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Philosophy of Music Education

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Philosophy of Music Education

A philosophy of music education refers to the value of music, the value of teaching music, and how to practically utilize those values in the music classroom. Bennet Reimer, a renowned music education philosopher, wrote the following, regarding the value of studying the philosophy of music education: “To the degree we can present a convincing explanation of the nature of the art of music and the value of music in the lives of people, to that degree we can present a convincing picture of the nature of music education and its value for human life.”¹ In this thesis, I will explore the philosophies of Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, Carl Orff, Zoltán Kodály, Bennett Reimer, and David Elliott, and suggest practical applications of their philosophies in the orchestral classroom, especially in the context of ear training and improvisation. From these philosophies, I will develop my own personal philosophy of music education, most broadly defined by the claim that music is key to experiencing and understanding feelingful experiences. Feelingful experiences refer to the abstract and physical experiences of emotions; not, for example, the emotion of ‘love’ itself, but what we experience as love, both in our bodies and in our minds.

The Jacques-Dalcroze Method, often referred to as “Dalcroze Eurhythmics,” is an educational approach based on the philosophy and research of Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, a Swiss pedagogue born in 1865. Eurhythmics, solfège, and improvisation are the three main components of his pedagogical approach, which incorporate most prominently movement, kinesthesia, and high-order, imaginative thinking. Jacques-Dalcroze believed that music was an outlet for emotional and feelingful expression; he spent a large portion of his professional life inventing a multitude of ways in which music students can connect to and utilize music as introspective individuals. His research in physical movement was aimed towards “freeing his students of conflicts between mind and body, between feeling and expression.”² Many music students³ lack the emotional literacy necessary to intimately recognize their feelings, as well as the physical ability to express those feelings through music. To combat this, Jacques-Dalcroze utilized movement and kinesthetic awareness of the body to develop skills in analyzing, interpreting, and experiencing music in an emotionally and physically natural

¹ Reimer, Bennett. *A Philosophy of Music Education*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970, 1.

² Choksy, Lois, Robert Abramson, Avon Gillespie, David Woods, and Frank York. *Teaching Music in the Twenty-first Century*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001, 41.

³ A lack of emotional literacy is not specific to music students; rather, it is a difficulty relevant to their craft. One may argue low emotional literacy is a negative sociocultural pattern highly prominent in Western civilizations.

way, creating “harmony between the temperament and the will, between impulse and thought.”⁴ He believed that since people physically feel emotions by “various sensations produced by different levels of muscular contraction and relaxation,”⁵ the key to accurately and effectively expressing internal experience was conscious control of their kinesthetic sense. In utilizing their sense of kinesthesia, Jacques-Dalcroze argued that people “would be in a state of attention and concentration; they would be alerted to the slightest change in sound or rhythm; they could consciously develop new responses or vary old ones.”⁶ With this high-order, imaginative thinking, Jacques-Dalcroze believed that musicians could freely express their internal feelingful experiences primarily through movement, and secondarily on external musical instruments. Through movement, kinesthesia, and high-order thinking, the Jacques-Dalcroze Method provides music students the opportunity to interpret, and more importantly feel, their emotions.

Although Jacques-Dalcroze did not refer to it as such, audiation is an important aspect of his educational approach to music, as one of his main goals as an educator was to connect the internal and external aspects of music. This form of ear training is highly effective with both instrumentalists and vocalists, as it internalizes intervallic relationships in the context of sound rather than notation or instrument geography. As aforementioned, physical movement is an important part of his philosophy; Jacques-Dalcroze “developed techniques combining hearing and physical response, singing and physical response, and reading-writing and physical response, in an attempt to arouse vivid sensations of sound.”⁷ He believed that the above connections devised a means to inducing and developing inner hearing, which he defined as “the ability to summon musical sensations and impressions by thinking, reading, and writing music without the aid of an instrument.”⁸ According to this pedagogical approach, performing musically on an instrument cannot occur effectively without audiation, as there is an enormous emphasis on the connection between the physical and the mental aspects of performing. Because of this philosophical outline, ear training is a key aspect of the Jacques-Dalcroze Method. Practically, an orchestral Jacques-Dalcroze Method enthusiast may incorporate singing into all classrooms, including orchestra classrooms, as they would argue that a

⁴ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 41.

