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From the Editor

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From the Editor

Thomas Regelski, ACT Editor

"The measurement of the measurer
is in the method of measuring."

Pierre Bourdieu, in one his most notable contributions to sociology, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984), identifies the idea of "cultural capital," the 'wealth' of cultural knowledge and competencies that confers upon its holders the advantages of good taste and, hence, power and status—that is, the distinction of being 'classy'. In this regard, he writes, "nothing more clearly affirms one's 'class', nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music" (1984, 18). However, in *Sociology in Question* (1993a) he also writes, "sociology and art do not make good bedfellows" (139). Mention of this mismatch between art (including music) and sociology provides an opportunity to reflect on a similar divergence between music education, sociology, and society. Despite the many noble sounding sociocultural benefits offered in rationalizing, advocating, and defending *music* in schools, music educators overall seem to show little interest in whether music *education*, particularly 'school music', actually produces these claimed benefits to a notable degree. However, whether or not the field reflects on—and thus the degree to which it 'measures up' to—its claims may well be seen as criteria of its social benefits and, hence, its value as 'measured by' society.

The strategy of 'immanent critique' uses the various rationales an institution offers for the value of its practice—the contribution it claims to make—as criteria by which it and its practice are evaluated *empirically*. Sometimes the value of a practice seems self-evident; for example, medical practice. However, considered in more depth, medical

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authorities themselves have identified *iatrogenic* conditions, disorders actually generated or induced by the practice of medicine itself: for example, diseases contracted in hospitals, problems from over-using antibiotics and, of course, medical malpractice. One of the classical sociological criteria for a profession is the self-policing done by its practitioners and, thus, its formal determination of malpractice (deMarris & LeCompte 1999, 149-50).

However, the traditional institutional conditions governing teaching prevent such formal, collective self-policing. The absence of such 'measuring up' makes individual and collective self-reflection by music educators concerning the concrete benefits of teaching practice all the more important. However, relying on published standards, in the questionable belief that such lists can account for and directly guide or regulate practice, has not been the answer. Such one-size-fits-all lists only give the appearance of standardization to unique situations where standard practices and standard results are neither desirable nor achievable. Indeed, the needs of those served by the 'helping professions' are always highly idiosyncratic and situated (e.g., the differences between "good health" for this child or that senior citizen at this moment). For such variable conditions, then, practice is framed in terms of 'standards of care'—an ethical criterion based on reaching 'right results' for those served—not in terms of standard practices (methods) or standard results. A further problem with the flawed faith in lists of standards is that neither individual teachers nor the teaching field are held accountable for the failure of students to reach the assessed qualities—which, in any case, are very loosely (if at all) applied in the field of music education. As a result, teachers focus on methods and thus engage in a search for a technology of "what works" judged more on ease of 'delivery' than in terms of actual and lasting results.

To some, a gap between society and music education is warranted; in fact, they see this gap as the *raison d'être* of music education. For them, 'school music' exists to inculcate musical or aesthetic values and to preserve and transmit the cultural heritage of music, and thereby to imbue society and culture with Culture—that is, with a taste for 'good music' properly understood and valued. This view appears to be held by those

general music teachers who seem satisfied that the required years of 'exposure to' and 'experiences with' music in class have made some positive difference when, typically, concrete evidence is lacking that students have acquired musicianship skills, attitudes, and values of direct musical benefit to them outside of school and throughout life.

To others, the gap between the worlds of 'school music' and of music 'in life' are just different, inevitable, and unbridgeable. These music educators are content to concentrate their efforts entirely on the former and to hope or trust that some benefit results for the other. Any carry-over from band, for example, to music 'in life' is not a curricular goal and thus not a typical consequence. The lifelong musical value of school music is taken for granted on faith (e.g., that being in an ensemble is a necessary and sufficient condition of good listening and of listening to good music); but, ironically, certain *everyday social values* are also claimed as the primary tangible benefits (e.g., learning cooperation, social skills, responsibility to others, etc.). Ensemble directors seem especially inclined to this view.

