

Philosophy of Music Education: Changing Moments

Erica Brooks, November 2006

“Miraculous,” one of so many words that explain what I have experienced and felt with my involvement in music. I would like to pass my positive experience to so many others in the world, whether it is education in the class room or a special program in a community. Very few children realize what music consists of other than noise that comes out of a radio, or TV. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary music is “the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity.” Does this prove that children really do not understand what music is, do they really know exactly how much of their world revolves around music? Another definition given by the Merriam Webster Dictionary is: “vocal, instrumental, or mechanical sounds having rhythm, melody, or harmony.” A child just walking down the street going the same speed with every step creates a rhythm. How many days actually go by where a human being does not run into some form of “music?”

Many critics believe that music/art should be the first subjects cut in schools to assist in budget cuts. Many of those critics believe music is not important, otherwise they would take a more in depth look at what music actually is and what music does for people all around the world. Some ask “why is music important, for the most part it is either words coming out of the mouth or a tune coming from an instrument?” This question is a very good example and reason on why music valuable in every human beings life. Music is important because, yes it is words coming out of the mouth and a tune coming from an instrument, but that is just a sliver of what music is and what it

actually does. The significance of music can go on and on, everyone has a different opinion on what they feel the important aspects of music are. Some top reasons include: an escape, therapy, a way to communicate (feelings, emotions, etc.), works the creative side of the mind that no other subject does, it makes the mind stronger, it strengthens listening skills, it is a positive activity that keeps students occupied, it works on focus, it gives a sense of accomplishment, challenging (there are many levels that could be challenging but possible to accomplish). It is these reasons and so many others that should prove to communities, school boards and the state that music should be taught in schools.

In most schools music is considered an extra curricular activity, which means many students get the choice to take a certain music class or not. For many this is a disappointment, even though they love music and would like to put it into their schedule they are unable to fit it in due to other core classes. By having a core subject of music in schools allows students an abundant amount of learning experiences that they would not receive anywhere else or to a certain extent. Students involved in music gain abilities, for example how to communicate in a different form other than talking or sign language, students get to be creative and make up their own tunes on their own or with a group of fellow students allowing them to meet and work with a variety of people. The highly encouraged reason why music should be included in all school curriculums is because not only do students learn and experience valuable information but it is also fun and enjoyable.

No matter what happens there are always more questions, when music does exist in schools there is always the argument of what type of music should be taught. For these

types of questions I believe first what has to be discussed is what are all the options and see if all the options are appropriate for lecture. If so then they should be put in the curriculum with no argument, however there are those circumstances of time and scheduling. Some schools have certain types of schedules that do not allow music classes to teach all that is available, what then has to be decided is what should be cut out of the curriculum and what should be kept. That answer could vary depending on the school and community. For example if it is a catholic school they probably will not teach rap or rock's roll. Public schools on the other hand have a bit more to discuss, just because the students they have does not mean they should not have Christian music as a consideration, but then they also have those students that could be former immigrants that want to learn about there type of culture music. If the conflict of what kind of music is appropriate to teach in schools the community should have a say, but just because a child does not have that music at home does not mean that should keep them from learning it at school. Music in schools should try to cover all kinds of music from, history to present or jazz to pop, or any music that would not come across a person's path without learning it in school.

No child should go through life without being educated in music. Every person should have a good perspective on music, which does not mean just a year of music class. Even though the math, science and English are very important subjects to teach in school music is just as important, it is just in a different area. With music being just as important means schools should make sure that music gets the same amount of interest as the core classes. Music class should not be any shorter then core classes and schools should make sure that music is easy to fit into students schedules. Many argue that schools do not

make music a priority because it is not of very much interest to students. Only a small sort of students has an interest, those small sorts of students are the only ones that have interest because it was easy to fit music into their schedules. If schools would make music easily accessible more students would gain interest. Every student deserves the education that comes from music programs: opportunities, friendships (acquaintances), the excitement or enjoyment, and all the experiences they can gain whether it is a special performance, or finding a certain type of music. Too many students like to be creative and use their own minds to create what they believe is a masterpiece, every student can learn how to write their own music, or create their own masterpiece. Why should a child be withheld the experiences of music just because they take more core classes, the school drops it or it is too expensive for their family? No student should have to go through life without the availability of music to their ear.

Who should teach music could come to be a bit more difficult for there are restrictions other than the obvious of having an education and a degree for the eligibility to teach. Music educators should not be people who are looking for an easy way through life, in order to have an adequate, dignified and proficient music program the educator has to be indulged in their work. Not only for the students but for the existence and positive popularity of music education. If any human being comes into a music room to teach music how are they going to know the special secrets to excite the students of music, and push them to be great performers, musicians and learn about the history of music. How are they going to know those pieces that students will practice days on end just because they like the piece, or because they love the challenge? The right music educator will put forth a hundred percent effort into making sure that when their students graduate

from the music program there was nothing further that the students could have been taught or experienced to that point, and also to make sure that they have encouraged them to continue in music whether it be as small and simple as joining the town band or actually becoming the next Beethoven.

Just because the word music is not spoken in everyday life does not mean that it does not exist nor has any importance. People are surrounded by music everyday, whether it be listening to the radio in the car or snapping their fingers. The world deserves a better education on what exactly do the population encounter everyday that they do not even realize that what they are doing can coincide or relate to music.