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## **Empathy in and through Music Education: Extending Artistic Citizenship**

By

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### **Abstract**

*Bowman, Elliott, and Silverman's concept of artistic citizenship helps characterize how music education accomplishes social change. However, while Elliott et al. regard artistic citizenship as a means of exercising music in political ways, further investigation of how musical activities prepare students to consider effecting social change might more comprehensively describe artistic citizenship as a socio-musical endeavor. In light of the goals of social justice-oriented programming, the relationship between citizenship and artistic practice, one might think not only of music in the service of exercising citizenship in the greater community but also as a means of developing citizenship skills in the first place. In this paper, I examine artistic citizenship for its limits and the potential for citizenship in and through music education: music education for the exercise of citizenship and its development. I suggest an extension of artistic citizenship to account for philosophical arguments that musical engagement can educate empathetic emotions and empirical indicators that group music participation might help develop empathetic skills. Finally, drawing from these ideas, I describe how music education might provide pedagogy of empathy to inform the acts of artistic citizenship for which Elliott et al. advocate.*

**Keywords:** empathy, artistic citizenship, philosophy, music education

Social change is a long-standing goal of education. The capacity for music education to contribute to this objective and act as a vehicle for social change, however difficult to evidence and substantiate, remains a worthwhile subject for research. The concept of artistic citizenship helps to characterize how music education might contribute to acts of social change. Described by David Elliott, Marissa Silverman, and Wayne Bowman in their 2016 book bearing its name,<sup>1</sup> artistic citizenship was introduced to practicing music teachers through Elliott's 2012 article in the *Music Educators Journal*.<sup>2</sup> In this piece, Elliott describes the need for music teachers to reevaluate why we teach music; in addition to examining how and what we teach, we should consider the capacity for music education to serve what Elliott describes as "additional or alternative aims."<sup>3</sup> These refer to the potential for artistic endeavors to explore social problems, allowing musicing, among other artistic activities, to affect society on the political stage.

The essential commonality between acts of artistic citizenship relies on the idea that expressive art can be "put to work" to address social problems.<sup>4</sup> Musical activities that embrace artistic citizenship, in this view, endeavor to "act in ways that move people. . . mobilizing them as agents of positive change."<sup>5</sup> By using artistic expression to address political issues, students can better understand and speak out about problems they find essential. Through musicing, students can raise awareness in their communities around these concerns. The possibilities for artistic citizenship as an objective of music education include greater relevance for students and their artistic work through transformative acts of social activity. However, while Elliott et al. regard artistic citizenship as a means of exercising music in political ways, further investigation of how musical activities can prepare students to engage in social change might more comprehensively describe artistic citizenship as a socio-musical endeavor.

While Elliott et al. advocate that those who wish to employ artistic citizenship wrestle with several "fundamental questions"<sup>6</sup> that reflect concern for students' social and emotional preparation for citizenship in action, they also ask artistic citizens to grapple with a definition of citizenship that is intentionally "metaphorical," imprecisely "evocative," and left vague in its implications.<sup>7</sup> Given the disparate definition of citizenship, this seems logical. Still, given the gravity of lessons aimed at citizenship in music education and the potential for a consequence on the broader world, it is also imprudent. Taking this question: "how might artistic citizens engage the general public in artistic projects designed to serve the diverse public, social, cultural, and political interests;" what keeps artistic citizens from engaging the public in harmful ways?<sup>8</sup> If artistic citizens are to be concerned with the "abilities and dispositions of body, mind, and heart...(they) require if they are to engage in, develop, and expand the possibilities and potentials of artistic citizenship," might the authors be more specific about what those abilities and dispositions are, lest an artistic citizen assume that malice or self-service sit at the cornerstone of artistic citizenship?<sup>9</sup> While capacities like empathy may be a subject of interest in other writings of Elliott and Silverman (most notably 2015's *Music Matters*), these capacities are left unattended in this context. Instead, artistic citizenship seems focused on those activities which best outwardly engage a community. Is citizenship only a matter of community engagement? Is it not, too, a matter of interpersonal development?

The potential for artistic citizenship is more significant than putting music to engage students' political voices and account for shaping students' voices before their exercise. How artistic activities can impact students' citizenship extends to how they conceive of citizenship, what it should be like, and with what and whom it should be concerned. In light of the goals of many social justice-oriented programs in music education, the relationship between citizenship

and artistic practice one might think of not only as music in the service of exercising citizenship in the greater community but as a means of developing the skills of citizenship in the first place. How might artistic citizenship broaden its scope to include the potential for music participation and engagement to inspire citizenship skills? How might it account for the politically critical social-emotional lessons possible in and through music education?

In this paper, I examine artistic citizenship for its limits and attempt to extend artistic citizenship to include its potential for communitarian citizenship in and through music education: music education to express communitarian citizenship and its development. I suggest an extension of artistic citizenship to account for philosophical arguments that engaging with music can educate empathetic emotions and empirical indicators that group music participation might help develop empathetic skills. Finally, drawing from these ideas, I describe how music education might provide a pedagogy of empathy to inform the acts of artistic citizenship for which Elliott et al. advocate.

### **Examining Artistic Citizenship**

There is considerable scholarship to critique artistic citizenship in American music education since 2012.<sup>10</sup> For example, Paul Woodford charges artistic citizenship with a certain insensibility. He supposes that Elliott is, perhaps, a romantic convinced that political action through music is always good. He challenges that music education, or any other function of American institutionalization, might be too entrenched a context to see social problems effectively. Woodford explains that education from kindergarten to college is rooted in bias and political agenda and must inherently express the will of an oppressive society. This cuts the concept off at the knees: because of the nature of schools and institutions, social justice issues cannot be practical, or without potentially harmful bias, taken up in school contexts.

