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To The Reader

This inaugural issue of *Action, Theory and Criticism for Music Education* is devoted to papers presented at the interdisciplinary colloquium held June 11-15, 2000 in Helsinki Finland by the “MayDay Group” of musicians (MDG) and the “Artist, Work of Art, and Experience” group of artists (AWE). These proceedings were originally published in the *Finnish Journal of Music Education (Musikkikasvatus)*, Vol. 5, No. 1-2 (2000). With the permission of that journal, they are now made accessible to the international community of music education scholars. Two lectures by Professor Richard Shusterman, a leading pragmatist philosopher who has concerned himself centrally with the arts, were arranged by AWE to coincide with the colloquium and produced two interviews by Lauri Väkevää of the University of Oulu, Finland, the second of which is published here for the first time. Thanks are offered to Professor Shusterman for his contribution to the colloquium and for granting permission to publish the interviews.

By way of background, the MayDay Group (www.maydaygroup.org) is a group of international scholars from a variety of disciplines in music and music education. J. Terry Gates, SUNY Buffalo and Thomas A. Regelski, SUNY Fredonia (both now emeritus) created the group in 1993 to consider mounting challenges facing music educators and the status of music in society. Its analytical agenda is to interrogate traditional and status quo conceptions of music and music education from the perspectives of critical theory, critical thinking and research from all relevant disciplines. Its positive agenda is to inspire and promote action for change, both concerning how music and musical value are understood in the contemporary world of music and in the institutions responsible for music in society, particularly music education. The AWE Group (<http://triad.kiasma.fng.fi/awe/WRITINGS/index.html>) includes artists from several disciplines associated with several art schools and universities in Finland who share mutual interest in applying Pragmatism to important issues in art and art theory. Finnish philosopher Pentti Määttänen, a specialist in John Dewey and Charles S. Pierce, has been informal leader of this group.

MayDay colloquia are held once or twice a year, and each explores one of the seven “action ideals” posted on the Group’s website. The Helsinki meeting focused on Ideal Five: “In order to be effective, music educators must establish and maintain contact with ideas and people from other disciplines.” A joint meeting with artists was, therefore, very apt and produced much of mutual value. As a prelude to the colloquium, Professor Claire Detels, a musicologist at the University of Arkansas and a MDG member, agreed to produce a “study paper.” This was drawn directly from her book *Soft Boundaries: Re-Visioning the Arts and Aesthetics in American Education* (Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1999), a critique of how single-disciplinary specialization and scholarly and pedagogical insularity within and between art and music departments of universities and schools have produced negative consequences for the effectiveness of arts and music education. The study paper was not read at the colloquium; but because it was addressed directly by several papers and other participants, it is also included with the proceedings.

Given the commitment of the AWE group to pragmatism and a strong interest on the part of several MDG members in music and music education as *praxis*, a Pragmatist theme evolved that addressed distinctly post-modern, post-analytic and post-structuralist perspectives on art, music and music education. In contrast to the hegemony of modernist aestheticist accounts of art, music and music education, the pragmatist-praxial tone of these proceedings exemplified for the arts a trend in other disciplines that has recently been called “the practice turn.”* In contrast to the “linguistic turn” of analytic, common language and formal language philosophy that occurred early in the 20th century, this newly burgeoning *practice theory* is concerned with human actions that are organized around praxis and pragmatic values, and that involve shared and embodied understanding, skills and know-how—where, in short, meaning arises in situated conditions of use.

Heidegger, Wittgenstein and a wide array of notable post-analytic, post-modern and post-structuralist philosophers, as well as second-generation critical theorists such as Habermas, have influenced the growth and direction of practice theory. It incorporates recent social philosophy and cultural theory and, in distinction to the rationalist bias of analytic theory, draws on empirical findings from the social sciences and cognitive studies, including neuroscience and consciousness research. The relevance for the arts and for music and music education in particular of this new emphasis on embodied praxis should be obvious; at the very least it offers the promise of new directions for thinking and research regarding the challenges facing music education. Thus, this collection of papers presents a variety of fresh and sometimes competing perspectives that otherwise have been overlooked, minimized, or even denied in many status quo discussions of music and music education. This new and sometimes provocative research is offered in keeping with the MayDay Group’s agenda to facilitate and disseminate new ideas, to continue to promote analysis of and open-minded dialogue about both old and new ideas, and to help effect change for the betterment of music education and music in society.

* Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina and Eike Von Savigny, eds. *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. Routledge: 2001.

Thomas A. Regelski, Editor.

“Critical Education,” Culturalism and Multiculturalism

T. A. Regelski, Professor Emeritus SUNY Fredonia

The idea of multiculturalism presents important challenges to society and thus to schooling. However, despite considerable lip service by opportunists, it is often not taken seriously enough. Instead it has become a catch-all term for a variety of different bandwagons; an almost meaningless buzzword justifying and incorporating a host of sometimes dysfunctional or counterproductive, sometimes competing or conflicting, sometimes self-serving, even one-sided educational and musical practices. Because music is central to the commonsense idea of “culture,” many music educators have recklessly gone along with this momentum. However if schooling is to contribute to the needs of our society, then music teachers need to take a critical stance on the role and value of music in life and thus of its reasonable place in schooling. To this end, I will first undertake a critical examination of the *theory of culturalism* upon which multiculturalism depends, drawing freely from Jürgen Habermas and earlier thinkers associated with the Frankfurt School of Critical Theorists. Then I shall make some observations and suggestions concerning both music education and multiculturalism.

Towards A Critical Theory for Music in Education

In 1922, the Frankfurt (Germany) Institute for Social Research was founded. In its early wave, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin and Max Horkheimer undertook a critical analysis of Western history beginning with the eighteenth century Enlightenment.

Adorno and Horkheimer saw Enlightenment thinkers as having put into motion two incompatible tendencies, both the legacy of the seventeenth century "age of reason." On one hand was the *rationalism* of philosophical idealism stemming from Descartes; and on the other was the *scientific materialism* that arose from the *empiricism* of Francis Bacon and Galileo (Adorno and Horkheimer 1972). Subsequent critical theorists have agreed that the ideal of Enlightenment reason was subsequently distorted by both Western positivism and Marxist scientism into the illusory, narrow and therefore humanly delimiting *technical rationality* that sees knowledge in terms of control. In this, critical theorists are uniformly critical of both capitalism and communism. Later theorists, such as Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and particularly Jürgen Habermas, developed these ideas further and in this analysis, I have been influenced by Habermas' reconstruction of



the earlier critical theorists.¹

The expression "critical theory" itself originated in a 1937 essay by Horkheimer (1992) that compared "traditional" and "critical theory." The former he saw as associated with the logical positivism that had evolved from Enlightenment empiricism and its false claims to objectivity. Traditional scientific theory, in this view, had become ideological in its claim that "facts" are detached from theory or other social and historical circumstances. Furthermore, when positivist theory is applied to society and individuals, the human condition is misrepresented as ahistorical, law-like and unresponsive to change. Even worse, these law-like regularities promote a technology of social engineering used by a powerful elite that dominates people at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

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Later critical theorists, particularly Habermas (1971), have started with a critique of logical positivism and its use as a technology for social control. Against the positivist claim that causal laws and facts are entirely free from social influences, Habermas has argued the importance of taking the lifeworld and human interpretations of it into consideration in any knowledge claims. Social scientists, in this view, need to participate in the lifeworld to fully understand it (Habermas 1988). Effective, non-coercive communication and true knowledge in this view both depend on understanding the lifeworld inhabited by others and the subjective interpretative categories by which they make sense of it. Such communicative competence for Habermas is central to any knowledge claims. However, Habermas and other critical theorists are as critical of unreflective subjectivity as they are of the positivist ideology of objectivity. Simply put, humans are too easily lulled into self-deception and *false consciousness* by a host of ideological influences that dominate and control their thinking—for example, positivism or culturalism.

