

Change in Music Education: The Paradigmatic and the Praxial

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This paper is about the phenomenon of change in music education: its nature and how it comes about.¹ Hopefully it will stimulate some thoughts about areas for historical, philosophical, and sociological research in our field.

One type of change is widespread, systemic change that we will call paradigmatic, after a concept put forward by Thomas S. Kuhn in his 1962 book entitled *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn's premise was that major changes in science occur relatively suddenly in the form of paradigm shifts,² a concept that has since been applied to many fields. My premises today are that major changes in music education result from large, paradigmatic shifts in society, and that these shifts are propagated not by music educators, but by societal forces beyond the control of the profession. The other category is comprised of smaller changes that result from the day-to-day work of music educators, a category we will call praxial, after the Greek word *praxis*—in this case the practice of music educators.³

All this seems rather straightforward: that is, there are large, paradigmatic changes in society and smaller praxial changes resulting from our own efforts. The problem is that we tend to confuse the two types of change and their causes. This conflation happens regularly, such as when music educators, working individually or collectively through professional organizations, beseech the profession to bring about system-wide, paradigmatic change. In other words, they insist on the profession doing the impossible. The calling for and then failure to achieve unattainable goals is a part of our heritage that stretches back to the days of colonial singing school masters and the cultural pundits at Harvard. Those folks strove for paradigmatic change in the form of reforming the musical tastes of the general public, and they failed completely.⁴

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² Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

³ Praxialism was added to the lexicon of music education philosophy after the publication of Philip Alperson, "What Should One Expect from a Philosophy of Music Education?" *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 25, no. 3 (autumn 1991): 215-42. The concept has since been expanded by David J. Elliott, Thomas Regelski, Wayne Bowman, and others. Aristotle defined *praxis* as "right actions" on the part of humans.

⁴ Allen P. Britton, "Music in Early American Public Education: A Historical Critique," in *Basic Concepts in Music Education*, Fifty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, ed. Nelson B. Henry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 205-06. See also Jere T. Humphreys, "Some Notions, Stories, and Tales about Music and Education in Society: The Coin's Other Side," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 23, no. 2 (April 2002): 138-41.

Because it continues to be misunderstood, this morning we will focus on paradigmatic change, and not praxial change, at which we excel. In an attempt to shed some light on the phenomenon of change in music education, we will take a look at what actually happens instead of what pundits think should happen.⁵ Perspectives based on evidence, historical and current, could help balance perspectives based on ideologies, about which we hear and read so much.

Paradigmatic Change

To start at the beginning, in ancient Athens formal schools for citizen boys were operating by the early sixth century B.C.E. ("Before the Common Era"), and in Sparta even earlier.⁶ In the Athenian schools all students learned their "letters," and almost all learned to play the lyre and participated in athletics. The students' fathers determined the curriculum *de facto* by selecting and paying tuition to particular schools, all of which were private.⁷ Beginning in the fourth century B.C.E., Plato and other philosophers expressed views about what music should be taught, and to whom and how it should be taught.⁸ Plato even described an ideal city-state ruled by philosopher-kings, and frequently punctuated his prescriptions with the pronouncement, "I'll make it a law."⁹ Unfortunately, we tend to read Plato's philosophy as history, in other words, we confuse what he wanted with what actually happened. This misreading may contribute to the modern myth that the music education profession can bring about paradigmatic changes in schooling,

⁵ I made similar arguments about the "would-be masters" (i.e., the professional music establishment and the intellectual leadership in music education), versus the actual "masters" (i.e., the public, students, and especially "social/educational factors") of instrumental music ensembles in the schools. See Jere T. Humphreys, "Instrumental Music in American Education: In Service of Many Masters," *Journal of Band Research* 30, no. 2 (spring 1995): 39-70; reprinted from *The Ithaca Conference on American Music Education: Centennial Profiles*, ed. Mark Fonder (Ithaca, NY: Ithaca College, 1992), 25-51.

⁶ S. S. Laurie, *Historical Survey of Pre-Christian Education*, 2nd ed. (New York: AMS Press, 1970; reprinted from 1900 edition), 226. Only approximately 20 percent of the population of ancient Athens were citizens; *ibid.*, 225.

⁷ Kenneth J. Freeman, *School of Hellas: An Essay on the Practice and Theory of Ancient Greek Education from 600 to 300 B.C.*, ed. M. J. Rendall (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1969; reprinted from 1907 edition), 57-58.