Additionally, there are other dangers present when using musical expression to consider issues of citizenship. Woodford cites examples of musical expressions, such as "music used as torture by American troops during the second War in Iraq, or as an incitement to genocide in the Rwandan crisis of 1994,"<sup>11</sup> that abuse the potential for music to inspire people in negative ways.

While some of Woodford's concerns about the types of music people should worry about seem short-sighted ("hip-hop," for example), his point that we use music throughout history in the service of propaganda and zealotry is not lost.<sup>12</sup> Citizenship, in this view, and its expression in harmful acts of propaganda, can be detrimental to society. Should artistic citizenship then hang up its hat? Perhaps school and music are not the places nor the medium to explore social causes and stick to purely musical goals. This concern, however, prohibits those interested in artistic citizenship from experiencing music in socially beneficial ways. Indeed, there are numerous examples of acts of artistic citizenship contributing to positive community change. Elliott et al. cite many of them in their book. I think the point we take from Woodford is that mere acts of political voice through artistic practice are not enough. Given the stakes of political action and the power of music to amplify and enhance them, what citizenship means and how we lead students to discern it are equally as crucial as providing avenues for its expression.

Deborah Bradley's chief concern with artistic citizenship is not with the work of social change through musical engagement, but with its vocabulary. As she sees it, artistic citizenship is symbolic, a catch-all term for that in which educators "seek to cultivate a sense of social responsibility." Still, the use of the word *citizenship* presents political challenges.<sup>13</sup> Bradley asks readers to consider the exclusionary implications of the concept of citizenship for those in marginalized groups, like those excluded from citizenship and those citizens betrayed through acts of state-sanctioned and systematized violence.<sup>14</sup> What does citizenship mean, she asks, to

asylum seekers or Dreamers?<sup>15</sup> What does citizenship mean in the United States of America in 2019? Given these questions, I wonder: how might we define citizenship so that it promotes social responsibility?

For Bradley, the exclusionary practices of communities and governments throughout history demonstrate the idea that citizenship is a "discourse of exclusion."<sup>16</sup> These practices are not necessarily in conflict with the positive acts of civil discourse through artistic citizenship Elliott et al. describe. Still, Bradley succeeds in poking an essential hole in artistic citizenship's potentialities. National or political citizenship inherently denotes agreement and can cause or perpetuate the harmful effects of assimilation on marginalized communities. Without details about the space from which we exercise citizenship, the nature of citizenship culturally and historically forces the assumption that the space is exclusionary.

Hess describes "dangers of activist music education" to which practitioners of artistic citizenship may be vulnerable. Among these are "hierarchization, cultural appropriation, stereotyping, exoticization, as well as the possibility of trauma that may emerge through rich contextualization" when engaging with musics of an "unfamiliar Other."<sup>17</sup> While engagement with protest music, for example, may allow students to experience the plights of protesters in unique ways, these experiences might also serve as opportunities to re-inscribe pre-conceived ideas about people or their lives. Participants socialized with notions of privilege or superiority might exhibit these in cross-cultural musical experiences and re-assert harmful hierarchical power dynamics in community relationships. Through encouraging students to practice empathy (as a "pedagogical strategy") in musical engagement and interaction might help students to reflect and think critically about injustice in both their perspectives and those of the "unfamiliar Other," this prospect is not without its risks.<sup>18</sup> According to Hess, empathy can serve to

overwhelm a participant with their feelings, causing students' emotional reactions to others' lived experiences to become the center of their learning, rather than the experiences of those about whom they are learning.<sup>19</sup>

An additional problem with artistic citizenship concerns how it regards music without explicit political content. Elliott et al. describe the "agendas and objectives of many arts educators," which focus on strictly musical goals, as not sufficiently educative, but "narrow, insular, remote, and disconnected from the affairs that matter most in people's everyday lives."<sup>20</sup> According to the authors, music without socio-political content or cause is without relevance. Elliott elsewhere cites the protest songs of Pete Seeger and the AIDS relief efforts of James Taylor, U2, and Elton John as the work of "artistic citizens," listing the "range of social problems on which artistic practice can be brought to bear" to justify the need for artistic endeavors to contribute to community change.<sup>21</sup> In this view, such change occurs by putting musical activities to work in the community, and the work of musical skill acquisition is "simply not enough."<sup>22</sup> The account presented here implies that musical engagement and participation, without further qualification, cannot be justified as socially beneficial acts. The content of musical works must have some added political message to affect society in a meaningful way.

If artistic citizenship includes those activities that involve a "commitment to serving the global human community," yet does not extend to "arts-related endeavors [which] are complacently confined to disciplinary or technical concerns,"<sup>23</sup> I ask: Are these mutually exclusive? In other words, are there not aspects of musical experiences which, on their own, exhibit qualities of social and political significance? Instead, the authors confine acts of artistic citizenship directly with social-political issues or those on which a political construct is applied.



Yet, disciplinary and technical concerns about music, in other words, musical concerns, can elicit empathetic growth that can influence socially beneficial notions of citizenship in society.

