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Drawing From Rural Ideals for Sustainable School Music

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In the summer of 2011, the Mayday Group met in Salt Lake City, in Utah—my home state. So, as a Mormon member of Mayday and, given the historical and cultural prominence of Mormonism in Utah, I felt it would be fitting to shape my narrative according to one of the most enduring images in Mormon theology, Lehi's Vision of the Tree of Life recounted in the Book of Mormon (1994).



The Tree of Life by Greg Olsen, http://www.gregolsen.com/lehi-s-dream-9121 (used by permission,)

In this account, Lehi dreams that he is wandering in a "dark and dreary" wilderness, he prays for deliverance, and is led by a heavenly messenger to the Tree of Life:

I beheld a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy. . . . I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it was most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted . . . And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy . . . I beckoned unto [my family]; and I also did say unto them with a loud voice that they should come unto me, and partake of the fruit, which was desirable above all other fruit. And . . . they did come unto me and partake of the fruit also. . . I beheld [many people who] did press forward . . . until they did come forth

and partake of the fruit of the tree. And after they had partaken of the fruit of the tree they did cast their eyes about as if they were ashamed. . . . And I also cast my eyes round about, and beheld, on the other side of the river of water, a great and spacious building; and it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth. And it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come and were partaking of the fruit. And after they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost. (15)

Rural /Urban Archetypal Images

For members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), the religious symbolism in this allegory relates to God's love, the joys of discipleship, and resisting the temptations of the world. I invoke the story here, however, as a framework for discussing a complex of images associated with rural and urban people and places. A number of characteristics about Lehi and his people seem, to my view and experience, quite rural; they are situated physically at an oasis in the midst of a wilderness, in a natural setting, partaking directly of unrefined and basic sustenance, living a simple and wholesome life. The denizens of the Great and Spacious Building, on the other hand, seem characteristically urban—dwelling and interacting within large, complex, constructed environments disconnected, in a variety of ways, from the earth. Pivotally, the tension between the two groups is precipitated by the urban population, pointing the finger in ridicule and striving to lure Lehi's people away from the Tree of Life. Some heed the mockery and leave the tree; others ignore it and stay.

I believe there is good reason that this image, with its interplay of rural and urban themes, could be considered archetypal. For Carl Jung, who popularized the concept in modern psychology, *archetypes* are *primordial* images "derived from the *collective unconscious*" and "at least common to entire peoples and epochs" if not to "all times and races" (cited by Grey 1996, 50). Actual archetypes are generally discussed as existing below the level of human consciousness and passed on as part of one's genetic make-up; in other words, they are inherited and recognizable only through *archetypal images* in cultural artifacts such as myths or legends. My characterization of *archetypal images*, however, draws more from Petteri Pietikainen's cultural synthesis (1998) of Jung's archetypes with Ernst Cassirer's *symbolic forms*. He writes:

With my revisionary proposal of the cultural aspect of archetypes, I am not aiming at offering a theory of my own to the 'science of archetypes', but rather a cultural

'common sense' interpretation, which takes into account the 'structural' and 'formal' features of archetypes without yielding to the (so far) untenable theory of the genetic inheritance of archetypes. . . . Jung argued that . . . ancient traditions are alive in the collective unconscious as archetypes, but I regard as much more plausible the idea that during the cultural evolution these 'undercurrents' are simply passed from one generation to another, and as a result of cultural transmission, our culture is not a single monolithic entity but a dynamic process, in which the cultural diversity is comparable to the evolutionary biodiversity in nature. (334)

The rural and urban images in Lehi's allegory of the Tree of Life, it seems to me, are rooted in the real interplay of rural and urban values and the sustained suppression of rural perspectives and values by urban ones. Another example of this archetypal image is a familiar Aesop fable about the Country Mouse and the City Mouse (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse). In the classic telling, the Country Mouse enjoys a life of relative safety, wholesomeness, predictability, and strenuous physical labor. The City Mouse visits, scoffs at the Country Mouse, and invites him to the city to experience how exciting and easy life can be. The Country Mouse acquiesces and, of course, discovers first-hand when a cat almost devours him that, even though there is plenty to eat and a lot of excitement in the city, it is a dangerous place. He chooses to return to his simpler existence. Even though relatively recent retellings of the Country Mouse and the City Mouse tend towards more pluralistic endings—each mouse is rightfully "at home" in his respective setting—most versions underscore the wisdom of rural life and the overall folly of city life, compounded (as in Lehi's Dream) by the latter's derision of the former.

This archetypal image of rural oppression and urban dominance is also a common theme (if not *the* common theme) in Country music. I will give three examples. The first lyrics are from *Big City*, written by Merle Haggard and Dean Holloway.

