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Editorial, Volume 39: New Beginnings for Visions

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New Beginnings for *Visions*

LOOKING FORWARD, CONTINUING TRADITIONS

Volume 39 of *Visions* marks a new phase in the journal's history. Over the last decades Frank Abrahams has led the journal through many changes. In his time as Senior Editor, Dr. Abrahams and his team, including Marissa Silverman as Associate Editor, created many volumes dedicated to a variety of topics.

Among his many achievements was making *Visions* open to all teachers and giving early-career researchers a place to publish. I, for one, can count my first publication as a *Visions* article. With Dr. Abrahams' retirement from Westminster Choir College, Ryder University, the stewardship of the journal passes into new hands. I, as Senior Editor, along with Cara Bernard as Associate Editor, and Julia West as Managing Editor, aim to continue the legacy of *Visions* built by Dr. Abrahams.

With the changes in leadership are some changes to *Visions*. The journal is now housed at the University of Connecticut. We thank Dean Jason Irizarry of the Neag School of Education and Head of the Curriculum and Instruction Department Todd Campbell for their support in housing it here. With this move to UConn, the changes include:

- *A new website* at <https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme/>. This website includes a system for review.
- *A new look*. We have introduced a new VRME logo, a new aesthetic to the website, and journal articles now have a different format.
- *A social media presence*. We now have a Facebook page and a Twitter account. In addition, we have a forthcoming podcast.
- *Changes in editorial board*. Dan Isbell and Brent Sandene have completed their service, and we thank them for their service to *Visions*. We have welcomed two new board members, Nicholas McBride of the The College of New Jersey and Evan Tobias of Arizona State University. We look forward to working with them.

With these changes, we aim to honor and continue the tradition sustained by Dr. Abrahams and previous editor and his editorial team.

THE ARTICLES IN VOLUME 39

The articles in Volume 39 reflect the focus of music education in the current climate internationally. The last three years will most certainly be remembered in history as the COVID years. The pandemic has altered economic, political, social, and cultural circumstances, creating unprecedented stress factors. Music teachers are not immune to these stresses. In a multiple case study, Karen Koner, Jennifer Potter, and Brianne Borden documented these stressors on music teachers. They noted what I have anecdotally heard numerous times from music teachers: Teachers have felt stress from the logistics of moving to new forms of instruction; their concerns about student engagement and disengagement have increased; they have feelings of helplessness; and they are preoccupied with curricular changes. Koner, Potter, and Borden advocate for increased support systems for addressing music-educator stress through professional organizations and professional learning communities.

While COVID has created these stresses, it has also opened up new forms of music teaching. COVID accelerated a move towards increasing use of technology in music instruction. Katri-Helena Rautiainen and Mikko Vesisenaho explored their move to an online, asynchronous, course for classroom preservice teachers. By seeking students' feedback, they documented the successes and challenges of moving online. Similarly, in her article, Cecilia Ferm-Almqvist examined technology, specifically the use of Spotify. Music commerce has shifted to what some call a postmaterial economy (Inglehart, 1977). Musical commodities—such as records, tapes, and CDs—of the previous decades, which were held in consumers' hands, have been replaced with audio streaming services like Spotify. Music that once was not available, or took days, weeks, or even months to acquire are now easily accessed in moments. This shift in technology influences how music educators make curricular and instructional decisions. Ferm-Almqvist investigated eight Swedish music teachers' uses and decisions around using Spotify in the classroom. She concludes that “music streaming didactic literacy” is a literacy that teachers might develop as they move into this streaming landscape.

In addition to the focus on COVID and technology, other articles in Volume 39 address issues of assessment. David and Barbra Akombo explore the differences between the Associate Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and the Kenyan music curriculum. The ABRSM creates musical assessments used around the world, including Kenya. As Akombo and Akombo explore, the ABRSM is housed in the U.K., and contains many Western music assumptions within it, like Western music repertoire and notation, a conceptual division between composition and improvisation, and focus on Western instruments, among others. This contrasts with the Kenyan music curriculum, which emphasizes musical traditions of Kenya, including playing by ear, communal music making, African tuning systems, among others. Akombo and Akombo provide a helpful detailed comparison of the ABRSM and Kenyan curriculum and assessment in these and other key areas. As Kenya is a formal colony of the U.K., these differences

must be understood within the context of imperialism, and the dominance of Western art music throughout the world.

The remaining two articles deal with music teachers' perceptions of and beliefs on assessment. Heather Shouldice looks at the beliefs of elementary general music teachers in Michigan. Using a survey, she explores the factors between these teachers' beliefs regarding musical ability, assessment, and the purpose of elementary general music. By comparing these three areas, she finds correlations and connections among these beliefs. Natalie Steel Royston and Jill Wilson looked at teachers' beliefs about the assessment of dispositions. Since the 1980s, the subject of dispositions has become prominent in the teacher education literature and in programs. "Dispositions" in this tradition refers to the personal characteristics that serve as the foundation that lead to teachers' beliefs, values, and ultimately practice. Dispositions emerged as a critique to behaviorist approaches to teacher education, which atomized teaching, breaking it down into discrete skills. Behaviorist approaches, as critics noted, missed a key component of teaching, which is that teachers' ideas, beliefs, and cognition play a foundational role in what actions teachers adopt, how they execute them, and how they form their own pedagogies. While dispositions as a concept provides important framing for teacher education, it is often ill defined and notoriously difficult to assess. Royston and Wilson conducted a survey of in-service music educators, collegiate music education majors, and collegiate education majors (not music) in a Midwestern state in the United States. Finding similarities and differences among how these different constituencies rank different dispositions and how these relate to content knowledge provides insights into teacher education and music education.

REFERENCE

Inglehart, R. (1977). *The silent revolution: Changing values and political styles among Western publics*. Princeton University Press.