

Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education

The refereed scholarly journal of the



Volume 2, No. 1
September 2003

Thomas A. Regelski, Editor
Wayne Bowman, Associate Editor
Darryl A. Coan, Publishing Editor

Electronic Article

Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts

Juergen Vogt

© Juergen Vogt, 2003 All rights reserved.

The content of this article is the sole responsibility of the author. The ACT Journal and the MayDay Group, and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville are not liable for any legal actions, which may arise involving the article's content, including but not limited to, copyright infringement.

ISSN 1545-4517

For contact information, please point your Web Browser to:

ACT Journal: <http://act.maydaygroup.org>

or

MayDay Site: <http://www.maydaygroup.org>

Philosophy – Music Education – Curriculum Some Casual Remarks on Some Basic Concepts

Jürgen Vogt, University of Hamburg

So beware, those of you to attempt to write philosophy for anyone else to read!
(Reimer 2003, x)

Despite attempts to establish some sort of international community of music educators who work in the field of philosophy and/or theory of music education, there remains little exchange or discussion between the Anglo-American and the European philosophy of music education. There are many reasons for this: some of them obvious (such as the absence of a "lingua franca" in music education); others less so.

Whatever their reasons, I find it striking that Dutch (Koopman 1995) or Finnish authors (Westerlund 2002) who deal with the philosophy of music education (hereafter, PME) do not discuss the German scholarly work in this field; nor do



German authors generally acknowledge Anglo-American writings.¹ Apart from linguistic difficulties, there may be *some* problems concerning different paradigms or



thought-traditions.² Or perhaps there is no transatlantic communication in music education because there is nothing to communicate about! Put differently, perhaps the paradigm(s) of the PME in North America are so different from those in Germany that even the most basic concepts and definitions of music education are fundamentally different. If this were true, however, there could be no “comparative music education” because there would not be anything that could be compared.

Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

I do not believe the paradigms in PME are completely incommensurable. As long as there is some common ground – however uncertain its “foundational” status³ – for phenomena like music or education, the potential for communication and understanding among music educators exists. I write “phenomena” because there are numerous and significant differences between German and Anglo-American PME: differences in paradigms, concepts, ideas, and words. To discuss even the simplest of these differences would be a wearisome enterprise. That is why I will *not* try to write an extensive essay-like review of Bennett Reimer’s *Philosophy of Music Education*, but I will try – if this is an excusable way to read and to treat it – to use Reimer’s to illustrate how difficult it is to find the common ground I mentioned above, and to demonstrate the urgency and necessity of seeking this ground. It is not my intention to contrast single traits of Anglo-American and German PME. My interest is a highly selective one: I will concentrate merely on those parts of Reimer’s book, that are of interest for me and my specific situation and context as a *German* reader, rooted in certain German traditions of PME. For example, the “National Standards” are probably very important in the American context because of their implications for the future of music in American schools, but these standards, their history, and their content are not within the scope of this essay. Instead, I will try to focus on some basic assumptions that concern *any* PME, whether situated in North America or in Germany or anywhere else. The necessary precondition for this effort is a certain concept of philosophy with which I will deal more closely in the first part of this

Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

essay. With Wayne Bowman I consider *any* philosophical endeavour basically as a “process devoted to the systematic examination of the grounds for belief and action.” Therefore, “philosophy is a systematic, *reflective* discipline; philosophy is a *process* of exploration or inquiry . . . ; and philosophy takes as its objects not so much facts and essences, not so much immutable or eternal truths, as human *beliefs* and the *practices* in which they are both embedded and which tend to shape them” (Bowman 1992, 3). Since PME, like any philosophy, should be a reflective discipline, I will approach Bennett Reimer’s philosophy by asking some basic questions: questions that may help provoke reflections much like a mirror does – by showing things back in a slightly different light. Perhaps that will help shed some much-needed light on the diverse field of PME.

Question 1: What does Reimer (and some others) mean by “philosophy”?

It is difficult to find a definition of philosophy with which everyone agrees. There may in fact be as many definitions of philosophy as there are authors. According to David Elliott (1995, 8), for example, a philosophical inquiry

- Is concerned with the “big picture.” (However, if this is true then scientific or political debates are also philosophical, and Analytical Philosophy is not.)
- Is concerned with issues that cannot be addressed by observation, description, or experiment alone. (However, if this is true then theology and literary criticism are philosophy, too.)
- Produces new perspectives on our thoughts and actions. (If this is true then my new diet plan is also a philosophical inquiry.)