I'm tired of this dirty old city, Entirely too much work and never enough play. And I'm tired of these dirty old sidewalks; Think I'll walk off my steady job today.

Turn me loose, set me free, somewhere in the middle of Montana. And give me all that I've got comin' to me. And you can keep your retirement and your so-called social security. Big city turn me loose and set me free. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ow3HDM0yzQM

The perceived openness and freedom of Montana is contrasted with the cramped and dirty, stereotypical city. Retirement plans and "social security" fail to provide freedom or the

same sense of security that people can experience living where the air and water are clean and where spaces are un-crowded. A similar sentiment, albeit with a more strident tone, can be heard in *A Country Boy Can Survive*, by Hank Williams, Jr.

I had a good friend in New York City; He never called me by my name, just hillbilly. My grandpa taught me how to live off the land And his taught him to be a businessman. He used to send me pictures of the Broadway nights And I'd send him some homemade wine.

But he was killed by a man with a switchblade knife; For 43 dollars my friend lost his life. I'd love to spit some beechnut in that dudes eyes And shoot him with my old 45 Cause a country boy can survive. Country folks can survive . . .

Because you can't starve us out
And you can't makes us run
Cuz we're them old boys raised on shotgun
And we say grace and we say Ma'am
And if you ain't into that we don't give a damn.

We came from the West Virginia coalmines
And the Rocky Mountains and the western skies
And we can skin a buck; we can run a trout line
And a country boy can survive.
Country folks can survive.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4s0nzsU1Wg

The singer's friend has conformed to a dominant lifestyle of the modern majority, working as a business man and purchasing his entertainment on Broadway, and looks down on his friend from the country. By contrast, the country boy, as a member of an endangered and oppressed minority, survives off the land and makes his own entertainment. That he feels threatened is evidenced by his claim that he can't be starved out or made to run. Despite this angst, however, he bravely asserts that he really doesn't care what other people do or think (like the folks at the Tree of Life who paid no heed to those mocking from the Great and Spacious Building).

Finally, Dolly Parton's *Backwoods Barbie* contrasts the core values associated with growing up poor and rural with relatively shallow and false modern appearances. She dreamed she "could have it all" and adopted the accourrements of modern capitalism. Still, in the end, the rural values are the ones that "run true and deep."

I grew up poor and ragged, just a simple country girl. I wanted to be pretty more than anything in the world, like Barbie or the models in the Fredricks' catalog. From rags to wishes in my dreams I could have it all. I'm just a backwoods Barbie, too much makeup, too much hair. Don't be fooled by thinkin' that the goods are not all there. Don't let these false eyelashes lead you to believe that I'm as shallow as I look 'cause I run true and deep. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2b2qzH8XIo

All three examples—Lehi's Dream, the Country Mouse and the City Mouse, and selected Country music lyrics—are imbued with a sense of irony. Despite the dominant view promoting the superiority of urban life with its modern conveniences and the accompanying bias against rural populations, many rural folk enjoy a life of deep satisfaction and fulfillment due, in large degree, to close ties to family, place, and community. True, many are lured away by promises associated with a more "modern" life, but some often regret it later and long to return ("I'm tired of this dirty old city!")—if not in person, then in spirit, re-appropriating or re-emphasizing rural ideals (see Carr and Kefalas 2009 for an extended discussion of this phenomenon relative to rural schools). True to the archetypal image, they realize that there is something of great value in the country life, something overlooked or misunderstood by city folk.

In sum, archetypal images in stories and lyrics such as these grow from perceptions of social, cultural, and geographical realities; for their purveyors, they likely stem from personal experience as the proverbial Country Mouse in the city and/or from first-hand experience with oppressive views contrasting stereotypically broad-minded, sophisticated urbanites with stereotypically narrow-minded, rustic ruralites. Either way, these images are integral to my purpose here because they provide a framework—they "set the stage"—for exploring actual discrimination and oppressive social patterns in rural music education. Given this framing, my intent is twofold—first, to discuss urban oppression and exploitation of rural people and places in American music education and, second, to offer suggestions for how rural ideals and ways of being might constitute a *hidden good*, something generally unnoticed that actually could serve as inspiration for more sustainable practices in fields of music teaching and learning.

