James A. Davis, ed., *The Music History Classroom*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2012. xxiii + 197 pp. $104.95 ISBN 978-1-4094-3658-4

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My bookshelf of monographs devoted to the teaching of music history is book-ended by the pioneering volume edited in 2002 by Mary Natvig, *Teaching Music History*[1] and by the recent volume under review here. With the addition of *Vitalizing Music History Teaching*, the fine 2010 collection edited by James Briscoe and reviewed in this journal in 2011,[2] these three distinctive and excellent volumes form the exclusive single-monograph coverage of the growing field of music history pedagogy.

To be sure, there are also exemplary and useful individual chapters in books that do not deal exclusively with the pedagogy of music history. There are, for example, several excellent essays in *Teaching Music in Higher Education*, including the first chapter, "Designing an Undergraduate Music Course";[3] Michael Griffel's "Teaching Music";[4] James Parakilas's "Teaching Introductory Music Courses with a 'More Comprehensive Perspective'";[5] and Ellen Koskoff's "What Do We Want to Teach When We Teach Music."[6] I regularly assign these thoughtful essays and others in my biennial course on music history pedagogy, which is designed for graduate students both in history and in performance. But the anchor textbook for this course has always been Natvig's volume, most

1. Mary Natvig, ed., *Teaching Music History* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002).

2. James R. Briscoe, ed. *Vitalizing Music History Teaching (*Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2010). Reviewed by Andrew Dell'Antonio in this *Journal* 2 no. 1 (Fall 2011): 99–102, http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/38/72.

3. Colleen Conway and Thomas Hodgman, *Teaching Music in Higher Education* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2–20.

4. L. Michael Griffel, "Teaching Music," in Steven M. Cahn, ed., *Scholars who Teach* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1978), 193–216.

5. James Parakilas, "Teaching Introductory Music Courses with a 'More Comprehensive Perspective,'" in *College Music Symposium* 30 (1990): 112–16.

6. Ellen Koskoff, "What Do We Want to Teach When We Teach Music," in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, eds., *Re-thinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 545–60.

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recently supplemented by the new volume by James Davis. Assigning essays from both volumes allowed my students—and me—to consider the comparative strengths of each volume in close juxtaposition.

I am happy to report that my students and I found these volumes to be admirable companion texts for the pedagogy course. We found few examples of redundancy, and ample coverage of different topics with a variety of approaches in each volume. Natvig's book was widely and favorably reviewed when it was published, so, while considering some general comparative features, I will focus my comments here on Davis's new addition to the literature.

As befitting a pioneering volume on the subject, Natvig's design for her volume included a number of essays that explored—sometimes for the first time—a number of approaches to teaching music history. Many of these approaches were diverse and innovative, and a few were even radically experimental. The contributors, several of them first-time authors in the field of pedagogy, were all eager to share their insights and experiences in the classroom.

Davis's volume, by contrast, is designed to lead a potential novice in the undergraduate history classroom gently through all of the manifold and complex teaching challenges in the discipline, from course design to course delivery and professional development as a teacher. The reason for the presumed shift of conceptual organization lies, I suspect, in a shift of demographics: in the population of the students being taught, increasingly a mixture of students with diverse professional aspirations—performance, music education, or music composition; in classrooms intended for increasingly large class sizes; and, most important, in the background and training of the instructors. With ever-greater frequency, music appreciation and even music history surveys for majors are being assigned to instructors with performance degrees rather than those with music history credentials. The former, well-prepared to teach studio or classroom courses in their own disciplines, are likely to discover, to their extreme discomfiture, that their first professional teaching positions will include the teaching of history courses as well as the more familiar applied studio courses. Lacking a rigorous training in the discipline, such students are an eager and grateful audience for a book like Davis's. And, to be sure, that audience will also include graduate students and the recent recipients of doctorates in musicology, preparing for their first teaching positions, along with the many more experienced history teachers who are also coming to terms with changing demographics in the music classroom.

Chapters in Davis's volume include coverage of course design and textbook choice; the creative use of classroom time; assignments that reinforce classroom lectures; the use of technology; teaching the "non-major" course; and how to manage the demands of the first year of a teaching position. Space does not permit a detailed discussion of each chapter, but I will focus on a few chapters that

seemed particularly useful to my pedagogy class and to me. Susan McClary's customarily provocative and thoughtful Foreword, "The Master Narrative and Me," asks us to consider if the history survey taught in most music programs is relevant to today's students. If not, why teach it? As detailed in previous volumes of this journal, many instructors have opted not to teach the time-honored survey of Western art music, preferring a thematic exploration of a limited selection of repertoire. I, however, was relieved to read McClary's endorsement of the survey, a "master narrative" that changes with the perspective of the "narrator," i.e., the individual instructor. She warns, however, that this narrative must *not* be mere "fact-hoarding," but must be always mindful of the issues that lurk behind the production of musical repertoire of any period: the economics of music-making; society's requirements of cultural products; the impact of technologies across time; and matters of class, race, gender and sexuality. It is good to read an argument for the enrichment, but not the jettisoning, of the historically based survey.

Two early chapters resonated particularly with my students and me: William Everett's "Creating a Music History Course" and Mary Natvig's "Classroom Activities." Everett takes the instructor through every demanding facet of course planning from the basics of how students learn (using not only the oft-cited Bloom's taxonomy but several recent updates and re-considerations of Bloom's seminal work) to the construction of a course syllabus that allows for flexibility and creativity within its broad topical planning. The choice of a textbook from the plethora available is crucial, of course, and Everett provides solid practical suggestions for how to make the choice.

Natvig generously shares the insights gained from a career-long engagement in the subject of music history pedagogy. Accepting the inevitability of a very large classroom situation for the music history survey, as is typical in large music programs today, she provides an array of exciting ideas designed to motivate and captivate music students. Each of her "12 suggestions" for fostering active learning in the classroom was classroom-tested (by my students and me), and thus I can testify to their creativity and to their success in engaging our students. (Indeed, number 12, "providing snacks," has always been a stalwart for me.)

There is surprisingly little overlap among the contributors to the earlier and the present volume, but a welcome exception is the chapter by Marjorie Roth, "Music as a Liberal Art: Teaching Music to Non-Majors." Her essays in both the Natvig and Davis books reflect her deep interest in the ancient concept of *musica mundana* ("Music of the Spheres"); in Davis's book she also brings that study into the arena of the "appreciation" course. Dealing with a course frequently passed along to teaching assistants, Roth here demonstrates the ways it can be made to speak to the interests and training of humanities students who are not aiming for professional careers in music. Although she makes a persuasive case

for the value and rewards of teaching a course designed for a small and select audience, it might also be useful to have the perspective of instructors assigned to the more massive appreciation course typical of large universities.

And speaking of these, I turn finally to José Bowen's all-important chapter on "Technology." As one who only last fall discovered with some dismay that her music history classroom had over the previous summer become entirely "digital," I was grateful to be reminded of the many tools now available to instructors and to their students. This is a chapter that will need to be continuously updated, as newer technologies replace those that now seem state-of-the-art. I suspect an entire chapter on the construction and delivery of on-line courses will be a useful inclusion in subsequent editions of the book, as will discussion of the harnessing and using social media.

In sum, Davis's treatment is the book we all wished we'd had when we began our teaching careers: a book constructed on the premise that "teachers are passionate about their subjects and will spend much of their professional lives refining and reexamining the content they teach . . ." (p. xxii). As such, it will always have an eager and interested audience. Along with Natvig's *Teaching Music History*, it is a must for the library of every music history teacher, and every instructor of those who will teach music history in the future.