



Amateurism in Music and its Rivals¹

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Amateur musicians are fanatics. Music claims their souls, and they are able to make beautiful sounds. But the beauty they produce doesn't match that produced by the great professionals. Thus they feel glory, power, and sorrow, all at the same time. This is a heady sensation that they seek again and again, forsaking their hearths, forgoing ordinary pleasures, forgetting to take out the trash.

(Pearlman 2007)

PROFESSIONALS AND AMATEURS: A BRIEF SOCIAL HISTORY

With its focus on reason and science, the 18th century began a history of increased specialization. As a result, professional degrees and certificates eventually came to define and control practices that had once been the domains of amateurs. By the end of the 19th century, many practices of lay enthusiasts had been pushed aside; where they were not actually outlawed (e.g., to protect the public), their continuing practice was accorded a lowly status by specialists.

This was particularly the case for Classical music; but other musics were also even further demoted by the ideas of “good music” and “good taste” promoted by the new aesthetic theory of the late 18th century. Music, thus, was increasingly left to the professionals, of whom there were more and more, representing more and more specialties.



Today, even ‘popular’ musics² have their specialists. As a result of these broad trends to specialization, music’s role in people’s lives today consists more often of passive consumption than of active, enthusiastic participation.

This is odd. In parts of the world less extensively influenced by these effects of modernity, being a fully functioning member of society means actively participating in its musical life (Kaemmer 1993). Musicking³ is a key social activity in which everyone has a role.⁴ Everyone, then, participates with skill and knowledge, even in societies that recognize music specialists. In ‘modern’ westernized societies music also plays a major sociocultural role (e.g., Martin 2006; Scott 2002; Stokes 1997; Shepherd 1991). However, a gulf has



typically existed between the musics of the ‘folk’ and the ‘gentry’. As sociologist Bourdieu notes,

nothing more clearly affirms one’s ‘class’, nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music. This is of course because, by virtue of the rarity of the conditions for acquiring the corresponding disposition, there is no more ‘classificatory’ practice than concert-going or playing a ‘noble’ instrument. (1984, 18)

As a result of the Industrial Revolution and the all but complete end of feudalism, a new mercantile bourgeois class began to attend the first public concerts⁵ and, as a result, adopted the music heard there—largely that of the aristocracy—as expressing its own aspirations, its own desire to be ‘classy’.⁶ These developments also coincided with the Enlightenment (the beginning of modernity in the 18th century) and its attempt to apply reason to everything—including matters of ‘good taste’ in the arts. In addition to the increasing specialization mentioned earlier, this brought about a host of new cultural institutions and concepts.⁷ Thus, Lawrence Levine writes in his classic analysis of the resulting growth of cultural hierarchy, “there can be little doubt that the creation of the institutions and criteria of high culture was a primary means of social, intellectual, and aesthetic separation and selection” (Levine 1988, 229), a social process that established upper and middle class “distinction” and the attendant authority to dominate the lower levels of society (Bourdieu 1984).⁸

As a result, “the new meanings that became attached to such words as ‘art,’ ‘aesthetics,’ and ‘culture’ in the second half of the nineteenth century symbolized the consciousness that conceived of the fine, the worthy, and the beautiful as existing *apart from ordinary society*” and ordinary life (Levine 1988, 225; italics added). For example, by their very nature, concerts and recitals were apart from ordinary life; and the wherewithal to attend them set the bourgeoisie apart from the less affluent. One legacy of these developments was the professionalizing of art-making and even reception. Writes Levine:

Christopher Lasch has argued that the new professions, which another historian has called the “consensus of the competent,” came into being “by reducing the layman to incompetence.”⁹ A similar development occurred in the realm of high culture, which paralleled the formation of the professions and which, like the new professions, was involved in a quest for cultural authority. Culture had become a manifestly serious and intricate endeavor that few could hope to master. (Levine 1988, 211)

Prior to the Enlightenment professional musicians had been, in effect, servants of the nobility and aristocracy; thus they were particularly concerned as a group to achieve a 'classy' status in society.¹⁰ The new public concerts increased their visibility, social standing, and influence; and even though audiences preferred hearing new music (the latest symphony, for example), musicians instead performed the music they preferred (Johnson 1995; Rosen 2005b).¹¹ Together with the 'training', shaping,¹² and "taming" of the audience (Levine 1988, e.g., 190-200), this demonstrates the seizure of cultural authority by musicians and their patrons, and perhaps represents the first attempt to musically educate the public to the virtues of 'good taste' and 'good music'—'good', that is, as judged by musicians and as expressed in their learned terms!

During the Enlightenment, dialogue, commentary, and criticism concerning art, music, and literature—previously the realm of the leisured cognoscenti—increasingly arose from the new middle class (Johnson 1995).¹³ The middle class home through the early years of the 20th century often had a piano. In both art and music, "amateurism was a virtue, and the time and effort entailed in learning to draw, as with playing the piano, enhanced its desirability" (Kimmelman 2006). And even the most famous of Romantic-era composers composed for amateurs and made piano arrangements and duets of larger instrumental works. Home musicking was widespread (Loesser 1990): "Before 1900 in Europe and America, it was at home that music was most often experienced, by family members who played some instrument or sang, and by, willingly or unwillingly, the rest of the family" (Rosen 2005a, 47). Of course, the working and rural classes still had a rich musical life that served traditional praxial functions, as opposed to 'consuming' music for its own sake at concerts.¹⁴

However, the Enlightenment and the discourse of its new philosophical specialty, "aesthetics," soon created the 'pure' and 'classy' aura that Levine, Shiner, Bourdieu and countless other scholars chronicle: the sense of authority promulgated by the cultural elite and patrons around the idea of fine or high art as an autonomous, quasi-religious, 'serious' experience that is reserved for special times, special places, and special people. As such art and music thus became "sacralized," specialist musicians and artists became its clergy, even its gods.¹⁵

Today, Classical music is elevated 'above' everyday life and ordinary people, a result of the purity and autonomy claimed for such music by the bourgeois ethos. Making music is now reserved for a cadre of specialized musicians who have attained socio-artistic distinction

and quasi-religious authority—authority and distinction that are ‘above’ and separate from the general population and that look down on lay musics and the musical laity. And while opportunities once available only to the wealthy are now offered in public schools as part of general and universal education, the historical mission of bringing high culture and good taste to the masses is still assumed (McCarthy 1997; Levine 1988).

The traditional premise behind formal music education has therefore been the assumption that the Classical music favored historically by the middle class is inherently good and superior to the popular musics of the underclasses. Despite its own social history, its value is mistaken to be intrinsic and altogether unrelated to social variables, conditions, or uses. The habit of regarding such music as a ‘serious’ business, and the aesthetic criterion of “purposiveness without purpose” also discourages and restricts it as a personal or social practice, whether for amateur or other uses. And learning it has certainly been a ‘serious business’ for those who enter the field of music education. Most music teachers are subjected to a seriously intense diet of Classical music—even if their training sometimes involves other musics.¹⁶

Such other musics, from the first decried as *déclassé* by aristocratic musical patrons, are correspondingly devalued, disregarded, even actively dismissed in schools. The curriculum and performance “programs” of schools (and private studios, as well) have rarely addressed such musics and other forms of musicking.¹⁷ Thus, as Charles Leonhard has observed, people who engage musically as amateurs do so on their own, without the help or support of school music (Leonhard 1999).¹⁸

It may be true that without school music some professionals might not have been ‘discovered’. But most students who go on to musical careers benefit from extensive private study. And these students are only a very small fraction of the total number of students, all of whom are entitled to the benefits of music education in schools. Thus, following in the footsteps of their own teachers, the elite few go on to higher studies where the social role and personal identity of “musician” is actively cultivated by the institution (Roberts 1993).

