

Music Education Philosophy From Practical to Praxial

by

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I have to thank my parents and my brothers Jamie and Luke for being so supportive of me in all of my endeavors. Without their help I wouldn't have ever made it here.

## PREFACE

I have been interested in both education and music for quite a long time now. This thesis has been a wonderful opportunity to explore these interests. Before I honed what it was that I would be writing about, I examined my personal relationship with music education. Looking into my past experiences with music in the classroom helped me understand what curiosities I have about this field. My work has been largely inspired by the thoughts of several of the music educators from whom I have had the pleasure of learning. These teachers who have been most formative in my musical understanding of the world have been those who were able to shake my understanding of creative possibilities. In his *Tri-Axium Writings*, Anthony Braxton wrote that the “whole of world creativity has been profoundly misdocumented” due to the (mis)use of western inquiring terms.<sup>1</sup> He is not alone in his believing that something about the broad practice of music education has been unable to uncover or produce truths about creativity. Braxton calls for a restructuring of the music education in universities and colleges because they supply a viewpoint that is “difficult to shake off.”<sup>2</sup> It seems to me that he could be speaking to general music education, which happens much earlier and much more universally.

It seems that for many people today, for whatever reason, the music they interact with, and the thoughts and emotions that they bring to these interactions, have little to do with whatever they may have learned in school about music. I would say that this is largely true for me as well – despite the fact that I spent quite a lot of my free time from the age of eleven on listening to, learning, performing,

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Delano Braxton, *Tri-Axium Writings*, 1st ed., vol. 3 (Synthesis Music, 1985), iii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:194.

and writing music. To me, it doesn't seem to be the issue that educators are picking the wrong sort of music, and that educators should be selecting different music. This argument has been made throughout the history of music education<sup>3</sup> - be it that music should be more readily enjoyable to students, of higher aesthetic quality, more globally inclusive, or better suited to teaching rudiments. Considering this, it seems that the question of including "better music" needs to be reframed. Paul Woodford invoked John Dewey to assert that "better music" shouldn't be the only concern, but really more "thoughtful valuation" – more rigorous music criticism in the classroom.<sup>4</sup> In music classrooms that take a multicultural approach, Woodford writes, the critique associated with narrow, Eurocentric aesthetic education has been left behind, leaving no means for students to develop skills in determining value.<sup>5</sup> This critique surely resounds with anyone who experienced music classes that might have fulfilled their multicultural approach by teaching students to sing a Hungarian melody, then a Chinese folk song, a Native American tune, and so on. Such an approach does not do well to aid in a students' understanding of any of these musical cultures or encourage cross-cultural basis for evaluation and understanding.

Study on what would make a more critical, culturally valuable approach to multicultural music education would be of great use. What also must not go without saying is that now more than ever in American history, students have access to (or perhaps more accurately are subject to) a massive amount of music of different varieties. All of these, whether critically valuable or not, are opportunities for

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<sup>3</sup> Allen P. Britton, "Music Education: An American Specialty," *Music Educators Journal* 48, no. 6 (July 1962): 28.

<sup>4</sup> Paul G. Woodford, *Democracy and Music Education* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 18.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

Deweyan *experiential* learning. The critical approach that Woodford suggests may not be immediately centered on enjoyment in the way that many early followers of Dewey may have advocated for, but it would make music education more immediately useful in understanding the world outside of the classroom. I am not advocating for music educators to lower the standards of critique to equate TV theme songs and pop punk (or whatever they find to be “low” music) to Handel and Haydn (or, likewise, whatever they consider to be fine music), but rather provide a method of approaching these pieces of culture in a meaningful way.

I am reminded something that jazz pianist Vijay Iyer said during a question and answer session at Wesleyan University in 2014. It something to the effect of, “make sure you study the basics, but don’t let anyone tell you what the basics are for you.” Iyer, to my understanding, was making a point on finding an artistic background that made sense to you in your pursuit of creativity, no matter how it had been historicized. Of course, he was making this point to university music students and faculty who were interested in hearing a genre transcending musician speak, not young general music students and teachers. But the sentiment still holds. Music should be taught in a way that is not only relevant to its own cultural context, but also responsive to the student’s cultural understanding. In this way, Dewey’s concepts of child-centric education come to light in a new way, for every child comes to the classroom with some musical experience or understanding, which must not be ignored or discounted in the process of building a larger understanding. The teacher can act as the student’s guide in this process, but in being mindful of student experience, can better know how to present musical concepts and forge connections between materials.

An age-old goal of music educators has been that of promoting some sort of feeling of community through their work. This goes back to Hans Georg Nageli, who believed singing would promote social unity, as well as religious and political values.<sup>6</sup> Lowell Mason brought to the United States the ideas that all children could be taught to sing and that music would bestow morals on the public.<sup>7</sup> The founders of the Music Supervisors National Committee made it a goal to provide a national musical culture, into which immigrants could be assimilated.<sup>8</sup> More recently, educators have sought to promote a cultural identity not through assimilation, but through the celebration of many different cultures. Such attempts to retool aesthetic education where it “couldn’t account for the pluralistic nature of society”<sup>9</sup> led to the multicultural approaches to teaching that are just as concerning in their completely subjective presentation of music as the culturally specific philosophies that came before them. Music educators today can still be concerned with the musical culture they are shaping – but they should not believe they are the only sculptors. The identity they nurture should come first from their students. Likewise, it should not forego close critical thinking for the sake of blanket cultural acceptance.<sup>10</sup> However, it should be mindful to the historic powers that have caused cultures to be related to each other in the way that they are. In a recent conversation with percussionist and music scholar Tyshawn Sorey on music at Wesleyan University, Sorey asked a question about the school’s world music performance ensembles. He was wondering

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<sup>6</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education* (New York, NY: Schirmer Books, 1992), 115.

<sup>7</sup> A. Theodore Tellstrom, *Music in American Education Past and Present* (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), 42.

<sup>8</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 254.