Community, Society, and Modernization

Rural and urban social arrangements received comprehensive treatment early on in the field of sociology starting with Ferdinand Tönnies' conceptualizations of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, typically translated as *community* and *society* (Nisbet 1966). Howley and Howley (2010) write:

One well-known account of community contrasts it with society: in community humans remain together despite their differences, whereas in society humans remain separate despite their commonalities. This account is important because it shows that the social priority in community is *mutual interdependence* whereas the social priority in society is *unilateral independence*. On such a view, the difficulty with society is precisely the want of community, and, indeed, many social theorists have articulated just this complaint about the modern world. (36, emphasis in the original)

Sale (1980) argued that the small rural community with an optimal population of around 500 people is historically the most ideal and successful human scale social arrangement for sustainably meeting the needs of its membership. In this kind of community it is possible for every individual to know everyone else personally. Subsequently, people in smaller communities are likely to work and engage in leisure activities together, interact face-to-face on a regular basis, adhere to long-held traditions, feel a connectedness to geographical location and nature, and come quickly to the aid of a neighbor in need. Examples of these close-knit communities include over 200 early Mormon farming-based settlements throughout the Western United States where people did, in fact, live communally, holding all material things in common. Aaronite (http://en. wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Aaron) communities in Utah's West Desert still live communally in this way and (among other things) take meals together each day in a central location. I think also of contemporary Amish and Mennonite cooperative communities throughout much of North America, especially in the Midwest.

In general, rural towns throughout North America, even though they have been extensively modernized, still retain important elements of traditional communities. Urban and suburban social arrangements, on the other hand, tend to be associated with a loss of this kind of community (Sale 1980, 181). Urban life is modern—mechanized, industrial, capitalist, and individualist. Focus is placed on progress, production (Berry 1977), and development often as ends-in-themselves. Anthony Giddens (1990) outlines three integral characteristics of

modernity. First, *capitalism* is the "restless, mobile character of modernity . . . explained as the outcome of the investment-profit-investment cycle which, combined with the overall tendency of the rate of profit to decline, brings about a constant disposition for the system to expand" (11). Second, *industrialism* is the "energizing impulse of a complex division of labour, harnessing production to human needs through the industrial exploitation of nature" (12). Finally, *time-space distanciation* is the "prime condition of the processes of disembedding . . . [which] serves to open up manifold possibilities of change by breaking free from the restraints of local habits and practices (20)." Two outcomes of this disembedding process include large social institutions and expert systems that "remove social relations from the immediacies of context" (28).

Modern urbanism tends to dominate and subvert the quality of life in rural places. "As a modernist form of organization, society, almost by definition, works to erode the localities where community most 'naturally' exists' (Howley and Howley 2010, 36f). It is not difficult, taking Giddens' three aforementioned qualities, to understand how and why this is the case. Capitalism feeds on progress; it must continually expand. This impacts rural places, rich in natural resources to be exploited and open space to be inhabited and integrated. Capitalism, along with industrialism and commercialism, depends on an ever expanding menu of goods and services marketed in ways that create desires for gadgets and services that people absolutely "must have" to lead a "normal" life. Industrialism draws populations to manufacturing centers both to labor and to consume. Large population centers allow for the proliferation of expert, standardized knowledge systems and large social institutions in the place of local customs, traditions, and the significance of regular, everyday patterns of interaction—the primacy of this person, in this place, at this time. The pluralism inherent to living in a limited space with a limited number of community members is lost in the placeless-ness of modern communication networks and ossifying institutions (see Regelski 2004 for a more comprehensive discussion of social institutions).

The "Rise (and Fall)" of Rural School Music

Patterns of modernization and urbanization are readily apparent in rural education. Modern urban schools were developed upon principles of standardization and efficiency—a factory model, in other words. Rural schools, especially one-room schools, were viewed as antithetical to progress; they simply weren't up-to-date. Hence, the history of rural schools

from the late 1800s to the present has been one of consolidation and modernization (Sher and Rosenfeld 1977, 34).

Making rural schools more and more like urban ones often meant that policies and practices developed for city schools were implemented in rural communities far removed from the particular problems, circumstances, and socioeconomic context originally envisioned and addressed. Not surprisingly, this wholesale adoption of urban educational models created long-lasting tensions within rural communities and contributed to a diminished continuity between rural life and rural education. (12; see also The National Rural Education Association 2005)

This urbanization of rural public schools applied as well to individual subject domains. Michael Mark and Charles Gary (1992) writes: "As the nation began to forge a business society, school boards and administrators began to favor subjects that reflected the new mechanization. They wanted subjects organized scientifically and evaluated accurately" (166). For example, in a 1927 article in the *Music Supervisors Journal*, rural music education reformer, Charles A. Fullerton, discussed how new audio recording technology could provide a "100% standard" for singing, allowing the "enrichment of rural life through music." Despite rich musical practices throughout rural North America, a general consensus among music education reformers of this era of rural modernization suggested that "real" music (rural music didn't count as music!) was not being played or sung in rural areas—that "a large proportion of children [were] absolutely denied the influence of music in their lives" (49). When reformers did acknowledge rural music counted as *music*, it was characterized as "blatant emptiness" and "vulgar"—"the cheapest trash" (Fullerton 1927, 37).

