

## THE FUTURE OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN FLORIDA: TRENDS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

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### **Introduction**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century will bring many changes and challenges to music education in Florida. Society's ever-changing definition of an educated individual often leads to public calls for schools to teach skills and information deemed necessary for existing situations and needs, not realizing the necessity of preparing students for the future. While no one can accurately predict what future issues and trends may affect our profession, it has often been said the best way to begin predicting the future is to examine the past and the present.

This paper attempts to foresee potential issues and influences that future music educators in Florida may encounter. Specifically, this paper will 1) outline potential social, academic and music issues, events and influences that music education leaders in our state might encounter and 2) offer possible suggestions for addressing these occurrences. While it may be impossible to accurately predict what influences and issues may arise, past and current events have been examined in an attempt to establish possible future trends from which to base our conclusions.

### **History**

History informs us that when society has had a problem it has repeatedly looked to education to help solve the issue. This has been true from military, social, scientific, political, financial and educational perspectives. Consider how America has won wars, responded to the U.S.S.R.'s launch of Sputnik by sending U.S. astronauts into space, dealt with political turmoil and faced criticism that other countries are stronger academically than the United States. In all of these events music education has not isolated itself. From the *Bay Psalm Book* and singing schools, to patriotic singings after the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, to the current call for more awareness through the MENC National Anthem Project (2007), music education has been asked to contribute to our society in more ways than musical. History teaches us that Florida music educators cannot place our profession in isolation from past and present issues or trends affecting our state, its communities and its schools. We must understand and acknowledge these events, learn from them and, when necessary or appropriate, repeat our successes while avoiding our failures.

Much of how contemporary music education presents itself is based on the model established by Lowell Mason in 1838 when he persuaded the Boston school board to begin teaching music in the public schools (Birge, 1966). Mason's model for music education has its foundation in large performing ensembles that presented public performances that were impressive both to see and hear. The enthusiasm generated by Mason's performances made such an impact that music educators have since been enculturated to this model as "the" way music education should be implemented and viewed. While few individuals may dislike the prospects of a fine large

ensemble performance, music education has been slow to alter its offerings to other music possibilities even though society has changed at the speed of sound (Mark, 1996). We need to bring what we teach and how we teach music into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Music education has been criticized for failing to keep up with changes, and contemporary school music programs are criticized for not being meaningful to students after they leave the programs. Transferring what was learned and experienced in the music class to their out-of-school musical lives has not occurred. We are frequently focused on the large performing ensemble while ignoring the music interests of our students, communities and society as a whole. Possibilities include classes in chamber music, music theater, MIDI, pop music, composition, piano, jazz, music business or salsa bands. In other words, we must redefine what constitutes a school music education experience, or we will lose our place in meeting the needs of students and society.

### **Trends in School Reform**

The issue of future trends in music education has been considered before. In 1999, Vision 2020: The Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education convened at Florida State University. Music educators of all levels debated what music education must do in order to be a relevant entity in our schools and society in the year 2020. This group stated the issues most important to music education are: wider choices for schooling, ethnic and music diversity, the impact of technology and the digital revolution and new approaches to teaching and learning (Yarbrough, 2000). While stating that public school music may still exist, they questioned the mode of instructional delivery, including music in privately run schools (both religiously affiliated and those connected to private businesses), charter schools, specialty schools such as magnet schools, home schools and even virtual schools. Each scenario suggests a variety of learning environments catering to the specific needs of individuals. The symposium's participants questioned whether music education would be able to adapt to nontraditional school choices.

Indeed, increasing calls for school choice among parents, politicians and students will be an issue for future Florida music educators. Traditionally, American society has been educated by our public school system that revolved around the concept of neighborhood schools. Since the 1960's, various components of society have increasingly questioned the quality of public schools. These questions have included concerns about teacher quality, school safety, moral and religious training, curricular relevance and curricular specializations. Consequently, Americans have embraced alternatives to traditional public schools. Furthermore, school choice has been promoted by both state and federal educational agencies. Beginning with Governor Jeb Bush and continuing with Governor Charlie Crist, the Florida Department of Education (DOE) has promoted school choice in numerous manners, including public and private venues. Additionally, the federal government enacted the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) calling for expanded options for parents and students to attend a wide variety of schools. School choice options, which once included only traditional neighborhood public schools, now include magnet schools in almost all academic areas (including music) and tax-based charter schools. Private school options include private for-profit and nonprofit schools as well as religious-based schools and virtual schools. Furthermore, the Florida DOE has promoted school choice by providing vouchers to help students transfer to the school of their choice. Vouchers include both tax-based funding (Opportunity Scholarships) and the private-based funded McKay Scholarships (Florida Department of Education, 2007a). The inclusion of the McKay Scholarships that enable students to use funding to transfer to religious-based private schools is an indicator that state officials will continue to promote school choice options toward private venues.