⁸ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. from the Greek by Joe Sachs (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publications, 2007; first published 380 B.C.E.), 69 (Book II), 90-97 (Book III), 117 (Book IV). Aristotle also had some things to say about music and music education; see Aristotle, *Politica*, Book VIII, quoted in Michael L. Mark, *Source Readings in Music Education History* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1982), 42. See also Jere T. Humphreys, "Plato's Views on Three Modes of Music Education Praxis: Composing, Performing, and Listening," trans. to the Greek by Evita Simou, *Musical Pedagogics. Special Issue: Praxial Philosophy of Music Education* 4 (2007): 78-90.

⁹ Plato, *The Republic*, 232 (Book VII). Plato set forth his views on philosopher-kings in various writings, including *ibid.*, 215-17.

when in reality even Plato couldn't do it, much less the Greek music teachers, whoever they were in those days.

Skipping forward to the late Roman period, early Christian leaders supported music in religious services because they believed it would help make people more receptive to church teachings.¹⁰ Thus, singing schools called *schola cantorum* evolved as part of the shaping of Christian worship services. Music then became an important subject in monastery and court schools during the early Middle Ages due to its place in Greek and Roman schools and the needs of the Christian church. In the second half of the Middle Ages, music remained the most important of the seven liberal arts, the core curriculum in the emerging universities. In some universities it also played a role in "the embellishment of academic ceremonies."¹¹

Now, fast forward to the Reformation, when Catholic leaders and Martin Luther founded quasi-public school systems in Germany. Both systems, Jesuit and Protestant, placed heavy emphasis on music instruction because religious leaders, who were in effect political leaders during this period of major change, wanted to enhance the musical aspects of their church services. The prominent place of music in these schools set the stage for future public school music education aimed at Europe's gradually expanding middle class.¹²

While German religious leaders were establishing Europe's first modern school systems, the Spanish explorer Hernando Cortez defeated the Aztecs in Central America. He then sent for a Franciscan missionary, who founded a cathedral school for the Spanish crown in what is now Mexico City. This singing master and organ builder taught music and other subjects to Spanish and indigenous children, primarily for religious reasons. He taught the first generation of European-style music teachers in the Western Hemisphere,¹³ and in doing so capitalized on one of the largest upheavals in world history, the Spanish conquest of the Americas. Two and a half centuries later, their descendants taught at the Spanish colonial mission that stands just south of Tucson, a functioning church where music is still practiced.

Let's fast forward again, this time to the 1820s and 1830s and the beginning of the common school movement in the United States, when schooling became universally available. This movement resulted from increasing democratization and a growing middle class during the Andrew Jackson administration. Music and other

¹⁰ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 10: Chapter XIII, quoted in Mark, *Source Readings in Music Education History*, 62.

¹¹ Nan Cooke Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 15-16, 31, *passim* (quoted material from p. 34).

¹² Ernest F. Livingstone, "The Place of Music in German Education from the Beginnings through the 16th Century," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 15, no. 4 (winter 1967): 263-77. Luther's important collaborator in education reform (and other things) was Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560).

¹³ For thorough accounts, see George Norman Heller, "Music Education in the Valley of Mexico during the Sixteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1973); and George Heller, "Fray Pedro de Gante: Pioneer American Music Educator," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 27, no. 1 (spring 1979): 21-28.

new subjects were added to the narrow elementary school curriculum,¹⁴ continuing a trend begun by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's book on childhood, published in Paris in 1762, and extending through the work of Johann Pestalozzi and others. Thus, it was not a coincidence that Lowell Mason—an energetic singing school master, composer, and promoter—helped secure a permanent place for music in the Boston school curriculum in 1838. Mason's considerable abilities notwithstanding, it should be noted that during this period of curriculum expansion music also entered schools in other cities, in some cases a bit earlier.¹⁵ He and others took advantage of the expanding curriculum; they did not cause it.¹⁶

The next major changes in American school music grew out of the industrial revolution. Industrialization led to increasing immigration and urbanization, which resulted in the passage of child labor laws, which in turn led to the passage of compulsory school laws beginning in 1852. The industrial revolution also spawned the progressive education movement, which opened doors to new subjects and athletic programs,¹⁷ mainly in high schools, which doubled in number between 1890 and 1915.¹⁸ Orchestras, choirs, and bands entered high schools during the early years of progressivism, much like vocal music instruction had entered elementary schools during the common school movement.¹⁹

Music for elementary general students began as sight-singing instruction during the 1830s, but under progressivism music listening and simple instrument performance were added to general music programs. These additions were facilitated not only by a liberalization of the curriculum under progressivism, but also by the player piano, phonograph, and eventually radio, all of which provided access to music beyond what could be performed live.²⁰

¹⁴ Harold Rugg and Others, *Curriculum-Making: Past and Present* (New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1969; reprinted from Bloomington, IL: Public School Publishing Company, 1926), 20.

