Curriculum Challenges and Dilemmas for Leadership of Catholic Schools

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Time to scan the horizon!
Challenges and Dilemmas framework

**Macro-level issues**
- Neo-liberal agenda issues
- Catholic values

Meso-level issues
- National and school agendas
- Curriculum change, integration

Micro-level issues
- Teacher professionalism
- Teachers’ beliefs and values
Neo-liberalism

- The state’s role in education is legitimated by economic concerns.
- Education as the key to economic growth ... yet the evidence to support this belief is contested (Wolf, 2002).
- Emphasis on individual rights to property ownership, legal protection, market freedom, enterprise and competition.
- Whereas the welfare state is the product of social democracy and embodies the struggle for citizenship rights within an environment of collective responsibility and national identity.
- Hyper-globalists regard economic globalization as the end of the welfare state and social democracy.
Dissemination

- Through social and political networks e.g. policy borrowing, policy entrepreneurs;
- National policy as a process of bricolage
- Sponsorship and enforcement by multilateral agencies e.g. World Bank, European Monetary Union etc.
- Emphasis on ‘reform’ rather than deep change
- Decoupling of education from direct state control giving appearance of greater autonomy
- Stephen Ball talks about the simplicity of the formula... ‘the market solution (magic of the market) displays the logic of witchcraft’!
- Role of the media e.g. New York Times: ‘The Trouble with Testing Mania’ (July 13, 2013)
- Globalisation, neo-Fordism as the route to ‘national salvation’
Growth of Globalisation

- At the beginning of the twentieth century there were 37 intergovernmental organizations (IGOs); by its close this had risen to almost 300 ... e.g. the WTO.
- In 1909 there were 371 officially recognized International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs, e.g. International Chamber of Commerce, International Trades Unions, the Rainforest Foundation); by 2000 there were in the region of 25,000.
- This has created the infrastructure of a global polity and new arenas through which globalization itself is promoted, contested or regulated.
Neo-liberalism and education

- **KEY TENSION:** education as a public good (including but not confined to national economic interests) vs. Education as a competitive private good (decoupled from direct state control)!
- Neo-liberalism calls into question the very aims and purposes of public education.
- Market approach sees education as a commodity or product and schools as being rather like small business firms.
- Education for producing the new global citizen and a billion dollar export industry (part of economic globalisation).
- Teachers, as employees of the state, are positioned as productive workers within this new global service industry.
Five sets of underpinning influences

• The **market** rules! ‘McWorld... observes no higher moral order beyond itself’ (Hargreaves, 2003), Sennett’s notion of the ‘corrosion of character’.

• Combination of **devolution, targets and incentives** based on NL economic theory and industrial (Mitsubishi) practices

• **Dependence on performativity** indicators for accountability

• **New managerialism** (Taylorism) – focus on ‘quality’, corporate culture, appraisal systems, output comparisons e.g. Education at a Glance

• Public choice theory

• So where are Australia and Catholic Education at??
Five elements of the ‘new orthodoxy for schooling’

• Improving national economics by tightening the connection between schooling, employment, productivity and trade
• Focus on enhancing outcomes in employment-related skills and competences
• Attaining more direct control over curriculum content and assessment
• Reducing the costs of education to government
• Increasing community input to education by more direct involvement in school decision making and pressure of market choice...
Globalisation of Education (Dale, 2000)

- The structure of school curricula is “closely linked to the rise of standardized models of society and to the increasing dominance of standardized models of education”.
- The school curriculum is a ritual enactment of worldwide educational norms and conventions rather than instrumental choice of individual societies to meet various local requirements.
- The definition of legitimate knowledge to be taught in schools, and the selection and hierarchical organization of such bodies of knowledge, are thus by and large “externally” prescribed.
- This discourse is highly standardized and universalistic in character.
Measuring success at Higher Education

- University rankings: which world university rankings should we trust?
- Different university world rankings showing wildly variable results for UK universities
- Times Higher Education tables
- QS World University
- Shanghai Rankings.
- Although nominally answering the same question, they don’t share a methodology, a data set or indeed a winner.
Shanghai Jiao Tong (China) World Ranking of Universities (ARWU)

- Only published articles are included, all books are excluded.
- Publications in literature, the arts and humanities are excluded
- 10% for Nobel laureates among graduates (chemistry, physics, medicine, economics and Fields Medals in maths) 5 subjects only
- 20% for Nobel laureates awarded to current staff in above 5 areas
- 20% for Articles in two science-related journals, Science and Nature
- 20% for listing on the Highly Cited Index (HCI*) (all 21 subject areas bar one, and part of another, are in science or technology).
- 20% for Articles in Science Citation Index (expanded) and Social Science Citation Index (many prestigious journals in the social sciences are not listed. All arts/humanities are excluded)
- 10% for scores on the above divided by full-time staff members