From a 1937 book aimed specifically at improving rural music education, Osbourne McConathy, W. Otto Miessner, Edward Bailey Birge, and Mabel E. Bray, an esteemed group of modern innovators in American music education, composed the following statement:

Everyone believes that music contributes to finer living. And everyone agrees that children of rural communities deserve all the advantages which today are offered to children in city schools. . . . The day of isolation of rural communities is past. Good roads, modern transportation, telephones, and the radio have brought all parts of the country into neighborly proximity. Educators are studying the contribution of the various school subjects to better living. Among these subjects music takes and important place and one which educators now recognize as essential to modern school life. . . . In order to show the full possibilities of our program, let us imagine a situation in which the teacher of a one-room school has never sung. Possibly she herself is the product of a rural school in which there was no singing. . . . Let us also imagine her in a school in which there has never been any music . . . She must feel deeply that music is a broadening, elevating, and refining experience. She must realize that music can bring to the boys and girls of her school something beautiful and fine which nothing else can offer in quite the same way and in the same measure.

... Here and there a child may be met who has heard music and musicians disparaged by parents or other older people . . . But such a pupil will soon change his viewpoint in the face of the general interest which the plans discussed in this book will develop. (5–7)

"Fine" living, scientific innovation, and other advantages of city life were offered as antidotes to the lived and musical conservatism, isolation, baseness, coarseness, and ignorance of rural life (think of the Country Mouse). Rural folk "deserved" musical modernization; they were just as important as everyone else. The use of modern technologies—recordings and radio—could be applied to develop an appreciation for "great" music. This was all part of a movement towards musical standardization, in the form of large ensembles with standard repertoire and instrumentation, as encouraged through national music contests during this era (Humphreys 1989). In addition, the suggestions that rural teachers might not have ever sung or that rural parents were found to disparage music, make sense only if everyday, traditional, rural music is excluded from what counts as singing or music proper.

Samuel T. Burns (1925), Assistant Superintendent and Director of Music in the rural Medina County, Ohio schools discussed innovative approaches in his district aimed at "overcoming the conditions of isolation" (8) and intended to "bring to the country boys and girls most of the advantages in music already enjoyed by pupils in our city schools" (10). Innovations included sharing specialists between schools according to their various areas of expertise, hiring additional traveling specialists, and county-wide orchestras and choruses for advanced students. Consolidation, of course, was the long-term solution, but until then (or possibly as a catalyst to that end) these efforts were found to be effective in physically and culturally integrating rural children. As with other music education reformers and school music advocates of the era, Burns took a decidedly negative view of rural community and family music making.

Most small communities have occasional amateur and home talent performances. Many of these of such low grade and given with such unattractive settings and crude properties as to be positively offensive to good taste. We feel that by making it possible for our schools to have public performances given in attractive surroundings, with suitable settings and good properties, we are developing an appreciation of the beautiful, no less than when raising the standard of musical appreciation. (71)

Seven years later, Burns (1932) had solidified his list of innovations for rural school music: varied and equally funded music programs, specialized instruction, music teaching

training, a county-wide music library and costume collection, large scale purchasing, a county music camp, and a county band, orchestra, and choir. Of these three standard large ensembles, he wrote the following:

Only by bringing together the musical talent of several small high schools is it possible to develop musical organizations which can give the more talented pupils the musical experience in ensemble which they should have. The statement that the especially talented child is the neglected child is never more noticeably evident than in the musical organizations of most small high schools. (27)

The effort to identify "talented" children and foster their musical development according to musical and cultural standards set by reformers was part of an ongoing effort to draw these most promising students away from rural life. Similar efforts were made across the United States during the 1930s and 40s in California (Heagy 1941), Idaho (Barnard 1936), Maryland (*Music Supervisors Journal* 1933), and Delaware (*Music Educators Journal* 1936). Of special note is an orchestra program in Shasta County, California of which Muriel B. Logerwell (1944) wrote:

This year the county is employing a supervisor who will correlate the work of the music teachers and assist the schools without special instructors to follow as nearly as possible the standard requirements for classroom music. We feel that we have come far from that first year, when learning to chord on the "gittar" was the pride of pupil and parent. Many parents in rural districts have become interested in their children's musical progress and have bought standard instruments. In most districts we are able—by combining the instrumental classes of several small schools—to achieve an orchestra that is fairly well balanced and in which all choirs are represented. The large majority of children in our rural schools now are receiving a well-rounded music education, and I have visited not one school in which the children were not gaining pleasure out of all proportion to the amount of money spent upon the program. We are proud, as we begin our sixth year, to have the principals of our high schools tell us that each year their music classes have grown noticeably in both size and quality. (62)

