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## INTRODUCTION

### QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES CONCERNING MUSIC'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

by

SAMUEL HOPE

Institutions like the New England Conservatory—and other institutions here present, from the Boston Symphony to the Metropolitan Opera, to the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts, and so forth; and their counterparts not present—represent a long composite history of genius and dedicated effort. Whatever our institution or position, we understand that part of our role in putting music and education together is to make sure that more people have access to that genius and history, and that significant cultural weight and force continue to develop that history in our own time. We are very clear on these issues overall. Our challenges are how to move on from here, and how to make an impact.

We all recognize what a great discipline music is. And we understand that education is a great enterprise. There have been in-depth testimonials to both at this conference. We know that the relationship between music and education is simple on one level, and complex on many others. For example, numerous disparate efforts in the United States are connecting music and education together, and many of them are represented in this meeting. When considering these efforts, most of us understand that there is a difference between essentialist and instrumentalist viewpoints. The instrumentalist viewpoint justifies teaching music or other art forms with the rationale that they are good for other purposes. The essentialist viewpoint starts from the position that the arts themselves are important, that each is good in and of itself. We know that both positions contain truth. We also know that there are problems if we don't find a good overall balance between these two positions in the composite work we are doing. If we are too essentialist, an arts discipline becomes isolated; if we are too instrumentalist, the power of the discipline itself is dissipated or lost.

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So every effort, whatever its scope, has a question to answer: where on the spectrum between pure essentialism and pure instrumentalism will our specific music in education program occupy? We know that strong doctrinaire positions reflecting organizational or policy choices have been taken by various groups. Positions often reflect the need to promote and fund. But I am not sure anymore, if I ever was, that there is a single right answer. There are many ways to answer this question, and there are many choices that work, as long as we realize and are honest about two facts: every answer does not produce the same results, and every approach does not have the same power. I sense that we are not at this conference to debate among various points of view, but rather to explore. I think this approach is wise, because exploration requires a certain humility, and from my perspective, humility is the most reasonable attitude toward both music and education. Humility and honesty naturally support each other.

A number of additional questions arise when we try to address the previous one. What about music itself? Music is rich in and of itself, and in its connections. Institutions like New England Conservatory exist to work in music full-time. Other institutions work with music as a part of a larger set of issues. When we think of these and other differences, we are confronted with hard questions; for example: What of that complexity are we going to draw into our curriculum? What of it are we going to draw into the performances we provide as experi-

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ences? Answering is a huge task, because time is limited in every educational situation. Another question is, How do we talk about what we do? What do we say about it? I pose these two sets of questions because it is possible to do work in education and around education, and to talk about music in education, all without ever supporting the teaching of music itself. It is wonderfully encouraging to

hear this morning how many of those present understand this problem deeply.

Another challenge flows from the fact that music can be enjoyed and have meaning without being studied. A young student coming into the Jordan Halls of America and hearing a powerful orchestral performance can have a transformational experience. Hearing or seeing the equivalent level of work in mathematics would not have the same impact. With rare exception, the math would be inaccessible, non-sensical, if you will. The impression is created that music is unique in this regard. But it isn't, really. We can enjoy riding in an airplane without understanding the slightest thing about mathematics or physics. But here is the difference: no one says that the pleasures of flying obviates the need to study science and math. So when enjoyment-obviates-study arguments are made about music, or when they are implied, the dominant message is that music is not important, not included in the so-called basic subjects. For those concerned with the future of music in education, these kinds of problems are critical – they go beyond specifics of each individual or organizational situation. We need to learn to make distinctions between study and experience clearer so that we can bring them together better. We all understand that there are many possibilities for connecting music to education. We can have education *in* music, and *about* music, and *for* music, and *through* music. And so in each event, each curriculum, each lesson, choices have to be made about

*The theme of my professional development over these last twenty-five years has been integrity in the music learning process. If we're going to have musicians in schools, if we're going to have music specialists, if we're going to have classroom teachers doing some kind of integration or connections or whatever we choose to call it, we have to ensure that all of them understand something about the integrity of the musical experience and the learning experience. Otherwise, in the long term, advocacy may not have substance to support it.*

*David Myers, associate director of the School of Music at Georgia State University, founding director of the Center for Educational Partnerships in Music*

the weight each will have. I am not concerned about what the weighting is as much as I am that we are honest about what each particular weighting will accomplish. It is the honesty and integrity with which these choices are presented, particularly when we talk about our own programs, that makes a huge difference in whether our effort is seen as being competitive with other efforts, or as joining in a larger effort.

We are all aware of the tremendous public relations push now underway with respect to music. Many justifications are tied to instrumentalities. For example, we have heard over and over again that involvement with music can raise SAT scores. And it is true. Students who study music in high school have higher than average SAT scores. However, as recent Project Zero studies show, there is no direct scientific cause-and-effect relationship. The positive correlation,

which is very real, does bolster the case for music study. But it also tempts us to create and use a soundbite that tends to invert values. It makes high scores on the SAT the reason for studying music. This inversion happens to be particularly dangerous because the highest correlation between a body of study and SAT scores is foreign languages. Students who study four years of a foreign language in high school score significantly higher on the SAT than those who study music. If improving SAT scores is the goal, it is easy to argue that music and the arts should be taken out of the schools, and time devoted instead to the study of foreign languages. This particular set of facts show the danger of overemphasizing instrumentalist arguments. It shows how easy it is to work for music in the short term in ways that place at risk the study of music in the long term. And so we have a tremendous challenge here. It is not easy to deter-

mine how we can use information wisely to address the important issues before us.