¹⁵ Lloyd Frederick Sunderman, *Historical Foundations of Music Education in the United States* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1971), 46.

¹⁶ Birge acknowledged that the idea of public school music was not unique to Mason or Boston (pp. 36-37), but he repeatedly credited both, falsely, with being the first to implement it. Edward Bailey Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States* (Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference, 1966; reprinted from rev. and augmented ed., Boston: Ginn and Company, 1937), 1, 57-58, 63-85.

¹⁷ Jere T. Humphreys, "United States of America: Reflections on the Development and Effectiveness of Compulsory Music Education," in *The Origins and Foundations of Music Education: Cross-Cultural Historical Studies in Compulsory Schooling*, eds. Gordon Cox and Robin Stevens (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 125-29.

¹⁸ Rugg, *Curriculum-Making*, 18-19.

¹⁹ Humphreys, "Instrumental Music in American Education," 45.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

So far, we have mentioned some important changes in music education that resulted from major intellectual, religious, social, economic, political, and demographic practices and shifts in ancient Greece, during early Christendom and Reformation Germany, and in Spanish America and the United States. If time permitted we could examine other cases, such as early teacher education in Prussia and later the United States, and the singing school movement in colonial and early America. In all these cases and more, individual music educators did the work, but broad paradigmatic changes provided the opportunities, including spreading egalitarianism and democratization, new religious practices, and advances in technology.

Our Improving World

Society

Today, life for a majority of the world's population is better in most ways important to the human condition than ever before in history. And, conditions continue to improve at increasing rates. This argument runs contrary to most of what passes for news these days, but here are a few observations.

The vast majority of the world's population is better sheltered, fed, entertained, and healthier than ever before. In his book entitled *The Rational Optimist*, Matt Ridley claims that the decade of the 1950s was a period of "unprecedented abundance" worldwide. Yet, over the next half century, to 2005, per capita income increased almost three hundred percent worldwide, and people ate one-third more calories, lived one-third longer, and "were less likely to die as a result of war, murder, childbirth, accidents, tornadoes, flooding, famine, whooping cough, tuberculosis, malaria, diphtheria, typhus, typhoid, measles, smallpox, scurvy or polio. . . [; were] less likely . . . to get cancer, heart disease or stroke. . . [; were] more likely to be literate and to have finished school . . . [; and were] more likely to own a telephone, a flush toilet, a refrigerator and a bicycle." The environment is also much cleaner and safer, and life expectancy has increased at an incredible rate of a quarter of a year annually for the past two centuries--yes, that's 50 years. Further, "[d]espite a doubling of the world population, . . . the raw number of people living in absolute poverty has declined. . . . The United Nations estimates that poverty was reduced more in the last 50 years than in the previous 500."²¹ According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, by the year 2022 the world will be mostly middle class instead of mostly poor for the first time in history.²² Now *that* is something to celebrate.

Height and IQ scores have also increased, while differences among individuals and nations have decreased. One of the biggest areas of improvement is in the amount of work required to acquire specified amounts of goods and services. An hour of artificial light from a sesame oil lamp in 1750 B.C.E. required over 50 hours of work; a tallow candle in the 1800s over six hours, a kerosene lamp in the

²¹ Matt Ridley, *The Rational Optimist: How Prosperity Evolves* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 12, 14-17 (quoted material from pp. 15, 17). Income figures were adjusted for inflation.

²² *Christian Science Monitor*, untitled article on MSNBC.msn.com, 5/17/2011.

1880s 15 minutes, a filament lamp in 1950 eight seconds, and a compact fluorescent bulb today less than one-half second.²³ Archeologists attribute many long-standing problems to overpopulation relative to resources, mainly food, but currently a quarter of the "world's population on a country-by-country basis is either stable or slightly declining, and the rate[s of growth in] . . . most . . . high-growth areas. . . are also declining."²⁴

We could go on and on about improvements in goods, services, and physical wellbeing, but what about happiness? Recent research suggests that contrary to earlier beliefs, increasing wealth is leading to higher levels of reported happiness. However, social and political freedom correlates even more strongly with happiness than does material wealth; in recent decades advances in individual freedoms account for the increases in reported happiness in 45 of 52 countries.²⁵ According to historian Francis Fukuyama, by the early 1990s a majority of the world's countries, approximately 140, had adopted democratic forms of government.²⁶

Music education

Like most aspects of society, music education has improved over time. Hard data are scarce, but we can hear huge improvements in the performance levels of school and university ensembles during the spans of our lifetimes, and from recordings before that. The performance levels of some of the renowned early college and university bands and choirs were far below those of the top groups of today. Recently, I heard someone speculate that the best university bands today probably play better than the Sousa Band in its heyday. The performance repertoire has also expanded dramatically in quality, scope, and diversity.