Here, again, mockery is paired with benevolence. "Standard" instruments are orchestral instruments as opposed to guitar—a beloved musical instrument for small-scale performances of popular and folk music. A large, well-balanced ensemble is the key to "a well-rounded music education." Size is inextricably linked with quality. This, of course, put smaller schools at a disadvantage and made consolidation of schools even more sensible. Overall, the efforts of school music reformers of the progressive era were aimed not simply at reforming school music, but were explicitly intended to modernize the musical tastes and social sensibilities of rural populations.

The impetus for school instrumental ensembles from 1920 on, it is important to note, came from industry, from the musical instrument manufacturers and their efforts to maintain a market for band instruments in light of "the decrease in the number of professional and town bands" (Humphreys 1989, 55). Jere Humphreys calls the subsequent proliferation of instrumental music "nothing short of amazing" (58) although it did take longer to develop bands and orchestras in many of the smaller, rural high schools. He writes:

By the beginning of World War II, instrumental programs were able to draw upon a more extensive and higher quality repertoire, a wider selection of appropriate pedagogical materials, many more trained music teachers, *larger schools*, a stronger national economy, and a fairly short but strong tradition for school instrumental programs. School orchestras and bands have continued to grow, aided by social reforms such as the civil and women's rights movements. School bands and orchestras are today more numerous, larger, and more musical than ever before. Although the golden age of bands was from 1870 through Sousa's death in 1932, *we are now living in the golden age of school instrumental performing ensembles*. (58–59, italics added)

Whether rural schools in general ever reached the "golden age of school instrumental performing ensembles" is debatable. For many small schools, large, balanced ensembles are simply out-of-reach. However, it is clear that ensembles did proliferate throughout the country, including in rural schools. However, as Humphreys notes, larger schools were integral to their proliferation. In other words, the phenomenon of expanded instrumental programs and large ensembles paralleled that of rural school consolidation and the corresponding deterioration of community. Both developments were part of a modern industrial, capitalist movement with its emphasis on standardization, focus on efficiency, and exclusive adherence to the promises of science (Humphreys 1988).

Fast forward to the present: this decidedly modern school band tradition, with its "competitiveness, efficiency, exceptionalism, and means-ends pragmatism" (Allsup and Benedict 2008, 157), is waning in rural schools; the "golden age" is clearly past. In schools within an hour's drive of Northwest Missouri State University, where I taught from 2006 to 2012, we were losing about one rural music teacher per year due to low enrollments in typically rural school music programs centered on a standard concert band. Of course, informal music teaching and learning (community, family, or media-based) and needsfulfilling musical engagements in rural places will probably never come to an end. And, in fact, the exit of music education professionals from public schools (something that I am *not* promoting) might even precipitate a renewal of the rural musical engagements demeaned and diminished by the expansion of rural school music.

The Promises of Rural Music Education

The promises of modernism have turned out to be rather empty in the long-term for rural music education. I offer another possibility—the renewal of rural school music, growing from rural roots that are still very much alive in rural places, *and* the renewal of music education everywhere, countering the negative effects of modern industrialism and capitalism with rural ideals of community and sustainability. To quote the popular lecturer, Sir Ken Robinson (2010, http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html):

I think we have to change metaphors. We have to go essentially from what is an industrial model of education, a manufacturing model which is based on linearity and conformity and batching people. We have to move to a model which is based more on principles of agriculture. We have to recognize that human flourishing is not a mechanical process; it's an organic process and you cannot predict the outcome of human development. All you can do is, like a farmer, create the conditions under which they will begin to flourish.

This argument for a more *organic*, farm-based (rural!) approach corresponds to Paul Theobald's (1997) suggestion that the "small, intimate, community-focused rural school" might serve as a model for schools in general as an alternative to the dominant, "consolidated, urban-factory school" model (Corbett 2009, 8). In his insightful book, *Teaching the Commons: Place, Pride, and the Renewal of Community*, Theobald (1997) discusses three rural ideals: *intradependence*, *cyclic time*, and the *avoidance of risk* in order to both highlight the positive qualities of rurality and offer solutions to modern problems. In the final section of this paper I will explore how fostering these three ideals might be transformative and re-invigorating for music education.

