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Puerto Rico: A Site of Critical Performative Pedagogy

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Housed in a simple 18th century Spanish residence, the Pablo Casals Museum sits a few steps from the San Jose Plaza in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico. During a break from a conference of Puerto Rican and Latin American music educators, I took the time to visit the Museum. As one would expect, its shelves sag under the weight of Casals' many recordings, scores, and letters; the walls, crowded with photographs and awards, testify to his artistic and humanitarian contributions over many decades. Especially poignant are the letters he wrote about his anguished exile from Spain during Franco's victories in the Spanish Civil War (1938).

Among the memorabilia of his life (1876-1973), I was drawn to the documents explaining his success in persuading the Puerto Rican legislature to support the establishment and permanent continuance of three related institutions: the Casals Festival (founded in 1955), the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra (1957), and the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music (1959). The Conservatory (PRCM) was established as a public institution of higher learning to support the Festival and the Symphony and, more broadly, to support the musical life of the island by educating teachers for public schools, advanced secondary school music academies, community music organizations, and private studios. Today, the PRCM is the only higher education music institution in Latin America accredited by the United States' National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).

My visit to Puerto Rico was a one-time event, or so I thought. The Chancellor (Dean) of the PRCM surprised me with an intriguing invitation: Would I consider establishing and teaching a Master's degree program in music education at the Conservatory over a two-year period, which others would subsequently carry on? This would be the first graduate music education program in Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean, and one of only a few in Latin America. I accepted the invitation. The plan we crafted was somewhat unusual. During each fifteen-week semester (two semesters per year) I would fly to Puerto Rico ten times to teach four courses every weekend. I

would use computer-video technology to teach the remaining five weekends. (The curriculum was based on twelve courses; eight core courses taught by me, and four electives taught by other professors).

As I write now, the students who began the program with me have graduated. This first group, pictured below, was made up of teachers with a wide range of experience in all levels of public, private, and community music education. (Approximately twelve students entered the program each semester after it began).

"Our Class"

My motivation for writing this article lies in the transformative experiences of teaching in Puerto Rico. Specifically, I reflect on why and how my transactions with my first class caused me to adopt themes and strategies from the relatively new field of *critical performative pedagogy*. I begin by explaining three concepts that ground critical performative pedagogy: performance studies, performatives, and performativity. I continue by examining the nature of critical performative pedagogy. I end with some descriptions of our teaching-learning processes that illustrate how my students and I engaged in critical performative pedagogy.

Performance Studies

Music educators might naturally assume that the term "performance studies" refers to a body of research concerning the development of students' technical, interpretive, or expressive abilities; or the study and demonstration of historical performance practices; or the scholarly investigation of musical talent; or all of these, and more. In fact, the term names a much broader and very recent domain.

Performance studies is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry that integrates concepts and research approaches from a wide range of fields (e.g., cultural studies, linguistics, sociology, gender studies, anthropology, archeology) in order to study actions – actions of all kinds, in all places. Performance studies scholars study actions-*through-action* – their own actions in a context, and others. As Richard Schechner (2002b) puts it, "one performs one's field work" in, with, and (often) for the actions of the community being studied (ix). In this view, "performance" is both an explanatory metaphor and a qualitative research method. Scholars do not "read" actions as artifacts, texts, or objects but, rather, "as" performances, taken in the broadest sense of the term.[1] For example, researchers and practitioners of performance studies focus on the agency, rituals, "behaviors,"[2] protocols, gestures, enactments, and social processes of festivals, political rallies, classroom transactions, and sports; the performing arts; everyday communications; social, racial, and gender roles; and the "actions" of paintings, poetry, fiction, and so forth. Indeed, the "performance turn" re-casts nouns as verbs; anything at all can be taken "as" performance. The aim is to understand how participants in performances respond to and make meaning of events *in situ*, over time, and in different contexts. To take an unusual example given by Richard

Schechner (2002a), a painting can be probed "as" performance in the sense that one asks, How, when, where, why, and by whom was it made? (2). How does it interact with those who view it? How does the painting change over time through appropriation and reiteration in different contexts? In short, "the artifact may be relatively stable, but the performances it creates or takes part in can change radically" (2).

Through a synthesis of research fields, performance studies seeks to engage "performance" in every sense; to explore, open, widen, and expand traditional concepts of this term, and, in so doing, "push back" against fixed categorizations of "performance" (e.g., dance, drama, music) that divide up, label, and house these actions in various domains and departments of study.[3] Inherent in the nature and aims of performance studies is a commitment to intercultural concerns; an appreciation of the interdependency and contingency of all peoples' actions; a rejection of universal theories; and the employment of actions for social justice. Indeed, many performance studies scholars are also practicing artists who create their works and research their efforts in a wide variety of forms, cultures, or "mixes" in-and-for the communities in which they work.