Critical theorists, therefore, engage in ideology critique by which false consciousness can be rationally analyzed and valid knowledge rationally justified and communicated. In this view, particularly as advanced by Habermas, all persons affected unanimously must agree, under conditions of free and uncoerced dialogue ("communication acts") that the truth of the knowledge in question is in everyone's best interest. What is true then is not absolutely or objectively true in the sense the positivist would have us believe; rather, knowledge is true in terms of critical discourse between historically situated individuals (Habermas 1984, 1987). The social facts and logic

involved rescue true knowledge from being arbitrarily relativistic. This social logic in turn leads to social action plan for change agency among those affected—a strategy that seeks to overcome the domination of ideological constraints through the mutual coordination of mutual needs and interests. "Critical knowledge" (i.e., emancipating knowledge) thus *empowers* people to be free agents, in charge of their own intentions and thus of what is uniquely human (Habermas 1971).

This all too brief summary of critical theory serves to highlight several important issues in the debates over multiculturalism in schooling. For example, it is reasonable to



observe that the impetus by a 'subculture'² for freedom from suppression by dominant groups can lead to single-minded or one-dimensional thinking that can be problematic.

Subcultures are by definition minorities, and thus by their very nature point to certain taken-for-granted 'facts' as evidence of subordination by the dominant group. Each minority argues from the interpretive categories of its own lifeworld according to an assumed common perspective at the basis of its institutional affiliation. The resulting




institutionalization of thinking³ resists whatever is seen as imposed by the dominant or other groups. Activists within each group, then, undertake vigorous critiques of dominant ideologies and paradigms, and agitate to restore freedom of agency to the subculture as against by other groups, dominant or other minorities.


This advocacy is perhaps understandable. Nevertheless, from the critical standpoint it fails to acknowledge that, despite the shared perception of subjugation, various subcultures zealously compete among themselves in legitimating their own institutionalized interests. And, as far as individual members of such a group are

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concerned, such institutionalized legitimation risks replacing the controlling ideologies of dominant social forces with those of the subculture. The social knowledge and lifeworld of each subculture thus become institutionalized as the paradigmatic reality to which all members owe deference. Thus in advancing its own agenda, many marginal members of

 the subculture end up disempowered as individual agents or, in any case, alienated.⁴

Furthermore, because each subculture is hindered by institutional paradigms from understanding the interpretative categories and lifeworlds of other groups, each legitimates and advances only its own institutional needs in direct opposition to the needs of other groups in the larger society, minority or dominant. As part of their “politics of recognition” (Taylor 1992), then, various subcultures typically advance their own

 interests at the expense of others under the banner of multicultural music education.⁵

In a complex society, as a result, the conflicting needs and interests of subgroups cannot be satisfied as long as other groups make their own competing claims, and curriculum for music must be approached on bases other than as menu of discrete “tastes” chosen for sampling according to arbitrary criteria. Habermas in particular has been critical of this colonization of the lifeworld into autonomous institutionalized spheres (e.g., Habermas 1970, Habermas 1994). He looks instead to the rational reintegration of society by socializing free, responsible and moral agents whose communicative competence results in a non-arbitrary *practical rationality* upon which agreement can be reached on interpretation of universal human needs and interests (Habermas 1984, 1987). This would be, then, the task of any critical theory of education.

Critical Education and Music Education.

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The empowering of teachers with regard to the social and pragmatic consequences of curriculum has been called "critical education" (Carr and Kemmis 1986) or "critical educational science" (Carson 1992, 102). Sociologist Joel Spring summarizes the movement in these words:

Critical theorists find fault with both liberal and neo-conservative positions on the economy and education. . . [C]ritical theorists emphasize an education for democratic empowerment, which simply means giving students the knowledge and skills they need to struggle for a continued expansion of political, economic, and social rights. Of utmost importance is making students aware that they have the power to affect the course of history and that history is the struggle for human rights. (Spring 1991, 31)

The goal of this critical theory of education, Spring continues, is to help students develop "a critical awareness of the social and political forces in society." This critical agenda, he concludes,

appeals to many people because it offers the hope that education can lead to action as opposed to passive acceptance of the status quo. Traditional methods of education might result in equality of opportunity, but they do not necessarily result in people trying to end those things that block the opportunities of all people. For critical feminists, critical pedagogy is a method for heightening awareness of the causes of female oppression. For critical integrationists, critical pedagogy is considered a method for educating people to struggle to end all forms of racism. For the critical pluralist, critical pedagogy will prepare people to work to end the sources of discrimination and prejudice in society. (Spring 1991, 148)

In a critical education, then, discrimination, domination or prejudice against any group would be constrained, but so would claims to exclusivity promoted by subcultures that result in the loss of self-determination by other affected subcultures. Similarly, critical



education empowers students with regard to the impact of their own subcultures.⁶ On the other hand, any true (non-arbitrary) interests at the basis of subcultural affiliations would need to be accorded due respect and emancipated from any larger institutional

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subjugation. Various musics, then, would serve curriculum without advancing the cultural identity or agenda of any particular group as against others.

This poses a significant challenge for schools in general and for music teachers in particular. To begin with, the dominant cultural institution has been the Eurocentric Fine Art of 'high' musical Culture advanced by the "cultural patriarchy" (Abrahams 1986) of university schools of music and conservatories, and imitated in public schools by teachers trained by the patriarchy. It will certainly be necessary to protect and insure this important tradition; but this music cannot be allowed any longer to dominate education to the exclusion of other musical cultures studied and understood as rational exemplars of concretely shared experience, values and praxis.

Critical music education will require music teachers who—in addition to usual concerns for musical competence—are critically aware of and communicatively competent with respect to the multiplicity of lifeworlds encountered in schools. Such critical awareness would necessitate developing several capacities and habits: (a) identifying the assumptions, paradigms, problematics or *epistemes* of social institutions and ideologies (of any kind, from any source) that threaten to dominate the conduct of music, education and music education; (b) critically analyzing these models of education and music in terms of their potential for inducing false consciousness; (c) framing alternative models or modifications; (d) adjusting or adapting these to the curricular and other instructional needs revealed by a pragmatic analysis of each particular teaching-learning situation; and (e) becoming "reflective practitioners" (Schon 1983; Schon 1987) by critically evaluating results against expected outcomes (Regelski 1997). To begin

with, however, such critical awareness and communicative competence requires a critical perspective concerning the separate yet related issues of "culture" and "music."



