

6 Reconciliation of Rival Stances

In Chapter 6 the connection between the two strands¹⁰⁶ of the thesis is meticulously maintained; it therefore leads from the rationalization and reconciliation of the rival philosophies, with White as catalyst, towards a template for the applicability of the derived compromise position. There is a *rückblick* to collate the issues that surfaced as truly significant in the exegesis as to how Elliott and Reimer differ. These are highlighted variously by their separate paragraph headings and include the American philosophical view of music education; Music Education as Aesthetic Education (MEAE); the (Voluntary) American National Standards; the relevance of American music education to the Irish case; music as art and in the arts programme; the conceptual confusion about performance; the commanding issues in a global understanding of contemporary (third millennium) music education (see 5.2.1). The malaise in Irish music education¹⁰⁷, the stimulus for the MEND Initiative, is taken as a paradigmatic context to test the serviceability of the rationalized positions of Elliott and Reimer as proponents of universality in music education philosophy. The curricular issues of balance, relevance and time management emerge as crucial to a plausible philosophical underpinning for pragmatic music education. Elliott's and Reimer's views are briefly revisited with this test in mind. Although Ireland is dealt with specifically, as MEND dictates, it is easy to see how the context might be modified and how a general contextuality might be substituted; the evolution of this idea, towards a new concept of adaptable philosophy is, however, left for treatment in Chapter 7.

6.1 Rationalization – Towards a Contextual Philosophy for Music Education

Throughout the MEND proceedings, and even from the conception of the MEND brainchild itself, there was a growing awareness that, in tracing the troubled progress of music education in Ireland back to its sources in the nineteenth century and, indeed, to the notional fundamentals of thought on the subject, an irreducible essence would eventually crystallize around the need for a philosophy by which to appraise the past and to underpin current and future efforts. This realization had taken significant shape with the delegates by the end of MEND Phase I and continued to wax in spite of Harry White's frustration, expressed at Phase III, that there was too much concern about theory before the fact of amelioration¹⁰⁸ – too many obvious targets in sight that scarcely needed a philosophy to

¹⁰⁶ Chapter 6 relentlessly re-emphasizes that the philosophical analysis and MEND, although separately highlighted as discrete strands of the thesis, are, in fact, inseparably bound, in a theory/practice relationship, by their shared purpose of providing guidelines for educational reform in Ireland.

¹⁰⁷ The reader is again reminded that the problems in Irish music education are set out in 6.7.9.

¹⁰⁸ Harry White, *A book of manners in the wilderness: A Model of University Music Education and its Relevance as Enabler in General Education in Ireland*. (College Music Symposium, Journal of the College Music Society, Volume 38 [1998]), 62.

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justify immediate action. *Festina lente!* Without dismissing White's healthy impatience, the consistent¹⁰⁹ input at MEND by distinguished philosophers of world renown made the case, and made it forcefully.

Although the philosophical theories seemed, at first, to cover such a spectrum - from thesis to apparent antithesis, and the many shades in between - that they engendered invitations either to be ignored (with impunity) or to be rationalized, the passion and urgency of cumulative pronouncements over the past decade commanded respect. They insinuated apparent disagreements, compelling new thought processes aimed at finding an approach to music education that would have universal appeal in a world at last aware of the totality of the musical heritage to which it owed allegiance, along with concern for true and sensitive service to its multifarious manifestations. The need for a philosophy of music education that would rationalize the teeming corpus of intellectual input was evident as a priority consideration. But, although music and music education may be considered an inseparable pair, the *a priori* existence of music and music making - a universal experience and faculty¹¹⁰ - and of much philosophy in relation to it, may not be assumed immediately to follow a well-lubricated path to a derivative theory as to how it should be imparted in education - how society might preserve that which it values. It may be true, as Harry White so aphoristically summarizes it, that 'the music, you might say, comes first'. But David Elliott's definitions that 'works of music are multi-dimensional thought generators ... [and] music making is thought-impregnated action' are in themselves thought-provoking pendants. Music cannot grow and flourish in transmission without thought; it is our duty to think about it.

The field of music is so bewilderingly vast, varied and complex that the task of transmission of its benefits is daunting. It is unnerving to attempt a rationalization of the parameters that would lead to an indissoluble essence in the strategies which can offer a minimal, eclectic and representative sampling of music to enrich all lives. It is palpably clear from the insatiable scholarship that has fed on the educational and transmission aspects of music that there is scarcely a consensus. The last word has not been spoken, if indeed it ever will be; this is surely the attraction and value of continuing philosophical debate. However, by invoking the pragmatic and fructifying criterion of the 'division of labour', it is possible, of course, to divide musical activity (and its associated educational burden) into

¹⁰⁹ In using the word *consistent* the author wishes to indicate that the apparent incompatibilities observed in rival philosophies were, in his opinion, more virtual than substantial and were eventually rationalized into a form that allows a consistent way forward, for Irish music education, to be proposed. Perhaps the only claim that, on its face value, is difficult to reconcile with the educational principle of the need to inculcate the mature faculty of judgement and evaluation, was that of David Elliott that 'no musical practice is inherently better than any other'. The claim is, of course, indispensable as a justification for absolute multiculturalism, and frames another of the three major dilemmas (see 5.2.1) facing today's music educators. The multicultural issue is crucial in Irish music education and is treated in depth in the MEND Report (Section 18.6).

¹¹⁰ See Heneghan, *The Interpretation of Music: A Study in Perception, Expression and Symbol* (Unpublished

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professional and amateur; into specialist and general streams; into academic and practical pursuits; into the making and appraising of music - composer/performer and listener and so on. These convenient dichotomizations paradoxically simplify and complicate the task of educational transmission, but they must be confronted. Choices have to be made, if progress is to have a logical basis, never more urgently than now when music has to justify its place, more than ever, in the curriculum, and stake importunate claims to the physical and mental space in the lives of learners. And assuming that music must be taught and learned if it is to survive and evolve meaningfully, at many levels from informal or casual absorption to intensely organized and committed involvement, there are key considerations¹¹¹ that must be taken into account if ideal, or even satisfactory, results are to be aspired to:

1. Music must be made more user-friendly, a criterion that corresponds largely to the distribution of musical preferences.
2. Judgement and Value ought to be invoked in choosing music for transmission and consumption
3. The notion of music as art must be taken into account. This is proposed as a line of thought that has not been given due consideration in educational philosophy.
4. Engagement with artistic vocabulary is ineluctable.

In relation to 4. above it is admitted that it is challenging to essay an adaptable philosophy of music education which refuses to abandon that last bastion where music and art are inseparably cognate. David Elliott summarizes the challenge: ‘Works of music (in the praxial sense) are artistic cultural constructions involving several interconnected dimensions or facets of meaning including the following: interpretative, structural, expressional, representational, social, ideological and, of course, personal meanings’. Philosophers (and we should be indebted to David Elliott for a notable attempt here) have tried to grapple with this challenge and to define a philosophical provenance that will accommodate the inevitable dissonances that occur at the-interfaces. Bennett Reimer, too, although still within the safe haven of his aesthetic convictions, has, in his response to Harry White’s *A book of manners in the wilderness*, identified the attempt to reconcile the totality of musics of the world’s cultures (specifically listing popular music, the all-embracing multicultural field, and art music as the three forces to be harmonized), into a manageable educational provision, as another commanding

treatise; University of Dublin, Trinity College, 1990), MEND 608, 16.

¹¹¹ These are put forward by the author as unexceptionable suggestions. In any move towards rationalizing the curriculum towards a single programme adaptable to all learners, a Gaussian distribution of propensities must be assumed and therefore calls for careful syllabus measures to ensure that the music studied is fully acceptable over a wide spectrum of taste. That is not to eschew stringent quality control (see Reimer [*A Philosophy*], 133] for guidelines). It has been argued in this thesis that music as art is a potent consensus view of the subject, as

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challenge in general music education, fuelling the search for an amicable and satisfactory accommodation.

It is predictable that the philosophical travail in relation to the nature and value of music, in all its ramifications, will be ongoing and that it will continue to produce differing versions of education philosophy to empower the crucial steps towards the formal and systematic introduction, through education, of music as a life force. The questions surrounding the music itself (which music?) are primordial in nature (simply because the experience is primeval in its historical context) but they must eventually lead to implementation of inculcatory strategy, and so to a new phase of philosophical concern - appropriate means and methods of transmission. The incontrovertible truism that music is a universal experience and faculty leads ineluctably to the ultimate cornerstone of the MEND edifice, one that was handsomely endorsed throughout the initiative - and without solicitation. It is simply that the universality of the experience calls for a universality of opportunity to allow the benefits of musical experience to be shared by all, with the potential for growth.