The history of this multidimensional field is a detailed and intriguing one that deserves a separate study, which I cannot provide here. Suffice it to say that the roots of performance studies include the works of philosophers J. L. Austin and Jacques Derrida; literary theorist Stanley Fish; theater director Richard Schechner; anthropologists Victor Turner and Clifford Geertz; sociologist Erving Goffman; folklorist Richard Bauman; and others. A cohort of thinkers led by Richard Schechner, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, and Diana Taylor established the first department of performance studies at New York University in 1980. Their intent was to move the study of performance beyond the stage and into "ordinary" cultural rituals as manifested in the everyday world. Whereas the NYU program had its roots in Theatre, the other generative center of performance studies, located at Northwestern University, emerged from a department of Speech and Communication Studies. During the last twenty-five years, several journals have emerged (e.g., *TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies; Performance Research*). Variations on the NYU and Northwestern models have developed at the Universities of Sydney, Maryland,

UC-Berkeley, Copenhagen, and elsewhere. Today, performance studies is still in its formative stages.

Performatives and Performativity

Two fundamental concepts stand at the center of performance studies: *performatives*, and *performativity*. Oxford philosopher J. L. Austin (1911-1960) introduced the concept of the *performative* in 1955 at the William James Lectures at Harvard, which was later published as *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). Austin challenged the basic assumption that the foremost function of sentences was to state facts, and thus to be true or false. Austin proposed an important distinction between two ways we use words: the constative utterance and the performative utterance. For example, in Austin's example of wedding vows, he argues that if I say "I do" in the context of a marriage ceremony, I not only make a statement (a constative utterance), but the words "I do" actually *perform* the act of marriage and, simultaneously, *create* a state of marriage, which implies something lasting: loving commitment. As Thomas Regelski suggests, performatives "do" in the sense of creating things that endure.[4] To take another example, if I say "I name my boat *Charlie*," I have not only made a statement, I have performed the act of creating a permanent name for my boat. As Claudia Ruitenberg (2004) puts it, Austin challenged the simplistic view that words just "throw up their hands and say, 'don't blame me, I just tell it like it is'" (3). From the performative standpoint, to *say* something is to *do* something. Diana Taylor (2003) explains the point this way: "a performative masquerades; it is a 'disguised' form that 'apes' a statement of fact while operating as a deed done" (5).

Henry Giroux (2006a) puts a human face on the "performative" in the following account of his difficult youth in a racially divided community in Providence, Rhode Island. Giroux explains how the words "race" and "class" were not just nouns to him, but verbs, or performatives.

> In my working-class neighborhood, race and class were performative categories defined in terms of the events, actions, and outcomes of our struggles as we engaged with kids whose histories, languages, and racial identities appeared foreign and hostile to us. Race and class were not merely nouns we used to narrate ourselves; they were verbs that governed who we interacted and performed in the

> midst of "others," whether they were white middle-class or black youths. Most of the interactions we had with "others," were violent, fraught with anger and hatred. . . . My own sense of what it meant to be a white male emerged *performatively* through my interactions with peers, the media, and the broader culture. . . . Popular culture provided the medium through which we learned how to negotiate our everyday lives, especially when it brought together elements of resistance found in Hollywood youth films . . . or the rock n' roll music of Bill Halley and the Comets, Elvis Presley, and other artists. (5). (Italics mine)

Giroux's statement highlights several points. First, when used as an adjective, "performative" has a theatrical component: it "inflects what it modifies with performance-like qualities" (Schechner 2002a, 123). As an adjective, performative means that something is "*like a performance* without actually being a performance in the orthodox or formal sense" (2002a, 110). Second, *performativity* is everywhere; for example, all forms of media, music, sports, and daily behavior perform – on us, with us, in us, and through us. They inscribe themselves on our bodies, minds, and spirits. Returning to Giroux's discussion of his youth, he explains that he was able to move from a dead-end situation in the inner city to a rewarding life of university studies with the help of a basketball scholarship. Basketball was a performative; Giroux's self-respect emerged performatively through everything involved in this sport.

> Dreams for the youth of my Smith Hill neighborhood were contained within a limited number of sites, all of which occupied an outlaw status in the adult world: the inner-city basketball court, located in a housing project, which promised danger and fierce competition . . . . was one of the few public spheres in which the cultural capital we took seriously could be exchanged for respect and admiration. (2006b, 1-2).

Judith Butler (1988) provides another example of performativity in her celebrated essay, "Performative acts and gender constitution." To Butler, gender is not a condition which one has, it is a social role one performs; and "the acts by which gender is constituted bear similarities to performative acts with theatrical contexts" (521).