And as mentioned earlier, general music instruction has become more sophisticated than the singular teaching of sight-singing. We have adopted, adapted, and created new teaching methodologies such as those by Dalcroze, Orff, Kodály, and Gordon. Our teaching materials are of higher quality in every way, increasingly aided by advances in technology, and a larger percentage of schools and students are served by music specialists than in the past—and also more than in most, if not all, other countries today.²⁷

In music teacher education we have developed more effective curricula, teaching materials, and strategies. We do a better job of training teachers through the use of lesson planning, grading rubrics, more sophisticated materials of all types, better insights into which things matter most in terms of teacher skills and

²³ Ridley, *Rational Optimist*, 18-19, 21.

²⁴ Steven A. LeBlanc, *Constant Battles: The Myth of the Peaceful, Nobel Savage* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003), 225.

²⁵ Ridley, *Rational Optimist*, 26, 28.

²⁶ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 42.

²⁷ See May Kokkidou, *European Music Curricula: Philosophical Orientations, Trends, and Comparative Validation*, ed. C. Tsougras (Thessaloniki, Greece: Greek Society for Music Education, 2009), 14-47.

knowledge, and more time spent in actual school environments, plus recording and other technologies.

Sources of Negativity

Unfortunately, the successes achieved by society in general and by music education in particular tend to be overshadowed by allegations of decline and decay over time, and by doomsday prognostications about the future. A sociologist at Arizona State University believes that increasing use of the word "fear" by the mass media since the mid-1990s partially explains why, despite dramatically lower crime rates, the healthiest, safest, most affluent people in history are among the most fearful. He reports, for example, that residents of Scottsdale and other upscale, low-crime areas in metropolitan Phoenix, Arizona apply for the most concealed weapons carry permits and keep more weapons in their homes than residents of other parts of the metropolis.²⁸

Excessive fear leads to a host of ills, such as homophobia, harsh sentencing and inhumane treatment of prisoners, the stoking of fears about "the other" in the case of minorities and immigrants, propaganda against targeted groups in the so-called war on terror;²⁹ and negative portrayals of foreign nations, soldiers, even entire populations based on different religions, ethnicities, political systems, dress, and so on. According to *Mother Jones* magazine, survivalist propaganda and products have surged since the election and re-election of the nation's first minority-race president. Today, a child-size tactical vest can be yours for \$499, and "8,671 servings of . . . gluten-free, vegetarian emergency rations goes for \$1,799.99 . . ." at Costco. And ten acres of land in a secret community right here in Arizona, replete with a 40-foot-long underground survivalist tube designed for a family of six, can be yours for only \$72,000.³⁰

The music education profession also tends toward negative attitudes and outlooks. One reason may be that music educators are among the most idealistic of the species. American music education is rooted in two highly idealistic worlds. One is the world of classical art music, a product of the sharply hierarchical Western European monarchies. This music is hierarchical in formal, tonal, and melodic structure, and it came to be construed on the ideal of non-contextual contemplation³¹—in other words, as elitist and idealist.

²⁸ David L. Altheide, *Creating Fear: News and the Construction of Crisis* (New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 2002), ix, 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁰ Tim Murphy, "Barackalypse Now," *Mother Jones* 38, no. 1 (January-February 2013): 49-51. Quoted material from p. 51.

³¹ Jere T. Humphreys, "Toward a Reconstruction of 'Creativity' in Music Education," *British Journal of Music Education* 23, no. 3 (November 2006): 352-55. See also Jere T. Humphreys, "Observations about Occupational Identity among Public School Music Teachers: Past and Present," in *Advances in Social-Psychology and Music Education Research*, SEMPRES Studies in the Psychology of Music Series, ed. Patrice Madura Ward-Steinman (Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 132.

In addition to European classical music, American music education is rooted in the world of formal education. Unlike classical music, modern-style education evolved to serve *all* children and adolescents. Therefore, the idealism in formal education stems not from its intended beneficiaries, but from the humble roles played by teachers throughout the history of modern schooling. During the common school movement, Horace Mann and other leaders propagandized an idealized service motive to teachers because society offered little in the way of compensation, future advancements, or other enticements. A substantial proportion of the teachers were young females, many of them teenagers, and their pay was low and the conditions poor.³² Teaching is still seen today as a service profession, with the attendant expectations of idealism on the part of teachers.