- Often deals with the criticism of past philosophy. (If so, then philosophy can achieve philosophical status simply because of its attempts to correct preceding philosophy – which is not a definition, but a “*petitio principii*.”)
- Is not an independent field of inquiry in the same way that physics or chemistry is, but it helps those fields in their self-reflection. (If this is so, then philosophy is mainly a “theory of science” – as some think it should be. And from this perspective, Plato and Hegel are not philosophers because their reflections are not helpful to the present self-reflections of physics or chemistry.)

Bennett Reimer is more careful in this respect. For him, philosophy is “not science as we have come to understand that word in the modern world but science in the sense of systematic, precise reflection about ideas, beliefs, values and meanings” (6). If this is not a very convincing definition, at least it appears relatively harmless – depending upon what is meant by “systematic” and “precise” (and as anyone who has studied the history of philosophy will know, dialectical and analytical philosophers, for example, strenuously disagree about the meaning of those adjectives). Reimer, however, deploys a kind of institutional or historical argument: various philosophical disciplines have their own histories and standards, like epistemology or aesthetics; and a PME should ground its orientation within the historical and systematic framework of those disciplines. This approach raises other problems and difficulties, but it relieves PME (or at least Reimer’s PME) of defining what philosophy *essentially* is. Philosophy (and its branches or divisions or subdivisions) exists as an academic discipline and it is not, or should not be, the task of music education to invent some new philosophy or new branch of philosophy. Obviously, some parts of philosophy are relevant to PME while others are not. But which are and which one are

not? Reimer maintains that “the branches of philosophy of most direct relevance for music education are aesthetics, or philosophy of art, and education” (6).

This declaration creates two problems. First, “aesthetics” is not the same as “philosophy of art.” The former is only a part of the latter. Immanuel Kant’s aesthetics, for example, is no philosophy of art at all, because it deals with the specific



form of aesthetic judgement.⁴ Reimer concedes, however, that he uses the term aesthetics “in the broadest possible sense, encompassing all past and present philosophical discourse on the entire range of issues related to aesthetics and philosophy of art, whether conceived as separate or concurrent domains” (7). The question is whether one can use a philosophical term in such an open and broad sense without getting into serious systematic trouble. Are all aesthetic philosophies and theories equally important for music education, notwithstanding their philosophical and theoretical background and their historical contexts? Which aesthetic philosophy is right and which one is wrong? Does it make any sense at all to speak of right and wrong, or of better or worse in aesthetic contexts? Is Hegel’s aesthetics “better” than Kant’s or is it just different? Is there any progress in aesthetics? Obviously, one needs a certain set of criteria in order to decide which aesthetic philosophy is more *plausible* or which one is more *useful* for the *educational* enterprise. These criteria, however, cannot be aesthetic themselves; or better: they cannot be aesthetic alone. Obviously, there must be criteria for adjudicating the relevance, the cogency, or the utility of rival

Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

aesthetic philosophies – if, that is, they are to be deployed for ends that are *pedagogical*.

The second problem is that Reimer seems to think that these crucial philosophical criteria (i.e. the criteria that might help us distinguish appropriate from inappropriate aesthetic doctrines) follow from the importance of education. Education, however, is obviously not a branch of philosophy but a praxis or a theory of its own. There is, as we know, a branch called “philosophy of education,” which, according to R. Senchuck is “a branch of philosophy concerned with virtually every aspect of the educational enterprise. It significantly overlaps other, more mainstream branches (especially epistemology and ethics, but even logic and metaphysics)” (Senchuck 1995, 583-84). If Senchuck is right, then philosophy of education is philosophical primarily to the extent it draws upon other branches of philosophy. In other words, we have to know what education *is* (or what education should be) before we can say which branches of philosophy share its objects, questions, or problems (for PME cf. Kaiser 1998, Vogt 1998). Within the German tradition, for instance, there is a very strong connection between ethics and the philosophy of education, a connection stronger than it is in, say, France or Great Britain.⁵ This strong connection creates problems of its own – when, in German philosophy of education, the moral aspect dominates or eclipses concern with action theory and instructional technique. But still, it is hard to imagine a genuine philosophy of education that neglects such ethical, normative questions. This is no less true for PME than any other branch of



Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

educational philosophy. In other words, PME (whether Reimer's or anyone else's) must confront the thorny, normative, pedagogical questions concerning the justification, the reasons for, and the ends of music education. Aesthetics, no matter how one defines the field, is not adequate to ends like these.