In western society (and it must be kept in mind that, in the final analysis, a consideration of the Irish case must be resonant with the norms of that classification) this predicates music in general education, meaning that music education must be part of the school experience. For this aspect alone there is every justification for invoking the American (US) experience, as this apparently self-evident truth has, only in the past decade, been recognized by the federal government and adopted in educational legislation, following a remarkable and historic challenge by the advocates of music and art, galvanized into concerted effort. Furthermore it predicates that all other musical activity must be influenced and conditioned by what goes on (and even more importantly what does not happen) in general education, from primary (and even from kindergarten, where appropriate) to the interface with third level, where other chosen specialisms may justifiably phase out or terminate the formal experience. That this is not happening - in other words, that there is ... at best, a cleavage between the intended and the delivered curriculum ... at worst, no clear intention at all - is a matter of grave concern to musicians and to those who would champion the cause of music - in almost every society. Furthermore, that there are two perceptions of musical experience, one emanating from the educational system (school music) and the other from the community¹¹² (popular music is typical), must be of deep concern to educators who are trying reconcile them - without any certainty that they are reconcilable.

can be deduced from the artistic vocabulary in general use (and not just in relation to western art music). See 6.7.6 (Item 7).

¹¹² The definition of community music (see note 31) should clear up any confusion here. The author believes that the issue of the cleavage between high art and popular forms is a matter of concern to Elliott and, certainly, to Reimer (see Reimer's response to Harry White [MEND 402] in which he specifically refers to this as one of the three dilemmas facing third millennium music educators).

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Depending on the (verbal) system used to define it, musical experience can be subdivided into at least five categories. The attempts to do so have led to many misunderstandings and concerns about omissions, undue dominances and de-emphases. The analysis of the Reimer/Elliott debate alone, which has been a necessary preoccupation in the aftermath of MEND, is a case in point.

1. The alternative perceptions of music as product or as process are the cause of serious divisions and vituperative debate. Harry White attributes to David Elliott, as the fundamental tenet of his philosophy, the claim that ‘all music is a human activity rather than the product of that activity’ (The College Symposium document, 54 [MEND 308, 5]). It is easy to imagine how this could be hotly contested when superimposed on the current argument over the place and the relative importance of absolute or total multiculturalism, typically as a challenge to the perceived dominance of western art music, in the curriculum.
2. The division of musical experience into its academic and practical pursuits is a simple manifestation of classification by specialism, of a pragmatic division of labour, so to speak, using a somewhat more blunt instrument than that (Reimer’s) which emphasizes the need for both in a complete and balanced educational package which should inculcate forms of knowing *within* and *how* (practical), *why* and *about* (academic). This dichotomy is, and has been, all too apparent in Irish music education, and is troublesome in the sense of the lack of understanding of each cohort of the other’s priorities and the intolerance which that breeds.
3. A third means of classification separates musical involvement variously - into music making and music appraising or, with further breakdown, into composing, performing (David Elliott always adds improvising, conducting and arranging parenthetically)¹¹³ and listening (knowing about music is curiously absent from this latter breakdown).
4. The professional/amateur dichotomy raises obvious questions of appropriate standards.
5. The division of music by *genre*, however classified, marks cleavages of a fundamental and troublesome kind when it involves rivalries, typically between the not necessarily mutually exclusive modes of high art, popular and multicultural forms

These are different ways of presenting the experience of music; they interpenetrate and cross-relate, but none would divide into quite the same cohorts as any other. It is notable that none overtly, if at all, singles out the enabler of all advancement in musical experience, if not the facilitator of the most

¹¹³ This is not to suggest that improvising, conducting and arranging are ignored by Reimer. It is interesting, however, that conducting is not mentioned in the American National Standards..

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embryonic awareness of meaning in music - the teacher. It is strongly arguable that the teaching of music is a unique way of experiencing, in that it has a double involvement in transmission - that of empowering the experience itself and of inculcating the skills that can lead to self-empowerment. The dangers, of compartmentalizing an activity (music-making) that is itself holistic, are obvious, not least in the possibility that some of these component activities can assume disproportionate importance. Worse still, they can become mutually exclusive or excluding. This has led to vagaries in philosophical stances that are in need of rationalization and reconciliation (as, for example, Elliott's apparently undemocratic rejection of listening *per se* as a fully-fledged musical activity capable of equality with performance *et al*).

Because of the scope for disagreement as to the hierarchy of the components in this quasi-debacle of musical experience to illustrate the full matrix - as music itself or as an educational challenge, it is necessary to define and delimit each area and to mount a defence of its claims, should it find itself isolated or deprioritized. This is, of course, also to define the task of music educators in general and curriculum developers in particular. And this, in turn, leads back to the need for a consistent self-justifying philosophy to identify the contexts and to inform the decisions.

The search for an enabling philosophy should start with an aspiration towards a universal rationale, one which might bind each system to its responsibilities in the 'global village', cherishing similarities while honouring differences, taking and receiving, resolving dissonance while accepting it as evidence of human feelings and convictions strongly felt, establishing canons that respect all musics, conferring rights while demanding that each justifies its position according to its merits and state of development, and by agreed criteria. That such a brief, if successfully taken to conclusion, would be Utopian is almost self evident, as is the fact that if it were in existence the MEND initiative would have been largely superfluous. But the attempt should be made; only when abortive, should universality yield to modification and lead to the particular. It was in following this process that it became attractive to examine the American philosophical arena. And it should be stressed that it was not because of similarities between the Irish and the American systems of music education that this reliance developed, but simply because music education in the US was in a state of flux on fundamental issues when the MEND initiative was mooted.

It seemed unexceptionable to take Bennett Reimer's *A Philosophy of Music Education* as a possible point of departure. Fortuitously it was supplemented in 1996, on the occasion of the Amsterdam Biennial Conference of the International Society for Music Education by a notable attempt, by invitation, to sketch a possible model for a Universal Philosophy of Music Education. More pertinently, it was finally challenged by David Elliott in his *Music Matters*. It is perhaps in its address

of the universality issue that David Elliott's book comes closest to his claim of offering a real alternative to Reimer; the two approaches, in this respect, are polar but also complementary.

Elliott starts with a total acceptance of all musics (another kind of universality), whatever their intent, leading back to constrain himself eventually to the praxial mode, an assertion of the linked pair of total multiculturalism and the innate equality of all music cultures - and a disproportionate dominance of activity (practical music making according to his own definition), amounting to an equally implausible solution to the universality aspiration. These attempts are copiously dealt with in the MEND analysis (notably in Section 18.1.2 [Contextual Philosophy]). It must be evident that, in analysing individually, in addition to comparing, contrasting and rationalizing these philosophies of music education, a useful corpus of relevant knowledge would emerge; the sources themselves and the analysis must encapsulate a great deal of received wisdom, and a nucleus of contentious issues to be taken out of the limelight of public disagreement and subjected to impartial scrutiny to extract any essence of consensus that might empower a way forward. The writer, having gone through this exercise in conciliation, believes that a sense emerges that allows these two views to coexist peacefully and to contribute, in their reconciled form, to a philosophy of music education which is not only plausible and applicable, but is particularly adaptable to context (including the Irish one) without losing its more general integrity - an admirable compensation for its predictably compromised status as a universal philosophy (see Overall Conclusions).

6.2 The American philosophical view on Music Education: towards a reconciliation of the Reimer/Elliott counterpositions

In systematically searching the writings of Reimer and Elliott for evidence as to how they reacted to one another, the writer became aware that the dates of the documents reviewed were very significant. It may thus be claimed that each was in position to benefit, by hindsight, from the promulgations of the other, as they occurred chronologically, and to respond to them. Not the least meaningful in this sense was Reimer's *Universal Philosophy* essay for ISME Amsterdam in 1996, although the sabre-sharp attack on Elliott weakened its impact by identifying his sensitivity to the dismembering of his own philosophy, gratuitously paying Elliott the compliment of public attention, if disapproval, in the first place. And it coloured, too, his own construction; but the model is, withal, astutely fashioned and elegant, all the more so since Reimer himself is candid about its fragility.

In sketching his model, Reimer incorporates some subtle shifts in his own evolving position without, however, compromising the basic tenets of his aesthetic stance, as a reconfirmed irreducible in the 1989 revision of his philosophy (Preface, xiii). It is worth conjoining, at this juncture, the fact that in

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his approximately contemporaneous response to Harry White's *A book of manners in the wilderness*, he is even more forthcoming in identifying the global issues, stated with masterful succinctness, that would test the applicability of a universal philosophy; the shifts referred to above lead to a complementarity with these issues, which are:

- (i) the urgency of the multicultural issue,
- (ii) the psychologically confrontational mutuality of popular and art music in education, and
- (iii) the unchallengeable dominance of performance as an issue. By implication, of course, the status of listening *vis-à-vis* performance is being postulated for validation.

Elsewhere both Reimer and, to a less forceful degree, Elliott, attest to the inseparability of product and process. But it is in his treatment of the contextual approach to music education that Reimer arguably breaks new ground and opens the door to the potential accommodation of other functions of music, possibly even those that might be in conflict with the aesthetic idea, although he does not specifically allude to them. This compromise is to identify the very heart of current contention. While Reimer outlaws the idea of unrelieved physical activity (such as performance, however mediated by artistry and musicianship) in the acquisition of true musicianship, thereby taking issue with Elliott (on grounds that are, however, disputed as spurious in their interpretation), he does not reject out of hand the elements of Elliott's claim for total multiculturalism. Nor is this entirely at odds with Reimer's own philosophy, since the aesthetic ideal is not compromised by the spectrum of music admitted to its critical lens. And there is nothing to suggest that he is not prepared to compromise even more. Reimer is at his most affable and accommodating here; it is only under direct provocation by Elliott that he adopts an attitude, albeit stoutly defended, of inflexibility, when he identifies the bottom line of his tolerance.