⁵ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 43.

⁶ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 47.

⁷ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 43.

⁸ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 43.

string player will not phrase effectively on an instrument if they cannot internally audiate effective musical phrasing. Additionally, Jacques-Dalcroze Method enthusiasts would very likely utilize solfège in their orchestra classroom, as solfège encourages adequate relative pitch, both internally and externally. Without proper ear training in the form of audiation, Jacques-Dalcroze would argue that musicians will not have the skills to effectively express their feelingful mental states.

Naturally, improvisation is another major pedagogical tool associated with the Jacques-Dalcroze Method. The namesake himself believed that through studying improvisation, “artistic impulses are released, and materials from the lesson are vitalized so that students can understand how life experiences may be converted into artistic impulses.”⁹ Students internalize information more effectively if it applies to their present lives; being able to express immediate artistic impulses will further engage student with the content by offering them an opportunity to enter into higher-order thought, namely application, which directly infuses personal experience into the content.¹⁰ According to the Jacques-Dalcroze Method, improvisation will only be effective if presented in an appropriate environment: “It is important to the beginning pedagogy that it is made clear to the students that they improvise only for themselves and not for the pleasure or approval of the teacher or any other audience. Anything that produces fear or ridicule of experimental improvisation is irrelevant and harmful both to the process and to creative discovery.”¹¹ A Jacques-Dalcroze enthusiast may argue that if improvisation becomes about pleasing others, particularly directors or mentors, the internally expressive aspect of it may become irrelevant. This would render the whole process misaligned with their philosophy, as the purpose of music according to this philosophy is most basically to express emotional and feelingful states. Improvisation reflecting Jacques-Dalcroze’s pedagogical philosophy may be practically used in an orchestral classroom in the form of group improvisation. A director might lead their ensemble in “Conduction,” a form of organized improvisation invented by Lawrence Morris, in which individuals “alter harmony, melody, rhythm, tempo, progression, articulation, phrasing, [and] form through the manipulation of pitch, dynamics (volume/intensity/density), timbre, duration, silence, and organization in real-time.”¹²

⁹ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 75.

¹⁰ Armstrong, Patricia. "Bloom's Taxonomy." Center for Teaching. Accessed December 02, 2016. <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>.

¹¹ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 75.

¹² Morris, Lawrence D. Butch. "Conduction." Conduction.US. <http://www.conduction.us/index.html>.

Soundpainting is a similar improvisational technique, developed by Walter Thompson.¹³ These forms of group improvisation align with Jacques-Dalcroze's philosophy because it offers a safe environment for students to improvise for themselves and the pleasure of those also participating, rather than for their director, as they are not expected to perform as a soloist. Improvisation allows students the opportunity to further understand musical concepts through self-expression of internal, feelingful experiences.

Carl Orff, a German composer born in 1895, is the namesake of the Orff Method (also known as *Schulwerk*), an educational approach to music first developed through his "vision of an ultimate wedding of music to dance for theatre."¹⁴ Orff was intimately involved in the composition of music for dancers in his earlier career, which jumpstarted his involvement in music education, when his colleague Dorothee Gunther began utilizing his music in her dance classrooms. According to the philosophy, Orff students develop "increased responsibility for their own learning, and they develop the capacity to formulate and express their own musical judgements and values." Orff students develop these skills by mastering both the physical and emotional aspects of musical experiences. This can be exemplified in the description of activities at the Guntherschule, a school in Munich that he developed with Dorothee Gunther: "All the dancers were expected to play all the instruments and all the instrumentalists were expected to dance."¹⁵ Gunther and Orff believed that, as a result of this interchange, sensitivity to the elements of music was heightened and response made more dynamic. This process, in which players moved and movers played, established the artistic alliance which became the essence of the educational philosophy in Music for Children when it was published in 1950: 'Out of movement, music; out of music, movement.'¹⁶ Although it is less explicitly stated in Orff philosophy than Dalcroze philosophy, one of the main outcomes of studying music in alignment with the Orff Method was a connection between the physical experiences of music and the internal, sound-based experiences of music. The Orff Method is a process, rather than a set of educational tools. The first stage of the process is the exploration of space, best described as the exploration of outer motivations of movement, such as walking, skipping, and

¹³ "Walter Thompson." Soundpainting Walter Thompson Comments. Accessed December 05, 2016. <http://www.soundpainting.com/walter-thompson/>.

