

2007

### Returning Music Education to the Mainstream: Reconnecting with the Community

Patrick M. Jones  
*The University of the Arts*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Jones, Patrick M. (2007) "Returning Music Education to the Mainstream: Reconnecting with the Community," *Visions of Research in Music Education: Vol. 7 , Article 4*.  
Available at: <https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme/vol7/iss1/4>

***Returning Music Education to the Mainstream: Reconnecting with the Community***

Patrick M. Jones, Ph.D.

The University of the Arts

ABSTRACT

School music programs should be fostering both lifewide and lifelong musicing by enabling students to be involved in performing and enjoying a wide range of musical offerings within their communities throughout their lives. They should focus on connecting students with the musical lives of their communities, teaching them to perform, compose and arrange a variety of musical styles available throughout their community, as well as chamber music they can perform at home and with friends. This would move school music from the margins to the mainstream of the musical lives of their communities.

The researcher investigated the musical offerings in Philadelphia from 21 September – 5 October 2003, documenting both live and broadcast music performances, to determine the “musical life” of the community during that period. The results indicate that the majority of performances in both live and broadcast media during this study period were musics unique to the Americas that developed from the clash and convergence of cultures unique to the Western Hemisphere. This is not the music typically offered in K12 school music programs, possibly indicating a disconnection between school music programs and the community’s music scene. This could be a cause for lack of support for and participation in school music programs.

This study raises implications and provides suggestions for both K12 curricular offerings and music teacher preparation programs. Given the fluid demographic shifts of pluralistic societies, ethnographic research and curriculum design have become necessary skills for music teachers. This study also indicates music teachers in the USA need to be well versed in digital technology, transcribing, arranging, and a wide variety of musics reflective of the Americas including traditional “art” musics of the Western Hemisphere, Bluegrass, folk, jazz, Brazilian, Caribbean, Cuban, Latin American, rock, pop and World Musics.

INTRODUCTION

Music education in the USA is in a state of flux. Instructional time for the arts is being reduced,<sup>1</sup> programs and jobs are being cut,<sup>2</sup> and there is simultaneously a national shortage of music teachers that has reached crisis proportions. Approximately 20% of all new teachers leave the classroom after just 3 years, while 50% quit teaching after 5 years.<sup>3</sup> Some 11,000 music teachers leave the profession annually while only 5,000 music teachers per year replace them. The end result is a deficit of 6,000 music teachers each year.<sup>4</sup> At this rate there may not be enough music teachers left by mid- 21st Century to make music a viable school offering.

Discussions concerning issues such as teacher recruitment and retention, student participation in music offerings, and public support for music in the schools often avoid the most

---

<sup>1</sup>Council for Basic Education, *Academic Atrophy: The Condition of the Liberal Arts in America’s Public Schools* (Council for Basic Education, March 2004), 7-8.

<sup>2</sup>Robert A. Frahm, *Schools ‘Losing Ground’ in Arts* (Education) [Internet] (September 6 2005 [cited September 6 2005]); available from <http://www.courant.com/news/education/hc-schoolarts.artsep06.0.1792881.story?coll=hc-headlines-education>.

<sup>3</sup>Cited in Clifford K. Madsen and Carl B. Hancock, “Support for Music Education: A Case Study of Issues Concerning Teacher Retention and Attrition,” *Arts Education Policy Review* Vol. 104, No. 1, (September/October 2002), 19-24.

<sup>4</sup>Carol Huffman, “It’s a Cooperative Effort,” *The Orff Echo* (Winter 2003), 8.

basic issue, the music!<sup>5</sup> While important issues such as salary and working conditions, scheduling, testing and standards, which often seem to be the sole foci of discussions surrounding these issues, are definitely factors for teacher recruitment and retention, they do not address the low participation rates of students in secondary school music offerings, nor do they have anything to do with the lack of public support for music education. Meanwhile, the music to be studied and the performing experiences offered students seem to go widely unexamined and unquestioned by the music education profession as if they are the only possible musical experiences we are capable of offering.<sup>6</sup> Libby Larsen, one of the USA's most prominent living composers, addressed this in a recent interview where she critiqued US music education saying "...we have a system that has grown up around a particular repertoire that is a really small percentage of the music that is in our world"...[music education]..."faces a crisis of relevancy to the musical world in which we live".<sup>7</sup>

Larsen is addressing what most of us know if we'll be intellectually honest. There is a musical disconnect between the schools and the community. The musical ensembles offered for students across the USA are predominantly Western European ensembles: Symphony Orchestras, Concert Bands, and Choirs performing Western European art music or music based in the Western European art music tradition, arrangements of American popular music, and perhaps some "world music" or American spirituals being sung in chorus.

The only uniquely American ensembles widely offered in US schools are Football Marching Bands, Big Band Jazz Ensembles, Show Choirs, and annual productions of Broadway styled musicals. Some schools offer experiences in world music groups, such as African drum ensembles, but these are rare by comparison. It must also be noted that the opportunities to perform in all but the symphony orchestra, choir and the concert and marching bands are generally limited to a select few students. And, even these large ensembles serve a small minority of the greater high school student population.

Some teachers include repertoire representing what has come to be known as "multicultural music". Exactly which cultures they include is primarily a personal choice and might not necessarily reflect the community in which the school is situated. It is often intended to serve as an introduction to music from around the world instead of the music of the students' own world. And, such music may be performed in inauthentic contexts, such as a mariachi medley arranged for concert band, creating no authentic cultural experience whatsoever. Thus, as a profession we seem to give little attention to programming music that will connect students with

---

<sup>5</sup>Clifford K. Madsen and Carl B. Hancock, "Support for Music Education: A Case Study of Issues Concerning Teacher Retention and Attrition". The authors list items such as administrative and parental support, financial issues, personal issues and classroom discipline, but never question the music included. This is particularly interesting as one of the anecdotal responses they published said the teacher "wanted something more musically interesting" yet the topic of music was never pursued.