Clearly Reimer is intuitively aware that the four approaches he treats (Formalism, Referentialism, Praxialism and Contextualism) are ill-at-ease with one another. Nor is he disingenuous about the price to be paid or a certain blandness in the result of a synthesis. Since the paper had no obvious brief other than to share his enormous insights with a world anxious to hear them, the most sensitive issues are generally played down, but it is not difficult to extract them and to identify them as the three concerns listed above, with which he sharpened the focus of Harry White's unease.¹¹⁴ Thus, the multicultural issue can most easily be constituted within the contextual approach; the complex sociological phenomenon of the pop/art dissonance is mirrored in a relaxation of the absolutist approach and in a referential view which aligns music with life as lived, rather than as a special *sui generis* pursuit, if indeed it is not also barely concealed in the praxial and contextual approaches. His concern over the

¹¹⁴ See Reimer's response to Harry White's paper – *A book of manners in the wilderness* (MEND Report -

centuries-old misconceptions about, and mismanagement of the performance issue, the desideratum around which music education seems constantly to turn, can take its cue from his outburst about the extravagance of some praxial notions that effectively encourage a performance dominance in which the delicate balance of the total music education dispensation is destroyed with irremediable consequences.¹¹⁵ The parameters are therefore consistently presented, from the two sources (Elliott and Reimer), in this *mise-en scène*.

Before proceeding to the denouement of this attempt to sketch a contextual philosophy for Ireland, based on what is considered to be the relevance of American theorizing (rather than of its practice), it is necessary to offer some explanations of features of the American system which differ from the Irish, to varying degrees. It would lead to serious misunderstandings if it were to be assumed that like is being compared with like. It is interesting, as a preface, to be reminded of observations and writings from luminaries such as Charles Leonhard (see Elliott's response, in 5.5.4, to the first four criticisms of Reimer) and Bennett Reimer himself, in which they cast doubt on whether the average American music educator fully understands the tenets of the philosophical pronouncements in relation to aesthetic education. This is astounding considering its general applicability for some thirty years as the 'official' rationale presumed to underpin Music Education as Aesthetic Education (MEAE). There is no reason either to call David Elliott's use of the word 'official' into question or to doubt the claim about flawed insights. But one cannot hope to find a fair treatment either of the philosophy, or of the system based on it, by reading Elliott. It is, nevertheless, crucial for any serious observer to understand as much what it is *not* as what it *is*. And if its plausibility endures, it will go hard with Elliott's praxialism to supplant it.

6.3 Music Education as Aesthetic Education

The system so described attempts to put into practice the tenets of aesthetic theory as synthesized and considerably expanded by Bennett Reimer, using various distinguished sources. Nor is it to undervalue his own epochal contribution when it is remembered that the task he undertook was to act as thoughtful mediator, in the delicate middle ground between theory and practice, to adapt a manifold corpus of mature thought to its educational consequences. Reimer's critics, Elliott chief amongst them, are apt to forget too easily the inauspicious circumstances under which MEAE came into being.

Section 18.1.1 [MEND 402]).

¹¹⁵ For a comprehensive treatment of this commanding concern see Reimer, *Beyond Performing: The Promise of the New National Standards in Music Education*, which is reproduced, by authorial permission, in the Appendices of this report [MEND 404].

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The historical perception of music education in the United States, even in the renascent enlightenment of the post-WW II years, held steadfastly onto the traditional idea that music was about learning to perform (Elliott might have no fault to find with the concept so baldly stated, whatever about the detail), a notion that Harry White would see as reflecting a similar Irish (mis)conception - one that is arguably entrenched on both sides of the Atlantic. But the dispensation in the two countries was vastly different. If the US *source* is consulted (Reimer's book, which is mandatory reading for anyone who wishes to understand the arguments), it presents, quite apart from the hard core of its philosophical principles, a comprehensive system of music education. It typically balances practical and theoretical components, but tailored by circumstances to the needs of the dichotomized cohorts of music learners. These comprised a healthy 10% or so of performers, and a complement of non-performers (by choice) who could best be described as apathetic and neglected at that time (1970).

This was notably different from Irish provision in that performance training was, as ideally represented in advocacy statements, freely available in schools to those who wished to take up the option and, presumably, this was built into the financial management of the school option system and into the American economy in its educational contexts. There was a similar division (to the Irish) of the labour force into practical and general (academic) streams, except that these were juxtaposed within the school system itself in the US; there can be little doubt that tensions existed between these groups, especially as to their rival claims to curriculum time, on the one hand, and to the options and allegiance of students on the other. America did not have a national curriculum, as Ireland has, so music was not even guaranteed a place in education as a right. If the ministry of informed and reflective practitioners is superimposed on this scenario, MEAE at its best and healthiest may be seen as providing a holistic musical education for those with inclinations open to it. The aesthetic ideal is/was, of course, implicit; and, in this regard, ongoing philosophical enquiry had every right - indeed even a duty - to continue to appraise the validity of the ideal in a changing world. But the system itself and the underlying philosophy should not be confused when negative criticism is being levelled. Neither can stand or fall by calling up examples of the best and most inspiring teachers/teaching or of the unimaginative and uncommitted - an all-too-common and naïve approach to championship and its obverse - fault-finding.

MEAE had, therefore, to contend with public opinion inured to performance (rather than holistic musicianship) and the teacher training and employment pattern that bolstered it - formidable barriers to break through. It seems probable that it engaged with this scenario and that the best results were exemplary of their kind; certainly performance thrived and Reimer has, on many occasions, referred to this outcrop with cautious pride. But the benign fallback position of MEAE¹¹⁶ - the one which is now

¹¹⁶ It will be discovered from perusal of Reimer's *A Philosophy* that the model of MEAE sketched provides for

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used to denigrate it - was to rescue the dramatically disproportionate non-performing cohort of, potentially, some 90% of learners, and to give them an exposure to music, without doing violence to the real intent of their 'option', which surely must have been to minimize their involvement in the well-known technical challenges associated with even competent performance. [The writer is convinced that to speak of practical competence in the absence of skill acquisition is a nonsense. Time spent is the crucial factor here.]

It is arguable, from the best professional practice, that the receiver should not dictate the methodology used or the objectives aspired to; but the reality was that these learners had a stated commitment to a non-performing option – another formidable barrier for the would-be educator, already denying him/her one avenue of progress. But it is central to the MEAE rationale (and, indeed, *it* is consistent in upholding its commitment to the idea) that listening to music is, in itself, a fully-fledged and fertile musical activity, and worthy of pursuit in its own right. Reimer is eloquent, and pragmatic too, in his defence of its integrity. It is worth quoting him at length to show the common sense of his philosophy in this respect. He does *not* say that listening enriched with performing opportunities and skills would not be more fulfilling, if it were possible within time constraints and the need for hard-won physical skills; what he does offer is an encouraging prospect and serendipitous consequences for the vast majority who, through well-understood circumstances, find their involvements with music largely defined by and concentrated in their propensity to listen to it, without performing it themselves. Here is what Reimer has to say, in a US context admittedly, and it is unanswerable:

In fact, of course, practically all people in western cultures (and most other cultures) are music listeners, because even the small minority who are performers, composers, and conductors also listen to music other than the music they are producing at the time they produce it. The vast majority of people in our culture engage in music only by listening (with the exception that many sing occasionally, as in worship services, communal events, and so forth). Listening, then, is the one musical involvement germane to all people in our culture, and it is pursued regularly, avidly, in a great variety of ways, and at no small expense. (The Recording Industry Association of America reports that 12 billion dollars was spent on recorded music and music videos in 1994 - more than ever before in history.) That music education has poorly served the needs of people to become more perceptive, intelligent, discriminating listeners is perhaps our major failing, in that we have opted, instead, to focus our major efforts on helping the 15 percent or so of students who choose to learn to be performers.¹¹⁷

If listening is taught by discriminating, imaginative and reflective practitioners who are enthusiastic - of the kind that David Elliott seems to imply are rare, if not unknown, within the MEAE movement - then its fruits need not be painted like a still life in sombre and monotonous colours. But to suggest that this is the only activity to which MEAE can lay claim to promoting, and to the exclusion of all

performance in many contexts and for different objectives (see Chapter 9 of the 1989 edition).

¹¹⁷ Bennett Reimer, in *David Elliott's "New" Philosophy of Music Education: Music for Performers Only*, (Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, Spring 1996, No 126), 75 [MEND 403, 12].

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others, is a gross misrepresentation of its intent. That there may be instances of this folly is possible, but in the writer's opinion, they cannot be taken as typical, and they certainly belie the underlying philosophy.