¹⁴ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 103.

¹⁵ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 104.

¹⁶ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 105.

crawling, exploring the inner motivations of movement, such as breath, heart-beat, and pulse, and finally exploring the connection of these two motivations. This concept is notably similar to the Jacques-Dalcroze Method, as the process involves connecting the internal and the external: “Inner motivation thus becomes part of outward expression.”¹⁷ The second stage of the Orff process is the exploration of sound, firstly environmental sounds, then organized sounds, sounds of natural instruments¹⁸, vocal sounds, and finally instrumental sounds. After the exploration of sound comes the exploration of form, which manifests practically in creating patterns and diagrams that represent sounds. The fourth stage of the Orff process is the transition from imitation to creation; teachers who utilize the Orff Method may argue that it is the “main task of the teacher and educator gradually to make himself superfluous” as students learn to create their own music by their own agency and musical decisions.¹⁹ The fifth stage of the Orff process is transferring the individual into the ensemble; Orff Method enthusiasts would argue that “the individual is most important when he or she is part of the group,” as “music cannot be made where there is no community.”²⁰ The sixth and final stage of the Orff process is developing musical literacy. Students learn to connect notation to the sounds they have become familiar with over the duration of years. There is no systematic practice to teach musical literacy within Orff philosophy, but the philosophy does suggest musical literacy must come after the exploration of space, sound, and form. The Orff Method’s focus on movement offers students the ability to internalize music for reasons beyond enjoyment; his “ultimate goal” was to “make music live for children.”²¹

Orff’s philosophy does not outline any particular systematic way of training the ear. However, Carl Orff clearly valued ear training, since one of the main steps in his method is sound exploration—the process of becoming intimately familiar with sounds. Additionally, although the philosophy does not offer a single objectively appropriate way to train the ear, his compositions in *Musik für Kinder* does offer both simple and complex music from which individual teachers can choose from: “These [five volumes of *Musik für Kinder*] offer a rich source of music for performance as well as models for improvisation and composition. They do not present the material in sequential order, although in

¹⁷ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 107

¹⁸ In Orff philosophy, natural instruments refer to instruments that children may invent, such as gourd rattles, wooden sticks, or other naturally assessable tools to create sound.

¹⁹ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 108.

²⁰ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 109.

²¹ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 114.

each book there is a range from very simple to very complex music; voices may be made from any of the volumes for use at any level.”²² This flexibility offers teachers the opportunity to design their ear training lessons to fit the needs of their particular students. Thusly, ear training will practically look unique in each classroom depending on the teacher and students. Ear training is certainly flexible in the context of Orff philosophy, but it is present nonetheless.

Since imitation is a major part of the first three stages of the Orff Method process, improvisation is commonly utilized in Orff classrooms. The practical application of imitation and improvisation in an Orff classroom is described in his first published volumes of *Schulwerk*:

The first volumes of the Orff-Schulwerk to be published were not the Musik für Kinder, but rather a compilation of the educational works that Keetman had used in the training of professional dancers and instrumentalists. The rhythmic and melodic exercises in these volumes were intended to provide a basis for student improvisation. Although the music could be, and was, performed as written, its primary function was to provide a creative stimulus, a vehicle for individual musical expression.²³