<sup>6</sup>This is evidenced in the most recent statistical study from the U.S Department of Education: John M. and Ana Maria Solis Guerra Geringer, "Preferences of 5th Grade Children in Mexico and the United States for School and Non-School Music Excerpts," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 153, no. 4 (Summer and Fall 2002). [publication NCES 2002-131 available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>]. This document is supposedly a "national profile of the status of arts education" in schools. The types of music offered is never even raised in the study. Types of offerings (classes/ensembles) provided is asked of elementary school principals. They were to identify if they offered "general music, chorus, band, strings/orchestra, and other". The results show nobody reported "other", leaving the reader to conclude the standard offerings listed above are all that apparently exist. The survey for secondary school principals, which potentially might reveal more diversity in music offerings, doesn't even include that question. Thus, the only data available indicates at the very least a bias on the part of the U.S. Department of Education that only such traditional school ensembles are offered widely.

<sup>7</sup>Valerie Strauss [interview with Libby Larsen], "For Music Teachers, a Trumpet Call to Relevance," *Washington Post* (March 2, 2004), Page A09.

the musical lives of the communities in which they live. I am not advocating limiting students' musical experiences only to those found in their own communities, such as Latino students only learning Latino music. What I am suggesting is that the school's local community is the logical starting place for developing school music curricula in order to bridge the gap between school and community so students can develop lifewide and lifelong musical participation skills and habits. In addition to the musical offerings being disconnected from the community and from student needs and interests, this may also be partially responsible for many musicians not choosing careers as music teachers. In this paper I will address this crucial topic, which appears to be missing from the discussion at large: the music studied and musical experiences offered in schools. To do so I will identify a disconnection between school music and the musical lives of the community using a large US city as a case study. I will recommend school music offerings bridge this gap by being oriented to the musical lives of their communities in order to foster musical participation of all students in both lifelong and lifewide scenarios. I will recommend the first stage of curriculum design should be a musical ethnography of the community in order to determine the musical contexts from which students come. Armed with such information, teachers can design music programs that break down barriers between school music and the out-of-school musical lives of their students. Finally, implications for curricular reform and teacher education will be reviewed and recommendations offered in order to foster dialogue within the profession.

### Population

The first step to bridging the gap between school and community music is to consider the students and community for which schooling exists when designing curriculum. Looking at the USA's demographics alone reveals a fluid situation that bears consideration. The population demographics have shifted greatly toward a more Latinized USA during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and will continue to do so during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Hispanics surpassed African-Americans in 2002 to become the largest minority in the USA now comprising 13.5% of the population.<sup>8</sup> This trend will continue for the foreseeable future. The population distribution by 2050 is predicted to be: 50% white, 25% Hispanic, 15% black or African-American, 8% Asian, and 2% other.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, there is a population shift from north to south as many North Americans invest in South America, relocate there for business, visit for business and leisure travel and even perform missionary work there. The end result will be a population orientation less defined nationalistically and more defined hemispherically.<sup>10</sup>

Current university students will be reaching retirement age in 2050. Therefore, they will spend their entire careers teaching during a seismic demographic shift in the US population. We must insure we are preparing them for the future.

While this paper focuses on the demographic plurality of the United States, the issues are relevant to all nations and supranational structures, such as the European Union, where

---

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Census Bureau. INTERNET. [accessed 29 November 2003]. [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). NOTE: This figure also does not account for the thousands of immigrants from the Southern part of the Americas who are not Hispanic. Some 16,086,974 people listed having immigrated to the United States from Latin America on the 2000 US Census. This is twice as many as the approximately 8 million from Asia, and considerably more than the 5 million Europeans, 900,000 Africans, 800,000 North Americans, and 168,000 immigrants from Oceania.

<sup>9</sup>Genaro C. Armas, "Census sees whites no longer in majority in U.S. after 2050," *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Thursday, March 18, 2004), A4.

<sup>10</sup>Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *The Americas* (New York: Modern Library Chronicles, 2003), 162, 172-3, 188.

populations are either no longer homogeneous or may not be so homogeneous in the future. The London terrorist attacks in July 2005 have led to public dialogue in Britain about how they have developed as a pluralist society and whether or not a more American approach would be better.<sup>11</sup> Thus, this paper can serve to inform those music educators in countries other than those nations of the Americas.

### Musical Ethnography

While population demographics are informative, the key issue is the musical life of the community. Therefore, a musical ethnography of the community should be conducted as the first stage of curriculum development. Such a study can serve as a tool to guide teachers in developing curricular offerings relevant to both the students and the community. Philadelphia was used as a case study in the fall of 2003 in order to analyze the relevance of school music offerings for connecting students to the musical environment in which they live. The results of this case study follow and reveal needs to be addressed in school curricula.