Enrollment trends point to continued concerns for public schools resulting in support and growth in school choice, including the option for home schooling (Florida Department of Education, 2006; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003). These trends reflect national trends in school choice as well (Austin, 1997; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003). Support and growth will be especially relevant to growth in charter schools. In the 1996-1997 school year there were five charter schools in Florida enrolling 574 students. In 2005-2006 there were 334 charter schools enrolling 92,214 students (Florida Department of Education, 2006). Growth in Florida home schooled students (including those participating in virtual schools) has risen from approximately 35,000 students in 1999-2000 to more than 51,000 students in 2004-2005 (Florida Department of Education, 2006). Trends in school choice will affect music enrollments as students leave traditional public schools to pursue studies in other facilities that may or may not include music instruction (Austin, 1997). Furthermore, the effects of home schooling where students may petition traditional schools to allow students to participate in music instruction without being fully enrolled in those schools remains a growing issue. Finally, the effects of magnet schools on enrollment in traditional public school music programs should not be dismissed. Traditional public school music programs throughout the state have experienced drops in music enrollment in communities where music magnet schools have formed. The effect of this development will need to be addressed since the question of access to quality music offerings for all students will be an issue.

### **Cultural, Curricular and Instructional Diversity**

The issue of cultural diversity will grow as Florida's population continues to increase in both size and composition. Technology and accessibility have made the people of our country and state, including our students, global citizens. Teachers must teach students to effectively interact with the global nature of our world, including the music in which people participate.

Recognizing the pluralism of our state's population will need to be actively addressed. Florida is currently the fourth most populated state in the country, with an annual growth rate around 11 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 a). The diversity of its population is equal to only Texas and California (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 b). For example, the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau (2007 b) reported that 16.7 percent of Floridians were born in a foreign country as opposed to 11.1 percent of the United State population being foreign born. Furthermore, 23.1 percent of Floridians live in homes where English is a second language (17.9 percent of all U.S. citizens live in this type of home environment).

However, the definition of diversity will need to expand since our state's population is not only a mixture of race and ethnicity, but also of ages, religions, special needs and socioeconomic levels. Different cultural groups have different musical expectations and standards. One large group of citizens within Florida is our growing senior citizen population. This cultural group can provide unique educational opportunities for music educators through intergenerational ensembles and historical authenticity, among other contributions. Evidence suggests that when senior citizen groups are incorporated into traditional public school ensembles, a positive interaction occurs, further bridging the cultural gap between two distinct groups (Abeles, 2004; Coffman & Adamek, 2001).

Music education will need to accept each culture's unique musical perspective and challenge. Calls throughout the country express concerns over issues related to students' knowledge and

abilities to understand and work effectively within other cultures. The program English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a growing nationwide attempt to enable all educators to work with diverse student populations. Music educators are not exempt from this need. Recognizing that our pluralistic society is not only multicultural, but also multi-musical will require a shift in curricular approach. A diversity of musical opportunities will need to be offered that reflects the pluralistic nature of our society. Music educators will need to demonstrate how what our students experience in our classes contributes to the nationwide concern for more competence in multicultural global affairs. Realizing that music is one of the few universal phenomena can assist educators in addressing music education's unique global attributes. Music education will need to demonstrate how music can familiarize students with other cultural perspectives.

The issue of how to effectively teach a culturally diverse student population will confront future music teachers. For Florida music educators, this issue becomes a greater challenge due to the diversity of our students and the subsequent varied musical interests they bring to our classrooms. Future music classrooms will continue to be composed of students with diverse learning styles and needs. It is imperative that teachers 1) create a culture where probing questions are asked, 2) provide open-ended activities where all students' responses are accepted and students are given opportunities to explain their thinking and 3) expect and encourage all children to participate actively. One instructional approach to addressing this challenge that merits attention is differentiated instruction.

Effective teachers have been differentiating instruction for as long as teaching has been a profession. Differentiated instruction involves being sensitive to students' needs and finding ways to help individuals make necessary connections for learning to occur in the best possible way (Starr, 2004). Differentiated instruction is a teaching approach in which educational content, process and product are adapted according to students' readiness, interests and learning profiles. Unlike individualized instruction, in which teaching must be directed to the specific needs and skills of each individual student, differentiated instruction addresses the needs of student clusters.

