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## An Education Carol

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# An Education Carol

## **Abstract**

This work is rendition of a small play written by Ben Fruchtl. This work analyzes one of the essential questions of the course, Social Foundations of Music Education, and questions how educators can change models of education to make learning more relevant in and out of school.

## **Keywords**

Education, Carol, Music, Relevance, Teaching Models

## **Disciplines**

Curriculum and Social Inquiry | Music Education

## **Comments**

Produced for MUS CLAS 149: Social Foundations of Music.

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Benjamin Fruchtl

Dr. Talbot

MUS 149- Social Foundations of Music Education

12/2/16

### Script

Question- How can we change the models of music education to become more relevant to our students' experiences in and out of school?

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade General Music 12/5/23

(Lines for Ghost of Education Past and Present require advancement through slideshow.  
Click for the line.)

- Ben- ...And the augmented 4<sup>th</sup> is the same as the diminished 5<sup>th</sup> which is the same as the tritone. The tritone is a dissonant interval that is one half step above a perfect fourth. A tritone sounds like this. And that concludes our lesson on intervals as large as a tritone! For homework tonight, I want you to complete the second half of the interval sheet that I assigned yesterday. This part of the sheet will cover intervals from a minor third to a tritone. Tomorrow we are going to work on intervals up to a perfect octave, the day after we will start compound intervals, and after that we will start triads! Doesn't that sound like fun? (Sighs) Anyway, class dismissed. Have a nice day.
  - Student- Um... Mr. Fruchtl?... (Louder) Mr. Fruchtl?
- Ben- Yes?
  - Student- I was thinking about a little while ago to September and I thought about the tragedy of 9/11. I was thinking about what had happened there. I couldn't process the information on the number of people...you know, who aren't here anymore. Is there a way we could apply this in class? I want to learn more about this day.
- Ben- I would like to help you, however we are in the middle of our intervals unit, and we won't be able to cover intervals if we talked about that day. Probably won't have time

during our triads unit either... Unfortunately, I don't see a time we will be able to apply it. Maybe it would be best to talk to your history teacher?

- Student- Ok.... goodbye Mr. Fruchtl.
- Ben- See ya! Ok, so where was that baton? I knew I had it...
  - Dr. Talbot- Beennjamin? (Like Jacob Marley)
- Ben- Yes?
  - Dr. Talbot- Beeennjaaamin!
- Ben- Y-Yes? Who's there?
  - Dr. Talbot- Relax Ben, it's Dr. Talbot.
- Ben- Oh! Jeez, you scared the crap out of me! How are you?
  - Dr. Talbot- I'm as well as I can be. The question I think needs most consideration is, how are you?
- Ben- Great!... Good... Ok... Yeah ok, pretty bad actually.
  - Dr. Talbot- Oh?
- Ben- Yeah. I feel like I am missing something in my lesson... I feel like I am stressed out about teaching my material correctly and having students learn music, and I feel like there is a better way to do it... but it's probably nothing. So, I assume you were outside my class and heard my lesson? What did you think?
  - Dr. Talbot- Yup... your lesson sucked.
- Ben- Oh... Well, um...that was quite... frank of you.
  - Dr. Talbot- Can you tell me why?
- Ben- Uh... my lesson was long? ...

- *Dr. Talbot*- A wise man named Bill Ayers once said when you teach you should be an “explorer on a journey with (your) students, (on) a voyage of discovery and surprise.” Is your class a voyage of discovery or a classroom of restriction? How do intervals help students? How does lecturing information help students? What do intervals apply to in the world outside of school? Evidently you need more work. I’m going to assign you a coffee talk with some friends of mine. You’ll need these. (Hands Ben stack of books.) Your teaching is entirely based on a model that is no longer as effective, and no longer relevant to the world outside the school. Tonight, I want you to think about one question in particular. “How can we change the models of music education to become more relevant to our students’ experiences in and out of school?”
- *Ben*- Ok, I will sleep on it and...
  - *Dr. Talbot*- Because tonight you will be haunted by three spirits.
- *Ben*- (Pauses)... I’m sorry, what?
  - *Dr. Talbot*- I enjoyed my visit. Hope you have a good night!
- *Ben*- Well that was... different. Never thought my education teacher would lose his mind... (Next slide to window view) Well! Need a nice night of sleep for tomorrow.
  - *Ghost of Past*- Hello.....Hellooo?
- *Ben*- Are you the spirit whose coming was foretold to me?
  - *Ghost of Past*- I am.
- *Ben*- Who and what are you?
  - *Ghost of Past*- I am the ghost of education’s past.
- *Ben*- Long past?
  - *Ghost of Past*- (Pause) No... your past.
- *Ben*- Alright then. (quickly) I will keep the spirits of past present and future in my hearts and keep them all the year. The spirits of all three will thrive within me! I will embrace Christmas...

