

## **Philosophy of Music Education**

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*I think I should have no other mortal wants, if I could always have plenty of music. It seems to infuse strength into my limbs and ideas into my brain. Life seems to go on without effort, when I am filled with music.* George Eliot (1819-1880)

As far as I can remember I have been given the opportunity to take part in all different aspects of music. If it weren't for these opportunities I would never have become who I am today. As George Eliot stated, "It seems to infuse strength into my limbs and ideas into my brain." Music has always been something that I could fall back on no matter how every other part of my life was going. To take that opportunity away from a child is unheard of in my mind. Music Education is essential as children are growing and developing, and later as they continue on with their lives as young adults through adulthood.

Music gives people the opportunity to express themselves without using words. Walking into a band or choir room before a rehearsal begins you will hear students drawing on music from other artists, or creating some of their own, to express themselves. Whether they are trying to relax, or spark their energy, or release anger, music is a good catalyst for that. When a student is given music, they may interpret it many different ways, possibly far from how the composers

intended, but with that are able to express how the music truly makes them feel. To give a student music, no matter how well they play or sing it, is to provide them with a source of confidence and a means to express themselves without words.

Music also gives people a taste of history and different cultures. Behind every piece of music written is a unique style and purpose for which it was composed. The purpose is left to interpretation and expression of the musician but the style is something the composer decides solely. Historically music has been composed to reflect events of the past or how cultures have developed through history. Learning the history of the piece will give a student the knowledge needed to best execute the performance. Teaching a student these things is just one part of music education that all too often gets left behind. As an educator myself, my students will never walk away from their music without knowing a bit of history about that piece.

To join the bandwagon of “no child left behind,” I, as a music teacher, will never deprive a child the opportunity to learn or share music. It is such an amazing opportunity that every person, no matter what age, should have the choice to learn and in turn live through. A music educator, like myself, should teach music of all genres and difficulties, without restrictions dependent on age or other things. The repertoire should include, as previously mentioned, pieces from all time periods, styles, ethnicities, and difficulties depending on the

students' levels of learning. Being an educator, one should be able to find music to best suit the students involved. It is essential for a teacher to know their students at a level deeper than what instrument they play or voice part they sing but rather on a personal level for their abilities and desires in music. A teacher can only help in the students' progression and should never hold a student back from their goals.

To reiterate my beliefs in a brief statement by George Eliot, "There is no feeling, except the extremes of fear and grief, that does not find relief in music." Every student deserves the opportunity to live out this quote, but that only can be done if the teacher provides the opportunity. Performing music, or at least listening to music is essential in the development of the lives of all people, young and old. Just imagine a life without the radio, or a piano, or even background songs on a commercial or TV show. It would be unheard of, literally! The reason music has been around so long is simply because of the need for it. If life were able to go on without music there wouldn't be a need for new pieces to be written or new performers to come in the public eye, or even for music educators to exist! Thankfully, us music educators will be around as long as there are still students who have that passion that we once had as children learning music. It is our duty to pass on that love of music on to the generations to follow.

*The whole problem can be stated quite simply by asking, 'Is there a meaning to music?' My answer would be, 'Yes.' And 'Can you state in so many words what the meaning is?' My answer to that would be, 'No.'* Aaron Copland (1900 - 1990)