Diane Taylor (2003) explains "performative" in relation to the war "theatre" of Iraq. In the beginning, says Taylor, George Bush and his generals promoted their military campaign with the words "Shock and Awe." Shock was a performative: "put down your weapons; you won't

survive." Awe warned the Iraqi people that the onslaught would be so terrible that they would surrender their religious faith and pledge allegiance to America. Now, as I write in 2006, the performativity of media images reiterating casualties and military failures have fomented such deep shock and awe among the American public that Bush and his Republicans have lost control of the U.S. Congress and U.S. armed forces are on the verge of failed withdrawal.

Also, of course, the performances we call "schooling," "teaching," and "learning" are among the most scripted and performed dramas that teachers and students act out for audiences of gatekeepers (e.g., parents, administrators, corporations, and governments) who, like drama critics, observe, measure, and rank students' achievements. Applying Butler's concepts in this context, we can say that "teacher" is a regulatory norm that operates performatively to inscribe, constitute, and materialize certain peoples' bodies with the habits, behaviors, expectations, and powers expected of, and granted to, a Western, "professional teacher." Each reiteration in a new context reinforces or alters the performative "teacher": students enter an undergraduate "teacher" education program; they enter schools as "supervised teachers"; they gain employment as "first-year teachers"; they become experienced teachers, master teachers, or supervising teachers.

Critical Performative Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy conceives the pedagogical site as a *problematic* space of racial, economic, moral, and social tensions requiring deep injections of social justice and civic courage. As Giroux (1993) puts it: "schools are more than instructional sites; they are cultural sites that are actively involved in the selective ordering and legitimization of specific forms of language, reasoning, sociality, daily experience and style" (xxiv). Critical pedagogy approaches the classroom as an opportunity for doing political and social *work* with and for students, teachers, and the communities in which they live. In McLaren's terms (1989a), the aim is to integrate students' abilities of critical reflection with their aspirations and potentials for social engagement and transformation.

Peter McLaren initiated the "performance turn" in critical pedagogy in the first edition (1986) of his landmark book, *Schooling as a Ritual Performance*. Over the next ten years, McLaren advanced his ideas and inspired others by combining several elements: his fieldwork in

urban classrooms; Victor Turner's theories of ritual performance; the social agenda of critical theory; and advances in performance studies. To McLaren, Henry Giroux, Elyse Pineau, and others in this field, critical pedagogy becomes performative when we ground critical reflection in the body, and when we engage students and teachers in feeling and "enfleshing" theory in action. Performative practice expands critical pedagogy beyond the discursive; it grounds critiques of power and politics in our bodily memories, inscriptions, and habits.

Of course, the natural inclination is to think of "the body" literally, but scholars in performance studies, ethnography, phenomenology, gender studies, theatre, and related fields take "body" as a metaphor for the ways that social factors shape physical mores, experience, and expression. From this perspective, knowledge is grounded in embodiment. Literally and figuratively, ideologies are inscribed in living flesh; social norms shape our posture, "pitch" our voices, and orchestrate our interactions with others. There is no such thing as "the pure body" that stands outside its own culture.

For these reasons, McLaren (1989b) suggests that critical educators tend to overlook the ways in which "ideology is performatively constituted . . . discourse given sentience" (191).

> Ideological hegemony is not realized solely through the discursive mediations of the sociocultural order but through the enfleshment of unequal relationships of power. Hegemony is manifest intercorporeally through the actualization of the flesh and embedded in incarnate experience. (McLaren 1988, 169).

McLaren (1986) coined the terms *enfleshment* and *refleshment* to capture the ways bodies become contextually oppressed or resistant. Enfleshment expresses how a body develops habits that seem natural, but are, in fact, culturally imposed over time. For example, conceived as performative situations, the conditions of schooling can be seen as reinforcing the mind-body split to such a degree that teachers and students park their bodies at the classroom door without noticing, even to the point of making us oblivious to physical discomfort during class time.

> Schooling systematically domesticates bodies; it incarcerates them in rows of wooden desks, robs them of spontaneity through rigid demarcations of time and space, and in fact devotes a great deal of energy to hiding the fact that we have bodies at all. (Pineau 2002, 45).

This echoes the way feminist scholars have exposed the ways in which bodies are deeply inscribed with cultural biases. As Butler (1988) says, "the body is an historical idea" such that "it gains its meaning through a concrete and historically mediated expression in the world" (521). Refleshment relates to a body's ability to remake and re-establish itself through critical thinking and critical performativity. Empowerment follows from unlearning "natural habits" by oneself, and with the help of others, in a given time and place.

Elyse Pineau (2002) argues that teachers can critically reconstruct their bodies to achieve new ways of being for themselves, their students, and their colleagues. To her, the "ideological body" is a metaphor for exposing how schools maintain gender, economic, and ethnic injustice (44). The task is to undress the regimes of "common sense" in which teachers' and students' bodies bring competing ideologies into confrontation: "[T]he bodies of students become sites of struggle in which resistance is a way of gaining power, celebrating pleasure, and fighting oppression in the lived historicity of the moment and the concrete materiality of the classroom." (McLaren 1989a, 170).