Still other teachers focus on the individual. Their emphasis is on promoting individual acts of understanding and appreciation (the necessary conjunction of which they take for granted), or on performance technique—or sometimes on both under the unexamined assumption that the latter is the only or best foundation for the former. Individual lessons for traditional orchestra instruments, piano, and voice often proceed on the assumption that classical music is the best pedagogical medium and the proper curricular message. Instruction is offered, then, as though leading to university or conservatory study rather than to lifelong relevance. However, most students will not gain admission (assuming they even try), and the question of the lasting musical value of their studies for their adult lives remains unasked and thus unanswered.

'Measuring up' and Legitimation Crisis

To the degree these beliefs (and their many sub-varieties and interconnections) are held, advocated, and used as a basis for practice in music education today, then to that degree music educators fail to reflect on—formally or even informally—whether the *pragmatic results* of teaching match the fine-sounding benefits claimed by *words* of

advocacy. This oversight is noticeable in teacher preparation, in the daily practices of music educators, and at the highest levels of policy and leadership. For example, "Rationales for music education" was the topic of an International Music Education Policy Symposium organized in the US in the spring of 2004 by the MENC and the National Association of Music Merchants. Judged by the abstracts, the papers of the international group of presenters argued for the importance of music *education* largely by stressing the value of *music*, while taking for granted that schooling done on behalf of music somehow and routinely advances its social value. Notably, however, one paper argued that, despite their innovative methods, music educators have failed to convince the public that music is an important discipline to study in school. This honest admission alone is suggestive of the need for music educators to attend to the actual results of their efforts and, thus, to whether music education in general 'measures up' to the claims made for its benefits to students and society.

According to social theorist Jürgen Habermas (1975), a "legitimation crisis" arises when the putative benefits of a practice ("action system") are not actually realized or if the practice ultimately creates its own problems, with either result requiring on-going'rationalization' by its advocates. In the case of failing to 'measure up', at best a practice may be seen as benign but dispensable. The current commitment to advocacy in music education today is ample evidence that just such a legitimation crisis faces the field; in the main, music education is considered 'good if you can afford it' but otherwise dispensable. Thus, its value must constantly be advocated. And only long-term sociological research can determine whether or to what degree students who are "turned off" to music *class* generalize that attitude later in life to the *music* studied in school. On the 'iatrogenic' side of music education there is, as well, increasing evidence of and concern about injuries that can arise from studying an instrument or voice and of hearing damage that can happen to performers from poor acoustical conditions (e.g., Bastian *et al*., 2000; Chasin 1996; Norris 1993).

Focusing on 'the music' rather than on actual sociocultural benefits

Powerful historical forces in music philosophy and scholarship predispose musicians and music educators to ignore or dismiss the relevance of social theory to understanding music teaching and learning and thus prevent their acknowledgement of music education's legitimation crisis and the consequent need for change in music education practice. They take for granted a different set of assumptions, beliefs, and claims for the nature of music and its value than do sociologists and other social and cultural theorists. These contrasting premises and paradigms took modern form during the eighteenth century. Before then, of course, there was no question that the fundamental nature and value of music was social. Because its social need and value were clear to all concerned, its practice and the learning needed to support that practice—whether for the church, court, or 'common' people—were complementary and effective.

That situation began to change in the seventeenth century, and by the middle of the eighteenth century the "modern system of the arts" (Kristeller 1990) had been "invented" (Shiner 2001). Prior to that, the concept-category of 'fine art' was not generally recognized; 'art' still had the ancient meaning of skill or craft (*ars*) applied in serving a particular function. Around the same time, under the enthusiasm of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century intellectuals for rationalism, the *aisthesis* of the Greeks, which had been concerned simply with the particularity of sensory (empirical) knowledge (in comparison to the universality claimed for rational knowledge), had been philosophically rationalized into the *aesthetic* theory of Baumgarten, Kant, and neo-Kantian aestheticians and aesthetes (Summers 1987).