Predictably, few graduates achieve careers of high distinction, most settling for making a respectable living through their music. Some do not succeed, and pursue a living by other means—teaching, for example. Given the non-musical rigors, complexity, and demands of a musician’s professional life, some opt-out for other careers or ‘retire’ to become conservatory or university studio teachers.¹⁹ Some, of course, start out to become

music teachers or therapists. While they make their living through music, it is often difficult, even impossible, to keep up the musical skills they worked so seriously to acquire and, in any case, they may have something of a conflicted mentality about being teachers or therapists.²⁰

Given these variables, distinguishing “musicians” as trained “professionals” from “amateur” enthusiasts as dilettantes or dabblers will no longer do. A lawyer may be a conservatory graduate who is musically active as an amateur; and more than a few professional musicians (at least outside of Classical music) are self-taught and highly accomplished. The stigma attached to amateurs, and the cultural pedigree behind it, are increasingly major problems for the health and well-being of music and music education in society today. Professional musicians abound. Yet the richness of the ‘music world’ depends on far more, and amateurs—including especially audiences—are the key.

I begin my analysis of these claims by scrutinizing the amateur *status*²¹ and will propose alternative understandings to serve as bases for resurrecting or rehabilitating musical amateurism. I will also show that amateurism is a valid socio-musical practice in its own right, one that warrants a central *curricular focus* within school and community music education. Along the way I will also survey what and who the “rivals” are to musical amateurism.

Near the fifth green of my local golf course is a stone monument dedicated to the name of a deceased amateur, honored on the plaque by his buddies as a “true golfer.” I am convinced that if that description is apt for describing enthusiasts who have less golf skill than professional players, then it is no less apt that musical enthusiasts might think of themselves, or be described by fellow enthusiasts, as “real musicians.”

AMATEURS²²

Analyzing amateur status does not require deep scholarship. For example, Microsoft’s *Encarta Dictionary* tells us that the word is used to describe “somebody who does or takes part in something for pleasure rather than for pay” (using an “amateur golfer” as an example); but, secondly, as “somebody who has only limited skill in, or knowledge of, an activity.” For the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (CD edition) an amateur is “one who engages in a pursuit, study, science, or sport as a pastime rather than as a profession,” or “one lacking in

experience and competence in an art or science,” with “amateurish” used to designate a lack of professional skill or competence.

However, the last meaning for *Encarta* is “someone who loves or is greatly interested in something,” while the first meaning offered by *Merriam-Webster* describes a “devotee” or “admirer.” Indeed, turning to *The New International Webster’s Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language*, we are reminded that, etymologically, “amateur” comes from the Latin root *amat*,²³ meaning lover! Now, even given the vagaries of love, we do not usually expect to see someone who claims love for some undertaking to do it haphazardly, carelessly, or ignorant of its value to them.

So, reversing the sequence offered by *Merriam-Webster*, I begin by understanding an amateur as one who *first* admires and *thus* becomes a devotee—a follower or disciple—of an undertaking like musicking. “At some point in her or his life, the amateur falls in love—not slowly, not gradually, but with that resounding whoosh that marks passion” (Goldsmith 2001, 50).

This distinction is central to the analysis that follows, and is definitely the sense in which Robert Booth coins the neologism *amateuring* (Booth 1999): the active, committed, disciplined (or ‘disciplined’), enlivening, and loving pursuit of, in his case as ours, music. It is a form of “loving play” (Booth 1999, 11-12) that is vigorous, demanding, and compelling. Most amateurs “don’t just dabble at something they sort of enjoy doing occasionally.

Instead, like any serious professional, they work at learning to do it better” (11).²⁴ Thus, “the amateur *works* at it, or at least has done so in the past, aspiring to some level of competence or mastery or know-how or expertise” (12; italics original). As a result,

the joys of amateuring deserve celebration of a kind undeserved by many leisure-time rivals. Amateuring is totally different from enjoying a time-killer or mere escape from boredom. It may be in a sense an ‘insanity,’ but, like very few other human pursuits, it carries us out of this world, into what I can only call the timeless. (16)

For those unfamiliar with his book, Booth is a retired English professor, celebrated literary critic, and amateur cellist. His wife is an amateur violinist, and together they pursue a retirement life dedicated largely to the pursuit of opportunities to play with like-minded amateurs. To judge from his reports of the discourse among players, these amateur performers are both knowledgeable and highly skilled. This brings to mind the U.S.A.’s Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice who regularly gets together with, as music critic



Anthony Tommasini describes, “four friends, lawyers by profession and dedicated amateur string players” (Tommasini 2006);²⁵ or the varied musical amateuring at Columbia University’s College of Surgeons and Physicians where a “vigorous musical community, from pediatrician pianists to composing pathologists to singing second-years [*sic*]” exists, based on five decades of tradition featuring a nine-foot Steinway (said to be Rachmaninoff’s piano), the result of the medical school’s “goal of producing well-rounded doctors” (Wakin 2006). Both the present Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope are accomplished amateur musicians.

This is not to suggest that the Classical chamber music literature is the only music worthy of amateur pursuits. Booth describes amateuring as a significant *self-actualizing experience* (Booth 1999, 50-65). The point of amateuring, then, is the quality of experience and the selfhood so actualized. To be described as a “real golfer” says something central about a person’s identity and values. Musicking done in the spirit of amateuring becomes a significant part of one’s identity, of one’s deepest values, of who one ‘is’ and is always ‘becoming’ through continuing involvement. My rehabilitation of amateuring will thus suggest several alternate and positive criteria by which it might better be understood, and towards which *music education for amateuring* might well be directed, instead of demeaning, discouraging, or dismissing it.

1. Admiration

The first and foremost consideration in rehabilitating amateuring involves recognizing and honoring the admiration mentioned by *Merriam-Webster* that is, from the first, the source of all amateuring. Virtually everyone is attracted to music, especially children. Very young children engage in spontaneous musicking and are easily ‘turned on’ to music as listeners, performers, and composers. Imagine a child’s first experience of a piano. Perhaps someone plays it, or just strikes a key. Almost instantly the child will be at the keyboard, performing and composing. The adults may take this as evidence of talent, certainly of interest, and some years later we find the same child dutifully slogging through scales, Czerny, Hanon, and learning to read the musical notation of dead white male composers.

We all know the rest of the story: It is one of the principal “rivals” or impediments to amateuring as advocated here.

