

Faith, Hope, and Music Education

An Editorial Introduction to ACT 17 (2)

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In this introduction to ACT 17 (2), I discuss the importance of music education institutions in facilitating and perpetuating action and interaction. When institutions become more concerned with self-preservation, however, critical theorists have an important role to play in recommending and facilitating actions for change. I explore hopeful developments and possibilities within five institutions (classical music education, university schools of music, professional associations, the music industry, and neoliberalism).

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We envision a world in which the joy of making music is a precious element of daily living for everyone; a world in which every child has a deep desire to learn music and a recognized right to be taught; and in which every adult is a passionate champion and defender of the right. (National Association of Music Merchants)

Faith in music education endures in the face of neoliberal curricular developments such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), that gradually supplant the arts and humanities, prioritizing global economic competitiveness above *vivir bien*—living well “in harmony with nature and one another” (see Solón 2018, Weyer 2017). Institutions professionally or commercially interested in music teaching and learning stand together to preserve and protect school music, promoting an array of benefits: enhanced achievement, improved math scores, improved memory, engagement, creativity, coordination, fine motor skills, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, perseverance, self-confidence, self-discipline, and cooperation (Bryant 2014). And more than just talking about it, music educators, teacher educators, researchers, and policy makers work

tirelessly to build strong music programs, train the next generation of music teachers, discern what works best in teaching and learning music, and lobby governments for funding and curricular recognition.

In this light, it may seem counter-productive to point out problems with music education and to recommend alternatives to current practices, perspectives, and justifications. But it's not. As every good ensemble director or applied instructor knows, criticism is integral to improved performance. In fact, critical theory is needed now more than ever in efforts to understand music education's ongoing legitimacy crisis and to identify actions that not only can help ensure the continuation of school music, but that are also ethically sound, socially just, and environmentally sustainable. Critical theory, one could say, is an "essential element" for sound reasoning and innovation in music teaching and learning. There's nothing inherently wrong with identifying and advertising music education's purported benefits, but this line of reasoning can feel somewhat self-serving, especially when coming from the music industry (see my discussion later in this introduction), and also seems insufficient compared to the scope of the challenges. All of the benefits in the foregoing list can either be attained through a variety of means other than music, or are best addressed directly—nothing improves math achievement quite like high quality math instruction. Even "intrinsic" benefits like aesthetic experience or autotelic experience ("flow," see Elliott 1995) are readily available elsewhere. Certainly, music can be an important source for and a contributing factor in all of these goods and more, and these may be effective "selling points" in some instances, but the ongoing decline of music education in many parts of the "developed" world indicates that we may need to look further for support.

For over a quarter century now, members of the MayDay Group have studied the roots of music education's curricular marginalization. Considering how deeply people value any of a wide variety of musical practices in their lives, why can it sometimes be so difficult to justify music in school? One of the most promising explanations is that of the ever-widening gulf between school music and outside-of-school musicking (e.g. Elliott 1995, Regelski 1998, 2006). The perennial recommendation follows: the music education profession needs a major course adjustment to align formal music education with the musical interests and needs of constituents. And, despite the fact that many outmoded practices remain firmly entrenched, music teachers world-wide are finding varying degrees of success

through increased focus on popular music (Smith et al. 2017), for example. Another explanation for music's marginalization, the identification of which has emerged more recently within the MayDay Group, relates to social justice: when music education centers elite European classical music traditions and practices, it can be exclusionary for many groups (e.g. Bradley 2006, 2017; Hess 2017). As societies become more diverse, a one-size-fits-all approach becomes ever more tenuous. Finally, a third explanation can be found in the expanding reach of neoliberalism which, not incidentally, has coincided historically with questions about school music's legitimacy. Neoliberalism's relentless ascent in schooling, privileging school subjects and pedagogies that appear to have direct application to national competitiveness in the global marketplace, may be the more difficult issue to confront.