There is a very simple and obvious correlation to be drawn from Reimer's words, too. If listening is the virtually universal form of engagement with music and if it is, as it should be, a respected form of independent activity (and Elliott, in the ultimate, does not deny this either), it should be taught. The place to do this, at its most fundamental, is in schools, which act as the throughput net for the overwhelming majority of people in western-type societies (including Ireland), as already alluded to. Three of Reimer's ways of knowing – *within*, *about* and *why* – are admirably served by cultured, informed and well guided listening. But David Elliott has other ideas, based on the *how*, which arguably discriminate against listening as an unattached activity of pure concentration on the sounds received, unencumbered by the physical and mental processes of actually creating those sounds in the first place: 'In sum, educating competent, proficient, and expert listeners for the future depends on the progressive education of competent, proficient music makers [performers]¹¹⁸ in the present.'¹¹⁹

Since listening and music-making (performing being typical) loom large in this irreducible essence of what separates Reimer from Elliott, it is clearly necessary that these two activities should be closely examined in their educational contexts to establish whether the two points of view are reconcilable. The Viennese music philosopher, Victor Zuckerkandl, epitomizes the challenge to music education and music educators in his passionate plea for a unifying formula to empower the musicality of all men:

It is a matter of fact that in its highest development music separates people rather than uniting them. There may be many listeners, but many more never listen, and among those who do listen only a few will really be able to hear what goes on. ... Are we not, then, bound to conclude that in its highest and strictest sense music is the special possession of a very small minority? Ought not our conceptions of music and musicality take this fact into account?... To be sure, the confrontation with a musical masterpiece seemingly divides people rather than uniting them; only a small band is being united, clustering around the work, separated from those who may give occasional attention and go away unaffected, and from all the rest who are too distant to be aware of the music at all. But only a very superficial view could conclude that music does not concern all these others too, that it does not exist for them at all. Beethoven wrote the words 'From the heart - may it reach other hearts' before the opening chords of his *Missa Solemnis*. Was he thinking only of the musically gifted? ... it is addressed to all, to the whole of mankind, to the human heart ... just as many may share in a new illumination without

¹¹⁸ The bracketed intervention is Reimer's; in fairness to Elliott's defended position it is spurious and clearly intended to be pejorative.

¹¹⁹ David Elliott, *Continuing matters: Myths, Realities, Rejoinders*, a response to Reimer's review of *Music Matters*, in the *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 1996, 17. [MEND 416, 14].

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seeing the source of the light. In this sense the greatest works of art – and indeed particularly the greatest – are, if not addressed to all, created for all.¹²⁰

And, elsewhere, Zuckerkandl writes with equal passion:

Precisely because music is a miracle, incomprehensible in the framework of the dominant mode of contemporary thinking, impossible to fit into the current conception of the world - a miracle not only in its greatest and most splendid, its most exceptional, manifestations, *but in its plain fundamentals* [writer's italics], precisely because of all this it is our duty to think about it. The purpose is not a rationalization, a setting aside of the miraculous. Thought that is true to its subject does not annul miracles. It penetrates the fog around them; it brings them out of darkness into the light.¹²¹

The elitist tone of the first mellows into the comfortable domesticity of the second quotation. Together they sound the imperative in music education to focus on these two faculties - performing and listening - to define their true character and function - most of all their complementarity - and to ensure that they be reconciled into that balanced relationship if music, in all its forms, is to attain its ultimate goal of reaching all human hearts. And Zuckerkandl is still prodigal with apt words when addressing the idea of opposing but complementary forces (the reader should feel free to substitute the art/pop dichotomy or that of performing and listening as a pair): 'only if the mediators are balanced and in a sound state is the soundness of the whole guaranteed. ... the incontestable advantage of sticking to the facts as we experience them and explaining them adequately ... is that it cannot be gainsaid that the evidence of our experience does not support any high-flown claims to universal validity'. And the undeniable fact is that, for the overwhelming majority, when their truck with or dream of performance is over, if they ever indulged it, they are left with listening alone. The question is whether, if the balance in their musical education had been tipped towards holism, they would be better equipped for the reality, and listen more effectively. The answer is clear. And Reimer adds 'Performance is an essential component but insufficient on its own to carry the entire weight of the music education enterprise at this point in history'¹²².

There is no intention that the reader should infer from the above that MEAE is being proposed as flawless. It has served music education (as Hanslick's nineteenth century diatribe, *On the Beautiful in Music*, served the art music of his time by laying down discriminatory canons) through insisting that a code of ethics, drawn from the theory of art, be invoked in choosing educational materials and method, and in highlighting the characteristics, within the materials and the experience, that are most to be valued. This is worthy in itself and probably broadly unexceptionable to the vast majority who think it

¹²⁰ Victor Zuckerkandl, *Man the Musician* (Princeton N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 18-19.

¹²¹ Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol* (Princeton N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1956; paperback 1969, Second printing 1973), 6.

¹²² Bennett Reimer, *David Elliott's "New" Philosophy of Music Education: Music for Performers Only*. Review in *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, Spring 1996, No 128, 61. [MEND 403, 2].

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through without any prejudicial notions, but it is potentially out of phase with some social norms evolving since its introduction; these tend to be more liberal in their attitudes to a wider variety of musics that MEAE has had difficulty in confronting as to their conforming to its canons or as suitable in education. Elliott concedes – that ‘while I argue also that while no Music is innately superior to any other, some musical practices may be *educationally* more appropriate than others’¹²³.

There is a great deal of fear, as there is also a polar attraction, in the popular perception of music as art; but the stronger emotion, mistrust of the arcane, the mysterious and the *difficult*, finds a convenient quarry in MEAE and its association, by definition, with art and the aesthetic idea, seen as elitist and exclusive in intent. But why all this consternation in the face of art? In an age which disdains hierarchies, is it passé to claim that music as art is answering to its highest calling? Stated simply - as abilities, talent and genius are not evenly distributed in humans, so musics, as their output, are not all equal, in their specifics or in their collectivity. It would be a negation of man’s powers of judgement to claim that they are. All musics are owed parity of esteem in their right to engage, initially, people’s curiosity in educational enterprise, but all must submit to judgement and the value based on it.

Art is a celebration of the threateningly unspecific, the turmoil in which we are constantly made aware that our questions outnumber our answers, in which we are called to interpret, to search for meaning, often at the deepest levels of our consciousness. Art is uniquely human; it confers on man (generic) the demiurgic qualities of giving substance to his innermost feelings. That it is cognate with virtually all music, few will deny (‘All art aspires to the condition of music’, as Walter Pater so eloquently puts it)¹²⁴, unless they have a specific agenda for so doing. But let such agendas look to their possible consequences and at least not reject the advantages, in education too, that accrue to traditional and intuitive understandings and that merit their retention, *inter alia*.

Music is, for most, a journey in search of what is beautiful. Without fear of giving hostage to either of the protagonists in this philosophical drama, let it be said that music is not only about products, but is about the activities that arise from them, too. And aesthetics merely places these activities under a scrutinizing lens. As Collingwood reminds us, ‘aesthetic theory is the theory not of beauty but of art. ... the quality [of beauty], invented to explain the activity, being in fact nothing but the activity itself, falsely located not in the agent but in his external world’.¹²⁵ Art is communication, expression, and implies inseparable dualities and complementarities - perception and response, objective and

¹²³ David Elliott, *Of Irish Myth: A Response to Harry White*, (College Music Symposium, Journal of the College Music Society, Volume 38 [1998]), 67. [MEND 417, 4].

¹²⁴ Walter Pater, “The School of Giorgione”, in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance - Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873; reprint New York: Mentor Press, 1959), 140.

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subjective, product and process, active and passive, giving and receiving and so on; it is that which challenges our interpretative powers and, as Annette Barnes so wisely observes, ‘when its claim to art is defeated, it loses its interpretation and becomes a mere thing.’¹²⁶ Is that the fate to which humans would condemn their own creation?

While a case has never been seriously made for the indiscriminate inclusion, in principle, of all musics in education, it is still easy to demonize MEAE as representing the *establishment* with its exclusions but, more seriously, of highlighting and institutionalizing the cleavage¹²⁷ between the totality of music in the community and music in education. Whether it is possible to bridge this gap is one of the great unanswered questions of evolving music education strategy. Even Elliott is cautious about musical admissions to education as his remark above illustrates. Although the dissonances are somewhat less serious than they are painted, it would nevertheless be prudent for MEAE and its underpinning philosophy to move towards greater détente with and accommodation of musical experiences on the weaker side of the artistic spectrum, notably those in which craft is obvious and in which the balance of their ‘usefulness’ responds more to musical, and therefore artistic (words dear to David Elliott), than to purely social criteria. No, MEAE as the defendant on a charge of elitism is falsely indicted; there is a more prosaic reason for its finding itself the scapegoat in disenchantment with progress in music education.