Actually, most people do fall in love with music of one kind or another; all cultures I know anything about are so steeped in music that their children never escape listening, singing, and dancing. And most of the children go on loving it, except when later experiences—*often the wrong kind of music lessons*, or the sheer pressure to survive—kill the love. What is sad is that too few go on producing it themselves. (Booth 1999, 21; italics added)

Given this natural love of music, nurturing and sustaining admiration is the foundation for promoting amateurism. Anything threatening that natural admiration, or anyone who corrupts it, regardless of intent—for example, “the wrong kind of music lessons” Booth cites above—is a rival. What good is the technique promoted by pedagogies that turn off so many aspiring amateurs if it is never used because they quit studying and playing? As Goldsmith (2001) counsels, “craftsmanship cannot explain enthrallment” (52), though a misplaced focus on technique for its own sake often explains failure to realize enthrallment—and the extinguishing of it! One of Booth’s amateur peers puts it this way:

I often feel angry about my early teachers who stressed nothing but technical exercises; they were leading me, they hoped, to the conservatory, but they finally drove me away from playing anything at all, for decades. None of them said a word about the music *as music*—there was nothing about *doing it musically*. Oh, maybe they would say something like ‘play it with more feeling,’ but I never had any sense of what they meant. (Booth 1999, 89; italics original)

At best we have the “I wish my parents hadn’t let me quit lessons” admission from an adult—often one who still has not regained the original enthrallment that might re-inspire study. And what if the music the teacher chooses for study is not admirable or enthralling to the student? If typical students are ‘turned off’ by or do not continue to play such literature, how successful is a pedagogy that imposes such music on all students as though in presumed preparation for conservatory study or in hopes that a taste for ‘good music’ will eventually be inculcated?²⁶




2. Student amateurs


Secondly, students, being non-paid, are always amateurs even by common understanding.

The impression is easily gotten from some advocates of “music education as aesthetic education” that since the musicking of students is aesthetically inferior (and thus, “amateur” in an unfortunately pejorative sense), its pedagogical importance is secondary to listening to

performances of the highest artistic caliber. But as Goldsmith observes of adult amateurs, “How PECULIAR are we—those of us who spend time rehearsing instead of sitting at home listening to perfect recordings” (2001, 55; emphasis original). What is important, then, is nurturing the admiration that initiates and sustains musical amateurism and that makes life seem incomplete without musicking. Study without such enthusiasm—or studies in which such enthusiasm is thwarted by parental pressure or fear of teacher censure—will rarely if ever lead to dedicated amateurism.

 It may sometimes appear that students have become complacent in their current musical abilities, an appearance easily mistaken for laziness.²⁷ For other students, rival loves compete for their time and attention—in part because ‘just doing’ these rival activities provides them with the *applied practice* by which improvement is gained (e.g., sports). The challenge, then, is to help such students return to their initial admiration and to constantly rekindle it at ever-higher levels by *modeling the pleasures found at the next stage of aspiration*. Given the models around me on the golf course, the sport looks much more satisfying when played by those at the next highest level than my present ability. When student motivation (i.e., enthusiasm for musicking) is fading, models of the next level of admiration can re-enthuse their efforts.

Where students no longer willingly practice, teachers need to re-examine their entire approach to the lesson, the choice of literature, and the like. Teachers of all subjects would do well to worry more about how formal schooling gets in the way of, or extinguishes, the natural love of learning that students first bring with them to school. Music teachers need to worry and wonder about what they are doing (or not) that may be interfering with the original enthusiasm of students. People who practice a pursuit and get better at it enjoy it more and thus continue their involvement, not quit it.

 One challenge, then, is *what* students are asked to practice—the range of literature the teacher selects, and how closely it suits students’ dispositions at that point in time. It should be obvious that if students do not ‘appreciate’ the assigned literature and its (at least potential) pleasures for them—then that problem needs to be dealt with first and foremost.²⁸ A well-balanced diet of literature, one that includes a range of genres—including those by ear that develop aural musicianship and offer different kinds of creative pleasures—helps encourage practice. At least the teacher will discover which musics are more favored or better suited to the student’s present needs and interests. Particularly uninspiring and

potentially destructive of student enthusiasm are lessons where students are expected to practice slavishly (whether individually, or in lock step as a group) the ‘literature’ assembled in a “methods book.”

Students focused on “doing-for-the-love-of-doing” (Booth 1999, 13) typically find technique drills, scales, and exercises less than *musically* satisfying, especially if they cannot directly connect such skill-drill with a corresponding increase in the pleasures (i.e., progress) of their musicking. The kind of technical practice most conducive to amateurism is drawn *from the music itself*—not unlike the applied practice and technique that golfers get simply from playing different courses, or under ever-changing conditions. In addition to building technique, new literature enters the student’s repertory of accomplishment and satisfaction. Daniel Barenboim advocates this pedagogy:

I studied with my father till I was about seventeen. . . .

For me, learning to play the piano was as natural as learning to walk. My father had an obsession about wanting things to be natural. I was brought up on the fundamental principle that there is no division between musical and technical problems. This was an integral part of his philosophy. I was never made to practice scales or arpeggios . . . [only] the pieces themselves. A principle that was hammered into me early, and which I still adhere to, is never to play any note mechanically. My father’s teaching was based on the belief that there are enough scales in Mozart’s concertos. (quoted in Booth 1999, 88)



Another challenge is to teach students *how* to practice²⁹—in particular, to teach them that there is a major difference between *practice* and sheer *repetition*. The difference, of course, is the existence of a clear musical goal that aurally guides practicing.³⁰ Practicing that fails to lead to *satisfying* progress soon deteriorates into dutiful or mechanical drudgery that merely fills up teacher-prescribed and parentally supervised practice time; and it eventually succumbs to rival loves in which time is not just consumed but well spent.



3. ‘Good time’

Thirdly, amateurism creates ‘good time’: not in the sense of effortless or spontaneous fun, as in “I had a ‘fun time’ at your party” (or what Booth calls “ice-cream pleasures”; 1999, 11),



but in the sense of *time well spent*, even where it requires strenuous effort!³¹ “Every real amateur feels responsible to some notion of doing the loving well, and that entails a kind of caring, both practice and intensity of effort, that could be called work” (Booth 1999, 55).

Everyone who has practiced music or a sport with the needed intensity knows that it is not fun in the care-free sense. Just the opposite: the sense of progress and pleasure that comes from time care-fully spent practicing helps make practicing itself worthwhile!



“Worthwhile” literally means “good time.”³² Musicking without ‘good time’ is not worthwhile in this sense, and will not promote amateurism. Worthwhile practicing promotes ‘good time’—playing better or being able to perform more challenging literature is more and more rewarding—while unproductive practicing only kills or fills time, and is therefore progressively vulnerable to offers of ‘good time’ extended by rival interests.