Clearly, substantial obstacles complicate our collective efforts to (as the NAMM quote at the beginning of this editorial reads) bring about "a world in which the joy of making music is a precious element of daily living for everyone; a world in which every child has a deep desire to learn music and a recognized right to be taught; and in which every adult is a passionate champion and defender of the right." The work of critical theorists can contribute in advancing visions such as this. Even though many music educators recognize the importance of this type of critique, there are still some who glibly and prominently dismiss this painstaking work as "doomsday prognostications" (Humphreys 2013, 56), "irresponsible" (Mast et al. 2011, 14), or "absurdist yet eloquent dicta" (Fonder 2014, 89). Yes, it's important for critical theorists to carefully consider these denunciations for any elements of truth and for guidance in framing future arguments. Critical theorists, put simply, need to be open to criticism and to shape arguments in ways that will have the greatest positive impact. In fact, in one of my first editorials in ACT (Bates 2015), I discussed the *apotropaic* potential of critique—how overstatement, partiality, and impracticality in theorizing can serve to solidify institutional entrenchment and fortify the resolve of those who defend the status quo. But for the most part, if people will conscientiously and responsively approach critical music education articles that appear in ACT and elsewhere, they will find careful, thorough, balanced, and practical analyses. They will also find an overall message purveying strong belief or faith in the importance and power of music in the lives of all people as well as a rather hopeful, positive outlook for future possibilities. In fact, hope is

a long tradition in critical theory. “For all their differences and disagreements, critical theorists presumably have at least one thing in common: hope for a better world” (Smith 2005, 45).

Institutions

In June 2017, the MayDay Group met in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, USA, to discuss Action Ideal IV: “Like all elements of musical culture, contributions made by schools, colleges, and other institutions must be systematically and critically examined in order to evaluate the extent and directions of their influence.” Within the field of sociology, the term “institutions” can refer to *meta-organizations* such as governments that organize more basic institutions (schools, police, military, social services, etc.); to *systems* of organizations guided by a common set of aims and ideals; or to social structures that are not organizations at all, but that involve “(i) differentiated actions ... that are; (ii) performed repeatedly and by multiple agents; (iii) in compliance with a structured unitary system of conventions ... and social norms” (Miller 2014, n.p.). Following these definitions, music education can be studied as one large institution made up of smaller institutions (e.g. schools, universities, professional associations); as an institution situated within and impacted significantly by a network of other institutions (e.g. musical practices and genres, education associations, music businesses or corporations); as an institution within larger meta-organizations (e.g. various levels of government); and/or as a component part of an organizational system (e.g. neoliberalism).

Tom Regelski (2016) underscores the importance of institution critique in music education.

Institutions are typically obsessed with perpetuating their defining ideologies and resulting activities, or—often at the same time—are focused on steadfast opposition to competing institutions and their agendas. This social fact should provoke critical reflection, because ideology determines and guides the functions the institution comes into being to serve, and not always with due attention to actual consequences. Thus, consequences brought about by institutions may be negative in ways that are (a) self-defeating, that (b) play into the hands of competing institutions, and that (c) progressively lead to institutional irrelevance. (22)

Institutions perform necessary functions in organizing society and in facilitating human action while, as Regelski notes, they can also become ossified, more focused

on self-preservation than with satisfaction of ever-changing social realities. However, when institutions have become disconnected from human needs and start to focus on self-preservation, the subsequent “irrelevance” (at best) and oppression (at worst) provide opportunities and impetus for change. I will briefly discuss five institutions that seem particularly problematic in music education, standing at odds with core shared aims and frustrating much-needed change. These five include classical music, university schools of music, professional associations, the music industry, and neoliberalism. For each, in a more hopeful light, I will also consider some openings for transformation.

Classical Music

Classical music is a cultural expression of elite European imperialism and colonization. As a global institution, it includes pockets of activity in nearly every country, particularly in urbanized places, assuming the position of elite and dominant culture nearly everywhere it exists. In the words of Jere Humphreys (2013), it is “a product of the sharply hierarchical Western European monarchies. This music is hierarchical in formal, tonal, and melodic structure, and it came to be construed on the ideal of non-contextual contemplation—in other words, as elitist and idealist” (56). Typically associated with whiteness and wealth, classical music is offered to the masses so that they too can experience “high culture.” But this is a basic foil for establishing the cultural superiority of its adherents and the inferiority of the masses who prefer other forms of musical expression (Bates 2016). To impose classical music on others (e.g. focusing school music on classical music and associated pedagogies) has been identified as racist (Bradley 2006, Hess 2017), classist (Bates 2017), and sexist (Lamb 1994, Gould 2013).