A Critique of Culturalism⁷

First, then, critically aware music teachers need considerable insight concerning various theories and limitations of the *culturalist* perspective of society and of the many uses of the ideas of *culture* that come with unexamined assumptions concerning education in general and music education in particular. A connected framework of propositions distinguishes the theory of culturalism from other sociologies such as structuralism and functionalism. It is largely upon the theory of culturalism that most problems and arguments connected with multicultural (interculture; panculture; transculture, etc.) are based. Thus, its nature and limitations must be made clear.

To begin with, the culturalist perspective accounts for culture in terms of the symbols, artifacts, and intellectual products that embody the shared values and habits of a group. Each sociocultural entity is seen as creating a certain basic personality and mind-set that is passed on to successive generations as traditional knowledge and praxis; as the "essence" of what it means to belong to that group. Secondly, each such group is seen as a unified or holistic cultural entity, the corollary being that different societies therefore represent necessarily distinct cultural viewpoints. The third contention of culturalism sees the value system of a given culture as to some degree delineated and determined by the values of dominant groups in the society. These cultural values, themes, heritages, traditions, resources, biases and blinders are transmitted to subsequent generations and to other new and marginal groups (e.g., immigrants) as *received* knowledge and values.

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However, the fourth tenet of culturalism recognizes that certain dissimilar values can co-exist as coherent social structures within a society. These "patterns of culture," as Ruth Benedict called them, are complementary and thus interconnected in their influence over society. Finally, culturalism sees individual consciousness itself as relative to and determined by the culture. Reality is seen, therefore, through the lens, so to speak, of the culture, which being self-created, is thus symbolic in its meanings and values.

Culturalism echoes (or perhaps creates) the "common sense" perspective about culture and cultures. But it has certain weaknesses and problems, not the least of which is that its pervasiveness promotes a persuasiveness that, not unlike ideology, can induce a false consciousness by which social issues are interpreted in a one-sided manner. Moreover, because teaching and schooling require sociocultural interpretation, the limitations of the culturalist paradigm are of direct relevance to teachers. In general, then, the entire edifice of culturalism needs to be critically analyzed and put into rational perspective by music teachers.

For example, the emphasis on the essentialism and homogeneity of cultures is misleading for complex, pluralistic societies. According to sociologists Raymond Boudon and Francois Bourricaud (1989),

it is only at the price of a great over-simplification that we can admit the idea of common values and imagine that these values are more or less administered to all by way of socialization. In fact, individuals are never exposed to the culture of a society as such. That culture is already no more than a simplification and a rationalization produced by certain actors, such as priests, intellectuals, or, according to the case, some fraction of the elite. As for individuals, they undergo complex processes of apprenticeship the contents of which depend upon their environment, which is variable. That is why culturalists are obliged to introduce the idea of subculture to characterize the value systems appropriate to sub-groups. (Boudon and Bourricaud, 95).

Likewise, the assumption that any given subculture is uniform in the homogeneity of its own essentialism is equally over-simplified. In the critical view, then, whatever values or traits may be held in common can often be quite superficial in terms of group identity. For example, the shared values associated with a certain ethnic or religious heritage are not necessarily the major or controlling factor in the lives of most people. And, in fact, individuals either tend to change group identity according to the situations in which they find themselves at the moment, or refuse easy typification.⁸



A second critical point is that the theory of the transmission of "cultural heritage" (or primary socialization) portends exactly the kind of law-like determinism that critical theory associates with the ideology of positivism. Culturalism thus rationalizes as somehow natural and unavoidable that normative cultural values are passed on intact to new generations and other newcomers. This "transmission" theory, then, implicitly recognizes the inevitability and thus the determinism of social or cultural conditioning. Taken literally in the common sense view, then, the individual has few or only inconsequential choices for personal agency. For culturalism, significant variation from cultural norms is seen as deviance or heresy, and most cultures actively work against the possibility of either individual freedom, or of consequential change in its institutional paradigms. Thus, culturalism clearly has difficulty accounting for unmistakable examples of adaptive, ahistorical, asocial, transformative change where entirely new values arise and dictate a revolution of consciousness and practice. The value of such change should be apparent. It is of particular importance if schooling and teachers are to

be seen as agents of social progress and individual empowerment rather than as 'establishmentarians' of the status quo controlled by a particular power elite, including those leading various minorities.

Finally, the holistic uniformity and essentialism of culture and cultural systems is greatly overstated. While reality is necessarily mediated by symbolic systems such as language, art or music, culture is not a signifying totality by which symbolic mediation is projected on its members *tout court*. "Apart from culture," then, "what must be called social reality also exists (Boudon & Bourricaud 1989, 97)," and in dealing with such reality, schools and teachers can be expected to mitigate, modulate and arbitrate competing cultural values. Thus rather than uncritically engaging in the sociocultural conditioning advocated by this or that cultural group, critical education puts the intentionality of human action at the center of its activities.

Intentionality involves a reaching out towards certain human needs that, while socially situated, need not be seen as culturally dictated or determined. While "behavior" can be conditioned, human *action* is, by definition, intentional and not determined by law-like forces.⁹ Intentionality can bypass simple social or cultural determinism and uniformity because it permits a reaching beyond ideological or otherwise socially dictated horizons. Among other things, this accounts precisely for significant differences between individual members within an identifiable subculture. Such individuation would seem to be a minimum condition for social products, each of which at some time had no precedent. Indeed, it is precisely this intentional quality that has been identified with

artists and artisans (Dipert 1993).¹⁰

With these shortcomings and simplifications of culturalism in mind, then, music education and schools can be seen as agencies not simply of *transmitting* the traditions of institutional and cultural status quo—dominant or minority—, but of challenging, clarifying and mediating competing values with a view to *transforming* individuals and society. In this view, schooling would promote the kind of self-actualizing empowerment that frees the individual to go beyond socially limiting and dominating conditions through a productively pragmatic dialectic of the individual and society, the contingent and the universal. I shall return to these themes after turning to my second condition for a critical music education, which involves a significant reconsideration of music itself.

Praxial Music and Culturalism

If we are to presume to teach something, we must be clear as to what "it" is. Therefore, even though music teachers feel that the answers are obvious, they need to ask, What is music?, When and how does it come into existence?, and What is music good for? Taking the nature and value of music for granted is dangerous because the public and politicians do not understand these issues in the same way, or at all! In fact, music education finds itself beset with a host of problems precisely to the degree it takes for granted the nature of music and its value to the individual and thus to society. Thus, as Swanwick recommends:

No credible theory of music education can be sustained without an insightful analysis of music as an essential strand in the fibre of human experience. No sensitive practice of music education can take place without at least an intuitive grasp of the qualitative nature of musical response. No effective policy-making on curriculum content and evaluation or student assessment can be managed without a conscious awareness of what is central to musical experience. (Swanwick 1988, 3)

To thus understand the nature and value of music in the most universal of human terms, music needs to be considered from the widest perspectives of its individual and social use. As ethnomusicologist John Blacking counseled:

By discovering precisely how music is created and appreciated in different social and cultural contexts, and perhaps establishing that musicality is a universal, species-specific characteristic, we can show that human beings are even more remarkable than we presently believe them to be . . . and that the majority of us live far below our potential, because of the oppressive nature of most societies. (Blacking 1973, 116)

And, as Blacking also points out, once we "know what sounds and what kinds of behavior different societies have chosen to call 'musical'" (5) then "we can no longer study music as a thing in itself" because "research in ethnomusicology makes it clear that musical things are not always strictly musical, and that the expression of tonal relationships in patterns of sound may be secondary to extramusical relationships which the tones represent (25)." The very concept of "music" thus profits from being considered from the perspective of ethnomusicology. "Attention to music's function in society is necessary," according to Blacking, if the musical structures themselves are to be understood and appreciated—even if we are interested mainly in what music *is* rather than what it is *used for* (26).

