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Introduction Hildegard Froehlich

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Introduction

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We present the *Proceedings* of the Third Symposium on a Sociology of Music Education with both sadness and joy. The symposium took place at the University of North Texas, April 10-12, 2003, in honor and memory of Dr. Steve Paul who had been instrumental in getting the first two symposia off the ground. Steve's untimely death in 2001 made us lose a valued friend and colleague as well as a driving force in promoting the need for thinking about music teaching and learning in sociological terms. Joy comes from the fact that Steve's legacy continues to be strong. The contributions collected in this volume, reflecting many viewpoints and positions, are testimony to that fact.

Some who presented their thoughts and research have been "regulars" in all three conferences; others were newcomers to this forum. All contributions however reflect the ever-present concern among music educators of balancing theoretical explorations and practical applications, certainly a driving force in Steve's work as well.

Steve set the pattern by which to determine key note speakers for each of the conferences. The objective always was to invite people who, over many years, have helped propel sociological thinking in U.S. music education forward. Following this principle, the speakers at the first symposium were Max Kaplan and Christopher Small; Barbara Reeder Lundquist, K. Peter Etzkorn, and myself gave invited addresses at the 1999 meeting, and the key note addresses of the third symposium were Thomas Regelski and Brian Roberts.

Max Kaplan, a veteran of arguing for the application of a sociology of music to music education, was well over eighty years old when he spoke to us in 1995. Despite his age and failing health, he did not shy away from chastising our profession for not having

moved rapidly enough toward a more sociologically orientated analysis of music education practice.

Christopher Small gave us insights into his then newly coined word “musicking,” a term which today seems to have found acceptance by many music education scholars. It reminds us that all of music making should be an act of exploring, affirming, and celebrating the relationships that come about as the result of people interacting with each other through music. Due in part to the presence of Kaplan and Small, the first symposium seemed to be characterized by an exploration of what a sociology of music education might entail.

The second symposium reflected the very different theoretical directions music sociological thinking can take. Barbara Lundquist, coming from an ethno-musicological background, stressed the use of sociological principles and theories as useful analytical tools. Peter Etzkorn, a *bona fide* sociologist who passed away too soon in 2002 and whose support and friendship we shall miss, was interested in the study of music as a social and societal rather than “purely” aesthetic phenomenon. I came to the sociology of music through George Herbert Mead’s theory of what later was termed symbolic interaction theory. The conference itself was characterized by contributions that touched on the social nature of music learning and teaching in the broadest sense, leaving open the question what a sociology music education might be.

The two key note presenters featured in this volume highlight two other important theoretical positions that have characterized music sociological thinking in the past. Tom Regelski has become known as one of the first, if not the first music educator in the United States, to apply Adorno’s and Habermas’ Critical Theory to music education practice. This he has done since the mid-1970s. Brian Roberts has explored the social construction of identity in music students, indeed a most important topic among the many issues music educators face.

It is for the reader to decide whether the papers collected in this volume reflect a specific theoretical direction. It should also be noted that not all of the presentations are printed here because their authors chose to have them published elsewhere. This, I believe, is a good sign because, ultimately, sociological thinking should permeate the field of music education just as psychological, philosophical, and aesthetic perspectives do. In fact, any good social theory of music education would account for all of these viewpoints. A mature field of music education therefore embraces all perspectives as equally important and useful in the explorations of music teaching and learning. This is the spirit in which all three symposia were conceptualized.

As often is the case during meetings like those that took place in Oklahoma and Texas, many of the discussions surrounding each presentation stimulated new ideas and intriguing trains of thought. The reports presented here reflect those thought processes only to the extent that their authors chose to incorporate them into their final manuscripts. Future symposium organizers might consider documenting important points of ensuing discussions because the latter would allow one to distill issues and concerns by which research themes or agendas could be determined.

Ultimately, the health of a profession is determined by its members' engagement in vibrant dialogues and ongoing exchanges of ideas on the one hand and, on the other, to turn those ideas into action. Judging from the spirit of the third symposium, the dialogue was there; acting upon those ideas is the challenge for the future.

Denton, Texas
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