Many music educators have made concerted efforts to address these issues, especially racism and sexism. I wonder, though, how amenable classical music is to changes that could make it more inclusive and egalitarian. How much better, for instance, has classical music become over the years at including females and people of color? It is still relatively easy to find instances of sexism in classical music (e.g. Rhodes 2014), and preferences for classical music, in the US at least, are not increasing among people of color (Mizell 2005, National Endowment for the Arts 2013). Yes, classical music may be changing, but ever so slowly. Still, I do see quite a bit of hope for the field of school music in the growing interest in popular music

education, evidenced in the proliferation of professional conferences focused specifically on popular music education, addition of a popular music SRIG (special research interest group) in NAFME (National Association for Music Education), and publication of the *Journal of Popular Music Education* starting in 2017. Furthermore, interest in multicultural music education, despite warranted critiques (e.g. Bradley 2006), continues as schools emphasize cultural diversity. It is becoming increasingly untenable to center elite European classical music. Race and gender arguments can be particularly powerful in today's political climate and, as economic inequality continues to increase throughout the world, perhaps arguments about classism in classical music will find more currency. These arguments could be taken directly to administrators and policy makers, including those outside of music education, at their conferences and in their professional publications. Of course, such arguments will likely have the most power as justifications for adding popular music or other more diverse programs to the school curriculum in the interests of underserved populations, rather than as arguments directed against classical music.

University Schools of Music

University schools of music serve as a primary institutional vehicle for classical music's hegemony. John Kratus (2015) has shown how these schools and departments have remained consistent in content and pedagogy for more than a century. He asks: "Why is the musical training of 21st-century music educators nearly identical to that of 19th-century performers preparing to join orchestras and opera companies?" (344). Even though there are so many other musical practices in which people find joy and fulfillment, this cycle of musical poverty seems rather difficult to break, prompting mainstream critiques such as the recent CMS manifesto (Sarath 2014). Brian Roberts (2004) discusses how schools of music socialize music teachers as classical musicians, first and foremost, a reality perpetuated by the needs of faculty to fill ensembles and studios.

In the end, the primary operational reality of the music school becomes the reproduction of a cultural reality in which the social investment as a classical performer by the members of faculty is protected, supported, and enhanced. This turns out to be the main delimiting factor in what kind of music is valued, and taught to be valued; and it is subsequently the defining basis for the incompatibilities between credentials and need concerning the "musician" identity on the part of school music teachers. (26)

Tom Regelski (2006), referencing the overall conservative nature of conservatories, quotes a university chancellor who joked, “It’s easier to move a cemetery than to change a Music Faculty” (8). Still, along with some changes in classical music, there do seem to be some incremental shifts in university schools of music, many of which have been documented in a recent collection edited by Robin Moore (2017). University professors generally consider themselves open-minded and progressive—good people who have the best interests of their students at heart, and appear to be somewhat responsive to the proliferation of theoretical, quantitative, and qualitative inquiry in social justice and music education (see Palmer 2017 for a recent social justice in music education literature review).

There may be reason to hope for more rapid change through a particular institutional rupture created by neoliberal education policies. Across the United States, teacher shortages have been used to justify the expansion of alternative routes to licensure. For instance, in Utah (USA), where I teach, anyone with a bachelor’s degree can be hired to teach in the public schools now, after which they have three years to qualify for a teaching license through any route approved by their local school district. If they can pass a music content exam, it is quite feasible for someone who has not been fully socialized in classical music traditions within a school of music to qualify for a music teaching license. Furthermore, Bradley (2017) tells about an innovative BA program at Arizona State University that allows music students to develop individualized tracks based on “alternative instruments or in non-canonical genres” (Kindle loc. 5056). Finally, although not as open as the ASU program, I currently direct a Weber State University program that provides online teacher licensure courses and student teaching supervision for graduates of the undergraduate commercial music degree program at Snow College, where a music education degree isn’t currently available. Participants in this program, due to its emphasis on commercial music, have taken more music technology and popular music courses than the typical music education major and are thereby likely in a better position to meet the interests and needs of modern music students.