From my perspective, it appears there is a tendency in PME to deal with "aesthetic" questions at the expense of normative educational ones. As Heidi Westerlund recently put it, "The nature of a philosophical view of music education depends largely upon the way music, the subject matter, is defined. There is an agreement that music education is, above all, about the enhancement of musical learning, growth and the enrichment of people's musical life" (Westerlund 2002, 14). Is this definition self-evident? Who has agreed on this view and when? On this particular point, it seems the views of aestheticists and praxialists converge. Philip Alperson's answer to the seminal question "What Should One Expect From a Philosophy of Music Education?" criticizes the "aesthetic rationale" for PME for the shortcomings of its music-philosophical foundations. Accepting Alperson's criticisms of aesthetic-based music philosophy, however, does not address the more basic theoretical question for PME: whether a philosophy of *music*, aesthetic or praxial, is an adequate starting point for philosophical reflections in the field of PME. In the end, Alperson's response sounds pretty much like the position Reimer takes:

"An adequate philosophy of music . . . would provide an understanding of what we might call the 'music world', by which I mean the set of practices related to the making, understanding, and valuation of music and the social, institutional, and theoretical contexts in which such practices have their place. If we could

arrive at something like an adequate philosophy of music, we would then have a base on which we could build a philosophy of music education, whose task it would be to provide a reasoned account of the goals, techniques, and values of music education in particular” (Alperson 1991, 218).

So far as I can discern from Reimer’s book, he moves on the same ground as Alperson (at least as regards this issue). In terms of ethics, however, this approach strikes me as committing a kind of *naturalistic fallacy*, with the following logical structure:

- ***Because*** music or the music world has certain features and properties,
- ***It follows*** that these properties must be the goals or values for music education.

Obviously this argument is wrong. If a purely formalistic theory of music (just for the sake of the argument) were somehow proven valid, it would not follow automatically or necessarily that music education must concentrate on music’s formal features: for there might be more prominent educational goals having little or nothing to do with such formal properties. The same is true of aesthetic or praxial musical theories. The best we can hope for, it seems to me, is a certain *convergence* between pedagogical-normative aims and values and philosophy of music. Music itself cannot be held to have educational value unless we make clear and discuss what is meant by education. This leads us to

Question 2: What is Reimer’s concept of “education”?

Due to his “aesthetic” starting-point, it is not easy to find a simple answer in Reimer’s book. There is not, for example, a specific chapter devoted to the subject. In

any case, Reimer has serious doubts about music's (or music education's) capacity to make people "more ethical" (126). And he lists numerous reasons for doubting it.

Although the Platonic idea of improving people's character or behavior through music education is perhaps the oldest guiding idea in the history of music education, there is no proof whatsoever for the truth of this idea. By the same token, Reimer rejects all utilitarian foundations of and justifications for music education: claims that "music is useful for raising test scores in the 'basic' subjects, for improving spatial-temporal reasoning (the so-called Mozart effect), for making people 'smarter,' for supporting the teaching of a variety of other subjects, for instilling discipline, improving social skills, and on and on with the many uses music has been claimed to serve throughout



the history of music education" (63). Again, he has many reasons at his disposal.⁶

On the other hand, Reimer surprisingly adopts an argument that has been brought forward before by "praxialists" like Regelski and Bowman (cf. Regelski 1998, Bowman 2002): music education and its results might add to what, in the "Aristotelian" tradition, may be called "the good life." In Reimer's view,

[W]e can conceive the good life as an accumulation of particular goods, each particular way to achieve an important value adding its particularity to the sum total of a life worth living. In that sense music offers ethical and life-enhancing values just as numberless other endeavors do, but *in the distinctive way characteristic of music*. . . . The goal, or value, or rationale for music, then, is not its contribution to what every other endeavor equally contributes to . . . but the contribution it makes *that nothing else can make*" (127).

