

Social Justice and Equity: Doing the Right Thing in the Music Teacher Education Program

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Striking banners hang from the façade of an urban environment public high school in my neighborhood displaying an assemblage of laudable goals for its graduates. Each banner is dedicated to specific personal attributes that would more than likely be deemed appropriate by most passers-by who took the time to read the inscriptions. One in particular piqued my interest because it bore the words “socially just.” Interested in learning more about the school’s vision for its students, I searched online for its web site and found the Jones College Prep Mission Statement and “Profile of the Ideal Graduate.” These documents describe the type of individual the school aspires to develop, a graduate who would manifest or be on the way to actualizing the following list of attributes: socially-skilled and mature, compassionate, well-rounded and holistic, intellectually competent, and of particular relevance to this discussion, socially just and responsible.

Intrigued to learn how the terms were being translated at the secondary school level and in this local setting, and in particular, what might be included among “socially just and responsible” attributes, I dug deeper into the web site. There I discovered a distillation of eighteen characteristics that collectively define a “socially just and responsible” individual as one who is:

- able to look at all parts of ideas and then make judgments;
- introspective about his or her own history;
- free of stereotypes;
- culturally aware;
- aware of his/her own ignorance in relation to issues of social justice;
- a person of integrity and character;
- a person who has a sense of ‘what you reap is what you sow’;
- productive;
- aware that personal gifts bear responsibility for doing good in the world;
- a person of moral integrity;
- centered on issues of justice;
- fair-minded; tolerant;
- aware of the world;

- someone who wants to make a difference;
- aware of and beginning to make sense of issues of environment, globalization, poverty, and other macrocosmic frameworks;
- aware of power structures and systems and knows how they impact individuals; [and]
- able to function in a diverse world” (Jones College Prep).

I quote this list in its entirety because of the broad terrain it covers, addressing ethical and moral concerns as well as promoting social-consciousness, tolerance, and altruism, but, also because the listing seems to be predicated on an understanding that the pursuit of these goals is for the good of all students, and, ultimately, for the benefit of our society and world, in general.

The topics of “social justice” and “equity” have certainly captured the attention of a broad constituency of seemingly well-intentioned individuals, not only in disciplines related to the social sciences, the historical provenance of such constructs, but also in humanities fields and in the discipline of education. Over the past few years there have been numerous conferences at the international and national levels dedicated to topics as far-ranging as “psychology and social justice,” “mathematics and social justice,” “equity and social justice in education,” “teacher education and social justice,” as well as the “music education, equity, and social justice” conference that took place at Teachers College, Columbia University in the Fall of 2006.¹ Additionally, the topic has been discussed in scholarly articles and books, and vigorously debated on discussion boards, including the Mayday Group’s “Social Justice” on-line forum. Upon examining the varied uses and applications of these terms—social justice and equity—there seems to be little consensus about what the terms actually mean, resulting in a plethora of uses and broadly-defined applications, not unlike what we encounter in the secondary school example. Yet, core definitions of the words “justice” and “equity,” such as those encountered in any dictionary, lead one to surmise that at a fundamental level, the interlocking thread that weaves its way amongst these various conceptual constructs is the idea of *fairness*. For justice or equity to exist in whatever realm of society is being addressed, the principle of fairness in terms of treatment or representation must surely be a factor.

Similarly, there appears to be no generalized understanding of how these terms apply to education: of what can or should result from their pairing to the broad scope of activities and goals related to teaching and learning. One educational site on the World Wide Web

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makes this point by dubbing the term “social justice” as “a big enough umbrella for all of us” (Reach and Teach: Educating for a Change). And, in an article particularly germane to this discussion, “The Joint Enterprise of Social Justice Teacher Education,” Morva A. McDonald acknowledges that “‘social justice’ has become a new buzz word in teacher education,” noting the imprecise nature of discussions, and specifically, the lack of evidence verifying how the concept of social justice is actually manifested in the work of teacher education practitioners (McDonald 2007, 1).

