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Neoliberalism and Music Education: An Introduction

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How might an understanding of neoliberalism and its relationship to music education be important for music educators and their work? To answer this question, my editorial recounts the emergence of modern liberalism in the writings of philosophers during the European industrial revolution of the 18th century, then describes the 20th century beginnings of neoliberalism in Chile, Britain, and the United States and its subsequent disastrous effects worldwide. Neoliberalism's delegitimization of liberal democracy has been especially destructive. Contributors to the present issue of Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education *describe neoliberalism's weakening effects on music education in Texas, U.S.A., in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and in Chile, also explaining how school music education advances neoliberal rationalities and how music entrepreneurship programs support students' indoctrination into neoliberal thinking. My argument ultimately points to ways music educators in liberal democratic nations can resist neoliberalism by helping to prepare students as critically astute citizens.*

Keywords: *neoliberalism, liberal, democracy, liberal arts, music education*

> There is a far, far nobler prospect of freedom to be won than that which neoliberalism preaches. There is a far, far worthier system of governance to be constructed than that which neoliberalism allows. –David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005, 206)

You might be thinking this: What on earth is neoliberalism, and what could it possibly have to do with music education? After all, *neoliberalism* sounds like a political term, and, historically speaking, politics is not a field toward which many music educators have been drawn.[1] Nor is there evidence to suggest that many music educators have spent time studying political economy, the social science dealing with political policies, economic processes, and their influence on social institutions with which *neoliberalism* is most directly associated. In fact, the concept of *music* that has historically been situated at the core of music

education in schools and universities in the Western hemisphere and beyond frames it as an *art*—i.e., a tangible expression, according to aesthetic principles, of what is "beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance"[2]—and not as a political phenomenon.

Yet music can indeed be considered politically,[3] since different musical practices are, after all, undertaken by the "bodies politic"—or collectives—of people of *different* cultures, *different* religious traditions, and *different* nationalities. Notably, not all of us human beings find beautiful the music made by people who are different from "our" people, or necessarily find it appealing or significant. Furthermore, music clearly has an economic aspect, since so many musicians, music educators, and countless others earn their living by working with it. So, if music is political, and if it inherently entails economic considerations, maybe a better question is this: *How might an understanding of neoliberalism and its relationship to music education be important for music educators and their work?*

Providing a reasonably informed answer to this question is my goal in this editorial preface. Further, I will introduce here the articles that comprise this issue of ACT and point to how their authors have effectively illuminated the concerning effects of neoliberalism on aspects of music education at present. But be forewarned: Answering the question above and grasping the importance of the articles in this issue requires some historical knowledge, partly because the word *liberal*—the root of the word *neoliberalism*—has a varied history. Its meaning has changed over time, and it still seems to be in flux. Knowing the history of *liberal* as a political term is important to understanding neo*liberal*ism, so let's begin there.

The Origins of Classical *Liberalism*

The industrial revolution that took place in Europe beginning in the late 18th century served to diminish the political influence and societal control of the wealthy aristocracy, as the number of people considered to be "middle class" there began to increase.[4] Industrialization yielded extraordinary riches for Britain, Belgium, France, and Italy, but especially Britain, where the government's non-interventionist economic policies allowed for entrepreneurship and investment; it soon became the wealthiest nation in the world.[5] The new factories brought exceptionally high profits to their owners; steamships and trains emerged as new modes of transportation; and shipping increased, all of which caused the prices of goods to decrease and enabled many people to markedly improve the quality of their lives. But simultaneously, artisans, craftspeople, and other workers whose handmade goods

could no longer compete in the marketplace found it necessary to take jobs in the factories,[6] where the constraints of low wages and the abhorrent conditions under which they worked came to threaten their very lives. This newly emerged "working class" faced dismal, overcrowded living conditions, breathed heavily polluted air, consumed unhealthy diets, were highly susceptible to disease, and largely died young.

Remarkably, the first intellectuals to write on the industrial revolution at that time—philosophers, political theorists, and economists of the "Enlightenment era" like John Locke, Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill—did not attend much to how the rise of industry had contributed to creating those problems. They were primarily keen to abolish state churches and invasive governments, to eliminate restraints on personal freedom, and to advance human reason and science in all ways. Trusting in what they held to be the natural goodness of humankind to handle social problems, they focused instead on the unlimited possibilities of human reason and freedom from oppression. Those philosophers were the first liberals of the modern era.