### **Empathy and Artistic Citizenship**

The nature of many musical experiences, owing partly to the development of empathy, makes these experiences politically significant. To be fair, in *Music Matters* Elliott and Silverman accept empathy as part of a dispositional education by music's *being in the world*, an "innate human propensity." Still, we take for granted its significance to citizenship in contexts of artistic citizenship. The authors regard empathy as a quality of consciousness rather than a social-emotional faculty that can be improved. In truth, researchers have found a decline in some types of empathy among university students in recent years.<sup>24</sup> Given the susceptibility for empathy to improve or decline, coupled with the importance of empathy in influencing notions of citizenship, a conception of empathy as a social-emotional faculty gives cause to wonder whether it should be assumed in acts of artistic citizenship.

Some misinterpretations might derive from the fact that empathy is a widely conceived phenomenon. In philosophy, Martha Nussbaum refers to empathy as a kind of "imaginative displacement," relatively neutral in its political connotations but often at the root of compassion, a political emotion with a public role.<sup>25</sup> Empathy, or "the ability to imagine the situation of the other, taking the other's perspective," is not necessary for compassion, according to Nussbaum (although "often extremely helpful"), but "morally valuable in and of itself...a recognition of the other as a center of the experience."<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Nussbaum describes empathy as a capacity that, in many people, can be "developed" and "matured," whether through activities like role-playing (a line of thinking she traces to Aristotle) or environmentally in "cultures of empathy," which encourage people to "see the world through the eyes of others."<sup>27</sup> Informed by empirical study,<sup>28</sup>

Nussbaum concludes that empathy-informed compassion, and compassionate action, might be cultivated through actively imagining another person's plight.<sup>29</sup>

For some in psychological research, empathy is regarded as an emotional state as well as a cognitive process, or moreover "the ability to produce emotional and experiential responses to the situations of others that approximate *their* responses and experiences, as well as an awareness and identification of their emotions."<sup>30</sup> Felicity Laurence, along with empirical researchers Tal-Chen Rabinowitch, Ian Cross, and researcher of philanthropy Sara Konrath, emphasizes the changeability of empathetic responses and the idea that empathy might be a social-emotional faculty or cognitive skill, rather than purely an affective emotion, which can improve or decline.<sup>31</sup>

When conceived as social-emotional faculty or cognitive skill rather than an involuntary process of personhood, I contend that the development of empathy is inherently political. It also happens in the rehearsal room and many informal settings of musical engagement, not just the performance stage. Performance-based activities might widen the reach of artistic citizenship through community engagement. Still, the development of citizenship-informing empathetic skills can happen in a group practice, engagement with musical works, and collaborative creative activity. In this way, arts-related endeavors, even when confined to "disciplinary or technical concerns,"<sup>32</sup> can contribute to that which can be politically significant and socially beneficial. By engaging and developing the faculty of empathy, musical activities can prepare students to engage with social and political issues in socially beneficial ways.

## Empathy for Citizenship

Extending artistic citizenship requires a better understanding of how artistic activities might affect students' engagement in social change. For this argument, social change occurs when students are empowered to recognize social problems and dedicated to finding solutions to address them. Artistic citizenship describes the second, more active part of this equation: students can seek solutions to civic problems through artistic activities.<sup>33</sup> But what influences students' determination about what is problematic in their communities? And to whose problems will they attend most? A teacher might provide opportunities for students to examine societal systems. Still, students' powers of discernment and their social-emotional understandings lead them to reflect in particular ways on the efficacy or fairness of situations in their communities.

Empathy might be a primary mover in empowering students to seek social change and informing what changes they seek. Researchers in music education recognize empathy as both a physiological and psychosocial phenomenon, both reactionary and volitional.<sup>34</sup> As such, empathy can be regarded as both a phenomenon that works *on* people, arising out of particular interactions and causing them to feel, but also as a functioning social-emotional skill that can be cultivated, or improved, throughout one's life. Laurence explores this distinction further, using Stein's Theory of Empathy to describe empathy as a cognitive process, rather than purely an affective response.<sup>35</sup>

In contrast to more reactionary "emotional contagion,"<sup>36</sup> Laurence's active conception of empathy relies on people cultivating a sense of a "higher we."<sup>37</sup> Citing Mothe, Laurence further emphasizes the distinction and importance of active empathy, saying that empathy is not a "thing" that we "have" but can be *done well*.<sup>38</sup> Empathizing well requires people "actively to strive for an empathic knowing of the other," distinguishing empathy from the state, trait, or

other involuntary positioning.<sup>39</sup> The distinction of empathy as an active faculty rather than an involuntary emotional response is vital since emotional contagion can easily be associated with harmful acts of "mass hysteria," as with the potential altruism that can come from feeling a sense of togetherness with others.<sup>40</sup> Woodford, as previously discussed, explores these more negative potentialities. Hess additionally warns of the dangers of "passive" empathy to re-center Whiteness and "erase complicity."<sup>41</sup>

So it seems that empathy (and a more actively realized or cultivated version of empathy conceived as faculty rather than involuntary affective response) is a necessary correlate of avoiding potential harm in acts of social, and even social-political, engagement. Active cultivation of the faculty of empathy, and its constitutive reflective processes, is thus further implicated as an essential part of utilizing the capacity for music education to effect social change, especially if one intends to avoid the potentially harmful consequences of the emotional contagion inherent to many musical experiences.

On a broader scale, the importance of empathy for a just and ethical society is recognized throughout civic scholarship and among those interested in social intervention and improvement. According to researchers in social work education, empathy is not only "a critical component of developing a deep understanding of people's life experiences," it is "a necessary ingredient in becoming a civically engaged person."<sup>42</sup> Empathy is crucial because it is regarded as "a cognitive capacity to take the perspective of another," which allows for "some temporary identification between self and other."<sup>43</sup> Such a capacity allows problems to be viewed and cared about outside of a strictly individual context. Moreover, evidence suggests that those with higher degrees of empathy are more likely to be involved in rectifying social problems.<sup>44</sup> An advanced ability to empathize might be what causes people to act on behalf of others, participating in positive social

change or responding to the needs of people that might otherwise be considered Other, irrelevant, or uninvolved.