Through imitating sounds in the first three stages of the Orff process (exploration of space, sound, and form), students are constantly improvising, creating sound based off of musical impulse and intuition rather than sound based off of musical notation. Improvisation aligning with Orff’s philosophy may be put to practical use in the orchestral classroom by individual improvisation in small sectional groups. Allowing students to improvise on their own while being surrounded by those who play the same instrument as them will allow them to explore space, sound, and form while also contributing to the musical education of those around them, offering their peers the opportunity to imitate their improvisations when it becomes their turn to be the solo improviser. Orff improvisation could also manifest in an orchestral classroom as conversational improvisation, wherein musicians have a sort of ‘conversation’ through improvisation, communicating back and forth with their instruments. Imitative improvisation necessitates groups of students rather than individuals, proving it effective in orchestral classrooms. However, it is important to remember the proclaimed function of improvisation in Orff philosophy: individual expression.

The Kodály Method is an educational approach to music developed by the Hungarian pedagogue Zoltán Kodály, born in 1882. Kodály’s philosophy of music education can be summed up

²² Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 113.

²³ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 105.

with six main points: 1) “All people capable of linguistic literacy are also capable of musical literacy,” 2) “Singing is the best foundation for musicianship,” 3) “Music education, to be most effective, must begin with the very young child,” 4) The folk songs of a child’s own linguistic heritage constitute a musical ‘mother tongue’ and should therefore be the vehicle for all early instruction,” 5) Only music of the highest artistic value, both folk and composed, should be used in teaching,” and 6) “Music should be at the heart of the curriculum, a core subject, used as a basis for education.”²⁴ The Kodály Method intends to develop the innately musical aspects of children²⁵ by offering them the musical literacy skills they need to participate in and enjoy their musical heritage. This philosophy is in contrast with the Jacques-Dalcroze philosophy, despite their similar practical tools in areas such as solfège; Kodály may argue that we must teach music for the purpose of musical enjoyment and skill-building in order to master the craft, whereas Jacques-Dalcroze would argue that we should teach music so children can develop deep understanding of their emotions, and give them outlets to feel those emotions. The purpose of music according to Kodály’s philosophy is less related to feelingful expression and psychology, and more to enjoyment: “The reason for music... is to provide the coming generations with fuller lives, to open them the limitless possibilities of participation in music as a means of filling some of the fifty hours a week of nonworking time the average adult now enjoys.”²⁶ Since the primary goal of the Kodály Method is to “produce universal musical literacy,”²⁷ music is seen as an extension of language, rather than as an extension of human feeling.

Kodály’s approach to ear training is highly systematic. The Kodály Method outlines organized ways to teach rhythm, melodic groupings, scales, form, harmony, and music theory, based on two criteria: complexity, and relevance in folk music from the student’s home country. These criteria imply that there are inherently simple and complex rhythms, melodic grouping, *et cetera*, and that familiar sounds will be easier to comprehend than unfamiliar sounds. Kodály Method enthusiasts would argue that in the same way that language is often taught sequentially,²⁸ music should also be taught sequentially. Without referring to it as such, Kodály also put a notable emphasis on audiation. Teachers who utilize the Kodály Method may put his beliefs into practical use in an

²⁴ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 82.

²⁵ It may not be true that all children are innately musical, and I might argue otherwise; however, this is an accepted premise vital to Kodály philosophy.

²⁶ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 83.

²⁷ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 101.

²⁸ First, children learn the alphabet, then vocabulary, then sentence structure, then paragraphs, *et cetera*.

orchestra classroom by teaching students a four phrase melody that all instruments can play. After teaching them the four phrase song, the teacher may request the students play the first, second, and fourth phrases aloud, and the simply hear third phrase in their heads. This may be assessed by noting if all students reenter for the fourth phrase in unison; if so, the students were all successfully audiating the third phrase. Kodály philosophy argues that “children who can do this correctly are developing the ability to think musical sound,” which is, in this philosophy, the definition of musical literacy.²⁹ Sequentially, Kodály students learn to identify patterns in the music through familiarizing themselves with familiar intervals and rhythms and by learning to audiate.