At this point, I think, Reimer approaches the crucial question of how educational aims and musical qualities may come at least into contact – but

Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

unfortunately he does not take the opportunity to address it. Admittedly, authors like Regelski and Bowman are not very explicit either, when it comes to terms of defining “the good life,” especially in terms of the specific contributions music may make. Reimer’s assurances to the effect that ‘The good life is an accumulation of particular goods,’ or that ‘Music adds to the good life because it adds all those values only music possesses’ are unhelpful and largely circular – they do not really explain a lot. In any case, we need *some* precise definition of a “good life” before we can say much that is meaningful about its relation to educational aims and to musical qualities.⁷



Reimer gives us no such definition. It is possible, however, to *deduce* or *infer* what Reimer has in mind. The “life worth living” seems to be a life full of *experiences* of all kinds: mental, bodily and emotional. Musical experience, then, is a part of this totality – and of course consists of experiences that are uniquely musical. “That is why musical experience is the core value of the philosophy I propose and the core determinant of musical learnings on which I believe music education should focus, such as the national content standards enumerate” (127). Expressed in more detail yet:

An experience-based philosophy of music education is one that focuses on and cherishes all the many ways music can be experienced and all the many musics offering the special experience music provides. . . . An experience-based philosophy of music education is inclusive of all musics and of all ways of being engaged with it because every particular kind and type of music, and every particular way music is made and received, represents a particular opportunity for musical experience. All such opportunities are precious. The central task of music education, I propose, is to make musical experience in all its manifestations as widely available to all people, and as richly cultivated for each individual, as possible” (69).

Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

Who would argue against this proposition? Almost anyone would probably sympathize with this claim. But the point that interests me is: who *could* argue against this proposition on the basis of argumentations Reimer has presented before? As Reimer confesses, he is “steeped in and devoted to Deweyan progressive education principles” (217). Unfortunately, especially for the German reader, Reimer does not explain or elaborate what is meant by these principles or by the “Deweyan” approach he obviously advocates. Of course, even as a German reader one has a broad idea

 what *may* be meant by that,⁸ but apart from a few quotations from *Art and Experience* (7, 66, 84, 141-42), Dewey’s philosophy and especially his philosophy of education is not mentioned by Reimer. I suspect that Dewey serves merely as a kind of “silent background” for Reimer whenever he argues in favor of musical *experience* as the basic means and end of music education. However, given the importance of “experience” for Reimer, a silent background is not very satisfying or illuminating.

For example: the term “musical experience” or “musical-aesthetic experience”

 has gained a certain value and importance within the German PME.⁹ “Aesthetic experience” as a term and as a notion exists in philosophical traditions like hermeneutics (Ehrenforth 1971), pragmatism (Kaiser 1993, Rolle 1999) and phenomenology (Vogt 2001). And there many other authors whose writings could serve as a philosophical background for an experience-based PME (e.g. Hans-Georg Gadamer, John Dewey, Alfred Schuetz, Maurice Merleau-Ponty). Reimer quotes Dewey and, from the phenomenological tradition, Mikel Dufrenne, but he does not go

Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

into any detail on Dewey's or Dufrenne's concept of aesthetic-musical experience, nor does he discuss the specific contexts in which Dewey's and Dufrenne's philosophies are rooted. If Reimer would have done so, he most likely would have gotten into serious trouble pursuing his "synergetic" approach (30-35), because while pragmatists and phenomenologists talk a lot about "experience," their concepts of it are utterly different in many details.

Regardless, *any* experience-based theory of music education, pragmatistic or phenomenological, faces a serious *pedagogical* problem that is scarcely mentioned by Reimer. In terms of a general philosophy of education, such theories always are



*formal theories of education.*¹⁰ With the term "formal theory of education" – in German: "formale *Bildungstheorie*" – the neglect (or lack) of content for such theories is signified: Experience is regarded as "formal" when it is not important what content – objects, topics, musics – constitutes it. Similarly, Reimer argues in favor of "every particular kind and type of music" (69), because every kind of music has *something* to offer that is worth experiencing.

This strikes me as a promising approach, especially in light of all the nauseating debates about the appropriateness of popular music for music education. But it creates as many problems as it offers to solve. Let me quote an example from Reimer, drawn from the chapter "The Feeling Dimension of Musical Experience" (72-102). It startles me, perhaps because the history of German music education (as part of the history of Germany in general) gives its message distinctive meaning for me.

Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

The setting is a church meeting at the height of civil rights movement, where a prominent black clergyman has concluded a stirring message with the words, “We *shall* overcome. . . Let us all rise and express this faith.” Reimer’s description continues:

We need no further instruction. All stand and lock arms, and he leads us in singing the great anthem. . . . In our selfness each of us has linked with other selves, transforming a shared aspiration into a shared, inner progression of feeling only music could accomplish, a making of felt meaning that the words by themselves could not possibly do. Idea, assertion, faith, need, all given shape and immediacy by making music of them – making them ‘sound’ in a way beyond language, making them ‘mean’ in a way beyond language. Music has worked its special magic. Again” (96-97).