<sup>9</sup> Marie McCarthy and J. Scott Goble, “Music Education Philosophy: Changing Times,” *Music Educators Journal* 89, no. 1 (September 2002): 22.

<sup>10</sup> Paul G. Woodford, *Democracy and Music Education*.

if and how the potential for music making across the various courses of performance study, from West African drumming to Javanese Gamelan was realized among the student body. How did the serious study of these different forms influence students' musical practices outside of strict tradition? This question highlights a possibility of a hopeful future, in Woodford's words, "towards some sort of hybridization of musical values."<sup>11</sup>

In this paper, I will explore the history of philosophical justifications behind including music in the United States public school curriculum. Over the past two hundred years, music educators, superintendents, legislators, and other interested parties have held a wide variety of beliefs about the purpose of music education and the value of providing it to all students. While music programs in schools across the country widely vary in course offerings, funding, and methods, philosophy is a perspective from which we can at least begin to understand the goals that educators might aspire to and the means they might use to achieve them. Studying the beliefs that music educators held about the value of music historically also helps us understand the relationship between our country's culture and education system.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 21.



## CHAPTER ONE

### EARLY PUBLIC SCHOOL MUSIC AND PRACTICALITY

The purpose of this chapter will be to establish the philosophies surrounding music and education that gave rise to the inclusion of music in the general curriculum in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To do this, I will start with information about the musical climate of the United States before music became a part of the school curriculum, with particular attention given to music education. I will then discuss the philosophical arguments that were used to justify music's place in schools and to shape what music curriculums would contain.

The school of thought that this chapter discusses has been labeled by many historians and philosophers of music education as *Utilitarian*. I associate this term with Michael L. Mark, who has written extensively on the history of music education. His work has been important to my research for this paper, and I will reference and cite his books often. However, I would like to distance myself from the use of the term utilitarian to describe this period of music philosophy. This is because the term was used not by educators of the time, but by later music educators and proponents of aesthetic education who wished to distance themselves from previous forms of arts education justification.<sup>12</sup> Thus referring to education as being “utilitarian” tends to connote negative connotations.

Outside of music education, “Utilitarian philosophy” is associated with John Stuart Mill's utilitarian ethical theory, which has little to do with the word's use in

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<sup>12</sup> Jeremy Kopkas, “Is the Casting of Utilitarian as Discordant with Arts Education Philosophy Justified?,” *Journal of Thought* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 53.

music education.<sup>13</sup> Instead, I will use the term *practical* for this discussion, as suggested by Jeremy Kopkas as a more accurate descriptor for this period of music education philosophy. Practical philosophy as it applies to music education has to do with emphasizing practical matters and social usefulness.<sup>14</sup> With this general definition, I will show how the early inclusion of music in public schools was justified with practical philosophy.

Since the 1720's, singing schools existed alongside other night classes in subjects like cooking, sewing, and foreign language that were offered in communities all over the country.<sup>15</sup> At the time, there were few ways for Americans to participate in or even hear music. Singing schools predate the first recorded concerts in the United States.<sup>16</sup> Before the singing school, there was singing as a part of church services, but the few melodies that were known were sung poorly. Alice Morse Earle wrote "Of all the dismal accompaniments of public worship in the early days of New England the music was the most hopelessly forlorn,— not only from the confused versifications of the Psalms which were used, but from the mournful monotony of the few known tunes and the horrible manner in which they were sung."<sup>17</sup>

Singing teachers would often travel from town to town and offer group lessons for a fee. Many of these teachers were also the finest composers of the time — Daniel Read, William Billings, etc. - the "Yankee Tunesmiths," often considered the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>15</sup> Michael L. Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Schirmer Books, 1986), 5.

<sup>16</sup> Edward Bailey Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States* (Philadelphia, PA: Oliver Ditson Company, 1937), 8.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 4.

first school of American composers.<sup>18</sup> Before these composer-educators came to prominence, there was little in the way of access to ‘formal’ music in the United States – there were no orchestras or great composers, and the general public was, for the most part, musically illiterate. In their work, these composer-educators combined psalm singing, western classical music, and folk song to teach and compose. Not only were they instrumental in defining the American sound in the context of what would become popular music, they also filled an expressed need for musical instruction. The content of their lessons was simple – attendants were instructed on the rudiments of reading music, and psalm tunes were learned both by reading and by imitating the instructor.<sup>19</sup> The singing school satisfied an expressed musical need as well as an important social function for many communities.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, these schools gave the country a musical identity and a culture of musical instruction.

It is necessary to remember the context that early American educators and musicians that I am discussing in this chapter understood themselves within. Their perception of their country as being musically illiterate and their desire to influence the country’s music culture was a result of their understanding the world through Western European cultural standards. Musical literacy was understood in terms that excluded much of folk music and music practiced by nonwhite individuals. Similarly, the country was only ‘lacking’ in a musical cultural identity in that it’s

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<sup>18</sup> Michael L. Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Edward Bailey Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States*, 14.

<sup>20</sup> Michael L. Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 5.

cultural identity was, at the time, significantly different from that of countries like Germany, France, Italy and England.<sup>21</sup>

In 1838, Lowell Mason and William Channing Woodbridge persuaded the Boston School Committee to include singing as a regular subject in their school district.<sup>22</sup> Lowell Mason came from a family of singing teachers, but his goals as an educator set him apart from the singing school tradition. Mason was concerned not only with raising the quality of singing school teaching, but also improving the compositional quality and choir performance of church music in the United States.<sup>23</sup> The singing schools improved the music literacy and singing ability of the American public, but Mason saw more work to be done. The compositional style of American composers at the time did not reflect music theory that was prevalent in Europe, and there was still little access to European art music in the United States. Mason produced one of the first series of concerts with this sort of repertoire in the states, featuring the works of Haydn, Handel, Mozart and Beethoven. In 1822, he published the popular *Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music*, a book of his own compositions alongside instrumental works of European composers adapted for singing.<sup>24</sup> Its success inspired Mason to pursue music education more seriously.