A significant portion of the education-related discussion is focused on the equitable and fair treatment of “multicultural students” in the classroom, and specifically, appropriate behaviors, attitudes, and practices to be used with students of varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds, employing an approach that is variously described, but sometimes referred to as “culturally-responsive teaching.”² This discussion largely centers on attitudes and behaviors required of teachers to ensure the success of students of “diverse backgrounds” (formerly known as minority group or non-dominant culture students) and on the optimal design for education or schooling that will provide these students with an equitable or fair chance for succeeding in the classroom and, ultimately, in life. McDonald’s statement, which addresses teacher preparation, confirms this:

Social justice teacher education programs view preparing teachers with the knowledge, dispositions, and practices to work with students from diverse backgrounds as a fundamental responsibility of teacher education and require that the multiple settings of programs—university courses and field placements—contribute to prospective teachers’ learning to teach from a social justice perspective. In such programs, social justice and equity are key aspects of the vision of teaching and learning that informs program decisions at all levels—from program policies, to curriculum and pedagogy. (McDonald 2007, 1)

Further, she states that these programs “aim to prepare teachers with the knowledge, dispositions, and practices necessary to provide students from diverse backgrounds with high quality opportunities to learn” (McDonald 2007, 2).

While acknowledging the appropriateness of that facet of the discussion, I would like to shift the focus slightly to what transpires and results when the terms social justice and equity are applied as ideals that direct curricular decisions, regardless of the racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic backgrounds of the students who inhabit the classroom space—and to what can result from considering these ideals not specifically or primarily for the benefit of certain

groups, but rather to inform goals and decisions that impact the education and experience of all students. I will focus here on the curriculum aspect of this discussion, i.e., the specific curriculum used to educate and prepare music education majors, and its potential impact on the decisions subsequently made by these individuals once they are in the position of planning and designing their own music education programs.

I proffer, as a possible theorizing apparatus, the idea that curriculum content serves as “transformative intellectual knowledge,” a phrase employed by Christine E. Sleeter to refer to “funds of knowledge” that can be found across diverse groups of people (Sleeter 2005, 8). James A. Banks, one of the leading scholars in the field of multicultural education, identifies “transformative knowledge” as one of five types of knowledge used in curriculum construction, and defines it as including “concepts, paradigms, themes, and explanations that challenge mainstream academic knowledge and that expand the historical and literary canon” (cited in Sleeter 2005, 84). Applied to music curriculum content, this concept of “transformative knowledge” forces the issues of which musics are to be included and which musics are worthy of being studied and performed.

What happens when we juxtapose the phrase “social justice and equity” with teaching and learning in music and apply it to instructional content and curriculum in school and collegiate music programs? Clearly, it will conform comfortably to many of the arguments, goals, and rationales that have been advanced in discussions of multicultural music education over the past two decades or so. In one discussion that applied John Dewey’s pragmatism to multiculturalism and explored how employing a pragmatic approach to multiculturalism in the classroom can be an effective tool for “foster[ing] a sense of the collective and of mutual, multicultural problem solving,” Sue Ellen Henry refers to “social justice and educational equity” as being among the most urgent issues of multiculturalism. She also names social justice as the ultimate goal of multiculturalism, arguing that “framing multiculturalism from a pragmatic perspective offers multiculturalism a philosophically defensible moral underpinning for its focus on social justice (Henry 2005, 2, 4).”

In an essay entitled “The Joint Enterprise of Social Justice Teacher Education,” McDonald (2007) draws an important connection between the education discipline’s earlier focus on diversity issues and its more recent focus on social justice education:

Social justice teacher education programs build on more than a generation of effort in teacher education to prepare teachers to work with diverse students.

Since 1978, the national Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education has required programs to include multicultural education as part of the preservice curriculum (3).”

It is not the intent of this essay to rehash all of the arguments for multicultural education or rationales for preparing pre-service teachers to teach a culturally diverse student population. Rather the intent is to focus attention on the role of music teacher education programs in educating future teachers who are motivated and equipped to teach in a manner appropriate to and consonant with the ideals implicit in the constructs of social justice and equity as they apply to curricular content, regardless of their backgrounds or the backgrounds of the students they teach.