Blacking's conclusions, of course, simply reinforce the general perspective of the sociology and anthropology of art and music (Kaemmer 1993; Blaukopf 1992; Layton 1991; Shepherd 1991; Zolberg 1990; Adorno 1976) and point to the need to make an important pragmatic distinction between an "aesthetic" philosophy of music and its value, and a "praxial" philosophy of music and its value (Regelski 1997; Elliott 1994).

Traditional rationales for music education have focused almost exclusively on the idea of

"aesthetic education." The aesthetic paradigm for music education has achieved the kind of hegemony that in practice functions as an ideology. It asserts that the proper purpose of including music (and art) in schooling is to promote aesthetic responses. Music—at least “good music”—is seen as a Fine Art that exists to be listened to for its own sake rather than regarded as a social praxis. Thus it is defined as having a formal or expressive aesthetic essence which, when properly “schooled,” is contemplated in a disinterested, “purely musical,” autonomous fashion, and results in an aesthetic response (Reimer 1970; 1989).

Against this view of music as a matter of aesthetic contemplation is what Alpers called "a praxial view of art."

The praxial view of art resists the suggestion that art can be understood on the basis of some universal or absolute feature or set of features such as . . . aesthetic formalism. . . . The attempt is made rather to understand art in terms of the variety and meaning and values evidenced in actual practice in particular cultures. (Alpers 1991, 233)

Alpers does not argue that the idea of aesthetic *experience* in relation to works of art needs to be abandoned but, rather, that "the truths and values of art are seen rather to be rooted in the context of human practices . . . , forms of human activity that are defined (in part) precisely in terms of the specific skills, knowledge and standards of evaluation appropriate to the practice (Alpers 1991, 233-34)."

Specialists in the visual arts have also questioned the premise of art as being for aesthetic contemplation according to contemporary sensibilities and definitions of Fine Art. For instance, one critic of the so-called ‘culture’ of Art museums writes:

Virtually the only art made to be exhibited in galleries (as opposed to perhaps serving as decoration in galleries) is the art of our own recent history, that is,

Western art since the late eighteenth century. In some measures, we have attributed to the art or artifacts of all times the qualities of our own: that its purpose is to be contemplated . . . Egyptian tomb furnishings and Renaissance altars—to say nothing of African art—are routinely exhibited in art museums without a clear examination of even the most basic questions: Can they be regarded as art in our sense? Were they made by people who thought of themselves in terms that correspond to our definition of "artist"? . . . We are too far from the voices of the original owners and makers, too locked into the perspectives of our own culture to presume to be faithful to the object in any exalted way. (Vogel 1990)

A similar challenge has been raised recently for music by calling into question the problematic idea of institutionalizing "masterworks" of musical "art" by enshrining them in museums called concert halls (Goehr 1990).

A praxial philosophy of music seeks instead to understand "just what music has meant to people, an endeavor which includes but is not limited to a consideration of the function of music in aesthetic context (Alperson 1991, 234)." Considered in this frame of reference, philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff considers "works of art " to be "objects and instruments of action. They are all inextricably embedded in the fabric of human intention. They are objects and instruments of action whereby we carry out our intentions with respect to the world, our fellows, ourselves, and our gods. Understanding art requires understanding art in man's life (Wolterstorff 1980, 3)." However, this does not mean making art so mundane that it is meaningless. As Alperson writes,

the issue is not that of changing the emphasis from "high art" to "low art." The difference is more radical, since a praxial philosophy of music will consider the production, study and appreciation of music in contexts where the aesthetic qualities of music are less central to the practice, where we are thinking of music in the context of social rituals, the function of music as a heuristic device for scientific and philosophical theories, the use of music for the communication or enforcement of social norms, the use of music in music therapy, and so on. (Alperson 1991, 234)

The question, therefore, is not so much a question of What is good music? It is, instead, What has music been found to be good for, and why? As social historian Christopher Lasch has written: “the artistic impulse has taken refuge in the rarefied realm of art for art’s sake. It is no wonder that the fine arts have lost popular favor; nor are they likely to recover it by a last-minute attempt to make themselves useful. The issue is not how to make art useful but how to make useful activities artistic (Lasch 1984, 42).” Wolterstorff suggests this answer: "Serving as object of the action of contemplation is but one among other ways in which works or art enter, in fact and by intent, into the fabric of human action." More importantly, he adds, "works of art equip us for action. And the range of actions for which they equip us is very nearly as broad as the range of human action itself. The purposes of art are the purposes of life (Wolterstorff 1980, 4)."

A praxial philosophy thus understands music "in action," for in fact music is praxis, an action, a 'doing' or 'making'. Thus, “music” is best regarded not as a noun, or a collection of “works.” It is a matter of "musicing" (Elliott 1991) in all its manifold forms and types, wherever it is found, under whatever conditions. A praxial philosophy of music, then, studies the varied forms, types and conditions under which "musicing" arises. By its very existence, musicing has self-evident value and purpose as human action and has a central role to play in life and education.



This necessitates broadening the concept of "music"¹¹ and its value beyond the currently institutionalized paradigms of 'high' Art and cultural elitism, or any other forms of sociomusical divisiveness or separatism, such as we find when, for example, it is asserted that “white musicians cannot play the blues in an authentic way . . . “ (Rudinow

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1998, 161).¹² Such a broader understanding of "music" and what it means in human life thus extends well beyond the aesthetic essentialism of autonomous music (Bowman 1994) to praxial musics—of all kinds and from many places—that are relative to human actions and thus human meanings.

It is not necessary to examine the musical life of every social group to discover in the broadest sense what music is good for? Anthropologists such as Alan Merriam (1964) have already done this. But such 'goods' should be kept in mind in any judgment of What is *good* music?, for—to paraphrase Forest Gump in the movie of the same name—good is as good does. Therefore "good" music can be determined only in connection with what it is "good for" and thus in terms of how well a particular music serves a particular human good. It is in this sense, then, that the “classics” are those that continue to serve certain human needs and interests that are seen to be good for the fullest realization of life. Rather than continuing to view musics on some sort of a vertical hierarchy, with aesthetic ‘high’ Art Music at the top and ‘low’ popular, ethnic or folk musics at the bottom, we should understand musics as arrayed along a horizontal



continuum according to the wide variety of human ‘goods’ served by different musics.¹³


However, some 'goods' are deceptive and their uncritical acceptance can induce false consciousness. Thus critical theorists warn in particular against music becoming the focus of an institutionalized *culture industry* where cultural products become commodities sold simply for financial gain and acquired to show that one is “cultured,” and where the masses at any level of the socioeconomic ladder are kept in a state of false consciousness. This *commodification of culture* is at the heart of the pointed objections


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of early critical theorists to the use and abuse of music as a type of socioeconomic domination or control (Adorno 1976; 1973; 1967; Horkheimer 1992) and must always be guarded against.