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<sup>21</sup> Many of the secondary sources that cover the history of music educators at this time do not address this issue in great detail, to their detriment. Many document changes in 20<sup>th</sup> century music education as being adaptive to the many more available styles of music available, which of course is partly true, but obscures the fact that many of the 'new' musics that were included in the curriculum were not new at all. They had simply never been acknowledged in the classroom in this way.

<sup>22</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 116.

<sup>23</sup> Gretchen Hieronymus Beall, "Methodology and Music in General Education," in *Music Education in the United States*, ed. Terry J. Gates (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 203.

<sup>24</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 119.

William Channing Woodbridge introduced Mason to *Pestalozzian* based methods for teaching music. Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) was an Enlightenment thinker and educational reformer. His philosophies, particularly on education as a critical tool for promoting social and economic mobility, were influential in the United States. Pestalozzi considered education's broad goals to be *morality* and *citizenship*.<sup>25</sup> Woodbridge, an educator and a historian of American education, visited Pestalozzi's school in Yverdon, Switzerland where he observed what he found to be impressive group singing classes.<sup>26</sup> Hans Georg Nageli, one of the teachers at the school, believed that singing would promote social unity, religious values, and would stimulate desire for good music.<sup>27</sup> Music classes were a wonderful place to realize Pestalozzi's educational goals of developing the "whole man," for his belief was that education should engage the moral, the physical, and the mental – all of which could be done through music.

Woodbridge brought Nageli's model back to the United States and shared it with Mason. Together, they developed a curriculum for singing that Mason used to teach a class of over 200 adults. It was even more of a success than expected. At the time, singing schools were essentially the only music lessons available in the United States. Many people were still skeptical about the idea that it was possible to teach anyone to sing. Most lessons were restricted to the gifted or privileged, and singing schools, while open to the public, were composed of a somewhat self-selecting student body.<sup>28</sup> In 1830 Woodbridge gave a lecture on *Vocal Music as a Branch of Education* to the American Institute of Instruction. This lecture was largely

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>26</sup> A. Theodore Tellstrom, *Music in American Education Past and Present*, 37.

<sup>27</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 115.

<sup>28</sup> A. Theodore Tellstrom, *Music in American Education Past and Present*, 39.

responsible for creating interest in conducting a trial of singing lessons as a part of the general curriculum in Boston. In 1838, Mason's students sang "Flowers, Wild Wood Flowers" to the school committee, and from that year on, it was decided that singing would be a part of the general school curriculum.<sup>29</sup> The school committee conceded that music was an important part of the curriculum in that it involved student development not present in the other classroom subjects. The committee wrote:

Judged then by this triple standard, intellectually, morally, physically, vocal music seems to have a natural place in every system of instruction which aspires, as should every system, to develop man's whole nature.... Now the defect of our present system, admirable as that system is, is this, that it aims to develop the intellectual part of man's nature solely, when for all the true purposes of life, it is of more importance, a hundred fold, to feel rightly, than to think profoundly (*Boston Music Gazette*, 1838).<sup>30</sup>

This 'triple standard' should sound familiar, as they are the same three that Johann Pestalozzi used to define the ideals of a public education – 'to engage the moral, the physical and the mental.' The Boston School committee accepted music on the grounds that students could mature in these three respects through music alone, not through the other school subjects. My working definition of practical education philosophy emphasizes practical matters and social usefulness. The music

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<sup>29</sup> Edward Bailey Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States*.

<sup>30</sup> Michael L. Mark, "The Evolution of Music Education Philosophy from Utilitarian to Aesthetic," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 30, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 17.

curriculum that was first included in public schools was based on both the Pestalozzian model, which strove to develop morals and citizenship, and the singing school model, which taught only the practical rudiments necessary to sing tunefully in a choir. Public music education at its foundation was a matter of practical philosophy.

Early music classes were narrow in their field of study compared to music education today. Instrumental music did not reach the curriculum until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the only “theory” to be learned was what was necessary to understand how to read music on the page. In short, schools taught the immediately practical skills for singing compositions in settings such as church services. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, students of private instrumental lessons began organizing themselves into orchestras and ensembles. These orchestras, and the private lessons that supported them, were not established by schools, but they often rehearsed after hours in school buildings and performed at functions associated with schools.<sup>31</sup>

Pleased with the prestige of having an associated orchestra, school directors eventually began establishing more permanent extra curricular orchestras.<sup>32</sup> These were most common in high schools, but there were some notable examples of grammar school orchestras as well, the first having been established in New London, CT in 1896.<sup>33</sup> In 1908, Charles Farnsworth observed group violin instruction from the Maidstone Movement in England, which he brought back to

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<sup>31</sup> Edward Bailey Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States*, 166.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

the United States.<sup>34</sup> These techniques helped superintendents and music directors in the US realize the viability of group instrumental lessons.

Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were several reasons that instrumental music in the United States, within or outside of schools, was scarce. Vocal music thrived in schools early on because of the focus on sacred music and the skepticism towards (mostly instrumental) secular music.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, music supervisors in public schools were vocalists knowledgeable about vocal music, not instrumentalists knowledgeable about instrumental music.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, in the early 1900s, band music was reaching its peak popularity in the United States – John Philip Sousa and his band were touring successfully, instrumentalist and band competitions were an emerging part of the school system, and the community music movement was on the rise.<sup>37</sup> The community music movement evolved out of the rise of community-organized bands that served the function of allowing people to play as well as to simply listen to music. This movement aimed to foster a symbiotic relationship between school and community – schools provided expertise and guidance to community groups, who in turn “brought to school music its spirit of free expression, of joy, of fellowship, of universality, of service.”<sup>38</sup> While band and orchestra programs offered more variety, their inclusion in the curriculum did not change the practical philosophy used to justify and determine the content of school music classes. Instrumental instruction was similarly focused on performance, and

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<sup>34</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 266.

<sup>35</sup> Edward Bailey Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States*, 176.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 263.

<sup>38</sup> Paul G. Woodford, *Democracy and Music Education*, 10.



the support for both school and community bands was justified for their ability to promote sociability and citizenship.