John Locke (1632-1704), the early "Father of Liberalism," posited in his writings that the human mind is naturally a blank slate (*tabula rasa*) at birth, therefore neither good nor bad, but rational and free to contract with others of like mind to form society; accordingly, he held all people to be equal and believed that differing ideas about how to live (i.e., religions) should be tolerated. Likewise, Adam Smith (1723–1790), perhaps the most famous of the "classical liberals," described his philosophy as the "obvious and simple system of natural liberty" in his book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776). But Smith put forward therein, on the basis of his purportedly "scientific" analysis, the unproven idea that in pursuing their own self-interest in the marketplace, people are led by an "invisible hand" and unwittingly contribute to creating the best overall result—the greatest wealth—for everyone in society. Accordingly, he held altruism and charity to be ineffective for bettering one's life or the lives of others. Smith's idea—that free markets naturally regulate themselves by means of competition and supply and demand—made his book the classic text of *laissez-faire* liberalism; it advocates for unrestricted freedom in all spheres of human endeavor, including economics.

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) also put reason first in advancing economic freedom and freedom of expression in his book, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789). But the "fundamental principle" of his philosophy

differs markedly from that of Smith. Bentham wrote: "It is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong" (Bentham 1776, ii). On this basis, he used his philosophy to denounce the aristocracy, state religion, and slavery. Likewise, John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) argued for the benefits of a *laissez-faire* economy and against constraints on personal freedom in *On Liberty* (1859). But in *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), Mill wrote that the public, via government, is obligated to ensure education, housing, and protection for all citizens, even if that requires limiting the economic freedom of factory owners or increasing taxes on the wealthy. The writings of Bentham and Mill—which argued for the watchful care of government over the well-being of the people—were the basis of the ideas that have come to characterize liberalism in recent times.[7]

The writings of Locke, Smith, Bentham, Mill, and other Enlightenment-era philosophers gradually gained influence in Britain and France, breaking the economic stronghold of the aristocracy and bringing financial independence to the middle classes. Further, by the mid-1800s, Bentham, Mill, and others had aroused public concern for the woeful conditions of the working class, and, by the end of the century, a new generation of politicians in the British government had enabled the working class to vote, although it took longer for them to act on Mill's ideas about education and housing.

Thus, the word *liberal* gradually came to refer in political contexts to "a person who believes that government should be active in supporting social and political change."[8] The political antonyms *liberal* and *conservative* subsequently gained currency in the 19th century, as the British Whigs and Tories adopted those words to describe the positions of their respective parties concerning government involvement in economic matters.

Notably, these and other ideas of the Enlightenment-era philosophers contributed to the formation and the early development of the United States as a *liberal* democracy: a system of government in which all citizens consent to the rule of their elected leaders, and where the leaders are constitutionally obligated to respect the rights of individual citizens. These rights include political participation and voting by all adults; regular elections with secret ballots; a government that can create, alter, interpret, and enforce laws to suit the majority's preferences (within limits); freedom of speech, press, conscience, religion, assembly, and equal treatment before the law; plus limited governmental powers, kept in check by constitutional

guarantees including separation of powers so that all executive, legislative, and judicial powers are not exercised by the same person or institution.[9]

Following on the writings of Mill and others, education, too, came to be understood as an essential right and responsibility of citizens in a democracy, since citizens cannot participate knowledgeably and government cannot be guided effectively without citizens' understanding of the issues and leaders on which they are voting. Following the early example of the United States, *liberal* democracy gradually became the most common system of government among the nations of the industrialized and economically developed world,[10] and, via the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, fifty-eight nations agreed in 1948 that all people have the right to an education.[11]

The Emergence of *Neo*liberalism

In considering the foregoing history, one might expect the word *neoliberalism* to denote a widespread rekindling of interest in ensuring happiness for the greatest number of people as advocated by Jeremy Bentham, or perhaps a new movement supporting government's role in promoting social and political change to ensure education, housing, and protection for all citizens as advanced by John Stuart Mill. Instead, *neoliberalism* has come to refer to a set of 20th century political, social, and economic discourses that stem directly from the *laissez-faire* liberalism first advanced by Adam Smith. Neoliberalism's underlying philosophy is based on Smith's assumption that a free, unregulated market most efficiently promotes economic growth, but it goes further in advocating for state governments to institute market-like reforms in all aspects of society to promote individual autonomy, the privatization of assets, and deregulation in all industries and institutions.[12] Since the 1970s, these ideas have come to tacitly pervade all aspects of daily life in the world's liberal democracies, although they are more extreme in some of those countries than in others.