## CASE STUDY: PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

### Demographics and Description

Philadelphia, with 1,517,550 residents in the city proper, is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest city in the USA and the second largest on the East Coast. The city's population is divided along ethnic lines as follows: 45% white, 43.2% black or African-American, 8.5% Hispanic or Latino, 4.5% Asian, 4.8% some other race, 2.2% two or more races, and 0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native. Those speaking languages other than English at home account for 17.7% of the population.<sup>12</sup> Philadelphia is a traditional East Coast city of neighborhoods. Like all former industrial cities, it has had difficult times. Most of its industry has either moved to non-unionized Southern States and Mexico or has been replaced with imports. It has lost 554,055 residents in the second half of the Twentieth Century<sup>13</sup> while being ringed by ever expanding suburbs, which now hold 3,583,381 residents<sup>14</sup>, filled with office campuses, formulaic housing developments, country clubs, and shopping malls. Philadelphia is now also experiencing the decay of its "inner ring" suburbs.<sup>15</sup>

Situated between New York and Washington, Philadelphia is often overlooked. Nonetheless, it is a vibrant community. The Philadelphia area is home to over 40 institutions of higher education, including two Ivy League universities, the Curtis Institute of Music, several colleges of art, and the only university in the nation devoted exclusively to the arts. Philadelphia boasts professional sports teams in all men's and some women's major leagues and has a lively arts scene. It is a vacation destination for its historic sites, a visual art center, home to many museums, and has a performing arts community that includes professional resident theater, dance,

---

<sup>11</sup>I witnessed these discussions on several BBC television and radio broadcasts in late July 2005 while visiting Scotland.

<sup>12</sup>U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census. INTERNET. [accessed 20 September 2003].  
www.census.gov

<sup>13</sup>US Geological Survey, Tabular Data – Population. INTERNET. [accessed 20 September 2003].  
<http://mcmweb.er.usgs.gov/phil/tabledata.html> & U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census. INTERNET.  
[accessed 20 September 2003]. www.census.gov

<sup>14</sup>U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census. INTERNET. [accessed 20 September 2003].  
www.census.gov

<sup>15</sup>Bruce Katz, Amy Liu et al, "Back to Prosperity: A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania," (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Center of Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2003).

opera and ballet companies, several professional ensembles that range in repertoire from early music to the most recent compositions, and is home to the world famous Philadelphia Orchestra. That all having been said, what is actually happening musically at the street level on a daily basis?

### Procedures

To answer that question I led a research team that conducted a survey of the musical life of Philadelphia from 21 September – 5 October 2003. The research team included 10 graduate students enrolled in “MU551 Education in American Society”<sup>16</sup> and 20 undergraduates enrolled in “MU257A Lab Teaching Practicum I”. The graduate students and myself set out to document live music performances. We limited ourselves to events by adult performers that were open to the public and within the city limits. The exclusion of K12 and university performances was intentional because the purpose of the study was to document the musical life of the community in order to determine if school music offerings are consonant or dissonant with that musical life. While a team of 11 researchers is not capable of documenting every musical activity in a city as large as Philadelphia I believe the results accurately reflect the rich diversity of offerings regularly found in the city.

We combed all the Philadelphia newspapers we could find: dailies and weeklies, with both city-wide and neighborhood orientations, performed internet searches, and toured the neighborhoods looking for offerings in churches, community centers and advertised in places such as coffee houses and train station bulletin boards. To accomplish the street-level study, we assigned neighborhoods to each researcher using the city divisions as defined by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission.<sup>17</sup> Each researcher was assigned a neighborhood or combination of neighborhoods to cover. Meanwhile, the undergraduates monitored broadcast media during the study period and documented the formats performed to see if their reporting to Arbitron accurately reflected their offerings.<sup>18</sup>

### Classification of the Results

The results from both live and broadcast media were classified by format categories established by Arbitron<sup>19</sup> whose categories are the industry standard for broadcast music ratings. The Arbitron formats are very broad and open to interpretation. Arbitron’s own definitions left us wondering what the specific formats meant and what some of the genres listed actually were. Therefore, we modified them with subcategories and added an “other” category to include those musical styles not included by Arbitron as listed in Figure 1.

---

<sup>16</sup>Thanks to class members Sean Arleth, Michael Drobish, Rebecca Larson, Eric LaRue, Frank, Machos, Michael McCarthy, Sharin Rello, Kyle Rogers, Larisa Vedensky and Mark White. Their fieldwork was invaluable in the collection of data for this paper.

<sup>17</sup>Philadelphia City Planning Commission Online. <http://www.philaplanning.org/data/pas.gif>

<sup>18</sup>While stations self-report their formats, we found inconsistencies. For example, 1210 AM lists itself as a “news” station. However, it broadcasts all Frank Sinatra music every Friday evening.

<sup>19</sup>Arbitron. [www.arbitron.com](http://www.arbitron.com)

Figure 1. Arbitron Formats with Definitions and Subcategories

---

Adult Contemporary - Encompasses all variants of Adult Contemporary: Soft/Light, Hot AC, Full Service AC and Adult Rock.

Adult Standards - Features a substantial amount of pre-Rock era music: Includes Easy Listening, Middle-of-the-Road, Nostalgia, and Variety outlets.

Alternative - Includes stations billing themselves as “Album Rock” and “New Rock.”

Classical - Consists of fine-arts music and talk. Includes classical compositions, opera, theater and commentary.

Contemporary Hits Radio - Contemporary Hit Radio emphasizes current hit music. Also known as Top 40. Includes stations specializing in “Pop CHR” and “Rhythmic CHR”

Country - Includes traditional and modern country music.

New AC/Smooth Jazz - Includes Jazz, New Age and New Adult Contemporary formats. Primarily instrumental based but featuring some compatible.

Oldies - Specializes in Rock-era oldies, including ‘70s hits and Rhythmic Oldies, usually those played on Top 40 Stations.

Religious - Includes Gospel and “Contemporary Christian” formats as well as nonmusic-based religious stations specializing in “teaching programs.”

Rock - Rock-based music from the mid-70s to the present. Includes Album Rock and Classic Rock

Spanish - All- Spanish-language formats, including talk and music.