Pineau's (2002) concept of the "ethnographic body" is her way of pointing to the means by which performance ethnographers (including teachers and students *in situ*) can study how their selfhoods are constructed and contested in classrooms (50). Taking McLaren's *Schooling as a Ritual Performance* as a classic example of performative teaching and research, Pineau's idea of the "performing body" (50) offers ways of developing curricula and instruction models to help students participate actively and critically within and beyond the classroom.

"Performing" in the context of critical performative pedagogy is radical. As Pineau says, it is a shift from the "body on display" to the "systematic exploration through enactment of real and imagined experience" (50). It requires students to experience and reflect on how and why their bodies are behaving in habitual ways in particular circumstances of learning and "acting out" in the world. Critical performative pedagogy proposes that we challenge and research ideologies not abstractly, and not only through verbal dialogues, but also with a focus on how ideologies and media work performatively on students' bodies as they negotiate the flow of overlapping experiences, energies, displays, and expressions of learning in all its manifestations. For example, and as I explain in the last section of this discussion, Pineau's concepts of the

ideological, ethnographic, and performing body provide ways for music teacher educators to expose the ways specific theories of music education, music methods, and/or musical styles act to impose, maintain, and legitimize – or to liberate students from – social, racial, cultural, gender, and economic injustice. In summary, critical performative pedagogy acts in several ways simultaneously: it is an embodied way of knowing; an instructional metaphor (McLaren 1986); an enfleshed teaching-learning process for achieving social change (Pineau 2002); a medium of critical methodology; and a research stance in the sense that the ethnographic body is a means by which teachers and students can study how their selfhoods are constructed and contested in classrooms.

Puerto Rico

To summarize briefly, matters of race, class, gender, politics, personal and professional identity, and so forth, are performative categories. These are not merely nouns; they are verbs that govern who people interact with and how they perform themselves with others who have similar or different histories and identities. Personal, political, and cultural identities emerge performatively through people's interactions with peer, media, and cultural forces, among other performatives. There is no such thing as the "pure body"; the body is an "historical idea."

The students I have worked with in Puerto Rico came to the Masters program with individual, ideological bodies inscribed by shared historical, cultural, political, and social oppressions, and local and professional sources of pride, despair, and desire. They continuously detailed, reiterated, and educated me about how their identities emerged performatively in their island context. Put directly, and from a performative stance, for my students to say (for example), "I am Puerto Rican," or "I teach music in Puerto Rico," is not only to state something, it is to do something. "I teach music in Puerto Rico" is to narrate, enflesh, and enact oneself, personally, politically, and professionally, in a variety of ways, in public and private circumstances. (Of course, and emphatically, each student in the class is *unique*. Any generalizations I make here merely report the majority views of the group). Before moving to the last section of this discussion, it is important to review some of the most important enfleshments that we exposed and interrogated together through critical performative pedagogy. Indeed, as

Freire makes clear in regard to liberation struggles, and as hooks (1994) emphasizes, the initial stage of transformation is "that historical moment when one begins to think critically about the self and identity in relation to one's political circumstances" (47).

On one hand, my students are fiercely proud of the stunning beauty and rich cultural history of their island. On the other hand, their fundamental concern is their sense of political and cultural identity. "Who are we? What are we?" With varying degrees of passion, they feel they live in – that they embody – an "oppressed American colony." In fact, the U.S. invaded Puerto Rico in 1898 during the Spanish-American war and secured it as a colony in 1898. Since then, Puerto Rico's identity has developed in the background of – and often in turbulent resistance to – the United States. Today, Puerto Rico has a strange, "neither here nor there" status as an "associated commonwealth" of the United States. This means in part that Puerto Ricans have U.S. citizenship and can be drafted into the U.S. armed forces, but they cannot vote for the U.S. president, and they have no full representation in the U.S. Congress.

Closely allied to this first issue is the matter of "foreign occupation." The term "U.S. military" is not just a noun to most of the students; it is a verb that governs how they perform themselves. Indeed, Puerto Rico is considered a strategically important military base in the Caribbean, giving the U.S. easy access to and surveillance of North, Central, and South America. Thus, Puerto Rico has the highest concentration of U.S. military forces in Latin America, which hold power over vast areas of the island. Until recently, the military controlled 60 percent of the outer island of Vieques, which it used as a testing site for bombs and missiles. Some of these weapons carried depleted uranium that caused severe contamination in one area of the test range. In the wake of high cancer rates and the humiliation of being used for target practice, Puerto Ricans and other protestors in Latin America mounted powerful opposition. In 2004, the U.S. military evacuated Vieques, without cleaning up its contamination.