*The basis on which the HCI index works within the social sciences and education fields is particularly difficult to establish.
Some dilemmas

- Quality vs [e]quality (where ‘equity’ is seen as a residual concern of government in marketised systems)
- Education as a private commodity vs public good...
- ‘Buying’ vs ‘getting’ an education?
- Having an education vs being educated... (Marcel)
- Channel One in the US
Channel One, a for-profit network now being broadcast into schools enrolling more than 40% of all middle and secondary school students in the nation. Schools are offered a free dish, two VCR’s and television monitors for each of their classrooms by a private media corporation.
In return all participating schools must sign a three- to five-year contract guaranteeing that their students will watch Channel One every day...only Channel One can be received but *mandatory advertisements* for major fast food, athletic wear and other corporations are broadcast along with the news which students – by contract – must watch (see Apple, *Educating the “right” way*, 2001).
An alternative approach based on Gospel values?
Curriculum and Social Justice

• Gerald Grace’s (2013) counter-cultural approach in the interests of the common good


The challenge for Catholic schools and colleges is that the addition of Business and Finance subjects to the curriculum may represent an entirely secular and utilitarian cultural implant... unless these subjects are brought into an organic relation with the religious, moral and social teachings of the Church.

The processes of globalisation ... open up the unprecedented possibility of large-scale distribution of wealth on a world-wide scale; if badly directed however, they can lead to an increase in poverty and inequality (Caritas in Veritate, 42, 50).

‘Today the material resources available for rescuing peoples from poverty are potentially greater than ever before, but they have ended up largely in the hands of people from developed countries who have benefited more from the liberalisation that has occurred in the mobility of capital and labour’ (42, 51).
Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (1,718) (Hughes, 2011)

• ‘Australian Christians are divided on most economic issues in similar ways to the wider society’ (p 8)
• 50% of Church attenders favour increasing social spending as against 46% of overall population
• 21% favour reducing taxes as against 26% overall
• Nearly 1/3 of Catholic attenders for reduced taxes
• ‘The consistent alignment of church attenders with other sectors of the population suggests that their opinions are often shaped largely by culture’ (12)
• Even many active Catholics not aware of Catholic social teaching
Elements of a philosophy of education
(Murray, 1991)

• **Wholeness**: educate the whole person + ‘Education should lead to the integration of what is learned, **breaking down traditional subject demarcations**, overcoming fragmentation and encouraging dialogue between disciplines’.

• **Truth**: Education should recognise that there are no value-free systems and should seek to **express openly the values which underpin the work of the school**

• **Justice**: Education should awaken the minds of students to the injustices that exist in social, economic, cultural, racial and religious matters.

• **Respect**

• **Freedom**
Need for alternative indicators

• Traditional indicators of economic progress are inadequate
• While an economy can be doing “very well”, the people there may not “feel” very well.
• Social Progress Index might include:
  • Social relationships experienced by the child in the family, school and among peers
  • The quality of the child’s learning experience
  • Emotional and spiritual well-being.
• Role of Conference of Religious in Ireland in formulating and monitoring social progress policy
Neo-liberal agenda and curriculum challenges
Three possible forces in control of curriculum

• Political/economic forces – neo-liberals, focus on economic needs of society

• Sociologists – focus on power elites, knowledge as a social construct

• Philosophical/ideological – focus underlying belief and thought systems
Curriculum ideologies and paradigms

• *Phronesis* vs *Techne*

• *Phronesis* aims to achieve the self-actualisation of each individual through *praxis* which enables ‘students to reflect on the conduct, character and consequences of their thinking, their actions and their ways of relating to others’ (Kemmis) e.g. Catholic education locates the educational experience in the context of Gospel values

• *Techne* sees curriculum in terms of an apolitical and value-free document
The knowledge-constitutive interests of Habermas

- Technical
- Practical
- Emancipatory or critical
- See *Becoming Critical*, Carr and Kemmis
Technical paradigm or ‘interest’

- Focus on *control* of the learning environment.
- Knowledge is objective and abstract, *value free* and comes neatly *packaged into subjects*
- **Instrumentalist**, focusing on inputs, outputs, cost efficiency and Performance Indicators
- It *ignores context*, seeing curriculum as a *product* rather than a process
- It sees curriculum construction as *apolitical or neutral*, apart from or above competing values
- It encourages fragmentation and sectoral interest
Practical paradigm or ‘interest’