For Nussbaum, the necessity of empathy for society lies not only in the capacity for empathy to contribute to rectifying social inequalities but in the potential for empathy to blur the self/other distinction. In this sense, empathy can be personally transformative, creating a multifaceted view of essential or requiring action or attention. Nussbaum describes the need for empathy for socially beneficial citizenship indirectly in her proposal that engagement with literature, through the cultivation of empathy, serves as "an essential part of both the theory and practice of citizenship."<sup>45</sup> Simultaneously, Nussbaum points the way toward artistic activity as a means of developing empathy, explaining how the "ability to imagine the situation of the other," inherent in literary engagement, requires a vivid imagining of another's experience,<sup>46</sup> which might contribute to empathetic growth. It is not the same as simply putting oneself in another's shoes but involves a "type of imaginative displacement" aided by engagement with other people's stories.<sup>47</sup> According to Nussbaum, such imagining represents "the key variable distinguishing those in whom a story of woe elicits compassion from those in whom it does not."<sup>48</sup>

It is easy here to wonder whether empathy is necessary for all members of society. Musical interaction that impacts empathy development among students from oppressive communities can humanize those they have victimized. However, empathy can be helpful for all members of a pluralistic society so that each member may connect socially and emotionally to other people and their life experiences. To be clear, one needs empathy for more than just correction; it might be foundational to any community which values all voices. It does not, however, require or implore consensus. I might empathize with a politically disagreeable person

and value their freedom and voice; this does not require me to follow them or do as they do. A student may not like their stand-partner but might still understand and appreciate their intention to contribute to the whole of a unified musical expression. Empathy, like musical engagement, does not require total agreement. Instead, empathy might allow students to begin to see issues from the perspective of multiple and varied human experiences. It might not insist on a culture of consent but create an environment for dissent to exist without an expulsion.

### **Music Education for Empathy**

#### **Philosophical Perspectives**

Given the importance of empathy for those interested in social change, providing a pedagogy of empathy is a crucial task. However, literature on teaching and cultivating empathy yields an undecided sense of how one might develop empathy and with what pedagogies.<sup>49</sup> Those interested in teaching empathetic skills have struggled with the idea that empathy is not "well-articulated as a communicable and teachable concept," and our understanding of how it arises is "haphazard and narrow."<sup>50</sup> Promisingly, philosophers of music have long been concerned with how arts education might function to educate students' affective faculties.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, building empirical evidence suggests that social music-making develops empathy.<sup>52</sup>

There is an ideological precedent for believing that musical experiences might elicit social-emotional, specifically empathetic, growth. Philosophers Susanne Langer, Martha Nussbaum, and Iris Yob have been concerned about facilitating emotional education by engaging music. For Langer, the connection between musical experiences and emotion can be understood as a property of some music, whether absolute or programmatic,<sup>53</sup> to symbolize feelings through their significant artistic forms. These works educate those who experience them by their "denotative and connotative" qualities, rather than any direct representation of object or

emotion.<sup>54</sup> Her idea responds to notions that music might work as a vehicle of either a composer's or performer's "self-expression."<sup>55</sup> Langer rejects these, insisting that "sheer self-expression," like the guttural sounds of an angry mob, "require no artistic form."<sup>56</sup> Instead, music conveys something less temporal than a composer or performer's current affective state—it symbolizes a composer's "knowledge of feeling," rather than their own emotions, presenting those engaging in music with "a source of insight, not a plea for sympathy."<sup>57</sup> However, her philosophy is not without its unanswered questions; as Bowman points out, Langer articulates "the form of feeling," but she can't say with any clarity "what those forms might be."<sup>58</sup>

While Langer might regard literary narrative as the product of discursive symbolism and outside the domain of felt experience, Nussbaum advocates for its use as a powerful means of engendering feelings like empathy among readers. As cited by Yob, literature provides the opportunity to develop one's "expressive imagination," a faculty that can "bridge the gap between the private inner world of reflection and the public outer world of engagement with human needs."<sup>59</sup> However, Nussbaum concludes that music, a dreamlike art form with no discrete or unambiguous meaning, cannot adequately convey a narrative to provoke the particular types of emotional responses that inspire empathy. Yob alleviates this concern, describing how engagement with programmatic music works can provide narrative-like experiences through which empathy is born.<sup>60</sup> Through careful contextual study, she explains how programmatic music can give listeners a sense of specific human experiences, including how it might have felt for the people who lived them. These philosophies provide sufficient evidence that musical engagement can develop empathy in students by stimulating their imaginations to consider experiences other than those they have first-hand and by presenting them with particular ways of knowing the emotional world.

The emotions arising from musical engagement, including empathy, are envisioned by Yob as influencing acts of cognition. In her account of emotional cognitions, Yob explains how "some feeling moment" can have rational impacts as we develop understandings of the consequences of exhibiting emotional states and their benefits to our lives.<sup>61</sup> To understand the relationship between these emotions and cognition, Yob asks for a Copernican turn. Rather than thinking of emotions solely as arising from rational cognition and understanding, she describes cognition that works in service of emotion. Even emotions not directly related to survival implore cognition to rationalize them concerning appropriate behavior, consequence, and expression. Feelings of benevolence, for example, prompt cognitive explication because of the positive social effects we intuit from our pursuant expressions of compassion and care. These emotions are what allow reason to justify appropriate actions. It follows that enhancing emotional faculties, like empathy, can improve students' emotionally-cognitive rational capacities to sort through social justice, citizenship, and equity issues.