I am sure that Reimer is right: music is able to do this. And perhaps an “education of feeling” is something many music educators have neglected for too long. But – and this is the problem with all formal theories of education, Dewey’s included – no pure theory of experience can tell us *which* feelings ought to be educated with the help of *which* music, or in what way. Magic is always dangerous. Without the given context – a church meeting during the civil rights movement – one could use this same account to describe the impact of music during a meeting of a totalitarian political party where, say, the party-hymn is sung and people come together and feel their selfness linked with that of others. I understand that this is not what Reimer intended. But one has to quite sure that one’s feelings are good and appropriate, as part of the determination whether one’s musical experience is a valuable one. How does anyone know?¹¹ In other words, a formal PME like Reimer’s



Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

needs to address the correlation between experience-as-a-process, the object of



experience, and experience-as-a-result.¹² Hermeneutical, pragmatic, and

phenomenological philosophies of musical-aesthetic experience are at pains with



dealing with this problem,¹³ and frequently they fail to address it satisfactorily.

Unfortunately, Reimer's pluralism of all-possible-experiences with all-possible-

musics does not even *acknowledge* the problem, let alone offer a solution. Everything

is allowed and valued: any kind of music, all kinds of music-making and listening.

But how – and this is my final question here – how can this sympathetic but

philosophically vague pluralism and “synergism” of all-possible-theories-and-

philosophies be forged into rationally defensible pedagogical practice?

Question 3: How does the curriculum work?

In exploring this question I will skip a lot of material in Reimer's book that probably warrants discussion (especially the theory of musical intelligence(s) and the “National Standards”), because as a German reader I am more interested in Reimer's concept of a “Comprehensive General Music Program.” In Germany there is *only* a “general music program,” with all its attendant opportunities and problems. The only point I will discuss here, however, is a theoretical one: How can a general music curriculum be justified and developed on the basis of a PME? According to Reimer, the “total curriculum” can be described and conceived as a “seven-phase-model”



(242-44):¹⁴

Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

1. Why?	Values Phase	Philosophy of Music Education
2. What? (a)	Conceptualized Phase	Psychology, Child Development, Research etc.
3. When?	Systematized Phase	Learning sequences
4. How? (a)	Interpreted Phase	Interpretation of 1-3 by professionals
5. How? (b)	Operational Phase	Interface of professionals and students
6. What? (b)	Experienced Phase	What students take from and make of their education
7. Cui Bono?	Expectational Phase	What people involved with education, and the society as a whole, want from it.

There are a number of problems that attend this phase model. Among them:

- (1) If the values of education are “dependent on what people in a culture regard to be so important that education must focus on them” (242), then what task does a PME have? Would it not be easier to do some research, asking people about their educational values? Or simply let the politicians decide?! At one time in German history it used to be an accepted value for music education to teach songs that praised war. Can acceptance alone be an “acceptable” criterion for educational values? I very much doubt if it can be, because it leads to exactly the kinds of relativisms (cultural, historical etc.) that Reimer attacks in his account of postmodernism (15-29). Given that philosophical study often focuses on values that differ strikingly from political or popular convictions, what is its place?

(2) According to Reimer, an educational philosophy is nothing else than “a set of values directing the educational endeavour” (243). Is that everything philosophy can ever be? What exactly does Reimer mean by “value” (he does not define it, although it is a basic idea of his book)? In a very general sense, the philosophical tradition recognizes two different kind of values: (a) moral values (things that are morally good-as-such) and (b) extra-moral values (things that are good-for-someone in any other respect). In which respect do these different kinds of values direct the educational endeavour? “Becoming rich” might be an extra-moral value (it might be good- for-me), but should it direct education? And if so, how exactly does a value direct educational action?

(3) My previous question is a logical (that is, a philosophical) one. The underlying issue it addresses is a very old one, an idea that was proven wrong long ago.

German educational theorist H. Blankertz (1980, 18-27) has criticised this idea



as the notion of “Normative Didactics.”¹⁵ All normative didactics claim to construct a closed chain of deduction between general normative convictions (about the position of humankind in the world, the nature of man etc.), aims of education (following from these convictions), themes and topics of education (the contents which are offered by the subjects), the complete curriculum, and the precise methods of teaching.