While the history of neoliberalism is complex and somewhat contested, one point of general consensus is that the ideas behind its current forms originated in the annual meetings of the Mont Pélerin Society, a group of economists including F. A. von Hayek, Milton Friedman, Ludwig von Mises, philosopher Karl Popper, and others, who first assembled in 1947.[13] Reportedly concerned that freedom of individual thought and expression was becoming threatened in Western societies owing to a collapse of confidence in *laissez-faire* economics following the Great Depression,[14] the New Deal liberalism advanced in the U.S. by President Franklin

Roosevelt in 1933, and the rise of British social democracy, the Mont Pélerin Society aimed to strike a balance between high government involvement in social concerns and the *laissez-faire* economics that many had come to blame for the Great Depression.[15]

The ideas of the Society did not gain much public traction until 1973, when, following an economic crisis in Chile, democratic socialist president Salvador Allende was deposed in a *coup d'etat*, and the newly seated dictator Augusto Pinochet began to make major economic reforms based on the neoliberal theories of Friedman and a group of Friedman's students from the University of Chicago. In the 1980s, following on what had ostensibly been learned from the Chilean "experiment" with neoliberal reforms, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and U.S. President Ronald Reagan began implementing neoliberal policies in Britain and the U.S., respectively, to address the economic inflation, rising unemployment, and lack of growth in consumer demand that had beset the two countries' economies since the previous decade.[16] Concomitantly, Reagan made tax cuts, increased defense spending, took steps to deregulate the financial markets, and expanded the trade deficit, which gave rise to economic problems in other countries. Subsequently, neoliberal policies and practices have come to be adopted in all the democratic countries of Europe, many in Asia and Latin America, some in Africa, plus Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, albeit in different ways; neoliberalism has recently been characterized as a "global system" (Iber 2018, par. 1).

While one might expect that it is conservatives who have to answer for the flood of neoliberal policies passed in the U.S. since the Reagan years, they cannot be held fully responsible for the advance of neoliberal thinking. The Carter administration's deregulation of the airline, electric power, and trucking industries in the 1970s, the Clinton administration's support for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 and subsequent cuts to the welfare state and continued deregulation of the U.S. financial sector, plus the Obama administration's championing of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and various other capitulations to the interests of the U.S. ruling class[17] are all examples of neoliberal advancements made by leaders usually considered to be traditional liberals.

Among the major adverse effects now thought to have stemmed largely from neoliberalist policies worldwide are these:

- The worldwide economic crisis of 2007-2008, which originated in the predatory lending of money to low-income homebuyers by U.S. banks, extreme

risk-taking by global financial institutions, and the collapse of the U.S. housing bubble (See Kotz 2008)

- Increasing the gap between the rich and the poor and exacerbating income inequality within societies and internationally (See Monbiot 2016)
- Fostering of unrestrained, free trade internationally, thereby accentuating the profits of capitalist countries and limiting those of developing countries, simultaneously enabling corporations in wealthier countries to benefit from labor in poorer countries (See Hickel 2017)
- Politicians' exacerbating of economic and social inequalities, despite claiming to mitigate them, and related failures in accounting for systemic racism and other social problems (See Davis 2012)
- Climate change, owing to the ineffectiveness of markets to price carbon appropriately, escalating pollution (and attendant costs), and politicians' unwillingness to take political risks on the short term in exchange for the long-term care of the earth (See Stern 2007)
- Concentration of media into a small number of companies, compromising the quality of information provided and diminishing its diversity (See Fenton 2011)
- Unequal access to health care (See Mooney 2012)
- Unequal access to education (See Bhopal and Shain 2016)

Social Planning and Administration scholar Robert Kuttner concisely summed up the global effects of the neoliberal "experiment" that was begun in Chile in the 1970s in this way:

> Now, after nearly half a century, the verdict is in. Virtually every one of [neoliberalism's] policies has failed, even on their own terms. Enterprise has been richly rewarded, taxes have been cut, and regulation reduced or privatized. The [U.S.] economy is vastly more unequal, yet economic growth is slower and more chaotic than during the era of managed capitalism. Deregulation has produced not salutary competition, but market concentration. Economic power has resulted in feedback loops of political power, in which elites make rules that bolster further concentration. (Kuttner 2019, par. 5)