At their most basic level, these curricular issues concern the fair and equitable representation of musics—i.e., whose music is discussed and examined in the classroom and what repertoire is mastered in the applied music studio and presented on the concert hall stage. This brings to the fore consideration of issues such as the place or status of particular musics in music programs and curricula: the manner in which music outside of the Western European classical tradition is regarded and employed, and whether such musics are viewed as “special” or “exotic,” and therefore non-essential, optional, or otherwise unimportant. Among the considerations that involve issues of social justice when college level music programs attempt to address the study of diverse musical cultures and traditions are whether such study is to be required or elective, or whether it can be used to fulfill core program requirements.

Again, my concern in this essay is how an application of “social justice and equity” ideals to a music curriculum might benefit all music students, not just one segment of the school population. The knowledge base of all students is enriched when they are presented with a broader understanding of the phenomena we call music, when they are presented with a more accurate representation of the range of activities that comprise music-making from a global perspective. Teaching that is rooted in principles of social justice and equity must emphasize that “quality” is not the possession of a single musical tradition—and in particular, not the exclusive possession of the European classical tradition that is the curricular core of most American school, college, and university music programs. The musical and the social understanding of all students is deepened when they see that musical cultures worthy of study exist across the world’s traditions, instead of being left with the impression that only a narrow

range of music is of sufficient quality to stand up to academic scrutiny and earn a place in the classroom or the lecture hall.

Teaching from a broadened approach engenders for students an enlarged and less-restrictive concept of music and music-making, one that allows students to discover the inherent beauty and power present in the multi-variegated musical landscape that exists across historical time periods, geographic regions, and cultures of the world. Such an approach will foster deeper and richer understandings of music as “a human phenomenon,” the phrase used by Patricia Shehan Campbell (Campbell 1991, 3) or music as “a form of intentional human activity,” to use David Elliott’s phraseology (Elliott 1995, 39). And in acknowledging the humanity of music and music-making, we acknowledge it as being inclusive of and belonging to all peoples, cultures, ethnic groups, and social classes. In discussing the potential contribution of praxial music education to the goals of multicultural music education, Elliott addresses the far-reaching benefits of employing music of diverse cultures in the curriculum.

I propose that a multi-cultural music curriculum connects the individual selfhood of students—which includes their personal and musical identities—to the selfhood of other music makers and audiences in other times and places. A music curriculum centered on the praxial teaching and learning of a reasonable range of music-cultures (over a time span of months and years) offers students the opportunity to achieve a central goal of humanistic education: self-understanding through the processes of coming to understand others. (Elliott n.d.)

As students become educated in more diverse musics, they come to understand the roles that music and the arts serve across cultures, and the variety of aesthetic principles, performance practices, and meanings that peoples, through collective consciousness and shared beliefs, bring to this vast array of music-making experiences. The study of musics from their socio-cultural perspectives is critical because of the insights it provides into music’s meaning and significance across the spectrum of cultures—insights that lead to deeper knowledge about culture or peoples. Students also draw from these educational experiences the understanding that musics emanate out of and in response to the cultural, social, and political contexts in which they are situated. At their most elemental, the diverse forms of music serve as vivid expressions of the customs, traditions, values, beliefs, aesthetics, and habits of being of the world’s peoples. Sleeter (2005) observes:

From perspectives of intellectuals from historically marginalized communities, knowledge is always situated in the context in which people create it, constructed, at least to some extent, in the service of knowledge creators' communities. Traditional mainstream academic disciplinary knowledge—the foundation of most school knowledge—has been largely rooted in experiences, concerns, points of view, and ways of knowing that emerged in Europe and among European Americans, particularly economically privileged men. (84)

Consider how scholar and ethnomusicologist J.H. Kwabena Nketia describes the functional nature of (in this case) African music:

In traditional African societies, music making is generally organized as a social event. Public performances, therefore, take place on social occasions—that is, on occasions when members of a group of a community come together for the enjoyment of leisure, for recreational activities, or for the performance of a rite, ceremony, festival, or any kind of collective activity, such as building bridges, clearing paths, going on a search party, or putting out fires—activities that, in industrialized societies, might be assigned to specialized agencies (Nketia 1974, 21).