Professional Music Education Associations

Professional associations in music education are networks of teachers and ensemble directors (in the United States, for example, the National Association for Music Education, the American School Band Directors Association, the American String

Teachers Association, the American Choral Directors Association) and provide online and face-to-face forums where professionals interact regularly. These associations promote and reinforce the special interests of the group, developing partnerships with similar groups and lobbying legislative and funding organizations for support. Further, they set standards for curriculum and professional behavior, both tacit and more explicit. Social development as music teachers and/or ensemble directors can begin rather early. For example, Mark Fonder (2013) recounts a formative teenage experience in an honor band directed by a renowned band director, where he resolved: “I want to be that guy; I want to do what he does.” There’s nothing wrong with this; it simply illustrates how rather strong identities as ensemble directors and musicians can form early in life. Professional associations help preserve and perpetuate these roles, profoundly impacting lives often in positive ways. This can become a problem, however, when initially service-oriented associations begin to prioritize self-preservation over meeting the needs and interests of the people they serve.

Nonetheless, institutions can also facilitate transformation at times of institutional crisis. Greenwood, Suddaby, and Hinings (2002) write that

professional associations are, indeed, important regulatory agents. Contrary to prevailing institutional accounts, which focus upon the essentially conservative role of associations in reinforcing existing prescriptions for appropriate conduct, our analysis addresses the role of associations at moments of deinstitutionalization and change. We suggest that at those moments, associations can legitimate change by hosting a process of discourse through which change is debated and endorsed: first by negotiating and managing debate within the profession; and, second, by reframing professional identities as they are presented to others outside the profession. This discourse enables professional identities to be reconstituted. (58–9)

Guitar education in the United States can serve as an illustration of this dialectic of institutional preservation and change. I have spoken with multiple high school and middle school band directors who express resistance to adding a guitar class because they are afraid it will draw students away from the band; the apparent musical interests of students and potential for life-long musicking appear secondary to band directors’ desires to direct an ensemble. Despite this resistance, the efforts of music educators such as Will Schmid (who recently passed on) *through* NAFME, has facilitated the proliferation of guitar programs throughout North America. Even though the approach too often is classical rather than popular, it is clear that professional associations *can* serve as catalysts for change. This is not to

underestimate institutional entrenchment. Culturally, large classical ensembles, concert bands in particular, are an indelible part of another institution—the modern suburban North American school—and this will likely remain the case for many years to come.

I see one more reason to hope for change within professional associations, in the growing number of critical social theorists who are serving in prominent positions—including a considerable number of current MayDay Group members—chairing research interest groups, serving on editorial and governing boards, and authoring articles for a wide variety of publications. Others have opted out of professional associations in protest against socially unjust policies and practices. This is understandable; one could make good arguments for either staying or leaving, and the critical work of those who aren't members can still have a strong impact. Still, those who are choosing to stay *are* making a difference as they instigate and participate in deliberations about the direction of the profession.

The Music Industry

Next, the music industry could be considered a system of competitive institutions that, as with any other businesses or corporations, tend to focus on the “bottom-line.” Despite the altruistic tone of the NAMM quotation that led this editorial, the profit motive is undoubtedly behind visions of daily musicking, increased desires to learn music, and school music for all. Successful school music programs cost money—sometimes a lot of money—for cellos, tubas, risers, sound shells, uniforms, sheet music, travel, and so forth. It is certainly in the music industry's best interest to promote music education, particularly when it requires items that yield the greatest profit margins—maybe pianos and timpani more so than guitars and djembes. Digital technologies can also be especially lucrative. Actual human needs and environmental sustainability are secondary considerations at best (Shevock 2017, Shevock and Bates forthcoming). For these reasons and more, some have critiqued partnerships between professional associations and corporate interests. Julia Koza (2006) writes: “Not only does the centrality of consumption in corporate agendas help shape the alchemic product called school music but it may also help explain the ignoring or discounting of sustainable alternatives” (34).

Nevertheless, returning to the NAMM vision, there does seem to be considerable congruence between industry and professional aims. Plus, considering the

reach of neoliberalism, as I will discuss in the following section, *both* institutions—the industry *and* the profession—support the underlying aims and trajectory of late capitalism. One glimmer of hope here is that the music industry appears to be responsive to social and cultural change. In 25 years of teaching music, I have watched the music stores I frequent evolve from showrooms full of pianos, organs, and band and orchestra instruments, to guitars, drumsets, and electronic equipment, albeit still with band and orchestra instruments to the side. The portion of the music industry that serves school music programs seems to follow trends in those programs rather than the other way around.

