

# A COMMITMENT TO MUSIC IN EDUCATION

WE MUST MOVE BEYOND ART FOR ART'S SAKE, TO CONVEY  
THE IMPORTANCE OF ART FOR EDUCATION'S SAKE.

—DR. CHARLES FOWLER, *STRONG ARTS, STRONG SCHOOLS*, 1996

With the *Journal for Learning Through Music*, the New England Conservatory, through its Music Education department and Research Center for Learning Through Music, supports the belief that this is a critical time for music and the arts in schools. This new journal is intended to promote a national discourse focused on the extraordinary range of learning associated with music by providing a forum for the discussion of new perspectives on the essential role music can play in public school education. By providing a vehicle for joining evidence of the impact of 1) musical training on learning, 2) successful arts in education programs, and 3) positive change in schools due to music, the thinking and practices can be strengthened everywhere.

The *Journal* is intended to speak to a broad audience: artists, teachers, educators, researchers, policy makers, and leaders of both cultural and arts-in-education organizations. It is hoped that members of that varied audience will find in this publication a place to describe efforts, share questions and findings, and engage in the debates that are necessary if the role of music in classrooms is to be more fully articulated and realized.

In order to present some of the many perspectives on Learning Through Music, the *Journal* includes articles that, taken together, focus on the philosophy, research, and innovative program practices that address issues concerning the essential role of music in education reform. We want here to recognize the report, *Champions of*

*change: The impact of the arts on learning* (Edward Fiske, 1999). It serves as a primary point of departure for the ongoing discourse about the role of music in the context of the arts education and school change efforts represented in this journal.

The *Journal* also features interleaved “conversational interludes,” “photo essays,” and “provocative examples from the field,” meant to stimulate interconnections among the multiple perspectives from article to article. These “connectives” are intended to stimulate commentary that supports discourse between the authors and reports from the field. Accordingly, examples, imagery, and commentary emanating from ongoing action research at school sites are intended both to introduce each paper and to further the conversations implicit across articles.

The first two issues of the *Journal for Learning Through Music* are intended to provide a focal point for the debate concerning the most appropriate and effective role of music as a resource and tool for arts efforts in public schools.

## THE FIRST ISSUE: AUGUST 2000

This first issue is devoted largely to topics presented at the conference, “Why Integrate Music Throughout the Elementary School Curriculum?” hosted a year ago in Ipswich Massachusetts by the New England Conservatory. It explores various perspectives on this topic by including:

- Commentary from philosophical and historical perspectives on music in the context of arts in education
- Interviews, essays, and action research reports that reveal the practical experience of developing New England Conservatory’s new Learning Through Music Partnership Schools
- Research underway at the New England Conservatory that considers music and learning from qualitative and quantitative perspectives.

## THE SECOND ISSUE: WINTER, 2001

A second issue, “Making Music Work for Public Education: Innovative Program Development and Research from a National Perspective,” is to be published in the winter of 2001. It will present findings from New England Conservatory’s national conference held on September 7-9, 2000. This issue will feature a broader range of topics, including keynote presentations, panel discussions, and roundtable responses which focus on the implications of music in education programs from a national perspective.

We anticipate that the *Journal for Learning Through Music* will soon be available in electronic form. This format will allow authors to make better use of photographic evidence and documentation. It will also allow the presentation of video documentation of lessons, programs, interviews, and performances. ¶

## REFERENCES

Fiske, Edward B. (Ed.). (1999). *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning*. Arts Education Partnership and the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

Fowler, Charles. (1996). *Strong arts, Strong Schools: The Promising Potential and Shortsighted Disregard of the Arts in American Schooling*. New York: Oxford University Press.