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## A Portait of Three Elementary Music Teachers: Their Classrooms and Self-Perceptions

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A PORTRAIT OF THREE ELEMENTARY MUSIC TEACHERS:  
THEIR CLASSROOMS AND SELF-PERCEPTIONS

by  
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Bachelor of Science, Moorhead State University, 1976  
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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Education

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1985

A Portrait of Three Elementary Music Teachers:

Their Classrooms and Self-Perceptions

Mary Helen Ingram, Ed.D.

The University of North Dakota, 1985

Faculty Advisor: Professor Robert W. King

This study explores the self-perceptions of three elementary music teachers. The areas discussed include musical and educational backgrounds, self-perceptions of teaching, and composing and performing activities. Research providing such an in-depth look at individual elementary music teachers has not been done in the past.

The data was gathered through classroom observation and individual interviews of the three teachers to discuss the various aspects of teaching. Each teacher was observed on three separate occasions, at one week intervals, teaching the same three half-hour classes each day. The observations were made prior to the interview session in order to provide a context for the topics discussed during the interview. Each teacher was interviewed for three to four hours, regarding musical memories, educational background, teaching experiences, and personal and professional composing and performing experiences.

The study resulted in individual portraits of the three teachers. Commonalities and uniquenesses among the three teachers were noted. Recommendations that emerged from the study suggest that the teacher

preparation program for elementary music teachers include composing for children, dealing with a variety of student behaviors in the classroom, and discussing the variety of roles a music teacher must assume. Additional recommendations include reexamining the reality of the expectations placed upon elementary music teachers and studying additional music educators to provide further insight into teacher's self-perceptions and the use of compositional and performing skills in the elementary classroom.

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This Dissertation submitted by Mary H. Ingram in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done.

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This Dissertation meets the standards for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

A. William Johnson 4/19/85  
Dean of the Graduate School

PERMISSION

TITLE: A PORTRAIT OF THREE ELEMENTARY MUSIC TEACHERS: THEIR  
CLASSROOMS AND SELF-PERCEPTIONS

DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION

DEGREE: DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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Date April 15, 1985

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the self-perceptions of three elementary music teachers. The areas discussed include musical and educational backgrounds, self-perceptions of teaching, and composing and performing activities. Research providing such an in-depth look at individual elementary music teachers has not been done in the past.

The data was gathered through classroom observation and individual interviews of the three teachers to discuss the various aspects of teaching. Each teacher was observed on three separate occasions, at one week intervals, teaching the same three half-hour classes each day. The observations were made prior to the interview session in order to provide a context for the topics discussed during the interview. Each teacher was interviewed for three to four hours, regarding musical memories, educational background, teaching experiences, and personal and professional composing and performing experiences.

The study resulted in individual portraits of the three teachers. Commonalities and uniquenesses among the three teachers were noted. Recommendations that emerged from the study suggest that the teacher preparation program for elementary music teachers include composing for children, dealing with a variety of student behaviors in the classroom, and discussing the variety of roles a music teacher must assume. Additional recommendations include reexamining the reality

of the expectations placed upon elementary music teachers and studying additional music educators to provide further insight into teacher's self-perceptions and the use of compositional and performing skills in the elementary classroom.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

#### Personal Beginnings

I came to this study as a result of my own experience as an elementary music teacher and my conversations with other teachers. The specific question, Do elementary music teachers compose?, was the spark that developed into a broader exploration of teachers' self-perceptions and the factors that brought them to that perception including childhood memories, musical training, attitudes about themselves, present musical experiences, their students, time allowances, and goals and dreams.

I taught elementary music in a small town of about 900 people, the only elementary general music specialist in the school. There was, therefore, no one else in the school with a similar professional background that I could confer with on a regular basis. The isolation was compounded by the fact that it was a rural part of the state; the other music teachers within the district lived and worked many miles away from me. My professional development, including the areas of performing and composing, rested mainly on my shoulders.

Within my own music classroom, I performed with and for the children, encouraging the development of their performance abilities through classroom experiences. Opportunities for formal performance in the community were rare for both the children and myself, consisting mainly of elementary music programs for the children and,

for me, a few invitations to sing or play for church functions. Any growth I experienced in the performance areas was a result of the daily classroom musical activities I participated in.

I rarely arranged or composed any music, but would sometimes embellish accompaniments while the children were singing and occasionally would be involved in improvisatory activities with the class. Lack of confidence in my compositional skills prevented me from attempting formal composing and I always tried to find already existing music to fill the needs of the lesson and the children. My arrangements for choir were few because I was never very happy with the results. Once I could not find an appropriate song for a particular spot in an upper elementary program I was writing and desperation caused me to compose one original musical piece. I was reluctant to announce to the children and the audience that I was the composer, not feeling comfortable with the responsibility of claiming the piece as my own.

Presently I am working in a university setting and have had the opportunity to become acquainted with other elementary music teachers. I recently began to wonder if any other elementary music teachers shared my experiences and self-perceptions in the area of performance and composition. Curiosity compelled me to ask if other teachers composed pieces for their children and, from their answers, related questions arose. I also wanted to know what performance opportunities were available to the teachers and how often they took advantage of those opportunities. These questions broadened to include their general roles as a teacher, background influences on teaching, philosophies, and classroom practice. This study is the

result of reflecting back on my own experiences as a music teacher and the questions that emerged from that reflection.

This study provides a portrait of three elementary music teachers based on a description of each teacher's classroom settings, the musical memories and background experiences that led them to the profession, educational philosophies, the joys and frustrations within the job, self-perceptions of success, the way teaching fits into a total life perspective, and future goals and aspirations. Through the interview process, each teacher was encouraged to share perceptions of teaching and the teaching profession.

#### Rationale: Contributions to the Field

There is a need to investigate the perceptions of elementary music teachers concerning their teaching and allow individual teachers to have an important voice in the research. A thorough search revealed no studies in music education which provide an in-depth portrait of individual music teachers. This study explores a way to examine the many facets of a music teacher in a manner not presently used in the field of music education.

Composition and performance facets of music educators are explored in the study. Composing, the creating of music, and performing, the recreating of music, are basics for the musician. This study explores the manner in which composition and performance skills practiced in the undergraduate program are utilized after graduation both personally and in the classroom. Questions pertaining to how and why music teachers use composition and performance for and with children were analyzed as part of this

research.

The teachers interviewed discussed issues of importance to themselves as practicing music educators that suggest further investigation and offered recommendations to teacher educators for the pre-service teacher education programs.

Rationale: Contributions to the Three Teachers Studied

The teachers that participated in the study had the opportunity to be a vital part of music education research. Comments made to the researcher indicated that the participants were enthusiastic about other educators hearing what they had to say. It was also an opportunity for each teacher to reflect about their musical background and teaching, composing, and performing. One teacher commented, when asked to be a participant, that she missed having a university supervisor and supervising classroom teacher around to observe and discuss her teaching. Two thirds of the way through the interview, another teacher discovered that she was beginning to see how everything being discussed was fitting together.

Rationale: Contributions to the Researcher

Throughout the process of observing, interviewing, and reflecting with the three teachers, the researcher found herself remembering, reflecting upon, and analyzing her own early musical experiences and classroom situations. It has caused the researcher to ponder her own teaching and learn from the three different teaching styles observed and the varied backgrounds and perceptions of the three teachers studied.

Rationale: Methodology

The method chosen was a type of naturalistic inquiry involving

observations of the teachers teaching in their music classrooms, interviews discussing musical backgrounds and self-perceptions of the teachers, and three focused reflections within the interview sessions exploring the concepts of "teacher," "composer/composing," and "performer/performing." The observations provided a context for the topics and issues discussed during the interviews. It also provided a description of the teacher at work, an essential part of the total person and the portrait. The interviews allowed the teacher to talk about themselves, emphasizing the experiences and topics of greatest importance for them. The interview questions were designed to give the three teachers a strong voice, determining the depth of exploration of any given topic. The reflections of the three concepts listed above were used at the beginning of the teaching, composing, and performing sections of the interview, providing a depth of meaning and a context for the concept, helping the participant to focus on what was to be discussed.

#### Following Chapters

The study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is an introduction and rationale for the study. The second chapter includes a discussion of related literature and the third chapter is a description of the methodology employed. Chapters four, five, and six are the three separate portraits of the teachers, each providing a description of the classroom setting, the activities observed in the classrooms, the teacher's musical and educational background, their perceptions of themselves as teachers, and their composing and performing philosophies and practice. The seventh chapter is a discussion of commonalities, unique themes, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER II

### RELATED LITERATURE

There is not much literature available regarding the question of the music teacher's professional and personal self-perceptions. This is especially apparent when considering the many facets of teaching that contribute to the making of a teacher. The literature cited in this chapter deals with the current philosophy and practice in the field of elementary music education, pieces written by teachers about their teaching, the general use of observational and interviewing methodologies and the specific use of these methodologies in studies exploring teachers' self-perceptions about some aspect of their professional lives, and the involvement of teachers in research. The literature cited in this chapter is taken from the disciplines of music education and general education.

The following section of this chapter is a summary of the current philosophies and methodologies used by elementary music educators in this country. The purpose of this section is not to review all the literature available on the philosophies and methodologies currently used, but instead, to give the reader the background on the educational context from which music teachers make their instructional decisions. The philosophy of music education that an individual teacher adopts influences the choices of activities and approaches used in the classroom. Reimer (1970) asserts "...everything the music educator does in his job is a carrying out in practice of his beliefs about his subject" (p. 7).

Landis and Carder (1972) also state "The individual teacher always has carried an important responsibility for awareness of current trends in educational thought, for making judgments of the values of these trends, and for putting into practice those procedures he believes best suited to his students" (p.4). Several methodologies, some of European origin and some developed recently in the United States, have developed a strong following within the profession. Landis and Carder (1972) point out "In recent years, three European musical doctrines have permeated practice in American schools: those of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, Zoltan Kodály, and Carl Orff" (p.2). Hackett, Lindeman, and Harris (1979) note "In addition, the influences of the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Project (MMCP) and the Contemporary Music Project (CMP) are apparent in the music education program" (p. 331). It is common to find nearly all five approaches incorporated in today's classrooms, since an eclectic approach often provides the teacher with the means to meet a variety of needs, determined by the instructional situation. Leonhard and House (1972) state the following:

It must be recognized no one method of teaching provides the solution for all music-teaching problems. Each teaching situation dictates the most appropriate method to be used, and all methods of teaching or variations and combination of methods may be used at different times. (p. 277)

### European Influences

Jacques-Dalcroze, a Swiss music educator, developed his approach to music education before Orff and Kodály. Although most educators, when his name is mentioned, think of eurhythmics, the

experiencing of rhythm through body movements, the Dalcroze method involves three areas of study. These three include solfege, improvisation, and eurhythmics, each considered of equal importance in his methodology. (Landis & Carder, 1972, p. 8) Sequence of musical experiences was of great concern to Jacques-Dalcroze, and he emphasized the importance of rich experiences in listening, dancing, singing, and composing before any instrumental study took place.

Landis and Carder (1972) quote Jacques-Dalcroze saying:

It is my object, after endeavoring to train the pupil's ear, to awaken in him, by means of special gymnastics, the sense of his personal body-rhythm, and to induce him to give metrical order to the spontaneous manifestations of his physical nature.

Sound rhythms had to be stepped or obtained by gestures; it was also necessary to find a system of notation capable of measuring the slightest nuances of duration, so as to respond to both the demands of the music and to the bodily needs of the individual. (p. 13)

The body is to be used as a musical instrument with the child demonstrating musical understanding through movement.

Kodály developed a sequential music education program for the Hungarian school system. Choksy (1974) notes,

Although interested in the training of professional musicians, Kodály's first concern was the musically literate amateur. He wished to see an education system that could produce a people to whom music was not a way to make a living but a way of life.

(p. 15)

Choksy (1974) states that Kodály felt the important components for a

good pedagogical system included simple short musical forms, the pentatonic scale, and the simplicity of language in addition to the child learning folk music of his own country before other music. Choksy (1974) observes: "He likened the historical development of music from primitive folk song to art music to the development of the child from infant to adult" (p. 8). The sequence developed was a child-developmental one rather than one based on subject logic and the elements of the method are "the tonic sol-fa system, the Curwen hand signs, the shifting do with key change, and the reliance on the best of folk and composed song material for teaching purposes" (Choksy, 1974, p. 10).

Orff, a German composer, contributed a child-centered approach to music education. Landis and Carder (1972) claim, "The central idea on which Carl Orff based his approach to music education is that music, movement, and speech are inseparable, and that they form a unity Orff called elemental music" (p. 71). Orff (1963) defines elemental music as:

Never music alone, but music connected with movement, dance, and speech--not to be listened to, meaningful only in active participation. Elemental music is pre-intellectual, it lacks great form, it contents itself with simple sequential structures, ostinatos, and miniature rondos. It is earthy, natural, almost a physical activity. It can be learned and enjoyed by anyone. It is fitting for children. (p. 72)

Landis and Carder (1972) state that Orff believed rhythm to be the strongest element of music and a shared element in speech, movement, and music, thus being a logical starting point in his curriculum.

Orff (1963) discusses melody:

Our melodic starting point was the falling minor third. The compass was gradually widened until it reached a pentatonic scale without half tones. Linguistically we started with name calls, counting-out rhymes and the simplest of songs. Here was a world easily accessible to children. I wasn't thinking of especially gifted ones. What I had in mind was the education in the broadest terms, applicable to modestly gifted children and even those with very little talent. I knew from experience that few children are completely unmusical, that almost every child can comprehend and enjoy music. (p. 72)

Creativity is an important component in his method. Landis and Carder (1972) quote Orff stating, "Every phase of Schulwerk will always provide stimulation for new independent growth; therefore it is never conclusive and settled, but always developing, always growing, always flowing" (p. 73). In Orff's philosophy, the study of standard instruments, such as piano and violin, should be preceded by the learning of certain musical skills and Orff developed some of his own instruments to be used by children in their musical development.

#### United States Influences

The Manhattanville Music Curriculum Project (MMCP), an alternative approach for music educators, was the result of a U.S. Office of Education Research Project conducted between 1965 and 1970. Biasini, Thomas, & Pogonowski (1970) begin by stating:

Every human being, to a greater or lesser degree, is capable of creative activity. This capability is revealed by man's

propensity to probe the unknown, to experience the world imaginatively, and to form impressions from his contact with the elements of his environment. The impressions which are most appealing to him are investigated further and cast in various combinations until the most satisfying and meaningful relationships are established. (p.1)

Thomas (1970) defines the focus of the MMCP curriculum to be the following:

In the MMCP a great deal of attention has been given to the role of the student in education. Most of the learning time has been allotted to activities in which the student functions as a musician. His learning is generated by his own needs in accomplishing both interim and long term musical goals of performance, composition, and interpretation. The program is largely life oriented with the students constantly involved in "doing" and using music. For them the acquisition of information and study data is more a by-product of their production-oriented learning experience than the immediate goal.

In such an educational plan the student has a wide spectrum of choice about what information he acquires, how he interprets it, and what he does with it. (p. 5)

It is not the teacher's job to impose musical judgments, a uniform perspective, or to deal with the identification or retention of systems and facts. Instead, the intention of the program is with the development of musical behaviors. (Thomas, 1970, p.5)

The Ford Foundation supported a project in 1959 called the

Young Composers Project, which involved placing young composers in the schools.

In 1959, the YCP program was initiated; thirty-one composers were placed over a period of three years in secondary public school systems throughout the United States. They were not over thirty-five and most of them were not more than three years beyond their formal education. (Comprehensive Musicianship, 1971)

American composer Norman Dello Joio suggested to the foundation that it place young composers in school systems to write for specific performing groups where the students could share in the new works and have the opportunity to gain insight into the creative, composing process. (Comprehensive Musicianship, 1971) Emphasis was placed on contemporary music because young people were not being exposed to it in their public school music experiences.

A receptive audience is what contemporary music lacks most acutely. Yet we composers have failed time and again to address ourselves to the most responsive of audiences--the young--whose minds and hearts and enthusiasm are bent forward in acceptance of our message. (Comprehensive Musicianship, 1971, p. 13)

The Young Composers Project has evolved into the Comprehensive Musicianship Project. It's fundamental beliefs include:

that music is more--and more important--than composition or theory or performance or pedagogy; that all musicians are educators, whether their locale is the concert stage, the composer's studio, the musicologist's archives, or the

classroom; that the music student, from the first grade through the conservatory, deserves to be taught the full range of what music is and not certain things about music. (Comprehensive Musicianship, 1971, p. vii)

Seminars and workshops were given to both preservice and inservice teachers to encourage them to use contemporary music with students and to develop a more comprehensive and creative, hands-on approach to the teaching of music.