The new aesthetic theory and the new category of fine art were complementary. The new category required some 'essence' that all sister arts shared in order to belong to it, and aesthetic qualities were this hypothesized substratum (Schaeffer 2000, 6-8). The very idea of *fine* art was connected from the first with the 'higher' social classes for whom art and music had always been "socially useful in their practical uselessness": Not only did their "acts of wasteful expenditure" in conspicuously collecting and displaying art "reveal their independence from material necessity," such signs of 'classy' consumption

by the social elite also set the precedent for both the putative refinement and the autonomy of art from everyday life (Harrington 2004, 91). From the first, then, aesthetic theory focused on the re*fine*d taste associated with 'fine' rather than 'useful' things.

On the other hand, just as the category of the fine arts needed an essence, so also did aesthetic theory need to hypostatize the existence and autonomy of 'works' of music and art that could 'contain' or elicit the hypothesized aesthetic qualities which were the criteria of good taste and that were held to distinguish fine art from the "useful" arts (at the time called the "mechanical" arts, and later, the "applied" arts), or from what Kant called the merely "agreeable" arts of entertainment, diversion, or catharsis. Reference by French intellectuals to *beaux-arts* rather than fine arts reveals the traditional concern of most subsequent aesthetic theory with the idea of pure (disinterested) *beauty*.

A parallel development was the rise of the modern scholarly disciplines under the impetus of The Enlightenment's commitment to both rationalism and the new scientific empiricism. The modern disciplines of music history and music theory took seminal shape at this time, as did the "discovery of society" by what was to become sociology (Collins & Makowsky 1993, 3). The ideas of fine art and aesthetics were well entrenched before the impact of this 'discovery' could be felt, however. Social theory and art and music scholarship have entirely separate sources, then, and have followed different trajectories. Unlike the visual and literary arts, which were often centrally concerned throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with social themes and social impact, music has more typically been kept at arms length from (or elevated above) all but 'high' society.

From the very first, then, musicians and musical scholars uncritically accepted the assumptions of the new aesthetic theory and the idea of music as a fine art; indeed, the existence of their own practice depended on these suppositions. Until very recently, most music scholars have continued to concern themselves with 'works' of music understood as fine art and thus as autonomous both in their nature and value. Scores are analyzed and regarded as the repository of inherent aesthetic meaning and as evidence of a developmental process that regards music as evolving or unfolding autonomously, as if

according to its own laws—that is, irrespective of social variables, and most decidedly without regard to its actual effects on individuals, audiences, or society at large. Thus, while sociologists concern themselves centrally with the "conditions of reception" of music (Bourdieu 1984, 19), mainstream musicologists discount "reception theory" as altogether irrelevant to the values believed to be immanent in the composer's score; it is the immutability of the latter that is at stake, not changing social variables of reception, use, or influence (e.g., see Rosen 1995, 52).

However, the history of public recitals and concerts itself reveals the inherent sociality of these events, even to this day (e.g., Small 1998; Knight Foundation Study 2002). Nonetheless, to accord with prevailing aesthetic and fine art assumptions, the social intentions and responses of audience members were in effect neutralized as variables in music's meaning and values; audiences were slowly trained to silent deference and homage to the seriousness and almost sacred purity of the musical event. A parallel consequence was the supposition that not just anyone could be expected to engage suitably in this serious and 'Cultured' practice; listeners had to know "what to listen for in music"—as dictated by what *musicians* listened for! Prominent musicologist Charles Rosen points out, approvingly, that at the onset of public concerts musicians performed what *they* valued, not what audiences wanted (Rosen 1995, 52). Today, of course, the tide has turned and orchestras and opera companies perform mainly the familiar canon and still have trouble attracting audiences, thus requiring various forms of private or public subsidy. This is evidence of a legitimation crisis facing classical music itself (see Sandow 2004; Holland 2004; Knight Foundation Study 2002).