This not only describes music on the continent of Africa, it also provides a framework for discerning how this meaning is transmitted and translated into other Africa-rooted musical traditions, including various historical and contemporary expressions of African-American music and musics of Afro-Latin and Caribbean cultures. It points out as well the socio-political roles that various genres of black music continue to serve.

When students have the opportunities to more fully explore and comprehend approaches to diverse and unfamiliar musics, their appreciation of and attitudes towards other cultures is enhanced. A reciprocal benefit ensues: Music provides social and cultural knowledge about the range and variety of human experiences, and social and cultural awareness enriches knowledge of music.

In some cases, students' knowledge of a culture or music may have been attained solely or primarily via images generated in the popular media—images that often present a partial picture, or that are laden with inaccuracies and stereotypes. The application of social justice and equity ideals should be a curriculum that explores fully and accurately the range of musically related concerns—the aesthetics, the artistic achievements, and music-making endeavors—of peoples who are like and unlike the students themselves. Not only is this the right thing, the just and equitable thing to do, it is a step towards better understanding among peoples, leading to, perhaps, a more just and equitable society.

The following “working definition” encapsulates succinctly the relationship between the aspirations and the challenges of multicultural education and those of curricula devoted to social justice—and their significance to society in general:

Ultimately, the goal of multicultural education is to contribute progressively and proactively to the transformation of society and to the application and maintenance of social justice and equity.” . . . “In a sense, multicultural education uses the transformation of self and school as a metaphor and starting place for the transformation of society. Ultimately, social justice and equity in schools can, and should, mean social justice and equity in society. Only then will the purpose of multicultural education be fully achieved. (EdChange Multicultural Pavilion Web site)

The role of music teacher education

In the premiere issue of the *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, Bennett Reimer presented “An Agenda for Music Teacher Education.” In that essay, he addressed the question of breadth in music studies in this manner:

The musicianship training of music education majors is largely if not entirely in the hands of teachers of theory, history, and performance, including ensemble directors. That training tends to gravitate toward the conservative end of the continuum in regard to the literature studied and the skills developed. The history background our majors receive tends to be limited to a survey of common-practice music in the great Western concert tradition. The theory training they are given, in ear training, analysis, and music writing tends to be closely tied to the practices of that literature. And the works they study as performers both in private lessons and in ensembles tend also to be highly correlated with that core literature, although more likely to diverge in this aspect of their training (Reimer 1991, 8-9).

Reimer went on to explain that he considers the literature of the Western tradition “foundational,” and states his disagreement with the “currently fashionable ‘politically correct’ position” . . . that Western concert music is no more pertinent or important than any other of the world musics represented in the multi-musical culture of the United States” (Reimer 1991, 9). He concluded by stating: “So the music we have inherited from our Western history must, I believe, remain an important ingredient in the education of those who will be teaching music to new generations.”

Then, in what I perceive to be a critical qualifying sentence, he states, “but, it must not be the only ingredient” (Reimer 1991, 9). Whether or not one agrees with the totality of Reimer’s argument, his description of the manner in which music education majors are educated is still accurate and to the point. His comments suggest that responsibility for the

development of these students' subject matter knowledge is a shared responsibility that has never rested solely in the hands of the music education faculty. The way music is defined in the academic music curriculum—by what is included and what is not—is reflected and demonstrated by course content and structure, curriculum requirements, and the types of experiences provided to all students.

Over a decade ago a first-hand experience with an undergraduate student who was completing a semester-long student teaching practicum engendered for me an epiphanous moment of clarity regarding this very issue. Despite the fact that the topic of “multicultural music education” had been presented in methods classes through an examination of the theory and philosophy and discussion of rationales, I was disappointed when this student, in the last semester of coursework, shared with me a lesson plan and related activities that seemed to completely ignore the concept and was built instead on content that was representative of only European classical music. This might not have presented a problem if the lesson itself had been focused on that body of music; however, it was an elementary grade lesson on the general topic of “composers.” And all of the figures included in the lesson plan were European classical music composers from time periods pre-dating the 20th century.