As Kuttner explains, the effects of neoliberalism have made it clearly evident that free markets *do not* regulate themselves, since managed markets have been both more equitable and more efficient over time. Noting that neoliberalism has also provided a "scholarly cover" for the greed of society's most powerful people, he points to where it has done the greatest damage:

> The neoliberal ascendance has had … calamitous cost—to democratic legitimacy. As government ceased to buffer market forces, daily life has become more of a struggle for ordinary people. The elements of a decent middle-class life are elusive—reliable jobs and careers, adequate pensions, secure medical care, affordable housing, and college that doesn't require a lifetime of debt. Meanwhile, life has become ever sweeter for economic elites, whose income and wealth have pulled away and whose loyalty to place, neighbor, and nation has become more contingent and less reliable. (par. 10)

Neoliberalism, Education, and Music Education

Among the numerous writers chronicling neoliberalism's deleterious effects,[18] political science scholar and critical theorist Wendy Brown may have presented the most well-reasoned and impassioned argument for the importance of preserving education in democratic nations in neoliberal times in her book, *Undoing the Demos* (2015).[19] Resonating with Kuttner's observations, Brown's general argument is that neoliberalism has undermined participation in the democratic process in modern nations—that is, it has "hollowed out" democracy—by making the market the model for *everything* in society. Indeed, what she calls the "governing rationality" of neoliberalism propagates an economic conception of *all* aspects of life, even construing human beings as "human capital" … with disastrous consequences.

Particular to our concern in this issue of ACT, Brown observes that, as neoliberalism became more pervasive, affordable higher education was sacrificed, and, like Kuttner, she warns that its loss now imperils democracy itself. Recognizing—along with John Stuart Mill, Alexis de Tocqueville, John Dewey, and numerous other scholars of the past—that citizens cannot engage effectively with democratic processes if they don't understand the powers and problems they are facing, Brown underscores that preparing citizens to engage knowledgeably with those powers and problems has historically been a central justification for public secondary and higher education in developed nations. Further, she observes, the need for the populace to be broadly knowledgeable and critically astute was the reason a liberal arts curriculum was advanced in public schools and universities: i.e., in order that citizens would be enabled to think freely, broadly, and critically, to expand their concerns beyond their own limited temporal and geographical circumstances. In contrast, current neoliberal rationality considers none of these things to be important, instead construing knowledge, thought, and training to have value entirely for the benefit of economic profit—that is, as "capital advancement"—either human or corporate. According to neoliberal thinking, she writes, "knowledge is not

sought for developing the capacities of citizens, sustaining culture, knowing the world, or envisioning and crafting different ways of life in common. Rather, it is sought only for 'positive ROI'—return on investment" (Brown 2015, 178).

Brown points out that the radical democratic idea of orienting educational practice toward preparing citizens for "intelligent engagement with the world" was never—in the history of the world—more completely embraced and institutionalized than it was in the United States following World War II:

> Only in the United States did a postsecondary education contoured toward developing the person and the citizen, not merely the job holder, ubiquitously come to structure university curriculums, and only in the United States was such an education on offer to a wide swath of the population from the 1940s forward. (186)

While Brown acknowledges that broad access to public education after the war did not bring an end to class stratification in higher education (nor did it do so in society), she emphasizes that *it nevertheless advanced social equality as an ideal*, one that reflects a "liberalism of profound egalitarian commitments, rich humanism, and a strong ethos of the public good" (187).

But now, the "neoliberalized" university and—many would say—education in general have become more primarily oriented toward "building human capital" for the income advancement of individuals and industry, and much less oriented toward engaging students in "representing, theorizing, interpreting, creating, [and] protecting the world" (187). Brown raises the question of whether benefits to society or the world at large actually accrued from widespread public access to affordable liberal arts education after the war:

> Did the principle of broadly educating the masses, generated in the aftermath of World War II, really improve democracy? Did it make U.S. citizens more thoughtful, less easily manipulated, more democratic in instinct, more public minded, more insistent on transparent governance, or more oriented toward justice than self-interest? Did it bring about better leadership or more political accountability? (Brown 2015, 188)

Her answer is *Yes*:

> If such accomplishments seem dubious…, it is important to remember that these same decades featured the civil rights movement, feminism, sustained challenges to inequality and to Cold War ideology, and an explosion of other justice-minded cultural, artistic, and civic practices. … Mass quality education held out the promise of citizens who were knowing enough about history, power, foreign affairs, language, affect, and meaning to give substance to the notion of choosing their own ends in life, as well as choosing and checking political representatives. To be "knowing enough," Socrates would remind us, above all entails humility before the vastness and complexity of the world, an appreciation of what one does not know. Such humility and appreciation are precisely what is disappearing from

> popular political discourse in the United States [in the wake of the neoliberal turn]; smugness in ignorance is notably more common. (188–89)

Music, as one of the seven liberal arts defined by Martianus Capella in the fifth century A.D., has been included in "liberal arts education" since long before the advent of the United States as a nation. But the current form of "music education" in liberal democratic countries, according to which students learn music—including the musics of peoples different from themselves[20]—in public schooling, was first begun in the early 19th century and is predicated on the concept of music as a "liberal art." Since that time, such inclusive "music education" has become a global—but not universal—phenomenon.[21]

But under the current "neoliberalized" circumstances, music education is becoming weakened, except perhaps in places where it serves to support—or at least does not contravene—neoliberal ideals. The authors of the five articles that comprise this special issue of ACT all critically examined the effects of neoliberal capitalism on aspects of music education in their own particular locales or contexts, and each in their own way has revealed its weakening influence.

Sean Robert Powell draws upon the philosophy of Frankfurt School scholar Herbert Marcuse to analyze the competitive structure of school music in the U.S. state of Texas, where the ascent of neoliberalism has transformed musical competition into "an official, state-sanctioned stand-in for education." The negative consequences of the pervasive competitive orientation of music education there for students and teachers have been many, as some students have been excluded from music classes, students at less competitive schools have been deprecated by those at other schools, and no time in music classes is dedicated to creativity, experiment, or even learning from trial and error.

Graham McPhail and Jeff McNeill critically evaluate the consequences of the neoliberal "capture" of New Zealand education on secondary school music in Aotearoa, following on their country's adoption of neoliberalism in the 1980s. They find the current, resulting, "highly devolved institutional framework" of the nation's education system to be characterized by an instrumentalized approach, wherein learning is expressed in terms of outcomes and credit value, rather than reflecting students' development of conceptual understanding. Most curricular decisions there are now made by teachers individually and implemented in their own classes, and the holistic, broadly liberal, humanist aims of past shared curricula have been weakened. They suggest that attending to the changes in New Zealand

since the 1980s may provide lessons for music educators in other countries who are facing increasing neoliberal influence.

Vincent C. Bates explains how school music education supports the reproduction of certain conceptual structures and social practices that serve to advance neoliberal rationalities and reproduce inequality, alienation, and exploitation in contemporary U.S. society. Bates puts forward musical *play*—a form of autotelic experience—as a means of facilitating personally fulfilling and socially emancipatory experiences and thus as an avenue for resisting or disrupting neoliberal rationalities.

Rolando Angel-Alvarado, Bayron Gárate-González, and Isabel Quiroga-Fuentes describe the effects of neoliberalism in Chile from the perspective of music educators. Following on its introduction in 1973, neoliberalism was sustained even after Chile returned to democracy in 1990. Chile is now a "subsidiary state," one where private companies control and market public services as "consumer goods," so only the poorest citizens still use state agencies, which are now unsupported and have largely been dismantled. Correspondingly, more than half of Chilean schools are private, and most of the students in public schools are economically disadvantaged. The authors find neoliberalism to be reflected in at least five aspects of music education there: few or no resources; unsupported conditions under which music classes are offered; lack of consensus about what defines a music education professional; broad curricular freedom, engendering institutions' pursuit of their own self-interests; and promotion of an individualistic mindset in students. Like McPhail and McNeil, Angel-Alvarado, Gárate-González, and Quiroga-Fuentes suggest the experience of their country may portend effects of neoliberalism elsewhere, internationally.