Thus, the music education profession adopted an elite classical music whose meanings, even existence, were purportedly not dependent on context—on the “real world,” if you will. And music entered the schools when schools and teachers were expected to function with negligible tangible support. The two idealistic worlds of classical music and formal education continue to shape identities and ideologies in music education.

The field doubled down on idealism during the post-World War II Cold War era, a period when national and corporate agendas increasingly influenced education.³³ As education came under pressure to justify itself, some leading music educators saw fit to try to justify their field in new ways that could be construed as unique to music education. Thus, they adopted an eighteenth-century German philosophy of absolute music as a philosophy of music education. “Music education as aesthetic education” (MEAE) did not address the national or corporate agendas for education, but it did provide philosophical underpinning for music education. Above all, this idealistic philosophy filled a perceived void.³⁴

³² Robert B. Downs, *Horace Mann: Champion of Public Schools* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974), 38, 40-42, *passim*. In 1842, Mann, as head of the Massachusetts Board of Education, complained, not for the first time, about female teacher salaries being less than 40 percent of the salaries of male teachers; *ibid.*, p. 42.

³³ Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience 1876-1980* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 651.

³⁴ Jere T. Humphreys, Review of *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, by David J. Elliott, *Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 17, no. 1 (January 1996): 153-59.

In recent decades, the idealistic goal of teaching aesthetics has been partially supplanted by new idealistic goals such as the fostering of "creativity," "democracy," "brain development," and others. The impetus for teaching "creativity" stems from corporate desires for workers who can "create" a continuous supply of new, high-quality, marketable goods and services for the global economy.³⁵ As for "democracy," according to education historian Lawrence A. Cremin, American promotion of "democracy" and "social justice" to the world dates from the very beginnings of the republic.³⁶ The current iterations of these ideals in music education draw heavily from the writings of John Dewey, despite the fact that Dewey lived in an era when democratizing hordes of immigrants was a national agenda (they called it "Americanizing"). Nevertheless, Cremin notes that "in the end Dewey's vision of a democratic socialist society and politically reformist schools did not triumph," as schools became, "if anything politically conservative."³⁷ That conservatism was manifested in the sponsorship of bands at federal Indian schools in Oklahoma and Arizona, which were to "Americanize" Native American youth (they called it "civilizing").³⁸

Modern calls for the teaching of "creativity" and "democracy" in music education draw additional sustenance from notions about popular music groups being more creative and democratic than traditional conductor-led ensembles. But just look around: most amateur popular groups do little more than "cover" music "created" by other groups, and many if not most successful groups, amateur and professional, appear to rely on leaders within the groups. The point is that music and other groups comprised of voluntary participants form part of the fabric of democracies, whether their leaders are elected or appointed.³⁹

³⁵ Jere T. Humphreys, "Influence of Cultural Policy on Education in Music and the Other Arts"; <http://mmc.edu.mk/IRAM/Conferences/Skopjeconf2/02Jere.pdf>, January 2005. For information on how the arts can contribute to the global economy, see David Aspin, "Lifelong Learning: The Mission of Arts Education in the Learning Community of the 21st Century," *Music Education Research* 2, no. 1 (March 2000): 76-79.

³⁶ Cremin, *American Education*, 9.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 651.

³⁸ Greg A. Handel and Jere T. Humphreys, "The Phoenix Indian School Band, 1894-1930," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 26, no. 2 (April 2005): 144-61.

³⁹ Jere T. Humphreys, "Relationships Between Popular Music and Democracy: Implications for Popular Music Pedagogy," *Music Education Research International*. (In press)

I am an advocate for teaching popular music because it is part and parcel of democratic societies, because many of the lyrics concern important social issues, and especially because it is the most important music of our time and nation.⁴⁰ At the same time, I try to discourage myths about any inherently superior qualities of democracy, justice, or creativity in popular music in comparison to other musics and performance mediums.

My concern with MEAE, democracy, and the rest is that we continue to try to force paradigmatic change by adding more idealistic but unrealistic goals, things to fail at that are not central to our mission and arguably could be done better by others. Given more time today, we could discuss the so-called standards and increasingly high-stakes testing, both corporate-driven attempts to improve reading and math test scores via mechanistic, factory-model schools.⁴¹ The music education profession has been lukewarm at best toward standards and generally hostile toward testing, and the implementation of both adds to our sense of negativity.