Neoliberalism

Finally, neoliberalism may be the largest institution standing in the way of fully inclusive, joyful, and enduring practices in music teaching and learning. Different in important ways from classical liberal interests in small governments and free markets, neoliberalism has developed for a century as an “encasement” of capital within strong national governments and international structures intended to maximize corporate profits and protect global finance from popular resistance (Slobodian 2018). Beyond a basic financial structure, wherever neoliberalism reigns, the capitalist logic of competition, domination, and efficiency pervades every aspect of social, cultural, and political life; in Wendy Brown’s words, “neoliberalism transmogrifies every human domain and endeavor, along with humans themselves, according to the specific image of the economic” (2015, Kindle loc. 61). Nancy Fraser (2017a) explains further the totalizing effects of neoliberal capitalism: “What all the talk about capitalism indicates, symptomatically, is a growing intuition that the heterogeneous ills that surround us—financial, economic, ecological, political, and social—can be traced to a common root, and that reforms that fail to engage with the deep structural underpinnings of these ills are doomed to fail” (141).

Schools and other social institutions such as families and churches serve important roles in reproducing human capital, helping young people become appropriately skilled and disciplined in order to labor compliantly and competitively in the global economy (Bhattacharya 2017, Fraser 2017b). Dennis Attick (2017) explains: “Teachers today are held responsible for developing in students the skills

that the neoliberal economic system requires for its ongoing survival” (42). Furthermore, “the central neoliberal tenets of rational individualism and competition” make it so that “teaching becomes primarily a series of economic transactions between competitive individuals in a highly administered and audited environment” (42). In modern music education, quantities and qualities associated with musicking stand in for financial currency as the “bottom line.” Jere Humphreys (2013) gives voice to a generally shared assessment of North American school music:

Like most aspects of society, *music education has improved over time*. Hard data are scarce, but we can hear huge improvements in the performance levels of school and university ensembles during the spans of our lifetimes, and from recordings before that. The performance levels of some of the renowned early college and university bands and choirs were far below those of the top groups of today. Recently, I heard someone speculate that the best university bands today probably play better than the Sousa Band in its heyday. The performance repertoire has also expanded dramatically in quality, scope, and diversity. (55, emphasis added)

As I have pointed out previously (Bates 2013), within music education programs in capitalist societies, large ensemble performance often serves as the bottom line by which to measure the success of school music programs. In fact, this may help explain why so many music educators hold so strongly to large ensemble programs in schools. These competitive groups reflect taken-for-granted neoliberal capitalist rationalities: even without awards or formal rankings, public and comparative evaluations serve as currencies that can be earned and accumulated (see Abramo 2017) along with other quantitative elements such as the number of participants and the difficulty level of repertoire performed. Students are disciplined to defer their own musical needs and interests to the ethos of musical achievement—the ensemble’s, the school’s, and their own—even though very few will participate in similar ensembles or musick in the same ways outside of school or after graduation. In fact, music ensemble educators can be heard to cite self-discipline (e.g. social reproduction) itself as ample justification for student participation. There are, of course, more manifestations of neoliberal rationality in music education (see, for example, an insightful analysis by Stephanie Horsley 2014), but this should suffice for now as a prime illustration.

For the most part, though, neoliberalism seems to work *against* school music by denigrating its contribution to global economic competition. This is typical of sites for social reproduction: they tend to be overlooked because money doesn’t

serve as their bottom line—their contributions to capitalism, albeit essential, are more informal and peripheral. Tithi Bhattacharya (2017) explains how capitalism “acknowledges productive labor for the market as the sole form of legitimate ‘work,’ while the tremendous amount of familial as well as communitarian work that goes on to sustain and reproduce the worker, or more specifically her labor power, is naturalized into nonexistence” (2). Music education’s standard approach to this form of neoliberal marginalization is to argue for our place in the global economy, which is probably why NAMM relies on the list given in my opening paragraph of this editorial. From my perspective at least, this general approach to advocacy is a reasonable reaction; I’m not going to denigrate it. This is the world we live in and we need to do whatever we can to preserve and promote our chosen profession. However, I would like to outline two hopeful possibilities for change, the first perhaps running with the stream of neoliberalism and the second running against it.