This chain of deduction, however, can never be as closed (or logically consistent), as some people may hope. As Jorgensen (2002) correctly observes, this is

Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

a “theory-practice problem”: there is no one-to-one correspondence between theory and practice (49). However, it is a “theory-theory problem” as well, considering the different layers or levels of curricular theory. Take for example August Hermann Francke’s idea of a pietistic education in the 18th century (cf. Blankertz 1980, 21). Francke’s “chain of deduction” begins with certain theological propositions (e.g. mankind is bad and sinful from the beginning, or man can show his will to improve by an active, productive way of living as a Christian). From these propositions, Francke advanced certain educational aims (values): to break the free will of the child (because it is evil) for example, and to fill the day with hard work. The pietistic curriculum, therefore, was a combination of teaching useful knowledge and practicing hard punishment. It is obvious, however, that this combination can not be deduced in a logically strict sense from one and only one normative conviction: for different educational systems in the 18th century were convinced of the necessity to teach useful knowledge, without the same religious or anthropological values as the pietists had.

Why is this so? The *deductive* way of constructing a curriculum is – in a logical sense – possible, if (and only if) the underlying values already contain everything that follows in a certain way. Deduction is a way of *analytical* thinking. If you are a bachelor, then I can easily deduce you are unmarried (because “unmarriedness” is semantically contained in “being a bachelor”); but I cannot claim, for example, that “baldness” is deducible from being a bachelor. My point is that it is not possible to *deduce* the “total curriculum” (Reimer, 241) from any kind of

underlying values, because those values – whatever they may be – do not contain certain ways of teaching or certain contents. These values, though, may have a critical, “negative” (in a logical sense) function: If any kind of teaching music in a democratic society, as for example in Germany today, is in favour of anti-democratic values, then this teaching must be discarded and must not be part of the curriculum. But the value of “living in a democratic society” does not answer the question of why, what, when or how to teach in music education. Who should decide? The philosophical masterminds? Should practitioners only *interpret* what the philosophers have written, or should they set up their own goals and aims, according to the instructional situation in which they find themselves? Should there be a *discourse* (in the sense Juergen Habermas uses it) among philosophers, policy makers, teachers, parents, and pupils? And if the answer is yes, how can this discourse be organized? How important are the musical interests of the pupils?

In my opinion, PME should take all these questions (and many more) into account as a constitutive part of PME itself. But then PME would have to change considerably, redirecting its focus from the “big” essentialistic questions (“what is the nature of music?”) to the more mundane, but nevertheless philosophical questions concerning the reality of music education. Perhaps an American, John Dewey, was among the first theorists who recognized this change of the philosophical task. Reimer, for all his “Deweyan flavor,” seems to be rooted in a much older, pre-modern tradition of philosophy: one where philosophy sets up the aims and goals of

education (just like Plato's "philosopher-kings"), and from which all other phases of curriculum-building are deduced. I am convinced that *any* kind of PME has to face the Deweyan question, How is education in a modern society possible? – regardless of how it is eventually answered.

Question 4: Is there any conclusion?

What, in the end, may be learned from Reimer's PME for the future of this discipline? Certainly, there are many valuable and useful insights, suggestions, and observations in Reimer's book that make it (or at least some parts of it) a worthwhile read. But as a theory as a whole, I am afraid I am not convinced of its consistency and coherence. Generally speaking, PME as it is conceived by Reimer (as well as by Elliott and others), is a type of theory with an extremely wide range. Its claim is to cover not only the nature of music and of education in general, but also to have a direct impact on curriculum, methodology, content structure, and so on. The more I read of such theory and attempt to contribute to it myself, the more I become convinced that *wide-range theories* do not succeed in what they claim to do. In other words, I doubt very much that this kind of theory is really necessary. Instead, I would like to plea for a PME with a basically *middle-range scope*. It should not be beyond the scope of PME to investigate philosophically topics like "child development" or "learning," topics that, according to Reimer (and others), do not belong to PME but to sciences like psychology.¹⁶ Perhaps in the end we all should be more modest: it



Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

simply requires more than one book to deal adequately with the concept of musical experience and its implications for music education. And as important as it may be to reflect upon global issues, it is at least as important for us to make local choices, in response to the particulars of our respective circumstances.¹⁷



Notes

¹ I have tried to do so in a critical essay-review of David Elliott's "New Philosophy of Music Education" (Vogt 1999). E. Panaiotidi's (2002) essay "What is Philosophy of Music Education And Do We Really Need It?" is one of the rare attempts to analyze both traditions.

