

MUSC 603

Lynne German, February 1, 2016

Chapter 2: *Several Alternative Views and a Synergistic Proposal:*

Reimer, pp 50-71

I. Product and Process

A. Extreme formalism (product)

B. Extreme praxialism (process & practice) - Elliott

- 1. Performance = "giving form to"
- 2. Performance is the central thing (oldest position in American Ed)
- 3. Listening is a lesser activity

C. Synergistic Idea: each depends upon the other

- 1. Processes produce products or they are meaningless
- 2. Music is a 4-dimensional concept, involving a
 - a. doer;
 - b. some kind of doing;
 - c. something done;
 - 4. The complete context ("doers do what they do")
- 3. Codependency exists – work on maker and maker on work
- 4. Experience-based philosophy

II. Music as a Social Agency: **Contextualists** (focus on social and political significance) vs. **Formalists**

A. Adrienne Rich, "The Images" – art gives explicit or hidden violent gender messages

B. Suzanne Cusick: "the cultural work of all classical musical performances . . . might be understood to be the public enactment of obedience to a culturally prescribed script."

- 1. Schumann's 1840 *Frauenliebe und Lieben* (Women's Life and Love) would have to be performed without its romanticism to remove offenses
- 2. She felt she needed to *ease her students' pain*
- 3. The pleasure of music is lost for the agenda

C. Susan Sontag disagrees, saying “we should focus on how art ‘dissolves considerations of content [message] into those of form.’”

D. Stephen Miles attempts a synergistic resolution: “Music means itself.”

E. Green calls the distinctive contributions of formal and contextual elements ***Interdependence***

F. Reimer: “emphasize the synergistic capacity of music to encompass delineated meanings and also to take them in to the realm of inherence as only music can do.”

III. The Boundaries of Music – Is Music Unique in its Power and Identity, Separate from the other Arts?

A. Music has blood ties to the other arts, sharing reasons for existence (drawing hard boundaries)

- 1. To create meaning
- 2. To engage with individual and cultural arts
- 3. To deepen, critique, and explore new nuances
- 4. To create heightened awarenesses, understandings, and experiences
- 5. Ensuing rigidity in music education assumes all children want to study music as if they are going to become musicians

B. Music is intimately related to worlds outside the arts (drawing blurred boundaries)

- 1. Examples: Politics, religion, commerce, nationhood, psychology, history, sociology, science, philosophy
- 2. These interconnect; to understand music is to understand and connect to all of human experience
- 3. “Music is all-encompassing” – Reimer’s synopsis
- 4. Supporters:
 - Claire Detels (*Soft Boundaries*) – where she discusses the fragmentations in music education forced by the either-or mentality (how do you mix teaching the musically talented

and the general population?); she purports the “Integrative, Interdisciplinary Education in the Arts and Aesthetics” in Chapter 8; virtuosity vs. general education creates a huge gap

- David Elliott (*Music Matters*) – where he explains the “many understandings relevant to performance

IV. Music and Utilitarian Values

A. What is music “good for?”

- 1. Raising test scores
- 2. Improving spatial-temporal reasoning (Mozart effect)
- 3. Making people smarter
- 4. Supporting the teaching of other subjects
- 5. Instilling discipline
- 6. Improving social skills

B. Advocacy: “the act of pleading for, supporting, or recommending”-p63

- 1. “The Arts and Academic Achievement: What the Evidence Shows” – exhaustive study by Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland – our best advocacy document
- 2. At a conference in LA, Howard Gardner, Elliot Eisner, Sam Hope, David Perkins, Richard Colwell, Joyce Gromko, and Reimer were asked to review its findings
- 3. Only 3 of the 10 areas were found to be a solid causal relationship:
 - a. music listening to spatial-temporal reasoning;
 - b. playing music and spatial-temporal reasoning;
 - c. drama and verbal skills
- 4. The conclusion: “Studying the arts should not have to be justified in terms of anything else. The arts are as important as the sciences: they are time-honored ways of learning, knowing, and expressing.”-p. 64
- 5. Philosophy and advocacy meet when we honestly consider values of music education and also understand the the non-music constituencies

-

V. A Philosophy Based on Musical Experience: Setting the Stage

A. Do we become the music, or does the music become what we make it?

- 1. How is music different from other things we experience?
 - a. music involves sounds, culturally and individually determined
 - b. practicing making music is unlike any other experience
 - c. contexts of music which make it different for each person include
 - 1. Traditions and beliefs
 - 2. Skills required
 - 3. Intended functions that it serves
 - 4. A level of importance or desire that we attach to it
 - 5. Ways of relating
 - 6. Stated and unstated assumptions
 - d. the common core of music to all people is:
 - 1. "making special" – Ellen Dissanayake, *What is Art For?*
 - 2. "magic or beauty or spiritual power or significance" – Ellen's quote
 - 3. Meta-reality – reality converted by the juxtaposition of components, when art is "for the purpose of embodying within their created conditions the potential for out-of-the-ordinary experience."-p.68

B. Performance-based vs. Experience-Based Music Education Philosophy

- 1. Performance-based: may emphasize singing skills, social utility, ethical conduct
- 2. Experience-based: includes all musics and all forms of engagement with music