First, there seems to be general agreement among critical theorists that neoliberal capitalism is in crisis (Fraser 2017a, Giroux 2018, Streeck 2016). Growing inequality, decreasing wages, and environmental degradation negatively impact the lives of billions, particularly the most vulnerable, leading to popular challenges to the status quo. One very real threat to reliable jobs is automation, whereby many factory workers have already been replaced by robots. A lot of white collar vocations, similarly, may no longer be available within the foreseeable future (Illing 2018, Pistrui 2018, Streeck 2016). The jobs that are left, along with new occupations, will rely more heavily upon uniquely human capacities like creativity and imagination (Pistrui 2018). As music educators, we have a solid case to make for our future within neoliberalism (or whatever system follows), a case that is currently being argued effectively in many places by STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math) advocates (see Allina 2018). Of course, it is essential to back up this line of reasoning with music pedagogies explicitly aimed at developing creativity more so than compliance.

Second, social reproduction has always afforded opportunities for resistance (Fraser 2017b). Families, for instance, may tend to adopt and reinforce dominant rationalities, but they don’t have to. In many nations, parents still have considerable leeway in how they raise their children; they don’t have to reinforce neoliberalism. If they don’t, of course, the school probably will, but the school doesn’t

necessarily have to either. Teachers sometimes have enough freedom to center rationalities or ideologies other than neoliberalism. Plus, because of their marginalization within school and curriculum, music teachers may have even more space for resistance than most other teachers. Along with other arts and humanities, in other words, music teachers can be integral in helping students develop critical thinking skills and dispositions to counter neoliberalism. And, in this regard, we have a solid and growing curricular base from which to build: critical pedagogy for music education, advocated more than a decade ago by Frank Abrahams (2005), “acknowledges that teaching and learning music is socially and politically constructed. It advocates a shift in power relationships within the music classroom [and] engages children in critical thinking through problem posing, problem solving, [and] critical action...” (14).

Critical pedagogy continues as a central theme in a considerable amount of research in music education, particularly the work found here in ACT. Again, it is a labor of hope, finding possibilities for transformation within inevitable ruptures in institutional oppression and exploitation. This principle of hope is reflected in Paulo Freire’s 1994 discussion of institutional realities in Brazil:

The fact is that the “democratization” of the shamelessness and corruption that is gaining the upper hand in our country, contempt for the common good, and crimes that go unpunished, have only broadened and deepened as the nation has begun to rise up in protest. Even young adults and teenagers crowd into the streets, criticizing, calling for honesty and candor. The people cry out against all the crass evidence of public corruption. The public squares are filled once more. There is a hope, however timid, on the street corners, a hope in each and every one of us. (Freire 2014, 1–2)

This Issue

All four articles in this issue address aspects of music education and associated institutions; the first three are based on presentations at the aforementioned Gettysburg colloquium and the fourth is a regular submission.

Juliet Hess leads with an insightful and well-researched look at the revolutionary potential of activist music education. She bases her analysis on a theoretical framework developed by Deleuze and Guattari wherein the State—“any regulated institution that functions through and imposes a particular set of rules embodied by

institutions such as governments, hospitals, courts, and schools”—is opposed by the War Machine—“a nomadic body in the radical exterior outside of State control. Aiming to challenge the State apparatus, it is oppositional, but is free to engage creatively, drawing upon any tactics and strategies at any time.” Even though it generally operates according to strict regulations in “striated space,” one strategy of the State is to appropriate key approaches emerging from within the more open or “smooth space” of the War Machine. Also drawing from Deleuze and Guattari, Hess describes the role of schools in social reproduction: “In operating as a site of social reproduction, school functions to conserve the status quo through reproducing classed and raced systems, and striate any unregulated space.” Given this context, can activist approaches to music education be “truly revolutionary”? Hess draws from three fictional vignettes and the experiences of 20 activist-musicians to explore this question in depth.