## CHAPTER TWO

### AESTHETIC EDUCATION

In the first century of public school music, the field grew significantly from its modest origins. The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought with it new technology and ideas that changed the ways in which music education was approached. While the practical philosophy that justified the original inclusion of music in the general curriculum was predominant during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century or so, the beginnings of a new philosophy began to take influence. This was aesthetic education philosophy, which became increasingly influential over the course of the century.

Aesthetic philosophy came to prominence as music educators became dissatisfied with the limits of what we have been calling practical philosophy. While the 19<sup>th</sup> century music teacher had a narrow focus— to teach the singing of choral music and the literacy necessary to do so— the expanding musical landscape of the United States demanded new approaches to dealing with music in the classroom. Aesthetic philosophy essentially states that music is valuable for the sake of itself, and that teachers should guide students in how to derive meaning from music.

In this chapter, I will first highlight some of the new aspects of education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that gave way to aesthetic philosophy's prominence, such as the advent of music appreciation courses and the progressive education movement. These things in themselves are not inherently exemplary of aesthetic philosophy in education, and in many ways they are arguably representative of practical philosophy. Nevertheless, they can help us understand how aesthetic education philosophy came to be seen as a necessary for justifying public school music. I will

then discuss how proponents of aesthetic education replaced the earlier practical justifications for school music with aesthetic ones, and how that changed music curriculums.

One of the most recognizable changes in the curriculum in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was the expansion of the music curriculum into what we understand to be a ‘general’ music education. This came with the advent of music appreciation as a field of study, the inclusion of more theory in the classroom, and the previously discussed addition of instrumental music instruction as a part of the curriculum.<sup>39</sup> New technology allowed higher access to more types of music, and offered new classroom techniques. In 1910, Frances Elliott Clark, one of the most important figures in the development of music appreciation as an educational subject, gave a lecture to the Wisconsin Teacher’s Association on the subject of “Victrolas in Schools.”<sup>40</sup> The new technology allowed for closer study of symphonic works and other European forms that were inaccessible to most during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1926, Alice Keith released “Listening in on the Masters: a Course in Music Appreciation for the Home, School, and Club, with Radio and Record Illustrations,” a series of records that featured symphonic works and information on how to listen to them.<sup>41</sup> The popular program was a model on which much of the music appreciation field was based upon. All over the country, music history and music appreciation were being added to the curriculum as independent electives or as sections of pre-existing music classes. For example, Clark taught a music history course in an Iowa high school, Peter Dykema

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<sup>39</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 266.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

taught Opera Studies in Indianapolis, and Mary Regal taught music appreciation in Springfield, Massachusetts.<sup>42</sup>

The music appreciation movement rose alongside philosophies held by music educators at the time. Just like their earlier counterparts, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century music educators strengthened the notion that *all* students, not just the gifted, benefit from learning music. Still important was that music education was meant to promote “cultural use of leisure time” to its students.<sup>43</sup> These beliefs about the social values of music reflect the practical philosophy of the time. In addition, many educators at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were becoming more and more attached to the idea that music’s ability to cultivate the emotions was its most valuable contribution to education. C.H. Congdon said “the moral influence of music sinks deeper and is more lasting than word or precept....the ability to sing is a passport to good society; and the love of music turns the footsteps of many a young man from the saloon and gambling-room to the church and home.”<sup>44</sup> David Kelsey, an early advocate for theory and harmony in the classroom, expressed that “music in New Education was devoted to the expression of feeling in the most esthetic forms.”<sup>45</sup> Music appreciation curriculums were written with the goal of developing good taste among their students in mind - “to propagate and socialize the musical tastes of the socially elite among all classes.”<sup>46</sup> The earlier goal for music to be socially useful was being expanded – music’s inherent emotional qualities were being praised as one of

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<sup>42</sup> Edward Bailey Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States*, 167.

<sup>43</sup> Paul G. Woodford, *Democracy and Music Education*, 8.

<sup>44</sup> *Journal of Proceedings, and Addresses*, vol. 34 (Michigan State University: The Association, 1895), 780.

<sup>45</sup> A. Theodore Tellstrom, *Music in American Education Past and Present*, 132.

<sup>46</sup> Paul G. Woodford, *Democracy and Music Education*, 9. This quote is taken from McCarthy, *American Music Education*, page 74.

the most important ways in which it influenced students morally and socially. When educators advocated for the understanding of what made musical works valuable through music appreciation and theory courses, they were presenting the earliest arguments for aesthetic education as music education.

Just as the world of music education changed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, so was the world of education around it. This time is recognized as the dawn of the early progressive education movement. Proponents of progressive education advocated for a new focus on *experience*. John Dewey, whose philosophies were instrumental to the development and popularization of this movement, wrote extensively on this. In *Democracy and Education*, he wrote that in education, providing experience was preferable to providing theory because experience has the capacity to carry theory, but “theory might not even carry itself.”<sup>47</sup> Up to this point, schooling was largely concerned with specific knowledge- that is to say it consisted of teaching facts and refining skills. Progressivism found this to be inadequate. In the face of a changing world and growing access to information, *adaptability*, along with creative problem solving, was argued to be more valuable than rote learning.<sup>48</sup> Dewey believed that experience and experimentation were key to learning, and that in this regard, students’ should be instrumental in shaping their schooling: “Doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking, or the internal noting of connections; learning naturally results.”<sup>49</sup> Education was being re-centered around the student, not the information being taught. The popularization of progressive ideas in education at large bolstered arguments for aesthetic educational practices within

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<sup>47</sup> John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 24th ed. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1951), 169.

<sup>48</sup> A. Theodore Tellstrom, *Music in American Education Past and Present*, 159.

<sup>49</sup> John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 181.

music. As Felicity Haynes states in the *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, “aesthetic education seems to be most easily defined by what it is not. It is not the teaching of logical form or matters of fact, and it is not satisfied to remain at the level of surface text.”<sup>50</sup> Like the progressives, aesthetic education advocates believed in giving students agency in their discoveries. Both movements were emerging in an era in which the scope of available information to be learned was expanding in all fields. Thus, educators found more value in teaching students to discover, understand, and evaluate information than in simply teaching information – for there was simply too much to cover.