I expressed my disappointment [read: horror] at the limited selection of composers particularly because I knew that this student had not been educated to think so narrowly, at least in the music education methods classes under my direction. But I was wrong. I realized that the student had been trained to think that way by virtue of the collective impact of the core music courses and experiences that had been completed in the years spent in the undergraduate music degree program leading up to the student teaching practicum. I pointed out that the lesson plan presented a very limited and misleading portrayal of “composers.” I asked why no composers from musical styles outside of the classical tradition, no American composers, no women composers, no contemporary composers, or no composers from countries outside of Europe had been included. My student teacher's sheepish response was that the textbook used in the undergraduate music history course had served as the resource for the lesson plan. My response was to emphasize that she should not miss this opportunity to impress upon her young student learners that individuals who compose music do so in a variety of styles and genres, that composers hail from different parts of the world, and that women are composers as well as men, thus providing them with a more complete

understanding and a fairer representation. She agreed and a productive discussion about appropriate resources ensued.

The student teacher's reliance on a familiar and trusted textbook as the source for lesson plan content was quite understandable and even predictable. According to Gay (2000),

Textbooks are the basis of 70% to 95% of all classroom instruction. As levels of education advance from kindergarten through high school, this dominance increases. Another testament to the power of textbooks is the fact that most students consider their authority to be incontestable and the information they present always to be accurate, authentic, and absolute truth. School level has little if any effect on these perceptions. When called upon to defend the validity of their explanations and understandings of issues, students often respond, "Because the book said so." Textbooks are often thought to be a foolproof means of guaranteeing successful teaching and learning. These practices and associated attitudes are so strongly entrenched in the minds of students that the value of courses without textbooks is sometimes suspect. (113)

For students preparing to become teachers, textbook materials may symbolically hold an even more exalted position as indisputable vessels of trustworthy knowledge due to their role as an educator's standard tools of the trade.

It is not difficult to understand the reasons that beginning teachers might rely heavily on their core music classes as sources for appropriate subject matter content. Foremost among these reasons is that this content is perceived as incontrovertible knowledge, knowledge validated by virtue of its mere presence in these courses. Second is the fact that teachers (and teachers in training) teach what they know and, further, they exhibit the general tendency to teach in the same manner in which they have been taught. A third reason is simply the limited amount of time available for students enrolled in the student teaching practicum to research additional content, coupled perhaps with insufficient knowledge of how to conduct the necessary research. Given the breadth of materials and information now available free of charge on the World Wide Web at the simple click of a mouse, the last reason has surely been diminished as a factor. The basic problem remains, however: core music courses and textbooks do not address the broad scope of music and musical practices; despite decades of research in ethnomusicology and multicultural music education, "core courses" continue to focus on the Western, European classical tradition almost exclusively.

This personal experience with a student teacher motivated me to take action in an area of the curriculum over which I had some control—two upper division music education

courses that dealt with materials and methods. The curriculum-based changes, which involved a modification of course content and structure, evolved over a number of years. But there were also changes related to the classroom environment and resources that were tackled immediately and were fairly easy to implement. These involved supplementing the materials available for use by music education students in their lesson and unit planning, a strategy that was initially accomplished by raiding my personal library of books, audio-visual materials, and sound recordings, and later by using internally-funded grants to purchase a large assortment of resource materials for teaching the music of diverse cultures.

These materials were incorporated into my music education courses and were also made available for students to draw upon in their own lesson planning and practice teaching. In addition, over the course of hosting several years of summer workshops, the program acquired the latest editions of music books and a host of other instructional materials including sound recordings and videos, provided by series book publishers. These materials represented a wide variety of musical cultures from within and outside the United States, and drew on ethnomusicological research as well as music education resources. Their presence in the music education classroom served as an empowering force for students by providing them opportunities to work with resources that extended other parts of their academic training. These changes also promoted student agency by providing opportunities for students to make their own informed decisions about what was worthy of inclusion.

While these strategies influenced the music education component of the curriculum, they had no effect on the greater portion of my students' education: the musical "core." I remained concerned that regardless of what music education majors encounter in methods and materials courses, if a broader, more inclusive scope is not represented in the musical "core," there is little hope it will be reflected in the music curricula and programs they develop and direct once they begin teaching careers.