Urban - Includes Urban AC and Urban Oldies

Other - Include Folk, Old Time, Bluegrass, World, Ethnic except Latin

---

## Results

Broadcast Music

Broadcast music plays a major role in the musical lives of communities. This music is available 24/7 to anyone with a radio. It thus crosses geographic and socio-economic boundaries instantaneously and more easily than live music performances. Figure 2 lists the number of stations in the Philadelphia broadcast market and the formats by which they identify themselves. Figure 2. Broadcast Music Performances Grouped by Arbitron Format.

Format/Subcategories	No. of Stations (n = 81)
Adult Contemporary	7
Adult Standards	15
A/S (1)	
80s Hits (1)	
Variety (13)	
Alternative	4
AAA (2)	
Alternative (2)	
Classical	.5
Contemporary Hits Radio	8
Country	2
New AC/Smooth Jazz	3.5
Big Band (1)	
Jazz (.5)	
New AC/Smooth Jazz (2)	
Oldies	1
Religious	14
Christian (6)	
Gospel (2)	
Religious (6)	
Rock	8
Classic (4)	
Rock (4)	
Spanish	2
Urban	3
Other	14
Children (1)	
Ethnic (1)	
Talk (News/Sports) (12)	

An analysis of the broadcast media outlets indicates 29.5 stations devoted to adult rock, alternatives, or jazz; 19 devoted to contemporary hits, rock and urban music; 14 dedicated to religious programming; 2 Spanish language, 1 oldies; 0.5 programming dedicated to classical music, and 14 “other”, which includes 12 talk, 1 children’s and 1 ethnic programming format.

Thus, of the 68 stations programming music, two-thirds (48.5) are devoted to adult formats including rock and jazz and pop-rock-urban music, with one-third programming the other formats. Only 0.5 of a single station’s programming is devoted to “classical” music.



### Live Music

Live music performances are more difficult to identify in such a large city. Professional classical music ensembles, such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, present regular concert series and produce professional marketing materials, whereas smaller groups and venues do not advertise that widely. Thus, a study depending on locating advertisements of performances will naturally be skewed toward the ensembles and formats with the most readily available advertising materials, which are the well-funded professional classical music ensembles. This should be taken into account when analyzing the results in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Live Music Performances Identified, Grouped by Arbitron Format.

Format/Subcategories	No. of Performances (n = 830)
Adult Contemporary	5
Adult Standards	0
Alternative	58
Classical	119
Contemporary Hits Radio	9
Country	0
New AC/Smooth Jazz	103
Oldies	9
Religious	90
Rock	255
Spanish	12
Urban	9
Other	161
African Drumming	
Alternative	
Bagpipes	
Bluegrass	
Eastern/Middle Eastern world music	
Folk & Old Time	
German	
Güiro workshop	
Indian	
Irish/Celtic	
Marching Band	
Mummers String Band	
Percussion – Experimental	
R&B	
Zydeco	

An analysis of the live music performances identified indicates 273 performances classified as contemporary hits, rock and urban music; 166 performances devoted to adult rock, alternative, or jazz; 161 performances classified as “other” (which includes a fair amount of folk, Bluegrass and “World Music” performances); 119 classical music performances; 90 religious music performances; 12 Spanish (Latino) genre performances, and 9 concerts of oldies.

Thus, of the 830 live performances identified in this study, 52% (439) were devoted to adult formats including rock, jazz, and urban music; 19% were devoted to “other” musics including folk, Bluegrass and “world” music; 14% were of “classical” music performances; 10% were religious performances, and the remaining percentage included Spanish and oldies.

These results indicate that rock, jazz and urban styles predominate in Philadelphia with folk and “world” musics being the second most popular musical styles and classical performances accounting for 14% of the offerings. Thus, while fourteen percent of these live musical offerings were Western European Art music styles and ensembles and some were from non-Western cultures, the overwhelming majority were musical ensembles and styles from the Americas, unique music of the Americas that developed from the clash and convergence of cultures unique

to the Western Hemisphere:<sup>20</sup> jazz, bluegrass, and rock, with Latin American styles holding a niche below the 8.5% of the population Latinos comprise.<sup>21</sup>

Data was not located to indicate actual audience counts for all of the events identified. Therefore, it is not possible to conclude what percentage of the population actually participated in each genre either as performer or listener. However, the commercial ventures listed would certainly not be offering such genres if there were insufficient audience numbers to make them profitable either through ticket sales, customer draw to venues (even those with free music), or sale of commercial air time.

## CURRENT SCHOOL MUSIC SITUATION

### School Music Offerings in Philadelphia

Information from the School District of Philadelphia was requested to determine whether or not the offerings in Philadelphia schools reflect these musical offerings identified in the community. The district's Lead Academic Coach for Music Education (the district's title for the music supervisor) in the Office of Creative and Performing Arts provided a list of which high schools and which K-8/Middle schools offered "orchestra" and/or "band" during the 2003-2004 school year as listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Instrumental Ensemble Data from the Office of Creative and Performing Arts<sup>22</sup>

Type of School <sup>23</sup>	With Instrumental Ensemble	Orchestra	Band
High School n = 59	16 (27%)	7 (12%)	14 (24%)
K-8 n = 232	61 (26%)	38 (16%)	56 (24%)
All Schools n = 291	77 (26%)	45 (15%)	70 (24%)

<sup>20</sup> Peter Manuel describes creolization as "the development of a distinctive culture out of the prolonged encounter of two or more other cultures." He explains this in his book *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1995), 14-16. This is the case with the musical genres of the Americas. They developed from the blending of various musical traditions imported by the people who settled here. This musical creolization serves to differentiate these musics from the musics of Pre-Columbian Amerindian indigenous peoples, and the pure forms of musics various immigrants brought with them from their homelands.