Through an institutional ethnography process, **Danielle Sirek** and **Terry Sef-ton** explore their professional experiences as, respectively, adjunct and tenured university music education faculty. In particular, they consider “how systems exert *control* over actors”; “*constraint* of action—ways in which those with less power feel constrained in how they respond to directives from administration”; and “*convergence*—pressures exerted on faculty resulting in less risk-taking and more conformity...” They discuss the nexus of institutions that control, constrain, and otherwise regulate their work, including the university, other government entities, and cultural/social practices. In their experiential analysis, all of these converge to prescribe and standardize outcomes, as well as ensure conformity, the impact of which extends beyond faculty to the attitudes of their students: “they come to our classes expecting a course outline that has detail on assignments and assessment, and explicit success criteria. Most want no surprises and no ambiguity.” While tenured faculty tend to feel a degree of power in resisting institutional control, adjunct faculty, due to the precarious nature of their employment, are more apt to comply.

Next, **Deborah Bradley** compares and contrasts nationalistic and metaphorical concepts of citizenship in her analysis of artistic citizenship, showing how such conceptualizations applied in music education can harm people whose citizenship status is tenuous. She wonders why citizenship is such an appealing term and

whether there are ways to “describe and demonstrate those values of artistic citizenship deemed important for education without invoking the inherent normativity and exclusion within the terminology of *citizen* and *citizenship*?” In light of global social and ecological turmoil, citizenship is becoming ever more diverse and contested, with growing numbers of “non-citizens, refugees, the dispossessed, the disappeared, the incarcerated, migrants, [and] immigrants” who are not accorded the same rights, protections, and privileges as others. Citizenship, then, can connote privilege, especially considering the upsurge in nationalist movements and political unrest throughout the world. Bradley acknowledges the social responsibility of the arts and arts education in promoting socially just and sustainable societies, but wonders if there might be better terminologies or conceptualizations; “educators need to practice activism responsibly, with care and intent, in order to avoid the potentially negative implications concepts such as artistic citizenship might invoke.”

Finally, **Kim Boeskov**, critiques the widely held belief in the socially and personally transformative function of the arts—music in particular—and questions the veracity of music practices “celebrated for their alleged success in bringing about positive social change through active music making.” Although integral in helping us see music’s social dimensions, Boeskov considers the social theories of Christopher Small and Tia DeNora as inadequate in fully capturing the complexity of musicking, portraying musical experience in too positive a light. He argues that “a more primary function of the musical performance is to conceal the arbitrary nature of these experienced social relationships and thereby naturalize and implicitly legitimate the existing social order.” He draws from Georgina Born for a more “adequate theory of music’s social mediation” and applies this “expanded view” in an analysis of the Palestinian music education program, as an illustration for “the complex intersection of transgressive and normative functions of musicking.” His conclusions are rather instructive relative to the theme for this issue of ACT.

Failing to address how immediate social relations produced in musical performance are connected to wider social and institutional formations entails a risk of exaggerating the transgressive and transformative functions of musical performance and overlooking the normative or constraining aspects. The result is not only inadequate analyses of music as a means of social transformation. More disturbingly, such analyses also contribute to concealing and naturalizing the power relations upholding the status quo.

Thanks

With this issue of *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, I conclude my five-year term as editor. I leave the journal in the expert care of co-editors, Deb Bradley and Scott Goble, although I will continue as managing editor. The aim of having two editors and one managing editor is simply to divide the work so it doesn't all fall to one person, and so we can maintain the continuity and quality of the journal.

I would like to acknowledge those who have contributed to and helped with ACT during my tenure. Brent Talbot served diligently as Associate Editor and has done top-notch work on multiple issues of ACT. We also have a dedicated production team—Anita Prest, Dan Shevock, Emmett O'Leary, Naomi Leadbeater—who stand at the ready to copy edit and format ACT for publication, sometimes at less-than-opportune times. Members of our editorial board—including new members and those who have retired over the past four years—along with “outside” reviewers, have written thoughtful, detailed, and constructive reviews. Most of all, many authors have contributed their insightful work to ACT and have been patient through reviews and revisions. Thanks to the efforts of all of these people, we have been able to publish an unprecedented number of articles. I began volunteering with ACT more than a decade ago when Wayne Bowman was editor and he has been a thoughtful and candid advisor since. Next, I served as associate editor when David Elliott was editor; I appreciate that he has always been gracious and encouraging. I also appreciate the kind support and reliable insight of Deb Bradley, who has served most recently as editor-in-chief for MDG Publications. Finally, all of us in the MayDay Group and throughout the field of music education owe much to the work and foresight of Tom Regelski, founding editor of ACT and co-founder of the MayDay Group. It's a lasting tribute to him that the journal continues.

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