#### Teachers Writing About Their Teaching

Practicing teachers have written about their teaching and the motivating factors that sustain them in their profession. Kincaid (1982) discusses early musical memories, a description of her particular job and the time allocations within it, what she considers to be the best aspects of her job, and the varied experiences with her students. She defines her role to include being a teacher, parent, counselor, friend, taskmaster, and perfectionist. Kincaid feels that "training in the arts, however, demands the participation of one's whole being because it is an interpretive and a creative process" (p. 5). Part of her responsibility as a teacher is to reach inside of the child. "In most cases, it is what is on the inside of the child that produces the greatest success" (p. 5).

Aveni (1982), Reich (1983), and Yeiger (1983) each wrote about what they enjoy in the teaching profession. Aveni, an astronomy and anthropology professor, describes memories from his childhood, reminiscing with former students about shared classroom experiences, his views on the interdependence between teachers and

students, and a defining of what he feels is his role as a teacher. He feels he is to "provide them with keys to the doorways of potential that lie within themselves" (p. 18). A teacher is patient, never forcing, yet "unrelenting in seeing that entry to the mind is made" (p. 18). Yerger, a high school teacher, also shares early memories of growing up and the many teachers that influenced him. He tried to imitate all of them at one time, but finally the real teacher inside of him came out. Reich, an anthropology professor, states that she learns to teach by examining the best teachers, parents, and friends. She is intent on hearing the voices of her students in order to expand on her knowledge of what to convey to students. All three teachers, through their own voices in their writings, briefly conveyed important aspects of themselves and perceptions of their role and contributions within the profession.

The literature on researching the role of the teacher often breaks down the various activities and characteristics of teaching into single topics for study and reflection. Miller (1981) discusses areas of nonverbal expression such as facial expression, the eyes, vocal intonation, touching, body postures and movements, dress and the use of space. Edwards and Furlong (1978) examine characteristics of classroom talk, including its public, highly centralized nature, participant structures, moves and sequences, formality and social distance, recitation, and classroom questions. These two pieces are examples of approaches to researching the role of the teacher while focusing on specific actions or language in the classroom.

### Use of Observations and Interviews

The methodology used in this study consisted of unstructured observation of the three teachers in their music classrooms and individual interviews based upon questions generated both before and after the observations were completed. Observation and/or interviews have been used in the study of teachers to explore specific aspects of their teaching and perceptions of a more general nature. Peeke (1982) describes research which made use of unstructured observational notes. The use of category observation systems was rejected because the researchers thought such systems would predetermine the nature of the data to be collected. Two general types of observation can be employed, according to Clark (1978-79), participant or non-participant observation. In a phenomenological study, the non-participant observation is paired with one or more teacher self-report techniques. Interviews have provided an important basis for the understanding of classroom processes. Classroom observations and teacher interviews played an important part in the descriptions of the four teachers in Carew and Lightfoot's study.

Teachers are the most profound and experienced knowers of the classroom scene, and their perceptions and reasoning should be an integral part of research. Teachers have a unique insider's view into what is going on in the classroom, a view that is at least as valid to understanding the educational process as an outside observer's. (Carew and Lightfoot, 1979, p.21)

Nias (1981), Newman (1980), and Newman, Burden, and Applegate (1980) all used interviews of experienced teachers to gain important

reflections and insights into the topics being explored. Themes emerged from the teachers as a result of these studies, providing valuable information for the profession.

#### Teacher Participation in Research

There is a growing body of literature stressing the importance of teachers participating in research. Britton (1983), Jarvis (1979), Nixon (1981), Powell (1979), and Tikunoff and Mergendollar (1983) all advocate this view. Nixon feels that teachers need to adopt a strong role within the research process and have opportunities to study their own work. Britton contributes a rationale for this type of research, feeling that

any generalizations we attempt to make must therefore be made in the light of context in the broadest sense of the word and in the final analysis we have to recognize that the context of any human action is so complex as to be experimentally uncontrollable. (p. 89)

Jarvis defines the teacher in research as a consumer, participant, researcher, and initiator. Powell expands upon this definition of the teacher's involvement. She states that "If the researchers are studying the thinking of teachers, the teachers will need to participate more extensively in the research process than they have in the past" (p. 7). Powell adds that the time commitment to the research is an important consideration for the teacher about to embark upon such a project. During the initial stages, the teacher can be involved in formulating the data collection procedures. He/she can give perceptions of what is happening and why, thus allowing the researcher's focus to be more closely in tune with the

teacher's focus. Related to Britton's comments on the importance of context, Powell states that studies reported upon in her article "indicate the influence of contextual factors on teacher thinking" (p. 9). The differences in perspectives between teachers and others can enrich the findings.

Tikunoff and Mergendollar (1983) feel that interactive research and development [IR&D] provides an important vehicle for teachers in their professional growth. They list three benefits:

teachers are encouraged to reflect upon their classroom lives, acknowledge problems, and take formal and concerted action to examine further and ameliorate those problems....A second benefit from participation in the IR&D process comes from the development of collaboration and discussion skills as a result of participation in the team's planning and organizing meetings....Finally, teachers who participate on an IR&D team have at their fingertips the results of the inquiry they are conducting, and are able to apply these findings immediately in their own classrooms. (Tikunoff and Mergendollar, 1983, p.217)

The teacher becomes a vital force in the research process.

The three participating teachers in this study discussed their philosophies and methodologies, were willing to be observed and interviewed, thought carefully about their perceptions of themselves, the students, and the profession, and were thus actively involved in this research project.

The literature on music education methodologies discussed here reflects the currently practiced educational philosophies eclectically used by music educators in the United States. Additional literature discussed here concerns ways in which teachers can and have had an active part in the research of their self-perceptions and of the profession in general.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

A qualitative methodology was chosen as the most appropriate method for addressing the question of personal meaning for the individuals researched, their perceptions of their teaching, and the influences on their current practice. This inquiry resulted in a portrait of each teacher, a new approach to the study of music educators. Observations of their music classrooms, individual interviews discussing musical backgrounds as well as self-perceptions, and reflections exploring key concepts throughout the interview sessions formed the basis for gathering the necessary information for the portraits. Classroom observations provided both a context for the topics and issues discussed during the interviews as well as a description of the teacher at work, an essential part of the portrait. The interviews allowed the teachers to emphasize the experiences and topics of greatest importance for them and allowed them to have some control in the study by determining the depth of exploration of any given topic. Reflections on key concepts provided a depth of meaning and a personal context for each concept, helping the participant to focus on what was to be discussed throughout the interview. Together, the observations, interviews, and reflections generated an in-depth look at the feelings, thoughts, and priorities of each teacher.

#### Criteria for Selection of Participants

The intention to provide in-depth portraits of elementary music

teachers determined that only a few teachers be chosen as participants in the study. Surveying a large number of teachers would not be appropriate to the nature of the study. Portraying three teachers made it possible for the researcher to identify the commonalities and unique themes of the teachers studied. The selection process evolved as characteristics of local elementary music teachers were examined. The final decision for selection was based on the following characteristics. Two of the teachers were regarded as potential participants because they were already known to the researcher and a good rapport had already been established between the teachers and the researcher and a third teacher was recommended by other music educators because she was known for her composing and creative work with children. All three teachers are presently teaching in a music classroom and are active musically. They each have varying amounts of teaching experience and represent three different career stages, one being at the beginning of her teaching career, the second in the middle stage, and the third in the later stage of her career. The teachers in the study are women since the elementary music teachers within the city are all women. The teachers chosen attended different universities for their undergraduate education. The teachers were approached individually to discuss their availability and willingness to participate in the study after approval was given by the school system for the study. The purpose and process for the study were described before decisions to participate were made, since it was important to convey to the teachers the time commitment involved in becoming a vital part of this research project.

### Observations

Observations were made by the researcher before the interviews took place in order to provide a context for some of the specific questions and responses included within the interviews. Each teacher was observed three separate days, at one week intervals, teaching the same three half-hour classes each day. The three classes were taught consecutively, resulting in a 90 minute observation each of the three days, with a total of four and one half hours of observation of each teacher. The observations focused mainly on teacher movement, language, activities occurring, and interactions with pupils, including some notation of the physical setting. The observations were unstructured in that check lists of specific behaviors were not used; instead, the researcher took notes as the events took place in the classroom. The notes taken during the observations were later transcribed by the researcher into a narrative form. The teachers were able to read the observation report of their classroom and teaching activities at the time of the individual interviews.

### Interview Questions

Prior to the interviews, a list of questions was generated to form a basis for the topics to be explored during the interviews. (See Appendix A) The questions investigating the teachers' backgrounds pertained to childhood memories, educational preparation and experiences, influential people and events in the area of music, and past and present professional positions. The interview continued with a discussion of motivating factors and frustrations within the profession and perceptions of their roles as a music

educator. Other questions centered around the topics of composing and performing, with emphasis placed on the teachers as composer and performer and how that relates to the children as composers and performers within their classroom.

### Reflections

Reflections on the key words "teacher," "composer/composing," and "performer/performing" were done by each teacher and the researcher during the interview process. Reflections, in general, consist of each person privately reflecting upon ideas, experiences, connections, and memories brought to mind by the stimulus word. These thoughts are written down over several minutes and then shared with others present, resulting in meanings and connotations contributed by the participants. For this study, the researcher participated in the reflections with the teachers individually during the interviews. From this process, enriched, common definitions of the key words mentioned above were established for the participant and researcher to aid in clarifying meaning and context during the interview.

### Interview Process

The interviews were taped during an intense three hour session for the first and third teachers and two shorter sessions of two hours each for the second teacher. The variance in the length of the sessions was due to individual differences in the time necessary to discuss the interview questions. The reflections were spaced within the interview session to coincide with the appropriate section of questions. The reflection of "teacher" was at the beginning of the interview, "composer/composing" preceded the

questions about composing, and "performer/performing" were reflected upon before the performance questions. Each teacher was given the opportunity to contribute her thoughts on questions not raised by the interviewer but germane to the study.

In the following three portrait chapters, the researcher changed the names of all the individuals mentioned in the study. Jeri Kline, Sarah Nash, and Ann Burns are the names given to the three teachers studied. Each chapter will begin by including a description of the teacher's present instructional setting, the climate of the classroom, a representative sample of the observed classroom activities, and reflections by the teacher on the words "teacher," "composer/composing," and "performer/performing." The second section of each portrait chapter will be written as a narrative with the teacher speaking in the first person. The data for this narrative was taken directly from the taped interviews, with some editing done by the researcher to facilitate an organized, flowing text. The questions asked by the researcher during the interview sessions were removed from the tape transcriptions and woven into the answers given by each participant in the writing of the narrative. Other changes made were to aid the reader's understanding of the implied meaning of the participant.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FIRST PORTRAIT: JERI KLINE

Jeri Kline is presently in her fourth year of teaching. She has taught all four years in the same school, but this is her first year as a full-time elementary vocal music teacher. The previous years she taught music half-time, with the rest of her time devoted to science and math with fourth grade students. Presently, Jeri has 580 students in grades K-6, 300 of them new to her this year because the primary students were added to her music teaching duties. Shortly before school begins she gives private voice rehearsals, teaches each period from 9:00 until noon with a half hour of planning time from 10:30 to 11:00, rehearses with three choruses of 60 students each on varying days during the noon hour, and then teaches each period from 12:55 until 3:00.

Jeri's classroom was once a stage that looked out onto the gymnasium and was converted into a classroom. It is a long and narrow room, with sufficient space to have three rows containing 10 chairs each and three rows of risers permanently set up. The remaining open space is used for movement and instrumental ensembles. The room is without windows, three of the walls are panelled with the fourth wall made up of concrete blocks painted blue, the carpeting is green, and the student chairs are blue, green, and yellow. Jeri has placed her desk, the majority of bookshelves, filing cabinets, equipment, and storage cabinets out of the way along the long wall that is adjacent to the gymnasium.

Overhead one sees heating ducts, old stage curtain rods, and acoustic baffles hanging amid the lights. Jeri has decorated the walls with posters dealing with intervals, meter, form, rhythms, musical elements, the greatest hits for the month, vocabulary words, and Halloween pictures.

#### OBSERVATIONS

Two fourth grade classes and one fifth grade class ranging in size from 24 to 28 students were observed during the month of October, 1984, and a majority of the music activities observed were related in some way to a Halloween theme. The boys and girls move together as a group from their regular classroom to the music classroom. All the classes observed enter the room quietly and go directly to assigned chairs. Jeri models a friendly atmosphere, often gently kidding the students, and is consistently energetic and enthusiastic throughout each music class. During every half hour class period observed, the students were intensely focused on the lesson, eagerly participating when directed, always on task, and having fun.

Today Jeri begins one fourth grade class session with an 8 count clapping and snapping pattern the children learned last year. "We're going to be unwinding the 8 counts and then wind it up again. Remember not to watch me. Who makes the most mistakes? Right. Me." The entire class goes through the sequence, clapping, snapping, and counting out loud. The second time through Jeri accompanies the sequence with a recording of "The Haunted House" and says, "Listen to the recording. This time we're going to put the clapping into the feet. When you snap, you stop [moving] your

feet." Jeri demonstrates by walking the pattern she has just described and tells the students that she will add the directions for moving backwards, in a zigzag, or in curves to make it trickier for them. The children move their chairs to the back wall to add more space for movement. While they are doing this, Jeri says, "What's the policy on a collision course?" One student replies, "Avoid it." Jeri says, "It doesn't take any talent to run into someone." She puts the record on and moves to the beat, going through the pattern, always in the midst of the students and watching their movements. The children move according to the pattern, consciously avoiding running into each other. About half way through the song she says, "Freeze! I think you're mixed up." Jeri explains what went wrong and then gets the class ready to start over again. "Did I mess up? I blew it. Who makes the most mistakes? Me." They start over again, moving backwards and zigzagging when cued, and get through it successfully. "Thank you for your help in that problem situation," Jeri says.

Jeri continues the lesson by reviewing the song "The Ghost of Tom", asking about its form, including some instrumental improvisation, and singing it as a canon. She has a birthday chart and consistently has the class sing "Happy Birthday" whenever someone has a birthday. Today they sing to Chris as he stands up in front of the class with her. Jeri ends the music class by focusing on a song in the books, helping students predict the number of phrases, define the word pentatonic, and sight-read the piece.

During the second observation of the same fourth grade class, exactly two weeks after the first visit, Jeri ends the class period

with a scary story. "Speaking of creepy....I have a story from the files of Mrs. Kline." Since it is a spooky story, she says they'll need spooky sounds to help tell it. Jeri asks the class to guess how many sounds a spooky story should have and after a few guesses they come up with the number 13. She picks players by drawing their names out of a can. They need players for fire, the gerbil, a tapping sound, tiptoeing, lightning, shaking, walking, sliding, a phone ringing, a heart beat, running, and a frying pan. The children determine the instruments to be used for making the 13 sounds. During the selection process, Jeri is making comments. "When I say tiptoe, I need a loud tiptoe." When someone can't remember the name for maracas, she says, "What are they called? Who did you have for music last year?" She adds further directions: "I like the way you're keeping the instruments quiet...Any spooky story has to have a heart beat...I get too scared if we turn the lights off." Jeri begins telling the story and helps cue the attentive players with their sounds. The class time ends before they reach the end of the story. Jeri quits just before the surprise ending, telling them they have to wait until next time to hear the end. The children try to persuade her to tell them the ending, but Jeri just grins and tells them they have to wait.

The day before Halloween the fifth grade class is having music. She begins the class by calling Frank up to the front of the room so everyone can sing him a "Happy Very Belated Birthday" with accompaniment on the omnichord. This was the day the class votes on their greatest hit for the month after reviewing the nominated songs. Jeri asks them if they remember the story about a

daydreaming kid. No one in the class remembers and Jeri realizes that they haven't heard it yet because she was gone the day she had originally planned to use it in class. She tells them the story of Peer Gynt, gesturing with her hands as she talks. During the story she asks some predicting questions pertaining to Peer's possible course of action for each situation he finds himself in and lets the class give their ideas. When one student predicts a particular action, she says, "That's what he did." They are familiar with the song "October 31" which has the same melody as "In The Hall of The Mountain King" from the Peer Gynt Suite by Grieg. The class tells her that they have done everything except listen to the record. Jeri prepares them for listening by telling the class to stand one by one each time they hear the theme that they know from "October 31", so that they will know how many times the theme is played by the number of people standing at the end of the piece. She asks them to listen for three things, the first of which is "tempo." She asks Frank to define the word. After two false starts he gets it right. "Good morning, Frank," she kids. She adds "dynamics" and "range" to the list and writes the three words on the chalkboard. After Jeri walks to the record player, she realizes that she can't find the record. "There are days I should stay in bed." Eventually she does find it and begins the record. Each time the theme is played all the students clap once and one by one the students stand up with Jeri moving along the row as each one stands. At the end of the piece she asks, "How many sections?" The class counts 19 people standing. "What happened to Peer?...What did the music tell you?" About half the class thinks Peer gets caught and the other half

believes he got away. Jeri tells them that he did eventually get away because it was his daydream. She concludes this portion of the class by asking about beginning and ending tempos, dynamics, and range. During the remaining minutes, the class moves from the chairs to the risers. Jeri puts the words for "The Ghost Ship" on the overhead, tells the story connected with the song, and teaches them the two part song as she plays a piano accompaniment. She walks the class to the door, enjoying the opportunity to chat and joke with the children informally.