Not surprisingly, the fact of U.S. citizenship does not match Puerto Ricans' (and my students') vigorous self-perception as "Puerto Ricans first, Americans second." Also, the vast majority of Puerto Ricans see themselves as distinct from other Latin American and Caribbean peoples. (Morris 1995). Overall, as Duany (2000) explains, Puerto Rico has all the major attributes of a nation, except independence: a unified language, territory, and history; a

"national" anthem, a flag, and a system of "national" universities; and a long tradition of literature, visual arts, dance, and music (8).

As Duany also explains, another problem of Puerto Rican self-identity is the magnitude of the Puerto Rican diaspora. There is a continuous, circular flow of Puerto Ricans between the island and the U.S. mainland, which problematizes conventional notions of "a nation" as a territorial unity. In 1977, approximately 3.1 million of Puerto Ricans lived on the U.S. mainland, compared to 3.7 million on the island (6). Thus, Puerto Rico is neither a colony, nor a state, nor a country. This neo-colonial status is not only protested in Puerto Rico but in New York City (Chicago, and other large cities), where Puerto Rican immigrants are known locally, and on the island, as Nuyoricans.

While Puerto Rican identity is tied to issues of occupation and independence, the island's deep financial *dependence* on the U.S. adds more complexity. The U.S. provides the island with billions of dollars of financial aid, a large portion of which goes to reducing Puerto Rico's considerable debt (which some estimates put at 17 billion dollars). In spite of this support, on May 1, 2006, the government of Puerto Rico shut down all operations (except police and hospital services) after running out of funds. (Government mismanagement and corruption are often cited as key issues). The shut down lasted two weeks, leaving nearly 100,000 public employees without pay and closing more than 1,500 public schools. My former students did not receive any pay for two months after the shutdown. Moreover, 60 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and crime is rampant in many areas due to severe drug trafficking. Several of my students teach in the most difficult areas of the island.

As I write this paper, the Democratic Party has taken control of the U.S. Senate and Congress. Thus, politicians in the U.S. and Puerto Rico are revisiting the island's status. However, because of deep differences among Democrats, there is no agreement among leaders in the new House and Senate. And, as one would expect, Puerto Rican political parties are deeply divided about maintaining the island as a commonwealth, joining the U.S. as a state, or becoming an independent country. Hence this recent ("same old") headline in the daily *San Juan*

Star : "Consensus on status elusive in Congress."[5]

Educationally speaking, and in the midst of this swirl of performatives, the students came to the new program with considerable teaching experience in their chosen areas: Puerto Rican public schools, advanced secondary music schools, community music schools, or private studios. During the (earlier) years of their undergraduate programs at the PRCM, or the University of Puerto Rico (which does not offer music education), "knowledge" was housed in distinct silos of Western music history and theory, traditional music methods, and private lessons—all often conducted in a strict European style. These undergraduate programs offered little in the way of conceptual content. Due to administrative initiatives, these circumstances have begun to change very positively in recent years.

Since I had interviewed each student during the admission process, I had a good sense of their collective and individual English proficiencies: about 70% of them spoke English reasonably well; the rest had some, little, or no proficiency.[6]

For my part, I entered Puerto Rican culture as a complete outsider: I am a white, middle-aged, privileged, male Canadian. I do not speak more than a few words of Spanish. My knowledge of Puerto Rico was superficial at the outset of my work. Thus, I was very conscious of being an "oppressor," even more so because my official duty was to "teach" a standard American graduate music education program (following the NASM requirements). The official components of my charge included: philosophy and psychology of music education, curriculum development, elementary music methods, secondary methods, multicultural music education, research methods, thesis seminar I, and thesis seminar II.

I experienced a wide range of emotions while planning the program and anticipating how I would cope. Would these men and women understand me, resent me, or help me? Given the intricate and colliding dance of racial, cultural, ideological, political, and educational issues we were going to encounter, I viewed our situation as a rich site of and for critical performative pedagogy. Our circumstances demanded critical reflections on the assumptions, oppressions, and enfleshments we brought to the PRCM as a teaching-learning community. Our responsibilities as mutual teachers and learners required that we work together to reflesh ourselves together in order to critically act and perform "upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire 2000, 51).

In the last section of this discussion, I integrate selected descriptions and commentaries to illustrate several principles of critical performative pedagogy as we endeavored to practice it in our situation. Obviously, the two-year period of this program involved a vast array of issues and challenges that I cannot begin to detail here. And, of course, not everything was perfect; but as another independent study (submitted for publication) documents, the students believe the program was very effective.

I begin with the first moments of my first meeting with my first class.