Although Kodály does not directly address improvisation philosophically, it may have a place in his classrooms. The main three tools of the Kodály Method are “tonic [solfège], hand signs, and rhythm duration syllables.”³⁰ All three of these tools can be directly utilized in improvisation. Students could improvise a sung melody with solfège syllables, or a tapped rhythm on syllables. Improvisation could also reinforce the study of harmony in Kodály philosophy, which he valued muchly. Students could improvise over a familiar harmonic progression, exploring for themselves which solfège syllables fit into that harmonic progression and which do not align. Regardless of the practical implication, Kodály philosophers may argue improvisation should come later rather than earlier in a music student’s career, as improvisation requires a basic understanding of harmony and a reasonably strong ability to audiate. Kodály’s philosophy states that “the teaching of harmony and theory begins of necessity only after children have had a large body of rote experience and have some proficiency in singing, reading, and writing simple rhythms and melodies.”³¹ Kodály students can certainly benefit from improvisation after they develop basic skills.

David Elliott is a Professor of Music Education at New York University, as well as a jazz trombonist and pianist. Elliott wrote the book *Music Matters*, in which he outlines his philosophy of music education and the practical application of such. He outlines from the very beginning of his writing two main premises of his philosophy: “The first is that the nature of music education depends on the nature of music. The second is that the significance of music education depends on the significance of music in human life.”³² In exploring the nature of music, he offers a critique on

²⁹ 25 Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 100.

³⁰ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 101.

³¹ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 96.

³² Elliott, David J. *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*. New York: Oxford University

the aesthetic view of music, claiming it does not offer enough extramusical justification for music education. In place of aesthetics, he offers a “praxial philosophy of music education.”³³ By utilizing this label, Elliot “intend[s] to highlight the importance it places on music as a particular form of action that is purposeful and situated and, therefore, revealing of one’s self and one’s relationship with others in a community.”³⁴ In contrast to aesthetics, his praxial philosophy suggests that music is valuable because it helps one reflect on their individuality and their relation to other individuals. He goes on to explain further: “The term praxial emphasizes that music ought to be understood in relation to the meanings and values evidenced in actual music making and music listening in specific cultural contexts.”³⁵ By taking a sociocultural view of participating in music, he outlines a philosophy in which music education may be valuable in different ways, depending on those who are being educated, since the value of music education, according to his philosophy, is dependent on music’s role in the student’s life within the context of the communities they participate in. Overall, his philosophy takes a contrasting view to Zoltán Kodály’s, as he believes there are many significant extramusical purposes for studying and teaching music. These purposes are related to understanding the self, as well as the role of the self in relation to others.

Elliot’s philosophy of music education is rather fluid. It offers a solid philosophy that can apply to many different classrooms, with many different communities. His thoughts on ear training are similar. Elliott writes, “When a listener’s level of musicianship is equal to the overall challenge presented by the several kinds of information that constitute a heard musical performance, a listener experiences this matching of musicianship and challenge as optimal experience: as an enjoyable, absorbing flow experience.”³⁶ For example, if a student were offered a melody that crescendos for two measures and decrescendos for two measures, the student will have developed proper listening abilities once they can identify both the shape of the melody and the two dynamic markings. This insinuates that ear training should occur in a systematic manner, starting simply and becoming progressively more difficult. Practically, this may look like beginning ear training with overly simplistic concepts, such as audiating single pitches, or counting simple rhythms. In an

Press, 1995, 12.

³³ Elliott, David J. *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, 14.

³⁴ Elliott, David J. *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, 14.

³⁵ Elliott, David J. *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, 14.

³⁶ Elliott, David J. *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, 123.

orchestral setting, this may look like sight reading very short passages together, or clapping rhythms aloud. The most important of ear training in the context of Elliott's philosophy is sequencing from simple to difficult, and allowing students to master concepts before they move on to more difficult concepts. This brings me to Dr. David Upham's pedagogical pyramid,³⁷ in which he outlines the least complex to most complex parts of learning music. If we teach sequentially from concrete to abstract content, we offer students to build off old content when integrating new content.