The predestined¹²⁸ failure of MEAE has been that it never had, or was permitted to have, widespread applicability in its philosophically pure form. So it has always been vulnerable to the accusation that it was a party, however proportionately innocent, to the consolidation, by the mere fact of engagement with it, of a damaging dichotomy between performing and general streams of music education, in which neither was well served, in spite of the spectacular results of a minority. It is desirable, approaching the ultimately idealistic, that performing *and* general streams should be concentrated in schools. In this America has vast potential, as indeed it could eventually be an almost Utopian paradigm for less prosperous economies. It is also desirable that specialization in performance (with its massive commitment to time spent) should be optional. How then can two streams with different

¹²⁵ R G Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 41.

¹²⁶ Annette Barnes, *On Interpretation – A Critical Analysis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988), 167.

¹²⁷ The reader is again referred to note 31. Music in the community is taken to be biased towards popular forms and therefore this cleavage mentioned here is what Reimer refers to as the ‘pop’/high culture dichotomy in MEND 402 (*qv*).

¹²⁸ It is argued in this thesis that MEAE (as the authentic application and mirror, in practice, of Reimer’s *A Philosophy*) never functioned in its wider, complete dispensation, but was shanghaied into service (with the traditional performing stream already historically and immutably in place ‘sans MEAE’) - into benignly servicing the reluctant non-performing stream. It is this caricature of MEAE that is being targeted as a predestined failure. The author sees much confirmation of Reimer philosophy in the Voluntary National Standards, which may now fertilize the situation anew for the reconstituted 100% cohort.

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objectives be combined in a single dispensation which guarantees for all an acceptable standard of musicianship?

The answer to the conundrum is that the system needs, in the first place, the backing of legislation to give authority to curriculum developers to ensure that differing needs are appropriately met. The US now has this legislation, albeit in federal law which still defers to the individual states for the enactment of details; the principle is established but it is difficult to see how uniformity can be achieved. In Ireland there is no such caveat. But ... Ireland has a national curriculum that is not fully geared to the accommodation of the performing stream at proficient levels; it recognizes its existence and facilitates it (as an import from the private sector) in examination credits, but it does not embrace it. The same can be said of official policy to Irish traditional music [ITM] in education (see the review of Ó Súilleabháin's Phase III interview [MEND 306]). This is a serious drawback to the potential of the national curriculum to do more than guarantee a flimsy presence of relevant music in schools.

There might be a temptation here to identify and embrace David Elliott's philosophy as providing a solution to the associated problem. More and more the music education dilemma seems to hang on the way performance is accommodated within the total provision; obviously, in an Irish context, that calls for an examination of the provision outside of schools, since the latter do not minister satisfactorily to the need (ITM being another case in point). The nub of the problem is quite simple, but it precludes the ministry of the praxial philosophy, however well intentioned its aims. The answer is *not* to make skill-intensive activities such as performance mandatory for all in its skill-intensive forms. Performance is by nature a specialized activity, suited to the aspirations of some, but of a necessarily limited minority; it is mercilessly time-dependent and is therefore outside the scope of school exploratory offerings within general music education, as it is pure idealism to suppose otherwise. It cannot escape its association with levels of native talent, interest and commitment. It *must* be treated as a separate activity within this definition and provided for accordingly, not only in its own interests but to safeguard the majority from involvement by mandate. It should be available, accessible and affordable. If the levels of availability in Ireland fall below those in, say, the United States option system, the standards of achievement will be correspondingly disappointing and that particular essence of musical activity will be less functional as the boost to general well-being within the total dispensation that it ought to be.

It is unnerving to ponder the statistic that Americans spent twelve billion dollars (\$12,000,000,000!) on recorded music in 1994 (the year in which MEND was mooted) and the simple claim that listeners (virtually 100% of the population) have been poorly served¹²⁹ in education. Does there seem to be a

¹²⁹ This fairly strong criticism - poorly served - is based on a statement by Bennett Reimer (see MEND 403,12).

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massive contradiction here? A plethora of questions, many of them psychologically searching, arises from this juxtaposition and they are at the heart of current concerns.

1. What is the deepest activity-related motivation for engagement with music as a human pursuit - listening or performing? Is listening a satisfying vicarious acting-out of the 'performing fantasy' or simply the agent of some craving for hormonal release, and the associated enjoyment or pleasure, unrelated to conventional ambition or achievement?
2. Does listening to music, at this staggering published level of take-up, need the agency of music education at all - a grim possibility for music educators to consider, if the answer is no?
3. Is Reimer's claim - 'that music education has poorly served the needs of all people to become more perceptive, intelligent, discriminating listeners is perhaps our major failing' - evidence of a definite agenda in music education? Of course it is, but the observation is benign in intent. And is Elliott's constant invocation of the musical and artistic as the aim of music education any different in its objective? Of course not. Could there be trust in a music education philosophy unopposed, by nature, to the commercial exploitation of immature, indiscriminating and value-free taste represented by attributing, albeit with a judgemental edge, the purchase of approximately 6 CDs per annum to every adult American? Is it to be that 'anything goes', that there are to be no standards for criticism at all? The answer is still 'no' to both questions.
4. What then is to be the role of music education in relation to the population at large? Surely this is a valid and burning question if it is to be relevant to the cultural advancement of society - and no other brief can be tolerated? Is it or society well served by an assertion of the inherent equality of all music cultures, or is it now permissible to interpret this as meaning that specific musics cannot be denied that starting position until the powers of judgement and discrimination have pronounced otherwise? Equality is not an unmarked and value-free concept; it predicates comparison, which in turn suggests judgement, if it is to have any significance. Is music education therefore empowered to implement its agenda to sharpen those powers by the systematic application of principles honoured with universal validity? Or is there to be nothing absolute except the relative – an impossible prospect? Where does the process start? It seems like an exercise in reinventing the wheel to suggest that we are dealing here with the evolution of the principles of art. But within those canons, let the definitions accommodating current contexts be anchored in flexibility.

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If, as it now seems reasonable to assume, music education has an implicitly hierarchical view of musics (though not necessarily by *genre*) which is largely unrelated to the evolution of listening preferences in society, how then does it retain its relevance to the needs of society at large if it is to justify its place in education? Is it caught, then, between the Scylla and Charybdis of irrelevance in the face of a wanton population and the unprofessional watering down or repudiation of standards? Are judgement and value, the cornerstones of the educational edifice, sufficient to rescue it from its dilemma? Are both Elliott and Reimer, and indeed all other respectable philosophies of music education, not constraining all music to enter the same filtering manifold, with the finest mesh fashioned by the taste-refining method of reflective and discriminating practitioners? The hierarchy is real and serviceable after all, and conforms to the norms and expectations of society, in that it is not in conflict with the basic equality which is at the heart of true democracy.

Perhaps this is merely to confirm what Elliott meant by his statement about the *inherent* equality of all musical cultures, and neutralizes one area of concern in relation to his philosophy. Nor can Reimer be charged with an elitism that implicitly elevates western art music above all others, for this is not congruent with his or any other canon of aesthetics. This leads naturally to a consideration of standards; and fairly recent American travail in this respect is very worthy of consideration. The questions must be asked as to whether America is moving away from conceptual MEAE, trying new strategies and redefining educational challenges in a more user-friendly way. *Tout court*, is it (and is the rest of the developed world, too) trying to confront and come to terms with the abysmal cleavage, which at last is being acknowledged, and taken seriously, as separating classical ideas of music education from the popular understandings of the norms of participation in musical experiences outside its ambience?

6.4 The American National Standards (1992-1994)

Music Content Standards

Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
 Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
 Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
 Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
 Reading and notating music
 Listening to, analysing, and describing music
 Evaluating music and music performance
 Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
 Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

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Paul Lehman offers an admirable exposé (MEND 303)¹³⁰ of the history of the movement which culminated in the proposal of these standards for adoption by the federal authorities in the US. The standards are really remarkable in that there is scarcely an exceptionable word to be found - not surprising since they were drafted by a representative committee, a notionally perfect filtering instrument which, nevertheless, in seeking to neutralize conflict, always runs the risk of a certain blandness in output. That they were expertly fashioned is disguised by their simplicity and directness, and a pervasive feeling of adaptability which would find them scarcely at variance with similar statements emanating from other respected systems. Lehman's treatment of the difficulties encountered, from the earliest days of deep concern about the absence of the arts from the US Goals 2000 legislation to their subsequent and triumphant inclusion, is masterful in its succinctness and would suffer from over-abbreviation. But there are some crucial defining comments which feelingfully transcend the necessarily laconic style of the Standards themselves:

1. Standards summarize results sought, rather than activities. Standards place the emphasis on kids' needs rather than on adults' needs. They specify a destination but not a road map for getting there.
2. Standards are not a panacea for the problems of music education.
3. Standards are not a curriculum, though they provide a basis for one.
4. Standards don't promote any particular methodology.
5. Nothing should be called for in standards that isn't currently being demonstrated in practice. They should be based on the best current practices within the profession.
6. Standards should be ambitious and not a reflection of the *status quo* but a vision for the future. Standards are an aspiration.
7. Standards are unrealistic if a school doesn't offer a music programme or is content to offer the most watered-down bargain-basement curriculum it can and still maintain its accreditation.
8. Philosophy and practice are mutually reinforcing because philosophy provides a basis for practice and practice provides an opportunity to test and validate philosophy.
9. Speaking of music education in the US: ' ... performance plays a very important part in music at every level. The challenge now is to expand that emphasis to include analysis, music of other cultures, and so forth. ... we need a balance between the so-called "arts

¹³⁰ The paper presented by Dorothy Straub at MEND Phase II (MEND 205) is also recommended as supplementary material, though the content of both follows similar lines as far as National Standards are concerned.