<sup>21</sup>It is difficult to classify "Latin" music. For example, where do artists such as Jennifer Lopez and Christina Aguilera fit in? They are Latina performers, but their music is not necessarily "Latin". Thus, the results of this study, which lists "Spanish" performances as those advertising themselves as such, potentially masks the contributions of Latino performers and/or performances of Latin music.

<sup>22</sup>NOTE: The School District of Philadelphia Office of Creative and Performing Arts provided a list titled *Orchestras/Bands 2003-2004*, which lists the high schools and "K-8/MIDDLE" schools that offered "orchestra", "band", or both during the 2003-2004 school year. The schools without such offerings were not listed. The complete listing of schools used to determine percentages was ascertained at "Directory," School District of Philadelphia, <https://sdp-webprod2.phila.k12.pa.us/OnlineDirectory/Directory> (accessed October 19, 2004). Elementary and Middle Schools are listed together with no indication as to which are strictly elementary, which strictly middle school, and which are K-8 schools. Therefore, the total number of schools is used in Figure 1.

<sup>23</sup>These 291 schools are those operated by the district. They do not include charter schools or private schools.

What kinds of orchestras (string, symphonic etc.) and bands (concert, marching, jazz etc.) are offered is not indicated. When prompted as to whether or not the district had schools with “jazz bands and choral groups [and] non-traditional ensembles such as African Drumming, Gospel Choir, Rhythm & Blues groups etc?”<sup>24</sup> the Lead Academic Coach for Music replied:

There are choirs – traditional and gospel choirs – from elementary to high school...Yes, we have jazz bands from the middle schools to high schools. There are drumlines and possibly, african [sic] drumming too. I don't recall any Rhythm and Blues ensembles per se. Also a few schools have handbell choirs, guitar ensembles, drumlines....Can not secure the numbers at this time.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, no information is available as to how many schools have such offerings and whether or not other types of ensembles exist. This information does indicate the district does not track those other ensembles, nor does it track if student-led ensembles exist in its schools that might be more reflective of the Philadelphia music scene. The fact that such data is not maintained leads one to conclude that perhaps only such traditional school ensembles are officially sanctioned at the district office level. This bias toward traditional school-based ensembles is reflected in the results of the U.S Department of Education's latest survey on school music offerings. Elementary principals were directed to indicate the types of offerings (classes/ensembles) provided by answering if their schools offered “general music, chorus, band, strings/orchestra, and other”. The results show nobody reported “other”, leaving the reader to conclude the standard offerings listed above are all that apparently exist in America's elementary schools.<sup>26</sup> The high school principals were not even asked the question, indicating perhaps an assumption on the part of the U.S Department of Education that only those traditional school ensembles are widely offered.<sup>27</sup>

### Historical Support for Music Education

The disconnect between school and community musicing has had a detrimental impact on music education. Music education in the US colonies flourished when it supported amateur musicing and directly contributed to the life of the community<sup>28</sup> such as the singing schools in New England, and among various religious sects such as the Quakers, Moravians, and Shakers for whom education in music was a critical component of preparing one for religious and civic participation.<sup>29</sup> This eventually led to the incorporation of music into the public school curriculum on the grounds it served to prepare students for participation in the community throughout life.<sup>30</sup> Today however, in great contrast to the original purpose for adding music to

---

<sup>24</sup>Patrick M. Jones, e-mail message to Virginia T. Lam, October 19, 2004.

<sup>25</sup>Virginia T. Lam, e-mail message to author, October 19, 2004.

<sup>26</sup>While I happen to know this is not the case because I have personally seen some elementary schools with groups such as steel pan bands and African drumming ensembles, the point is that the USDOE survey indicates they don't exist. This calls the validity of this survey into question. It also reflects the same scenario as the School District of Philadelphia where, if such ensembles exist, they are not tracked, are not registered on official documentation, and apparently do not have a sense of ownership from district officials.

<sup>27</sup>*Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1999-2000*.

<sup>28</sup>James A Keene, *A History of Music Education in the United States* (University Press of New England, 1987), 27.

<sup>29</sup>Michael L. Mark and Charles Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Reston, VA: MENC, 1999), 44-49.

<sup>30</sup>The Boston School Committee “Report of Special Committee, August 24, 1837” in Michael L. Mark, *Source Readings in Music Education History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Routledge, 2002), 75-86.

the school curriculum, school based musical offerings tend to be disconnected from the students' musical lives outside of school.<sup>31</sup>

One result of this shift away from emphasizing musical amateurism and direct a connection to the musical life of the community has been a continuing decline of support for and participation in school music. The current state of participation in K12 large ensemble programs across the USA is estimated to be fewer than 20% of the total student population (some claim it to be fewer than 10%).<sup>32</sup> Teenagers love music. This is evidenced by production and marketing within the music industry and its use by manufacturers in marketing and branding their products.<sup>33</sup> However, while children certainly love music, the overwhelming majority are not interested in the types of ensembles middle and high schools traditionally offer. Instead, their interests are in smaller ensembles of diverse popular musics.<sup>34</sup> Simultaneously and perhaps consequently there is less overall involvement in actual music making throughout our society.<sup>35</sup>

The trend in the interest of teenagers away from large ensembles and toward smaller music ensembles is perhaps also a reflection of a greater societal shift in preference away from highly structured large-group activities based on a leader/follower dynamic and toward less structured individual and small group activities fostering more active participation.<sup>36</sup> This shift runs counter to the structure and dynamics of the majority of offerings in school-based music ensembles which tend to be large performing ensembles centered on a conductor who makes most (if not all) the musical decisions.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### School Music

In order for music education to regain relevance and return from the musical fringe to the musical mainstream we must rethink the curriculum. A 21<sup>st</sup> Century music curriculum must be designed to invigorate musical learning and to musically empower students in pluralistic societies in at least three ways.