#### INTERVIEW

At specific points during the interview, Jeri reflected on the concepts "teacher", "composer/composing", and "performer/performing." The term "instructor" came to mind first, and she elaborated that a teacher is one who helps students learn and can be considered a facilitator of learning. She feels that observant and receptive teachers can also be taught by their students. Jeri remembered Mrs. Sanders, her third grade and all-time favorite teacher. When considering the concept of "composer/composing", Jeri immediately thought of creative and observant people and their ability to take in the fullness of life. Jeri feels that composing is a complete way to apply the basic elements of musical knowledge, gearing the composition to a difficulty level that is parallel to one's own abilities, and is a means of transposing thoughts into an aesthetic language. To compose takes a concentrated effort and Jeri feels it is always a difficult task for her because she sets expectations for herself too high. The researcher reflected about a composer being a

communicator and an arranger of sounds and described composing as "what you can do with what you've got." Jeri laughed and said, "Yes. I think that sounds like a good one.." During the final reflection of the terms "performer" and "performing", Jeri first thought of an improviser and a jazz performer. Jeri feels that performers need lots of practice and there is always a pressure to do well. A performer can achieve a level of skill that, combined with intense concentration, will allow him/her to really have fun with the music. Jeri feels that teachers do a lot of performing because they are constantly sharing and imparting their knowledge and experience, but are definitely not putting on a show for the children. The researcher talked about performers having confidence to share their music with others and performing being related to giving. Jeri responded to this by simply saying, "Neat."

The following section is an edited version of Jeri's memories and thoughts about her musical experiences, teaching philosophies and practices, composing, and performing. It is written as Jeri speaking in the first person. Jeri talks fast, energetically, and uses a wide variety of facial expressions as she speaks. During the interview, Jeri's 20 month old daughter periodically wanted to sit on her mother's lap. Jeri kept her daughter occupied at those times and still continued to respond to the interview questions.

#### Musical Beginnings

I started taking piano lessons at age 6. Both of my parents were really musical. My father is an accordian player in an old-time polka band and my mom plays piano and improvises. She got me started reading notes and taking lessons. I took lessons from an

elderly lady. Not being one to practice, I became a con artist since I only practiced my piano lesson an hour beforehand. I always wondered if she knew. I had a third grade teacher who had a structured music class. We did a lot of two part harmony, descants, and alto parts. She really challenged us. I started the clarinet in fifth grade and participated in the Harding Elementary Band. In junior high school, I started seventh grade in the not-so-good band and progressed to the honor band by the end of the year. In eighth grade I added the sax and stage band and the piano lessons stopped at that point because of busyness and band and school things. In high school, the sax went by the wayside because of clarinet soloing. There's a story about making mistakes that I try to tell my students. In high school I played a clarinet solo with band accompaniment. My dad was in the audience (he's an improviser) and in the middle of the solo I got dry mouth. The squeaks came and my dad was so disappointed that his daughter squeaked that he wouldn't talk to me for a week. He was told by a friend that Benny Goodman squeaked and that it was all right to talk to his daughter. In college I played in the Wind Ensemble, University band, and small wind ensembles. Since 1978 I've been a member of The Symphony, the Symphony quintet, and will occasionally fill in on percussion. In addition I played soprano recorder in the recorder consort at the university and can play omnichord, autoharp, "a re." mean temple block", and ukulele. String instruments have been against me and ukulele is the only one I can play because of my small hands. Again with the baritone sax, the size of my hands was a problem.

### Influences of People

There were several people who influenced me in my decision to choose music as a profession. In junior high school I always assumed I would be a math teacher. My high school orchestra director told me that I'd never be able to play a certain Weber clarinet concerto. So I thought, "yes, I will," and I did it, but I don't know how well. In high school, music was always there, and with my family background I always assumed it would be there. Yet, I always assumed that my major would be speech and communication. My high school English teacher asked me about my college major and I told her that I planned to major in journalism. She said, "You're a musician, you'll major in music." One challenged me and the other saw through me. And then there was Ruth, my elementary music education professor. She helped me to see the excitement of the profession.

### University Studies

I began my studies at the university in the fall of 1976 and graduated in the spring of 1981. I took speech and personal relations courses at first and music theory for my own benefit. The second year I got more into music and left journalism by the wayside. I had a journalism professor that was the worst teacher I had had in my life. Maybe that helped to steer me away from journalism. By the end of my second year, I was into my elementary education training. The third year I took music education, elementary education, and music history while in the fourth year I took elementary education and music education courses. The first part of the fifth year I did my student teaching and during the

second semester I picked up more courses that I felt I needed. I only needed four or five credits. It was good to go back after student teaching because I was able to relate more to what the instructors were saying and I could contribute more in class, and share my experiences in a real classroom to help other students relate better to the principles being discussed in class. I specifically remember two of my music professors. Stanley Johnson was my clarinet teacher and not only did he give me clarinet lessons, he also taught me to stand up for what I believed in. He said if you're going to make a mistake, make it a good one, but don't waste your energy being weak. And there was Ruth, too.

I have unpleasant memories about some of my music history courses, especially Renaissance to Contemporary. There were two weeks left in the semester and we were just starting the Romantic era. I was frustrated because I felt I would not be well prepared for what I would have to teach in my own classroom. Ear Training and Sight Singing was not one of my fortes. The sight singing part was a challenge because it was trickier for me. Visual arts courses, especially pottery, were courses that I never took, but wish I had taken. I've also always wanted to take stitchery courses, cross-stitch and crewel, taught by a professional.

The two teachers that I did my student teaching with were very influential. I use a lot of the strategies used by my classroom supervising teacher Carol Waters, such as building up background before teaching a song, going over the lyrics, what the song was communicating, and giving extra musical background. I used a lot from the music teacher regarding personal relationships. She was

very concerned about children having problems and would call them in to talk to her right away if there were any kind of behavioral or learning problems. I learned a lot of my quick pacing from the music teacher. When you only see the kids for two one-half-hour periods a week! Talk about time on task!

My real strengths as a student include my ambition, my drive to succeed, to always do my best. I was lucky, because things come easily for me, especially memorizing facts and concepts. I always felt comfortable asking questions in class. I wasn't just a spectator. I would come forth with questions that I thought were important.

I also belonged to a sorority for five years. I was scholarship chairman, so I did counseling and the setting up of tutoring sessions. The last year I was married and was not active in the sorority. I did a lot with my husband, and people in the music department. We were a close knit group. That was all I really had time for in addition to my classes.

I chose the elementary level because I like the kids at that age. Junior high school is not for me, that is the ultimate challenge; that and substitute teaching. In the elementary school I have the chance to expose them to a background in music, theory, and future ensemble participation. That's where it all starts.

#### Classroom Experiences

The children in my school come from middle income families mostly. They are good kids. They have a value system I love. Extreme behavior problems are few. In each classroom there are a few who need help. They are pleasant and polite. The boys offer to

help me move things. Overall, they are excited about what teachers present to them. A lot of opportunities, individualized and creative things, field trips, speakers, and new projects are available to them.

I can think of several examples of exciting, positive instances with children that really satisfy me and make teaching rewarding. This is my first year with my first grade class. When report cards came out I was explaining the grading system. They liked hearing that no one got "ones", my lowest grade. They asked me if teachers got report cards. I told them no, but in college we could do evaluations. As they were leaving, one little first grader with big brown eyes and strawberry hair said, "You know Mrs. Kline, if I was to give you a report card you'd get all fours." Fours are the highest grade I give. That's fun, when you get that kind of feedback. It's great when kids feel free to talk to you. Last year I had a fourth grade girl drop a note on my desk and walk out. I knew she didn't want me to read it right away. She asked to set a time to meet with me. There was a separation in the family and she wanted to talk to someone. She talked, just needing to bounce ideas off someone. Her mom was ecstatic that I'd listen.

I get excited when kids go to concerts. I also get excited when they take something learned before and apply it to a new situation. Then I know that there are cognitive processes going on, when they do something that previously they have not succeeded at. I have a fifth grade girl that is really into Beethoven. Today we were talking about Grieg. She said, "He was a great composer too, wasn't he?" She's that much into it. That's exciting. Maybe I can

help her. A sixth grade girl set something on my desk. She had made a crossword puzzle of words that describe me. She used words like priceless and pretty. Wow! I need this kid. She also said skinny. She gets \$25 for that one. These are interpersonal things. There's more to teaching than just the subject matter. That's where I see the positive strokes. That sixth grade girl is from a rough family. There are not good role models for her at home. I can give a positive model for her.

Looking back, there were some earlier positive experiences. I was student teaching with a classroom teacher in this school. She asked me why I did such a good job at teaching. My jaw dropped. It was hard to keep up with her, she was just a wonder. It felt good. I was natural at this. When I was student teaching in music the principal here wanted to observe me, because he suspected he'd have an opening and wanted to hire me. That was a real positive. My clarinet instructor told me, after a jury, that he never thought I could perform that well. I could almost have gone professional.

Although I've mentioned some of the positive experiences, there are frustrations, too. The difficulties are with helping people realize that music is an academic area desperately needed by children to become better people. Not just aesthetically, but to be better analytical thinkers, and helping in other subject areas. Music can support that. I need administrative support in that sense. I'm doing things during break times to help students and I still need a time to collapse and relax. Sixth grade boys have a difficult time because of changing voices, attitudes, and hormonal changes. Spring sixth grade boys can be absolutely the pits. I try

so hard to capture their interest. You have them for four years and they've been enthusiastic up to that point. It's hard.

The textbooks we have are really good for the K-5 levels. The sixth grade level is weak and I'm always searching for good songs and other materials. I have good access to instruments and the room is nice in that it is long and I can have risers and chairs set up all the time. It's bad because it's next to the gym and you can't shut out the noise. We're in the process of developing teacher enrichment books. Since graduation I have been taking courses dealing with elementary vocal things, movement, dance, theory, and elementary math and science courses.

#### Description of Teaching Style

I would describe my teaching as definitely fast paced. Maybe there's not enough depth for those who have a strong music background, but it's well-planned and well-prepared. I'm flexible in working with other teachers. One day a teacher came in to say that the film had broken and they'd be a little late in coming to music. I can easily adapt to that. My class is a pleasant experience for the kids, I'm not a serious person. I tease them by saying things like, "Let's see how many mistakes you will make." It's a relaxing and enjoyable time. I'm building a good solid background for the kids. I'm a juggler for sure. I'd add that I'm sensitive and I try to be a learner and a listener. I like the students to be the instigators, while I give the background. I ask myself questions like, "Am I doing what I should be doing? Am I covering everything?" That's an idle way of driving yourself crazy. I'm a strong person who wants to succeed and ultra critical of

myself. I'm lucky, things have come easy for me. I'm serious about things that don't go the way I thought they should, especially when you see kids only one hour a week. If it's a low day, you've wasted something.

I want my students to leave with a love for music. I don't want them to say, "That elementary music teacher was really the pits." I want the classes to learn something and enjoy it. I hope that they will have positive feelings about music and then they can search and delve into musical things. I want them to be good music appreciators or musicians. If they go to a concert, I want them to have enough background in theory to listen to a fugue and know what it is and who Bach is. Plus they will know interesting things about tempo, meter, and other musical things. I think most of the kids enjoy music. I'm drawing that judgment from parents, other teachers, and the faces of the kids.

#### Composing in the Classroom

The composing that does take place in my classroom is most often a joint effort. The kids will come forth with the ideas and I'll be the secretary. As they get older, they do more. I usually plan it into our activities about two to three times a month. About four or five times a year students will bring in things to me. They'll bring in the words and I'll write down the notes as they sing to me. It starts as a whole group and then small ensembles and individual efforts follow. I begin with rhythmic composing, starting with echo clapping. I start almost every class with it as an attention getter. They get a feel for four beats and three beats. We branch into different meters as they get older. We go

into meanings of notes, the number of counts, how we arrange those notes, and liken it to a puzzle to give a complete whole of so many counts. I'll do some dictation, clap or play a pattern, and they write it down as a game. "Let's see if we can all get this." Then I send them off to do their composing in small groups. We take turns clapping the patterns. Not all of the compositions we do are written down. We do improvising in almost every class. Writing down the pieces is less frequent.

My goals this year have more to do with composing. Composing with chords is an area I felt weak with. I took Ruth's course to try to do more of it. We prescribe chords, chord tones, melodies, and how they can move. It progresses from there. We look at a scale and determine the steps and chords from it. They write a measure that has to have four beats of any rhythm in it. They write four of these measures. Using the key signature for F, we figure out the I, IV, and V7 chords. In the first measure we use notes only in the I chord to help with their melodic composing. The second measure uses the IV chord, the third measure the V7 chord, and the last measure ends with the I chord. It must fit the rhythm pattern you've already written.

#### My Composing

As a teacher, I arrange more than I compose and I do differentiate between composing, improvising, and arranging. I've always enjoyed arranging. My favorite area as an undergraduate in the composing areas was arranging. It's a natural interest of mine. I do a lot of arranging for Orff instruments because the Orff parts are either too simple or too advanced for my students. I arrange

something in the middle. I've also arranged a trumpet duo for a Bach piece for chorus and a flute obligato for a lullaby for another chorus group. It adds interest to the piece and I want to show them that we're not an island away from the band program. I want to relate it to our choral music.

My composing was done for my theory class. (laughs) It was a grand audience. Two have since gone on to do composing and publishing. It was a pressure class, but I was exposed to unique ideas. We had a recital of our compositions. It was our idea, not our teacher's and we did two recitals.

My pieces were mainly instrumental things, for woodwinds. I feel comfortable composing for woodwinds because that's been my background. I have done some simple piano things, with not a lot of voices. A woodwind quintet was my largest voicing. My music is very classical. There is a lot of consonance; it's melodic, but not disjunct melodies. The harmonies are familiar but I add a little color. It has form with accepted harmonies.

I've liked the pieces I've written. I've always felt insecure because it was not one of my strong areas. Others in the class would come in with grandiose pieces. But I've liked mine and I think audiences have enjoyed them. My favorite was a Beethoven Piano Sonata, "The Pathetique", that I arranged for woodwind quintet. It's my favorite because of its lyrical, woodwindy sound. My theory teacher said, at the time, that I should have it played at my wedding. Unfortunately I couldn't have it at my wedding because the musicians needed weren't available.

Most of my compositions were assignments. During that time I branched out and did a little on my own. Not a lot, because of time. I was working part time. Everything best was done after 10:00PM. I started clicking at that time. I always put a lot of time and effort into what I did. It was laborious to me. I try to communicate the opposite to my students. "It's something you, yes you, can do." They're doing it at a different level. It's much easier.

I think there is a value in children seeing me as a composer. It's letting the spirit within you emerge. Many are not able to express thoughts and feelings in words. This is an extraterrestrial, out of the ordinary way of doing it. Kids need to feel that their ideas are good both musically and a contribution to a discussion. It's valuable because they are their ideas. When we improvise, I tell the kids that I've taken away all the mistakes. The only mistake is if you don't do anything. Try something. We do pentatonic and rhythmic composing a lot. Rhythm and melody together is a lot for them. I break it down for them. They love and get excited about my arranging parts because it's a real, live person doing it. It's not someone who is dead. They're amazed if you're still living. There is an aura of all great music having already been composed. No, it's still living. We do some John Cage stuff, the deep end stuff, his silence piece. We do conventional and nonconventional stuff.

My composing had both a structured influence and an unstructured influence. My college preparation taught me how to structure and the technicalities of composing. It didn't teach me

ideas, they were always there and were viable things. My father knows a great deal about music and influenced me as an improviser. He doesn't read music, having had one lesson and hated it because it was too structured. My classmates influenced me, too. It excited me to see someone who could write down such beautiful ideas. Now working with kids, any one can compose and be a musician at your own level.

I wouldn't describe myself as a composer because I don't do enough of it. I look at myself as an arranger. I want to split that down. I can take an existing idea and do "wonderful" things with it. I don't do more because I'm selfish with my time. I spend a lot of it with my family. I would do more if I had the time. I think it would be fascinating to be a composer. It's an honor, a dream. Not everyone is blessed with the talent to make a living from it, to make it work. If I was living in Russia and they said I was to be a composer, I would be afraid. That would be the ultimate pressure. I can handle the pressure of preparing a musical. The people aspect is important to me. I thrive on being with people and sharing ideas. Composers need to spend a lot of time alone. I don't do a lot of things just alone. Overall I wouldn't want to be a composer if that was all I was to be. Salt and pepper add to the whole of life. "Composing is a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there."