Musical 'Goods' and the Determination of Musical Meaning


That musics exist to serve human praxis of one kind or another, however, points to the importance of values or qualities that are relevant to a specific musical praxis. However, such praxially specific musical values should not be equated as being simply "styles" of performing, as though they are simply variant instantiations of "purely" artistic or musical qualities that are autonomous and thus transcendent. To the contrary, praxially specific values are those musical attributes that are most directly relevant to and thus inherent to a particular musical praxis. In this respect, a musical praxis is not some instantiation of a disembodied ideal of "music" that theories of "pure" aesthetic or musical qualities would have us believe.


Each praxis—whether considered as an idiom or style, or in terms of the purposes  for which the musicing arises¹⁴—is unique in its particulars and meanings. Thus we should no more expect to hear a conservatory trumpet tone quality or static rhythm from a jazz performer than we would to hear a jazz sound or swinging rhythms from a soloist in Haydn's *Trumpet Concerto*—although Wynton Marsalis is able to negotiate the praxis of both with excellence—thereby giving warrant to this argument. Similarly, while Jessye Norman can be expected to use her considerable musical prowess in one way to serve the human meanings served by *Amazin' Grace* or spirituals, different purposes or

 'goods' need to be served when singing opera or Mahler.¹⁵ The implications of this thinking for music education in schools and universities are considerable.

To begin with, music would be understood broadly as a praxis serving certain general and recurring human 'goods' — which is to say, the meaning and value of any music is inextricably tied to the human purposes served. Second, each musical praxis would be understood in terms of the musicianship and other musical demands of the 'goods' it serves; that is, by its praxially specific musical qualities, not those central to

 another praxis.¹⁶ For example, country fiddling would not be held up to conservatory standards, or vice versa. Third, sufficient musical competence with the particular musical values of any given praxis would be developed so that the student can be empowered

 fully enough to know of, choose and savor its 'goods'.¹⁷ Without the chance to improvise, for example, students are unlikely to learn of its virtues. Fourth, no particular 'good' would be typified as inherently better than other musical 'goods', at least as far as the sociology of music and musical valuing is concerned. Grand Opera, therefore, would not be seen as inherently better ('higher') than, say, Andrew Lloyd Weber. Fifth, qualitative distinctions can reasonably be made *within* a musical praxis and such

 comparisons might even be a reasonable component of the overall “esthetic”,¹⁸ of 'goodness' involved. Thus, the discrimination that a church choir performed the notes correctly with a pleasing tone and in tune is certainly a requirement of “good” church music. However, fixed hierarchies of value or general value typifications would be discouraged. Thus, for example, no claim would be made that “pure music” — *viz.*,

symphonic or chamber music—has more or better musical 'goods' than, say, opera with its entertaining plot, scenery and costumes—which is the snob appeal of the distinction some musicians make between 'opera lovers' and 'music lovers'.

Finally, and in consequence of the foregoing, a broad enough array of “other” musics should be sampled to a degree of reasonable competence in order for students to understand "their own music" *critically* in terms of its limitations and benefits as praxis. Here, "their own music" could mean the ethnic music that influenced their primary socialization (e.g., music associated with ethnic celebrations and customs); or it can refer to their present musical 'taste' for "youth" music, or whatever else they musically take for granted!

There are two separate but compatible warrants for musical breadth, and both follow from the idea of a *horizon* which, even in ordinary discourse, refers to a perspective beyond which one cannot possibly see. To begin with, for the same reason that travel in a foreign land can be educational, any musical 'horizon' is understood all the more profoundly when it is thrown into relief or comparison with another horizon (Blacking 1973, ix-x). Thus, “I understand the community, culture or tradition only in the 'moment' of doubt, dialogue, and question, that arises as my horizon meets the horizon that encircles the object of interpretation, be it a person, a culture, a text” (Pusey 1987, 61).

A second objective for reaching beyond current musical horizons is the benefit of tempting students with the possibilities that other musics hold forth additional and



altogether different 'goods'.¹⁹ Performing from contemporary graphic notation, for

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example, opens new musical possibilities for students at all levels. Such alternatives promise to increase the freedom and ability of students to choose to be involved with musics other than those they favored when they entered school. Such breadth of musical schooling, however embryonic or preparatory, prepares students to be more fully empowered as agents of their own musical destinies. Instead of being concerned with music that reinforces the *primary* socialization of students in the home, community and via the media, music teachers would instead be concerned with the kind of *secondary* socialization provided by schooling that increases musical options and thus the potential for active musical satisfaction in life. Schooling in music would enable students to understand the personal and genuinely human values lost when a musical culture becomes a cult and excludes more people than it includes.

Such a “cult-ification” of musics through the kind of rationalization that makes them economic commodities is exactly the problem critical theorists have seen (e.g., Zuidervaart 1991, 77-78 on Adorno) as illogical and ultimately irrational. It entails a loss of freedom both inside and outside the 'cult' or 'culture,'—and this is no less true of, say, Romanticism or raga than it is of reggae, rap or rock. Thus, as Swanwick writes in defense of understanding music from what he calls an "inter-cultural" perspective, "music is free to travel and, just like language, is continually being refashioned, adapted, reinterpreted—to create 'new human values', to 'organize thought', to 'transcend' the limits of local culture and personal self (Swanwick 1989, 111)." A praxial philosophy of music, however, also brings music back to earth from the lofty heights of aesthetic or purely musical abstraction and thus holds forth the promise, at least, of coming "to life" *in life*

for students. With this “grounding,” then, music is somewhat less free to travel in fact because it must traverse musical boundaries that, in defining each musical praxis, are somewhat similar to ethnic, racial, national and religious boundaries—and everyone knows the mischief those create!

Music as uniquely and universally human

What it is to be human transcends any particular manifestation of being human. Thus, each musical praxis reveals certain unique dimensions of humanness. Acknowledging this variety within in human unity is, however, not the same as acknowledging that musical values are fully autonomous and that by decontextualizing music it becomes universally accessible. Thus, we can agree with Swanwick when he observes that music, like language, can "have some independence from social context." But his further claim that, "in time the territorial origins of music lose their significance as musical process themselves become accepted on their own terms" (112) resembles claims made for the autonomy of aesthetic qualities and the transcendence of aesthetic experience.²⁰ An uncritical acceptance of an idealist autonomy and transcendence for musical values uncritically results in rendering music in the abstract terms that risk making the study of it **anesthetic**.