First, it should connect students with the musical environment in which they live. In order to connect students' in-school music education with their out-of-school musical lives, music offerings must emphasize music they will find in their communities. The goal is to have students participating in music both within and outside of school so graduates will continue performing and enjoying a wide range of musical offerings within their communities throughout their lives.

Secondly, music instruction should also focus on the benefits of music to the cognitive, social, and physical health of students. There is a growing body of research on the sociological need for music in order for people to live healthy lives.<sup>37</sup> This complements a great deal of research on the therapeutic use of music both in clinical settings and in substance abuse

---

<sup>31</sup>Randall Everett Allsup, "Transformational Education and Critical Music Pedagogy: examining the link between culture and learning," *Music Education Research* 5, No. 1 (2003), 5.

<sup>32</sup>Robert A. Cutietta, "David Elliott's Philosophy of Music Education: Good Theory, Bad Timing or Bad Theory, Good Timing?" *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* (Spring 2000): 21-27.

<sup>33</sup>Theresa Howard, "Pepsi Ads Wink at Music Downloading", *USA Today* (23-25 January 2004).

<sup>34</sup>John M. Geringer and Ana Maria Solis Guerra, "Preferences of 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Children in Mexico and the United States for School and Non-School Music Excerpts," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* No. 153/4 (Summer and Fall 2002) , 15.

<sup>35</sup>Cutietta, 21-27.

<sup>36</sup>Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 166 & 175.

<sup>37</sup>Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 46-

rehabilitation programs.<sup>38</sup> Thus, people need to be familiar with, and have access to, a wide variety of music in order to live healthy lives. Therefore, as stated previously, music curricula should not limit students' musical exposure only to what is immediately available in their community. Instead, it should provide exposure to a wide variety of musics while empowering students to participate in the musics they find in their community.

Finally, youth are bombarded with advertisements every day that successfully use music in order to lure them into purchasing products. A body of research on the use of music in marketing and advertising has developed which indicates music is a valuable tool in subconsciously influencing shoppers, including manipulating children.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, our students should be educated in such uses of music in order to prepare them to fight against being manipulated by music in advertisements, shopping centers, and local stores.

Revisiting music education requires us to base it on sound philosophical ground and to provide clarification as to how one determines what the facilities, course offerings, repertoire and ensembles ought to be, and how best to prepare the teachers who will lead such programs. To that end the following framework is provided as a starting point to foster a larger dialogue within the profession.

**Philosophical Basis.** The role of general education is to empower students to be independent, critical and productive members of society.<sup>40</sup> A general education in music should provide graduates with the skills necessary to make music at an amateur level and enrich their own lives and their communities with musical experiences for the rest of their lives.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the philosophical basis of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century music program is a pragmatic PRAXIAL<sup>42</sup> one which holds

---

<sup>38</sup>For comprehensive coverage of many types of influences of music on the brain see: Manfred Spitzer, *Musik im Kopf*. (New York: Schattauer, 2003).

<sup>39</sup>For example, see Judy Alpert and Mark Alpert, "Music Influences on Mood and Purchase Intentions" in *Psychology and Marketing*. 7, 2 (1990),109-133, Charles Areni and David Kim, "The Influence of Background Music on Shopping Behavior: Classical Versus Top-Forty Music in a Wine Store" in *Advances in Consumer Research* 20 (1993), 336-340, and for manipulation of children see: Carole Macklin, "The Relationship Between Music in Advertising and Children's Responses: an Experimental Investigation" in *Nonverbal Communication in Advertising* (Lexington Books, 1998), 225-243. DeNora also covers this topic in great detail in *Music in Everyday Life*.

<sup>40</sup>See Harold F. Abeles, Charles R. Hoffer, and Robert H. Klotman, *Foundations of Music Education*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York, NY: Schirmer Books, 1995), 98-99, and Thomas A Regelski. "Schooling for Musical Praxis." *Finnish Journal of Music Education*. Vol 3, No. 1 (1998), 7-37. Reprinted in *Canadian Music Educator* 40, No. 1, no. Fall (1998), 32-43.

<sup>41</sup>Regelski, "Schooling for Musical Praxis".

<sup>42</sup>PRAXIAL as applied to music education was first defined by Philip Alperson in "What Should One Expect from a Philosophy of Music Education?" *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1991), 215-42. There has been a great deal of scholarship, discussion, debate, and misunderstanding surrounding the meaning of Praxial philosophies of music education. The reader is referred to original sources of this dialogue in addition to Alperson such as David Elliott's book *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), which brought the idea further into the mainstream of music education discussions; Marie McCarthy, ed. *Music Education As Praxis: Reflecting on Music-Making As Human Action: The 1997 Charles Fowler Colloquium on Innovation in Arts Education* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1999) in which various scholars present perspectives on Praxialism; Thomas Regelski's clarification of his perspective of Praxis in Thomas Regelski, "Schooling for Musical Praxis," *Canadian Music Educator* 40, No. 1, no. Fall (1998). Scholarly discussion of Elliott's perspective was held by the MayDay Group. Their papers were published in the *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, No. 144 (Spring 2000). Clarification of the different Praxial perspectives of Elliott and Regelski is provided by J. Scott Goble in "Perspectives on Practice: A Pragmatic Comparison of the Praxial Philosophies of David Elliot and Thomas Regelski" in *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 2003): 23-44. And, finally, Wayne Bowman provides a much needed perspective in "Re-Tooling

that music is an essential human practice in which all humans need to engage in order to live healthy and fulfilling lives. Therefore, the music program I recommend is a performance-oriented one in which students develop performance, analytical, critical, and compositional skills they can use outside of school independently of any musical “expert” directing them. The end result should be independent musicing.<sup>43</sup>