Performativity in Puerto Rico

Officially, each Saturday was divided into three classes stretching from 8:30am to 4:00pm. On the first morning of our new program, the outside temperature was eighty-four; inside the small, air-conditioned classroom, it was 60. I flinched as I entered the cold room; the students showed no visible reactions. I wore a sports jacket; they wore casual clothes. I stood at the front of the class. Although desk-chairs were scattered around the room, they chose to organize themselves in rows. Looking around, the students showed mixed performances of awkwardness and tension.

Because our first moments together were extraordinarily important, I decided to begin by performing several different teaching scripts as a way of introducing basic performative strategies that we would include and elaborate in our work during the next two years. First, and in terms of Freire's concept of "banking education"[7] that the students were accustomed to, I greeted the class in English and passed around the syllabus for the Foundations course (in English and Spanish). I made some general comments about the program and said a few words about how the Foundations course related to other courses we would study that term. I put down the syllabus and asked if anyone had any questions. Their responses were mixed: silence, some blank stares, squirming, many eyes looking down.

I made a fast transition to "the next body." I invited them to move their chairs into a circle. I took off my jacket and sat down with a pronounced shiver (brief smiles from the class). I asked each one to introduce themselves. I attempted to repeat their names with proper accents. (Nods of appreciation). At that point, I invited them to talk among themselves in Spanish about what they were thinking and feeling, what they noticed about how I had started, and anything

else they were thinking or feeling. I invited them to talk to me whenever they felt comfortable. Most were taken by surprise. As soon as I moved into a casual position, I could see bodies transform: many began to relax; eyes came up from the floor; faces began to lighten; they started to talk among themselves. I left the room. More surprise.

I returned after a short interval. The students were relaxed and engaged in Spanish conversations. I asked them to reflect on the differences between the first and second teaching styles I had performed. By drawing attention to the details of the two different ideological bodies they had felt, we began to undress how the traditional habits and actions of schooling systematically restrict bodies, and how their past experiences as public school and institutional music students had "deprived them of spontaneity through rigid demarcations of time and space" (Pineau 2002, 45). I asked them rhetorically: "How do your past university experiences affect your current teaching? How do you think your students *feel* in your classes?" (Short conversations among them; reflective movements). Several took the lead to explain to me how the shift in postures had not only startled them, but relieved some of their anxieties about how we would work. In their experience, "the teacher" always assumed a posture of "I am in charge, completely."

In addition, they explained the obstacles that several of them faced in attempting to speak English. (Puerto Rico is officially bilingual, but "school English" is poorly taught, and, generally, people have little opportunity to practice it, given the dominantly Spanish culture). I learned that although most could read English quite well, even those who could speak English were embarrassed to talk in class because their accents were imperfect. One concomitant of this reluctance was a tendency to feign understanding. However, and positively, they explained how they enjoyed the humor of the shift and the sense of power that accompanied the reality that they were linguistically "in the know" and the professor was "out," unless they decided to include me. During many weeks, most became more confident and proud of their abilities to translate for me, teach me how to speak Spanish in small steps, help each other with the English articles and texts we interrogated, and elaborate ideas in relation to their cultural and educational experiences and situations. Clearly, an added dimension of this program was its nature as a very informal

learning-by-doing SSL "course" (Spanish as a second language for me) and an ESL experience for them.

Doing critical performative pedagogy requires teachers to recreate their educational processes as identity experiments. Performative teaching is contingent; it disrupts teachers' traditional scripts and identities, upsetting the belief that the teacher's position is stable and secure (Logan 1988). Uncertainty in teachers' actions enables them to recognize their performatively constituted identities; teachers investigate their actions through action. Engaging in critical performative pedagogy highlights student-teacher interactions as corporeal-critical exchanges "in which positions of power dissolve, integrate, and re-emerge, only to dissolve again" (Phelan 1993, 173).

In the next phase that day, I introduced important themes from Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and explained how these themes would move into the foreground and background of our work. I suggested that our main mission was to become critically reflective thinkers, music makers, teachers, and citizens. With these principles in mind, we moved on from the first two scripts. I asked the students to shift to another body. We moved outside; they sat in small groups on the picnic tables that ringed the palm trees around the school. They discussed the themes and short readings from Freire that I had introduced. I circulated among the groups to coach, generate questions, engage problems, and resolve any fears they might have about this "unusual" process. In fact, they embraced it quickly and enthusiastically. This became the working mode every week as we moved through each "course area," which always overlapped others. That is, we never did "Foundations" without teaching and music making; we never did "methods" without critical pedagogy, and so forth. Another mode type of "performing body" came with our breaks for coffee and lunch at the nearby sandwich shop, or the bakery, which gave us time for casual discussions, storytelling, de-centering – all of which carried over to so-called "class time."