- Primarily concerned with the *meaning* of the educational activity to the students and other players
- The ‘official meaning’ is determined by those in power and in control of resources
- The meaning is very different from the classroom perspective e.g. as uncovered by teacher as researcher doing action research.
- In the face of top-down reform opportunities for action research are limited.
Emancipatory paradigm or ‘interest’

- The student is ‘let in’ on the process of knowledge construction (as in the Process model)
- Asks if curriculum practices operate to emancipate the learner through the process of learning e.g. Paolo Freire’s Base Education Communities
- Student-teacher relationship involves a dialogue aimed at the development of critical consciousness
- Questions previously ‘taken for granted assumptions’ e.g. about school, learning etc.
- Who is doing what to whom and why are they doing it?
- Recognition of importance of context (Cornbleth, Grundy) e.g. Catholic education in Australia vs Ireland.
So what’s this schooling all about anyway?

Harold Macmillan (British PM) ‘Nothing you learn in the course of your studies will be of the slightest possible use to you in after life – save only this – that, if you work hard and diligently you should be able to detect when a man is talking rot, and that, in my view, is the main, if not the sole purpose of education’ (Kenny, 1997, 20)
So what’s the dominant paradigm?
Challenges for Catholic education?
Catholic education and the values of the neo-liberal agenda?

Gerald Grace feels that the secular opponents wouldn’t trust us, that they would suspect ulterior motives... is this true in Australia?
Challenges and Dilemmas framework

Macro-level issues
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- Catholic values

**Meso-level issues**
- National and school agendas
- Curriculum change, integration etc.

Micro-level issues
- Teacher professionalism
- Teachers’ beliefs and values
Curriculum change

• Fullan (1991) draws a useful distinction between the teacher’s subjective perceptions from the ‘classroom press’ and objective change

• For ‘deep change’ there must be change at the three levels of
  • Content
  • Pedagogical practice
  • beliefs and values e.g. about how learning happens; ‘good teaching’, ‘a good school’…. 
Centrality of beliefs and values

Critical pedagogy vs Rote learning
An inspector entered a school room, asked the teacher what she had been giving her class, took up a book and asked the following question:

"If you were to dig a hole thousands and thousands of feet deep, would it be cooler near the bottom or near the top, and why?"

Not a child answered. Finally the teacher said, "I'm sure they know the answer but I don't think you put the question in the right way."

So taking the book she asked, "In what state is the centre of the earth?"

Immediately came the reply from the whole class in chorus: "The centre of the earth is in a state of igneous fusion" (Tyler, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction, 1949)
Critical Pedagogy

- Challenges previously taken for granted assumptions (conscientisation)
- Recognises students as active makers of meaning with implications for assessment
- It illuminates the relationship among knowledge, authority, and power (Giroux, 1994)
- Critical media literacy is empowering, enabling students to become critical producers of meanings and texts, able to resist manipulation and domination (Kellner, 2000)
- The tyranny of subjects….
Tyranny of subjects
THESE GUYS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING!!
A SPECIALIST, I NEED TO SEE A SPECIALIST!!

THE ORIGINAL HMO HORROR STORY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<td>History</td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Geography</td>
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<td>Irish</td>
<td>CSPE</td>
<td>SPHE</td>
<td>Maths</td>
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<td>10:20</td>
<td>BRE</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:40</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>French</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:40</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
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<td>1:30</td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:10</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:50</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What have all of these got in common??
Different approaches to integration (Beane, 1997)
Some [Catholic] integrationists

- … RE alone does not make the Catholic school... The Catholic school seeks to integrate the curriculum, to unify faith and culture, and to bring together the different pieces of the school programme into a higher synthesis that influences the social and spiritual formation of pupils (Lane, 1991)
- Education should address the whole person, the integral development of the person: aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual (Murray, 1991)
- Education should lead to the integration of what is learned, breaking down traditional subject demarcations, overcoming fragmentation and encouraging dialogue between disciplines (Murray, 1991).
- Work in the arts cultivates the modes of thinking and feeling.. Such forms of thought integrate feeling and thinking in ways that make them inseparable (Eisner, 2002)
Characteristics of successful PISA systems and Catholic Education

- Low levels of student differentiation (streaming) between and within schools#
- Low levels of competition between schools#
- School disciplinary climate*
- Positive teacher-student relations*
- High levels of school autonomy in relation to curriculum and assessment#
- Provision for early childhood education#.
Differentiation

• **All students**, regardless of socio-economic background have similar opportunities to learn.