Successful music educators have always been adept at adjusting instruction to meet the goals and objectives of their performing ensembles or general music classes. Choral, band and orchestra directors are very aware of the individual student's abilities and knowledge within each ensemble and work to mold these sounds toward group excellence. Helping students to meet their individual goals, however, is a huge challenge for large ensemble directors. The incorporation of nontraditional methods of instruction are often forgotten or excluded due to the large numbers of students, the performance expectations and the limited amount of rehearsal time. Differentiated instruction is certainly more appropriate than individual instruction for music educators. Addressing the needs of student clusters already takes place in performance ensembles via instrumental/vocal sectionals. In elementary general music, authentic learning centers or small-group composing and project-based learning activities should definitely be included to encourage the interests and skills of young musicians. Florida middle and high school music programs have a unique opportunity and need to diversify instruction by offering courses for students who are not interested in performance (e.g., composition, recording, guitar, keyboard, etc.) and to differentiate instruction within these classes.

There are many current curricular issues affecting music education. Such issues are not new, and they will continue to exist in the future. These issues include calls for daily physical education

for all students, increased math and science requirements and vocational studies such as the major area of interest that is part of the Florida A++ education plan (Florida Department of Education, 2007b). Furthermore, constant calls from society for education to address immediate concerns have and will continue to challenge music education to juggle music's perceived importance and contribution to a student's total education. This is evident in the current concern regarding obesity in our society and how schools should require more physical education in the school day.

Another current societal concern reflects the global nature of our world as events and issues regarding national security and economic development increasingly are becoming world concerns. Traditionally, Americans have studied and prepared to work with European and North American cultures. These countries have more frequently reflected our cultural heritage. However, factors such as technological development, political and military interests and economic changes have shifted American global interactions to new and less familiar cultures. American schools are being asked to prepare students for future global interactions including preparation in different languages, cultural interactions and diverse communication methods. Future students will need to be culturally more aware of growing countries and areas such as China, the Middle East, South Africa and South America. Future music educators must demonstrate how music contributes to a more global awareness. Providing frequent, direct hands-on experiences through world music activities and other multicultural opportunities that demonstrate music's global characteristics and appeal will enable students to become more aware of cultural diversity.

Literacy is a national concern as well as a state issue. According to the National Institute for Literacy (2007), only about 1 in 17 of all 17-year-olds in the United States can read and comprehend what they have read well enough to succeed in college. Further analysis of these data by race/ethnicity shows this rate is 1 in 12 for whites, 1 in 50 for Latinos and 1 in 100 for African-Americans. In Florida, 44 percent of all 4<sup>th</sup> graders do not meet state proficiency rates, and the state is ranked near the bottom of all states in adult literacy (Roberts, 1998).

There have been few research-based attempts to draw correlations between the ability to read music and developing school reading literacy. In one recent study, recognizing that phonemic awareness is one key to learning to read, Gromko (2005) found that kindergarten students receiving music instruction showed greater gains in developing phoneme segmentation fluency than similar students not receiving music instruction. Despite the apparent successful correlation, Gromko cautions that further research is necessary before making broader generalizations. Thus, it appears that music educators must be patient in allowing data to develop in order to justify their positions. However, music educators must be able to communicate their contributions to literacy in a manner that non-musicians can comprehend. Furthermore, these contributions must be based on musical experiences.

All educators, including music instructors, should be alert to a new kind of literacy, that involving technology and information literacy. An increasingly media-drenched society will require individuals to acquire literacy skills that enable them to sort through and locate information quickly while determining which sources are reliable and which are less helpful. Such sources include Google searches, blogs, instant text messaging, YouTube, MySpace and podcasts. The goal for educators is to teach students critical thinking skills: distinguishing valid

and useful information, making correct choices and being able to defend their own views and ideas rather than accepting the status quo.

A primary curricular issue is that of scheduling. We cannot assume music will always be in the schools. Since the launch of Sputnik and the corresponding shift in educational priorities in the late 1950's, music's existence in most school curricula has been threatened. Funding has often been an issue. However, scheduling has perhaps become music's greatest threat. The various forms of class schedules (e.g., block scheduling, rotating schedules, six- or seven-period days) often leave little time for students to explore interests outside the traditional academic core subjects. Additionally, ever-changing graduation requirements (e.g., possible physical education every day or increases in math and science requirements) force students into courses many in our society deem necessary to future success. Finally, the impact of high-stakes testing (e.g., FCAT) has pushed educators to place even greater emphasis on subjects directly affected by these exams.

