved from <https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/quenchin.php>
- Langer, S. K. (1942). *Philosophy in a new key: A study in the symbolism of reason, rite and art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Robinson, M. (2005). A tensegretic theory of school-college collaboration in music education. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 106(3), 9–18.
- Snow, S. L. (1998). *Rehearsing in the choral context: A qualitative examination of undergraduate conductor/teacher planning processes and relationships to emergent pedagogical knowledge evidenced in teaching* (Doctoral dissertation). Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.
- West, C. (2008). *Hope on a tightrope: Words and wisdom*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House.

INTRODUCTION

**Terri N. Watson, Jeffrey S. Brooks,
and Floyd Beachum**

Over the past half-century researchers and practitioners in educational leadership have developed useful ways of examining and improving their practice. They have also routinely looked to the business community, the social sciences, and policy makers to frame their ways of approaching the complicated work of leading schools. Yet, while these technical knowledge bases have their utility, scholars have begun to recognize the importance of spirituality, emotional intelligence, and the arts as important foundations of leadership practice (English & Ehrich, 2016). This has led to the recognition and realization that insight, information, and inspiration cannot only be gleaned from the aforementioned sources, but also from arts and specifically music. Music is therapeutic. It promotes creativity, reflection, and communication. In this light, we set out to understand how music has impacted professors of educational leadership and practitioners in the field.

There is a kind of magic that comes with music. It is that tune playing in the background, it is that song you sing when you are happy, it is that lyric that you keep singing to yourself over and over without realizing that your mouth is moving. Thus, music plays an integral part of our lives in very obvious and less apparent ways. West (2008) wrote, “Music has been our most powerful creative expression” (p. 114). West uses music to metaphorically analyze himself and the world around him. He even describes himself as

“an aspiring bluesman in a world of ideas and a jazzman in the life of the mind” (p. 114). His appeal to these unique musical forms displays their greater applicability past only being of entertainment value. Similarly, Beachum and McCray (2011) noted that “music is more than an avenue for entertainment only” (p. 6). They used history, education, and music to trace the course of African Americans from slavery to the 21st century. These three components were critical to their analysis because they all occurred concurrently and frequently intersected. Thus, the historical time period in which one lives impacts educational attitudes and is also influenced by musical expression. Dyson (1997) used Black music as a tool of analysis to critique society’s contempt for Black youth and its preoccupation with nostalgia. At the heart of his analysis, Dyson wrote:

For our nostalgic true believers, it translates into the notion that the best in black music happened to coincide with their own youth. At the same time, they associate vice, or limitation, or smallness of vision, with the aesthetic form most alien to them . . . We should adjust our evaluations of music based on the sorts of achievement that are possible, even desirable, in a given period. (p. 132)

How many times in our lives have elders criticized and demonized the music of younger generations? Furthermore, how many times have elders, professionals, and school leaders criticized and demonized kids and youth culture? Educators constantly reflect on a supposed “Golden Age” of education where students were orderly, respectful, and obedient (and coincidentally culturally homogeneous). By using music for analysis we discover that “educators should recognize how their past experiences can coincide with the experiences of their students and not always conflict with them. In this way, educators should examine the ways in which collective memories can help them build closer relationships with their students” (Beachum & McCray, 2011, p. 123). Thus, music has many different academic, social, and educational applications. This is the essence of the book you are reading now.

In this book we considered new territory for educational leadership by looking to music for lessons and inspiration that may inform the next generation of schools leaders. Each chapter focuses on an artist or group whose work serves to refine, extend, and challenge our thinking in regards to educational leadership. You will find a vast array of musical forms of expression analyzed and described by an equally diverse collection of educational leadership scholars and practitioners. There may be some who question the academic appropriateness or relevance of a text such as this one. Our response is that part of our ongoing mission should be to break ourselves out of academic silos and forge meaningful connections between seemingly disparate disciplines. Furthermore, educational leadership stands to gain

more by drawing from the arts and specifically musical influences. Finally, music is an obvious part of most of our lives; why not explore the ways in which it impacts us on an academic level and not just a personal level? In sum, we ask that as you read the chapters of this book, you reflect on your own musical tastes and favorite artists. Think about how music has influenced your life in various ways. As you reflect, keep in mind what West (2008) noted about blues and jazz:

What is distinctive about using blues and jazz as a source of intellectual inspiration is the ability to be flexible, fluid, improvisational, and multi-dimensional—finding one’s own voice, but using that voice in a variety of different ways. (p. 114)

We encourage you to listen to your music effectively, reflect deeply, and find your voice.

REFERENCES

- Beachum, F. D., & McCray, C. R. (2011). *Cultural collision and collusion: Reflections on hip hop culture, values, and schools*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Dyson, M. E. (1997). *Race rules: Navigating the color line*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- English, F. & Ehrich, L. C. (2016). *Leading beautifully : Educational leadership as connoisseurship*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- West , C. (2008). *Hope on a tightrope: Words and wisdom*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, Inc.

This page intentionally left blank.