Over a half-century ago, music education historian Allen Britton said this about Lowell Mason's adoption of Pestalozzian principles during the 1830s:

. . . the student of the history of music education is confronted with a disheartening spectacle. The most important historical figure in music education exerted himself over a long period of years in promoting a teaching method the principles of which he did not understand, holding before him as the bible of the method a work he had plagiarized from a nonpertinent source. . . . And to the present day many American music educators have demonstrated what may be considered an easy readiness to climb aboard any intellectual bandwagon which happened to be near by, and to trust it to arrive at destinations appropriate for music educators, or worse, to adopt its destinations as their own without careful enough scrutiny of the intellectual proprieties involved.⁴²

Nearly a decade later, Britton wrote: "[w]e have probably been reformers long enough."⁴³ He was concerned about the constant striving for major reforms that began during the colonial era, well before Mason came onto the scene, and showed no signs of abating during Britton's own time.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ See *ibid.*; Christopher Small, *Music of the Common Tongue: Survival and Celebration in Afro-American Music* (London: John Calder, 1987), 4; and Jere T. Humphreys, "Popular Music in the American Schools: What the Past Tells Us about the Present and the Future," in *Bridging the Gap: Popular Music and Music Education*, ed. Carlos Xavier Rodriguez (Reston, VA: MENC: The National Association for Music Education, 2004), 91-105.

⁴¹ See David C. Berliner, *The Manufactured Crisis: Myths, Fraud, and the Attack on America's Public Schools* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1995).

⁴² Britton, "Music in Early American Public Education," 206-07.

⁴³ Britton, "The Singing School Movement in the United States," in *International Musicological Society, Report of the 8th Congress*, vol. I (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1966), 99.

⁴⁴ Britton also wrote: "A spirit of reform has permeated . . . ever since 1721," and "has manifested itself in an always evident willingness to discard the old for something new and presumably better. But . . . the new was not always better."

Things We Can and Cannot Do

During the 1980s, the Music Educators National Conference campaigned for the issuance of a postage stamp commemorating music education. The fact that this large professional organization was unable to accomplish such a seemingly modest goal should serve as a cautionary tale about the kinds of things we can and cannot do, about the limits of our power and influence. We should continue to exercise our real power for good on behalf of our students and programs, in the here and now. At the same time, we should recognize our decidedly limited ability to realize fantasies about grandiose paradigmatic changes. It might help to remember that although we could not bring about the issuance of a postage stamp, last month the U.S. Postal Service announced the upcoming issuance of a stamp commemorating "The Man in Black," country/rock crossover singer Johnny Cash.⁴⁵ Our failure to achieve the postage stamp fantasy has no bearing whatsoever on our ability to contribute significantly to our students, schools, communities, and society at large.

It is exceedingly difficult to predict paradigmatic shifts, in part because they occur so seldom, certainly not more than once in a music educator's career and typically not at all. Nevertheless, slowly and more-or-less surely music educators, professional organizations, and universities capitalized on major paradigmatic shifts in society that greatly affected education. Understandably, no one anticipated the changes, but when the common school movement opened the door for music in the American school curriculum and there were no school music teachers available, singing school masters filled the void. When universities delayed offering music teacher education programs, summer "singing conventions" and textbook company schools stepped in. When ensembles entered the schools and universities were slow to train directors, students and teachers of other subjects volunteered, many of them members of community ensembles.⁴⁶ In other words, people responded and they got the job done when the time came.

What we have not done well is adapt to changes in the world of music. The evolution and spread of modern popular music, most of it with roots in this country, is the obvious musical paradigm shift that we have essentially ignored. The field was hostile to blues, ragtime, and jazz; oblivious to white upland, mountain, western, and country musics; and we remain cool toward styles derived from both of these streams, such as rock and its off-shoots. Linda Ronstadt, the most popular female rock star of the 1970s, lives here in Tucson, and the international star Alice Cooper lives in Scottsdale--two of dozens of famous popular musicians with strong Arizona connections. Music educators eventually took advantage of the paradigmatic changes in education discussed earlier, but we have failed to capitalize on the several

Sometimes it was not really new either. . ." Britton, "Music in Early American Public Education," 205.

⁴⁵ "Johnny Cash to be Honored with Postage Stamp," *Rolling Stone*, "Music" section, January 30, 2013; available at: <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/johnny-cash-to-be-honored-with-postage-stamp-20130130>. To be fair, only 20 of approximately 40,000 stamp subjects recommended annually are selected for issuance; *ibid*.

⁴⁶ Humphreys, "Observations about Occupational Identity," 130-31.

paradigmatic sea-changes in music, probably due to our musical training that includes more than a little indoctrination.⁴⁷

Some Recognitions and Realizations

It is important to recognize that we have confused correlation with causation; that is, music educators took advantage of some large structural shifts but did not cause them. And we have confused praxial with paradigmatic change—the things we can and cannot do. It is also important to recognize that things are not deteriorating, that over time our profession has improved in virtually every way due to our day-in, day-out praxial efforts and because our predecessors did respond to some important paradigmatic shifts.