Florida music educators must resist temptation. It is imperative that music programs keep the process of diverse music making as the focus of instruction and value while balancing the product-driven purposes of American education. At times, music educators have been their own worst enemies by focusing our educational objectives solely on public performance experiences. These objectives have frequently conformed to our own data-driven test in the state Music Performance Assessment or other festival-type performances. As a result, many school music programs do not, and often cannot, take opportunities to teach the broad diversity of musical skills and experiences. It is important for music teachers, school colleagues and the public to realize that music by itself is not music education. Without a broader perspective, little of the music-making process transfers to other musical interests. Students in our contemporary society fail to understand the connection of music experienced in school to music they participate in outside of school (Madsen, 2000). This lack of connection results in limited discovery of unique individual relationships to music through school music experiences. Consequently, students lack motivation to participate in school music due to a perceived disconnect of music to their lives. They fail to understand the benefits that school music's role and contribution can bring to their lives. Florida music educators must address the issue of musical relevancy and meaning.

### **Political Issues**

Political issues at all levels, from local to national offices, have always affected education, including music education. Local issues have included debates regarding tax referendums to fund education, school scheduling issues, dress codes and local values. At the state level, Florida educators are affected by the class size amendment, ever-changing graduation requirements or the increased emphasis on reading and literacy. However, the state mandate that has the most influence on Florida education has been the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The FCAT's national rival tool is the testing proposed by the federal government's No Child Left Behind Act. Both exams are examples of what appears to be society's emphasis on data-driven, product-focused education.

Both testing examples appear to be part of the education experience for the foreseeable future, since society has turned to politicians to address educational concerns regarding student achievement, teacher quality and even school safety. Our society appears to want and accept competency-based education as a method to gauge educational progress and teacher effectiveness. This approach has led to educational philosophies resembling business structures

that are product, not process driven. An emphasis on reciting facts with little or no transfer to situations will leave our students incapable of creatively solving future complex problems. Florida music educators must demonstrate how music education contributes to learning as measured by competences tested on these exams. Music educators must connect educational achievement in the music class and rehearsals to each student's overall educational progress. We must connect musical experiences to a broader perspective that requires students to leap across disciplines and pull knowledge together to create new and more meaningful musical experiences.

It is important to remember that constitutionally the United States places the responsibility of educating citizens at the state level. States, especially the governors, have the greatest power to influence education standards and opportunities for its citizens. Consequently, music educators must become active advocates at the state level if they are to alter the competency-based, test-driven political process in education. Public school music teachers must become more aware of and involved in political matters both at the local and state levels of government.

### **The Music Teaching Profession**

Future music education leaders must continue to be concerned about the lack of fully certified music teachers. In 2003, approximately 15,952 teachers left Florida's public schools. Roughly 10 percent of Florida's public teachers resign each year, with up to 19 percent of those being retirees. Interestingly, teachers in the mid years, ages 35 to 54, are the most likely to remain in the classroom (Feng, 2006).

The Music Educators National Conference reports that 30 music teachers are lost every day (Music Educators National Conference, 2006) due to retirement or changing careers. The American String Teacher Association (2002) estimated that 5,000 new string teachers would be needed by 2004. Adding to these woes are data showing fewer individuals are pursuing music education as a college major (Bergee, Coffman, Demorest, Humphreys, & Thorton, 2001). Asmus (1999, p. 5) reported that while the demand for music teachers may be at an all-time high, the number of students entering the music education profession is declining. Thus, supplying an adequate number of music teachers for the future appears to be a concern. The National Association of Schools of Music (Bidner, 2003) reported the current number of new music teacher education graduates would supply approximately only one-half of the vacancies in the music teaching profession nationally. Furthermore, the MENC-sponsored publication *Vision 2020: The Housewright Symposium on Music Education* (Madsen, 2000) suggested the existing teacher shortage would continue to grow as society encounters increased difficulties in attracting and retaining individuals to the music teaching profession.

Certification of teachers will continue to be a concern as the music teacher shortage grows and individuals are needed to fill classrooms. Future educators should emphasize the need for professional music teachers to be fully certified. While alternative routes to certification may enable more individuals to be placed in music classes, the lack of professional training does not enable many of these individuals to be effective. While it must be acknowledged that many professionally trained music educators do not succeed, there is evidence that music teachers who have completed the traditional certification route, including the student teaching internship, are more capable to succeed and affect student learning (Madsen & Hancock, 2002). Addressing the music teacher shortage through the emphasis on alternative certification essentially communicates a belief that anyone can teach. Such an attitude undermines the accomplishments of professional music educators. Not everyone can perform at the level to become a member of

the New York Philharmonic, and not everyone can effectively teach a highly motivated student.