Fun is not the same as ‘good time’ if it is mindless, effortless, or if it offers only psychological or physical release. Of his own amateurism, Booth writes in an existential tone, “we are not killing time; we are living it, making something of it” (Booth 1999 16). Much of what seems like students having good times with music is actually time that serves



other ‘goods’—other personal needs—rather than time spent care-fully, in pursuit of musical knowledge, skills, and the rewards of musicking.³³ Other dimensions of musical ‘good time’ exist, such as the social solidarity of ensemble members pulling together for their best effort. The ‘good time’ associated with social engagement in group activities, including musical ensembles, is highly worthwhile, especially to adolescents. However, this socializing alone



will not lead to the kind of musical amateurism that I have in mind.³⁴

4. Making time

Fourthly, and in relation to good time, those engaged in amateurism *make* or *find* time for musicking. Thus, “the amateur chooses, day by day, hour by hour, to pursue what life does not require” (Booth 1999, 57). In the lives of just about anyone, there are many admirable, attractive, competing ‘goods’ to rival musicking and the practicing that advances it. When students are taught to practice well, of course, practicing will also be more efficient and they have more time for other worthwhile interests. Students who do not manage to fit music into their lives will sooner or later stop amateurism and at best will ‘play around’ on occasion as adults. When the time made for musicking is worthwhile (is ‘good time’), and is more worthwhile than rival interests, musical amateurism will continue. When time is not found or made, in particular for practicing, it is not helpful to blame the student (which is to say, rival interests like television, computer games, sports, etc.) or parental laxity in enforcing practice.

Instead, music teachers must consider what in their pedagogy may be diminishing the student's original admiration and make the necessary changes.

5. Listening

Fifthly, as a kind of disciple-ship musical amateurism is always *informed* by awareness and appreciation of musical expertise. This is not to suggest that negative comparisons be made (e.g., “You’ll never be a musician if you play like that!”). But it is precisely an amateur's awareness of *excellence* (good-ness) that is the original source of admiration and serves as the aural goal for improvement. Just as golfers typically watch golf and learn from the experience, musical amateurism is promoted by listening to and profiting from models.

Pedagogy and curriculum for amateurism, then, will teach students to listen carefully to their own playing; but it will also feature a listening component as part of the overall pedagogy for improving musicianship, concepts of tone, phrasing, interpretation, and so on. Exposure to other styles and literature is likewise important. Without listening, students have little idea—and no aural model—of what they may be missing by way of musical ‘good time’ where they neglect other literature and skills, dimensions that can make their playing even more worthwhile and rewarding (Booth 1991, 149-157).

Furthermore, musical listening *is* ‘good time’, an amateur practice in its own right. Often, listening may be the musicking that is most accessible in an otherwise busy adult life. By using the performance medium as the immediate motivation of a student's listening interest the door can be opened to an array of musical pleasures—an eventual listening repertory, even the beginnings of an audiophile collection—that might not otherwise have been discovered. This same door can lead to interests and repertoire the student might otherwise have found unimaginable, or might have resisted.

If students are to engage in amateurism as adults, they need models of the next level or degree or type of amateurism to which they may reasonably aspire, or at least from which they might gain interest as listeners. Thus, beginners should see and hear middle school students, who should see and hear high school students, and so on. Moreover, considering the certainty that only a small percentage will become professionals, all students need *regular models of accomplished adult amateurism*, preferably from their own communities, if they are to envision musicking as part of their own adult lives.

6. Independent musicianship

Sixthly, musical independence is the *sine qua non* of amateurism. Without sufficient musicianship, fundamental technical command, practice skills, and knowledge of the literature—all used independently of the teacher (or other experts)—amateurism is not likely to develop. Indeed, it is not usually even possible, except under conditions of dependence on others for one or more of these ingredients. The fact that students in school ensembles are usually *made dependent on the director* for such matters (and more) is already a major reason why, despite the high levels some ensembles achieve, most students do not continue their musicking: they cannot! They lack the independent musicianship.

When they are treated like organ pipes, students can be gotten to perform better than they ‘know’ and can do on their own.³⁵ But it is what they know, can do, and want to do independently of the teacher or director that facilitates and promotes amateurism. One useful kind of knowledge, then, involves resources, such as the ability to locate new literature, technical information (about fingerings, chords, etc.), discographies, historical information, and so on.

A feature of the amateurism endorsed here is that “amateur” is no more a descriptor of a *quality* of musicking than “professional” is. Everyone has heard dreadful professional performances, and in some practices the difference between accomplished amateurs and professionals is only that the latter are paid. Booth also describes situations where “a professional can behave as a true amateur—what I’ll call a pro-amateur” (1999, 15) and situations in which professionals are “willing to join amateurs, pursuing their love together” (Booth 1999, 60)³⁶—for example, music teachers who join (or start) amateur groups.³⁷ For that matter some common musical practices (for example, Barbershop singing) have no compelling professional models.

What counts for amateurism, then, is the love of and commitment to musicking: qualities that are admirable, not objects of disdain! And often, as we have seen, amateurism depends on making time for musicking in otherwise busy lives. We should marvel that some amateurs perform as well as they do, given the many other responsibilities they have. In amateurism, “appreciation” is an active, dedicated form of independent doing. “Just do it,” was the motto of a sporting goods company that had this criterion in mind.

7. The medium as the message

Finally, amateurism that starts at the earliest ages and that learns to savor the good time of musicking is most likely to continue. As Booth observes, “amateurism in our early years can lead to a lifetime of amateurism” (Booth 1999, 22). With this in mind, all musicking in schools—indeed, music teaching of all kinds—ought to be based from the very first on the ideal of modeling and promoting amateurism. Amateurism should be advanced not avoided! A music educator’s most important curricular goal should be to inspire lifelong musicking in the spirit of amateurism. Students who aspire to professional careers will not be deterred in any way by study that promotes amateurism.

Consider the content of the typical individual music lesson: typical piano lessons, for example. These are often structured and conducted as though leading to concert careers. Thus, from the first, students are subjected to the discipline of technique-building exercises and to the warhorses of the Classical repertory.³⁸ If, on the other hand, instruction were designed to nurture amateurism,³⁹ lessons would feature a wider array of musics and their related musicianship skills; and students would not become so tied to notation that they could not improvise or play by ear. Sight reading and accompanying would also be involved since, in addition to developing wide-ranging musicianship and a good ear, such skills directly support amateur musicking opportunities—opportunities pianists are far more likely to encounter in their lives than the concert stage.

Rethinking of instruction for other instruments would also be undertaken—for example, familiarizing students with MIDI-based accompaniment software for the pleasures of playing with an accompaniment, or perhaps with jazz ‘changes’ and rhythm section. For that matter, familiarizing students with MIDI versions of their own instruments would enable them to experience some of the musical good time uniquely afforded by MIDI.⁴⁰ Such teaching and learning is unlikely to deter in any way the potential for advanced study and a career; if anything, advanced study would be facilitated. Imagine, for example, the improved practicing strategies of future music majors, their greater familiarity with the literature of their medium, and the possibility that they might learn basic pitches and rhythms in their dorm rooms on MIDI instruments rather than wasting time seeking a practice room for that purpose.

Given their busy lives, it is difficult for large ensembles of amateurs to find a time and place get together to rehearse and concertize. And whatever their other benefits, large

ensembles are not ideal vehicles for promoting amateurism.⁴¹ Solos and small groups of all kinds are the most effective models and types of amateurism. When these are promoted in schools, at least in addition to large ensembles, the habit of making time for ‘good time’ gets established early.⁴² School-based “garage bands” (e.g., rock, jazz, Klezmer, steel bands), small vocal groups (jazz, Barbershop, folk), and the like provide ways of meeting the amateurism needs of *all* students, and in ways that are suited to making time in busy lives and in ways appreciated by local taste groups. Clearly, such types of musicking are more realistically worked into busy adult lives than are the logistics of traditional large ensembles.