Improvisation can be seen as equally fluid and emotional as ear training in Elliott's philosophy of music education. Elliott comments on the range in complexity of improvisation, stating that "The composing aspect of improvising varies with the musical practice in question. It can include everything from spontaneously varying or embellishing given rhythms and melodies while performing, to developing complex and extended variations on musical themes, to creating entirely new works."³⁸ Again, the variation in complexity insinuates a systematic approach to improvisation; beginning with the simple will allow more success with the abstract. Elliott connects improvisation to his overall philosophy about music education by stating that "During musical improvisation, 'it is as if the improviser's audience gains privileged access to the composer's mind at the moment of musical creation.'"³⁹ Since Elliott argues that improvisation is not only valuable to the improviser but also to the listener, putting his philosophy to practical use in an orchestral may not be too complicated. Perhaps conversational improvisation in which people communicate back and forth through improvisation would fit well, as students would have the opportunity to both create their own improvisations and interpret others' improvisations. Improvisation is a key aspect of Elliott's philosophy of music education, as it offers the opportunity to gain an understanding of the self and of others, which is an extramusical reward for creating music.

Bennett Reimer, an American music educator born in 1932, wrote the book *A Philosophy of Music Education*, which outlines both his personal philosophy of music education as well as the need for philosophy in the educational discourse. Reimer begins his definition of his educational philosophy by outlining the positive and negative parts of aesthetics, which is "the study of that

³⁷ Upham, David. "Pedagogical Pyramid." Digital image.

The bottom of the pyramid is labeled posture and position, and moving upwards reads tone production, intonation/rhythm, dynamics, articulation, balance and blend, with the tip of the pyramid labeled phrasing.

³⁸ Elliott, David J. *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, 169.

³⁹ Elliott, David J. *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, 169.

about art which is the essence of art and that about people which has throughout history caused them to need art as an essential part of their lives.”⁴⁰ Most basically, aesthetics refers to the sensory appreciation of an object.⁴¹ Reimer appreciates the philosophy of aesthetics, however he also states that “only those portions of aesthetics useful for [making statements about the nature and value of music and music education] need be used. Aesthetics must never be the master of music education- it must be its servant.”⁴² He believes that there is indeed purpose for music and music education beyond aesthetic appreciation. In *A Philosophy of Music Education*, Reimer likens music to literacy: “Creating art, and experiencing art, do precisely and exactly for feeling what writing and reading do for reasoning.”⁴³ Through writing and reading, humans build their reasoning skills by objectifying their thoughts with words. Humans are constantly thinking, logically and illogically, quickly and slowly. According to Reimer, writing and reading allows people to organize their thoughts outside of their minds onto paper, which externalizes them immediately in their current state. Reimer likens this to the function of music with feeling: “Human beings constantly feel. Feelings flood our minds and beings in a never-ending stream or torrent, overlapping, rushing ahead or slowing down, mixing together in countless blends, whirling around then shooting off in different directions. Internal feeling- subjectivity or affect- is not, in and of itself, linear and logical in its organization; it is more like a whirlpool in its dynamic structure.”⁴⁴ In response to these feelings, Reimer suggests that in order to “go beyond the dynamic flux of inner subjectivity,” humans need a method to “hold onto a feeling so it cannot wash away; a means to give its permanent embodiment,” and in his philosophy, that device is musical sound.⁴⁵ Once Reimer reaches this conclusion, he goes on to argue that art not only educates us on feeling, but offers us the opportunity to deepen and discipline our subjectivity, as the process of externalizing our feelings allows us to “feel reflectively about [our] feelings themselves.”⁴⁶ According to Reimer, furthering our internal, feelingful understanding is to “be rid of extraneous impulses that weaken rather than

⁴⁰ Reimer, Bennett. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 2.

⁴¹ Danto, Arthur C. *The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art*. Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2003.

⁴² Reimer, Bennet. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 15.

⁴³ Reimer, Bennet. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 33.

⁴⁴ Reimer, Bennet. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 34.

⁴⁵ Reimer, Bennet. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 35.