Katherine M. Sadler presents a critical assessment of music entrepreneurship programs at four (unnamed) highly rated U.S. conservatories and schools of music, based on interviews she conducted with their program staffs, students, and alumni. While most participants had positive things to say about their experiences, many found themselves facing systemic barriers to professional opportunities as they completed the programs, limiting the applicability of what they had learned; inhibiting factors included gender, race, and differences in family income. In Sadler's analysis, entrepreneurship education in music in post-secondary educational institutions serves largely as a form of indoctrination to support neoliberalism.

Keeping in mind the historical background of neoliberalism presented in this editorial, its pervasiveness in contemporary societies, and the negative effects of

neoliberalism on music education identified by all of the authors who contributed articles to this issue of ACT, I return to my original question: *How might an understanding of neoliberalism and its relationship to music education be important for music educators and their work?*

Three points come immediately to mind (but no doubt there are many others that should also be considered). First, noting that citizens cannot participate knowledgeably and government cannot be guided effectively without citizens' understanding of the leaders and issues on which they are voting, *all* K-12 and post-secondary educators need to realize that they are uniquely positioned—and that they have a responsibility—to teach the students in their classes, as the next generation of adult, voting citizens, about the destructive effects of neoliberal thinking. Our immediate tasks are to *learn for ourselves* and to *help our students learn* how neoliberalist policies have contributed to bringing about the problems cited in this issue of ACT. Recall that Bentham and Mill aroused public concern for the tragic circumstances of the working class in the early years of the industrial revolution, and, by the end of the century, a new generation of politicians in the British government had enabled the working class to vote. Likewise, educators in all democratic nations afflicted with neoliberal policy-advancing leaders can enable students to grasp how the short-sightedness—and in some cases the outright greed—of those leaders are undermining the health of their societies and contributing to severe environmental damage.

Next, following on the thinking of MayDay Group philosophers Thomas Regelski, David Elliott, Wayne Bowman, and others who have contributed to advancing *praxial* views over *aesthetic* conceptions of music and music education, music educators can *diminish their teaching of* ***music***—as the study of objects of *art* to be appreciated aesthetically—and *increase their teaching of* ***musicking***—as dynamic human behavior—in order to demonstrate its social efficacy within and between communities of people. The British workers who sang together during the industrial revolution were not motivated to do so by an interest in creating *art*. Their songs emerged from their shared experience of exploitation, they gave public voice to the workers' experiences, and collective singing of those songs provided the workers with emotional and social support.[22]

Further, music educators in schools can *collaborate with their colleagues to align curricula between subject areas*, to enable students to better grasp the relevance of different academic subjects in their lives, in line with the traditional goals of a liberal arts education and to advance understanding of the problems to which

neoliberalism has given rise. For example, music students might prepare a concert of songs and other musical works from the time of the industrial revolution while, in their English classes, they study the writings of Charles Dickens, whose novels illuminate and critique the abhorrent life conditions of workers in that era. (*Hard Times* and *Oliver Twist* would be particularly apt choices.) Students could do these things while also learning about the industrial revolution in their social studies classes, where their teachers help them to "connect the dots" and identify common causes behind the hardships of the mid-19th century British factory workers and those of the underpaid and homeless workers of today. (Other possibilities for aligning curriculum with such social concerns are limited only by the historical knowledge, societal awareness, and imagination of teachers.) It is important to remember that the precursor of the social studies classes now in the secondary schools of many democratic nations were courses in "civics," where students learned the theoretical, political, and practical dimensions of citizenship, as well as the rights and responsibilities it entails.[23] Restoring healthy democracy to "neoliberalized" societies will require the full engagement of our students as suitably educated and critically astute citizens.

In sum, music educators—along with educators in all academic disciplines in liberal democratic nations—now need to teach like our instruction has implications for the healthy future of our democratic nations and planet earth itself … because it does.

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Notes

[1] Admittedly, the International Society for Music Education (ISME) has explored political issues within and surrounding music education since its inception in 1958, its Policy Commission has focused on them specifically, and recent years have seen an increase in publications by and for music educators on political concerns underlying their field (e.g., Schmidt and Colwell, eds., *Policy and the Political Life of Music Education*, 2017). But relationships between music and politics have not been central in most school music educators' teaching or their writings since the beginnings of public school music education in the early 19th century, as evidenced by the relative scarcity of publications on the topic.

[2] This is a current definition of *art* from the online reference at: https://www.dictionary.com/.

[3] In fact, a quick review of titles in ACT's index reveals that this journal has historically been instrumental in advancing scholarship that addresses political aspects of music and music education since its inception.