• Rigid streaming associated with below average scores.

• Scores were above average when levels of *between-school competition and socio-economic inequality* were low.

• Weaker correlation between family income and educational outcomes in systems with a genuine commitment to equity (Pearson, *The Learning Curve*).
Competition Between Schools and Student Achievement in Australia

- Competition for enrolments between schools is widespread in Australia, more so than in any other OECD country.
- 90% of Australian students are enrolled in schools where principals report that they face competition from two or more schools and 96% in schools facing competition from at least one other school.
- Internationally: the proportion of schools competing with other schools for student enrolment is unrelated to overall student performance regardless of socio-economic background.
- Australia: No statistically significant relationship between school competition and performance when student background is not taken into account.
However....

- **Taking student background** into account, the average student performance in Australia is 24 points lower in reading (6 months) where schools compete for enrolments.

- Contrary to neo-liberal theories, choice and competition do not improve overall school results, because socio-economically disadvantaged parents have more limited choices of schools because of financial constraints.

- And school choice and school competition are related to greater levels of segregation in the school system and, consequently, lower levels of equity.
Secrets of Finnish education

- Same comprehensive basic school for all
- Teacher **autonomy, qualifications and status**
- Education as a **public service** to all where teachers enjoy professional freedom and schools are encouraged to experiment
- Systematic preparation of principals
- Teachers work in learning communities
- **Flexible accountability** – focus is on deep learning rather than testing
- Prevailing culture of **trust**
Four strategic principles of Finnish education (Sahlberg, 2010, 56)

• Guaranteeing equal opportunities to good public education
• Strengthening professionalism of and trust in teachers
• Enriched information about the process and performance of teaching and schooling
• Facilitating network-based school improvement e.g. professional learning communities
Moral purpose of teaching as an underlying belief/value

- South Korea and Finland, the two top ranking PISA 2009 countries, share the fundamental cultural belief that learning has a moral purpose because it contributes to the public good.
So what meso-level beliefs, values and practices do we need to interrogate? Why?
Challenges and Dilemmas framework

**Micro-level issues**
- Teacher professionalism
- Teachers’ beliefs and values

**Meso-level issues**
- National and school agendas
- Curriculum change, integration etc.

**Macro-level issues**
- Neo-liberal agenda issues
- Catholic values
Beliefs about teaching and learning  
(Thomas Sergiovanni, 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life-Liberating Beliefs</th>
<th>Life-Limiting Beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong> students are capable of high attainment, not just the fastest and most competent</td>
<td><strong>Only the bright few can achieve at a high level</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Good students **work together**, solicit help from each other  

**Competition** is necessary to bring out the best in our students
Managerialism and Accountability

- Within the discourse of managerialism, New Public Management, quality has been linked to accountability through the process of quality assurance.
- Preoccupation with performativity (i.e. with what is produced, observed, measured) and has suffered a general loss of democratic vision.
- Managerialist culture competes with the traditional democratic culture.
- Place for ‘vocation’???
Teachers’ work in a managerialist culture
What is the meaning of professionalism?
Changing nature of teachers’ work

• By fostering a culture of managerialism and performativity, neo-liberalism has profoundly changed the nature of teachers’ work.

• Smyth (2001) argues that this culture has created for teachers the illusion of more collaborative and participative ways of working while in reality imposing increased levels of surveillance and a pervasive intensification and deskilling of their work.
Case of New Zealand (Codd, 2005)

- Teachers as skilled technicians who are subject to contractual rather than professional accountability.
- Performativity replaces the critical reflection and professional judgement of the autonomous professional.
- Teacher as ‘managed professional’ is expected to have specified competencies, be extrinsically motivated (contract) and produce what the performance indicators can measure.
- This produces a culture (Codd, 1999) in which trust is no longer the foundation of professional ethics.
- The restoration of a culture of trust in education requires a professional form of accountability which enhances the professionalism of teachers e.g. Finland.
Curriculum and teacher autonomy

• The introduction of a centralised and prescriptive National Curriculum appears to have weakened [teachers’] professional confidence, lowered morale and left them uncertain of their ability to cope and their right to take major curriculum decisions…increased state control of curriculum undermines teacher professionalism (Helsby and Saunders, 1993)

• And then there’s the impact of international tests and league tables… case of PISA
PISA: Affording teachers professional autonomy and status

• Teachers’ salaries prioritised over reductions in class size in successful systems