The praxial view reveals, in part, that music and musical meaning exist and are powerful only to the degree that they are praxially situated. It is precisely the inherent relation to a particular praxis that determines the most profound relevance of any music. Therefore, the meaning of any music—the intentionality of its agency—is inextricably wed to praxially contingent musical values and procedures. These praxially contingent

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values and procedures are, however, variations on the theme of universal human musicality, just as writing systems have varied the universal human capacity for language-making and using. But even though the idiom-bound ideas and images of any language are not autonomous enough to be understood fully outside the praxis *in situ* of the language group, many are capable of being grasped to the benefit of outsiders—not in arbitrary translation, to be sure, but through a significant level of participation that reasonably approximates the intentionality of the praxis (e.g., reading literature in a second language).

The possibility that in some respect music can reach beyond a particular context needs to be acknowledged and explored. Otherwise music can only be regarded as absolutely situated and thus incapable of being understood or valued outside of the originating contexts (cultures, subcultures, etc.) that give rise to it²¹ —and this includes the Eurocentric canon. Thus, among other problems, it would never be possible to move any music out of one time, place, culture or subculture and into the classrooms of another except as the abstract study "about" musical praxis. No glimpse from "inside" the musical praxis or culture could ever be either given or gotten. And performance of, say, Balinese *gamelan*, Japanese *koto* or African drumming, would amount to musically "empty" forms of technical behavior—a mere invoking of the techniques without the musical meanings which are inevitably tied to the originating praxis. As Habermas, following Max Weber, has pointed out (see Pusey 1987, 47-60), the benefits of the rationalization by which science, learning, and art were set free of the control of princes and popes are nullified when such rationalization narrows our field of action to

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specialized fields pursued as technologies or techniques for their own sake—and this applies as well to music.

On one hand, then, there is considerable truth in the notion that, as a Native



American once told a group of music educators,²² "You can never know what our *Song*

to the Homing Pigeon means to my people." Similarly, there probably is no way that

certain African drumming and dancing can ever embody for non-indigenous Africans

(including, by the way, African Americans) the musical meanings experienced even

today from the hundreds of different tribal musics in Africa. On the other hand, no

matter how well a Westerner learning the Japanese *shakuhachi* flute masters its technical



demands,²³ no amount of abstract study about Zen can compensate for the praxial role of

that instrument in the monastery culture. However, if that flute is used as a vehicle for

the 'practice' of Zen "in action" (i.e., *Zen praxis*)—which is the only way a true

knowledge of Zen is gained or used—, then some praxial musical meaning can arise.

And, of course, a music can be “reconstructed” in terms of a re-situated or newly

contextualized praxis; for instance, the uniqueness of, say, Finnish rap music.

The contextuality of music, thus, is not necessarily absolute or determinate, but



familiarity with its originating conditions is essential.²⁴ Thus we must seek the musical

meaning reasonable to the praxis. Appropriating music to strictly musical ends falsifies it



and denies its true human significance.²⁵ Thus the music of the *shakuhachi* flute is

inherently, which is to say praxially, “meditative” in the same way that a certain kind of

African drumming is “hypnotic” or “trance-inducing.” Whether playing or listening,

then, the musical meaning of either is lost if the music is attended to or produced with the disinterested, rationalizing, discriminating, intellectualizing contemplation advocated by either aesthetic or "purely musical" theories of meaning. Furthermore, the experience of listening to (or watching) a Japanese drumming ensemble, such as "Kodo," in concert is



likely to be entirely different than the meanings experienced by the performers.²⁶ The same distinctions between the different values experienced by performers and audiences can often apply, though in different ways and degrees, to all kinds of "concert music,"



including (maybe especially) the "classical" canon of western Art Music.²⁷

On the other extreme, if the contextuality of music is understood as absolute, as though nothing of musical value or interest could transcend the situated praxis; or if the value of a music is said to reside solely in the benefits it confers to institutionally or culturally embedded individuals; then music would be culture-bound and altogether inaccessible to others. But in fact many musical values or features that arise in connection with a musical praxis are not necessarily exclusive to that practice. Therefore some reasonable degree of transcendence from the particulars of time and place is probable and such values can sometimes serve similar or even other musical 'goods' in



other contexts, for other peoples.²⁸ For example, following the music of "Kodo" or the *shakuhachi* flutist, we might re-conceive (i.e., re-cognize) music as a meditative type of praxis or spiritual discipline that involves a 'loss of self' or individual ego; where, in other words, music is valued as an 'altered state of consciousness' precisely because it avoids the analytic abstractions and rationalizations (Weber 1958) of estheticians, music



theorists and historians.²⁹ The possibility is worth considering, in fact, that students and other neophytes may initially experience some enticing degree of such meditative enchantment from music until pedantry gets in their way; then many quickly lose further



interest.³⁰ This is not to deny an important role for the mindfulness appropriate to any praxis. In fact, the "practicing" of just such musical values is what enables the individual to transcend those aspects of Self that are otherwise limiting, and thus to glimpse or share in a humanness that is more social, more universal.

The Universal-Relative Dialectic and Music

The point of musical schooling, then, would be to engage students in one or more musical practices in a way and to the degree that dysfunctional musical exclusivity is minimized or avoided. For example, since most music outside the European canon is not notated, any student can profit from significant musical praxis that does not involve a score. Similarly, practicing the social instruments used in particular forms of musical praxis also allows entirely new insights that can benefit the musical and thus human sensibility of any student. Thus we can agree with Swanwick that the goal of music curriculum should be "not to transmit an arbitrary or limited selection of idiomatic values but to break out of 'restricted worlds of culturally defined reality'" and to promote instead the "imaginative criticism [that] is the special task of formal education: bringing ideas to consciousness, asking questions, probing, trying things out (Swanwick 1988, 115, 117)."

One additional role for the music teacher, then, is to function as a cultural critic and mediator (Nadanner 1985) in helping students learn "what is universal to human

existence" on a transcultural or pansocial level (Hamblen 1986). As one arts educator has pointed out:

[A] universal-relative dialectic exists between what is universal and what is relative in art. This dialectic generates that valuable paradox of 'enlarging the range of our recognition of human sameness as it appears in human differences'. (Hamblen 1986 quoting Redfield 1971)

Some human experiences are more or less universal and are suited to being embodied through art (Blacking 1973, 112-13). As Blacking writes,

we shall learn more about music and human musicality if we look for basic rules of musical behavior which are biologically, as well as culturally, conditioned and species-specific. It seems to me that what is ultimately of most importance in music cannot be learned like other cultural skills: it is there in the body, waiting to be brought out and developed, like the basic principles of language formation. (Blacking 1973, 100)

Human experience is doubtlessly "processed" or otherwise "filtered" or influenced by uniqueness of the environment and other situational variables (Hamblen, 73, 75-76; Bruteau 1979). These result in praxial and other contingent distinctions. However,

[u]niversal themes, qualities, and functions should be studied as to how they relate to and satisfy needs common to all humans. . . Cultural interpretations and responses to art should be studied as a function of socially learned expectations. . . The universal aspects of a cross-cultural arts form are most easily accessible, cultural aspects less so, studying art as a discipline in a particular culture even less so, and so on. (Hamblen 1986, 73-74)

Thus, Blacking is correct at least in one sense when he affirms that, "music *can* transcend time and culture" because, "at the level of deep structures in music there are elements that are common to the human psyche, although they may not appear in the surface structure." (1973, 108-09; his emphasis).