During the first class, throughout that day, and over the months to come, a pattern emerged, flowed, and returned: shifting rhythms of group exchanges and gesturing among the students; Spanish to English translations for me, and the reverse for their mutual understanding; laughter and shouted comments; questions to me, and each other, about content arguments; requests for explanations of ideas; and bursts of chaos. The students were open and emphatic

about their pride in being pioneers in this new program, which they viewed as exceptionally important for music and culture in Puerto Rico. They emphasized their eagerness to learn and their *excitement* about learning. The latter is fundamental in critical performative pedagogy. As bell hooks (1994) puts it: "Neither Freire's work nor feminist pedagogy examined the notion of pleasure in the classroom" (7). She points out that while excitement is often discussed in relation to elementary and secondary schools, this is not so in higher education where it is seen as "potentially disruptive of the atmosphere of seriousness assumed to be essential to the learning process" (7). Indeed, "teachable moments" often follow from enjoyment and enthusiasm, and generating excitement flows from allowing students and ourselves to "lighten up" and make spontaneous shifts in regular classroom practices.

The quality and range of our interactions in all of the courses on that first weekend, and afterward, were so productive, exuberant, and satisfying that we continued this way. Over the ensuing weeks and months, we developed a mutual mode of working in which individuals, pairs, or small groups took the lead in guiding and critiquing other small groups by unpacking and undressing their classmates' past and present teaching-learning performances, and their own classroom practices. I encouraged – and they relished – the fading and "death" of the traditional student-teacher dichotomy, which made them keenly aware of what each of us had to contribute, and needed.

McLaren (1988) sees the critically performative educator as one who "understands teaching to be an essentially improvised drama that takes place within a curricular narrative" (174). As Pineau (1994) says, performative pedagogy supplants information dispensing by reframing teaching as a fluctuating and continuously unfolding "ensemble of narratives and performances, rather than a linear accumulation of isolated, discipline-specific competencies" (10).

Simultaneously with the processes just described, we examined theories and methods of music education through critical pedagogy and critical performative pedagogy by critiquing and performing the ideological bodies common to specific methods (e.g., Orff, Kodaly, Suzuki, Kodaly, Gordon, Solfege, "Music Theory"), some of which the students had been taught and taught to their own students. Critical performative pedagogy gave us the means for creating

serious and humorous tableaux enactments of these approaches and to “play out” contrasting scenarios that exposed the values and/or problematic cultural imperatives embedded in constructivism, behaviorism, postmodern curriculum design, and so on. We did the same for “teaching” band, chorus (as opposed to teaching children and music), and general music. Philosophically, we critiqued and enfleshed aesthetic education (MEAE), and my own praxial philosophy (Elliott 1995). Indeed, as Spry (1994) reminds us, “we should not kid ourselves about who we are, nor the power we potentially have as animators” (180).

Clearly, what we were doing was comparable to Augustus Boal's (1974) *Theatre of the Oppressed*, which engages students in the performativity of language and teaching by rehearsing and playing out actions in response to many communicative/cultural/artistic obstacles and rituals. We enacted our class as a “musical theatre of the oppressed.” By this I mean that we conceived our teaching and learning in terms of a theatre where we could “play out” and critique a variety of teaching dramas or “spectacles.” Thus, we not only performed as teachers, musicians, and dancers in the conventional sense of performing, we deliberately embodied many different ideological bodies associated with the teaching issues that I just mentioned. We “staged” the contrasting performatives involved in (for example): oppressive and democratic examples of teaching listening, improvising, and composing; repressive and liberatory situations of teaching children through large and small ensembles, and with technology; problematic and humanistic enactments of curriculum.

In one project related to curriculum, we focused our critical lens on the Puerto Rican department of education, which is just beginning to impose what the students called “the latest forms of Yankee imperialism,” by which they meant “National Standards,” standardized tests, and corporate tutoring. Whose “Nation” they asked? Another “invasion!” Here was one more site of struggle, spectacle, and performatives; more grist for the mill of critical performative pedagogy. They could not fathom why educated American music teachers could swallow the simplistic “dramatics” of this “new” reform. As one put it: “Where is the ‘critical’ in critical pedagogy when we need it most?” Another pointed out that “National Standards” seemed like one more example of an oppressor imposing a “banking-style pedagogy”[8] on malleable student teachers and teacher educators.

To heighten their awareness of why and how their performing and listening bodies had been inscribed by the norms of Western classical music and American education, and to reconstruct their bodies with possibilities for themselves and their students, we took leaps into other selves and other ways of being musical. They made up dramas that performed their behaviors as children in private music lessons. They imitated the habits of their past teachers; they dramatized their feelings about performing as professionals for American tourists, who, they often felt, belittled their music. These dramas brought deep feelings to the fore.