In sum, these philosophical accounts provide base reasoning for understanding how emotional content, meaning, and skills might be cultivated or practiced through musical experiences. From Langer, we can surmise a capacity for music to present meaningful understandings around feelings writ large; from Nussbaum and Yob, the possibility of more directed emotional experiences in music through narrative and imaginative displacement. Taken together, we might derive empathy from the understanding of empathy via absolute or programmatic music or the practice of empathy through engagement with narrative or programmatic works.



## Empirical Research

Recent empirical evidence suggests that the relationship between music and empathy might also extend to group music-making and develop actionable empathy through musical interaction. Rather than restricting empathetic imagination to those reflected in music works, co-actors might inspire such processes in musical engagement. For example, Rabinowitch, Cross, and Burnard found higher degrees of emotional empathy ("the ability to experience another person's emotional state") among students in a musical group interaction program than those not involved in group music participation after one year of study using self-report questionnaires as well as verbal, and non-verbal observational measures.<sup>62</sup> In addition, Resein identified specific empathy producing musical components associated with musical group interaction, suggesting that empathy development might be a matter of participating in particular types of musical activities rather than (or in addition to) engaging with particular types of pieces of music.<sup>63 64</sup>

Given these conclusions, Langer's and Yob's accounts of the capacity for music to act as education of feeling through the connections between composers, performers, and audiences might be complemented by the psychological findings referred to here. For both Langer and Yob, the content of musical works determines the extent to which participants might direct their imaginations and elicit empathetic results; for these philosophers, solo music-making can provide a "feeling moment," wherein participants have imaginative experiences that can blur self and other.<sup>65</sup> While according to Rabinowitch et al., "listening or even playing alone is insufficient for acquiring the full breadth and richness that interpersonal musical interaction can offer,"<sup>66</sup> concerning these findings, what one needs in imagining more musically empathetic experiences for students is not necessarily a hierarchal understanding or an "either-or."<sup>67</sup> Music listening and solo musical experiences might contribute to the cultivation of empathy as

philosophers have described, and so might more physically interactive experiences, as is evidenced in psychological research. In sum, the possibility that findings from the psychological milieu might inform existing philosophical accounts is encouraging. These accounts provide an opportunity to synthesize an understanding of the relationship between empathy, citizenship, and music education among solo, ensemble, programmatic, and absolute musical contexts. What might we learn from the complete compendium of evidence? While Langer and Yob have provided a way for understanding how engagement with particular music might produce empathetic responses, we now turn to reckon with the suggestion of some psychological researchers that particular modes of musical engagement might also play a role.

Some of the most compelling experimental data for the connections between empathy and musical interaction comes from Sebastian Kirschner and Michael Tomasello, who studied four- and five-year-olds' prosocial behavior following a social music-making task.<sup>68</sup> In a controlled experiment, researchers measured empathy in children based on their decisions towards "spontaneous helping" following periods of musical play and non-musical play.<sup>69</sup> The researchers found that children were more prone to provide spontaneous help to other children after musical play than non-musical play. This study and many others<sup>70</sup> indicate the capacity for music education to promote higher degrees of empathy among music participants. Given the importance of empathy for an equitable society, such research offers further evidence that music education can inspire socially beneficial notions of citizenship. This revelation provides important pedagogical goals for programs intent on social change.

Through an extended definition, encompassing not only the exercise of citizenship through the arts but the potential to develop its constituent interpersonal skills, artistic citizenship might be better situated to describe how music can prepare and inspire students to act towards

equitable change in their communities. By extending to acknowledge empathy as a potential outcome of artistic practice, artistic citizenship helps to characterize the breadth of possibilities for students in music education to exercise their citizenship and to develop it in socially beneficial ways. Informing citizenship in this way is both a matter of emotional education through engagement with musical works and musical group interaction.<sup>71</sup> If music educators capitalize on these possibilities and most powerfully influence students' citizenship, I propose synthesizing strategies.

### **A Pedagogy of Empathy**

Empathy allows for newer understandings of citizenship than those culturally and historically ascribed. An extended idea of citizenship, one which encompasses citizenship within a musical community, allows for the conception of citizen not only as a political or national identity but as a contributor to a community capable of shared ineffable experience. Citizenship of this nature has the potential to assuage the exclusionary qualities Bradley identifies. By informing students' notions of citizenship through empathy-promoting musical experiences, political actions can come from a place of empathy rather than exclusion. Further, as educators, it seems irresponsible to focus exclusively and indiscriminately on giving students a political voice in the exercise of artistic citizenship. Providing students with opportunities to form their political attitudes empathetically before putting them out into the world lessens the possibility that these will serve the purposes of propaganda and zealotry. Through empathy-promoting musical experiences, music educators might empower students to approach social issues with the sense that other peoples' problems are essential and that the successes of others can improve their successes.

Rather than metaphorical citizenship on which to build their artistic correlate, Elliott et al. might consider a more specific version of citizenship and one inclusive of the empathy developed in and through music education. Allsup's concept of musical citizenship, wherein students' capacities for "mutual care" are developed through the intentional study of diverse musics, might help name these potentialities or extend the effects of empathy producing musical experiences when incorporated into the music curriculum.<sup>72</sup> However, criticism of discourse associated with citizenship as a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion would still apply.<sup>73</sup> Westheimer and Kahne's categories of citizenship, like the "justice-oriented" type, might help make the term more specific but begin to beg questions about *what and who's justice?*<sup>74</sup> A third option involves terminology from the social sciences like *communitarianism*, wherein citizenship, and thus artistic citizenship, might be most concerned with "civic obligation and the common good."<sup>75</sup> This definition is set in relief to *legalistic* views of citizenship, which seek to "inculcate obedience and respect for law and order."<sup>76</sup> How might the musical activities of the *artistic legalist* differ from the *artistic communitarian*? For which do Elliott et al. advocate in music education?