AMATEURISM AND MUSICKING WRIT LARGE

The discussion so far has used performance as a primary source of amateurism. Without it, of course, there would be no music. However, all forms of musicking can be predicated in some way on the conditions and considerations for amateurism described earlier. Amateurism as a goal of general music classes is beyond the present scope,⁴³ but certainly listening, composing, and other kinds of musicking are all candidates.

Regular audience membership is its own amateur practice, and the weak audience for Classical music in many parts of the world⁴⁴ is testimony to the lack of precisely the kind of amateurism recommended above. However, following those recommendations for promoting amateurism, especially to the inclusion of listening as a part of performance lessons, would likely facilitate audience growth. There would be a demand for recitals where they do not now exist,⁴⁵ and a culture of recitals by and for amateurs would develop. In a curriculum for amateurism, the school itself would be the community music center for such recitals, and “house concerts,”⁴⁶ now quite rare, might well become commonplace.

Taught with a view to amateurism, theory and composition studies would include the same breadth of musicianship and listening background that should inform performance lessons. Once again, this would not deter advanced study, and it would actually contribute to the amount of music composed—for example, for church, home video sound tracks, and the like.⁴⁷ Although the ever-new array of composition software is frequently marketed as though for musical dimwits, results are limited primarily by the musical skill and knowledge of the user—abilities that can be advanced by school-based composition studies.

Many other forms of musicking could also be sources of amateurism—for example, music criticism and music journalism groups, arranging (e.g., for one’s own Barbershop


 group, or for one's church bell choir), creating "anime"⁴⁸ music videos, or "mixtapes,"⁴⁹ audiophile interests, CD collecting and discussion groups—even groups interested in particular genres or artists (whose members often become true aficionados). Such models of amateur musicking should become prominent features of school music, community music schools, "adult education," and beyond. Instituting such forms of musicking as part of school music, if only as extra-curricular options, would promote amateurism in just the way photography courses and camera clubs do.

THE RIVALS OF AMATEURING

The main rival to musical amateurism is the lack of respect given it as a musical practice in its own right. The idea seems to be that musicking must be supported by years of study and hard work (quantitative criteria), and a single-minded focus on perfection (a qualitative criterion) in order to be valid or valuable. Booth disagrees:

Just what is the purpose of amateurism Why go on taking lessons and practicing daily . . . ?

Well the answer is obviously nothing like a hope for perfection. Though we amateurs are often driven, and even plagued, by the desire to do it better, the real drive is the sheer love of the playing itself—not just the music but the *playing* of, with, through, *in* the music. It is our conviction that if anything is worth doing at all, it is worth doing badly. (Booth 1999, 5-6; italics original)

 What drives amateurism, then, is the "doing-for-the-love-of doing" (Booth 1999, 13), not hard work toward some abstract future goal. And the issue of quality is not a purely musical issue⁵⁰ but a matter of the *quality of life* created and enhanced by such musicking. As Booth (1999) reveals: "Over the years all that playing has come to feel less and less like a mere addendum to life, a pastime, a hobby, and more and more like something beyond even an added luxury: it's now a necessity" (9). "I'm fully alive when amateurism" (10).

Some may feel the need to distinguish amateurism from the superficiality, attention-seeking, and affectedness of *dilettantism*. However:

Amateurs are doers. Once upon a time they were wealthy, male, excellent doers: the gentleman athlete, the gentleman archaeologist. When did the word get to be a synonym for 'incompetent dilettante'? Unpaid singers make up most of the choruses in the United States, even when the chorus as a whole is paid by a symphony

orchestra. Yet choral associations call us ‘volunteers’ to avoid the dreaded stigma of the word ‘amateur.’ (Goldsmith 2001, 50).

While musical amateurism may be done for audiences or in the presence of others, it focuses on qualities—‘good time’ and other values—that are appreciated first and foremost by the *doer*. In fact, Booth is far from alone in admitting to a “reluctance to perform for any audience” (73).⁵¹ ‘Showing off’ by amateurs is relatively rare and, in any case, is no more extensive than the affectations and attention-seeking of some professionals.

Given the sacralized status of the arts mentioned earlier—the “consensus of the competent”—an emerging cadre of professionals reduced laypeople to incompetence by portraying the arts a serious and difficult ‘business’ that only specialists could or should do (Levine 1988, 211). Thus, the focus changed from amateurism to “appreciation.” Today, “professional renditions” of art and music are

so widely available that most people probably can’t or don’t imagine there’s any point in bothering to do these things themselves. Communities of amateurs still thrive, but they are self-selecting groups. A vast majority of society seems to presume that culture is something specialists produce. (Kimmelman 2006)

Thus, “both private and public music are being displaced by recordings. Few people make music themselves at home anymore” (Rosen 2005a). One result of the convergence of recorded music and the professionalizing of performing, then, has been that, as cultural historian Christopher Lasch pointed out, we have progressively become nations of listeners (Lasch 1984).

However, new home-based recording technology does allow listeners to ‘deconstruct’ albums and to, in effect, create their own listening experiences by sequencing different musics, tempi, moods (etc.), according to personal criteria. Some of these criteria can be functional, such as music for aerobics,⁵² or for pacing long-distance runners, for example. Such uses may not seem to qualify as musicking until one considers that creating such sequences requires considerable understanding of music’s properties—and the different affordances⁵³ of those properties—and there is a considerable repertory to choose from.

Again, the qualities of amateurism I wish to highlight go well beyond musicking as a ‘mere’ leisure time diversion, entertainment, amusement⁵⁴ or passive pursuit. I have been at pains to stress the serious, thoughtful, committed, substantial, and often accomplished nature

of amateuring. Because music is not a religious pursuit, amateuring is neither sacrilegious nor a sin: it is a down-to-earth, human praxis that helps define us as individual humans and as social beings. It is not other-worldly, but worldly in its benefits for everyday life well-lived (DeNora 2000).

As Robert Shaw wisely noted, then, music is too important to be left to musicians alone.⁵⁵ Amateuring is a musical practice that has its own valid criteria and its own valuable contributions to make: it has standards of its own, prime among which is a love that sometimes escapes professionals who must make their living doing it ‘on cue’. When ordinary people define who they are in part by reference to their musicking, music educators will have made an important musical difference in society and culture.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary rival to musical amateurism is the stigma against it as a valid and valuable musical praxis, a stigma that denies its legitimacy as a central curricular goal for music education. Failure to regard students as amateurs—and thus to see their futures as amateuring adults—leads us to neglect the need to cultivate the pleasures of amateuring while they are students. As a result, an overwhelming number of students and adults turn their attention, their admiration, to rival pursuits. But amateuring should be at the heart of both “value added” and “authentic assessment” conceptions of music education. Such rehabilitation of amateuring as a valid and valuable curricular *action ideal* would do much to overcome the declining support for school music.⁵⁶

Among the central pleasures that inspire amateuring are the rewards of ‘good time’. All teaching should promote that result. When practicing is efficient and directly facilitates ‘good time’, students will make time for it. However, any skill exhibits a “learning curve” that, after some rapid progress, reaches a plateau: if the student is not newly inspired or challenged, a decline follows. Students at such a plateau benefit from listening to musical models that help them consolidate earlier gains, appreciate that challenges remain, and see how greater expertise may bring new kinds of ‘good time’. Listening to such models is itself ‘good time’—an amateuring accessible even in the busiest of lives.