### Performing

I would divide my performance areas into two categories, formal and informal. Formally I perform on the clarinet, the sax, and the piano, with the clarinet as my main area. Informally I sing and

play the piano in my classroom. There was a very rapid growth of my performance skills in the elementary years. Piano was strong until the fifth grade, faded, and then I picked it up at the end of my college years. I missed it and wished that I had done more with it. In junior high school clarinet, sax, and voice, in that order, were at a high with a crescendo in clarinet through my college years. The third and fourth years of college were the strongest years in my clarinet performing. My piano and voice skills are now the strongest they have ever been. Sightreading with the clarinet has increased and my technical abilities have regressed a bit. The development has slowed down. My voice range has increased a lot with singing so much, especially since preparing a student for Amahl and the Night Visitors .

My small hands hindered me in playing piano and baritone sax. Up until now my voice range was limited. I sang a lot of tenor parts before and the upper range was not there until recently. With my clarinet playing, I was confident about tone, but not technical things like finger speed. I wonder if old age has set in. Aesthetics is my forte, not techniques. Since becoming a music teacher, I'm more conscious of musical controls. When the Symphony was preparing to play with Roy Clark, I could sight read the music successfully. It was not technically difficult, but it required a lot of expression. The thought processes are more astute than when I was in college. It doesn't take me as long to practice something and get it to sound good. If it's technically difficult, I can do a really good job of improvising to get it there. I think my experience and maturity have contributed to my being able to do

that. I'm not presently taking any lessons, but I'd like to take some voice lessons. I have never done that formally. I use it so much, but have never had any training in voice. For a while I was burnt out from college. Now I'm to the point of being able to enjoy clarinet lessons again.

Right now I perform with the symphony and the symphony quintet, which is a whole new dimension of music for me. It's the ensemble. I like symphony over band. I have responsibility and liberty with the music. I also do some things with the church, dependent upon the time element. I'd like to do more at the church if I had time. A week before Christmas I'll improvise harmony parts for voices. I also pinch-hit for church on piano if the organist doesn't show up in the summer. I'd like to spend more time there because it's important to me. In high school and my first year in college I was in charge of organizing a folk group. Then I fell away from it. There was dissension in the group and people not wanting to come to rehearsals caused us to go our separate ways. After the group disbanded, I felt they were not appreciating what I was doing, but began to expect it. But I do feel that music can add a lot to a liturgy and I do have the ability.

My performing is a model to my kids. They ask each fall, "Do we get to see you perform in the symphony?" It's wonderful. It's an outlet for me. I bring in my clarinet a lot. They want me to bring it in more than I do. I use it for instrumental units, the children's symphony concert at the Fritz, pitch movement with the primaries, and stuff like that. I've brought ensembles in to perform for them. One of the senior high schools sent over some

quintets and other groups to perform in culmination of instrumental family studies.

#### Performance in the Classroom

In the classroom, we do a lot of improvising, performing with Orff instruments, and the fourth and sixth grade chorus do a musical/music program. Most are in the chorus, so they have that added dimension in performing. In chorus I tie in all the things we've been talking about in class. Plus I use musicals as a total arts education. My goal is to someday do some programs that are not musicals. But my administration and the time factor dictate that I stick to musicals. The teachers don't always have the time to plan programs that show all the concepts that they've taught. I sometimes wonder if parents always want to know all the concepts taught. But with the kids I make sure they realize that the performances are a culmination of our classroom activities. If parents want to know how, I'll take care of that on an individual basis.

We sing, play instruments and use a lot of body sounds. My goal is to include instruments and singing in every class time. We precede instrumental playing with body sounds. During American Education Week the fifth and sixth grade classes will put together a performance of what we do in music class for the younger grades. The first and fifth grades will be paired and they watch the fifth graders do their stuff. The Orff instruments are the main instrumental performing done. I do some solo vocal performing in the spring. I'm supposed to organize the talent show. Last year we opted out because of the reputable sixth grade class. We were

afraid of what they'd come up with. (laughs) It's mainly piano playing, skits, and I involve some theatre-dramatics, too.

I think there is a connection between being a teacher and a performer. If a person is to be a good performer, he/she has to be able to teach their craft. Turning that around, my mother-in-law once told me that I was able to teach because I play. I hadn't thought about that before. I can draw on my experience as a performer. I think what helps there is that I am more realistic in my demands of the kids. I know what it's like to make a mistake during a performance, and therefore I can sympathize with the emotion in the kids. I know what they feel like when they forget their lines.

I can broaden that out to thinking of teaching in general as performing. You communicate to others what your abilities are in that area. In reading, you communicate what your knowledge shows you to be the proper ways to do those things. In social studies you are imparting knowledge that your background has given you. The place and the presentation are important; teachers have that in common with the performer. Teachers have to be able to get up in front of a group and communicate ideas and feelings. They have to meet the audience at their level. A musical performer does not have to be concerned in performing down to a particular level. A teacher has to know the level of the students, it's trickier. They have a responsibility to increase the level and it's crucial if they don't. A performer is more relaxed, they're not charged with their having to get certain things across to the audience. A teacher has a critical, tough job to do. Being a diverse performer is helpful.

I've taught in an elementary classroom, an elementary music classroom, and a methods class. Some have only taught in a methods class and are thus more demanding on the students.

The months and weeks ahead of a performance with the children are difficult for me. I want things organized. Rehearsal times and costumes are things that I want to know in advance. When we hit the performance date, I want to feel we are ready. On the date that we are done with the show for the school, I can relax for the evening performance for the parents. I concentrate on getting the kids ready. I'd compare it to my wedding. I enjoyed the day and could then lay back. I let them be the show, it's not my show. I get them mentally and emotionally prepared. We do "what happens if" preparation. When we're done I'm elated, no matter what happens. They will be more critical than I, always. They will ask if they projected and sounded okay. I will not gloss over mistakes. I tell them to remember that no performance is perfect and I ask them to look at what was good about the performance. There is a lot of hugging. I tell them that they did a good job and ask if they feel good about what they did. There was a sixth grade boy who was labeled as LD. Aurally he was very strong and knew everybody's lines. But he couldn't have read it. I asked him to take over the lead part because that boy was sick the day of the performance. It didn't take too much convincing. He did a good job and I put my arm around him when he finished. I laugh and clap the loudest. Last year the program with the sixth graders was a real hardship. It was the roughest part of my teaching career. I told the other music teachers not to come. We got a standing ovation. It had a

patriotic theme. It was touching and I had chills down my spine. The kids need to take credit for the performance.

### Thoughts on Performing

Before I perform I get really nervous, depending upon the difficulty. I would wear mittens and a coat before a performance so that I wouldn't get cold. After a difficult piece was finished I would relax. Sometimes I start to think too much. I make more mistakes then. I should just let it flow naturally. Afterward I consider the goals I had set. If I meet them, I feel pretty good. Otherwise I am really critical, and not totally positive. The worst part of a performance is during because of my not getting enough time to practice.

I have a friend that just had an audience with Beverly Sills. Another friend is a semi-professional performer, taking lessons from the principal bassoonist in the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Wow. I think it would be exciting to be able to do more of that. On the other hand, I have set my priorities, with the time I have, and am satisfied at the level it is at.

For me, the performer enhances the teacher and the teacher enhances the composer. But those are two separate statements, they're not sequential. Teaching has made me more confident about my composing.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SECOND PORTRAIT: SARAH NASH

Sarah Nash has been teaching in the local school district for the past seventeen years. Prior to teaching in her current school district, Sarah taught in music and elementary classrooms in California and Nebraska. Locally, she began as a regular classroom teacher for seven years and for the last ten years has been a music specialist. This year she began a new assignment teaching reading and all the music for one elementary school building. She sees every music class for 90 minutes per week in three 30 minute periods, except for kindergarten which she sees for 60 minutes per week in two 30 minute periods. The children receive 90 minutes of instruction rather than the scheduled 60 minutes because Sarah feels it is important for them to receive that additional instructional time. In order to give them the 90 minutes, she gives up her preparation time for teaching. Sarah also offers children the opportunity to participate in a chorus that meets for two 45 minute rehearsals per week before the school day begins.

Sarah's music room is on the second floor of the building and is an average-sized classroom. In the back half of the room are six rows of folding chairs, separated by a center aisle, with three rows of chairs on each side of the aisle. Bookcases and cabinets line the back wall, with additional storage space under the windows along the right wall and by the teacher's desk in the left front corner. The piano is placed at an angle in the front right corner of the

room; with a variety of Orff instruments on the floor surrounding it. The front wall is covered with bulletin boards and a chalkboard. Hanging below the chalk tray are recorders in brightly colored cloth cases. One bulletin board has a musical staff on it with "notes from the staff" (teachers in the school) on it. There is a movable bulletin board standing in the back left corner of the room covered with tie-dyed material in various colors entitled: "Sound has Color or Timbre." The walls and the carpeting are green. The carpeting and the abundance of materials spread all along the walls added warmth and homeyness to the room.

#### OBSERVATIONS

A kindergarten class, a sixth grade class, and a fifth-sixth grade combination class were each observed three times for 30 minutes during a three week period in October, 1984. Each of the classes observed had between 25 and 30 boys and girls in it. The kindergarten children always seemed to bounce into the room, barely able to contain their energy and enthusiasm. They willingly followed directions and sang and moved with joy and gusto. Sarah used more facial expressions and voice inflections when working with the kindergarten children. The classroom atmosphere was notably different when the sixth grade and fifth-sixth grade combination class was in the music room. Instead of joy and enthusiasm, a lethargic attitude toward the activities initiated by the music teacher prevailed. The sixth grade boys expended their energy by engaging in physical contact with each other. An attitude of mutual tolerance existed between some of the fifth and sixth graders and Sarah. She always greeted the students pleasantly at the beginning

of every class period, but the feeling of tolerance would emerge if unexceptionable student behaviors began to occur. Once a reprimand was given, Sarah was able to continue pleasantly with the lesson, not allowing any negative feelings she might have to interfere with her contact with the other children.

On one of the observation days Sarah had a small-group composing activity planned for the fifth-sixth grade combination class. During a previous class period, the children had been divided into small groups. Sarah has prepared large pieces of paper, each containing a different verse of a poem. She gives each group of students a piece of paper containing one of the verses, instructing them to use it for recording their musical composition. She asks them to not "ding around" with the instruments and tells them that they are really good at working in groups and that they take responsibility well. Sarah gives them step by step instructions for the procedure to be followed in their groups. She demonstrates by writing line notation for her verse of the piece on the chalkboard and then adds note names above the rhythm lines. "I can start on any note I want from the five tones to be used. Select a secretary to record your tune."

She calls each group up to the front of the room to get their paper and tells the group by the piano not to play their tune on the piano. Each group finds a spot in the room, taking instruments with them. All groups are working simultaneously, resulting in a room filled with sounds. The children enjoy working with the instruments and the energy level within in the room rises. Sarah helps one group determine a pitched instrument that will be appropriate. She

writes down the line notation for the first line of the verse. The group members talk about long and short rhythms. Sarah gets down on the floor with them and encourages them to make up a tune for the first line. She walks over to another group. "Have you a tune for the first line?...Write that down, secretary." Sarah walks over to another group and gets down on the floor. "Play the tune for the first line." She goes to the group in the back of the room and tells them to use a different instrument because it was not the kind of pitched instrument appropriate to this assignment. The students find another pitched instrument. Sarah moves to another group and asks, "How are we doing?" She encourages them to play. An argument breaks out between the player and another member of the group because he didn't feel that the player was doing a good job. Sarah says, "Don't panic! This is not easy. It's not as easy as it looks." She sings it with them as he plays. To another group she says, "You've got a good steady beat here!" bending her knees to their beat as she speaks. Sarah continues to move from one small group to another until the music period is over. "Good job!" The children put instruments away and give her the papers as they leave.

Later that morning, the kindergarten class arrives. Everyone sings "Happy Birthday" to Brent while Sarah plays a piano accompaniment. "I have a friend hiding in this room. His name is Tinga Layo. Do you think he'll come out if we sing?" The class sings the song "Tinga Layo." Nathan checks the back of the room, but Tinga Layo isn't hiding there. "Let's sing it louder." The class sings it again a little louder. "It's coming from over here." Sarah walks over to the bookcase by her desk and finds Tinga Layo.

He is a marionette donkey and she walks him across the floor to where the children are. "He likes to hear you sing. If you clap, he'll dance for you. Clap on 'come, little donkey come'." Tinga Layo claps with them and tells the class that they did a good job singing and that they are going to learn a Halloween song. As Sarah puts the marionette away, the children say good-bye to him.

Sarah asks the class about graveyards and what they might find there. They tell her about skeletons and spooks and that sometimes a graveyard can be scary. Tim is poking and tickling the children around him. She asks Tim if he wants to come up by her desk. If not, he has to take care of his hands. Tim decides that he will stay in his chair. "Thank you." He doesn't bother anyone for the rest of the music period. Sarah sings a song about an old woman and a graveyard, using a small white ghost puppet to help her sing the "oo" part. At the end of the song she shouts, "Boo!" and some of the children jump. As the class joins Sarah in singing the song, she uses the ghost flying from high to low in the air to represent the direction of the melody. She has everyone move their bodies from a high position to a low position as they sing the descending melody phrase. Sarah concludes the class by making a people train to move the children from their chairs to a line at the door, ready to return to their regular classroom. Music is fun and exciting for the kindergarten children and they eagerly participate in all the activities Sarah presents to them.

On the last observation day the sixth grade class has music first in the morning. Two boys come in before the rest of the class and Sarah smiles and asks them if they are having a good day so far.

She asks Ken to water her geraniums and he leaves the room to get a container for the water. The others begin to come into the room, commenting and clapping upon seeing the Orff instruments that are on the floor in the front of the room. Sarah begins the class by teaching them the song "Liza Jane." Some of the boys are not participating in the singing and Sarah explains that they can work now or come in at 12:00 to do it, expressing her preference that they do it now. The boys decide to make the effort now and join in on the singing.

After learning the song, Sarah adds a clapping part to it and encourages everyone to try it with her. "Good. You got that right away! See if you can get this motion with me." She demonstrates a thigh and hand clapping pattern to be used later by the xylophone players. She gives Alice a melodica to play three notes at once to represent the train whistle in the song and asks her to try it. "Alice, listen. On the word train...You've got it. The hardest part is to be patient until we get to train." The class sings the verse with Alice adding the train whistle. "Right on." Sarah introduces the nursery rhyme chant "One, Two", having the class clap the end of each phrase of the chant. "One, Two" will be added to "Liza Jane," becoming one section of the total piece with the rhythm instruments playing the phrase endings just practiced.

"Let me instruct before we make some noise. Why am I competing? Alice, I don't want to compete." Sarah explains the xylophone parts written on the board. "Ben, do you want to come in at noon?" She demonstrates how the xylophone parts are to be played and reminds them to pick up their elbows as they play. She explains

that the A and B sections are to be played on the woods and the C section is to be played on the metals. Sarah assigns three players to the woods and three players to the metals. She works with the six players first, demonstrating what to play. She walks over to where the tambourines are placed on the floor. The mallet players are all playing at once. "Hold it. I can't instruct through this." They stop their playing. She gives out the tambourines, drums, sticks, sandblocks, maracas, guiro, and triangles. Everyone begins playing at once. "Quit, freeze. We'll never get it together if you take my time like this." Sarah rehearses the rhyme with the rhythm instruments and the other sections with the metals and woods.

After some initial rehearsing, she starts the entire group on "Liza Jane." There are several starts and stops when sections make mistakes. "Kids, sing, watch me. We can't get it together if you're asleep." They begin again. Two boys come into the classroom. She stops the class and gives them each a tambourine. "One more time. It will be nice if we get it together." They begin several times, after working on getting the train whistle louder, the instruments playing at the right time, and Sarah getting one of her cues right. "That's really nice." She has the mallet players teach their part to someone else. The rhythm instruments are being played constantly while the new mallet players are trying to learn their parts. The boys are doing most of the playing of the rhythm instruments and are asked to keep the sound off when it's not their turn to play, but they keep playing. "Ready?" Sarah waits until it is quiet. They begin playing and singing as she cues the parts. "Stop. Very nice. Lay the mallets down. Leo, we don't touch drums

with anything but our hands and soft mallets." She excuses the class by the instruments they played.

