Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education

The refereed journal of the

Volume 11, No. 1
March 2012

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Electronic Article

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ISSN 1545-4517

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Ethics in Music Education

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It is my great pleasure to introduce this issue on ethics in music education. Ethical considerations have become increasingly present in music education discourse as scholars more deliberately examine what it means to be ethical and act ethically in all aspects of professional work. This collection of essays is a companion effort of the MayDay Research Colloquium XXII "Music Education and Ethics: Theoretical and Practical Concerns," which sought to energize interest in ethical issues encountered by music educators in their daily decision-making. The papers introduce multiple, unique perspectives for approaching the pervasive ethical dilemmas of teaching and learning, and provide a basis for better understanding the complex and urgent responsibilities teachers face as caregivers to their students.

Tom Regelski offers an introduction to ethics by first delineating normative and applied ethics, then investigating the ethical implications of the teaching profession in general, and, later, of music teaching. He raises a point that is made in other papers in this issue— the assumption by teachers, as members of a helping profession, that their work is ethical *ipso facto,* even as their daily actions, ostensibly on behalf of students, are burdened by conflicting and misleading priorities. Regelski believes this assumption is symptomatic of the inability of teachers entering the profession to fully comprehend the nature of the work ahead. He cites competing influences which include preserving one's musician stature while circumventing the pressures of a performance career, the flexible lifestyle associated with teaching, and past success as students in "school music" settings. Shifting his attention from teachers to school music programs, he applies the tenets of consequentialism and virtue ethics to reveal the ethically compromising practice of failing to state and achieve pragmatically beneficial outcomes for students, i.e., benefits that truly "matter."

To succinctly characterize this aggregate problem, Regelski creates the term "musicianism" to describe the condition of being primarily loyal to the values and practices accrued through one's own formal musical training, i.e., conceptualizing the values of a musical education more in terms of music than of education. Regelski believes that

Rodriguez, Carlos X. 2012. Ethics in music education. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 11(1): 1–6. http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Rodriguez11_1.pdf

instruction built upon such a perspective is educationally unfounded, as evidenced by the number of students who favor their own ways of musicking and create their own gratifying musical lives outside of school. Regelski identifies the source of musicianism as the universities that historically train musicians first, and prepare educators second.

As a university faculty member I have often pondered my ethical responsibilities as a teacher of writing. At the undergraduate level, these responsibilities arise for me mostly in dealing with plagiarism issues. Students grapple with the various forms and degrees of plagiarism precisely because their writing assignments invoke unexplored subtleties in ethical thinking. At the graduate level, I often wonder whether I should require students to write in a manner I personally consider "concise," to use accepted nomenclature within accepted organizational schemes, to duly credit their ideas to previous literature, and so forth. Thus I read with great interest Hildegard Froehlich's essay on mentoring doctoral students. She recounts her interactions with students as being fundamentally well intentioned, derived from her own experiences working as a doctoral student under university faculty, and framed by her unique pride in having successfully mentored over fifty doctoral students. Through the lens of this heightened sensitivity to ethical practice, Froehlich recalls a social occasion in which she encounters a former student who accuses her of ruining his academic career, suggesting careful scrutiny of traditional teacher-student relationships wherein teachers have the greater share of power and influence. Is regarding oneself as a trustworthy and compassionate mentor legitimate without considering the perceptions and valuations of students? Froehlich provides a careful analysis of her decision-making in a variety of contexts, weighing established principles of fairness against the actualities of teaching students with widely varying academic skills and personal attributes. Adding to this mix of considerations, she wonders how the hierarchically organized groups of academia—committees, departments, and even universities—affect a mentor's ability to help students discover and develop themselves as researchers and writers.

Marja Heimonen challenges music educators to conceptualize ethics globally, claiming it is necessary for protecting the self, each other, and the earth. She makes the familiar point that humans have remarkable power to do good as well as harm, which makes contemporary life both fragile and endangered. Music education at its best, she suggests, encourages students to develop the skills and sensitivities to understand an ever-increasing spectrum of musical experiences and traditions. After surveying some of the most influential

ideas in music education during the second half of the twentieth century, she proposes that the collective impact of these ideas, which she calls the "content of music education," beneficially situates learners toward the global orientations she espouses. This is accomplished through a process of sympathetic induction. For example, students meaningfully respond to various musical elements and apprehend their own "subjective individual feelings" which can then transfer and link to their efforts to understand otherness in the larger world of human activity. Heimonen believes that this transfer process is even more concrete when students are encouraged to listen to music sensitively, which mirrors the way people of diverse experiences and perspectives must listen to each other, or when they engage in "political listening," which occurs when a performance suggests links between music and emotion, then emotion and political thought. Finally, the interpersonal habits implicit in teacher-student relationships and nonverbal communication are both useful to this same end. Collectively, these potentials comprise "an ethical basis for creating peace in the world."