When teaching is predicated on increasing a student’s independence from the teacher, the likelihood of future amateuring is greatly enhanced. Maximizing the conditions of amateuring while students are still in school enhances the likelihood that they can and will

engage in musicking on their own throughout life. A diet of solo and small ensemble musics is particularly recommended since the logistics of such amateurism are less daunting than for typical large ensembles—particularly for busy adults. And the inclusion of a wide range of musics increases the musicianship skills that can support amateur pursuits with a variety of musics. Add to this local ‘run outs’ and opportunities for community musicking (e.g., a recital series at the local library or school auditorium—one that invites adults to perform, as well), and enthusiastic amateurism will be the proof that music is “appreciated,” and that music education has succeeded.

While traveling, I observed a family of three loading their van to resume their vacation. Only a guitar in its case remained. The father struggled to squeeze it in and as I passed by I observed, “I think it’s great your son brought his guitar on vacation.” He replied, with a smile and evident pride, “It’s not his, it’s mine!”

I have argued that such enthusiasm is a worthy outcome of music education, wherever and whenever it occurs. If one’s first inclination is to object, “Well, first I have to hear what and how well he plays,” the present ‘disconnect’ between school music and the ‘music world’ outside of school will continue. Then, paradoxically, music education will continue to be a rival of, or irrelevant to, the musical amateurism that is central to a life well-lived through music, and both music education and society will be worse off for that rupture.

Notes

¹ An earlier version of this paper was given at the MayDay Group Colloquium, June 2005, at Westminster Choir College, Princeton NJ. The title is indebted to Booth (1999).

² Herein ‘popular’ refers generally to all musics outside the ‘learned’ tradition of Classical music.

³ “Musicking,” herein, refers not just to performing—although that is the early focus—but to all manner of musical productivity and involvement (Small 1998). For present purposes dance, a primary form of musicking, is not a concern—though, sadly, too often it has been banished from university schools of music and school music.

⁴ In anthropology, “the concept of social role is often connected with social *status*”; and “societies vary widely in their views of the role of musician” (Kaemmer 1993, 44; italics added) and concerning the criteria to be met for and by that role (44-57). However, Kaemmer writes, “it is often useful to reserve the term professional for musicians obtaining the necessities of life through their musical activities” (49), and it is in this general sense that the term “professional” is used here, not in the classical sociological sense of Max Weber

(see, deMarrais & LeCompte 1998, 149-50). However, the social status accompanying the role often remains in the minds of both professionals and laypersons alike. This is an impediment to more widespread musicking that school music can and should address.

⁵ Before the mid-18th century, “concerts” were private entertainments in the homes of aristocrats and nobility, and the public encountered such music only occasionally in various public ceremonies.

⁶ “Bourgeois” refers to the mercantile middle-class that grew rapidly as a result of the 18th century Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. It is distinct from the nobility and aristocratic classes ‘above’ it, and the so-called working class ‘below’ it. It thus looked ‘up’ for its social models of culture, manners, taste, and values, rather than ‘down’. However, today’s middle-class is characterized by more, and more complex, variables. And members are also typically drawn—often more so—to musics other than (and in addition to) Classical (Martin 2006, 88-104; Peterson & Kern 1996). Concerning distinctions between mass, popular, and high culture (and musics), see Strinati (1995) and Carroll (1998); for an account of Classical music in relation to middle class identity in Germany and Austria, 1770-1848 (the music at the very heart of today’s Classical music canon), see Gramit (2002).

⁷ E.g., public concerts, opera houses, museums, art galleries, even scholarly disciplines that focused on high culture. The concept of a ‘classy’ music of the middle and upper classes in distinction to the déclassé entertainments of the underclass becomes even more sharply drawn at this time. Furthermore, the term “Classical” first arose in the early 19th century as a reaction *against* the supposed excesses of what, by then, were the beginnings of “Romanticism”—excesses, that is, when judged by the standards of ‘good taste’ of the new aesthetic theory of the time that eschewed emotional immediacy in favor of intellectual contemplation. See, also, n. 8 and n.10 below.

⁸ Classical music was a primary means of affirming middle class values. “For a bourgeois world which conceives its relation to the populace in terms of the relationship of the soul to the body, ‘insensitivity to music’ doubtless represents a particularly unavowable form of materialist coarseness” (Bourdieu 1984, 18-19; see, also Martin 2006, 77-104; DiMaggio 1992). As a result, sociologists today generally agree that “the consumption of ‘classical’ or ‘serious’ art-music in various ways—such as concerts, discs and radio—has been regarded as an activity characteristic of members of upper- and middle-class groups, while the very term ‘popular’ (often used as a pejorative opposite) conveys the sense of music made for, and often by, the masses” (Martin 2006, 77-78; see, also, Crane 1992).

⁹ That is, in the present context, to the status of incompetent amateur or dabbler (etc.), regardless of the practice involved.

¹⁰ This earlier status as servants is among the factors contributing to musicians’ support of the idea (from the new aesthetic theory of the late 18th century) of music’s autonomy—its for-its-own-sake purity—from worldly affairs. Thus conceived as ‘pure’ and ‘fine’ art, the efforts of ‘serious’ musicians could be distinguished from the ‘low’ entertainments of other musics and ‘commercial’ musicians—ignoring, of course, the obvious intellectual entertainment their efforts provide for listeners who pay considerable sums of money for tickets. On the professionalizing of performers, see Goehr (1992).

¹¹ Though you would never know it from typical music history books (see n. 14 below) and formalist aesthetic theory, this preference for ever-new music was one reason for the importance of characteristic ‘forms’ such as sonata allegro, rondo, and the like: the predictability of their organization aided the comprehension and appreciation of new music.

¹² Rosen (1995b) describes—without embarrassment—how musicians imposed their tastes and values on the audiences of the day (whom they considered dilettantes in the worst sense of the word, despite depending on them for their living and rising status) by, for example, continuing to play Mozart even though his music was not favored by early audiences (as noted by Johnson 1995). Even Beethoven's First Symphony (1807) was first rejected by audiences, but by 1828 his compositions had become instantly successful—due in large measure to the change among Viennese aristocrats toward an “strategy of social exclusion,” one based on the new aesthetic ideals of ‘good taste’ and not just on the ability of the bourgeoisie to pay to attend concerts (Martin 2006, 27).

¹³ As sociologists of music recognize, discourse about music influences, even constitutes, how music is actually heard. On such “politics of meaning” in the discourse of music reception, see Martin (2006, 26-28).

¹⁴ Their music, of course, is not chronicled in the music history texts musicians study as part of their training (see Edstrom 2003). The music discussed in those history texts has thus tended to be the “music” of “music education,” not music in its broadest sense as a social practice.