#### INTERVIEW

At specific points during the interview, Sarah reflected on the concepts "teacher", "composer/composing", and "performer/performing." For Sarah, a teacher is a person and is very human. She is someone who is interested in others and is a giver and a helper. Teachers are learners themselves, yet motivators and encouragers of others. They need to be good listeners, understanding with their students, and even arbitrators at times. She perceives teachers as being facilitators, taking managerial roles at times, and cooperating with students and other faculty. Sarah describes a composer as a person who is always looking around, listening, and seeing what is there. A composition can be a thought or an idea, or may be the result of a feeling, a mood, a whim, the environment, or a deadline. Compositions have parameters. A performer is an artist, a technician, a listener, an interpreter, a communicator, and most definitely someone who is able to express emotion. Performing requires that the performer be intense and sensitive and show insight into an artistic expression of the composer.

The following section is an edited version of Sarah's memories and thoughts about her musical experiences, teaching philosophies and practices, composing, and performing. It is written as Sarah speaking in the first person. Sarah speaks slowly in a low, quiet voice. During the interview, she would take time in answering questions, thinking carefully about what she wanted to say.

Musical Beginnings

Actually I hadn't planned to go into music from early childhood. I enjoyed being able to experiment. I was playing at the piano, not playing the piano. I wasn't very good at playing it. I didn't have the discipline one needs to be a performer. I would make up tunes and arrangements on and off throughout my early years. When I was small, I was playing at the piano, imitating my mother's students. When I started grade school, we didn't have any structured music classes, but there were classes in which we sang and musical plays that we did. I was usually involved in those things, playing the ukulele in a spring program. In junior high school I enjoyed working with small groups doing some arranging. I took theory from a private teacher, who was an encouraging and inspirational teacher. She was innovative and worked more or less in the modern idiom. I wanted to do that, to compose. She was vivacious, a warm person, and she'd be enthusiastic about some of the things I was trying to do. That was encouraging. My junior high teachers were good models for me. There was an instrumental teacher that was a violinist and a good musician and I took clarinet from him. He was very encouraging to me and praised my compositions. I had a high school teacher that knew I already knew theory, so she let me listen to records while she taught the class. It was wonderful because I didn't have any records of my own. There were pieces that made impressions on me. She was sincerely trying to do things with music. She wanted to give to her students, despite the kind of teacher she was in the classroom. In senior high I thought I could major in theory. I was able to write music

down for a lady who composed for films. She couldn't write it. At one time I thought I could and would try to write for films. It was a lofty ambition, like some people running for president. (laughs) Nevertheless, that went through my head.

I didn't take piano lessons from my mother because she didn't feel she could teach me because our mother/daughter relationship would get in the way. I took from some really good teachers. In high school, my piano teacher said I was wasting time and money and to come back when I was ready to work. I did go back and work for her for a short time in college and I still admire her. I had to work at the piano in college because I had to have a major instrument to major in theory. I did have to work, especially all of those exercises! I think I was able to work then in college, because I was ready. (laughs) I consider myself a hack musician because I really don't play anything skillfully. I played viola in college because I really wanted to play a string instrument. I don't know why I didn't push to do it when I was young. I was a little late in starting on it and it does take time to develop the techniques.

#### University Studies

I have a bachelor of music degree. I took the regular academic courses plus strings and percussion. I got by without brass--I don't know how--and woodwinds because of my clarinet playing. I didn't take much theory because I passed the exams without the courses and filled out my music courses with history, literature, composition, orchestration, ensembles, and conducting. A highlight for me was working with Howard Swan, a vocal conductor. He was

working with high school students in a three-hour session. I enjoyed watching him work and his sharing of his techniques. Backtracking to high school, I had the experience of working with Robert Shaw. The critics walked out because he was moving his hips. (laughs) Professor Schuster was also a conductor and an inspiration to me. He was a fine musician and talked about musicianship in a small class I was in, conveying it in his own conducting. Dr. Reed was a composition teacher that I had. He wasn't inspirational, but he was kind to me. He didn't command respect, but he was a good craftsman, musician, and very understanding. There are people who are inspiring. He wasn't. I didn't want to compose just like him though his compositions are highly respected. Swan and Schuster were the most inspiration in my college experience.

My only regrets were in not being able to take more general history courses and foreign languages. I did take Spanish. I also wished that I had started earlier to pursue strings. But these are just wishes.

#### Classroom Experiences

Being an elementary music teacher was the farthest thing from my mind before I did it. I didn't have any long term goals when I graduated from college other than marriage and a family. The reason I went into teaching was that my husband was going to do his residency for a doctorate and I would have to be the breadwinner. With that in mind, I went back to school to get a teaching credential. I had to teach in the public school because I didn't have a masters to teach at the college level. I continued to teach except when I was pregnant. I liked music, that was my background.

I exchanged with other teachers, taking over their music classes in exchange for other classes. That was in Glendale, California, my first teaching experience. It was natural for me to take over their music. I had a fourth grade classroom and the chorus. There was no music specialist in my second teaching experience. The music instruction was haphazard and the children's experience had been to sing from a dittoed sheet of words. I was able to find music books in the building that I could use. I taught the music classes for any teachers that wanted me to. So I just fell into music.

There are some things that happen that are positive with the children. Some days they are few and far between and sometimes they are very subtle. It was encouraging within the last couple of days to hear the sixth grade boys in chorus sing "Drunken Sailor" as they left the classroom. I like it when someone else is turned on by what I think is quality. When I see some children, not talented in many areas, recognized for their music ability, that thrills me. I give them an opportunity to show their talent and they get recognition from their peers. We did a centennial program and the little girl who played Shirley Temple had the most wonderful experience. Of course it's rewarding when you do something with a group that is musical. Very seldom do I get really "musical" performances from children. It's more the process of getting them involved with good music and if they enjoy that experience, it's important to me.

There is one valuable experience for the children that comes to mind. We were studying Mozart and I wanted the children to be involved with the music, not just historical facts. I wanted them

to become familiar with his music, to see that it was of lasting value, and of worth to them. We put on a simplified version of "The Magic Flute." The children spent a lot of time making the puppets. That in itself wasn't a musical experience, but we learned about the characters. We made instruments for the overture out of papier-mâché. The children had to listen intently to the music. It was a neat thing for the children to do. They would go into the halls whistling the themes. At reunion time, former students talked more about program memories than anything else. It was a nice thing for me, because music stuck in their minds.

I am frustrated in being unable to muster an esprit de corp and I want very much to do that. Some teachers do, but I can't get it to happen. I'm also very frustrated by the nonchalant attitude of students toward other students in their class.

#### Description of Teaching Style

How would I describe my teaching? I suppose there are a number of words that come to mind. I think that some of the time I am energetic, haphazard, nervous, enthusiastic, analytical, and expressive. I don't always stick to my plans if the children come to the class excited about something else, but I am organized in my own way. I'm an actor with younger children because I'm not a natural with that age group. I'm not as effective a director as I'd like to be and I'm definitely not a performer. I am caring and dedicated, but I am disapproving at times. I disapprove of apathy and dependency on others without making an effort yourself. I know there are reasons for students to be dependent and I try to be sensitive to that, but I encourage independence. I also disapprove

of those that take an obsessive amount of attention from others. Perhaps I am a fault finder, but I try to avoid it. I don't think of myself as negative, but I'm not an excessive praiser either. I do praise when I mean it, but not for every action, though. I say, "That's coming...100% improved...I appreciate what you've done today." It doesn't come naturally to me, if I don't mean it. I do it more with primary children because they need to hear more praise.

For my students, I would hope that their tastes would be broadened and that they would not be as inclined to switch off "Morning Concert" because they would hear snatches of something familiar. This goal would at least be for a majority of children. I'd also hope through having some acquaintance with musical skill development that they would feel confident and not be fearful of trying to develop further musical skills such as reading or playing folk type instruments. I think many children feel they can't do it because they can't read much. I would like children to go away saying they know a little about those notes and to be able to play recorder and hear what they saw. I've had fourth graders who could play many of the songs. I see my role as exposing them to the various kinds of music and certain musical knowledge. I'd like them to feel they have some capabilities in music, that they are capable of listening with some understanding, performing an instrument or vocally, that they can participate in some way. I think the list of words I came up with for the reflection of "teacher" were positive and what I'd like to be as a teacher. I could have added, had I wanted to be negative, that I was a poor role model. (laughs) Some teachers are poor role models and I am at times. But most of the

things I listed were positive, the ideal, and what I strive for.

#### Composing in the Classroom

Composing does take place in my classroom. Sometimes it's a group effort. When we're making up a song, maybe we take a theme. I snatch ideas from the children, something like brainstorming. Then I might start a sentence, using their ideas to put in the sentence, having them determine the number of syllables in the sentence. I ask someone else to put in another line. I think we have to get it started. Then the children contribute. You saw verses in my room. They were just lyrics. I ask the children to sing a tune to the first line, the second, and so on. Sometimes the children have brought in tunes that they have written. Sometimes it's an improvisation. This happens every so often on a somewhat regular basis. I don't really plan it, it's spontaneous. It could be an outgrowth of social studies. The students came in all excited one day. They had been talking about archeology. I started writing down what they said. We made an entire program around it. It's not my creation, it's something that happens that gives me an idea for something else. That's my reason for saying "looking around" in the reflection. It's resourcefulness, seeing the possibilities, and being open to them. They came in, and I had the choice of going with the excitement or doing my lesson.

#### My Composing

None of my pieces were real big. Nothing was written for piano because I don't have the pianistic skills for it. I've written some vocal pieces with piano accompaniment and for a string quartet. I suppose when I thought I could compose, my pieces were a little bit

harsh. I was told they were a little unexpected from me because of the way they thought of my personality. They were sometimes somber. But my composing has been so little. I haven't done any serious composing since college and that was a while ago. The things I have composed since have been of necessity for classroom use. When I couldn't find anything and needed it, I would write it. There weren't canned programs on the market when I first started teaching. I've written some little vocal things, but I've done quite a bit of arranging. There just hasn't been much material I've wanted to use. I'd find a nice tune and want to use it. In the early days, before everyone got legal, I would arrange almost everything. I wanted things that would be singable, easy enough for children to sing, but not trite. I do a lot of arranging for instruments for my chorus. I'd use an instrumental ensemble to enhance a song or develop a concept. I'd do some of it and the children would do some of it. I'd choose a theme and make arrangements when other materials were not available. I've used what instruments were available, such as a cello recently. I can't think of any particular favorites or raves of the pieces I've written.

I'm not sure of the value of the children seeing me compose in the classroom. When I write music down, I have had some kids ask me how I do it. Or when they sing me a tune and I write it down, that dictation is amazing to them. Some children then find that they can take some dictation themselves. I think that is encouraging. They find they can. I suppose the modeling is worth something. They see this as something that happens and I don't make a big deal of it. It's a natural part of music. I have noticed that children really

like their things. Last Halloween the fifth graders did some whole tone scale things. They'd make a tune and their own lyrics. It was kind of spooky and the accompaniment was whole tone. They really liked that and wanted copies. So I made copies and they took them home. They felt proud.

My early composing was a natural thing for me to do. Since my mother was a piano teacher, there was music in the house, so I had access to an instrument. I thoroughly enjoyed and imitated her music students. It was fun and I enjoyed the sounds and the melodies. More of my pieces were vocal than instrumental. My school preparation was important in being able to get my compositions down on paper. The teacher I had was inspirational. There's that word again. She composed and I liked what she composed. She wrote in the modern idiom and I wanted to write in the modern idiom myself. I did a bit of it when I was younger but the modern idiom has changed and I haven't changed with it. I haven't kept abreast, so I don't know about the modern craftsmen. I don't know if my background allowed me to compose more involved, sophisticated, and complex music. It certainly didn't hinder me in any way. I might have been just imitating the same kind of music that I did, just from having listened to it. The theory helped me to analyze what I had written, knowing what kind of a chord I had used. I could have fumbled around to find the same chord. I think you have to have some kind of instruction to get it down on paper. Folk musicians are creative and original, but they have to have someone else to write it down for them. You have to have some instruction to be able to get it down on paper.

When I do compose I do it in one sitting and it usually takes me about three or four hours. Sometimes when I go back and look over what I have written I will change things like flats and sharps or I will change it if I think it's too high or not as singable as I thought.

I wouldn't call myself a composer because I don't compose enough. But quantity isn't the entire reason. I didn't develop my composing. I just quit. I feel like there might have been potential there and I might have even been a serious composer. But I fell short. It would be nice at this point to call myself a composer, but I'm not. Perhaps I would name myself an arranger, but I'm not a good improviser. I can do a bit of it. It's not natural. Again, I don't have the piano skills.

#### Performing

My performance areas include piano, classroom instruments, recorder, the basic harmonies on the guitar, and autoharp. I started recorder and guitar when I started teaching at Glendale. It wasn't difficult for me to pick up the recorder because I had played clarinet. As I said, I played at the piano when I was younger. I took some lessons, but I was not serious about them. When I got to college I had to have piano as my main instrument and I worked at it. I'd say that my college years were the peak of my skills. Now, I just play what I need to in the classroom and I don't perform outside of the classroom. If any one heard me play they wouldn't ask me to accompany them. (laughs) Yes, I've been asked to do several things but, not to accompany a group. I was asked to accompany a lady on a piece she had written for the violin and I did

play for her in practice. I do hate to play accompaniments that require some technical skill or work.

Voice and piano are the two performance areas that I use the most in my teaching. I'm not in as good shape technically as I was in college when I took voice lessons. I certainly have lost some of the technique that I acquired in college. Then I could phrase more correctly, whereas now I grab breaths when I shouldn't. I feel that as far as vocal technique goes, I haven't refined that and I think it's from dormancy. I am able to sing with freedom. I notice I don't have a lot of breath control, but I do have enough resonance that my voice will carry and I've a pretty good range and I can hold a part. I get laryngitis occasionally, but it's not chronic. At the piano, my best skills include my ability to transpose on the spot and play by ear.

#### Improvising and Performing in the Classroom

The children have an opportunity to sing and play in the regular classroom. Other opportunities usually come from chorus. I had a student that auditioned for the part of Amahl in Amahl and the Night Visitors at the local high school. I put him in the program because he did so well at the audition. I have solo opportunities and small ensembles at my programs. I use instrumental ensembles to accompany in class and for programs. I use instruments that are appropriate for the song, not twenty guitars. That is not aesthetic to hear. When teaching them to play guitars I will use more, but not for performance. I may use two recorders on a piece in a program or in a classroom setting where I am not teaching recorder techniques. I try to give musical performances and the musicianship

of the children is also important to me.

I think that the connection between being a teacher and being a performer is that one will enhance the other. It's important to be actively involved making music, musically. It's not essential, but it is helpful. Nadia Boulanger was a good teacher, but not a well known performer. I think that some people may see many aspects of teaching as performing, but for me, expressing yourself as a conductor is teaching as performing.

If I could live my dreams, I would like to sing under a good conductor, not that I have so much to contribute. I enjoy working and responding to a good conductor. It's fun. I enjoy responding to someone else's design. The other things are dreams.

My teaching drives me, it forces me to do certain things. It also becomes an excuse for not growing. I teach what I have to do, to learn something for that day. It makes you wonder how people teach, perform, compose, and constantly grow. The music chairman at the university does all of that.

Before a performance I am nervous and apprehensive. I am awake at night, wondering if I will remember everything. I feel the responsibility, because I take care of things. Afterwards it depends on how it went. I see children pleased with themselves. If they forget something they tell me because they are nervous, too. If anything goes wrong that's the first thing they say. They don't go over it and weigh the positive and the negative. It doesn't mean they hear the applause and think only of the goof. I ask them if anyone else knew it was a goof and that usually makes them feel better. I tell them about the good ending, that it was really in

tune. Well, only if they were. (laughs)

Getting back to the rewards and satisfactions of teaching, one of the most rewarding things in teaching is to discover something a child can do musically. It rewards the child. When kids discover body movement with music, the responsibility at a program or in the room, it's a rewarding thing. That of course includes a child who has trouble in other areas. They benefit from an opportunity you have helped provide, musical or extramusical.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE THIRD PORTRAIT: ANN BURNS

Ann Burns is in her fifth year of teaching music in the local school district. She taught in elementary classrooms and/or as a music specialist for thirteen years in various districts before beginning her present position. This year an additional elementary school was added to Ann's responsibilities. She teaches 500 students, K-6, spending two mornings at one school and the remainder of time in a second school. She is allowed 20 minutes for travel and 25 minutes for lunch.

Ann's classroom has the average space of an elementary classroom. Instead of chairs, Ann has three tier risers for the children to sit and stand on. The children are evenly spaced along the risers by pieces of tape indicating where each child is to sit. Bookcases and shelves line the back wall under the windows and other cabinets for ukuleles and rhythm instruments are placed along the left wall. Bulletin boards are along the right and left walls and there are chalkboards on the left and front walls. Ann has two pianos in her room, one placed perpendicular to the front chalkboard and the other set at an angle to the left in front of the risers. Her desk is in the back left corner of the room. The walls are blue cement blocks and Ann described the tile floor as institution turquoise. Ann attempts to achieve a feeling of warmth in the room with a variety of colorful decorations on the walls.