At the same time, our misreading of history leads us to conclude that if our predecessors in effect created something from nothing, we could and should do likewise today. Moreover, our ignorance about music education in other countries leads us to conclude that we are behind, when this is manifestly not true (our foreign colleagues are being told the same things). All this results in unwarranted negativity about the present state of music education.

Then, to our mis-readings of the past and present we add doomsday scenarios about the future, about things that *might* happen. We even have doomsayers who see precursors of their negative prognostications at every turn. All these doomsday scenarios about the past, present, and future pave the way for generalist doomsayers, who sweepingly pronounce music education a colossal failure.

Most music educators understand that most, if not all, of the doomsday scenarios about the past, present, and future are based on false assumptions and idealistic ideologies, not facts on the ground. Moreover, observers from outside the field, such as parents of our students and others, seem quite pleased with what we are doing. I personally don't know of any major critics or criticisms of music education emanating from *outside* the field. But we don't need outside critics because we have our own, seers who conjure problems and then, presto!, step forward with solutions, kind of like the doomsday survivalists who offer solutions to the problems *they* prognosticate. All the doomsaying can lead music educators to despair, paranoia, even nihilism, not to mention burnout and turnover.⁴⁸ We face enough praxial challenges daily without having to suffer self-inflicted wounds from within

⁴⁷ See Jui-Ching Wang and Jere T. Humphreys, "Multicultural and Popular Music Content in an American Music Teacher Education Program," *International Journal of Music Education* 27, no. 1 (February 2009): 19-36; and Humphreys, "Popular Music in the American Schools," 96-97.

⁴⁸ As discussed above, the drive to locate and adopt a philosophy of music education after World War II resulted in part from fears over possible changes in status for the field. There were similar expressions of fear, even paranoia, early in the progressive education movement. For more on the latter, see Jere T. Humphreys, "Applications of Science: The Age of Standardization and Efficiency in Music Education," *Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 9, no. 1 (January 1988): 18-19.

the profession. It would be prudent to dial back the drumbeat of negativity that envelops the profession like a shroud and distracts us from the important tasks at hand. We need to recognize that paradigmatic change in music education does not result from the wishes or efforts of music educators or our organizations, and certainly not from university professors' writings or seminar rooms. In fact, major changes do not start in teacher education programs at all, but in the schools themselves, always in response to societal shifts.

American music educators continue to make important praxial changes in response to evolving societal conditions. A short list includes the continuing improvement of curriculum, musical teaching materials, and pedagogies; initiation and development of programs for middle and junior high schools; instruction in multicultural music; instruction for handicapped, disabled, and adult learners; and increasing use of new technology. These and other praxial changes have and will continue to result in incremental but monumental improvements over time.⁴⁹

The Future

In addition, it appears that we are poised for some paradigmatic changes, because surely schools must transition from the current industrial age model to a post-industrial information age model. This transition has already taken place in the U.S. economy, but not yet in education. Eventually, societal forces must realize that

successful schooling will require more choices for students and their parents, not fewer; and that schools are not factories, teachers are not assembly line workers, and students are not Toyotas to be tested endlessly in the name of quality control. When these realizations occur, appealing electives will likely become the "name of the game" in education,⁵⁰ much like they did during the progressive era when elective ensembles entered the schools, and maybe more so.

Today, those who are trying to force a standards and testing structure on the schools, in other words trying to make the outdated industrial model of schooling work in the information-age world, are doing everyone a disservice. Music educators who try to force an information-age model into the antiquated industrial-age schooling model are equally in error. Attempts to create paradigmatic change in music education before the structure of schooling changes are counterproductive. When the education system finally does transform from its industrial-age model to an information-age model, we will know it, but nothing on the scale of the common school or progressive education movements has occurred for about a century now. Granted, it is possible to find exceptions at the teacher or even program level, but on a scale of the sweep of history, the paradigm shift from industrial age to information

⁴⁹ Jere T. Humphreys, "2006 Senior Researcher Award Acceptance Address: Observations about Music Education Research in MENC's First and Second Centuries," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 3 (fall 2006): 186. In the past there were also programs directed toward national priorities in Latin America and the nation's efforts during both world wars.