• High levels of teacher autonomy in relation to curriculum and assessment

• Teachers in high performing systems are afforded similar status to other respected professions and benefit from relevant, ongoing professional development (Pearson).
Challenges

• Macro: the values of the neo-liberal agenda
• Meso: curriculum policy and practice
• Micro: teachers’ professional lives
So where does this all leave us?
Abundance of theoretical frameworks
# Components of Catholic School Identity (Convey, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion programme</td>
<td>Faith Community Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Curriculum</td>
<td>Rituals and Symbols</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most popular characteristics of U.S. Catholic schools (N = 3,398)

- Strong faith community
- RE teacher is Catholic
- Principal is Catholic
- School day begins with a prayer
- Religion course teaches Catholic doctrine
Some interesting differences

- Administrators saw the schools’ culture and faith community as a considerably more important indicator of a school’s Catholic identity than the presence of rituals and symbols.
- In particular they saw the Integration of Catholic teaching into the curriculum as far more important than the presence of rituals and symbols.
- Integration of Catholic teaching into the curriculum showed the most variation; higher ratings from administrators and experienced teachers than from other teachers.
- All teachers but particularly those in middle and high school grades could benefit from professional development in this area.
## The Leuven school types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive belief styles</th>
<th>Melbourne Scale (Theological typology)</th>
<th>Victoria Scale (pedagogical typology)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literal</td>
<td>Confessional School</td>
<td>Monologue school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Critique</td>
<td>Values Education in a Christian Perspective</td>
<td>Colourful school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relativity</td>
<td>Institutional Secularisation</td>
<td>Colourless school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-critical belief</td>
<td>Recontextualisation of Catholic School Identity (in a pluralist perspective)</td>
<td>Dialogue school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional Reconfessionalisation</td>
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</table>
Curriculum, faith and reason

• **Benedict XVI** on Reason and Faith in the Public Realm. June 29, 2009

• Truth, Faith and Reason: **Pope Benedict XVI** Reminds the World that it is Rational to Believe. University of Regensburg

• Michael Drumm of Catholic Education Partnership (Ireland) – ‘what matters most of all into the future is dialogue between faith and reason’

• ‘if Catholic education is the mean anything it has to allow space for people to actually have a dialogue in their own minds and hearts on faith and reason in curricula and other senses’
Murray’s principles and curriculum

**Formal curriculum**
- Wholeness
- Justice
- Truth

**Informal curriculum**
- Respect

- Freedom
The Future of Schooling (OECD, 2001)?
Scenarios for the Future of Schooling: OECD options

• Scenarios 1 & 2: The status quo
  1. ‘Robust Bureaucratic School Systems’
  2. ‘Extending the Market Model’

• Scenarios 3 & 4: Re-schooling
  3. Schools as core social centres
  4. Schools as focused learning organisations

• Scenarios 5 & 6: ‘De-schooling’
  5. Learning Networks and the Network Society’
  6. ‘Teacher exodus - the meltdown scenario’
Scenario 3: Schools as core social centres

- High levels of **public trust and funding**
- Schools as high-status institutions provide a bulwark against fragmentation of society, especially in poor areas
- Schools lay the foundations of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for lifelong learning
- Schools as **centres of community and social capital formation**
- Greater diversity of approaches may threaten equality
- **Involves a re-definition of the purpose, practice and professionalism of teachers.**
Scenario 4: Schools as focused learning organisations

- High levels of **public trust** and **funding**
- Schools and teachers collaborate widely in **learning organisations**
- Strong emphasis on quality **and** equality
- Innovative forms of assessment, skills recognition, R&D, teaching and learning
- Will face resistance from status quo including teachers, media and politicians.
- **Involves a re-definition of the purpose, practice and teacher professionalism.**
Quo Vademus? Some options

• Status quo…

• Abandon Catholic schools and have parishes take on their catechetical roles

• Define Catholic education in a way that will require stronger commitment and painful choices from parents…. no longer possible to have Catholic schools offering both ‘the right peers and the right points’! → fewer Catholic schools but greater integrity

• Adopt an overtly political approach that challenges the dominance of technicism and neo-liberalism and build alliances with like-minded individuals and groups.
Dilemma of control….

Is energy well spent in fighting to retain control in management terms [when] having this control leaves the Church so powerless to do what, in terms of its own professed policy, it wants to do?’ (Dunne, 2006, 212)
Crisis or opportunity?

‘Great leaders are bred from great causes, but leaders, at their best, also breed great causes. Sadly, for want of a cause, we too often create a crisis, which is not the same thing at all’ (Handy, 1996, 9)

How much music can you still make with what you have left?