The limited involvement and gross neglect of musical traditions outside of the European classical tradition in the music "core" curriculum has been the focus of considerable scholarly attention over the past decade or so, as evidenced by discussions and presentations at national music conferences and in the publications of national music organizations such as the College Music Society (CMS), the Society for American Music (SAM),³ the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM), and the Center for Black Music Research (CBMR). For example, at the Musical Intersections "mega-meeting"⁴ held in Toronto in

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2000, the first CMS session⁵ addressed “the obvious under-representation of music by non-European artists in the college curriculum” (American Musicological Society 2000, 1). A presentation⁶ at a CMS Poster Session at the same conference addressed, in part, “incorporating popular music, jazz, and music of other cultures as models of correlation or contrast with the Western musical canon” (ibid., 147). These discussions are not unlike what transpired in the fields of American and English literature during the 1980s, where lively debate ensued on redefining and expanding the literary canon to include works by women and minorities. The discussion was heightened by the publication of *The Closing of the American Mind*, in which Allan Bloom claimed that “abandoning the Western canon had dumbed down universities” (cited in Donadio 2007).” This debate led to special sessions on the topic at annual meetings of the Modern Language Association, re-examinations of curriculum in academic English programs, and a barrage of publications, including critical essays, articles, and books.

In 1996, an issue of the *Black Music Research Journal*, a scholarly journal produced by the Center for Black Music Research of Columbia College Chicago, was devoted to an examination of educational philosophy and pedagogy. In one of the articles,⁷ Christopher Wilkinson makes a personal declaration that demonstrates that decisions made by faculty regarding course content are often value-laden, and that attitudes and values can be important catalysts in the motivation to teach from a particular perspective.

My commitment to exploring the processes of acculturation and the diverse musical traditions that it has fostered arises from a deeply held conviction that as teachers we not only discuss the subject of music history but also convey to our students the value we attach to the art itself, to the people who created it, and to the world in which they lived. Those who teach the subject of music history, explicitly or not, espouse a particular aesthetic and socio-political hierarchy. This course advocates an aesthetic, political, and social order that aims to be inclusive not only of the diversity of musical traditions but also of the diversity of people who have been the sources of this tradition (Wilkinson 1996, 265-266).

Current discussions of critical theory and critical pedagogy are also worthy of note in this regard. For instance, Patrick Schmidt’s (2005) efforts to apply Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1970) to music education explores some of the ways music education might become a more empowering enterprise for both students and teachers. Schmidt claims, among other things, that schools fail to provide “tools for critical thinking

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and transformative action”, and that music education “must go beyond considerations of musical syntax, aesthetics, and performance”—the components that currently dominate music curricula and programs (Schmidt 2005, 3). Schmidt argues further that music education “needs to relate to the realities of individuals and communities in which it engages. It must not only establish its value in cognitive and emotional connections alone, but also search for social and thus personal, transformation” (ibid., 3).

One of the ways that the higher education music curriculum can empower prospective teachers is by deepening their knowledge and enlarging their understanding of what music is, and of what music means to the peoples who make it and receive it—the many forms and meanings music has assumed across time, social circumstances, and cultural milieus. Such a strategy allows students (prospective teachers) both to explore the social and cultural realms of music-making and to experience the music, culture, and social situations of peoples and communities whose faces, though absent from the core music curriculum, may well be seen in the schools and communities in which they are eventually employed as teachers. Of the many ways teachers can become empowered in the classroom, one of the most basic or elemental is through the confidence that results from deeper levels of understanding and competence in their subject matter.

While solutions to the curriculum problem must be sought on a number of different levels and in all of the areas of musical instruction, music teacher educators have a pivotal and exciting role to play in this process. Part of the task requires calling on the expertise and enlisting the support of faculty colleagues from other areas of the music curriculum towards a concerted and coordinated effort to transform the content knowledge of music education majors. The effort must be made to involve those responsible for applied music instruction, conducting courses, and performing ensembles in discussing strategies to broaden the repertoire and literature presented to all music majors. We need to work to “break down barriers and encourage more communication between music education faculty and faculty in theory, musicology, composition, and performance”⁸ (American Musicological Society, 48). Music history and theory faculty must be encouraged to pursue study opportunities that present alternative approaches to teaching music history and theory, such as the CMS Institute for Music History Pedagogy, and its Institute on the Pedagogies of World Music Theory. Administrative support for this type of professional development among “core subject” faculty is essential.