The aesthetic and progressive movements surfaced at a time in which music education was coming into a new awareness in itself as a field. In 1907, the first meeting of what would become the Music Supervisors National Conference (MSNC) was held.<sup>51</sup> The members of the MSNC saw it as their task to “see that no American was deprived of the opportunity to experience the pleasure of music.”<sup>52</sup> MSNC educators’ goals reflected of both aesthetic and progressive philosophical influences, particular these emphases on experience and pleasure. This combination of philosophy in some ways would become the backbone of the MSNC into the future. Frances Clarke’s music appreciation classes served both to teach a specific body of music and to help the student to develop their approach to listening.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Felicity Haynes, “Aesthetic Education,” ed. Michael A. Peters et al., *The Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory* (1999, n.d.), [http://eepat.net/doku.php?id=aesthetic\\_education](http://eepat.net/doku.php?id=aesthetic_education).

<sup>51</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 255.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>53</sup> Gretchen Hieronymus Beall, “Methodology and Music in General Education,” 205.

Bennett Remier defines aesthetic education as “the development of sensitivity to the aesthetic qualities of things.”<sup>54</sup> In *A Philosophy of Music Education*, he asserts that the expressive emotional meanings within a piece of music exist without reference to the extramusical world.<sup>55</sup> While Remier was not influential in his own right until later in the century, these beliefs reflect those widely held by music educators throughout the 1900s. By this time, many music educators had found that their methods were flawed – while schoolchildren were becoming very good at singing and proficient at reading music, the majority did not continue to sing after leaving school.<sup>56</sup> Music educators in the 20<sup>th</sup> century agreed that the only way their field could be justified was in terms of helping their students enjoy music so that it could become an important part of their lives.<sup>57</sup> It was a prominent concern among educators that the American public, despite the music education available, did not as a whole possess a high level of musicality. This problem was attributed both to methodology – that music examples used to teach singing were boring and unrelatable, that the value placed on performance ability in education came at the expense of musical *experience*– and to the professionalization of American music.<sup>58</sup> The latter concern was founded in the idea that when singing schools first became popular, they functioned to provide a way for the public to both learn and, more importantly, listen to music. As recording technology improved and concerts featuring professional musicians became more common, music education’s function of providing a means for listening became obsolete in the eyes of many. The

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<sup>54</sup> Marie McCarthy and J. Scott Goble, “Music Education Philosophy: Changing Times,” 21.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> A. Theodore Tellstrom, *Music in American Education Past and Present*, 130.

<sup>57</sup> Michael L. Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 7.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 8.

aesthetic education movement was, in part, a “new call to teach real music, songs with intrinsic beauty.”<sup>59</sup> This movement to refocus music classes on making music immediately enjoyable and understandable to students coincided with the beginning of the progressive movement, a massive shift in American education across the board.

Music educators embracing both aesthetic and progressive educational philosophies found there were ample connections to be made between the movements. For many music teachers and supervisors, the shift towards the aesthetic education meant refocusing content onto student’s needs. Jazz educator David Elliott wrote that aesthetic education is “concerned with maximizing the individual’s derivation of meaning from the musical work.”<sup>60</sup> Educators now wanted to bestow the joy of musical experience onto children, not just to teach them the rudiments. Similarly, music educators embraced democratic conceptions of education that became popular through the progressive movement. The influence of Dewey lead schools to place higher importance on music within the greater curriculum due to the belief that music was an effective means by which children developed social skills.<sup>61</sup> The development of more options of music programs - from music appreciation and theory courses to different performance ensembles – was also presented as a democratic development in schooling. A variety of elective courses in the arts was an attractive quality for schools advertising a commitment to student

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<sup>59</sup> Gretchen Hieronymus Beall, “Methodology and Music in General Education,” 204.

<sup>60</sup> David J. Elliott, “Jazz as Aesthetic Education,” *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 44.

<sup>61</sup> Michael L. Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 71.



choice.<sup>62</sup> The presence of music appreciation in general music classes served an egalitarian function to “propagate and socialize the musical tastes of the socially elite class among all classes.”<sup>63</sup> The members of the MSNC saw themselves as working towards socializing immigrants into a musical culture alongside other citizens, developing community outreach, and promoting good citizenship for all.<sup>64</sup> Developing relationships with community music programs was one way that educators saw their mission of a democratic education not only being realized in the classroom, but extended into the world.

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, these early aspirations were changed and challenged with the times. The first half of the century saw exciting growth in the subjects and methods that schools were willing to try out. However, by the middle of the century, the excitement of these movements were challenged by uncertainty – the toll of the world wars and the cold war cast a shadow on American education, which was under pressure to deliver measureable, “competitive” results in the form of the newly conceived “core curriculum.”<sup>65</sup> At the same time, many educators were aiming to change their fields of study to be less prescriptive in the face of technological and informational advances; for they believed that a student’s understanding of their role in society was a higher priority than rote material, which was seen to be vulnerable to unpredictable change.<sup>66</sup> Educators became concerned that their teaching practices had not kept up with the modern advances in music as

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<sup>62</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 258.

<sup>63</sup> Paul G. Woodford, *Democracy and Music Education*, 9. Quoted from Marie McCarthy, *American Music Education*.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>65</sup> Michael L. Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 29.