Intradependence

More comprehensive than dependence or interdependence, intradependence is when people "exist by virtue of necessary relations *within a place*" (Theobald 1997, 7). It includes the classic definition of community—a small group of people living in relatively close proximity who naturally, thoroughly, and of necessity know and rely on each other. This re-focusing on community has potential for ameliorating the individualistic and alienating effects of capitalism and competition. Plus, the concept of intradependance adds the element of place in

the sense that quality of life is inextricably linked to preserving, sustaining, and beautifying local environments.

This attitude of place-full-ness runs counter to the currents of ongoing modern industrialization and placeless-ness (time-space distanciation). Despite modernist claims to the contrary, place understood as geographical location is *still* important and likely always will be. In the words of rural education researcher, John Corbett (2010),

... each of us still lives somewhere concrete ... we still have bodies. We sleep in a bed somewhere if we are lucky enough to have a home. We get up and negotiate a room, a house, an apartment. We dwell in some kind of physical place ... where face-to-face interaction and ... colloquial language practices are the foundation of life. Global capitalism and radical mobility have not altered this fundamental reality . .. Place still matters. (120–121, italics added)

School size, in rural areas, is directly related to place. For instance, the high school I attended was situated more than 100 miles from the nearest town, and it served a collection of very small farm settlements spread throughout 40 miles of Utah's Snake Valley. Our school was too remote to consolidate. Other rural schools throughout North America have avoided consolidation by virtue of either relative isolation or the community's persistent school-preservation efforts. For instance, when the Eureka, Utah schools were in danger of consolidation, community members boarded their school buses, drove to the state capitol, and effectively voiced their opposition. That these schools are deeply cherished is linked to their small population and their close proximity within the local community. It is also possible to foster similarly small neighborhood schools in local urban and suburban neighborhoods (Slotta and Fernandez 2011), including dividing large schools into smaller learning communities.

In the modern view, however, smallness is still generally considered a disadvantage. Large schools, it is typically argued, can offer more specialization and standardization. Nowhere is this more evident than in music education, where large, balanced ensembles are the generally accepted goal. However, small schools call for and allow for *smaller* ensembles. Happily, this coincides with the fact that people in North America generally prefer the music of *small* ensembles—Country bands, rock bands, and the like. For *all* schools, if at all possible, small ensembles are a more sustainable alternative than "traditional" bands, orchestras, and choirs. Smaller ensembles also foster more interdependence between musicians. Contrast the large, director centered, ensemble with a bluegrass band. In the

former, a large group of individuals follow the directions of a conductor and, in the latter, a group of musicians play together collaboratively and without formal direction.

Place-full-ness is also more likely in smaller ensembles where smaller, more intimate performance venues are possible. Large ensembles, of course, require large spaces (concert halls, PA systems, stadiums) in which to perform. For small ensembles, a city street, a park, a front porch, a living room, or a garage will suffice. Bluegrass bands, for instance, perform regularly out-of-doors demonstrating affinity to and care for and about local places. Music teachers do not even have to teach ensembles at all, but can teach for sustainable local performance/participation in homes and other local places. A couple of weeks ago I visited with a band teacher who also teaches a guitar class in a large, suburban high school. I asked him if the guitar students perform together as a guitar ensemble. He replied that the course is aimed at developing individual skills that can be applied in a variety of settings, not intended for concert or ensemble performance. Yet, it is likely that more of his guitar students will continue playing their instruments throughout life than do his band students.

Burns' (1925) aforementioned comments about how "amateur and home talent performances" were "of such low grade and given with such unattractive settings and crude properties as to be positively offensive to good taste" are reasonable only within a standardized view of musical excellence and value that places priority on the actual sound rather than upon how the musical experience benefits people and avoids harming places. Viewed through the lens of intradependance, the "amateur and home talent performances" Burns experienced were likely highly valued forms of social/cultural/musical interaction within the community. In short, they were likely more participatory. According to Turino (2008), "situations of participatory music making are not just informal or amateur, that is, lesser versions of the 'real music' made by the pros but . . . , in fact, they are something else—a different form of art and activity entirely—and . . . they should be conceptualized and valued as such" (25). Neither did they require specially constructed, natural-resourceconsuming performance venues. These participatory forms of performance fit naturally within already existing community times and spaces. In my recollection, the hoot-n-nannies I attended as a child involved the entire community—multiple ages and occupations—joining together to share music and engage socially. In these settings, standards of local participation eclipsed standards of musical excellence; the musical performances were by no means "refined." However, they were no less effective in building community. Neither is musical

variety an essential element in participatory performance. My grandparents told of a dance they attended one night where the only instrumentalist in the group was a pianist who knew just three songs. So, they had a great time dancing the night away to those three songs played over and over!