## OBSERVATIONS

A first grade class, a first and second grade combination class, and a third grade class were each observed three times during a three week period in October and early November, 1984 in the school Ann travels to in the afternoon. Each class period lasts 30 minutes. The children in all the music classes seemed anxious and excited to participate in the activities Ann had planned. When observing on election day, the excitement was very high and Ann recognized the children's high energy level and worked to calm them down a little in order to proceed with the lesson. Ann promotes a feeling of cooperation by encouraging everyone to contribute ideas to improve the class performance. She uses a moderate tone of voice that contains energy and excitement and adds humor to the class sessions by her use of puns.

Today Ann has the third grade class shortly after lunch. The students come in and are told to pick up the black folders by the door. Ann is at the piano and plays a chord several times. She stands and claps a rhythm pattern and the children echo the pattern. She changes some of the children's places on the risers. "Now boys and girls, some of you forgot that I changed your seating. Let me go over this." She reads off the names from a seating chart in her hand. As she reaches the end of each row she says, "Good work."

"You have the 'Monster Song' in your folders. We're going to read through the words." They begin reading together, reading some parts in a definite rhythm. At the end of the second verse Ann asks, "Which parts are the same?" She uses her hand to direct the rhythm at the end of the third verse. Just before they read the

fourth verse together Ann says, "This is a good verse for expression." They change their voices to whispers in part of the verse. She tells them that they are going to add sound effects to their monster song. She asks Nick to play the word beat on the temple blocks, questioning the class as to whether he will play a steady beat or the rhythm of the words. The students reply together, "The word beat."

There is an interlude in the song which Ann plays on the piano. She wants those with velcro fasteners on their tennis shoes to play that sound on a particular beat. Those without velcro tennis shoes can make the sound of the beats with their voices by saying, "ch, ch." They all practice it to get the sound on the right beats. "That's right. You start singing, the velcro stops...May I have your attention, Sam?" Ann waits until everyone is quiet and reminds the class to be quiet with the velcro on the other parts of the song.

"Let's take it from the top." Ann plays the piano and the children sing along, adding the sounds. She looks at Nick as he plays his temple blocks part. "Good." Ann stops them, wanting them to try that all again, and remembering that there is no interlude on verses four and five. When they get to the end of the song she gives them the cut off. "Boys and girls, raise your hand to tell me what was really good about our performance." They talk about Nick's part. She asks them to put their music back in the folders.

Ann brings out a large shell and tells the history of the shell. "Tom, the boy who brought this in, said I could make a sound on this. I'm supposed to blow into it. Where will I put my lips?"

The class finds a spot and she blows it. It is a loud sound pitched at middle C. She asks them to name instruments with mouthpieces.

"One at a time." They name a flute, trumpet, and French Horn.

"Please just raise your hand." Someone else mentions a trombone and they determine that most of these instruments are part of the brass family. Ann blows the shell again. "Is it loud or soft? High or low?" She puts her hand over the shell as she blows and it changes the pitch. She asks them what happened. "One at a time. Noah, what do you think? It's Noah's turn." The children are excited and wanting to all talk at the same time. Ann tells them about talking to the principal about his trip to Hawaii and his sharing that they still use the shells to call people together when a ceremony is to begin. "Karl, what were you going to say? Karl says, "It sounds like a foghorn."

Ann concludes the class with the song "The Ten Days of Halloween" sung to the tune of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." She uses pictures for each of the ten days and has ten children stand in order in the front of the room holding the pictures. When they are finished, Ann dismisses them by row. One boy stops to play the temple blocks. "Those are neat Dan."

During the second visit, the third graders come in excited because today is election day. Ann talks about the election, people coming to their school to vote, and all the excitement it is producing. She tells the class about going to a bazaar on Saturday and buying a musical glove, referring to it as her "Michael Jackson" glove. She puts it on and demonstrates the body wave. "It's just like magic." Ann has the entire class trying the body wave. She

looks down at her high heeled shoes and mentions that her shoes are not very good for doing the moonwalk, but tries it anyway. Three students get up one at a time to demonstrate the moonwalk. She comments that they've been practicing their moonwalk and are doing really well.

Ann asks the class to turn to the last page in their books. There are a lot of voices that can be heard. The children want to tell Ann and their friends things. "One at a time. There is so much excitement." Sandy notices all the letter "A's" around the room and tells Ann. Ann explains that the librarian asked the teachers in the building to adopt a letter and she chose the letter "A." She asks them to find all the "A's" in the song in their book. Heidi found 18. "Are you going to look on a line or a space?" Jim answers, "Space." "First or second space, Jim?" He replies, "Second." Sandy says that she has found three "A's". "Don't look at the words, only the music...Kari?" He replies, "Four." "That's what I found. Let's sing it." The class sings "America" twice, the second time exchanging the words for the long "A" sound. Toward the end of the second time through some of the children start singing other letters of the alphabet and giggling can be heard. "Were you singing "A" on the word beat or the steady beat?...Boys and girls, may I have your attention? We are so excited." Ann has decorated the room with "A's" made in various sizes, colors, and types of lettering. She asks the class to try to find all the "A's" in the room. As they give their answers she replies, "You bet...Right."

A boy points to the notes on her easel and Ann asks the class to try to determine what song begins with those notes. "Yankee

Doodle," "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and "Mary Had a Little Lamb" are suggested by the children. Ann has them sing each of the three songs as she points to the notes and they decide that they have not found the right song yet. She gives them the hint that the song has something to do with America. Someone mentions the song "America" and the class sings it as Ann points to the notes on the easel. "Let's do it one more time just to be sure." They sing it again and when they are finished she says, "It fits, doesn't it?" Ann concludes the class by working on the songs "You're a Grand Old Flag" and "This Land is Your Land."

A week later the second grade class is having music. "There's another big holiday coming up...Sam has it...Thanksgiving." Ann asks the children to turn to page 142 in their books. "When I was in second grade I learned this song. It makes me think of Thanksgiving." She plays "Over the River" on the piano. "Raise your hand if you've heard it...Do you think we'll have snow like in the picture?...Try to read the words." Ann plays and sings the piece and some of the children sing along a little.

"What's something else that you eat?...Turkey!" She tells them about the game they will play to the song "Albuquerque Turkey" which they already know. Ann adjusts seven carpet squares on the floor in a circle. After getting the pitch from the piano, the class sings the song, which is to the tune of "Clementine," without any accompaniment. Ann explains the way the game works and picks seven people from the first row to be the first squad. They step to the steady beat as everyone sings the first verse. Ann joins them in the circle to help them keep the steady beat. She chooses a new

group of seven for the second verse and because she lands on the specified square, Ann is the turkey in the center for the third verse. She gets someone to take her place in the center as she gets a third group of seven for the third verse and a drummer to help keep the steady beat. She plays a piano accompaniment for the third verse. Ann concludes the class by having everyone listen, move, and sing to a new song, "Grandpa's Turkey."

#### INTERVIEW

At specific points during the interview, Ann reflected on the concepts "teacher", "composer/composing", and "performer/performing." Ann began by describing a teacher as a guide. A teacher is to guide students to an awareness of life around them, providing an atmosphere of sharing our thoughts, our feelings and our discoveries. A teacher encourages exposure to a variety of styles, allows for an openness of opinions, and provides opportunities for individual involvement and discovery. There is a need for a teacher to be resourceful and innovative in order to provide an atmosphere which motivates interest and stimulates the involvement of the student and creates performance.

In reflecting upon the concept of "composer/composing," Ann first thought of the great masters and that compositions only belong to them. She sees it as an ultimate goal, to be in touch totally and to take one's cumulative knowledge in music (in theory and style) and compose. Ann feels that she does not quite measure up, possibly because she has set an expectation of perfection for herself. Only recently has she acquired the feeling of having an adequate ability as a composer as she works with children to develop

their notational skills. In this light, compositions can be thought of as one line songs, a three note song, or in using an alternative score. At this point in the interview, Ann expressed that she could see how all this ties together for her. She wants children to have the involvement to feel capable of composing even the slightest and say, "This is good."

When considering the concept of "performer/performing," Ann compared it to a mirror reflecting the work of others, a window to see into the self and others, and as a department store displaying a variety of styles. There is a development of skills and techniques required, synchronizing a beginning and ending together, acquiring finesse and a repertoire, with the performance being a culmination or bringing together of all that one has learned. Performing is a celebration, a joyous time together, and a special event for those involved. There is a sharing and expressing of the self with others through song. Ann considers performing to be giving a gift to others. There is also a sense of thanksgiving within the performer for the talent received and the achievement attained. Educationally Ann feels a need to promote an awareness of new and different or same and traditional in performance. Accompanying performing is exhaustion, requiring the performer to have a time of recharging and renewing.

The following section is an edited version of Ann's memories and thoughts about her musical experiences, teaching philosophies and practices, composing, and performing. It is written as Ann speaking in the first person. During the interview, Ann speaks earnestly on certain issues and her posture is usually one of

leaning a little towards the researcher. While remembering certain experiences or speaking of current issues, Ann laughs often, seeming to enjoy the memories and topics brought up in the interview.

#### Musical Beginnings

My earliest musical memories were shared with me by my uncle. I was four or five years old. We had an old record player, a victrola. I would slam the records onto the turntable and the holes in the record got at least a quarter of an inch larger. I would sing and dance to "Bell Bottom Trousers." I enjoyed music. I had a second grade teacher, Mrs. Dunn, who took out plastic piano keyboards and taught us piano theory on these keyboards. From that discovery, all through elementary I developed an interest in music. It was tangible to develop this interest in music that I already had. I was involved in scouting and we'd sing songs at camp. Those songs still provide a basis for me. It brings back memories to this day. We'd sing patriotic songs for the flag ceremony. The scout leader worked with a triple trio, so I had that experience, too.

In junior high school I started on the cornet and later transferred to the French Horn. I played that all the way through college. That was a real good instrument for me. In marching band I played tenor drum and I have John Philip Sousa memories. Exciting. I started taking piano lessons with Aunt Olga in upper elementary. In junior high I took from Mrs. Anderson. She introduced me to sonatinas, Mozart, Chopin, and Bach. I really did some work and I got exposed to all those super masters. I stopped piano lessons when I moved to Minot in the middle of my junior year in high school. I didn't pick it up again until my college years.

During my master's work I picked it up again and developed the finesse I treasure now. All through this I've played for church choirs, directed church choirs, folk choirs, and studied the pipe organ for my undergraduate major instrument. For my performance area for my master's work I chose the piano. It has remained my favorite.

When in junior high school and high school I was in chorus. After I moved to Minot, band and choir stayed very important to me. I had always been in church choir. In college I continued in choir and community choruses. Church choir has always been important to me. I've moved a lot and have been in a lot of church choirs. As I started teaching five years ago here, I sang with the community chorus and my priority now is church choir. I'm serving as accompanist now.

#### Influences of People

Before I was a junior in high school, music was just for fun. That year it was my thought to be a commercial artist. I sent in a matchbook cover. (laughs) They said I had talent and should go into this line of work and I was all excited about that. But I got frustrated doing the India Ink projects. (laughs) At that time my pastor was saying, you have a lot of talent in art and music. These talents could really be used in the teaching profession. (laughs) Well, I thought, sure enough. I enrolled a year and a half later in Minot State College in the area of education. Little did I realize that I could specialize in music education. I hadn't even given it a thought. After six or seven years of classroom teaching, I considered going in as a music educator. I always thought it was

just for fun. A lot of talent just came naturally. Fun. When I transferred to a church college my junior year, I was well on my way to music education. I wondered if biology or another science was my field. I didn't get serious about music education until my senior year. So I would say that it evolved gradually, with a push from my pastor.

### University Studies

I did my undergraduate work in four years and a summer because when I transferred I lost some credits. I got a Bachelor of Science degree in education with a major in music. I was certified for a K-8 classroom and/or music. I had a minor in English Literature! I am not a reader. I thought I was going to end up with a minor in biology! I had more English credits. I still to this day do not understand. It was not planned. (laughs) Biology was planned. I had enough for almost two minors.

I have some bad memories in the field of history. I got a "D" in history. I didn't give that professor a chance as I look back. That he would dare to give me a "D." Not that I deserved it or anything. (laughs) It was difficult for me because time was difficult for me. Music history was difficult. I got a "C-." My perception of time is very weak.

My positive memories go with my music instructors. I was in love with the man who taught the music education courses. He was gentle and had finesse. Could he play keyboard! I would sketch him in class. I was infatuated not only with him, but also with his performance skills. When I transferred there were three music professors that were positive. One inspired to me write music. He

had a way with composition geared to the lay person. I did descants on chorales, exciting piano arrangements, and wrote an invention. I felt special, that I created something from inside of me. The second was a wiry man that never smiled. Those of us that played in the band had the goal to make him smile at least once in every rehearsal to break the ice because he was so stern all of the time. He was an excellent musician and had a good band. He had a pipe organ in his home and a collection of renaissance recorders. He challenged my musicianship on the French Horn and he utilized my harpsichord and pipe organ skills. A third professor had me accompany the choir and voice students.

In college music was my life. I ate, drank, and slept it. I was in small woodwind groups, ensembles, and practicing takes half of your waking time. I had several instruments to practice at one time.

I always wanted to take courses in chemistry and physics. It surprises me as I say it. I never thought I was smart enough to do it. I had music things to fit into my schedule as far back as high school. I was afraid of it at the time. Looking back, I wish I had taken them.

My master's program is more current because I've had it for only four years. My memories are mixed because of the personal stress in my marriage. My study allowed me to keep in touch with myself as an individual. I was discovering a lot about myself I never knew. Changes were coming back to my personal life. It was changing my role and my perception of my role as a wife, but not so much as a mother. I was more intelligent than I thought I was and

in touch with my talents once more even though some were put by the wayside. I was changing my role in the sense that my free time was for practice time, writing or typing papers, reading, and doing projects. I was discovering a whole new world, even about the teaching profession I had been in for so long. Brand new doors were opening up. Where had I been all this time? I started thinking of some other possibilities. I loved teaching at the college level as a GTA working with college students. It stimulated me to think that there were other areas to teach in besides the elementary school and in workshops. I extended my thinking, it was stimulating to me, and opened an awareness of achievement I never realized before. How stagnant I had gotten in my marriage relationship. It was a difficult change. Consequently I was divorced the week I graduated with my master's. Some make it, some don't. (laughs)

I can't say enough about Ruth, my mentor...mentress? She was a whole person. She stood by me and encouraged me. When I was almost done with my paper I wanted to throw it away. She told me to take a day off. I did. It was amazing. She helped me organize myself. She handed me tools I had never considered using. She inspired me to create and pull together all the resources I had ever worked with and opened up new resources. I came up with a paper that is extremely practical. To this day I use it and share it with my student teachers. I think it's fantastic! (laughs) It's the basis of my curriculum, it being more than a textbook. It's done on just the concept of melody and is transferable, providing a real basis. Carl Waters, another music professor, was a real philosophical inspiration. He was so thorough and had such depth. Awesome. His

sense of humor (laughs) was a real boost. He was interested in you as a student. Another graduate student was going through similar personal things. We'd bounce philosophical things off of each other in discussions. It was very stimulating to get another viewpoint and challenge. Exciting. I feel good about it, encouraged, and it stimulated me.

### Teaching Experiences

I chose the elementary level because I just had such a love for little children. I enjoy working with them. I had wonderful memories of my own elementary years. My wealth of songs and repertoire go back to my own elementary years. I was afraid of secondary kids because I didn't understand them, then. I love all age levels once I was exposed to them and understand what makes them tick.

I have taught in a number of schools. The first year I taught a third and fourth grade combination self-contained class of 25 students in a Lutheran school in Denver. During the next two years I taught a kindergarten, first, and second grade combination self-contained class in a Lutheran school in Utica, Nebraska. The kindergarten kids came in March, April, and May. Oh, my lands! They wanted me to be a principal the second year. I told them that I couldn't be principal and my husband under me! They got my husband an emergency certificate so he could be principal. Just think of the administrative credentials I could have had. (laughs) From there I taught a third grade self-contained classroom with 28 children for one year at the training school at Concordia College in Nebraska. It was the first time I had student teachers. The school

had great textbooks, good facilities, AV equipment, art supplies, and outside speakers. I spent two years at Long Island teaching first and second grade. We came back to North Dakota for one year and I taught first grade and had a fifth and sixth grade chorus. I took five years off to adopt my three children and then substitute taught in Grand Forks for three years. We spent one year in Minot and that was my first experience as a self-contained music educator, teaching K-6 music in two schools. The following two years I substitute taught in Climax, Minnesota and started my master's work. For the last five years I have taught K-6 music in Grand Forks.