[4] See, for example, Chambers, et al., *The Western Experience* (2003), 819.

[5] See, for example, Chambers, et al., 790.

[6] See Osborne, *Civilization* (2006), 345.

[7] See Chambers, et al., 812–14.

[8] The Merriam-Webster Dictionary presents further information on the history of the word *liberal* here: https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/liberal-meaning-origin-history

[9] The defining characteristics of a liberal democracy are presented concisely here: https://www.encyclopedia.com/international/legal-and-political-magazines/liberal-democracy

[10] After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, more liberal democratic governments were formed or restored in countries in Eastern Europe, the Americas, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia. Largely as a result of this change, the percentage of countries classified as "Free"—on the basis of

analysis of citizens' political rights and civil liberties done by Freedom House, a non-profit, non-governmental research and advocacy organization—grew from 36 to 46 percent between 1988 and 2005. Worryingly, the percentage of "Free" countries declined to 44 percent between 2005 and 2018. On the basis of 2019 data, Freedom House presently classifies countries of the world as "Free" (44 percent), "Partly free" (30 percent), and "Not Free" (26 percent) here: https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/democracy-retreat

[11] The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be accessed here: https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

[12] See Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005), 65.

[13] See, for example, Harvey, 20–22. Others ascribe neoliberalism's origins to a book by the American journalist Walter Lippmann, *An Inquiry into the Principles of the Good Society* (1937) and to a 1938 international conference in Paris that focused on Lippmann's ideas in that book. See Richard M. Ebeling, "Neoliberalism was never about free markets" (2017).

[14] The Great Depression—the most severe economic downturn of the 20th century—began with the crash of the U.S. stock market in 1929 and continued worldwide until the beginning of World War II in 1939. Disastrous for people in both rich and poor countries, unemployment in some countries climbed as high as 33 percent.

[15] See Harvey, 20.

[16] David Harvey tells the story of "how neoliberalization was accomplished" by Reagan and Thatcher in the U.S. and Britain, respectively, in his chapter, "The Construction of Consent," in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 39–63.

[17] The words "U.S. ruling class" are used here to describe those who Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page characterized as "economic elites and organized groups representing business interests [who] have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy," in contrast with "average citizens and mass-based interest groups [who] have little or no independent influence" in their often-cited article, "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens" (2014).

[18]Among the other writers who have illuminated the effects of neoliberalism and provided some insights on how it might be resisted are Noam Chomsky (*Profit Over People*, 1998), Noam Chomsky and & C. J. Polychroniou (*The Precipice: Neoliberalism, the Pandemic, and the Urgent Need for Social Change*, 2021), Melinda Cooper (*Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism*, 2019), and Naomi Klein (*The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, 2008).

[19] The Greek word *demos* usually refers to the common people of an ancient Greek state. Democracy—the form of government in which supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system—originated in ancient Athens. In her book *Undoing the Demos*, Brown uses *demos* to reference the people of a liberal democratic state (particularly the United States, but by implication other such nations) as those whose system of government is now being "undone" by neoliberalism.

[20] While some believe that U.S. school music educators began including the musics of different peoples—i.e., not just European- and American-based art and folk musics—in their instruction following the Tanglewood Declaration of 1968 (according to which "Music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures belongs in the curriculum …"), in fact some did so much earlier. Following on the formation of the International Musical Society in 1899, some of the music textbooks published just after the turn of the 20th century included "music of many lands and peoples." See Robert A. Choate, *Documentary Report of the Tanglewood Symposium: Music in American Society*, Section 1, and J. Scott Goble, *What's So Important about Music Education?*, 195–96.

[21] Gordon Cox and Robin Stevens, along with their contributing authors, have helpfully shed light on the uneven introduction of music into compulsory schooling in 18 countries in *The Origins and Foundations of Music Education: International Perspectives* (2017).

[22] "Poverty Knock," "The Colliers' Rant," and "The Strike" are among many such songs sung by British workers during the industrial revolution. One point of departure for studying these songs is the chapter, "The Industrial Songs," in Albert L. Lloyd's *Folk Song in England* (1967).

[23] Alarmingly, only 24 percent of students performed at or above the "proficient" level on the most recent U.S. National Assessments of Education Progress (NAEP)--i.e., Grade 12 in 2010 and Grade 8 in 2018. NAEP results can be accessed here: https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/.