Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education

the refereed scholarly journal of the

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DeNora, T. (2002). The Everyday as Extraordinary: Response from Tia DeNora *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education. Vol. 1*, #2 (December 2002).

The Everyday as Extraordinary
Response from Tia DeNora

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As Daniel Cavicchi puts it in the opening to his review of *Music in Everyday Life* (MiEDL), "It has always struck me as slightly absurd to have to talk specifically about something called 'music in everyday life'." His point underscores an intriguing irony in writing a book like this one: "[F]or me and for millions of other people in the Western world," Cavicchi reminds us, "music is experienced *only* in everyday life. . . . Like many adults, I music when I can, within the constraints of the culture in which I live."

Most Americans, notes Cavicchi, "don't *play* music, they *listen and dance* to music." And indeed, as he aptly observes, CD player sales overwhelmingly outnumber instrument sales. These observations ring true in the United Kingdom as well. Lucy Green's recent (2000) study, *How Popular Musicians Learn*, also emphasises ways the institutional organisation of music education misses much of what is important about musical activity. The musical education system, she argues, with its vocational emphases upon musical performance and formal technical skill, aesthetic education, and canonical learning, serves as a contrast structure against which most students – most of the population in the industrialised West, for that matter – emerge as musically deficient. But are these portrayals (mine, Cavicchi's, Green's) reasonable likenesses to what individuals actually do, musically speaking? As Hildegard Froehlich notes, "[t]he challenge now lies in gathering data that either confirm or reject this hypothesis."

There are echoes in this question of an older concern about so-called "deviant subcultures" – a theme John Shepherd invokes through his discussion of subcultural theory. 1970s writers on subculture urged the need for ethnography in order to illuminate

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both (a) the essentially orderly activities conducted by 'outsiders' and (b) the situated role played, in these activities, by popular cultural forms and their consumption. These scholars helped show the short-sightedness of simply presuming a culture's function within particular social circumstances: culture simply could not be read from top-down. There was, that being the case, no shortcut around ethnography. As Shepherd puts it, this "new wave" of popular music scholars (circa late 1970s) saw within popular music "the possibility of understanding music not as a pristine artistic form unsullied by the gray forces of mass social process – such 'sullying' producing popular music – but as a cultural form that was socially constituted." What subcultural theory bequeathed to socio-musical study, then, was an ecumenical approach to musical genre, and a realisation that conventional musicology's "toolbox" (to use Don Randel's [1992] term) precluded too many valuable topics. In seizing "disciplinary control over the study of music," Susan McClary (quoted by Shepherd) charged, musicology "prohibited the asking of even the most fundamental questions concerning meaning...something terribly important [was] being hidden away by the profession."

One of the first adjustments to the socio-musical paradigm, then, is a shift – advanced in MiEDL and by all three reviewers here as well – toward socially situated "musicking" where ever it is to be found. This means a shift away from the focus on musical texts and scores; a shift toward musicking as situated practice. The reviewers are quite right to suggest that MiEDL is not the first to make this point (and the various works cited by the three reviewers merely scratch the surface of the excellent forerunners and contemporaries of MiEDL). One of the great pleasures of engaging others in a forum like this is learning about new work that constitutes the wider community of scholarship. What seems clear at this stage is that the points of convergence have multiplied in recent years; that "mainstream" musicology is also responding to developments outside it; and that – as indicated by this symposium – a basis has been established for interdisciplinary work in

future. It is that basis, as fleshed out here by these three reviewers, to which I would like to direct my attention in the remainder of this response.

The first of these points of convergence is methodological/theoretical. Although I expected it of him, I was gratified to find John Shepherd advancing the view that to divorce fieldwork from theory impoverishes socio-musical study. Shepherd's work serves, in itself, as a benchmark for commitment to this dual practice. I was also greatly pleased to see in his discussion of my work a clear restatement of the need to chart a course between the notion, on the one hand, that "the music itself" is the author of music's effects (which would be linked to a paradigm consisting solely of interpretive analyses of musical texts – not so far removed from earlier formalisms in its elision of what real people really do with music), and, on the other hand, the idea that music's effects derive from nothing more than what people say about music and its powers. As Froehlich observes, the former position fails to transcend the musicologist's own relationship with the musical text. And as Shepherd observes (a point his work has long stressed), music has a materiality that invariably extends beyond matters musicological. Indeed, this is a key point in MiEDL: we need to focus on human-music *interaction*, by which I meant the process by which music's properties come to be drawn into, and to structure the very ways we then "respond to" music. This reflexive to-and-fro of musical material and interpretive (cognitive, embodied) response results in something that is never one-directional, and always more than the sum of its parts. It is only, I believe, by taking such a paradigm seriously that we can, ultimately, take music seriously as a material of social structuring.