<sup>66</sup> A. Theodore Tellstrom, *Music in American Education Past and Present*, 240.

they had in mathematics and science.<sup>67</sup> These were the issues that educators, scientists, sociologists, and representatives from many other fields discussed at the 1967 Tanglewood Symposium, an influential conference for the understanding of music education philosophy. The symposium, which was sponsored by MENC, aimed to clarify and redefine what the guiding principles and underlying philosophies of music education should be. In addition to preparing publications intended to help teachers evolve their curriculums, the conference attendees also compiled a summary of the symposium called the Tanglewood Declaration.<sup>68</sup>

The aesthetic basis for a music education was a serious point of discussion at the symposium, with some believing that this philosophical framework would be adept at tackling challenges in a changing society, and others finding its confines limiting. The declaration stated that, “the arts afford a continuity with the aesthetic tradition in man’s history. Music and other fine arts, largely nonverbal in nature, reach close to the social, psychological, and physiological roots of man in his search for identity and self realization.”<sup>69</sup>

Clearly, many of the attendees found that the aesthetic movement had not reached its limits. Many agreed that the aesthetic paradigm was suited to adapting to change. Bennett Reimer asserted his belief that aesthetic education as one of the most fundamental and necessary purposes that united music teachers.<sup>70</sup> The aesthetic model gave educators a common language that had been built up through music appreciation curriculums, art criticism, and music theory as it had developed

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>69</sup> Michael L. Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 68.

<sup>70</sup> Marie McCarthy and J. Scott Goble, “Music Education Philosophy: Changing Times,” 23.

over history. Susanne Langer and Leonard Meyer were proponents of this model at the symposium, as was Charles Leonhard.<sup>71</sup> In the same year as the Tanglewood Symposium, Leonhard published *The Foundations and Principles of Music Education*, a comprehensive argument for aesthetic education. *Foundations and Principles of Music Education* delineated why music curriculums based in non-aesthetic goals won't serve adequately. Leonhard argued that curriculums that over-emphasized performance would be inadequate.<sup>72</sup> Since the early days of the aesthetic movement, this argument has been central to establishing difference between the older, more 'utilitarian' or practical modes of teaching, which were focused heavily on performance. Second, Leonhard states that music education shouldn't be designed as entertainment for students.<sup>73</sup> These sorts of programs were evident failures of different progressive education experiments. Some music appreciation classes were viewed this way, but often these criticisms were made towards curriculums implemented as parts of cross-disciplinary efforts. These attempts to unify subjects often came at the detriment of each individual subject. Many of these music classes were not cumulative or sequential, and when evaluated outside of the rest of the school curriculum, many were found to make little sense.<sup>74</sup> Charles Leonhard criticized this trend in education. Leonhard also cautioned against educators who viewed music primarily as a means to other social ends and schools that used music principally as a method of maintaining public approval.<sup>75</sup> For Leonhard and like-

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>72</sup> Charles Leonhard and Robert W. House, *Foundations and Principles of Music Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 5.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> A. Theodore Tellstrom, *Music in American Education Past and Present*, 242.

<sup>75</sup> Charles Leonhard and Robert W. House, *Foundations and Principles of Music Education*, 6.

minded thinkers, a restated commitment to the aesthetic education was a commitment to value musical experience over the extrinsic benefits of music. “Through aesthetic education,” Leonhard wrote, “[man] finds true self-realization, insight into life values which are timeless, culturally significant, and personally satisfying. He discovers means for satisfying a basic and pervasive need of all human beings, namely, the need for symbolic experience.”<sup>76</sup>

Advocates of aesthetic education philosophy continue to make their case to this day. However, even during the Tanglewood Symposium there were many who doubted the adaptability of aesthetic education to modern issues of music development. Aesthetic philosophy was challenged in many ways, and we may be coming to see the potential for new philosophies through which music educators can unify. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 115.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ECLECTIC PHILOSOPHIES

Over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the present day, aesthetic education philosophies have been called into question. While many still find the aesthetic model to be important to the field of music education, others have called its true value into question. In this chapter, I will first discuss the critiques of music education as aesthetic education that arose during and after the Tanglewood Convention. The disputes over philosophy prompted many in the field of music education to unite over methodology instead of philosophy, which had political ramifications within the field. I will finally propose the recent Praxial Music Education as a philosophy that is gaining popularity and could provide a unifying function for music educators.

An important development for changing perspectives among 20<sup>th</sup> century music educators was the development of ethnomusicology as a field of study. Musicology, which has been defined variably as studying “humanly organized sound,” “people making music” and other similar definitions that encapsulate many modes of musical experience.<sup>77</sup> The Society for Ethnomusicology was established in 1955, twelve years before the Tanglewood Symposium.<sup>78</sup> Contrary to what one might assume, music education university programs were even more important to the support of ethnomusicology in the academic community than music history or

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<sup>77</sup> Jonathan P. J. Stock, “Music Education: Perspectives from Current Ethnomusicology,” *British Journal of Music Education* 20, no. 2 (July 2003): 135.

<sup>78</sup> Patricia S. Campbell, “Ethnomusicology and Music Education: Crossroads for Knowing Music, Education, and Culture,” *Research Studies in Music Education* 21 (2003): 18.

composition programs. This is because music educators found exposure to diverse expressions and opinions of music to be useful to developing their teaching practice.<sup>79</sup> The influence of ethnomusicology as a discipline on music education is undeniable. Contemporary philosophies such as praxial music education incorporate ethnomusicological ideas as central approaches to teaching and learning.

The Tanglewood Declaration reaffirmed for many educators the importance of an aesthetic foundation. However, others who participated at the symposium were skeptical of the potentials of aesthetic education. Some of the first proponents of aesthetic education even highlighted its weaknesses. Abraham Schwadron, one of the earliest advocates for the aesthetic movement, discussed its limits. While noting that an aesthetic philosophy was attractive as a basis for finding consensus justifying professional security for music educators, Schwadron doubted that aesthetic education philosophy could meet the demands of pluralistic society.<sup>80</sup> It was understood by the attendees of the Tanglewood Symposium that a proper music curriculum should include music from all periods and cultures. Schwadron and others called into question the euro-centric aesthetic philosophy as a means to incorporate a vast variety of musical experiences in a meaningful way.