⁵⁰ Jere T. Humphreys, "On Teaching Pigs to Sing," paper presented at the Seventh MayDay Group Symposium. University of Washington, Seattle, April-May 1999; <http://www.maydaygroup.org/php/resources/colloquia/VII-humphreys-reenergizing.php>, p. 6.

age schools has hardly begun. In the meantime, sending new teachers out with vague notions about information-age schooling models, but inadequate training for coping with current realities in the schools, is poor practice indeed. Going forward, we need to take advantage *when* paradigmatic changes occur—not *before*.

As we look for ways to expand and otherwise improve our existing programs, we should distinguish between our compulsory music programs for general students and our elective music programs, at present mostly performing ensembles. The century-long debates over listening versus performance have not served us well, and have led us to miss things. Historians bear some of the blame because they have failed to make it clear that, for example, compulsory vocal general music morphed not into choirs, but into compulsory modern general music. Elective classes, mainly ensembles, came from a different place. The fact that both of these transitions occurred during early progressivism adds to the confusion.⁵¹

For example, we need to think hard about whether instruction in “creativity,” “composition,” “democracy,” “brain development,” and all the rest, not to mention the nine standards, can be crammed into the less than one hour per week of general music instruction. And will we continue to fantasize about somehow cannibalizing elective performing ensemble classes and turning the student interest and curriculum time into new types of secondary general music classes? Do we really believe that if we could just rid our world of the uncreative, undemocratic performing ensembles we could somehow install general music classes in secondary schools? And if so, would they be elective classes or would they be compulsory and thus universal?⁵² Or are we going to gradually change the centuries-old, music- and culture-bound performing ensembles into general music classes—a modern-day version of the profession’s old musical bait-and-switch tactics? If none of the above, where and how will all the proposed new content fit in?

One possible solution lies in the realization that in all previous cases of paradigmatic change discussed earlier, additions were made, not subtractions. In other words, existing programs were not destroyed as part of the process of adding new content to the curriculum. Music was *added* to the German and then the American public schools, new general music approaches and ensembles were *added*, and so forth. Future changes are also likely to come in the form of additions, not destruction followed by additions. This realization should make us wary of the alarmist “tipping point,” “elephant in the room,” and other doomsday scenarios,⁵³

⁵¹ Humphreys, “Instrumental Music in American Education,” 44.

⁵² Humphreys, “2006 Senior Researcher Award Acceptance Address,” 185.

⁵³ John Kratus, “Music Education at the Tipping Point,” *Music Educators Journal* 94, no. 2 (November 2007): 42-48; and David A. Williams, “The Elephant in the Room,” *Music Educators Journal* 98, no. 1 (September 2011): 51-57. For some actual data and references to some of the false claims, see Kenneth Elpus and Carlos R. Abril, “High School Ensemble Students in the United States: A Demographic Profile,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 59, no. 2 (July 2011): 128-45.

not to mention the diatribes seeking to discredit existing programs through straw man arguments coupled with hackneyed use of Foucaultian mythology.⁵⁴

A better understanding of where the elective music and general music classes came from, plus accurate assessment of where they are today, would help us realize that loss of our elective offerings would simply leave a hole and not make room for anything else. It is important to recognize that the elective offerings represent our best chance of adding other electives, much like jazz education entered through existing elective instrumental programs.⁵⁵ Let's be clear: any future curricular gains will likely come in the form of elective programs in composition, popular music, and other types of ensembles, to name a few examples, whereas additional curriculum time for compulsory general music is highly unlikely, in elementary or secondary schools.

I think we should continue to buckle down and do the hard, praxial tasks of developing the field in ways that work and forego the grandiose attempts to force paradigmatic change prematurely. It is troubling when teachers are told they are failing because "all" they do is help their students learn about music, perform it, even compose it, while engaging in wholesome music-related activities. So, let's stop conflating correlation with causation and praxial with paradigmatic change, and concentrate on improving the praxial aspects of our work, things we can do well. We should remember and be grateful for the fact that both our profession and the world continue to improve in most ways that matter. All the negativity notwithstanding, we really are doing a good job, a very good job indeed. Thank you.

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⁵⁴ Randall Everett Allsup and Cathy Benedict, "The Problems of Band: An Inquiry into the Future of Instrumental Music Education," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 16, no. 2 (fall 2008): 156-73; and Roger Mantie, "Bands And/As Music Education: Antinomies and the Struggle for Legitimacy," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 20, no. 1 (spring 2012): 63-81. Other authors lump their criticisms of the ensemble paradigm together with every other imaginable aspect of school-based music education in North America; e.g., Lee R. Bartel, ed., *Questioning the Music Education Paradigm* (Waterloo, Canada: Canadian Music Educators' Association, 2004).

⁵⁵ Humphreys, "Instrumental Music in American Education," 47.

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