Social theory versus music scholarship

Many musicians and musical cognoscenti choose to ignore or paper over evidence of this legitimation crisis and are content to extol the virtues of the 'classics' regardless of social variables or impact. Social and cultural theorists, however, take particular note of such tangible evidence of the actual musical values and practices of society. To begin with, these theorists regard music and its values not in orthodox aesthetic terms, as such, but as a vital social practice. For them, then, music is thoroughly imbued with sociality

(e.g., Shepherd 1991); its value is as praxis—as *personal and social action and agency* of various kinds—and not 'purely' for its own sake. This is even the case for the minority who extol the intellectual, refined, or uplifting benefits of classical music.

A main theme of sociologists of music and like-minded theorists (e.g., ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, ethnologists, etc.) then, is the "social construction" of both the very *idea* of "music" and of its situated meaning and value (Martin 1995). Traditional themes concerning the "sociology of knowledge" and "the social construction of reality" inform mainstream sociological thinking and apply no less to music than to any other socially constructed 'realities' or kinds of knowledge. Even philosopher John Searle has analyzed the "construction of social reality," stressing that our knowledge, valuing, and use of the physical properties of 'things' are thoroughly conditioned by social intentions and functions (Searle 1995). Mind as a collective phenomenon—as addressed in the writings of John Dewey, other pragmatists (for example, in economics, social psychology, and jurisprudence), and action theorists (e.g., Schatzki 2001)—also implicates the social contingency and situatedness of meaning and value (Kilpinen 2000).

Such notions are uncomfortable for many musicians and musical scholars who early in their socialization were led to think only in terms of the "pure gaze," as Bourdieu describes the act of 'contemplating' fine art in 'disinterested' terms (Bourdieu 1993b). However, they also fail to note (or accept) that the pure gaze itself is a social construction and therefore relative to its own social contingencies. Instead, they treat it as a rational 'faculty' given by nature that they further assert needs to be developed and refined via study and discipline in order either to discern music's proper aesthetic meanings or to discern its musical meaning properly—the criteria in either case being determined by their values. In contrast, sociologists analyze how the qualities and features of music—even classical music—'afford' a variety of values and meanings according to the situated intentions and needs of particular users, and point out the important role of all kinds of music "in everyday life" (e.g. DeNora 2000; on "affordances," see 38-41).

Many musicians do not welcome this finding, however. As a result, the social perspective is either steadfastly kept from aspiring musicians, belittled as irrelevant, or

damned as "relativistic"—the latter argument failing to realize that the contrary idea of 'pure', timeless, faceless, and placeless beauty is itself culturally and historically *relative* (Bourdieu 1993). Music education students typically comprise the largest group of these student musicians in higher education.

Music teachers are therefore typically inculcated to be concerned exclusively with 'the music' (e.g., see Roberts, this issue) and their teaching of it rather than with its social effects, conditions, and inherent sociality—except, that is, when they advocate its many sociocultural benefits in response to the legitimation crisis mentioned earlier. If music is valuable, they surmise, simply teaching it must be valuable; end of discussion! As a result, they remain largely unaware of what sociology, social and cultural theory of all kinds, and the sociology of music can bring to a richer understanding of music and of its role and value to society. Moreover, they are also too often unconcerned with the findings and theories of the sociology of education and of social psychology, and the relevance of both to teaching effectiveness. They are often satisfied, then, to 'deliver' musical instruction as best they can and otherwise take for granted that the content and means of such instruction have (somehow) fulfilled the otherwise only abstract claims they and other musicians make for music's value.

Bifurcation or bireme?

On one hand, then, sociology and social theory provide compelling empirical evidence for and theories of music's value and role in society. On the other hand, the account of music as a social practice, the meaning and value of which is thoroughly social rather than autonomous or 'pure', conflicts with deeply held assumptions and paradigms of aesthetes and cognoscenti committed to music as a fine art. Unawareness of, or resistance to the social account and dimensions of music, however, contributes directly to the inability or unwillingness of music teachers to concern themselves with the concrete effects and supposed benefits of their teaching.