Cyclic Time

Theobald (1997) encourages us, "imagine that you once looked at time as something that reappeared everyday instead of something that marches on, never to be regained" (41). The concept of time as an expendable and limited resource is integral to at least three important foundational concepts of modernism: the primacy of scientific rationalism (best practices) in guiding human actions and establishing values (How can time, including school time, be spent most efficiently and effectively?); the subsequent division of labor and knowledge into separate domains or specializations; and increased individualism—time is a commodity; "I will spend *my* time on earth *my* way" (42). A cyclic view of time re-embeds it within place and community; "time is thought to be in the service of the task at hand" rather than the other way around and "time reappears each day, true to its cyclic nature" rather than becoming lost—"true to its linear nature" (Theobald 1997, 36). The rhythms of everyday life and work, along with seasonal traditions and celebrations, shape and give meaning and purpose to social interaction.

Cyclic time calls multiple aspects of modern music education into question, including national and state behavioral standards ("Students will be able to ______"), linear curriculum models whereby students progress gradually and logically/sequentially from one level of skill or understanding to another, and the isolation of music as a domain separate from all other domains of knowing/doing. Musical standards remove music and musical engagements from their innate rootedness in particular groups of people interacting in "real time" and place. If we were to remove or avoid universal standards in any form—including actual written standards, beliefs about "timeless" masterworks, or generally promoted and enforced professional practices—it would allow schools and school teachers the possibility for reembedding music instruction within the everyday life of individual communities. This, of course, would not constitute a move *away from* standards or towards scholastic chaos.

Practical guidance could more easily derive from and be embedded within local standards—local values, beliefs, practices, and traditions. The temptation for professional scholars in the

field of music education might be to forge so-called "glocal" standards—principles so general that they could be considered universal and still find practical local application—but any such effort would remain suspect as a vestige of modernist institutional control and industrial/scientific social engineering.

The perspective influenced by a cyclic view of time, supports John Dewey's (1897) celebrated declaration, "I believe that education . . . is a process of living and not a preparation for future living" (http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/My_Pedagogic

Creed#ARTICLE TWO. WHAT THE SCHOOL IS). Schooling is effectively embedded within the realities of socially and locally lived experience. Of course, when this is the case, skills developed during one's school years will likely find application after schooling is completed. School, from this perspective, provides spaces for everyday forms of musicing througout the school day including musical routines, "integration", and celebrations.

Learning experiences include a synthesis of subjects, including music (which maybe should not have been separated out in the first place).

At the elementary level, for example, traditional singing games and folk/popular dances are integral to this type of organic approach. When people sing and dance together, they foster a sense community; they share, in *common*, something of cultural, social, and personal value. Recently, an elementary music specialist wrote an email to me "complaining" about a hand clapping game, Four White Horses, that I had encouraged her to include in her curriculum plan when she was studying to become a music teacher. She had carefully planned out a sequence of songs, games, and dances for an entire suburban elementary school, grades K through 6. When she introduced Four White Horses to her fourth graders, however, they played the game at home and on the playground until many other children in other grades knew the song and game as well. Now this music teacher would have to find a new song to introduce to next year's fourth graders. Her feigned complaint revealed her pleasure in having introduced something musical that could take on a life of its own, so to speak, outside of the initial institutional setting. This, I believe, is a prime example of a community-enhancing song and game (and there are many more like it). For myself, as a rural K-12 music teacher, singing games and folk dances provided curricular salvation since there was simply not time to develop sequential lesson plans. Students were willing to play the games over and over, developing important social and musical skills in the process. The children and community embraced this joyful approach. Recently, I have been sharing some

songs and singing games with the third grade class my daughter attends and just this week, one of her classmates reported, unprompted, that he had shared the clapping game, *Head and Shoulders Baby*, with his mother; he taught it to her and they played it together!

In the banking model for curriculum (Freire 2006), information is "covered" sequentially. At the elementary level, for instance, a music teacher might present a lesson about dynamic labels—*forte* and *piano*—giving some listening examples, having students mark correct responses on a worksheet, and checking responses for understanding. In essence, this bit of knowledge is placed in the student's bank of knowledge to be applied (spent) in some future context, performing in or listening to large, classical ensembles where such terms possess cultural currency. On a curricular macro-level, isolated bits of knowledge and skill such as these are identified as essential and are divided rationally across the years of public schooling usually in a spiraling sequence through which children progress, factory style, in same-age peer groups.