⁴⁶ Reimer, Bennet. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 35.

strengthen the unfolding expressive form.” Bennet Reimer’s philosophy can be summed up in one simple sentence: “Creating art and experiencing art educate feeling.”⁴⁷

Ear training is an extremely important part of the practical function of Bennett Reimer’s philosophy of music education. Reimer writes,

“Notice that when we compose our feelings into a set of tones as in a melodic phrase we then hear the phrase to receive its affect and to ponder whether that affect is coming through clearly or whether it needs to be clarified. So composing is also experiencing through hearing: we are constantly and continually hearing and rehearsing each tone and phrase we have composed. The hearing or experiencing or responding part gives us back the feeling we have composed, and we can, in feeling it, judge whether it is given well.”⁴⁸

Music’s greatest value, according to Reimer, lies in an individual’s experience of it; understanding what we hear is necessary to pondering, analyzing, and clarifying it. Reimer enthusiasts may argue that anything we do in the music classroom ought to be a form of ear training, as the experience of hearing and analyzing sound is vital to experiencing music. Mindfully experiencing music, according to Reimer’s philosophy, is equivalent to the act of educating feeling, his purpose of music education. Practically, ear training may go beyond intervals, rhythms, and harmony, in the context of Reimer’s philosophy. In a Reimer enthusiast’s orchestra classroom, you may find students singing the melody of a piece they are playing, with particular focus on dynamics and phrasing. Training the ear and mind to emotionally and musically understand the melodies and harmonies we hear and play is the sort of music-making that Reimer would advocate for in any music classroom.

Reimer does not necessarily outline the specific role improvisation plays in his philosophy. However, it could function in the same way that ear training functions above: training the ear and mind in understanding feelingful experiences. Those who subscribe to Reimer’s philosophy may implement improvisation in their classrooms by assigning a student an emotion to improvise upon; this would allow students to explore the depth of that emotion. This could look like group improvisation in the orchestral classroom, where some students would be assigned an emotion to improvise upon, and other students would articulate what emotions the improvisation offers to them. This allows the latter students to further their depth of understanding regarding that

⁴⁷ Reimer, Bennet. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 33.

⁴⁸ Reimer, Bennet. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 36.

emotion, as well as the improviser. Improvisation plays a similar role as ear training in Reimer's philosophy.

As Elliott and Reimer both believed, in order to discern the value of music education, we must first understand the value of music. As the main premise of my current philosophy of music education is that music is valuable because it is key to experiencing and understanding feelingful experiences, it is vital to first describe the complexity of feelingful experiences. Emotions are not always immediately and accurately discernable; I would argue that they rarely are. Even in moments where people have a general sense of their emotions, it is difficult to perfectly pinpoint and articulate linguistically the feelings they are experiencing. For example, there have been times in my life in which I have known with absolute certainty that I love someone, without being able to discern what sort of love that may be. David Upham once described to me Reimer's metaphor of an ocean of love, filled with buoys that represent particular types of love, such as paternal love or friendly love.⁴⁹⁵⁰ In an ocean, buoys are markers for notable parts of the sea. For example, a buoy may mark a very large rock. However, there are vast amounts of unmarked ocean that certainly exist without buoy markings. According to Reimer, feelings are as fluid as the sea; sometimes, although we are very obviously experiencing a deep feeling of love, we cannot accurately describe or even understand that feelingful experience, as the only discernable buoys we have that resemble these emotions are broad and nonspecific, like paternal love and friendly love. Feelings can be all-consuming, and this is where I argue music functions in human experience: to help us discern the space between the buoys. Music educates and gives us access to emotional and feelingful literacy.

If the value of music is to more clearly and fully experience complicated feelings, then the purpose of music education must be to educate people on the process of discerning feelingful experiences. I must agree with Reimer in this moment that creating and experiencing art are synonymous with educating feeling. Practically, educating feeling will occur most simplistically within ear training and improvisation, particularly in the context of utilizing the voice. Developing the ability to audiate not only pitch and rhythm but also musical, expressive phrasing may be the most important part of ear training. Dalcroze's philosophy outlines the importance of connecting the internal and the external, and that audiating is critical, as it is the process of clarifying the

⁴⁹ Upham, David. Personal communication, October - November, 2016.