Aesthetic theory, as it is understood, is useful for analyzing western art music along with the cultural setting by which it was developed. It can provide similar, but culturally inaccurate, analyses of music outside of that cultural sphere. Bennett Reimer's concept of "absolute expressionism" – that the meaning of a given musical work is primarily internal to the work – was popular with proponents of

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>80</sup> Marie McCarthy and J. Scott Goble, "Music Education Philosophy: Changing Times," 20.

aesthetic education.<sup>81</sup> This elevated the value of teachers who could help students come to conclusions about the intrinsic emotional meanings of musical works. How could this idea be reconciled with the ever more apparent reality that the emotional meanings of musical features were culturally bound? This question concerned educators past the Tanglewood Symposium and throughout the Civil Rights era.

Throughout the twentieth century, music educators realized the implications of this problem of euro-centrism in the aesthetic model. Many music educators distanced themselves from the past goal of music educators to assimilate immigrants into American culture. Where this model of education as assimilation was previously the case, socially conscious music educators needed to find ways to celebrate and teach the diversity of American culture. As Paul Woodford has more recently noted, such attempts to extend aesthetics across cultures has often lead to classes where music is completely subjective, and therefore beyond certain criticism.<sup>82</sup> This sort of education does not effectively empower students to evaluate the world around them.

Education historian Michael Mark has noted music educators' need for an "eclectic philosophy."<sup>83</sup> Abraham Schwadron, too, called for a new unifying philosophy for music educators at the Tanglewood Symposium.<sup>84</sup> While in some form, the Tanglewood Declaration attempted to outline philosophy through which to unify, music educators across the country continued to feel divided as a community, wanting for a shared goal. The 1959 symposium left educators with the understanding that the task of teaching general music was a massive one that

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>82</sup> Paul G. Woodford, *Democracy and Music Education*, 18.

<sup>83</sup> Michael L. Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 48.

<sup>84</sup> Marie McCarthy and J. Scott Goble, "Music Education Philosophy: Changing Times," 21.

required many types of knowledge from teachers – from the knowledge of music as it functions practically and culturally, to developmental psychology as it relates to teaching musical concepts, to the ways in which music relates to other subject areas. Many teachers, looking for ways to meet the vast demands of the field, turned not to philosophy but to method as a source for identity and closeness within the profession.<sup>85</sup>

In the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the popularity of several European methods arose. The most prominent two were the Orff approach and the Kodály approach. The Orff method, developed by Carl Orff, was based in the idea that “elemental music evolving from speech, movement and dance could become the basis of early childhood music education.”<sup>86</sup> Orff developed instruments specifically for teaching his method and published a five-volume series called *Music for Children*, which was translated into eighteen languages.<sup>87</sup> Theodore Tellstrom noted that its popularity in the United States was likely due to its emphasis on the basic substance and structure of music.<sup>88</sup> The Kodály method was similarly focused on structural elements. Zoltan Kodály used a sort of sign language that corresponded with the tonic sol-fa system to teach. His method used folk music to teach concepts in a progression that was designed to be readily accessible to students.<sup>89</sup>

Gretchen Hieronymus Beall wrote that these systems appealed to American educators not only because of their emphasis on the structural elements of music, whose importance had been emphasized at the Tanglewood Symposium and

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<sup>85</sup> Gretchen Hieronymus Beall, “Methodology and Music in General Education,” 208.

<sup>86</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 359.

<sup>87</sup> Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*.

<sup>88</sup> A. Theodore Tellstrom, *Music in American Education Past and Present*, 245.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.



elsewhere, but also because of the ease with which they allowed educators to ascribe to an identity.<sup>90</sup> Beall noted that the “certification courses can be taken to the classroom and repeated without further translation.”<sup>91</sup> These programs both had a wealth of writing that accompanied them, required little risk, allowed teachers to maintain control of classroom situations, and made it easy for children to sound good.<sup>92</sup> However, Beal warns that method should be carefully selected to best fulfill goals and objectives that are understood through developing foundational philosophy. While useful in their own right, methods are narrow and removed from the political landscape of the country. The concerns surrounding the progressive and aesthetic movements came about politically due to events outside of the scope of music education – the Space Race, the Cold War, the Civil Rights movement – these are all historic phenomena that called educational philosophy into question. Paul Woodford has critiqued music educators for their retreat from the political sphere since the 1950’s and 60’s.<sup>93</sup> This move has been largely possible through a choice to unify behind method rather than philosophy. Music educators were thus enabled to avoid reaching consensus on the viability or lack thereof of a universal aesthetic philosophy to justify their existence. It also insulated them somewhat from political movements, by prescribing a structure that can be expanded or narrowed as needed. However, method provides no answers as to how curriculum should adapt to the future when necessary, and it doesn’t answer deeper questions about itself for

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<sup>90</sup> Gretchen Hieronymus Beall, “Methodology and Music in General Education,” 208.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Paul G. Woodford, *Democracy and Music Education*, 57.

educators. Method has served in the place of coming to consensus on the philosophical basis for music education.

More recently, there has been work done to reconcile the differences between the aesthetic and the utilitarian philosophical bases for music education that defined the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 1990s, educators began discussing *praxial philosophy* as a new contrast to aesthetic philosophy.<sup>94</sup> The term praxial comes from the Aristotelian *praxis*, meaning action rooted in practice, rather than theory.<sup>95</sup> This philosophy is in some ways a bridge between the utilitarian and aesthetic philosophies in that it is based in practical understanding of music, but one that isn't bound by theory prescribed by one culture. Instead, it examines musical practice from different cultures as a means to understand musical value and meaning in a wide variety of cultural settings. Praxial music education philosophy isn't the only new philosophy to have emerged recently, but it is one that has received considerable discussion and could be the new means by which music educators find an "eclectic philosophy" that can unite them.

Praxial Philosophy was first outlined by music education scholar David Elliott in his seminal book *Music Matters: A Philosophy of Music Education* in 1995.<sup>96</sup> Elliott had a chance to strengthen his ideas in 1993 at the first meeting of the MayDay Group, which was an international group of theorists who sought to apply critical theory and thinking to the purpose and practice of music education as well as

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<sup>94</sup> Marie McCarthy and J. Scott Goble, "Music Education Philosophy: Changing Times," 23.