Conversely, in an organic approach, children engage in musicing together (singing games, sing-alongs, folk dances, instrumental ensembles) according to the cultural conventions of each musical practice (an approach akin to various *praxial* theories, e.g. Elliott 1995). Skills develop by virtue of participation, but efficiency is not a central concern. Good times are valued more than time well-*spent*. Furthermore, looking at the concept of cyclic time with its connections to and derivations from place can open discourses about local musical traditions and events and how school music might be tied more closely with the local community and natural environment—the everyday rhythms and lived realities of cherished places.

Avoiding Risk

Theobald (1997) has pointed out the centrality of risk in modern, capitalist society.

The emphasis on individualism, the "right" to ever-greater riches and the inattention to nature that came with it, the idea of science as the key to labor-replacing technology, the powerful emphasis placed on freedom and autonomy—all of these things led to a kind of cultural stamp of approval for entrepreneurial fearlessness. The greater the risk, the greater the payoff. In a way that would have made no sense at all in a communally oriented world, entrepreneurs—those willing to take risks—gradually came to be viewed as the greatest contributors to the welfare of society. . . . It is still conventional wisdom . . . to believe that in order to be successful, one needs to take risks. . . . Schools take this ostensible truism about success and risk very seriously, for we have designed schools so that they structure in significant risk for students on a daily basis. (45–46)

Competition permeates modern music education where standard practices include auditions for all kinds of ensembles, from elementary choirs to select state or regional performing groups; high-stakes, adjudicated ensemble and solo performances; and staged, formal concerts and musical productions before relatively large audiences. Success, in the form of high ratings and other formal accolades, is paramount for individuals and for performing groups. Evidence of student success (or failure) is often taken as the sole evidence of professional success for individual music teachers. Where such evidence is lacking, significant progress towards these aims is usually sufficient as long as it is continuous. Basically, successful music teachers are those who either maintain or build successful programs. Conversely, the cultural and social relevance of the standard school music program and the long-term impact of the music program on the well-being of students is either not of central concern or is taken-for-granted as a natural outgrowth of striving for excellence. Finally, the competitiveness between and within school music programs has the tendency to create both winners and losers between and within school music programs. The enduring belief is that this risk-based approach is necessary to student motivation and for inculcating individual self-discipline and fortitude so that students will eventually be able to "compete in the global economy."

I have previously suggested (Bates 2004, 2009) a nurturing approach to school music, based on the fulfillment of basic human needs. The cooperative, egalitarian spirit of this suggestion reflects a rural, communitarian ethic and runs counter to modern, taken-forgranted, success orientations. Maslow's *hierarchy of needs* has already been popularly studied and applied in North American music education. However, as a *hierarchy* of needs it is linear and progress-oriented; basic needs must be satisfied prior to so-called "higher" needs such as self-actualization or aesthetic experience—those associated with participation in the arts. Put simply, musical experiences are dessert in this view; they come after the hard work of making a living. Really, though, music is part of everyday life (see Regelski 2009) and all groups participate in music regardless of relative availability of time and material resources. For instance, after their founder and leader, Joseph Smith, was assassinated, the Mormons were driven by mobs from Nauvoo, a beautiful city they had built on the banks of the Mississippi River in Illinois. They were forced from their homes in the middle of winter across the frozen Mississippi and onto the plains of Iowa. In their destitute situation facing a

1,500-mile trek across plains and mountains to what is now Utah, what did they do? They danced! And they kept dancing regularly on their westward trek, often to the music of a brass band (Holbrook 1975). This form of engagement was not absolutely necessary to their survival and progress. However, it no doubt enhanced well-being and quality of life.

Returning to the image at the beginning of this discussion, when Lehi tasted the fruit of the Tree of Life, it filled his soul with joy. He wanted everyone to join him, especially his family. He didn't try to market the fruit or refine it. There was no competition for the fruit and no need for more efficient harvesting. By simple means, vital needs were met. The folks in the Great and Spacious Building thought it was silly—there was so much more out there beyond Lehi's limited worldview. Some of Lehi's friends and family were lured away. In like manner, the Country Mouse was enticed to join his cousin in the city. He discovered the hard way that his country life was preferable. "I'm tired of this dirty old city" is how Merle Haggard sings it, "Turn me loose, set me free somewhere in the middle of Montana." The history of rural music education parallels these archetypal images. Communities have always developed or adopted musical practices that satisfied a variety of musical needs in longlasting, meaningful, and joyful ways. These musical practices were too simple and crude for urban reformers and so (along with other factors) schools were consolidated and structured in attempts to accommodate large ensemble performances of and provide sequential instruction in more refined musics. These innovations, while popular at first, gradually lost their relevance and a legitimacy crisis has ensued in North American music education. The innovations haven't been so wonderful after all.

It's time to go home . . .

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