While "teachers cannot be expected to be skilled in all the musics of the world," as Swanwick points out, "they must be sensitive to many and skilled in at least one."

Such musical sensitivity, he notes, arises from "receptive attention coupled with an understanding of the universality of musical practice and a recognition that idiomatic variations arise out of a common human theme, best rendered as a verb, an impulse 'to music' (Swanwick 1988, 116)." This brings us once again to Elliott's description of "musicing"—in other words, it brings us to music as praxis. To be musically educated is thus to have been granted the possibility of choice of personally meaningful musical praxis. Only then, through the choice of musical action, can music "come to life" or, more precisely, back to the life that is its and our source of Being.

Conclusions

Habermas, particularly in his later writings, has seen art as a significant example of social logic and communicative rationality that is the antithesis of technicist



positivism.³¹ Just as language is used on the assumption of the rational competence of other people, so Habermas sees art and music as being made and used on the rational assumption of its sociality. Music has the advantage of lacking the discursive and propositional knowledge of language but is nonetheless rational in its production and in the social rationality it elicits from other humans. Thus, Habermas sees it and the other arts as exemplars of what is most rationally human and possible. However, he seeks to reverse the rationalization that has resulted in music becoming so autonomous and regulated by abstract norms that it excludes rather than includes meaningful praxis in life. To him, such exclusion of lifeworlds is the epitome of irrational thinking. Therefore, much like Dewey, he seeks a rational reintegration of art and life. It is this aspect of his

critical theory applied to problems of multicultural music that suggests some directions school-based music teaching can take to make a *critical* human difference.

First, a music teacher should be an effective cultural mediator. Thus, rather than subscribe to or prescribe a curriculum that leaves ethnocentric assumptions unchallenged, the music teacher should "be sensitive to the relationship between cultural and social forces experienced by . . . students" and should "help students negotiate for themselves the most appropriate interaction between home culture and the dominant society (Nadner 1985; 52)." Second, the music teacher should 'practice' the conditions of a critical theory of education. These require a capacity for successful analysis and a critical awareness of the limiting and narrowing influences of institutionalized cultural traditions and ethnocentric assumptions. Third, music educators should model and promote tangible musical learning that is "in the best sense of the term re-creational: helping us and our cultures to become renewed, transformed" (Swanwick 1989, 119) through the vitality of its applicability to individual musical praxis. Fourth, the music teacher should approach music in all its varied and rich manifestations throughout the world as a vital materialization of human action—of humans Being and Becoming—which embraces all forms of musical praxis as potentially valuable, including but not restricted to the practice of "just listening" (Regelski 1998). Finally, music teachers should advance a dynamic musical pluralism that deals productively with the creative tension and "nervous wariness" (Smith 1983, 27) brought about by encountering unfamiliar musics and cultures. Thus, music teachers need to constantly concern themselves directly with the dialectic of the universal-relative meanings of music, and especially with the dialectic of

understanding self through understanding others. These steps would go a long way towards the integration of music in life that Habermas sees as the foundation for living life fully and rationally.

As musical horizons become more comprehensive or inclusive, they become or more humanly rational and profound. Only then can the particularity of contingent situatedness and cultural exclusiveness give way to a consensual world of meaning that is ever-wider in scope. I hope this vision is tempting enough to lure us away from the present tendency toward increased cultural isolation and exclusiveness by the uncritical acceptance of the multicultural bandwagon.

Notes

¹ One target of Habermas' on-going critique has been the position of early critical theorists. Thus he has reconstructed much of their thinking in light of recent developments. (Pusey 1987, 32f.)

² This common label will be used for its familiarity, but should not be misconstrued as confirming culturalist assumptions.

³ This analysis of institutionalization and institutional thinking is based on the analysis of the social construction of knowledge, especially the social phenomenology of everyday reality articulated by Berger and Luckman (1967).

⁴ For example, inner-city students who show more interest in classical music than in either their own ethnic music or the music of the youth subculture, or who otherwise thrive on the 'culture' of the school, are often seen as traitors by these subcultures. (Gregory 1992).

⁵ Consider the following: An African American music educator from a major northeastern US city, a Chicano orchestra director, and a Native American elder spoke on multicultural music to a group of college-level music educators. The first two robustly argued for the inclusion of 'their' music in the school because of its importance to the self-identity formation of 'their' respective youth. Since these two groups together can constitute the majority in many urban schools, the issue was not raised by either speaker of how the music of each could be incorporated in a single curriculum, or in what proportion to other music. The Native American, in contrast, discounted the self-identity,

“politics of recognition” thesis by arguing that the music of his people would and should be learned only in connection with traditional uses. He did not even advocate teaching traditional music in the reservation’s own schools because it should not be divorced from socio-religious practices and, in any case, because non-Native American music teachers could not begin to do justice to it. Instead he advocated the virtues of learning Eurocentric musics in reservation schools.

⁶ For example, where traditions deny women equal opportunity.

⁷ This discussion of culture and culturalism is drawn from Boudon and Bourricaud (1989), Barrow and Woods (1988), and Barrow and Milburn (1986).

⁸ For example, an African American concert pianist may identify with Eurocentric concert music more than with rap, soul, jazz or rhythm and blues, but can conscientiously serve on an affirmative action committee that protects the rights of minority groups.

⁹ “Action” is distinguished in philosophy and social sciences in general, from the broader sense of “behavior.” Action is intentional; it involves purposes that signify values. It is a “trying to” accomplish certain ends or values. Thus, action is both meaningful and largely mindful. Behavior, on the other hand, involves responses or reactions that are habitual, reflexive or performed without much thought or planning. Thus performing music is an (intentional) action that involves considerable (trained) behavior. See Dipert (1993) for an analysis in relation to the arts.

¹⁰ Objections concerning “the intentional fallacy” are not at stake here, although Dipert (1993) deals with such objections successfully in connection with the role of intentionality in creating art and artifacts.

¹¹ Because it is so integral a part of social praxis, many languages do not even have a separate word for “music.”

¹² Rudinow summarizes the position of Amiri Boraka (LeRoi Jones) in those words, but provides something of a praxial argument against such ethnocentrism: “I think that if we wish to avoid ethnocentrism, as we would wish to avoid racism, what we should say is that the authenticity of a blues performance turns not on the ethnicity of the performer but on the degree of mastery of the idiom and the integrity of the performer’s use of the idiom in performance.” (167)

¹³ For example (and at the risk of oversimplifying what there is not space enough to argue here), the so-called “classical canon” can be seen to serve certain ratiocinated and ratiocinating ‘goods’ of a rather restricted but nonetheless important nature. Similarly, we might see rock music as serving to reawaken the adolescent in all of us, and jazz as allowing us to savor the ‘good’ of rehearsed spontaneity. Theater music, such as opera, ballet and musical shows, obviously combines music with other expressive ‘goods’ and serves an entirely different praxial interest than, say, concert music of any kind. Various kinds of folk and ethnic music, then, serve ‘goods’ associated with the customs of such groups, and ‘occasional music’ will continue to be drawn from all such sources according

to the ‘good’ served by the occasion. Thus, ‘good music’ for weddings will be music that serves the particular religious or social ‘goods’ involved.