A model of artistic communitarianism, comprehensive of both the artistically informed development of citizenship and its exercise, centers around empathy as a pedagogical goal rather than a propensity. The reasons for this are logical and opportunistic: empathy is essential to the formulation of communitarian notions of citizenship, and music can contribute to developing these ideas in unique and powerful ways. When deciding on cultivating empathy through music education, teachers can consider how engagement with music works can inspire empathetic skills. Taking up more opportunities for group musical interaction and incorporating these in more varied contexts might also help empathy grow. However, there are perhaps even more

excellent opportunities for teaching toward empathy if educators are not only concerned with musical engagement or group musical interaction but how group music-making might enhance how students are experiencing the content of chosen works.

We might engender empathy drawn from music participation by the renewed focus on group musical interaction and musical play. Students could be encouraged to work together whenever possible to realize the benefits of musical interaction. Many ways teachers do this are native to ensemble and group music class experiences, including having students move, play, and emote together. What is important to note is that all students should have access to these experiences, not just those that can afford to invest in social-emotional development. Further, teachers might consider how empathy derived between co-actors in musical activity might be limited to members of an already socially cohesive group. Prolonged activity of this nature might serve to build community amongst an ensemble, but those interested in citizenship-informing empathy development are wise to consider how empathy might be extended to those outside students' ordinary social, political, or identity groups.

To engender empathy drawn from musical engagement, as Yob describes, students might be afforded opportunities to engage with music with narrative content, which contributes to empathy development by inspiring a unique manner of imagination attendant to another person's story.<sup>77</sup> Lessons could be designed to lead students through these processes of directed imagination to enhance their empathy development. Consider the experience of my friend, a former Director of Arts Programming in the South Bronx.<sup>78</sup> His musical theatre class was bookended by an annual Empathy Concert, the culmination of a semester-long project. In class, students reflected on feelings derived from their pieces of study. Through visual interpretations and creative prose, they responded to the emotions they imagined the composer or songwriter

wanted to convey. They were asked to reflect on their own experiences and to re-live times they experienced similar feelings. Finally, each student read a personal declaration to describe how they empathized with their piece before performing it for a public audience. Through this project, affective musical engagement was potentially enhanced through deliberate questioning and consideration. By attending to the perspectives expressed by their music of study, students involved in projects like this one can develop empathy through engagement with musical works.

A synthesized understanding of empathy development, inclusive of both empathy derived from musical engagement and born in musical interaction, might allow educators to extend the impact of musical engagement by incorporating musical interaction into their processes. Imagine, for example, that one draws the narrative content of musical works from students' own experiences. This could occur through processes of original composition or by inviting students to select and share music that they feel relates to some aspect of their lives, similar to processes involved with an Empathy Concert. Engagement with these works of music would offer a degree of interpretive interaction, requiring students to imagine the experiences of their co-actors. This compounds the empathy development process, wherein we might derive empathy from engagement with musical content and with and among those involved in musical interaction.

From a philosophical perspective, the scenario becomes especially interesting if students choose to play chosen or original works in the ensemble. At this point, students might not just feel empathy for the composer or the composer's life experiences but as active agents in putting that story out into the world, together, as members of a musical group. Thus, what I hope this exemplary activity illustrates is a synthesized approach to empathy development: empathy for a classmate not only by way of experiencing their story through their composition or chosen work,

or by the very nature of musical engagement, but empathy derived by being a co-actor in active and reflective musical activity.

Considering this synthesized strategy, I would like to reimagine, through a communitarian lens, examples of artistic citizenship identified by Elliott et al. that provide remaining questions about its nature in practice.<sup>79</sup> For example, the authors describe the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance (IWAMD), an organization that exemplifies artistic citizenship in its curriculum. One aspect of IWAMD's artistic citizenship work is a community Comcheol choir that aims to reach out to newly arriving migrant populations. They offer choir members free childcare to anticipate their practical and holistic needs and lower barriers to access. The result, they say, is a "bridge built" between the world of higher education and newly arriving community members.<sup>80</sup>

The emphasis on making cross-cultural connections through artistry as an act of artistic citizenship might be an important avenue towards ethical musical engagement and social justice; however, it is equally important to question the nature of the relationships built, and bridges erected. The educator's task of employing artistic citizenship in these activities becomes much broader than offering cross-cultural connections and includes processes that might produce empathy among participants.

Consider how the Comcheol choir of the IWAMD might acknowledge empathy development in its artistic citizenship practice. Experiences of musical group interaction and imaginative musical engagement might enhance empathy produced within a culturally disparate group like this one, in addition to the acts of community engagement its performances might afford. Equal effort, then, or perhaps more effort, might be put towards classroom or rehearsal activities that center empathetic engagement or interactive musical activities devoted to

presenting music for a community performance. Lessons in cooperative musicianship and peer support, recognition of individual contributions and shared goals, and deep engagement with others' musical experiences might also be considered vehicles for empathetic growth. Through these experiences, choir members might develop social-emotional faculties and form their ideas of citizenship. Of course, these ideals are the responsibility of the artistic citizen. Nevertheless, their formation represents an essential facet of the potential for artistic citizenship in music education.