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approach”, which emphasizes performance and creation, and the so-called “humanities¹³¹ approach”, which emphasizes analysis, criticism and history. ... the precise nature of that balance is subject to honest disagreement.’ Don’t wait until you have all the answers before you move forward.

10. Lack of time as an obstacle to the implementation of the curriculum is sometimes exaggerated. It is the only resource that is allocated with absolute and complete equality to every school in the world. Time is a false issue. The problem is not a lack of time; the problem is a lack of will masquerading as a lack of time. [Writer’s comment! Presumably Lehman is referring here to the total allocation of time to a school and not to the proportion of that time allocated to the music programme. His comment should therefore be interpreted in this context.]
11. (In the US) standards represent the closest thing we have to a statement of philosophy.
12. Implementation is the key issue. Reaching consensus on the standards, difficult as it may be, is easy compared with implementing them.
13. We can achieve marvellous things working together that we could never achieve working separately (speaking of coalition of the arts, a strategy very relevant to the Irish Academy for the Performing Arts).
14. We can’t teach things we can’t do. In-service and pre-service education for music teachers is a priority.
15. Education reform is largely political, not educational. And ‘all politics is local’ (quoting Tip O’Neill, Irish-American politician).
16. Standards emphasize evaluation and assessment. Standards do more than make assessment possible. They make it necessary. We cannot have standards without assessment. Assessment is not only helpful but inevitable. ‘I see assessment as the

¹³¹ The arts/humanities distinction is important in distinguishing school music, which might include pedagogical materials, from concert music. Elliott makes this distinction in his plea for music making; Reimer would encourage as much performance as time allows, if one considers singing as performance. The low percentage of students participating in music at secondary level in the US refers to those who continue to participate for more than one year (Reimer is the authority for the statistics on the uptake of music in American schools [MEND 402,4]). By comparison, there is no official provision within the Irish school music system for a school-based performance elective, although the performance option may be taken up in the Leaving Certificate examination, based either on imported skills (see *Deaf Ears?* Report) or derisory ‘intern’ standards, which are being tolerated to vindicate the option and to placate a disadvantaged cohort. This dangerous situation, which is making a mockery of standards, is dealt with in the thesis (see 6.4). When the author makes a plea for the acceptance by government of the resources responsibility to support the performance option, it is tantamount merely to a suggestion of bringing Irish norms up to the same level of expectation that exists for American students; either the performance elective should be available in school, or separate provision should be made in dedicated schools of music (or the private sector). But this is hardly to single it out as talent education, which refers to a rather higher level of giftedness and commitment.

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supreme challenge and the defining issue for music education in the coming decade' (Paul Lehman, MEND 303, November 1996).

17. Standards give a basis for rationalizing the entire educational process.
18. Standards clarify our expectations.
19. Standards bring equity to our expectations.
20. Standards move music beyond entertainment. Music is not simply an activity; ... it is based on learning specific skills. There is indeed an important body of skills and knowledge to be taught and learned.
21. Standards provide a basis for claiming needed resources ... and for insisting on qualified teachers. Discussions about specialists and classroom teachers become irrelevant because the label is irrelevant. What counts is the results.
22. Standards provide a vision for education.

Lehman's peroration is worthy of recollection as to its altruistic vision and its homely bite! **'... Music is vitamin M. It's a chocolate chip in the cookie of life. ... The only question, in both the United States and Ireland, is whether we want to limit access to music to those who can afford it or whether we want to make it available to all of our citizens to enjoy. I think the answer is clear.'**

The American standards documentation and the plenitude of Lehman's discussion in relation to it, provide further necessary and valuable information to inform the search for a contextual philosophy. They are, in the writer's view, eminently applicable to Irish music education, if indeed it might not be claimed that their general sense is already evident in recent curricular revision, though, based on the chronology alone, it is unlikely that they were invoked. They are agreeably non-contentious in nature because they are neither philosophically bound nor methodologically constrained. Their value lies in their potentially general acceptability to the widest spectrum of music educators, a very necessary criterion in the advocacy campaign which followed in their wake in the US.

As a starting point they are epochal, certainly in American music education. But, for all their seemingly innocuous statement of the seemingly obvious, they aim a lethal shaft, if adopted, at the very heart of American complacency with the *status quo* and the public perceptions that have always upheld it. They transcend, as they are inimical to, the imputed shortcomings of the two philosophies of music education that are being here appraised as to their relevance to the Irish context. Thus, while there is little doubt that performance-dominant music education will still thrive in the US, and through school dispensation, too, it will no longer be available to the exclusion of a balanced participation in all the other defined components that constitute a holistic exposure and absorption. Performance will

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still have a vibrant presence (that will cause no pain to either Reimer or Elliott), but it will be recognized, at its proficient level, for the specialization that it is, and must be, and it will be removed in that aspect from general music education. There will be a balanced programme mandatorily provided for *all* learners and, at least theoretically, this will not favour activity (including listening and performing as the two main components, if indeed either is a true hubris of MEAE or praxialism, as imputed) over other knowings of a more obviously academic mien. This substantial upheaval, and a new beginning, will have been achieved through the agency of the National Standards alone; no wonder Paul Lehman could celebrate their virtues. But Lehman sounds a warning about the difficulties of implementation.

‘The National Standards are not a curriculum, though they provide a basis for one - the closest thing the US has to a statement of philosophy’. This conveys that the Standards were indeed infused with curricular and philosophical thought, for the architects of the Standards must have been music educators of stature who were well versed in such matters. The Standards are a reconsidered response to the cumulative centuries-bred awareness of the benefits of music. In stating what is needed, they are responding to the question ‘how can there be music?’ rather than to the question ‘how can there be music education?’; and presumably, the underlying philosophy is similarly biased. Harry White’s aphorism may yet again be called into service for its precision in defining the critical but interim nature of the Standards benchmark. ‘The music, you might say, comes first’. They are also positioned on the first rung of the curricular ladder; they state what is intended with the hope that it will be still recognizable when implementation and delivery have been effected. This is the point at which the philosophers of music education make their entry and their input. It is also a useful point, in this study, to take stock of what may already be in place.

If Reimer’s acumen is trusted in defining the problems that are likely to be encountered (see Reimer’s response to Harry White’s *A book of manners in the wilderness* in Section 18.1.1 - Overview of Music Education Philosophy), the National Standards can be held up to that template. Although supporting documentation is also specific, an examination of the Standards themselves, in isolation, clearly defines a system of *school education* corresponding approximately to the Irish spectrum of primary and second-level education¹³²; that much is immediately relevant and in agreement with MEND ideas.

¹³² An examination of the documentation (published by An Roinn Oideachais [Dept of Education] and the NCCA) on the revised syllabus for Irish schools (Primary and Secondary [at junior and senior level]) would show that in dealing with the traditional parameters - Composing, Performing and Listening - they do not differ radically in principle from what is proposed in the American VNS. The question of time within the paradigm is, of course, related to how much time is allocated to music in the curriculum in the first place. This may vary between the US and Ireland; indeed, in the former case, it may differ considerably from state to state. What is being suggested here is that, within an assumed time constraint (after all the Goals 2000 legislation in the US is unlikely to have promised an expanded time allocation to music, since the arts had been [criminally!] excluded in the first place) all that is possible in schools would be Reimer’s ‘exploratory’ performance. Proficient levels

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But the Standards stop short at endorsing music education philosophy and method which concern themselves passionately with both repertoire (in a generic sense) and the crucial relationship/balance between performing and listening. What may be inferred, with ease, from the Standards is that ‘what *every* young American should know and be able to do in music’ at the end of the twelfth year of study is, indeed, a great deal in terms of the variety of the enabling repertoire, the skills and the understandings. But it is possible to infer much more.

With the implementation (whatever the state-by-state nuance) of such a mandatory programme, generality becomes the norm in which breadth is prized over depth - at least as far as the official mentality is concerned. There is no room within the paradigm for specialization which, by further inference, can and will exist outside the common denominator. Performance is by far the most sought-after specialization. Far from sounding the death-knell of performance as an option, the implementation of the National Standards will revitalize it in fructifying ways. It will identify the truly committed, but will empower them for greater achievement and enjoyment by equipping them with a higher level of imported musicianship. It will arrest the traffic in students joining the performance programme merely to escape the imputed doldrums, in the past, of the general programme. It will enable gifted (proficient and expert) performers to contribute enhancing experiences to the general programme without upsetting the delicate balance between the dimensions of the new curriculum, or expecting that the general level of performance within it can render that service, facing impossible challenges in the attempt.