¹⁴ See Regelski (in press) for details of the distinction between a musical praxis considered as a distinct idiom vs. in terms of the social conditions that bring forth various idioms, styles and predictable uses for music.

¹⁵ More specifically, for example, there is no correct or ideal vocal production. Tone is correct according to the praxis involved. Thus the singing, say, of the Japanese Noh drama is entirely unique and valid in comparison to a Japanese performer singing Western opera or art song. Each requires its own praxially distinct musicianship and musicality.

¹⁶ The concept of “style” is rooted in the assumptions of music-for-its-own-sake. In fact, musical “style” is to claims for autonomous “music” what “subculture” is to the oversimplifications of “culturalism.” Thus, the Noh drama and Western opera are not different “styles” (or even “types”) of music; they involve an entirely different praxis that elicits distinct musical values. Thus, they are distinct “musics” not different styles or types of “music.”

¹⁷ This should not be misunderstood as entailing the need to become fully expert in a musical practice, or to earn the role typification “musician” in order to be musically active with and for meaning. Criteria of excellence should be known and practiced to a degree necessary to savor the praxis. Thus an individual need not be any more a “professional musician” to play jazz for personal pleasure, say, than an amateur golfer needs to be a professional to play golf for recreation. To a degree, in fact, the status of falling short of professional standards of ‘perfection’ in both cases is part of the intentionality that keeps people “practicing,” including professionals. See Regelski (in press).

¹⁸ “The esthetic dimension”: [W]e do not ‘receive’ a ‘message’s’ meaning . . . but rather *construct* meaning, in the course of an active perceptual process.” “The word ‘esthetic’ was [Paul] Valéry’s neologism [coined in his inaugural lecture for the Collège de France in 1945]. . . ; He prefers it to ‘aesthetic’ in order to avoid possible confusions, and on sound etymological grounds . . . Enjoying, contemplating or reading a work, musical performance, as well as scientific and analytical approaches to music are, de facto, situated on the side of the esthetic.” (Nattiez 1990, 12; italics in original)

¹⁹ While we stand to gain the most according to the “strangeness” of the musics we encounter, we are also most likely to integrate music in life by being enabled to avail ourselves of the kinds of music praxis most accessible in our society. Thus, a pragmatic criterion for curriculum would be to work towards an awareness of practicable alternatives for musical praxis within our society, more than teaching towards the praxis of distant societies. On the other hand, in the same way a foreign language is learned to advantage even without the likelihood of use *in situ*, other musics can be studied to advantage—again, if only to throw into ‘critical’ relief the familiar musics we take for

granted. As the ‘world’ of music becomes more international, however, we may reasonably expect more and more interpenetration of musical thinking, and with it certain musical praxes may also serve universal human needs in addition to (or more than) local ones.

²⁰ The distinction between the existence and autonomy of purely “musical” as opposed to purely “aesthetic” qualities still maintains the “purity” or disembodiment of musical qualities from praxis. This claim for musical *essentialism* still denies the praxial connections that ethnomusicology demonstrates. This is not to say that musical values—including but not limited to what Swanwick calls “procedures”—that arise in connection with praxis cannot be put to other praxial uses. However, once such values are thus decontextualized, they are not longer authentic, no longer musically what they were in meaning. Sometimes this can result in a new and authentic praxis—for example, when the “blues” became “jazz” or when “gospel song” became “soul.” But all ‘jazzy’ music—where jazz procedures are used for other praxis, such as a film score—is not “jazz.” This distinction is related to the issue addressed briefly in n. 16 and deserves its own separate analysis.

²¹ See the assertion quoted earlier that white people cannot properly play the blues; or, for another example, consider the claim that jazz belongs in bars and is no longer “jazz” when made in a school or on a concert stage.

²² See n. 5.

²³ Such a technical manual exists (Christopher Y. Blasdel, *The Shakuhachi: A manual for learning to play Shakuhachi*, Tokyo: Ongaki No Tomo Shar Corp., 1988). The ‘art’ of this instrument, however, simply cannot be attained in separation from the tradition of Zen. Correspondingly, it can be argued that the study of the instrument under proper conditions is one among several ways of ‘practicing’ Zen.

²⁴ There is a reasonable possibility that some music might be so context-bound that it cannot (or should not) travel at all. The rareness of such music no more discounts the present thesis than the rareness of ‘pure’ musical autonomy justifies aesthetic claims for the autonomy of the Eurocentric canon.

²⁵ I have argued elsewhere (1996) that the “classical canon” of Western music was in fact originally praxial and despite the aesthetic ideology attached to it, remains praxial (1997).

²⁶ This group is not simply an assemblage of “professional” performers; rather, it is a group whose members share a very intense lifeworld where drumming is practiced as a “spiritual discipline” or “spiritual praxis” (*viz.*, as “-do” in Japanese) in the same way, as, in martial arts such as *Ju-do* and *Ai-ki-do*. Thus while “concerts” may be “performances” in terms of audience intentionality, they are also implicated with a certain spiritual intensity and intentionality on the performer’s part. The same can be at stake in, for example, “secular” concert performances by gospel choirs (a video of one such

performance shows some “performers” with tears brought on by religious fervor despite the secular context).

²⁷ And this is the case, I would argue, even where the listener is an expert performer who at the moment is engaged in the different praxis of “just listening” as a member of an audience (see Regelski, in press).

²⁸ From the praxial view, at least, a greater capacity for such ‘decontextualization’ (i.e., “rationalization” as Weber [1958] called it) does not infer greater ‘goodness’ in any absolute sense. It only means that such music—e.g., the Eurocentric canon—is more abstract and thus inherently more remote from the everyday lives of most intelligent people who are not “institutionalized” or otherwise acculturated. It is an acquired and practiced “taste” (analyzed in such terms, for example, by Wengerer 1992) not a transcendental “good” and is no ‘finer’ than the refinement and discernment available with any praxis. A further issue concerning the canon would be to determine to what degree, if at all, such “classy” music was every a matter of “disinterested” contemplation, or whether, as I have argued (1996), that it has to some degree always served a praxial social function, especially for the social aspirations and values of the rising middle class—and aside from its “rationalization” by and for professional musicians (which, in any case, can also be seen in praxial terms as the “social construction of reality” [Berger and Luckman 1967]).

²⁹ Some warrant for the ‘meditative’ role of music can be adduced from the widespread use with university music students of books such as Zen and the Art of Archery, by Eugene Herrigel, and many others that take the same ‘meditative’ or ‘right brain’ approach to performance pedagogy. However, the “no-Mind” of Zen should not be confused with a “mindless” comatose state or sheer automaticity of responsiveness. Rather, it is intensely mindful, but in a non-ego focused way.

³⁰ Thus, students of any age who undertake the *self-study* of an instrument rarely quit. And because such instruments (e.g., piano, guitar, home organ, electronic keyboards, mandolin, ocarina, dulcimer, autoharp, accordion, etc.) can be learned with self-sufficient enjoyment, they continue to be played in larger numbers than instruments that require accompanying parts for satisfaction

³¹ How ironic that such positivism has attained ideological hegemony in music education research, particularly in North America.

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