The performance of protest songs, an act of artistic citizenship initially described by Elliott et al., might also be enhanced by a pedagogy of empathy. Students could utilize empathy-promoting musical activities in addition to considering the political issues the songs describe. They might engage in collaborative practice, shown to develop empathy in individuals. They might lead through reflective engagement to discern songs' meanings to recognize dynamic content connected to their own experiences. They could even write music themselves, responding to the experiences of others through an empathetic lens. In each of these examples, the content of students' civic contribution is in development, aimed at informing student citizenship before putting it to work.

The difference between performing artistic citizenship and developing citizenship-informing practice lies squarely in what research reveals about the nature of musical engagement and music participation: it is not only about the artistic statement made to the community, but the ways in which musical practice shapes what that statement will be. While Elliott et al. may understand these as mutually reciprocal processes,<sup>81</sup> given the potentially harmful nature of a concept like citizenship, greater specificity about the nature of artistic citizenship and the role of empathy within it might help to avoid the pitfalls of a problematic discourse. Moreover, through



their engagement with and participation in musical activities, students can develop the skills to be citizens who act with empathy. What follows is a broader view of artistic citizenship, one that enriches both the field of possibilities for more meaningful musical engagement and further unlocks the potential for music education to serve as a vehicle for social change.

### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> David James Elliott, Marissa Silverman, and Wayne D. Bowman, eds., *Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> David James Elliott, "Another Perspective," *Music Educators Journal*, 99, no. 1 (2012): 21-27.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>5</sup> Elliott et al., *Artistic Citizenship*, 7.

<sup>6</sup> David James Elliott, Marissa Silverman, and Wayne D. Bowman, eds., *Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Ebook, 44.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Deborah Bradley, "Artistic Citizenship: Escaping the Violence of the Normative (?)," *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 17, no. 2 (2018): 71-91; Paul Woodford, "The Eclipse of the Public: A Response to David Elliott's 'Music Education As/for Artistic Citizenship'," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 22, no. 1 (2014): 22.

<sup>11</sup> Woodford, "Eclipse of the Public," 33.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 31.

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- <sup>13</sup> Bradley, “Escaping the Violence of the Normative,” 77.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, 79.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, 77-8.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid, 73.
- <sup>17</sup> Juliet Hess, *Music Education for Social Change: Constructing an Activist Music Education* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019): 128.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, 115.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid, 142.
- <sup>20</sup> Elliott et al., *Artistic Citizenship*, 11.
- <sup>21</sup> Elliott, “Another Perspective,” 26.
- <sup>22</sup> Elliott et al., *Artistic Citizenship*, 11.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid, 77.
- <sup>24</sup> Sara H. Konrath, Edward H. O’Brien, and Courtney Hsing, “Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students Over Time: A Meta-Analysis,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14, no. 2 (2011): 180-198.
- <sup>25</sup> Martha Nussbaum, *Political Emotions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid, 145-6.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid, 178-9; 198.
- <sup>28</sup> Nussbaum cites the experimental studies of Daniel C. Batson, *The Altruism Question: Toward a Social-Psychological Answer* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992) and *Altruism in Humans* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- <sup>29</sup> Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 145. It should be noted before going further that this is an admittedly Euro-centric vision of empathy, and many other views and definitions of empathy

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(including those which trouble the notion that it might be a skill to be cultivated) exist. Some accounts, like Buber's, de-emphasize the conception of empathy as a capacity or skill altogether, depicting empathy as a phenomenon that arises not within a person, but between people in a dialogic "crossing over."<sup>29</sup> Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1955). The concept of *ubuntu*, drawn from Africana philosophy, dictates a shared spirit among humanity frequently summarized by the Zulu saying, "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" ("a person depends on others to be a person")<sup>29</sup>. Jacob Mugumbate and Andrew Nyanguru, "Exploring African Philosophy: The Value of Ubuntu in Social Work," *African Journal of Social Work* 3, no. 1 (2013). Ethical principles from Confucian philosophy, including the broad concept of *ren* ("benevolence", "human-heartedness", "humaneness", or "love of others"), treat empathy as an emotional impetus for cultivating "humaneness."<sup>29</sup> Ann A. Pang-White, Caring in Confucian Philosophy, *Philosophy Compass* 6, no. 6 (2011), 377.

<sup>30</sup> Tal-Chen Rabinowitch, Ian Cross, and Pamela Burnard, "Long-term Musical Group Interaction Has a Positive Influence on Empathy in Children," *Psychology of Music* 41, no. 4 (2012), 485.

<sup>31</sup> Ian Cross, Felicity Laurence, and Tal-Chen Rabinowitch, "Empathy and Creativity in Group Musical Practices: Toward a Concept of Empathic Creativity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education, Volume 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*, ed. Gary E. McPherson and Graham F. Welch (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012); Sara H. Konrath, "Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students Over Time: A Meta-Analysis."

<sup>32</sup> Elliott et al., *Artistic Citizenship*, 77.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

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<sup>34</sup> Cross, Laurence, and Rabinowitch, “Empathy and Creativity in Group Musical Practices: Toward a Concept of Empathic Creativity.”

<sup>35</sup> Felicity Laurence, “Music and Empathy,” in *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, ed. Olivier Urbain (London, UK: IB Tauris in association with the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, 2008), 19.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid (emphasis mine).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>41</sup> Hess, 142.