¹⁵ On this “sacralization of culture” (Levine 1988, 85) see, e.g., Levine (1988, 85-168); Shiner (2001, 187-224); Gramit (2002); DiMaggio (1992; 23, 35, 42, 44, 46, 47, 50). Shiner, for example, has a sub-chapter devoted to “The Artist: A Sacred Calling,” a mindset that resulted in the exalting of artists and musicians and the resulting decline of artisans and amateurs—the former as producers of *useful* artifacts for sale (high art was to exhibit “purposiveness without purpose” and be one-of-a-kind), the latter for lacking the bravura and *artistry* assumed to be required by the ‘serious’ and noble demands of the aesthetic creed of the time. Even today, that amateurs do not give themselves totally to music as a ‘serious’, quasi-sacred calling is often held against them: music, in this view, needs to be *protected from amateurs*. Music teachers who see their high drop out rates as natural and helpful to the quality of their ensembles subscribe to this view.

¹⁶ Despite progressive efforts in some places, such breadth is still quite rare; the music teacher is typically nowhere near as trained in other musics. In comparison to the time spent in practice rooms, studios and ensembles that involve Classical music, other musics are decidedly elective or a money-earning sideline (often undertaken at risk of the disapproval of studio teachers who fear students will acquire bad habits of tone, technique, etc.).

¹⁷ “Multicultural” and “world” musics are typically approached with the same “music appreciation” pedagogies that are employed for Classical music: background information from theory and history, and listening to representative ‘works’. Some general music teachers do teach guitar in their classes, though whether students typically gain a functional competence is doubtful. Jazz is sometimes addressed in general music classes, though it, too, is taught with a view to listening appreciation and thus favors a historical-theoretical approach. Whether most students actually learn to improvise in school big band jazz programs, so that they can ‘gig’ as adults in amateur or professional settings, is also doubtful. Starting ensembles that feature other musics seems to be musically sacrilegious, the practice is so rare.

¹⁸ Or the commercial sector and community associations take over responsibility for what school music is not teaching. For example, the instruction offered for non-orchestra instruments in music stores in the U.S.A.; community music schools (by whatever name, publicly or privately supported: see, e.g.,

<http://www.maydaygroup.org/php/ecolumns/communitymusicinaction-introduction.php>); the Paul Green School of Rock, actually over two dozen schools in locations around the U.S.A. that teach rock (see <http://www.schoolofrock.com/>); or the Infinity Performing Arts Program developed in Jamestown NY (U.S.A.) to promote the kinds of musicking that school music has tended to ignore or reject (<http://www.infinityperformingarts.org/index.php?content=program>).

¹⁹ In the US, large numbers go directly from graduate performance degrees into studio teaching positions in professional degree programs without ever having actually had a professional career in which they supported themselves mainly through music. The ranks of faculty in university music departments and schools of music, in fact, tend to be staffed mainly by musicians whose professional careers have been short-lived, minor league, or negligible. Some, like theorists, musicologists, and most composition faculty, are in professional careers that exist mainly as university teaching positions—although most engage in the professional discipline itself as often as their teaching duties allow.

²⁰ It is worth a passing note that over-identification with the role of “musician” (or under-identification with the role of “teacher”) can have negative effects on teaching if music and the teacher’s own musicking through students is valued more highly than students’ musical and educational needs. Music therapists, in contrast, are not even tempted to put music before the needs of their clients.

²¹ Again, “status” because the low placement of amateurs on the socio-musical hierarchy—predicated originally on Classical music and Classical musicians at the top—is the source of the cultural attitude under consideration; it is the acceptance of this hierarchy that stands in the way of a fully respectful regard for and encouragement of ‘mere’ enthusiasts who dare to engage in the ‘serious’ business of musicking.

²² What follows is not an attempt at defining amateuring or at distinguishing it from a hobby, a recreation, an avocation, a pastime, or an entertaining leisure-time pursuit (etc.). My purpose is to encourage musicking of all kinds, at all levels of expertise, as a valid musical practice of *laypersons*. Furthermore, I am not so much interested in making a case for applying the term “musician” to amateurs, but am concerned that present use of and attitudes toward the label has an intimidating, elite, status-conscious effect that works against more widespread musicking of all kinds in society.

²³ And, ultimately, to the Italian *amatore* and to the French *amateur*, now an Anglicized word.

²⁴ See, for example, Charles Cooke, whose *Playing the Piano for Pleasure* (1985) is a guide for practice and study by amateur pianists. Reader commentary about this book on www.Amazon.com also provides revealing insights about the attitudes of amateurs towards their playing.

²⁵ And, mentioned elsewhere in the article, Julliard graduates! This is one reason why “amateur” does not reveal the actual ability of a performer.

²⁶ See Booth’s Chapter Five, “Teaching the Love” for more of his insights on pedagogy and the need to keep students’ love of music alive by *making the learning of ‘technique’ itself musical*. More on this follows.

²⁷ However, instead of laziness, students often *gladly overlook many of their errors* because they lack an adequate aural goal of what the ‘finished’ performance might be. They play with pleasure until they make a major mistake, stop to correct it *once*, and continue from

there. They call this practicing! On this problem, see notes 29-31 below and the related discussions.

²⁸ Attitudes toward practicing often benefit from hearing a range of new pieces from which students *choose*. This also provides an aural goal as a basis for practice. Having at least one freely chosen piece helps keep admiration alive: *it will always be the most practiced and most accomplished*. Another motivation can come from providing an accompaniment that enhances the student's performances and, hence, pleasures. And recording each 'finished' piece and compiling a tape or CD over time also contribute to student regard for both aural *goals* and aural *results*. Such compilations also provide a motivating sense of *progress* (and make great gifts for grandparents).

²⁹ This can be done by devoting part of the lesson to 'how to practice'—i.e., having the student demonstrate, say, five minutes of typical practicing and then discussing improved strategies (see n. 28 for the typical student weakness). In group lessons, students can comment on the practicing example of one among them (at this lesson, another student at the next) and thus improve their own practicing by 'critiquing' classmates' practicing strategies. Students can also audio- or videotape practicing at home for analysis as a regular part of the lesson.

³⁰ Technique is motivated by an aural goal, a musical result; it is not an end-in-itself. This is at the heart of Barenboim's recommendation above. An aural goal provides the criteria for noting mistakes and weaknesses; without it, practice often actually 'rehearses' mistakes *as* mistakes.

³¹ I first proposed the concept of "good time" in Regelski (1996). The idea developed there of time as a kind of "currency" that is made and saved, spent or wasted (etc.) was analyzed in terms of cognitive linguistics by Lakoff and Johnson (1999).

³² From "worth the while," i.e., worth the time, good use of time. In British English, it is usually spelled worth-while.

³³ This is particularly the case with the singing games and other activities of general music classes that, while fun in non-musical ways (or in comparison to math, etc.), rarely or only accidentally result in musical learning or potential for lifelong musical 'good time'. And it may be fun to play in an ensemble but, for too many, it is not the kind of 'good time' that motivates conscientious practicing for rehearsals, or that seeks out such ensemble experiences later in life.

³⁴ In fact, once the socializing pleasures are removed (e.g., after graduation, and in adult life), too many seem to find little *musical* reason to continue to participate in such ensembles. A diet of solo, duets, trios, etc., during the school years, avoids both the temptation to succumb only to the socializing aspects that are so attractive to youth and the problem of sixty adult amateurs needing to find a common time for rehearsing.