Some of you have spoken about issues and problems in the culture that make your job in music or the issue of music in education difficult to pursue. I would respectfully suggest that part of the reason we are not further along than we are, given all the resources we have throughout the nation, is that certain cultural forces directly counter many things necessary for music, education, and education in music, at least as we have traditionally conceived them. We are living in a culture that does not promote study in terms of learning for its own sake. Think about it. Think about the marketing forces that are brought to bear on children and youth. Study is not a big feature. Often, study is denigrated. We are living in a period of education reform, where unfortunately in so much current rhetoric, *learning* has been replaced by *winning*. We are living in a culture that talks constantly about speed, and therefore promotes lack of patience. Few things require more patience than individual acquisition of knowledge and skills in music and other disciplines. We are living in a time that regularly denies history or is essentially ahistorical, but the history of culture and the history of civilization is central to education. Music and the other arts are primary carriers and extenders of this history. We are living in a community swoon over assessment. The assessment movement often reminds me of the amateur farmer who pulled up carrots to

see if they were growing. I am also reminded of Albert Einstein's saying that all things that count cannot be counted, and all things that can be counted do not count.

Given these cultural conditions, and given our energy, our resources, our great spirit, and our dedication to what we are doing for music and for education, how can we bring our resources together in a country of 278 million people, geographically spread over a wide area; a country with tremendous entrepreneurial spirit, intellect, and resources for the production of artistic power? I, like you, look forward to the day when the various parts of the total music enterprise can work more closely together—not politically, but in a more parallel effort of bringing together the various elements that constitute music in education. We need strong performance, and we need to bring students to the best performances we possibly can. We need to have arts experiences in the schools brought there by people with high artistic ability. We must have daily effort in the schools, led by qualified teachers who have high artistic credentials. We need to understand the psychological dimensions and continue research that helps us understand better how the great mysteries of art and education work. We need to bring our resources together, and I believe we are on the verge of doing that. Efforts here at the New England Conservatory can be a powerful force in making this happen, especially when continued in conjunction with the efforts of others around the nation. It will take

patience, and it will mean talking honestly and carefully about what our hopes and dreams are. It will take time.

The issues I am raising are crucially relevant to higher education. The National Association of Schools of Music represents over 575 institutions around the country which have a dedicated mission for music study and professional training. Many of these institutions prepare music teachers for schools and studios, and almost all of them are dedicated to artistic training at the highest levels. One of the things that we have been working on as an association since the late 1960's is music in general education, by which we mean, in part, preparing musicians to talk about music and to advance the cause of music. This project has succeeded in some ways. One of the reasons it has not been more successful is that conditions have not been bad enough to force a significant change in priorities. However, conditions are getting worse. The loss of radio stations that play classical music, funding problems, losses of audiences and interest on the part of young people, have sent a wake-up call to many. Harsh reality is producing a level of commitment that policy alone could not produce. We see efforts sprouting up around the country. Certainly, the one here is model of its kind. This change is extremely important and NASM is committed to continuing its support for these kinds of efforts.

One thing is very important to remember. Institutions of higher education have a unique opportuni-

ty to bring the community of interested parties together. They teach performance, composition, musicianship, history, and so on. They also have expertise in music education; many have community schools and therefore experts who create a natural community working on behalf of music and the education of children and youth. I hope that the convening leadership that the New England Conservatory is exerting—and that a growing number of other postsecondary institutions are exerting—to work actively with the larger local community, will become more and more common across higher education. The time is right; the need is great.¶

#### CONVERSATION QUOTE

*I'm here to explore how we achieve balance so that music as a subject of study is valued in and of itself....How can we ensure that music is not subsumed by larger educational concerns, like SAT scores, so that when hard economic times come again, music isn't again on the chopping block of expendable educational pursuits?*

*Polly Kahn, vice-president of the American Symphony Orchestra League, formerly director of education for the New York Philharmonic orchestra*

## Art for Art's Sake and Art as Learning Tool: Achieving a Balance

**DAVID MYERS, GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY:** *One person in our lunchtime discussion made a plea that in this conference we focus on the balance between art as art and art as a tool for learning across the curriculum, and that we make sure that we recognize the importance, the joy, and the reward of music itself. We took that one step further and we asked ourselves, If we have a public arts education policy that focuses primarily on the relationship of arts to learning across the curriculum, what are the potential compromises that may occur within the art form itself, or the learning of the art form itself? And one that came forward was the simple one of music reading. While all of us understand the importance of experiencing music, and we feel that perhaps reading has been overemphasized and has become the medium rather than the means, at the same time we also talked a little bit about the fact that after all being able to read music is an entry point into musical participation throughout one's life. It's an entry point into musical independence, whether it's opening the hymn book and being able to follow a line, or getting together with a couple of friends and being able to make music from a score, or even being able to transpose or put a clarinet and a saxophone and a trombone together in some kind of an ensemble. So one of our concerns was, Where do we ensure that school students are gaining the fundamental skills within the discipline that in fact allow them the lifelong participation and opportunity to grow independently in music?*