The two-tier system will ensure that all learners have the opportunity to take performance at the level of their willingness to engage it beneficially. [In the writer’s view the two-tier (by definition multi-tiered) option (put another way, progressive specialization) is the only feasible solution when a necessary component in a general programme outgrows its aspirations and threatens balance and stability. The principle is well understood in its application at third, fourth and fifth levels of educational pursuit in universities.] It follows, too, that listening will not be inhibited by the need within the class to provide its own music - all the time. Balance, common sense and pragmatism will have their day. It is assumed that the demand for performance, which it is anticipated will not disappear, will still be met from within the school; otherwise the benefits of both systems will be lost

in the US would only be attainable by a ‘covert’ return to the old specialism idea (but also see treatment of this topic in succeeding paragraphs and in Footnote 72). In the case of Ireland, specialism within the paradigm for general music education would currently be impossible on the basis of all three criteria – available time, teaching expertise and other resources (instruments and dedicated teaching space). The author has also made the point several times that what has to be considered is the inculcation of a value system in equal increments of teaching/learning time. The author is convinced that, even discounting homework time, the efficiency of the so-called listening programme, with mere performing competence (rather than proficiency, by whatever definition), is greater in ministering to the statistical certainty that the vast majority of people are destined to become listeners to/consumers of music, hopefully appreciative ones.

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and the last state will be immeasurably worse than the first. Presumably the music education watchdogs will be vigilant lest their hard-won benefits should crumble at the hands of mischievous politicians with readjusted funding policies. The complementarity of the two programmes is quintessential if the fruits are to be worthwhile; but the prospects are heartening.

The applicability to Ireland is eminently plausible if the self-deception of current policy can be arrested and exposed. The MEND deliberations have been useful in throwing light on this and other aspects, such as electives and repertoire, dealt with below, and it would be nonsense to claim that the Irish curricular revision has replicated in a single provision the best features of the two-tier system described above just because of the accidental presence of a pitifully small cohort of good performers within it; that would be a return to the worst kind of duplicity exposed by the *Deaf Ears?* Report in 1985. But this is not to gainsay the laudable progress made by the Irish government-appointed music curriculum sub-committee. [And it should be remembered - in political terms too - that Ireland has been on the crest of an economic boom, as evidenced clearly by the importation of a labour force for the first time in history.] Can it now afford to dispense with the sham of proficient performance being claimed as a dimension to school output, as registered in the assessment procedures, and support it honestly?

The strange hybrid of performance specialization (or indeed any other) being available to students on the basis of their imported skills has been hailed as a breakthrough in educational accommodation. The sinister truth is that performers are also welcoming it as an opportunity to gain credits for their non-school-based expertise, without giving a thought to the price that posterity may have to pay for acquiescence in the delusion. The oldest trick in politics is the adaptability of short-term benefits to dodge the occasional embarrassment of being reminded of deeper responsibilities. The NCCA sub-committee is to be praised for coping, in a pragmatic way, with the not so subtle imposition of the bottom line on funding; but the music education dispensation, while it stands to gain from their input is still far from comparable with the potential of the remarkably similar American problem and its solution, simply because of the funding aspect.

The Irish system is on the brink of significant success, but a clearer understanding of the performance dilemma is a prerequisite. However, as regards the US, both performance and listening stand to gain from the implementation of the National Standards, in the wider sense of the readjustment of the balance between them, resulting from the implicit recognition of performance as a true elective, and a detachable specialization, by definition. If Irish music educators can embark on a campaign to obtain funding or subsidies for electives approved as being in the general interest (performing in music being one of them), they, too, can expect to see significant advances in the health of the national programme

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for arts education. In the US, the National Standards, in responding to the mandate which brought them into being and empowered them, have successfully ‘blown the whistle’ on the abuses by which the highly endowed performance stream has discriminated against all music education cohorts, including, ironically, themselves. Ireland should not disdain to search out the correspondences and to benefit from American experience; in this context the similarities are more significant than the differences, and are worth exploring.

As to Reimer’s other two concerns (outside of performance), they have to do with repertoire and indeed might be viewed as coalescing into a single generic issue which attempts to grapple with the time-sensitivity alone of opening educational doors to all musics - quite apart from their suitability, to which many standards of judgement can be applied. Here it is a different story with the National Standards. They would have split the carefully-constructed music education coalition along partisan lines if they had become embroiled in that delicate question. And so they are vague and inscrutable; in vain can they be searched for guidance. There is little to be made of the bland statement of content which specifies a ‘varied repertoire of music’. And yet the issue must be confronted if the ultimate conversion of the Standards into a workable curriculum and syllabus is to be achieved. Reimer is right; this is a major problem and could be a Pandora’s box once the search for repertoire begins. In a system such as the American, with a high degree of local autonomy, this dilemma may very well be sorted out in a contextual way which takes into account the racial and social circumstances of particular communities; but this does little to come to an understanding of the deeper concerns which call for solutions approaching universal validity and adaptability.

Many will argue, and convincingly too, that the subdivision of music - typically into art, folk, popular, multicultural, etc. - is largely artificial and is belied by the equalizing forces of multivalence, interpenetration and hybridization. How, then, can a satisfactory criterion be arrived at in deciding on the suitability of one type of music over another? The decision is pressing; it cannot wait and it cannot be ignored. The ultimate levelling agent of the availability of time, particularly in the constrained ambience of a general music programme in schools, must have priority in ordering the other factors. An array of questions¹³³ must be answered:

1. What is the assessable first culture¹³⁴ experience of the cohort to be taught and is it uniform across the matrix of cells? Continuity is also a criterion.

¹³³ These seven questions refer only to the subset of Multiculturalism, which is, however, as the author asserts, an important aspect of the study as a pressing context in Irish music education (and therefore a MEND concern) and because the multicultural issue looms large in the wider Elliott/ Reimer documentation listed as relevant to the philosophical analysis (see footnotes to 5.1 and 5.4 for details).

¹³⁴ First culture experience is that which is imported from the home, possibly deriving from ‘ethnicity’, combined with informal learning experiences brought to the classroom ambience under consideration.

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2. What is the relevance of the music chosen as a confirmation of identity or, alternatively, as a justifiable expansion of horizons beyond that of the reigning culture?
3. What criteria of judgement can be applied to test the excellence of the music in a way which is also consistent with its function and its accessibility for the learners?
4. Is there a consensus philosophy of music education underpinning the decisions, and are teachers versed in its tenets?
5. Is there a consistent methodology for the teaching of the chosen music, and are teacher training and on-the-spot expertise congruent with this?
6. What is the ‘coefficient of authenticity’, cultural and educational, in the resultant experience? What criteria are applied to establish its musical intrinsicity over and above the aims of other agendas?
7. Is the enabling curriculum part of an arts education programme and, if so, is it consistent with its ethos?

Reimer may be right in seeing the art/pop dichotomy and the post-modern multicultural issue as psychologically separate. He alluded to them directly in his response to Harry White (5.2.1 {MEND 402, 5}) in relation to the challenge facing the implementation of the National Standards. And it is no small wonder how misconceptions about definition can enter the popular mentality and defy logic. Thus there is an intuitive understanding as to what the domain of ‘pop’ embraces, but an all-too-easy acceptance of mutual exclusivity when it is compared with so-called art music.¹³⁵ The term ‘art/pop dichotomy’, in the sense of inimical mutuality, is arguably a misnomer - an oxymoron - when applied to education; it has been unnecessarily and divisively judgement- and value-laden, as if there is no possibility of peaceful coexistence, mutuality, integration and complementarity between the musics so differentiated. The task of music educators is surely not to widen an illusory chasm by acquiescing in the idea of its existence and its polarities in the first place - but to combat the associated prejudices to show that they are without substantial foundation in educational terms, and to ply a methodology which consolidates that view. There is a profusion, and confusion, of ideas, which must be brought to order and compatibility if the tensions of this perceived cleft are to be safely discharged and not to escalate into insupportable crisis. And it might, therefore, be as well to see this problem in isolation from the multicultural issue, since it is more concerned with real hierarchical and intellectual

¹³⁵ The implementation of the VNS must grapple with questions of choice of repertoire. And yes, these questions have to do with schooling. Reimer’s three commanding concerns for present day music education must surely be relevant to the field of applicability of the VNS. It is inevitable that there would be interpenetration of the two thesis strands at this point. The VNS are a kind of blueprint for philosophy (Lehman - MEND 303) and must lead on to the curricular choices of syllabus and method. Therefore literature is an outcome of or evolution from philosophical considerations.

snobbery; multiculturalism, on the other hand, has largely emanated from an impeccable source in the ethnomusicological interests of the greater institutions of learning.