Teachers are inclined to believe they are ethical professionals because their efforts are presumptively executed in the best interests of students. Yet, the extent to which teachers exercise deliberate ethical reasoning when the need arises can be addressed empirically. Joelle Lien investigates dilemmas faced by teachers using an applied ethics approach: she elicits the perceptions of practitioners for her primary data. She speculates that educators are prone to acting unprofessionally due to a lack of preparation for ethical decision-making, thus her work is directed toward describing and categorizing their recollections of past incidents requiring ethical judgment. Perhaps the most informative of her findings was the near total absence of self-criticism among teachers surveyed. Responses from her large sample of participants suggest that they tend to locate ethical conflicts in the behaviors of others rather than themselves, which bears out a recurring theme among these collected articles: teachers take for granted that their work is ethical by nature, and neither often nor deeply enough consider the import of their judgments and behavior to ethical dilemmas.

Roger Mantie borrows a framework for ethical inquiry from Foucault to recount the changing purposes of wind band participation, deriving an evolving discourse from issues of the journal of the Canadian Band Association published over a thirty-year period. Participation in wind bands prior to the middle of the twentieth century was driven by personal and interpersonal enjoyment, particularly the sense of community derived from

public performance, yet since that time has gradually become driven by self-improvement through music, development of artistic insights, and contribution to group performance in order to render the composer's intent, characteristic of what Mantie calls the "pedagogical band world." His primary focus on the ethical ramifications of this trend is Foucault's (1997) concept of *rapport a soi,* a four-component process in which individuals define themselves ethically. These components provide comprehensive analysis points for understanding the changes represented by the pedagogical band world, namely, a switch in purpose from entertainment to education. Mantie's most pronounced conclusion is that contemporary band culture unjustly dichotomizes these purposes, engaging musicians to follow the conductor's or composer's intentions, thus leaving them without ethical purpose or potential.

Randall Allsup and Heidi Westerlund examine the role of methods as a framework for organizing knowledge, noting that their power to specify the materials, strategies, interactions, and outcomes of classroom musical experiences make them the "primary tool" for teachers. They acknowledge that teachers utilize methods to attain instructional consistency and ensure known outcomes. However, the authors invoke Dewey's view that such pursuits restrict the more challenging aspects of teaching, such as helping students confront, understand, and act upon the change and uncertainty they encounter in the classroom and beyond. Allsup and Westerlund claim that while methods *per se* are quite useful in everyday life as a way of directing experiences, their use in the music classroom has a tendency to inhibit ethical deliberation by students and teachers because they emphasize instructional means and ends. The authors refer to various methods and approaches to suggest the degree to which ethical reasoning by teachers is useful or even possible, focusing extensively on informal pedagogy (Green 2008) in which the responsibility for materials, procedures, and outcomes is shifted to students. In such cases of limited adult intervention, teachers are relegated to observing, rather than guiding, the ethical deliberations arising from daily classroom work. Allsup and Westerlund derive eight principles to guide an ethical music education, among them, that the more dependable the teaching method for producing specifiable outcomes, the less need there is for ethical decision-making.

Patrick Schmidt portrays ethics as a generative process of encountering and negotiating uncertainty and change, which are necessary conditions for "flourishing," as distinct from morals, for which he cites Appiah's (2008) conception as preordained rules of proper behavior. Echoing a familiar theme among these essays, Schmidt portrays traditional

music education as externally restrictive of flourishing in its imposition of established standards for learning, as well as internally restrictive in its absence of activities and environments that encourage creative production. Training and habits of mind compel educators to follow these presumptively acceptable norms, which Schmidt calls the "moral of the state," a disenfranchising condition which he believes accounts for the dreadful statistics on teaching career longevity. The result is an education system that practices an "economics of withholding" insofar as it does not sufficiently accommodate students who think and act outside the status quo of school music. According to Schmidt, the critical practice of "authorship" is necessary for the development of ethical flourishing, and promotes opportunities for teachers and students to spontaneously interact in learning spaces intended specifically for that purpose.

I am deeply indebted to Wayne Bowman for providing me the opportunity to be involved in this project, and for his careful mentoring as I progressed through initial editing, and to David Elliott, who provided guidance for this project later in the process. I also must acknowledge the many reviewers who spent long hours critiquing the manuscripts and elevating the quality and focus of scholarship, and Vincent Bates for commanding the final production details.

I hope that this collection of essays will invigorate discourse in ethics in music education, open new conceptual spaces for inquiry and debate, and stimulate others to contribute to the growing body of literature on ethics. Perhaps the most critical work music educators can undertake is to examine their ethical responsibilities toward every facet of the profession, and especially to their students, to whom so much of the writing contained herein is clearly directed.

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