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Until systematic change across the music curriculum becomes a reality, music teacher educators must capitalize on their distinctive positions to introduce students to resources and materials for teaching music and provide opportunities for critical examination of these materials for their pedagogical value. Courses in music education foundations, methods, and materials, may well present the only opportunity in the standard music curriculum where students encounter more than cursory exposure to musics that are not addressed in the core, included in the repertoire for applied lessons and conducting classes, or performed in the band, orchestra, chorus, or chamber music ensembles.

Music education courses also serve as laboratories where content deemed appropriate for classroom use is employed experientially as students develop and hone their pedagogical skills. Music excluded from these laboratory settings is less likely to be incorporated as instructional content in future lesson planning and teaching experiences. Prospective teachers must have hands-on experience with diverse styles and genres of music in order to develop an understanding of their worth and potential pedagogical value. While optimally, such experience should occur throughout and across the program, we must not overlook the benefits of including it in foundations, methods, and materials classes. When one prepares to teach a topic, one is forced to interact with it in a more intimate manner by studying it more deeply and critically, and contemplating it at higher cognitive levels. Therefore, music education courses must involve the study and analysis of musics of diverse cultures and assure that lesson plans incorporate such materials.

The curricular focus I am advocating represents just one step towards addressing justice and equity issues in music education programs; it nevertheless provides a critical space for initiating and framing this discussion. This step must not stand alone. It must be accompanied by careful discussion and interrogation of rationales and justifications for teaching from more inclusive and more critically-informed perspectives. While this might seem self-evident to those who are adamant about the need for change in the discipline of music and/or music education, my twenty-plus years of experience in the field have shown me that students who decide to pursue careers in music education do so largely because of meaningful prior experiences in school music programs. Very few enter the profession wanting to change it or even being cognizant of a need for change. Fewer still are inclined to question the appropriateness of their experiences in pre-collegiate and collegiate music curricula. Therefore, we must seek to help students see the inequities that curricula often

embody and understand the historical contexts, underlying values, and power structures that create and sustain these inequities.

All of this presents an opportunity for change in the way music is taught and, more specifically, the manner in which it is taught to music education majors. An article in the *Black Music Research Journal's* 1996 issue on educational philosophy and pedagogy presented the challenge this way:

No longer should such training employ performance and study materials that almost exclusively reflect European classical or Western art music. Prospective music teachers need the opportunity to study and perform music that is representative of a variety of cultures. They need opportunities to interact with and utilize these musics in their pedagogy and methodology courses. A commitment to preparing students from a multicultural perspective will undoubtedly require significant changes in the music education curricula typically found in colleges and universities throughout the country (Sands 1996, 227).

These changes will require the collective will, ingenuity, and commitment of all music faculty. But music educators in particular can be key in preparing and motivating students to teach music in less exclusive ways, working to promote a more fair, just, and equitable representation in the academic curriculum of a more diverse repertoire of music and the cultures and communities that define the historical provenances of these musics.

Notes

¹ The International Conference International Conference on Music Education, Equity, and Social Justice, sponsored by Teachers College, Columbia University, was held October 6-8, 2006.

² According to Geneva Gay, "Although called by many different names, including *culturally relevant, sensitive, centered, congruent, reflective, mediated, contextualized, synchronized, and responsive*, the ideas about why it is important to make classroom instruction more consistent with the cultural orientations of ethnically diverse students, and how this can be done, are virtually identical" (Gay 2000, 29).

³ Formerly known as the Sonneck Society

⁴ This event featured joint meetings of fourteen different music organizations.

⁵ Entitled "Diversity in Today's College Music Curriculum."

⁶ Entitled "Rethinking Pedagogical Norms: Northwestern University's New Approach to Teaching Music Theory,"

⁷ "De-forming and Reforming the Canon: Challenges of a Multicultural Music History Course"

⁸ This statement is taken from the abstract for the panel presentation, "Innovative Ideas for Changing the Undergraduate Music Curriculum."

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