#### Description of Teaching Style

I would describe my teaching as high energy level. It's important to me for it to be a pleasant, stimulating, and involving experience. Involvement is a big word in my teaching. Teaching is an involvement of the children responding instrumentally, singing, moving, and listening. The most important thing for children to gain is a feeling of independence in the skills as a musician. They can do, live, and use music. I see my role as a teacher as a guide. I am to guide them with experiences that allow them to feel good about themselves as a musician. They can have confidence, achieve, and enjoy. Music is a part of their life.

There are different roles that a specialist has to play. One answers questions about student behavior to other specialists, teachers and parents and the insight into a child's development. As a music specialist I get a totally different perspective because he is expressing his real self in music. It's a contrast to classroom behavior. I have valuable insights into student development that

really,... the potential has not been tapped in how my insights can add value to this child's learning. My role is as a cookie person [rewarder]. Everyone needs one, someone who is encouraging and accepting. Music allows that. That is why they will come to the music room and work with an instrument and feel good about coming. It's a chance to express themselves. There is my role as a counselor. They express themselves. They're singing silly or patriotic songs. They'll tell me things they wouldn't breathe to another person about how they're feeling and about relationships. They come to the specialists. We know them on an intimate level. If they're going to use us only as release time... We have a variety of roles in the integrated arts and other subject area concepts. I instigated the Foster Grandparent program. They are a one person audience that can relate to the children. I find my position to be a lonely one. There is no other music teacher in the school, as a part of the faculty. They do not totally understand what you do. It's almost an administrative position. We should have two degrees.

#### Present School Experiences

The response of the kids is the most exciting thing for me as a teacher. It's exciting to see a kid read his first story. He shows with his expression that excitement. It's the same with reading music and singing those notes. That is the most exciting thing to me.

I see some really positive things happen in my classroom. I have started giving myself compliments in front of the children. I got this from a workshop at teacher's convention. It gives the kids permission to compliment themselves and feel good about themselves.

In chorus I told them that all eyes are on your talented director. (laughs) One sixth grader came up to me with the biggest smile and said "See how talented I am?" It was wonderful. It was instant reinforcement for me and what I was trying to do.

There are frustrations with the job, too. Do you want to hear all seven at once? (laughs) The schedule for music teachers does not allow for time between classes. You have to change from kindergarten to sixth grade mentally, with materials, energy level, and with your approach. It's a change of gears that has to happen in a minute. The pressure is excruciating at times. This is not just between classes, but all year long. There's a constant drain of energy. I feel I need more time to rejuvenate.

I travel between two schools and see 500 children. Getting to know the new kids and the new school this year has come easily for me. I learn names easily and I understand people very easily. In my association with children, it doesn't take me long to get to know them. The new ones are as special to me as the old ones. That's been easy. The frustration is not having enough time with them. Thirty minute, just whizzes by. I see them only twice a week and I feel estranged between times. I know the school there because I substitute taught there for about three years, seven or eight years ago. It's small and the same teachers are there, so it's like knowing a family. It's been beneficial. I have only 20 minutes for travel and 25 minutes for lunch. I am very rushed to put materials away and it is difficult at times. There are times that I don't get to finish my lunch. Consequently I feel rushed at the class after lunch. There's not enough time to change gears. It's not even

winter yet! (laughs)

Other frustrations are directed at the administration right now. The music teachers met with them about our concern over the cutback on the time with the children. It went from 75 minutes to 60 minutes a week this year. We're concerned about what that means in the future for music in the schools. They finally met with us to visit about the issues. It was helpful to get opinions from both sides. But a lot of changes were made without consulting us and without preparing us for switches in positions, schools, and philosophy. I was very frustrated with that. It's taken me a while to accept the changes. With this change of having two schools, I have frustrations that stem from programs. I have three programs in three weeks and it's difficult to keep each separate. (laughs) I do not feel prepared because it's so confusing and impossible to be fresh.

I have another frustration with the administration. We spent so much time on a curriculum study to pull together concept statements. The administration said that they don't totally understand what we're getting at. They can't because they're not musicians!

There are frustrations that are not necessarily related to the changes that took place this year. Classroom teachers see music only as a release time. I used to take groups of children to the shopping malls to perform. To take them to the mall disrupts their release time and I have to account for that. I don't take groups to the mall because teachers can't get their release time. They won't miss one day. They see us as babysitters. That frustrates me.

Some teachers are like that. I've had to be flexible and understanding with them.

I have found some behavior problems a frustration, especially upper elementary, adolescent behavior, and it's a challenge. I've taken workshops and have become more aware of the characteristics of children of alcoholic families and it has helped me so much. I'm more aware of child abuse, chemical dependency from workshops and the background has lessened the frustration. In my first years of teaching I understood little about behavior problems. It's not in college courses and how to handle it. I feel it needs to be addressed in teacher preparation for both the children and the teacher. It's a factor to deal with. I still get bogged with five in one class. Somedays I tear my hair out. For the most part, my job in the classroom is not a frustration. Outside influences are frustrations.

I have experienced some burnout symptoms. I am aware of them. I'm applying for a three year leave of absence for a career exploration. I have an application in to law school. I'd like to explore other possibilities: This gives me a chance to renew myself and my energies. I experience satisfaction in trying to explore, to try something new. My energies for teaching for two schools needs to be renewed.

#### Composing in the Classroom

Composing does take place in my classroom and the children are the ones doing it. I am directing and guiding this composition, often in a large group activity, which stimulates small group and individual compositions. We compose about nine or ten times a year

as a culmination of any unit I work on. The children will work with percussive instruments in small groups before school, sometimes doing things we've done in class. They will take an ABA form for organization. They use homemade instruments, pots and pans, for an ostinato! Notational compositions start as early as first grade. We'll use one line and play it on bells or use the risers for three step movement. We do rhythmic composition. Kids have written five pages of rhythmic notation. (laughs) Then they will try to play it for you. (laughs) I will find it in my mailbox! Kids get excited about notation. They will compose on recorders, things like "Mary Had A Little Lamb" as a round or "Hot Cross Buns" in a trio. Two part harmony happens in the upper grades. We use percussive ostinatos for accompaniment. We work out melody ideas on chromatic bells. It's exciting to see that. They will improvise on the casio. Before and after school they will come in and play patterns on the Orff instruments. They use patterns from class and make some up on their own. We use the black keys of the piano which is no fail.

#### My Composing

I arrange things for chorus programs. I'll do descants, partner songs, arrangements for Orff instrument accompaniments, and ostinatos. Mostly I do choral compositions which are prepared melodies that I change. I get the urge to express myself verbally. I'll write articles rather than through music. I compose through keyboard accompaniment while the children are singing. I do accompaniments with the primary grades. I want the arrangements to be interesting with things like glissandos. They love it. I'll do a bumble bee trill in the left hand during a song about a bumble

bee. I embellish their singing. So my composing is not just for the chorus. I write out the things for the chorus, while the classroom things are more spontaneous.

The things I do for chorus are mostly at Christmas time. I'll take traditional carols and create a medley with a bridge in the accompaniment. Soloists and ensembles do this kind of special thing. I want to make the program a little more interesting so it's not the same each year. I use ostinatos and descants. I find pieces and change them from three part to two part songs. I apply it to the needs of the chorus. I don't have time to write it out for publication. I change the piece to meet the needs of the kids. During the composing it is frustrating pulling it together. It's great when it's done!

A favorite is an arrangement I did for "Sing Now The First Noel" for bells and chorus. It's a three part piece and I used the bells for the two counter melodies. The bell players were wonderful. It was an exciting arrangement. I did a descant to "Sons and Daughter of the King." It's a joyous descant written for brass quintet. It was exciting to play around with these things. Plus the organ played a counter melody with the descant. That's exciting to me. For the folk choir I would write flute descants, and guitar and chorus parts.

The children never used to know that the arrangements were mine. On programs I'd put: Arranged by Burns. Then I got some comments from parents. I did not sell it to parents or children. I was more for doing things offstage and not confident then. The parents gave me the encouragement and confidence by their

compliments. Recently I've had the confidence to let them know. Now they know I do it, at least since October! (laughs)

I started composing to meet the needs of my group. The music was difficult for them. Back in college I only composed for credit. There was nothing before that. I would not describe myself as a composer because it is not my primary role. I have composed, yes. For it to become a primary role I'd need more exposure to a variety of styles. I could then develop my own style of music. Like my painting. I look at a picture and paint it. The one of the sunset is my composition. I took it from God's picture and what was in my mind. I want to take something original from my mind and put it to paper and then share it with the public. That would be my role as a composer. I would like to be a composer because it would give me a feeling of accomplishment and achievement. The ultimate is to reach the goal of being a master at something.

### Performing

My performance areas include piano, organ, French Horn, voice, and recorder. Does public speaking count? Does it have to be musical? There's classroom performance and as a teacher I perform. My performance skills have developed since childhood. I used to perform and be so nervous that it would interfere to the point where I could not perform. That happened until college. My organ instructor shared something with me. You're not performing for yourself, but you're worshipping as you play. It's an expression of thanks for the talent and sharing with others. Since then, it's been beyond self-consciousness. Since beginning to teach, my technical skills are more acute from playing all day.

In teaching performance skills, I had to develop a philosophy about it. It's made me more keenly aware of what I'm doing and conveying to others. I've learned about sound systems, staging, movement, and interrelated arts that enhance performance. After taking a park board oil painting class, I am more aware of color and the harmony of sound. From aerobics I am more aware of movement and coordinating movement. There is a relationship between the flow of the brush and the flow of things in the classroom.

I feel that my greatest strength as a performer is the sense of the overall feeling and attitude I am able to have. It all works together. Every minute of detail works to the whole. Wherever. That awareness is a guide, of pulling it together. It must be clearly in my mind to carry out the performance. If I don't feel a total readiness and a total whole, I do not feel prepared for the program. Consequently I will go through a cycle before each program performance, a mental preparation. I have a tremendous mental organizationa<sup>l</sup> ability. I can practice mentally. I hear it in my mind. I encourage children to do it in their minds, too. I will laugh five to ten minutes before the performance. I'll joke about it and be silly. Then I'm calm. I will calm and comfort the performers and build myself up also. I put them and myself at ease.

I want to talk more about the cycle I go through before a performance. I just about have it timed. A week and a half before, I am totally frustrated and wonder if it will ever come together. It's out of control. I can't control the children's response. I let them know that it's their program. It's up to them. That's the perfectionist part of me. Three or four days before I can see it

coming together. It's an acceptance stage. I tell them they are ready if I feel they are. I help to motivate and encourage them. I find opportunities where they are succeeding. The day of the performance I'm really nervous on my own. I shake it out of my hands, my teeth chatter, and I say it out loud. At the time of the performance I have a tremendous calm. I see the children. I have a feeling of unconditional love from the kids and parents. It's a joyous celebration. We've done our best in getting ready. We do our best. In front of an audience I am calm and enjoy the performance and the children's response. I am in two places, playing and as an audience. Afterwards I am exhausted. It takes me two days to recover. I don't harbor on the negative. I want them to have a sense of accomplishment. It's the same cycle when I accompany the choir in church. If it's a difficult piece, I will spot check the piece. By the time I get to the church I am feeling fine. I view it as a worship experience. Today I did not get all the notes. The page turns were tough. But it went well. I enjoy the whole thing: the conductor and the choir sound. It was absolutely beautiful.

#### Performing in the Classroom

I believe every song that we sing, every instrument played, and every element of the lessons is a performance. I encourage their response. I will ask them about what we can do to make our performance better. Organized sound from the beginning to the end is a performance. We are the audience. The teacher is part of the audience or the chorus. All of us belong to the performance every minute of the lesson, both the student and the teacher.

There are times when my teaching role is that of an entertainer. I stimulate and motivate. I show them dance steps, moonwalk, and joke. I get their attention. I make an immediate bridge to the lesson from where we are. I perform for them to initiate their performance. I'll demonstrate and sing something two different ways. I'll ask them to pick the best and ask them to try to make it sound better for us. I will pun a lot for the benefit of getting into a lesson. I'm a master at puns. I'm clicking ahead all the time to get into the lesson. Ruth said to evaluate right on the spot. I have to have conceptual and behavioral objectives in mind. It helped me so much in my teaching. It's the purpose of the lesson. Performance is an evaluation that I would add to my reflection.

I am living my performance dreams because I would want to be an accompanist for someone, a choir, or a church accompanist. I am doing that now. That's how much I enjoy it. My teaching is definitely encouraging as far as this dream is concerned. I do it every day. I'm happy when they are singing and playing.

## CHAPTER VII

### DISCUSSION

The last chapter centers on a discussion of the three teachers studied. This discussion includes: experiences common to all three teachers; prominent themes unique to each in the areas of teaching, composing, and performing; summary descriptions; recommendations for and by music educators; and suggestions for future research.

### COMMONALITIES

The observations and interviews revealed a number of experiences common to Jeri, Sarah, and Ann. One or two of the teachers may have spoken in more detail about a particular topic, but the following characteristics were in some way common to all three.

The first commonality was that Jeri, Sarah, and Ann grew up with music in the home. Jeri's father played in an old-time polka band and her mother played piano. Sarah's mother was a piano teacher and Ann vividly remembers singing and dancing to records in her home.

A second commonality was that before reaching adulthood, all three encountered someone that challenged, encouraged, or inspired them musically in some way. Jeri had high school and college teachers that were challenging and encouraging, while Sarah used the word "inspirational" to describe various teachers and conductors that deeply influenced her musicality. Before Ann's pastor pointed out how her art and music talents could be used in the teaching

profession, Ann considered music as something that was just for fun.

Thirdly, all of the teachers have had experience in teaching in regular elementary classrooms. This is Jeri's first year as a full-time music teacher, previously teaching music, science, and math. Sarah and Ann began as classroom teachers and more recently have had the experience of teaching elementary music exclusively.

A fourth commonality identified was that they all feel frustration in their work as music teachers. The focus of this frustration centers in not having control over all aspects of their teaching. A compilation of the limitations felt by the three teachers include the insufficient number of minutes they can see the children each week, lack of breathing time between classes (one class comes in the door as the other is leaving), number of students they see each day, scheduling and design of programs, lack of personal reflection and thinking time, and lack of support and understanding from faculty and administration for the music curriculum. Not every limitation listed is experienced to the same degree by each teacher, since every situation is a little different. There is however a common concern about how they can teach everything they believe is important in a quality music education program in the limited amount of time available to them.

A fifth commonality was that performance in the classroom, by the music teacher, is an everyday expectation of the profession and Jeri, Sarah, and Ann were observed using their voice and piano skills regularly in the classroom. Jeri used the omnichord occasionally and talked about the various ways she uses her clarinet skills in her teaching. Sarah also used the guitar with the

kindergarten class observed. They all experience tension in the preparation for a program performance and Jeri and Ann also described their nervous feelings before personal performances.

A final commonality identified the teachers as arrangers more often than composers. Although all of them have done some composing of original material at some time, they are presently involved in arranging already existing melodies to be used with their choruses and in the classroom. Each teacher knows the capabilities of her students and can arrange materials to meet the needs of children and curriculum. Ann mentioned that she does most of her arranging for her Christmas program in order to add interest from year to year. Jeri arranges chorus pieces to include instrumental accompaniments, not only to add interest, but to demonstrate the connection between the choral and instrumental programs in the schools. Sarah mentioned that she began arranging things for children because of the lack of appropriate, quality materials available years ago and continues the practice today.

#### DIVERSITIES

The following section will discuss the differences noted between each of the teachers in the observations and interviews and is divided into three parts: teaching, composing, and performing. Diversity is defined here as a strong focus or theme in one individual and does not mean that the other teachers are totally void of that characteristic or concern. Each teacher has her own unique view of the world and blend of characteristics and priorities.

Jeri as Teacher

Jeri's classes are fast paced and a feeling of high energy is always present when observing and talking to her. Jeri's "energetic spirit" is apparent as she teaches; she is involved with the students from the moment they walk in the door. She works hard at making music an enjoyable experience for the children and often uses a kidding approach to challenge the students in the task at hand. When a student could not remember the name for the maracas, Jeri kiddingly asked who their music teacher was last year. She will occasionally tell a musical joke at the beginning of a class period, using humor to motivate the students in the learning of musical concepts.

Her focus is definitely on doing things for the benefit of the children, wanting them to experience the very best she can offer. Because of wanting to provide the best she can, Jeri is very critical of herself, especially in the areas of her teaching and her performing. She wants them to enjoy music, be intelligent consumers of music outside of the classroom, and is constantly concerned that she is providing the best musical training for the needs and desires of the students.

She also wants her students to realize that everyone makes mistakes--herself just as much, if not more, than anyone else--and it's a natural part of music and life. Jeri tells the story about her clarinet squeaking during a concert to let the students know that situations like that happen to everyone. Being a normal mistake maker, Jeri attempts to remove the potential of being put on a pedestal by her students. She reminds them that she makes just as

many mistakes, if not more, than they do.