Early on, they spoke proudly about Puerto Rican music; Puerto Rican singing, drumming, and dancing entered into our classes, and continued into our breaks. A key moment came when they asked me if they should be allowed to teach their musics in their own classrooms, to which I said, "Of course, don't you do this? Why wouldn't you?" Their school music curriculum was purely Western music. They could not believe that a professor was "allowing" them to do their musics in their classrooms. To drive the point home, and for my own enjoyment, I became an enthusiastic learner of their cherished musics, which validated their lifelong "hidden wishes" to teach Puerto Rican *plena*, *bomba*, and *salsa*, and Puerto Rican instruments like the quattro. My musical body was being re-fleshed.

A critically performative attitude privileges process; it penetrates the flowing, improvisational, emergent, dramatic, temporal, contingent, and contradictory bodies of teaching-learning encounters. "It acknowledges that identities are always multiple, overlapping ensembles of real and possible selves who enact themselves to the context and communities in which they perform" (Pineau 1994, 15).

Doing Puerto Rican musics was a catalyst for questioning and reframing traditional teaching methods, doing multicultural music education, and curriculum design. It exposed the hegemonic performatives that had inscribed their professional work. Also, the students told stories of how common it is for Puerto Ricans to learn instruments in their homes and communities, and to travel to different homes on weekends to sing and play. To me: "Do you think it's valuable to bring this 'natural' way of learning to our classrooms now? Can we teach our Puerto Rican music in 'normal' ways?" They were visibly amazed when I said, "Yes,

absolutely, of course." With that, they realized, again, how their current teaching was dominated with the political ideology and rigidity of an imported (colonial) university system.

To expand this last topic, we plunged into composing and listening to musics that disrupted their training. We did 20th century aleatoric, soundscape, and electronic musics. Naturally, their assumption had always been that composing is something they could only attempt after years of Western theory. They were amazed at the immediacy, limitless possibilities, and enjoyment they experienced as a group, and soon after, with their own students' enjoyment. And they were excited by the questions their students began asking about the meaning of "music" and how to compose other kinds of music.

We organized duos, trios, and quartets so they could perform interactive "new music improvisations" with their "old instruments." This served to expose everything they had taken for granted about the rigid techniques, uses, and sounds they had been taught to make "perfectly" with their "bodies as performing trumpet players," opera singers, and so forth.

As they reported to me on emails and in succeeding classes, they experimented with alternatives in their school and community settings. For the most part, they were exhilarated with the ways they could "move" themselves and their students in deeper ways. The problems they encountered were mostly due to the resistance of their colleagues and supervisors, an issue that we needed to explore deeply in relation to becoming effective, musical-democratic citizens.

Because of these emergent processes, a collective learning dynamic developed and continued during our two years together. Traditional "content walls" became porous, or broke down. Through critical performative pedagogy, we integrated course content and problematized it in a way that took nothing for granted, including the strengths and weaknesses of critical pedagogy and performative pedagogy.

Drawing on Pineau's concept of the ethnographic body, I began our study of research methods by asking the class for autobiographies of their new performative selves, their theorizing selves, their teaching and learning selves, and their own students' "new bodies." I asked them to create narratives about the ways the "banking" notion of schooling used hidden technologies that made their colleagues and students uncomfortable, passive, irritated, and so forth. They carried out action research projects with attention to their own shifting corporeality.

Conclusion

I was exhausted by the intensity of my first months of teaching in Puerto Rico. This was an immensely rich and valuable site for investigating the complexities and intersections of power that were inflicting themselves on communications, musics, politics, histories, ideologies, and our individual and collective identities. However, as these complexities became a shared endeavor among "our family," another dimension of experience emerged, which Pineau describes this way: when we surrender the teacher's chair,

> we enter that liminal space where our own identities as "experts" become tenuous; the student-teacher boundary melts power, . . . [and] creates a community where all texts become open to multiple meanings. In effect, to be a scholar-practitioner of critical performativity means welcoming students to join us in that uncertain, magical space of personal and communal transformation.

In my experience, a performative approach to education is fundamentally and powerfully liberating at the human, educational, and theoretical levels; critical performative pedagogy is transformative.

Notes

1. Of course, scholars in the field still consult traditional sources (e.g., books, photographs, scores).
2. To be clear, I do not mean "behaviors" in the sense of behaviorism, or in the sense of simple activities, but rather, behaviors in the broadest sense of mindful, cultural actions.
3. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett makes this point in Schechner, (2002b, 3).
4. I am grateful to Thomas Regelski for his assistance in reflecting on the creative and enduring dimensions of performatives.
5. *The San Juan Star*. Sunday, November 19, 2006.
6. Since Puerto Rico is officially bilingual, students can enter higher education in either language.
7. See Freire (2000, 71-86). Freire argues that "authentic" education aims for liberation through mutual respect and dialogue among students and teachers. Thus, Freire rejects oppressive forms of education that view students as passive, empty bank accounts waiting for authoritarian, "bank clerk" teachers to deposit their "verbalistic" knowledge.
8. See note 7.

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