This programme calls for a symmetrical analytical approach – attending both to musical materials and to the circumstances in which these materials are heard and integrated into social experience in real time. By definition such an approach is interdisciplinary. If anything, it pushes music scholarship and sociological analyses to a yet more "micro" level, focusing upon music as, in Cavicchi's phrase, "an open 'process'" –which I take to

mean the way units of musical material come to be relevant to social experience. A chord or a rhythmic or melodic gesture, for example, may provide a trigger for (a means of enlisting an actor in) an entirely different train of affective and/or embodied action. Consider the hypothetical example of how our beings/bodies "turn" when the music on the jukebox changes. While the directions of turning may vary, what is significant here is the idea of musically instigated (or, perhaps, “musically warranted”?) re-orientation. To speak of issues such as these is to speak of what music may be seen, in situated social settings, to afford. And, as Froehlich aptly observes, anyone concerned with music schooling ought to be concerned with how, in and through in-school music education, mind and body are conjoined on a daily basis (and often routinely repeated) – actions that may well comprise a very deep, and otherwise tacit, aspect of the music curriculum.

I have already, in this response, begun to shift attention to ways these three reviews presage potentially useful applications for the music-in-everyday-life programme. The concern of how to further specify just how music comes to be linked to embodiment and feeling form is discussed as well by Shepherd. Here there is considerable work still to be done, work that would profit from continued interaction not only with ethnomusicologists and popular music scholars, but also with social psychologists of music, biologists, and others (cf. Juslin and Sloboda 2001). Shepherd suggests a way forward, through the notion I have advanced of music as "prosthetic technology." As Shepherd writes, "...the material through which music is recognized as music is sound, and a particular, non-denotative use of sound at that. This is surely the technology to which DeNora refers." He continues, suggesting that we might examine how music enters the body and is experienced inside the body in ways other cultural forms are not (consider here the extreme examples of infra and ultra sound). In short, future work could profit from further consideration of music's intention, not just extension, of the body, and there are models here in Shepherd and Wicke's discussion of music and the body (1997).

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Equally important I think is Shepherd's notion of a performative model of music's power – a model focused on music as it enrols, enlists and transforms its users. He is quite right that such an understanding of music's social power aligns it with adjacent projects in Science and Technology Studies and their concern with artefacts and user-configuration issues. (The STS area has recently "discovered" music as a major area for attention – witness a Symposium at Maastricht in November 2002, called *Sound Matters*.) This theme could, I believe, profitably be made more explicit within socio-music studies, particularly as we move away from what Shepherd calls "a shopping list of meanings". We are now a long way from any conception of music listening as passive. We are well-removed also from a focus on reception as concerned primarily with interpretation and meaning. Our focus is, rather, the ways music 'gets into' (helps perform) social life.

Within this focus, further issues seem clearly demarcated for scrutiny in the near and middle future. Perhaps most notable among these is a concern, raised by all three reviewers, with music's implications for social relations and, more boldly, for power relations. As Froehlich observes, "[w]hat we play or to what we listen either asserts or questions the power relationships in which we find ourselves, creates associations of belonging or not-belonging, and leads to or takes away from feelings of alienation or affirmation." Cavicchi develops this point through the concept of entrainment. He does so in a way that conjoins musicology (by which here I mean to focus on musical materials – pace the discussion above about whether musical affect is arbitrary or immanent) with ethnomusicology, sociology and social psychology. He explicitly focuses on musical-environmental matters, asking "how exactly different bodies are synchronized with different environments," so as to think about "musical situations in which the body *can't* or *won't* be synchronized." This point leads back naturally, I think, to the classroom, a fitting social setting with which to end this response, and to a vision of what music might, in Cavicchi's words, "do for different people." To construct such a vision would, I suspect, arouse musical consciousness (and

thus social consciousness) in ways that would foster critical awareness of music's enabling (and disabling) role in the lives of music pupils. In so doing, it would also foster a more explicit awareness of what music may "make possible" (or impossible), thus fostering a more critical recognition of music's potency in every day life.

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