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Symposium: *Music's Significance in Everyday Life*

The essays that follow inaugurate a feature of A.C.T. it is hoped readers will find thought provoking and useful: a series of 'symposia' involving multiple essay reviews of books. Books for review will be selected with a view to their potential relevance to music education – whether or not music educators may have been the intended audience.

Critical analysis and commentary from a broad range of perspectives is in keeping with the MayDay Group's commitment to critically exploring and expanding, rather than limiting, discourse. Inclusion of reviews by scholars both inside and outside the music education profession is consistent with the need to encourage interdisciplinary thought and dialogue on matters of potential importance to music education, and to music studies more broadly. When circumstances allow, authors will respond to reviewers' analyses, impressions, questions, and suggestions – in the spirit, it is hoped, of inclusive and expansive dialogue: the communicative exchange of ideas.

The primary concern of these reviews is not, in other words, the promotion or vilification of the book under consideration. Reviewers will be encouraged to approach the task in ways that initiate thoughtful dialogue on issues germane to our understandings of music, our approaches to curriculum, and our strategies for practice. They will be asked to consider posing questions to which the author(s) might respond. And we will endeavor to make the reviews interesting and informative in their own right – whether or not the reader is able to consult the book under consideration. Reviewers will be encouraged to advance their own thoughts in relation to the themes, issues, and

arguments raised. In each of these ways, these essays may be expected to depart from the typical academic review.

The book being discussed in this issue is *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge University Press, 2000, ISBN 0-521-62732-X) by Tia DeNora, a British sociologist from the University of Exeter. DeNora was the 1994 recipient of the *International Sociological Association's* "Young Sociologist" award. In addition to numerous journal articles, she has published the book *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius* (University of California Press, 1996) and is currently completing for 2003 publication (Cambridge University Press) a book entitled *After Adorno*.

Music in Everyday Life was chosen because it probes matters closely related to topics that have been debated heatedly among musicians, sociologists, and philosophers in recent years: issues that have figured centrally in the Mayday Group's concern to re-think key issues in music education. In particular, DeNora's work challenges us to think much more closely about the range of things implicated in our debates about "music" and "musical praxis." It shines a bright light into dimly lit corners, highlighting musical values, uses, and powers that extend well beyond those manifest in such musicianly affairs as performances, works, and pieces – the referents that seem to situate and demarcate so many of our assumptions and claims. The typical notion of musical praxis, as associated with capacities like musicianship and its quasi-professional musical traditions, differs rather strikingly from the one that seems to emerge from DeNora's more broadly utilitarian, social, and bodily accounts. Music, DeNora shows persuasively, is deeply and significantly implicated in the creation of human lives and meanings – and

in realms that include both the extraordinary and the mundane, the elegant and the prosaic.

Thanks to Daniel Cavicchi, Hildegard Froelich, John Shepherd, and Tia DeNora for pointing us in promising and provocative directions – directions with implications that beg further exploration.

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