

*“Music is the fourth great material want of our natures, - first food, then raiment, then shelter, then music.” – Christian Bovee*

Music expresses a range of human emotions that transcend cultural, historical, and language barriers. As the soundtrack of human existence, music expresses that which cannot be said. An intimate form of expression, music connects a listener to how the performer and composer experiences life. Music has the essence of dreams, hopes, and aspirations for not only those who compose, but also for those that perform and listen.

*“Music is the voice of all humanity, of whatever time or place. In its presence we are one.” – Charlotte Gray*

Music should be taught in schools because it is part of human existence that is unique to our species. It contains the experiences of past generations. In music, the economic conditions, types of technology, religious turmoil, and mood of the time when the composer lived are expressed to us. All children should be actively engaged in music education. Music education provides students who do not fit the normal mold with an outlet to excel and find purpose in the school environment. Music education helps create well-rounded individuals, critical thinkers, and opens the door to new experiences.

*“We know an age more vividly through its music than its historians.” – Rosanne Ambrose-Brown*

Music from many cultures, generations, and eras should be taught in schools. The music must have a heart or a point of entrance so that every student can embrace the music, and reflect the composers intent like a gem. Music from other cultures need to be taught so that the dominant American culture becomes more aware that there are other belief systems in the world. Through music, we can start the conversation about other cultures with a language the students understand: music. The cross-cultural musical experience is important because one becomes more empathetic to other cultures through exposure to another culture’s art. Context, meaning, and purpose must be carefully considered when a teacher prepares such music. Music is an important looking glass to

peer into and experience other people's experiences and attempt to relate it to one owns experience.

*"If you can Walk, you can Dance. If you can Talk, you can Sing." – Zimbabwe Proverb*

Every student, of every age and ability, needs to have the opportunity to participate in a music classroom because music is the essence of being a human. Students with disabilities need to be accommodated so that they can experience success within the classroom. Music educators must be prepared to work with students with disabilities. They should develop relationships with the special education teachers and become part of the IEP team so that there is an understanding of what a music can provide for these students. I believe that as a teacher works with students with disabilities they become more in tune with how every child learns, and the teacher themselves can excel at the craft of teaching.

All grade levels need to be exposed to music either through a general music class, an exploratory music class, a traditional performance based ensemble, or through a music history or theory course. It is important for a child to be part of a small or large performing ensemble, so that they can experience the group effort that a piece of music takes to perform. The extra-musical benefits are boundless in all classrooms: working for a common goal, pride in individual achievement, and learning to express oneself in a positive manner.

*"Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which is impossible to be silent." – Victor Hugo*

A passionate performer, someone who has the drive to push their students to the inner depths of the piece of music, should teach music. A powerful teacher understands that art and music start conversations and reflects the world around them. A person that can inspire students to love and appreciate music, even if the student is not the most talented musician, should be a music teacher. A person who can clearly articulate verbally and musically what they want to hear from their students will succeed as a music

teacher. A great music teacher knows students' limitations and boundaries and gently pushes them to their next level. It takes someone who understands every student's needs and understands the learning curve of music. Most importantly, it takes an inspirational teacher to lead students in and out of the most daunting piece of music.

It is important as music educators that we are able to assess how the music is being performed. A great teacher will clearly articulate the expectations so that the student has every chance at success. We have to tell the truth through assessment considerately. We need to assess thoughtfully, informatively, and compassionately. Music educators can be subjective within their assessment of a student's performance, however there needs to be formal, objective and authentic assessment to assist the student succeed.

Quotes taken from

*Music lovers Quotations* edited by Helen Exley