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It is a great pleasure to invite you to explore the richness of content within the latest version of the Hellenic Journal of Music, Education, and Culture.

The opening article by Laia Viladot, Markus Cslovjecssek draws on the authors' work within the team-based EU Comenius Project 'European Music Portfolio: A Creative Way into Languages' (EMP-L). The project was completed in 2012 and has been subsequently extended into an EC-funded music and mathematics programme (EMP-M) that is ongoing. The goal of the EMP-L project was to integrate musical activities within foreign language education to explore how teaching and learning in these two disciplinary areas could be mutually supporting. The European team's research was designed to lead to a range of professional development courses for teachers. The article reports on the course enactment in different countries and the reactions of the teacher participants and is a positive addition to our understanding of the challenges and potential successes involved in extending professional development across subject domains. Arguably, neuroscience would suggest that the brain is holistic in design rather than compartmentalised into school 'subject' areas and so any pedagogical innovation which seeks to join up learners' experiences as reported is to be welcomed.

The second article is by Panagiota Papageorgiou and Konstantina Koutrouba and explores an ongoing and central issue in music education: Is it possible to draw on the musics of other peoples in a way that is faithful to their roots whilst extending children's understanding and musical expertise as non-native listeners? The authors review key sources to address the nature of contested concepts in multicultural music teaching, such as how teachers might make sense of 'world music' in primary school settings, and report on a recent (2013) research-based survey of the views of Greek School Advisors. Central foci included whether the socio-cultural contexts for music should be studied alongside the musical features, at what age such teaching might begin, whether it was important for children to first learn their 'own' music, and the range and diversity of other musics that might be included in the curriculum. The article raises highly topical issues, not least in a world in which diversity and difference are used by some within contemporary society to signal negative perceptions of 'otherness' and presents findings which touch on the lives of many teachers and researchers globally.

The third article is by Rina Altaras and seeks to situate what is now a well-known piece of music, Debussy's *La Mer*, in its original socio-historical-cultural context in order to explore and

understand why it was seen as controversial when first performed in the early 1900s. The article presents a fascinating insight into the prevailing musical expectations of the time, explored through the lens of a leading music critic writing in a contemporary weekly music magazine, *Le Ménestrel*. It is also a timely reminder of the nature and role of popular music criticism in the perception of musical value.

The final article (in Greek) by Aggeliki Kordellou also has a musicological focus and is an insightful examination of the relationships between different forms of music and language in the works of the Greek composer Giorgos Koumendakis (b. 1959). Koumendakis's compositions (instrumental, vocal, works for the theatre and operas) refer in various ways to – mostly Greek- works of literature or poetry from antiquity to the twentieth century. The author examines in sufficient depths all possible categories of music's relation to text in these works and reaches substantial conclusions as to how a continuous dialogue between past and present is succeeded; moreover, she demonstrates with clarity the main characteristics of the composer's work: variety, plasticity, attendance to the detail, innovation and a wide range of aesthetic choices and directions.

The final contribution in this issue is a report by Jane Harrison on a 2014 conference in honour of the music scholar, Simon Frith, upon his retirement from academia. The conference was titled *Studying Music* and it was held in April 9-12, 2014, at the University of Edinburgh, College of Art.