² Similar problems seem to exist in philosophy, by the way: perhaps it is difficult to explain the background of what John Passmore, funny enough, calls "Latin-Teutonic Philosophy" (Passmore 1994/1957, 466) to somebody who did not grow up in this tradition. There are authors, however, like Tom Regelski or Wayne Bowman, who try to adopt some more serious aspects of German Philosophy (Habermas, Gadamer) for a renewed PME.

³ Cf. Vogt (2001), Bowman (2002a).

⁴ It would require an essay of its own to work out when, how and why Kant's aesthetics has become the paradigm for "aesthetic attitude theory," which is sometimes equated with "the aesthetic approach" in American PME.

⁵ As far as I can see, Bowman (2002) argues very much within this "German" framework of ethics, education and music.

⁶ Reimer's criticism of all "utilitarian approaches" ought to be especially interesting for German readers, as the so-called "Bastian" or "Berlin Study" (Bastian et al. 2000) – an empirical study which concentrates solely on the utilitarian effects of intensified music education – is presently used to justify the existence of music education as a subject in schools.

⁷ Cf. Vogt 2002

⁸ The way John Dewey's writings have been (or have not been) adopted in Germany is *one* of several topics for a comparative (music) education.

⁹ And of course there are authors, mainly stemming from the analytic tradition, who simply deny the existence of "aesthetic experience" because "aesthetic" as well as

“experience” are considered to be too fuzzy to be philosophical terms (cf. Kutschera 1989, 69-88).

¹⁰ In Germany, this problem has been thoroughly discussed by Klafki 1963.

¹¹ The same holds true for Reimer’s adaptation of Gardner’s “theory of multiple intelligences.” Intelligence in itself is a mere formal, and not a pedagogically justifiable goal. Scientists and engineers who created the killing-machinery of the concentration camps definitely were intelligent, but only in some respects. The question is still the same and very old (at least pointing back to the beginning of Enlightenment): How should scientific, moral and aesthetic (musical) “intelligence” cooperate and interact, in order to become *reason*?

¹² This critique applies for Elliott’s concept of musical experience as a “flow experience” too.

¹³ One could easily add other philosophies here, e.g. Michel Foucault’s “Discourse Analysis” or the dialectical concept of experience as it was put forward by members of the so-called “Frankfurt School.”

¹⁴ The “question” column in this table is my adaptation, not Reimer’s original.

¹⁵ “Didactics” in the German tradition means more or less the same as “the theory of teaching and learning.” Its meaning is much broader than in the Anglo-American tradition.

¹⁶ I have attempted such philosophical investigation in Vogt (2003).

¹⁷ I would like to thank Wayne Bowman for his editorial suggestions, and for helping me express certain of my points in ways more idiomatically appropriate to English language.

References

Alpers, P. (1991). “What Should One Expect From a Philosophy of Music Education?” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 25:3 (Fall) 215-242.

Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

- Bastian, H. G.; Koch, M. & Hafen, R. (2000). *Musik(erziehung) und ihre Wirkung. Eine Langzeitstudie an Berliner Grundschulen*. Mainz (Germany): Schott.
- Blankertz, H. (1980/1969). *Theorien und Modelle der Didaktik*. Munich (Germany): Juventa.
- Bowman, W. (1992). "Philosophy, Criticism, and Music Education: Some Tentative Steps Down a Less-Traveled Road." *Bulletin of the Council of Research in Music Education* 114 (Fall) 1-19.
- Bowman, W. (2002). "Educating Musically." *New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning*, R. Colwell & C. Richardson, eds. New York: Oxford University Press (63-84).
- Bowman, W. (2002a): "Re-Tooling 'Foundations' to Address 21st Century Realities: Music Education Amidst Diversity, Plurality, and Change (The Dream of Certainty is a Retreat from Educational Responsibility)." Originally delivered to the Mayday Group in Amherst, Massachusetts and forthcoming in its online journal *Action, Criticism, and Theory (ACT) for Music Education* (<http://act.maydaygroup.org>).
- Ehrenforth, K.-H. (1971). *Verstehen und Auslegen*. Frankfurt a. M. (Germany): Diesterweg.
- Jorgensen, E. (2002). "Philosophical Issues in Curriculum." *The New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning*, R. Colwell & C. Richardson, eds. New York: Oxford University Press (48-62).
- Kaiser, H. J. (1993). "Zur Entstehung und Erscheinungsform 'Musikalischer Erfahrung.'" *Vom pädagogischen Umgang mit Musik*, H. J. Kaiser, E. Nolte & M. Roske, eds. Mainz (Germany): Schott (161-176).
- Kaiser, H. J. (1998). "Was heißt 'aus musikpädagogischer Perspektive'?" *Entwicklung und Sozialisation aus musikpädagogischer Perspektive*, M. v. Schoenebeck, ed. Essen (Germany): Die Blaue Eule (27-40).
- Klafki, W. (1963) *Studien zur Bildungstheorie und Didaktik*. Weinheim (Germany): Beltz
- Koopman, C. (1997). *Keynotes In Music Education: A Philosophical Analysis*. Nijmegen: Mediagroep Katholieke Universiteit.
- Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