<sup>95</sup> Marie McCarthy and J. Scott Goble, "Music Education Philosophy: Changing Times."

<sup>96</sup> Marissa Silverman, Susan A. Davis, and David J. Elliott, "Praxial Music Education: A Critical Analysis of Critical Commentaries," *International Journal of Music Education* 32, no. 1 (2014): 54.

to affirm the central purpose of music participation to human life.<sup>97</sup> In *Music Matters*, Elliott outlines praxial music education as understanding music as “human activity,” starting with people and their way of doing music rather than the musical work in itself, as might have been typical for adherents to music education as aesthetic education.<sup>98</sup>

Elliott’s presentation of this new philosophy served to provide a viable alternative to the aesthetic model. Elliott, in developing this philosophy, posited it against ‘liberal’ education philosophies that preceded it. Liberal education refers to education that follows a democratic philosophy that prepares students beyond a specific vocation or frame of knowledge.<sup>99</sup> It is ideologically linked to the progressive movement as well as the aesthetic education movement. Elliott critiqued liberal education philosophy for being concerned with general and inert formal knowledge of classics and for being removed from practical knowledge.<sup>100</sup> Of course, this isn’t to say that praxial music education isn’t democratic, or even that it doesn’t share features with these other philosophies. In fact, in many ways it deftly merged the attractive aspects of many of the philosophies before it, including the now ancient practical philosophy. Praxial music education is associated with the practical insofar that its focus begins with the understanding of musical processes – composing, listening, moving, improvising, and other “human activities” – over the

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<sup>97</sup> Marie McCarthy and J. Scott Goble, “Music Education Philosophy: Changing Times,” 23.

<sup>98</sup> Marissa Silverman, Susan A. Davis, and David J. Elliott, “Praxial Music Education: A Critical Analysis of Critical Commentaries,” 56.

<sup>99</sup> Paul G. Woodford, *Democracy and Music Education*, 16.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

understanding of completed musical works, thus shifting the classroom focus towards performance-related activities.<sup>101</sup>

Praxial music education has been met with criticism by advocates of aesthetic education because of the way it levels musical works conceptually with other aspects of music, and because of its consequential relative emphasis on musical experience. Bennett Remier called it “traditional, entrenched conventional fundamentalism.”<sup>102</sup> Elliott’s emphasis of pursuit of happiness, enjoyment, and self-growth as key values has also been critiqued as being self-indulgent by those who think that these qualities are only peripherally important.<sup>103</sup> Many of these arguments serve to associate praxial music education with a base, vocational, and shortsighted return to the ‘utilitarian’ philosophy that predated music education as aesthetic education. However, many of these critiques misunderstand the goals and practices associated with praxial music education.

In a sense, praxial music education is more focused on performance than models that preceded it. As mentioned before, praxial music education takes a “multi-dimensional” approach to understanding musical works (and music at large). By this, it is meant that the student should learn to understand a musical work’s meaning on multiple levels<sup>104</sup> and that s/he should understand what performers,

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<sup>101</sup> Marissa Silverman, Susan A. Davis, and David J. Elliott, “Praxial Music Education: A Critical Analysis of Critical Commentaries,” 56.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>103</sup> Paul G. Woodford, *Democracy and Music Education*, 25.

<sup>104</sup> Elliott’s model involves six dimensions of understanding: performance-interpretation, form/design, standards/traditions, musical expressions of emotions, musical representations and characterizations of people, places and things, and socio-cultural ideological meaning.

arrangers and composers must do to create the work.<sup>105</sup> These ways of understanding necessitate an approach that elevates the importance of performance as well as other activities – most notably listening. Elliott’s listenership “combines several processes of musical thinking and knowing involved in listening to explain what students must learn to understand and enjoy works as deeply as possible.”<sup>106</sup>

Of course, the question stands whether praxial music education is a philosophy through which methods can be developed and understood, or if praxial music education is merely a new method to be considered alongside the Orff and Kodály methods. While there is not as wide a body of literature surrounding praxial philosophy as there is of aesthetic philosophy, many have adopted praxial philosophy as an alternative to music education as aesthetic education. Others have written critiques of it that still posit it as a philosophy opposite aesthetic education. It is the most prominent of new educational philosophies to incorporate concepts from ethnomusicology and sociology on a foundational level.

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<sup>105</sup> Marissa Silverman, Susan A. Davis, and David J. Elliott, “Praxial Music Education: A Critical Analysis of Critical Commentaries,” 60.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

## CONCLUSION

In my introduction, I quoted Paul Woodford on his hope for an eventual “hybridization of musical values.” The educators doing the best work are the ones striving to understand how to recognize musical culture to be at once a multifaceted collection of disparate ideas and a constantly flowing and changing stream of art. Not only this, but great music educators enable their students to be agents in their complex cultural habitat, able to enact change through ways of creating, performing and even understanding and listening.

Praxial music education philosophy certainly seems to have the capacity to provide common ground for music educators to share while leaving room for differences in the needs and preferences of individuals and communities. If educators still find purpose in nurturing a common culture among their students and themselves, then paying attention to philosophical ideas such as praxial music education could be a way to merge mutual interests.

Perhaps this is the goal, but practically speaking, there is no means of unifying musical understanding or educational philosophy. Michael L. Mark calls instead for an “eclectic philosophy,”<sup>107</sup> with the capacity to encompass all viewpoints. Perhaps this isn’t quite right either. Educational philosophy should shift just as the culture it is a part of does. In the case of music, eclectic *philosophies* might be more appropriate to better represent the reality that music serves many purposes in many contexts, and therefore deserves a plurality of philosophies to examine it through.

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<sup>107</sup> Michael L. Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 67.

Many of the ideas I have discussed have been theories that are defended and critiqued outside the context of the classroom, removed from the day to day of teaching practice. However, I believe I have illustrated the use in examining the philosophical underpinnings of music education. Close consideration of these issues, both historic and contemporary, helps us understand the complexities concerning music education in all of its other facets.

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