Physical Plant. The built environment in schools creates paradigms as to what music study entails. Therefore, revisioning school-music requires rethinking the physical plant. We must jettison the current rehearsal hall construct with its underlying assumptions of group synchronicity and a leader/follower dynamic in order to create a physical environment open to all kinds of musics and more conducive to fostering individual creativity. In its place I propose the physical plant of the music suite be a recording, production and editing studio. The main room would be a recording studio large enough to accommodate larger ensembles and also double as a small recital hall. Satellite rooms would include a recording booth an editing laboratory, a music computer/keyboard center, a music library, instrument/equipment storage rooms, and several small ensemble rehearsal and individual practice rooms. The ensemble and individual practice rooms would be equipped with the technology needed for accompanying, recording and playback. They would also be wired to serve as “isolation booths” for the main recording studio. This physical layout mirrors the current physical structure of many, if not most, music suites in middle and secondary school across the USA. Therefore, there is no need for major construction. The issue is merely one of inserting technology as needed which is becoming ever less expensive and reorienting the curriculum, which costs nothing.

Courses of Study. The courses of study could include private and group lessons, performing ensembles, music theory (aural and written), composition and arranging, improvisation, amplification/live sound reinforcement, recording/production/editing, music criticism (artistic/sociological issues and uses of music), music history, and music industry/business.

Ensembles and Repertoire. The ensembles and repertoire studied need to be diverse, oriented to the musical lives of the school’s community<sup>44</sup> and in this Philadelphia study decidedly Pan-American.<sup>45</sup> The teacher begins with the school’s local community and then branches outward. It will naturally be easier for teachers in more diverse communities to find a wider variety of

“Foundations” to Address 21<sup>st</sup> Century Realities: Music Education Amidst Diversity, Plurality, and Change”. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol 2, #2 (December 2003) [available at [www.maydaygroup.org](http://www.maydaygroup.org)].

<sup>43</sup>For exposition and clarification of “knowledge-in-action” as opposed to “knowledge-out-of-context” (which predominates in much US schooling) see Arthur N. Applebee, *Curriculum as Conversation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996). This approach has been espoused in music education circles by David Elliott as “Curriculum as Practicum” in *Music Matters* and Thomas Regelski’s “Action Learning” approach to curriculum in *Teaching General Music in Grades 4-8: A Musicianship Approach* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>44</sup>The positive social impact of the arts on communities has been documented in research. See Mark Stern and Susan Seifert, *Social Impact of the Arts Project: Summary of Findings* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work, March 2001) [available at <http://www.ssw.upenn.edu/SIAP>]. The need to connect music education programs to the community and its ethnic groups has also been advocated by Michael L. Mark in *Contemporary Music Education*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York, NY: Schirmer Books, 1996), 301. Regelski has also advocated connecting school music activities to the needs of the community.

<sup>45</sup>Libby Larsen advocates music and ensembles from the Americas that allows student to carry what they learn in school music “into a world they recognize”. See Strauss, “For Music Teachers, a Trumpet Call to Relevance.”

musics locally, such as the Pan-American flavor of Philadelphia's music scene. Those teachers in less diverse settings will need to cast a wider geographical net, some looking to their entire state or region. Ensembles can include homogenous ensembles such as: electric guitar ensemble, percussion & drum set ensemble, flute choir, men's chorus etc; heterogeneous ensembles such as brass, woodwind and string ensembles, and mixed choir; and ensembles devoted to performing folk & bluegrass, jazz, Caribbean, Cuban, Brazilian, Latin American, pop/rock and art music.

### Music Teacher Preparation

The important first step toward reengaging musically with the community is to revise music teacher education curricula to reflect current realities and prepare the next generation of music teachers to be less narrowly focused musically. Music educators should be versed in a wide variety of musical practices reflective of the Americas as a whole in order to prepare them for wherever they find a teaching position. They should be able to design, teach, and assess age appropriate music courses and content that include: jazz, folk, world, popular and art music genres; performing on western, non-western, and electronic instruments; vocalizing; musical skills development; listening; music technology for performance, composition, arranging, sound reinforcement, digital/audio recording, multi-media sound, internet/web music, and audio playback; music criticism; written and aural music theory; music history; conducting; music business/industry and management; and be qualified to direct choral and/or instrumental ensembles of all genres. They must possess ethnographic skills and be able to design curriculum, not merely follow prescriptive methodologies.

This is a daunting task, but one we can certainly accomplish if we are willing to rethink music teacher preparation from start to finish. I believe we should overhaul the curriculum and expectations of what music education majors are expected to be able to do. Our current emphasis on socialization into the status quo results in replication and stifling of innovation. Instead, we should offer a broad array of musical experiences aimed at producing music educators who are generalists like their peers in the visual arts, instead of the narrowly focused band, choir, orchestra and general music teachers we've produced for the last three quarters of a century.

We must begin with our admissions criteria. We can no longer limit admissions to those who perform on concert band and orchestral instruments, and sing classical music.<sup>46</sup> To do so is to narrowly limit the musical skills and perspectives of our graduates, thus placing music in peril. We must embrace a wider array of musicians with varied backgrounds and experiences. In the end, we must consider that the future leaders of our profession might not necessarily be members of school based large ensembles with resumes of participation in honor band, choir and orchestra but are perhaps garage band guitarists, self-taught keyboard and drum-set players, and vocalists who have played in clubs and copy an aesthetic more regularly found on Broadway and MTV than in the concert hall.