Jeri respects her students and their ability to teach her many things, maintaining that a teacher must also be a learner. She appreciates their help and ideas in musical activities and various classroom situations. When she forgot that the fifth grade class had not heard the story of Peer Gynt, Jeri was happy the students helped her out by determining what had been missed.

Jeri feels successful in her teaching and gave numerous examples of specific situations with her students that reinforced that feeling. A first grader would give her the highest rating if teachers were given grades on a report card and a fourth grade girl chose Jeri as the person she wanted to talk to concerning a separation in the family.

#### Sarah as Teacher

Sarah realizes that she focuses more on the musical processes that children experience than the final musical product, because she rarely gets a really "musical" performance from the children. This is an example of the "frustrated perfectionist" in Sarah. She will tell the children that a performance has really improved, being honest in her comments, but rarely feeling that what they do is exceptionally good.

She tries many different things in her classes, using ideas from the children, and experimenting to determine if the ideas are workable and worthwhile. Sarah may disregard the plans she made for a particular class period if the children are excited about something else, doing something musical with their immediate interests.

Sarah is disappointed in what she feels is her inability to muster an esprit de corps in the groups of children she teaches and conducts. She feels that other music teachers have accomplished this group loyalty and she would like to have it, also. This perception of Sarah's is another example of the "frustrated perfectionist," yet when Sarah mentioned going to a reunion at the elementary school where she teaches, many students fondly remembered the musical programs she directed. She must have had a positive effect on the students for them to have had such strong remembrances of musical experiences in comparison to other school memories.

Sarah is the only teacher that repeatedly mentioned that she felt uncomfortable with the primary children in the school. She feels that she has to "act" when she teaches them and is never able to be herself the way she is with upper elementary children. Her actions, voice, and facial expressions were more animated with the kindergarten children than with the fifth and sixth grade students observed. It did not appear to be an "act" to the observer, but Sarah definitely conveyed in the interview that she was uncomfortable with young children.

In reflecting on the teachers that were most influential to her development, Sarah repeatedly used the term "inspirational." Other instructors were possibly kind or helpful, but the best ones were always "inspirational." Even though Sarah did not say outright that she wanted to be "inspirational," it seemed that was a characteristic a truly great teacher should have.

#### Ann as Teacher

Ann is a "seeker of the wonders of life" and experiences

frustration when something keeps her from having the time and energy to explore and experience the world. Ann is the only teacher that must travel between two schools this year. She finds the traveling and hectic schedule involved to be an extreme energy drain and spoke earnestly about needing time for renewal both between schools and between classes and programs. The forty-five minutes allowed for travel and lunch between schools and having one class of children coming in for music as another class is leaving, without any break in between, are examples of causes of the energy drain for Ann.

Ann feels there is a lack of understanding of music specialists and spoke strongly of the need for being understood as a musician and specialist in the schools by both the faculties in the two schools and the administration of the entire school district. Being the only music specialist in both buildings means that Ann has no immediate support group of teachers with the same experiences who would understand her feelings. Ann experienced frustration when the music teachers in the city spent time working on a music curriculum for the district that was not really understood by the administration. Ann feels that other musicians understand, but communication is needed between music teachers and others within the district to bridge some of the gaps.

In her classroom, Ann claims to be a master at puns, using them to both motivate and provide transitions between parts of the lessons. When a new student was introduced, Ann talked about where he was from and all the places she had lived in this land and immediately went into her planned song of "This Land is Your Land."

She emphasizes that "involving" is a key concept in her work

with children. Not only are the students involved in singing, moving, playing, reading, creating, and listening in her classroom, but also in analyzing each performance they participate in within each 30 minute class period. Ann is constantly asking the children to make suggestions to improve their performances.

#### Jeri as Composer

Jeri tries to convey to her students that anyone can compose at some level. The compositions that Jeri creates and the ones she and her students create provide an example for the children that composers are not all dead and that music is still being composed today. She went into great detail about the sequence of instruction she uses with children to initiate and later develop their composition skills.

Jeri uses the term "extraterrestrial" in reference to the way that composers let the spirit within them emerge and express their thoughts and feelings in a nonverbal, musical way. The researcher sensed that Jeri felt that someone could be taught the technical skills of composing but that the musical ideas have to come from within the individual before a composition of worth can emerge.

Having had more performing experience with woodwind instruments, Jeri feels most comfortable composing original material for woodwind ensembles. One of her favorite compositions was an arrangement of a Beethoven piano sonata for woodwind quintet.

Jeri emphasizes that although she has composed original music and will arrange music for the children, she still considers herself to be primarily an improviser, especially when playing her clarinet. When preparing for symphony concerts, Jeri will practice her parts,

improvising on passages that are too difficult technically for her to play exactly as written until she is satisfied with the proficiency she can attain.

#### Sarah as Composer

Sarah seriously considered being a composer while in high school and as she majored in music theory in college. At one time she felt she could write music for films, but now considers that to have been a lofty ambition. Sarah feels that her best compositions were ones created many years ago because they were larger, more complex works.

Presently she composes and arranges pieces to be used with her students, taking ideas as they come along and allowing pieces to be created from the interests of the children. Sarah mentioned compositions that emerged one day as the students came into the class excited about the anthropological things they were studying in their regular classroom. She began writing down the specific things the students were chattering about and involved them in putting it to music. Sarah seems to approach composition with children as something that is a natural part of music, occurring at times other than those planned into a particular lesson because ideas for compositions surround us if we take the time and effort to look.

Modesty appears to be at work when Sarah says that none of her compositions are unusual; she does not have any personal favorites nor does she remember any of them receiving "raves." It is interesting to note that Sarah was recommended for the study by other music educators because of her fine reputation for being a composer and the creative music programs she has written.

Ann as Composer

Ann first associates composing with the masters, the great pieces they wrote, and is in awe of their talents. Although Ann does compose and arrange pieces to be used with children, she prefers to express herself verbally and will write articles instead of musical compositions. She also uses painting as a means of expression and feels that her visual art experiences enrich her musical awareness.

Due to a lack of confidence in her composition skills, Ann was afraid to tell her students that some of the pieces being rehearsed for programs were her arrangements. She is beginning to overcome this fear because parents and other adults were complimentary and encouraged her to write and use more of her pieces.

Jeri as Performer

Jeri is a clarinetist and continues to perform in the city's symphony orchestra and quintet. She is very critical of her own performances and critiques each performance based upon the goals she set for herself prior to the concert. Jeri becomes cold prior to a performance and during her college years remembers walking around backstage with a coat and mittens on in order to keep warm before going on stage.

Sarah as Performer

Sarah feels that her performance skills in piano peaked while in college and have since regressed because she has not spent the practice time necessary to keep them at their previous level. In Sarah's opinion, a performer must be dedicated and work very hard at perfecting his/her skills. She feels she does not have the

necessary dedication to really work at it and instead considers herself a "back" musician. Sarah practices only what is necessary for use in her classroom and does not seek outside performance opportunities.

#### Ann as Performer

Ann stressed that she felt music was just for fun as she was taking lessons and participating in performing groups in school. Piano is her favorite performing instrument and she enjoys being accompanist so much that she included it as being a performing dream in the interview. Performing for Ann is a worship experience and a joyous celebration of the talents she has been given. Ann described a cycle of nervousness and calm that she experiences before every formal performance, one that she knows so well as to have it timed. In the classroom, she considers every musical experience to be a performance and encourages the children to make comments after each performance.

#### SUMMARY DESCRIPTIONS

Jeri is an "energetic spirit" and tries to channel that energy into her classroom. An underlying emphasis during the interview centered on doing things for the benefit and growth of her students. Her focus was on the children even though she was talking about herself and her teaching. Sarah portrays a "frustrated perfectionist" as a musician and teacher. Her image of a musician, whether in composing or performing, consists of someone with great talent and dedication, something she does not feel she possesses. As a teacher, Sarah tries to provide the best musical experiences for children that she possibly can and cares deeply about her

students as individuals and musicians. When events in the classroom don't go exactly as hoped, Sarah places the blame on herself, never feeling particularly satisfied with what she is able to do. Ann is a "seeker of the wonders of life", taking the time to enjoy herself, others, and the world around her. After beginning graduate school, a world that she didn't know existed started to open up for her. She also stresses the importance of knowing oneself, discovering the wonder inside each person.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Recommendations for Teacher Education

From this researcher's work with the three teachers it is recommended that the following suggestions be implemented into the teacher education program. The first recommendation is to give prospective elementary music educators a realistic picture of the characteristics necessary to be a successful music teacher and a realistic potential work schedule. The usual schedule such teachers work with requires a tremendous amount of energy. Music educators are also trained as performers and, from the observations made, it became apparent that the teachers were at a high performance energy level for each 30 minute class period. There were no restful moments during any of the 30 minute classes observed. Combining this consistent energy level with one group of children walking in the door as another group leaves and the elementary music teacher has an emotionally, mentally, and physically draining situation.

An elementary music teacher is also expected to be proficient at working with all age groups. The music educator must be knowledgeable about the characteristics of all ages and the methods

appropriate for each grade level and must be able to shift from one grade level to another in a few seconds. For example, Sarah taught a fifth-sixth grade combination class right before a kindergarten class.

A music educator assumes a variety of roles other than teaching music to children. It is important to prepare pre-service teachers for the variety of roles a music teacher must assume and the varying attitudes elementary classroom teachers and administrators have towards the purpose and importance of music education. Jeri and Ann substantiated this when they gave examples of situations where students shared feelings with a music teacher that they probably wouldn't have shared with anyone else. Ann experienced frustration when, as a specialist, her role was misunderstood by some of the people in the school district. The time the class spends with the music teacher is often a preparation time for the regular classroom teacher and consequently music teachers sometimes feel they are perceived by the regular classroom teacher as a babysitter for the class. The variety of roles assigned to music educators need to be discussed with undergraduates. Descriptions of the many facets of being an elementary music teacher by practicing teachers, such as this study, would benefit the prospective teacher in preparing for the realities of the profession.

The second recommendation for teacher education is that prospective classroom teachers need to be educated with regard to the goals of music education and the variety of demands placed on the elementary music educator. If the classroom teacher can appreciate what the music teacher is doing, misunderstandings would

diminish. The music teacher and the classroom teacher could work together to discover ways in which to integrate music into regular classroom activities.

Thirdly, the undergraduate music education program could discuss strategies for having the children help the music teacher with the changes of materials necessary between each music class. These strategies could alleviate the pressure felt by music teachers to make all the material changes themselves. While certain assigned students were distributing the needed materials, the music teacher could be initiating a musical activity for the rest of the class. All three of the teachers in the study were very organized in having materials close at hand, and asked for very little assistance from the children. Careful thought will be needed if workable strategies are to be discovered due to the numbers of children handling the materials and the communication needed between the teacher and each new group of helpers to enter the room every 30 minutes.

The fourth recommendation for teacher education is to have the music education classes address the behavioral problems and situations the elementary music teacher may encounter when teaching children ranging from five to twelve years old. Some children feel that music is not an important school subject and may not be cooperative or enthusiastic. The prospective music teacher needs to have a background in behavioral problems and strategies to involve the skeptic student.

The final recommendation for teacher education is to include instruction in composing and arranging for children in both composition classes and music education methods courses. The three

teachers in the study arrange and compose music for use by their students in the classroom and in chorus and thus those college students indicating a desire to teach music in the elementary schools should be encouraged to arrange and compose pieces for children during music composition classes. This would allow them to experiment with writing for children under the guidance of an instructor, providing confidence in using their composition skills later to enhance the music available for children.

#### Recommendations for Music Education

Two recommendations for the field of music education arise from this study. The many frustrations experienced by the three music teachers suggest that the first recommendation deal with a reexamination of realistic expectations of elementary music educators. All three teachers commented about the limited amount of time they had each week with each class, being concerned about the quality of music education they would be able to give to children. The children in the district receive 60 minutes per week of music instruction from Jeri and Ann and 90 minutes per week from Sarah because she teaches during her preparation time to give the students more instructional time. The Music Educators National Conference recommends that kindergarteners through third graders receive not less than 100 minutes per week and fourth through sixth graders receive not less than 150 minutes per week of music instruction. (1974) The teachers in this study are trying to provide a quality education while having contact with the students only 40-90% of the instructional time recommended by the music profession. One suggestion would be for the regular classroom teacher to work with

the music teacher to increase the amount of music instruction the children receive. The classroom teacher could reinforce what is being taught in the music classroom and integrate music into the other subject areas taught in the elementary classroom.

A second recommendation is that the daily teaching schedule for elementary music educators needs to be reexamined. It was the norm for one group of children to be coming in the door of the music classroom as another group was leaving to return to their regular classroom. The only variation on this procedure occurred when the next group of children was late in coming to the music classroom. Late classes allowed the teacher to rearrange any material to be used by different classes and to mentally prepare for a different grade level and lesson. If a class was at the door waiting to come in as another class was leaving, the music teacher had to "change gears" as she was saying good-bye to one class and greeting the next. The teachers found this schedule to be exhausting, both mentally and physically, and felt it increased their chances for experiencing burnout. Every half hour class observed was designed to provide as many active musical moments for the children as possible, requiring a high energy level from both the teacher and the students. Scheduling the classes one after another does not allow the music teacher to mentally or physically breathe during the day, creating a tremendous energy drain. Unrealistic expectations regarding the demands on one's energy levels need to be given careful thought if music educators are to be expected to remain in the profession.

### Recommendations for Further Study

Additional studies could explore how often elementary music teachers have their students compose as part of planned, classroom activities. Related questions include examining the instructional sequence used to enable children to compose, the types of compositions created, and what is done with the compositions once they are completed. Studies could also be directed at compositions and arrangements created by elementary music teachers. Related questions include examining how many teachers compose and arrange for their classrooms and choruses, reasons for composing and arranging as a teacher, and confidence levels in their ability to compose and arrange. Data for such quantitative studies could be gathered at music education conferences, although individual surveys could be used.

In conclusion, it is recommended that other portraits of elementary music teachers be done. These portraits could further investigate the self-perceptions of teachers regarding their roles as teachers, composers, and performers and could examine how the three roles can be complimentary and/or contradictory to each other. Considerable time is spent on enhancing composition and performing skills in the undergraduate music program. The importance of these skills, how they are used by music educators after graduation, and the frequency of use could suggest modification or areas of refocus in the undergraduate program to better prepare future teachers. Observation and interviewing time could be extended but this researcher felt that sufficient time was spent in gathering the data for the three portraits. When another portrait is done, this

researcher would want to follow the methodology used in this study. After the observations were made and the interviews were conducted, it might be beneficial to observe the same classes again and interview the teachers further to gain an even more in-depth portrait.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Musical Background

Describe early musical experiences and memories that you have.

Was there someone or something that influenced you in choosing music as a profession?

Describe public school experiences, lessons you took, instruments you played, and groups that you participated in.

Describe your undergraduate background and the program of study.

Describe specific memories and experiences from your undergraduate courses, the professors you had, areas you considered to be strengths, courses that have unpleasant memories, favorite courses, and courses you wished you had taken but never did.

Teaching

Why did you choose elementary music teaching?

What satisfies, excites, or rewards you as a music teacher?

Are there any frustrations in teaching music?

Describe experiences in your classroom that were positive and you feel good about yourself as a teacher.

Describe any previous teaching positions that you have held.

How would you describe your teaching?

What are some of the most important things you want children to gain from your classes?

What do you feel is your role as a teacher?

Composing

Does composing take place in your music classroom?

Who is doing it?

How often?

Describe the types of composing that occur.

When does it occur?

Is there a particular process that is followed or does it vary?

Do you as a teacher compose?

Describe the pieces you've written.

Is the composition for a particular audience?

How often do you compose?

Why do you compose?

When do you compose?

How do you feel about the pieces you've composed? Are there any favorites? What is it about them that makes them successful and a favorite?

Is there a value in children seeing you as a composer? If so, what?

Why and how did you begin composing? Did your college preparation play any part? If so, how? Were there other influences?

Would you describe yourself as a composer? Why or why not?

If you don't compose, what reasons keep you from doing it?

What would need to happen before you'd begin composing?

Would you like to be a composer? Why or why not?

If you were to begin composing, what would you envision it to be like?

Performing

What are your performance areas?

How have your performance skills developed since childhood?

Do you perform outside the classroom? If so, describe. How important do you feel these outside experiences are?

How have you grown as a performer since becoming a full time music educator?

Do you still take any lessons?

Describe the performances that take place in your classroom.

This could include performances by both students and the teacher.

What do you consider to be your greatest strengths as a performer?

Are there connections that you see between being a teacher and a performer? If so, describe.

Are there performance things that you would still like to do or dream about doing?

Does teaching hinder or help to accomplish those dreams? Explain.

What do you feel or think about before, during, and after a performance experience? This could include your own performances and those with your students.

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