- Kutschera, F. v. (1989). *AEsthetik*. Berlin & New York: de Gruyter.
- Panaiotidi, E. (2002). "What is Philosophy of Music Education and Do We Really Need It?" *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 21. Dordrecht (Netherlands): Kluwer Academic Publishers (229-252).
- Passmore, J. (1994/1957). *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*. Harmondsworth (GB): Penguin.
- Reimer, B. (2003). *A Philosophy of Music Education: Advancing the Vision* (Third Edition). Upper Saddle River (NJ): Prentice Hall.
- Regelski, T. A. (1998). "The Aristotelian Bases of Praxis for Music and Music Education." *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 6:1 (22-59).
- Rolle, Chr. (1999). *Musikalisch-aesthetische Bildung: Ueber die Bedeutung aesthetischer Erfahrung fuer musikalische Bildungsprozesse*. Kassel (Germany): Bosse.
- Senchuck, D. (1995). "Philosophy of Education." *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, R. Audi, ed. Cambridge (GB): Cambridge University Press (583-584).
- Vogt, J. (1998). "Zum Problem des musikpaedagogischen Standortes: Reflexionen zum Beitrag 'Was heißt aus musikpaedagogischer Perspektive' von Hermann J. Kaiser" *Entwicklung und Sozialisation aus musikpaedagogischer Perspektive*, M. v. Schoenebeck, ed. Essen (Germany): Die Blaue Eule (41-55).
- Vogt, J. (1999). "David J. Elliotts 'Praxiale Theorie der Musikerziehung' Versuch einer kritischen Annaeherung." *Musik & Bildung* 3 (38-43).
- Vogt, J. (2001): *Der schwankende Boden der Lebenswelt. Phaenomenologische Musikpaedagogik zwischen Handlungstheorie und AEsthetik*. Wuerzburg, Germany: Koenigshausen & Neumann.
- Vogt, J. (2002). "Allgemeine Paedagogik, aesthetische Erfahrung und das gute Leben: Ein Rueckblick auf die Benner-Mollenhauer-Debatte." *Zeitschrift fuer Kritische Musikpaedagogik* (<http://home.arcor.de/zf/zfkm/vogt2.pdf>).
- Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf

Vogt, J. (2003). "Musik-Lernen im Kontext von Bildung und Erziehung. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit W. Gruhns ‚Der Musikverstand‘" Forthcoming in *Lernen und Lehren als Themen der Musikpaedagogik*, M. Pfeffer & J. Vogt, eds. Muenster (Germany): LIT-Verlag.

Westerlund, H. (2002). *Bridging Experience, Action, and Culture in Music Education*. Helsinki: Sibelius Academy.

About the Author

Juergen Vogt was assistant professor for General Music Education at the University of Hamburg. Since 2000 he has been professor (substitute) for Music Education at the universities of Muenster and Cologne. His fields of research include aesthetic education and aesthetic theories; foundations of general music education; and philosophy of music education. Recent publications include *Der klingende Kosmos. Studien zu den wissenschaftlichen und bildungsphilosophischen Grundlagen der Musikpaedagogik bei Rudolf Steiner* [The sounding cosmos: Studies on the scientific and philosophical foundations of Rudolf Steiner's concept of music education] (Mainz 1995); and *Der schwankende Boden der Lebenswelt. Phaenomenologische Musikpaedagogik zwischen Handlungstheorie und AEsthetik* [The rolling grounds of the life-world: Phenomenological philosophy of music education between action theory and aesthetics] (Wuerzburg 2001).

Vogt, J. (2003). Philosophy–Music Education–Curriculum: Some casual remarks on some basic concepts. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.2, #1 (September 2003). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Vogt2_1.pdf