### SUMMARY

In this paper I illustrated a disconnection between school music and the musical lives of the community using Philadelphia as a case study. I recommended school music offerings be oriented to the musical lives of their communities in order to foster musical participation of all students in both lifelong and lifewide activities. To do so I recommend the first stage of

---

<sup>46</sup>Clifford K. Madsen and Carl B. Hancock, "Support for Music Education: A Case Study of Issues Concerning Teacher Retention and Attrition" reported that "...almost every respondent indicated that he or she came from a precollege program that was excellent". While they don't define what they mean by an "excellent" program, their evidence does indicate that such a pedigree among music teacher candidates is not indicative of retention within the profession. Thus, perhaps coming from such programs is overrated in terms of whom we should be recruiting to be music teachers.



curriculum design should be a musical ethnography of the community in order to determine the musical contexts from which students come as a starting place for curricular offerings. A case study musical ethnography of Philadelphia was provided which indicated Philadelphia enjoys a Pan-American music scene. Based on that case study I provided a model approach to music curriculum design for pluralist societies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and discussed implications for school music offerings and music teacher education in the USA.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abeles, Harold F., Carles R. Hoffer, and Robert H. Klotman. *Foundations of Music Education*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York, NY: Schirmer Books, 1995.
- Allsup, Randall Everett. "Transformational Education and Critical Music Pedagogy: examining the link between culture and learning," *Music Education Research* 5, No. 1 (2003): 5-12.
- Alperson, Philip. "What Should One Expect from a Philosophy of Music Education?" *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 215-42.
- Alpert, Judy and Mark Alpert. "Music Influences on Mood and Purchase Intentions." *Psychology and Marketing*. 7, 2 (1990):109-133.
- Applebee, Arthur N. *Curriculum as Conversation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Areni, Charles and David Kim. "The Influence of Background Music on Shopping Behavior: Classical Versus Top-Forty Music in a Wine Store." *Advances in Consumer Research* 20 (1993): 336-340.
- Armas, Genaro C. "Census sees whites no longer in majority in U.S. after 2050," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Thursday, March 18, 2004), A4.
- "Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1999-2000". Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2002. [publication NCES 2002-131 available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>].
- Bowman, Wayne. "Re-Tooling "Foundations" to Address 21<sup>st</sup> Century Realities: Music Education Amidst Diversity, Plurality, and Change." *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol 2, #2 (December 2003). <http://mas.siue.edu/ACT>.
- Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* (No. 144, Spring 2000).
- Council for Basic Education, *Academic Atrophy: The Condition of the Liberal Arts in America's Public Schools*. Council for Basic Education, March 2004.
- Cutietta, Robert A. "David Elliott's Philosophy of Music Education: Good Theory, Bad Timing or Bad Theory, Good Timing?" *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 144 (Spring 2000): 21-27.
- DeNora, Tia. *Music in Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Elliott, David. *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Fernandez-Armesto, Felipe. *The Americas*. New York: Modern Library Chronicles, 2003.
- Florida, Richard. *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.

- Frahm, Robert A. 2005. Schools 'Losing Ground' in Arts. In *Hartford Courant*, Education, [http://www.courant.com/news/education/hc-schoolarts.artsep06\\_0\\_1792881.story?coll=hc-headlines-education](http://www.courant.com/news/education/hc-schoolarts.artsep06_0_1792881.story?coll=hc-headlines-education). (accessed September 6, 2005).
- Geringer, John M. and Ana Maria Solis Guerra. "Preferences of 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Children in Mexico and the United States for School and Non-School Music Excerpts." *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* No. 153/4 (Summer and Fall 2002): 15.
- Goble, J. Scott. "Perspectives on Practice: A Pragmatic Comparison of the Praxial Philosophies of David Elliot and Thomas Regelski." *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 2003): 23-44.
- Howard, Theresa. "Pepsi Ads Wink at Music Downloading", *USA Today*, 23-25 January 2004.
- Huffman, Carol "It's a Cooperative Effort", *The Orff Echo* (Winter 2003), 8.
- Katz, Bruce, Amy Liu et al. "Back to Prosperity: A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania". Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Center of Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2003.
- Macklin, Carole. "The Relationship Between Music in Advertising and Children's Responses: an Experimental Investigation." In *Nonverbal Communication in Advertising*, ed. Sidney Hecker and David W. Stewart, 225-243. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1988.
- Madsen, Clifford K. and Carl B. Hancock. "Support for Music Education: A Case Study of Issues Concerning Teacher Retention and Attrition". *Arts Education Policy Review* (Vol. 104, No. 1, September/October 2002), 19-24.
- Manuel, Peter. *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1995.
- Mark, Michael L. *Contemporary Music Education*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New York, NY: Schirmer Books, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Source Readings in Music Education History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Routledge, 2002.
- Mark, Michael L. and Charles Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Reston, VA: MENC, 1999.
- McCarthy, Marie, ed. *Music Education As Praxis: Reflecting on Music-Making As Human Action: The 1997 Charles Fowler Colloquium on Innovation in Arts Education*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1999.
- Regelski, Thomas. "Schooling for Musical Praxis." *Musiikkikavsvatus (Finnish Journal of Music Education)* 3, No. 1, no. Spring (1998): 7-37. Reprinted in *Canadian Music Educator* 40, No. 1, no. Fall (1998): 32-43.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Teaching General Music in Grades 4-8: A Musicianship Approach*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Spitzer, Manfred. *Musik im Kopf*. New York: Schattauer, 2003.

Strauss, Valerie [interview with Libby Larsen], "For Music Teachers, a Trumpet Call to Relevance" *Washington Post*, March 2, 2004, Page A09.

Stern, Mark, and Susan Seifert. "Social Impact of the Arts Project: Summary of Findings". Philadelphia, PA: The University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work, 2001. [available at <http://www.ssw.upenn.edu/SIAP>].