³⁵ This is not uncommon in studio instruction, as well; for example, the piano student whose teacher always marked in the fingering and pedaling and thus who never learned how to finger or pedal new literature on her own; or the "play it this way" school of pedagogy-as-demonstration-and-imitation.

³⁶ Succeeding as a professional performer is difficult and demanding, and too often it is not as musically satisfying as might be assumed (see, e.g., Tindall 2005, 295, who describes orchestral musicians who "were understandably bored after playing *The Nutcracker* forty-five times every December for decades"). As a result, most trained musicians eventually end up in other careers: "Today, the amateur musician is a conservatory-trained 'professional' who

can't find work. Typically, his life is backwards from that of the 1950s amateur—highly trained in his hobby but uneducated in whatever becomes his money-making career. Instead of earning a college degree in a field that will support him adequately and playing music in his spare time, he has spent his college years refining the musical talent that will become only a pastime. . . . True amateur musicians lose out as well, and say they have a hard time finding playing opportunities as community orchestras and chamber music groups are filled with conservatory graduates” (Tindall 2005, 306). Tindall’s autobiographical account of her twenty-year attempt at a professional career as an oboist provides many revealing insights that should be read by young people who aspire to becoming professional Classical musicians. She worries about “young people who are encouraged to train exclusively for a career in an industry that is clearly failing (304)” and counsels the need to seriously research the reality of the adult life-style challenges they face (304-05).

³⁷ People who moonlight doing club gigs, weddings (etc.) fall into status of pro-am, or are considered “musicians” mainly in a money-making sense, even though part-time. Many amateur groups, too, are enough in demand locally that they can charge for their occasional appearances (and sell their CDs). However, most know better than to give up their full-time jobs; they gig part-time more for the enjoyment than for the employment. This group may be largely immune to negative attitudes associated with amateurs—at least if there are no nit-picking professionals in the audience. On the social and economic benefits of the pro-am concept in many areas of life, see Leadbeater & Paul Miller (2004).

³⁸ Recall the complaint of the amateur cellist cited earlier: “[T]hey were leading me, they hoped, to the conservatory, but they finally drove me away from playing anything at all, for decades” and Barenboim’s admonition, cited earlier, about unmusical, mechanical skill-drill.

³⁹ This *is* the assumption of some pedagogies, for example the piano pedagogy of Robert Pace in which music theory, ear training, and other musicianship skills are learned *through* playing the piano and where playing the piano is informed by these skills and is thus applicable to a diversity of musics. With lessons like these, students often have better ‘ears’ than typical first-year music majors. Such lessons are truly music lessons, not simply piano lessons.

⁴⁰ She who practices in an apartment house better use a MIDI-trumpet rather than an acoustic one! If a place and time to practice in the peace of everyone’s quiet needs to be found, the likelihood is lessened of, for example, spontaneously deciding that “I feel like practicing *now*.”

⁴¹ Obvious amateur exceptions are drum corps shows and competitions that, oddly, have no real professional models for comparison. This is another area where professional and amateur fail as descriptive labels of quality.

⁴² Consider, for example, a large ensemble where all students are (a) encouraged to be in (even to create) a small ensemble, or to prepare solo or duets (etc; and not just for competition festivals) on their own, (b) and where some of this music is featured at concerts, with (c) the rest performed at regular recitals that are the large-group rehearsal period transformed from time to time into model audience experiences for ensemble members. The skills gained from such independent efforts will make up for the time (supposedly) lost to the large group rehearsal; in fact, the large ensembles will improve because individual members gain musical independence and musicianship from such opportunities.

⁴³ However, I have treated that at book length elsewhere. See Regelski (2004).

⁴⁴ See, Greg Sandow, “The future of classical music”, <http://www.artsjournal.com/greg/>.

⁴⁵ For example, by faculty and students of nearby university music schools and departments, and by local amateurs and pro-ams, using local public school facilities.

⁴⁶ See www.houseconcerts.org/hc.html.

⁴⁷ I'm reminded of a former neighbor, a bartender whose hobby was composing songs. He once composed a commercial jingle that won second prize in a national competition. Interestingly, his son went on to study composition. Any kind of amateurism, then, can promote similar side-effects for others. In his book, *The Cult of the Amateur*, Keen (2007) argues that the Internet has seen a major proliferation of amateur content, including the musics of amateur garage bands (etc.). He argues that this trend is a threat to cultural gatekeepers and thus to culture. But if, as is likely, the trend toward user-generated content will gather ever-more momentum, music education focused on amateurism can at least raise the quality of such content and make its educational contribution felt well beyond the schoolhouse doors.

⁴⁸ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anime_music_video; <http://www.editundo.org/> describes a "school musical"—decidedly not the typical variety—composed and acted entirely by students, and produced in a local theater.

⁴⁹ See, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mixtapes>.

⁵⁰ "The woods would be empty of music if only those birds sang who sing best."

(Anonymous) "In [musical] art there is perhaps no absolute bad but insincerity; there are endless shades of worse and better." (Daniel Gregory Mason). Both quoted in Booth (1999, 130).

⁵¹ "For some decades, in fact, the very presence of anyone but fellow players made me play worse. I didn't even want to be heard practicing, by anyone, musical or not" (73). See Booth 1999, 61-63, on "Loves Shared vs. Loves Solitary."

⁵² For the complexity of variables that are considered in choosing the music for aerobics, see DeNora (2000). Overall, this sociological study stresses the role and benefits of various kinds of musical amateurism in "everyday life."

⁵³ Just as different objects "afford" different uses (e.g., a tennis ball as a dog toy, a rock as a hammer, etc.), so do the 'objective' features of music afford different uses and values. On music's "affordances" for everyday life see DeNora (2000, 38-41).

⁵⁴ Although all three can easily be attributed to even the most 'cultivated' concert listening, especially if one discounts the sacralized status of the music and the concert hall as a house of cultural 'worship'. Even typical aesthetic theorizing claims that Classical music, by its reservation for special times and places, is a leisure time diversion from mundane life (hence, e.g., musical "divertimenti"). And the "muse" in *amusement* is worth noting, as is the etymology of "entertainment" from "entaining" (*entretenir*)—namely, holding something (anything, even Classical music) in mind or in rapt attention.

⁵⁵ See Goldsmith's (2001) chapter "Too Important to Leave to the Professionals" (48-62) in which she quotes Shaw in full: "Music and sex are too important to leave to the professionals" (50).

⁵⁶ An "action ideal" is not idealistic or utopian: it is a 'good' (goal) that serves as a direction for action, as in good marriage, good health, or good friend. Such 'goods' take multiple forms, according to those involved and the particulars and limiting circumstances. Amateurism, as an action ideal for curriculum, could be realized in countless ways—none of which seem to be noticeable or notable today, because school music is its own 'world' that, beyond school concerts, typically makes little if any direct contribution to the musical life of the

community. “Authentic assessment” uses, in the case of music, “authentic” musicking as evidence of learning, not paper and pencil tests, for example. For more on a “value added” conception of music education see Regelski (2006a); Regelski (2006b); Regelski (2005). In short, the value of music education should be a matter of what students are enabled to *do*, better, at all, or more often, *as a result of their musical studies*, not the noble sounding and abstract platitudes of aesthetic philosophy posturing as advocacy.

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