- *Ghost of Past*- No, you idiot! Didn't you hear me? I wasn't hired so that you could have your Christmas spirit, I came for your teaching so that you may think deeply about yourself. I am the ghost of *education's* past.
- Ben- Oh... You were... Hired?
  - *Ghost of Past*- By your former education professor. We ghosts of Christmas temporarily changed job occupations. The market for people in need of Christmas spirit is high, so we needed some time off. So here we are. I read the lesson plan that your professor gave me. You're in for a rough night.
- Ben- Fantastic. Well that explains the Marley impression... Well let's get started.
  - *Ghost of Past*- (Next slide to Gettysburg College picture) Do you remember this place?
- Ben- Of course. This is Gettysburg College. I was a student here.
  - *Ghost of Past*- (Next slide to classroom) How about this room?
- Ben- This was my first music education classroom!
  - *Ghost of Past*- With your first education professor Dr. Talbot I assume?
- Ben- Yes.
  - *Ghost of Past*- And how was your class structured?
- Ben- It was very much based on the students. Rather than lecturing on material that we read outside of class, we brought the material into class and discussed it and unpacked what we read. He used these discussions to gain more knowledge of all of us, and to get to acknowledge us as individuals rather than dismiss us as merely students. It reminded me of... shoot... which book... Bill Ayers. "To Teach: The Journey in Comics." In his book, he stated that "A commitment to the visibility of students as persons requires a radical reversal. All teachers must become students of their students."
  - *Ghost of Past*- That's nice. In the question your professor gave you though, it asked how we change models to increase relevance. So how is *this* relevant?

- Ben- Right. Well, students in the class were free to discuss, and because we felt like we were individuals in a classroom, we could discuss social problems, historical context, and learn based on songs in class. Dr. Talbot was always participating in activities. So, through breaking down the boundaries of teacher and student, Dr. Talbot allowed for an environment where students pursued their own relevance through connections. In the teacher-centered banking model of education, the students cannot voice their own input. In “Teaching as a Subversive Activity,” one of the satirical messages they say are sent in a banking method form of teaching is: “One’s own ideas and those of one’s classmates are inconsequential.” Because students are sent that message, students no longer express their opinions in class, and thus are forced to rely on only the teacher’s sense of what is relevant. From what our class showed, increasing relevance in the classroom requires a breakdown of the banking model of teaching to develop a conglomerate of a variety of teaching styles so students can create their own relevance.
  - Ghost of Past- That’s a nice thesis... Congratulations. Do you agree with this theory?
- Ben- Well, it’s hardly practical in a classroom.
  - Ghost of Past- Oh this is going to be just great. Why is it not practical?
- Ben- Well... I mean, I love the concept of being able to teach based on questions, and basing material on students to gain relevance, however if I let my class determine the relevance and what is discussed, then for a younger audience I won’t be able to keep control.
  - Ghost of Past- If we look at one of your materials though, we may find an answer. In Pedagogy of the Oppressed, the book states that: “...the ecology of the inquiry environment requires that the *students* play a central, but not necessarily exclusive, role in framing questions that they deem important.” If this is true, you still play a role in the class room. As Bill Ayers puts it, you are the explorer on your vessel. You help to guide your students in a certain direction, but you are not the commander of the vessel. And commanding, I must add, is exactly what you are doing.
- Ben- What do you mean?
  - Ghost of Past- Do you really think children want to learn about intervals in a lecture that borders on brain-numbing mind-sizzling boredom? You would restrict a student from learning a material that he would like to research and apply in your

class? You would dictate your curricula to the point that your class is structured days and weeks in advance? Structure is important in some circumstances, but it is not a way to promote a love of learning! “Musician and Teacher” outlines a plethora of styles to emulate and draw upon and yet you rely on one flawed method of teaching. Even in your outside observations, you observed teachers using a great melting pot of styles of teaching, and yet you choose one flawed model? May you be happy with the life you have chosen.

- Ben- Wait! Come back! I’m not happy... (Next slide for Ghost of Education Future’s Red Eyes.) Wait, where is the ghost of Christmas prese... You know what, it doesn’t matter. I assume I am with the ghost of education yet to come. And I already know what you are going to ask. I don’t know how as an individual I can change models of education in my future classes. Saying that it needs done is all well and good, but it disregards action. Perhaps all it takes is altering the style of my class. If I change my class to embrace student action and student involvement in curricula, I can further address Postman’s question of “What is worth Knowing.” I can live in the system as we discussed in class, and address required curriculum in class, but just as “oppressed” students have a say in what is covered in an oppressor’s class, my fellow oppressed teachers and I have a say in what is mentioned in an oppressive government’s curricula. (Next slide to gravestone) What are you doing? (Click twice for cause of death and date on gravestone) Don’t let it say my name. (Click for name) No! (Ben kneels on the ground) I will change! I will break down my banking model of teaching so my students may actively find their own relevance in their material! Let my name be wiped from that stone! (Next slide. Ben wakes up looks around.)
  - Ghost of Present- Ha Ha Ha! Thought you wouldn’t have to deal with me huh! We must deal with the present at some point! Thankfully I only have one question. You provided yourself a goal so that you may seek relevance, but as mentioned in your prolepsis discussion in college, future goals and statements only go so far. What will you do now to reach your goal?
- Ben- (Pauses. Crumples up lecture lesson plan, throws for trash.) I have a lesson plan to rewrite.



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