Most teachers naturally tend to take for granted the value and relevance of the subjects they teach, while too many of their students just as naturally do not. However, the 'disconnect' between school and life may be worse for music educators; students are

much more aware of the reality and importance to them of music outside of school than they are of the relevance of their academic studies. In this regard, the contrast between school music and 'their' music makes teaching music even more difficult, and it contributes to the sense of irrelevance students often display towards school music (see Stålhammar, this issue)—students who submit only to required music study and who, importantly, are the next generation of 'the public' (namely, the next generation of taxpayers and music 'consumers').

Music education can address its legitimation problem by promoting an effective understanding of the social dimensions of music and music teaching on the part of pre- and in-service teachers. Instead of the present 'dissonance' between music and social theory, they need to be more 'in tune' with sociology proper, social theory in general, the sociology of music and sociology of education, and thus 'attuned' to both the socio-personal variables and tangible sociocultural effects of their teaching. Music education research will benefit, too, from focusing on inter- or trans-personal variables of music and music learning rather than the current philosophical and psychological focus on mind and brain alone. To continue to deny or downplay the social dimensions of music and music learning risks increasing irrelevance and more of the 'treading water' of advocacy that may keep music education afloat for the moment but which makes little actual progress. As concerns the effectiveness of music education, the separation between the traditional mind-sets of musicians and music educators and social accounts of music and musical value can be compared to a *bireme*, a large boat with two sets of oars on either side. All oars must operate in tandem lest it go around in circles, which is what happens when one side dominates!

This issue and 'measuring up'

The research presented in this issue is hopefully an indication of growing interest in social research and themes. All authors deal in some way with various social aspects of music and music education. Börje Stålhammar's study of British and Swedish students highlights the 'disconnect' between school music and students' "own music," and the nature of some of their impressions of this gap. It leads to theoretical premises

concerning the "spaces" and "forces" of music in life that can help music teachers understand the social role and value of music better. Its cross-cultural nature offers key insights into important differences between societies, and it provides a useful glimpse into music education practice in Sweden. Marja Heimonen offers a comparative study of Swedish and Finnish "music schools"—schools for voluntary musical study that serve a wide range of students. Of particular interest and relevance are her analyses of some important social differences between these neighboring countries and the consequences of these differences for their music schools. Her focus on comparative law reveals how the two countries address a similar social need differently.

The curriculum theory offered by Chi Cheung Leung is rooted in his previous empirical research with music teachers in Hong Kong and stresses the many different and often competing social and musical issues to be considered in curriculum development. His study also contributes a cross-cultural and comparative music education perspective, as uniquely seen through the eyes of an educator-composer. Brian Robert's article summarizes some of the main findings of his extensive sociological research of music education students, and brings sociological theory to bear on the question of the musical versus 'teacherly' identities of music teachers. In the process, he highlights some powerful parameters of musical socialization in higher education (and not only of music education students), and some of the consequences of this socialization for the school music educator.

The final article, by Donald Bohlen, has been invited on the basis of the unique perspective on music and music education provided by a composer who has been recognized by his university peers for teaching excellence. His paper, given on the occasion of that honor, ranges widely across many theoretical landscapes and reveals keen insights of a composer about music, composing, and teaching. Of particular interest is his "unified view of the individual mind and society" considered from the perspective of non-linear dynamics.

Bohlen also offers many provocative *bons mots*, one of which has served as the title of this essay: "The measurement of the measurer is in the method of measuring."

The inherent social implications of this recommendation should remind us that music education may be judged by society in terms of how (or whether) music teachers 'measure' the success and impact of their practice. Music educators typically assert the social value of music and take for granted that the use of supposedly good methods and materials automatically amounts to good (or good-enough) teaching. However, when both contentions fail to be demonstrated to society in terms of concrete and lasting musical benefits, the resulting lack of 'notice' by society becomes its 'measure' of the value of school music. If society does not at least see music education as concretely 'measuring up' to the values advocated in defending and rationalizing school music, then the resulting social indifference becomes a primary source of the legitimation crisis facing music education today.

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