⁵⁰ Reimer, Bennet. *A Philosophy of Music Education*.

internal before attempting to produce it externally. Following through on audiation with vocal expression further engrains the internal, audiated experience, as the voice is inherently the most natural of instruments, because it comes from our own bodies. The voice itself may be the only undeniable connection between the internal and the external experiences of music, as people can both sing aloud and in their heads- that is, audiate.⁵¹ Practically utilizing audiation and vocalization is rather straightforward: have your orchestras audiate and sing their parts. However, implementation may prove to be less straightforward, as many instrumentalists feel uncomfortable singing. This may be where Reimer's words on why having a philosophy of music education is important to not only the students and the field, but also to the teaching individual: "Individuals who do have convincing justifications for music education, who exhibit in their own lives the inner sense of worth which comes from doing important work in the world, become some of the profession's most prized possessions."⁵² If a teacher can be sure that audiating and vocalizing is necessary to their students' development as musicians and know *why* it is necessary, finding the courage to implement audiating and vocalizing will be easier. The implementation will additionally be more effective, as it will be motivated by organized thought, purpose, and practical necessity. Improvisation may be more difficult to implement in an orchestral setting under these philosophical premises, especially in the context of singing. This difficulty illustrates the necessity of variation in the classroom; one may not be able to develop all musical skills in the context of full, orchestral rehearsals. Perhaps, improvisation ought to be implemented in sectionals. Students could be asked to improvise instrumentally in the comfort of smaller, more intimate sectionals, over simple, recorded chord progressions. As students become more comfortable with improvising on their instruments and in front of their sectional peers, they could be asked to improvise vocally over those same chord progressions. There may be value to beginning the exploration of improvisation without the direct observation of the teacher.⁵³ Through ear training and improvisation, students can develop emotional and feelingful insight and understanding.

⁵¹ This is not possible with external instruments; you cannot play violin internally; you can only imagine playing violin. To exemplify this, try singing Hot Cross Buns in your head (audiating). Be sure to differentiate between singing in your head and simply imagining yourself singing.

⁵² Reimer, Bennet. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 4.

⁵³ I would of course never argue for leaving students alone or unattended; rather, watching from afar may offer them relief from any pressure to impress or gain respect of the teacher.

Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, Carl Orff, Zoltán Kodály, Bennett Reimer, and David Elliott all have unique philosophies of music education, each with valuable aspects and important ideas. Dalcroze “hoped to find the connection between the ear that hears; the body that performs, feels, and sense; and the brain that judges, imagines, and corrects.”⁵⁴ Orff argued that “the physically, mentally, and spiritually prepared individual who has had sufficient training in the *Schulwerk* finds the loosely woven fabric of the Orff approach enough of a system or ‘method’ with which to transmit to children the aesthetic satisfaction of making music.”⁵⁵ Kodály defined music as “a manifestation of the human spirit similar to a language.”⁵⁶ Reimer wrote, “the arts offer meaningful, cognitive experiences unavailable in any other way, and that such experiences are necessary for all people if their essential humanness is to be realized.”⁵⁷ Their philosophies are all unique, however they would all agree on one thing without a doubt: music is a necessary and valuable part of human existence, and therefore a necessary and valuable part of education. In the way that an individual’s actions will reflect their desires if they allow themselves to be motivated and led by their own personal values, a community’s actions will align with its intentions if it has a strong philosophy. Reimer believes, and I certainly agree, that “until music education understands what it genuinely has to offer, until it is convinced of the fact that it is a necessary rather than a peripheral part of human culture, until it ‘feels in its bones’ that its value is a fundamental one, it will not have attained the peace of mind which is the mark of maturity. And it also will not have reached a level of operational effectiveness which is an outgrowth of self-acceptance, of security, of purposes understood and efforts channeled.”⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 45.

⁵⁵ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 114.

⁵⁶ Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in The Twenty-first Century*, 102.

⁵⁷ Reimer, Bennet. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 29.

⁵⁸ Reimer, Bennet. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 4.

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