<sup>42</sup> Karen E. Gerdes, Elizabeth A. Segal, Kelly F. Jackson, and Jennifer L. Mullins, "Teaching Empathy: A Framework Rooted in Social Cognitive Neuroscience and Social Justice," *Journal of Social Work Education* 47, no. 1 (2011), 123.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 112.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 123.

<sup>45</sup> Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 52.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 146.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Gerdes et al., “Teaching Empathy,” 110.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 112.

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<sup>51</sup> Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*. (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1953); Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice*; Iris Yob, "A Feeling for Others: Music Education and Service Learning," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 8, no. 2 (2000).

<sup>52</sup> See studies by Sebastian Kirschner and Michael Tomasello, "Joint Music Making Promotes Prosocial Behavior in 4-year-old Children," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 31, no. 5 (2010); Tal-Chen Rabinowitch, Ian Cross, and Pamela Burnard, "Long-term Musical Group Interaction Has a Positive Influence on Empathy in Children," *Psychology of Music* 41, no. 4 (2012); Merja Hietolahti-Ansten, "Self-Esteem and Empathy Among Children Actively Involved in Music," *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 71, no. 7 (1990): 1364-6; Paul Reddish, Ronald Fischer, and Joseph Bulbulia, "Let's Dance Together: Synchrony, Shared Intentionality and Cooperation," *PLoS ONE* 8, no. 8, (2013); Glenn Schellenberg, Kathleen A. Corrigan, Sebastian P. Dys, and Tina Malti, "Group Music Training and Children's Prosocial Skills," *Plos One* 10, no. 10, (2015).

<sup>53</sup> While Langer, in *Philosophy in a New Key*, does not restrict logical symbolism to absolute music, she derides "program music" and "sound painting" as "naïve and literal," (221); likely, absolute music provides better opportunity to convey emotional meaning than programmatic music because it is more "non-representative...with no obvious, literal content in our way," (209).

<sup>54</sup> Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, 216.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 221.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 217.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 222. In *Feeling and Form*, Langer characterizes music as providing a symbol through which we can conceive of the emotional world. It is not a tool for emotional contagion, but the

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very form of feeling, a “logical picture of sentient, responsive life” (described by Wayne Bowman, *Philosophical Perspectives on Music*. New York: Oxford University Press: 1998, 110.) Music is revelatory, in this view, presenting a unique impression of humans’ conscious lives, and, most importantly, the way it feels to live them. In this way, music serves as an “education of feeling,” engaging with the world of feelings the way other subjects serve to educate the faculty of reason (214).

<sup>58</sup> Bowman, 218.

<sup>59</sup> Yob, “A Feeling for Others,” 68.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Iris Yob, “Cognitive Emotions and Emotional Cognitions in the Arts,” *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 32, no. 2, (1998): 35.

<sup>62</sup> Rabinowitch, Cross, and Burnard, “Long-term Musical Group Interaction Has A Positive Influence on Empathy in Children.”

<sup>63</sup> Tal-Chen Rabinowitch, “How, Rather Than What Type of, Music Increases Empathy,” *Empirical Musicology Review* 10, no. 1 (2015).

<sup>64</sup> It should be noted that in *Music Matters*, 102, Elliott & Silverman describe praxial musical experiences which do specifically contribute to the benefit of society, having been “carried out ethically, for the human ‘goods’ of well-being, flourishing, democratic engagement, educative teaching and learning, or positive social transformation” however, these processes are not characterized within the specific contexts of citizenship or *artistic citizenship*. Greater specificity in the use of citizenship as a construct would help explicate the potentialities for *artistic citizenship* as a socio-musical goal.

<sup>65</sup> Yob, “Cognitive Emotions and Emotional Contagion in the Arts,” 35.

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<sup>66</sup> Rabinowitch, “How Rather Than What Type of, Music Increases Empathy,” 97.

<sup>67</sup> John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: MacMillan, 1938), 5.

<sup>68</sup> Kirschner and Tomasello, "Joint Music Making Promotes Prosocial Behavior in 4-year-old Children."

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 360.

<sup>70</sup> Hietolahti-Ansten, "Self-Esteem and Empathy Among Children Actively Involved in Music;" Rabinowitch et al., “Long-term Musical Group Interaction Has a Positive Influence on Empathy in Children;” Reddish et al., "Let’s Dance Together;” Schellenberg et al., "Group Music Training and Children’s Prosocial Skills.”

<sup>71</sup> *Musical group interaction* is the term used by Rabinowitch et al., in “Long-term Musical Group Interaction Has a Positive Influence on Empathy in Children.”

<sup>72</sup> Randall Everett Allsup, “On Pluralism, Inclusion, and Musical Citizenship,” *Nordic Research in Music Education*, 12 (2010): 9-30.

<sup>73</sup> Bradley, “Artistic Citizenship: Escaping the Violence of the Normative (?).”

<sup>74</sup> Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne, “What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy.” *American Educational Research Journal*, 41, no. 2, (2004): 237-269.

<sup>76</sup> Christopher Anderson, Patricia G. Avery, Patricia V. Pederson, Elizabeth S. Smith and John L. Sullivan, “Divergent Perspectives on Citizenship Education: A Q-method Study and Survey of Social Studies Teachers.” *American Educational Research Journal*, 34, no. 2, (1997): 343

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 344.

<sup>77</sup> As discussed thoroughly by Yob in “A Feeling for Others.”

<sup>78</sup> Brandon Magid, Former Director of Arts Programming, DreamYard Preparatory High School (New York, NY), in conversation with the author Fall 2018.

<sup>79</sup> Elliott et al., *Artistic Citizenship*.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 92.

<sup>81</sup> As suggested in writings like *Music Matters*.

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