Teachers need to remember they are the greatest influence on a student's decision to become a teacher (Madsen & Kelly, 2002). Consequently, the best approach for addressing the chronic shortage of music teachers is for current music educators to be role models for our profession. Promoting education as a vocation is a must. Providing students with leadership and teaching opportunities that provide direct experiences in the role of a teacher has been shown to influence students to pursue music education as a college major (Madsen & Kelly, 2002). Furthermore, addressing the music teacher shortage will need more than attracting new teachers; we must work to retain our current professionals. Researchers have shown that up to 50 percent of all teachers leave our profession within the first three to five years (Merrow, 1999). Many reasons have been cited, including an inability to maintain classes, teacher pay, nonsupport from administrators and the community and a feeling of isolation (Krueger, 2000). Research has shown that experienced music teachers need to have opportunities to grow as musicians and educators (Krueger, 2000; Madsen & Hancock, 2002). They need support from experienced teachers in the form of mentoring to continue to develop their confidence and abilities to connect to students. If Florida continues to lose its music teachers, the Florida Music Educators' Association will be challenged to gather sufficient capabilities to provide quality music instruction.

### **Summary**

Music education will not be exempt from future questions regarding its role and function. The status of any music education program reflects society's concerns and views regarding music as a whole. Consequently, one trend for future Florida music educators will be recognizing the reciprocal relationship between society and education. Lowell Mason used society's enthusiasm to demonstrate to the Boston school board the void that music can fill in individuals' lives. This required making the community understand that music learned in schools is equally important to music that individuals participate in outside of schools. The same will be true for future music educators. Increasing the community's awareness, understanding and involvement will be a must if school music is to remain important to individuals and thrive. Likewise, connecting school music programs to music in the community will be necessary if music education is to be viewed as a relevant subject in the school curriculum.

The overall primary goals of future Florida music educators must be to 1) prepare students for a lifetime of music, 2) enable as many students and individuals to experience music as possible, 3) expand the school music curricula to include as many music opportunities as possible reflecting a broader variety of societal interests and 4) connect the music needs of schools to those of the community through diverse music making. Music educators must be willing and able to connect the past and the present to the future, enabling students to be lifelong participants in music in ways unique to each individual.

Future Florida music educators must be willing to rally support for music's position in the schools. Music must be offered every day at all levels of instruction. All facets of music education, from researchers and performers to teachers of all levels, must advocate the importance of daily music instruction in the lives of all students. Regular contact with school administrators, other teachers and guidance counselors must be made. Advocacy with politicians and community leaders must be more proactive. Music education must show direct application to

students' lives. We must connect school music experiences to individuals' lives outside of school.

Future Florida music educators will need to address educational perspectives associated with process and product. The growing nationwide emphasis on predetermined core subjects promoted by political agendas such as No Child Left Behind and the FCAT will continue to drive society's definition of "education." Music education will not be exempt from issues related to data-driven instruction. Music educators have already been asked to demonstrate how music contributes to general intelligence and even to specific subject areas such as mathematics and reading. Such product-driven perspectives may be seen as attempts to justify music based on the needs for quick answers. Researchers both within music education and outside our profession have failed to consistently demonstrate that music actually does contribute to general human intelligence (Price, 1995). Many studies promoted by the media, politicians and business (including our own MENC organization) have cited studies that provide evidence connecting music participation to academic success and data-driven test scores. However, many of these studies are flawed with unreliable methodology and biased conclusions. Yet there is one recent study that credits the possible correlation between standardized test scores and music participation directly to the music programs. Johnson and Memmott (2006) found that students in high quality music programs scored higher in English and math standardized tests than students in lower quality music programs. Furthermore, the quality of the music programs was a stronger indicator of academic success than other variables, such as socioeconomics. However, it is important to note that the authors do not suggest that the quality of music program causes the differences in student scores.

The challenge for future Florida music educators will be blending social and academic aspects of music learning with enjoyment and education. Broadening our attitudes and the attitudes of our colleagues, peers, administrators and community toward the power of diverse musical opportunities to influence and change lives may be difficult. However, future music educators must be accountable for making music an important part of every individual's life.

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