**JAMES CATTERALL, U.C.L.A.:** *If I have an umbrella vision in my work, it is to bring together the people who look at the non-arts benefits and the arts benefits of the arts, precisely in a spirit of collective curiosity. There are lots of things to learn in both domains. And just because you choose to want to learn things in one domain, and I choose to train my lenses in another domain, doesn't mean I don't like your agenda. It just means that I've chosen one because we have to make choices in life, and can focus only so much.*

**MYERS:** *I think it's a question of balance. The issue for people within the discipline and the arts was simply that we are concerned about the integrity of the art in all that we do. We do know that there are relationships beyond the arts; it's just that a lot of us are concerned that that not become the reason for our existence.*

**COMMENT:** *My real education is as a theoretical physicist, not as a musician. And mathematicians never worry about this. They have math in every school. Math gets used for non-math. As a matter of fact, most of the math that everybody learns in school is really what mathematicians would call non-mathematical purposes—keeping score, doing your check-book. Those are not mathematical issues; those are numerical issues. And yet, because math is everywhere in the culture, and because we expect everyone to be math literate, that means that no matter where you are, if you have math potential, you'll be in math hotbed where you go to school. So I think ultimately if we advocates of music education are really invited in to sit at the table with all the disciplines, there will be plenty of useful environments in which real musicians can grow up and become whatever performer they aspire to be.*

**LARRY SCRIPP, NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY:** *At the Conservatory Lab School, we use the language of equality, or the concept of equality. If music is just as important as math, well then you have to read music. If language literacy is important, so is music literacy. There isn't a distinction of non-music and music; it's a matter of equal partnership among the subject areas, which then allows you to investigate the common, fundamental processes, if they exist across these disciplines. And the interesting thing is, we're coming up with issues right away like, "Well, does Johnny get to graduate from 2nd grade to 3rd grade if he can't read music?"*

**MARTIN GARDINER, BROWN UNIVERSITY:** *I just wanted to emphasize how much I agree with the notion that it is great if one can teach sight-reading of music, because I think that the long-term availability of the opportunity to make music throughout your life can be very wonderful and valuable. And the entry into this is critical. My colleagues and I have some evidence of long-term benefits, which I hope will soon be published. Also, I hope we don't feel somehow that we have to choose between emphasizing the similarities and differences of music from other parts of our experience and learning. Both the similarities and differences are important. I think what we're talking about is a dialogue between what music can help you develop and what other parts of your experience need and can use.*

**ERIC BOOTH, JULLIARD SCHOOL:** *There have really been two reasons that the arts have existed in U.S. public education, really for the whole hundred years that they have been in our public school system. And the first was "Art for art's sake." They believed that people making music was an inherently useful enough task that it belonged in the experience of most children. In fact, that notion was challenged in our lifetimes in the 80s and 90s, when that almost disappeared from the schools. It seems to be making a comeback, but it's still alive. The other reason, which arose at the turn of the century, was "Art for the sake of the workplace." In fact, it was believed getting kids to work with their hands in visual arts and with instruments made them better factory workers. So you could have an instrumental purpose for art—that is still alive today. In fact, businesses are some of the greatest supporters of inventive arts in education programs, believing that a 21st century worker needs a particular kind of skill, and that the arts invite people into the development of those skills. In fact, this has been extended a little bit now in schools, as they're looking at "Art for the sake of different kinds of literacy"—mathematical, verbal literacy. I think the story of our new century is going to be the appearance of a third reason for art to be in schools. And that is "Art for learning's sake." We are discovering that bringing artistic experiences into the learning equation does something exciting to the learning. Something hap-*

*pens in that classroom. Something happens in that individual which doesn't just make him or her go right out and buy a season ticket to the symphony. But it wakes up a kind of alertness, an "awakeness," to all kinds of learning. I think that is going to be the story of our work in this century, and it's the blessing and the curse of our particular time that we're just at the beginning of that.*

**VINCENT MARRON, NORTH CAROLINA A+SCHOOLS:** *When Eric was talking about arts as learning, it reminded of a wonderful story that I've used on many occasions. A few years before he died, when he was well into his nineties, Pablo Casals, the great cellist, was interviewed by a cub reporter who went to his house and found him practicing. And this reporter, who was somewhat naive, was so astonished that before he started his interview, he said, "Maestro, I have one question I must ask you. You're 95 years old, you're the most famous cellist in the world. Why are you still practicing?" And Casals looked at him, and he said, "Because I think I'm getting better." Now, whether the story is true or whether it's an invention, it's still, I think, a wonderful example of the way in which the arts in the life of artists is a process of continuous learning. ¶*

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