1. Some, though not all, pop music is easily linked to the post-1960s syndrome of cultism and the challenge to established authority. It is a sociological phenomenon for which the music is merely a convenient vehicle. It is arguable that music in this classification, which may merely mirror reactionary defiance and non-musical gratification, is, by nature and definition, incompatible with normal educational practice and unsuitable as repertoire. It has its place in third- and higher level studies in social anthropology, sociology and related studies. It is, withal, entitled to consideration if it can pass muster in accordance with agreed criteria.
2. ‘Music for easy listening’, which is audience-friendly, immediate and overtly, though perhaps at times deceptively, simple in presentation, may very well define the popular label. But the definition is generally adaptable, even desirable as a goal, and may straddle a wide variety of musics.
3. At a less aggressive level, devotees of popular music may subconsciously harbour resentment of the privileged position of western art music (WAM) in education (this is a theme which has surfaced significantly several times in Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin’s MEND presentations [MEND 120 and 306]). As a form of people power, it may be fuelling the offensive against WAM as the established and preferred vehicle in education. A campaign so based may lack intellectual substance and advocacy; but it is not less dangerous on that account. On the other hand, the case for popular music is compromised in the suspicious mind of the Epicurean by the perceived machinations of market forces. This is Harry White’s theme, but he should remember that it is not aversion to WAM but capitulation to or being overwhelmed by commercialism that characterizes the American music education dilemma.
4. To draw on Ó Súilleabháin again, he observes that ‘popular music has a habit of looking after itself outside of the school system, but the school system can have a special place to play in reflection [on], I suppose, or re-evaluation of what that music is which is so close to the majority of students in the classroom’ (MEND 306, 2). And is it too judgemental, or merely being cavalier, for Bennett Reimer to claim, in relation to some of the more ‘extreme’ forms of pop, that ‘we can bypass such music safely because few youngsters would expect or want it to be brought into school’?¹³⁶ But in current circumstances it is not so easy to ignore the pressures of popular forms for inclusion in the curriculum. One

¹³⁶ Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education* (rev. 1989), 144.

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wonders whether Ó Súilleabháin has not ‘hit the nail on the head’. Popular music, in its finest manifestations, has something to bring and to add to the educational experience, but it is almost a natural outcome of its popular status that it needs little advocacy in education itself; nor is it, typically, likely to offer to educational method its most searching challenges. It is WAM which needs advocacy, and the reason is clear.

5. Harry White in his defence of WAM, and its benefits in music education, describes its plight with scintillating imagery. ‘A European art form which rivals literature in its range and depth of feeling, structure and historical engagement withers and dies under the incessant pressure of “Me” and “Mine” and the present tense of American popular culture.’ And a pair of short eighteenth century quotations place the matter in further unambiguous perspective. On the one hand ‘music is a secret and unconscious mathematical problem of the soul’¹³⁷; on the other it is ‘a method of employing the mind, without the labour of thinking at all, and with some applause from a man’s self’¹³⁸. Could any juxtaposition more succinctly summarize the problem? WAM, like the mathematical calculus or organic chemistry, is educationally challenging, absorbingly appealing to some - but *difficult*. Is this a reason why they should all be deprioritized in education, ignoring their underlying usefulness in underpinning many other related but dependent activities; would such be tolerated in the sciences? It is precisely because it is difficult that it must be retained and with a share proportional to its usefulness. And it is for education to uphold and protect that usefulness, without, however, additionally disdaining to justify it in advocacy or policy statements.
6. The enabling repertoire is only a small, albeit a crucial, part of the educational construct. Of equal, if not transcending importance, are the underlying rationale and its associated literature – the informing philosophy, the curriculum development, the pedagogy and method, the assessment procedures, the whole paraphernalia of how these components relate and interact. It is arguable that these have evolved from the same stream of scholarship that might be suspected of supporting the aesthetic model in the first place, presenting a virtually impregnable citadel of learning-centred and concept-driven education in ‘closed shop’. But it is as appropriate to appraise what popular music forms bring to this system, as it is to observe and complain of what they take from it. In the interests of the dependency of the whole dispensation (all musics included) on the norms of educational practice that have evolved from the canons of WAM, it would be prudent to retain what is most serviceable and to make that effort with a confidence based on and

¹³⁷ Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz 1714, taken from John Amis and Michael Rose, *Words about Music; An Anthology* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1989), viii-ix.

¹³⁸ Samuel Johnson quoted by Boswell 1785, taken from John Amis and Michael Rose, *Words about Music; An*

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worthy of its value. It is axiomatic that vulnerability is to be found in the weakest link; it is paradoxical that the educational edifice should be in danger of collapsing on the topic of repertoire, arguably its most assailable flank, when its strongest member (WAM), with its armoury of justifications, has allowed itself to be painted into the corner of apologizing for its very existence. Or is it merely a question of who wants to consider cold logic in these days of rampant iconoclasm? It is not a matter of re-establishing the stranglehold of WAM, but of retaining a balance which allows it to survive in education - if not even with some gratitude for its timeless contribution, at least for the unsung but manifold and indispensable benefits which its panoply of services continues to guarantee. In the urgency of cleansing the system of its abuses and tyranny, and of establishing a new order, let us not ‘throw out the baby with the bathwater’.

7. This apologia for WAM may pale beside the lofty eloquence of Harry White; but neither should blind us to the need to consider the merits of other musics in education. So what, first, of so-called popular music in education? If the more and more questionable educational distinctions between it and WAM are accepted, how can we essay an imperceptible blend which removes the odorous sense of hierarchy, as centred in the genres themselves, and leaves neither compromised? We cannot eradicate the perceived difficulties of WAM, but we can minimize them by inspirational method; David Elliott’s maxim of matching musical challenges to the level of musicianship confronting them is admirable in this respect (*MM*, 122). We cannot gainsay the natural advantage of popular music’s immediacy, but we can contextualize it into its most fruitful serviceability in education, commensurate with its value. And how is this value assessed? The value of all music is surely its relevance to its function - its ability to bring human consciousness and give unique human expressiveness to that which its function demands. Expressiveness invokes the idea of human feeling, much less that of emotional discharge; it is more redolent of subjectivity and of a pervasive condition *within* than of the need to dissipate that inwardness indiscriminately. When expressivity is aided by craft it becomes art, not in the narrow aesthetic sense of Hanslick’s *sui generis* upliftedness, but in the comfortable sense of the mysterious and the mimetic, fulsome with intrinsicity, that is so well appreciated. To apply the criteria of craft and feeling (expressiveness) then, as so expertly laid out by Reimer in his book¹³⁹, is to treat all music as innately equal, in the best and most democratic sense, and to test it in the crucible of artistic aspiration. No music is excluded, there are no preconceived hierarchies, and there is no hiding place for the falseness of mindless taste or indiscriminate claims. The bluff is called on the “Me”

Anthology (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1989) viii-ix.

¹³⁹ Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education* (rev 1989), 133-138.

and “Mine” and the present tense of American popular culture’; music, and music education too, are emancipated from the threatening tyranny of false dichotomies.

6.5 Multiculturalism (MC)

Of all the topics discussed at MEND, the latter-day cult of multiculturalism - novel, fashionable, seemingly fulsome with ideas and potential to expand musical experiences to undreamed-of levels of diversity, burnished with all the glamour of information technology and contemporary communication systems - had the least conclusive of outcomes. It enjoyed kaleidoscopic treatment, from the cautious optimism of scholars who were more comfortable with its base in higher-level education - to the offerings of philanthropic enthusiasts who were more convinced and vocal about its benefits in education than they were mindful of the associated problems - to the scepticism of those who had reached the appraisal stage as to its track record, and were posing a new set of questions as to the nature of its place in education.

Without gainsaying the incalculable wealth of music at its disposal - the potential of multiculturalism to saturate the individual ear with judicious choices from its treasury, and collective consciousness with a new-found certainty of the universality and variety of musical experience and music-making - it may also be seen as the voice of conscience, a sudden monumental ‘discovery’ by some musicians of the western tradition that other musics exist and that they are abundant, interesting, often sophisticated and professionally charged - and challenging, too, to ideas of educational holism. In a world where every branch of human discourse has been subjected to radical rationalization, it may be suspected that political correctness has led WAM to reappraise its conquistadorial attitudes of cultural supremacy to reach détente with all other musics. MC is, then, paradoxically an outgrowth of western culture, although there are other more charitable and partisan explanations as to how the multicultural idea has progressed.¹⁴⁰ Its history spans little more than half a century: its ascendancy has yet to establish itself convincingly.

It is axiomatic, in a world largely dominated by western ideas and under the spell of western scholarship, that other musics could not have escaped its insatiable appetite for new conquests in the field of knowledge, in this instance social anthropology which, in the case of music, branched into the

¹⁴⁰ Professor Ramon Santos from the Philippines (a non-western culture) with a serious commitment to a pragmatic MC which concentrates on the music of the Western Pacific rim, understandably gives an non-western (complementary) view, which is, nevertheless, eminently plausible. He sees MC as a reactionary post-colonial phenomenon, a nationalistic emblem aimed at the recognition and preservation of endangered non-western musics, the possibilities of widespread cross-fertilization and the mitigation of the destructive self-interest of so-called Eurocentricity.

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discipline of ethnomusicology. What is so amazing is the speed at which it established a kind of moral order which quickly outran the clinical study of the musics of other cultures and began to demand that they infuse the educational process in the West with the absolute democracy of total multiculturalism. That ethnomusicological consciousness, or ambition in its designs on the educational field, was fuelled by the multicultural ambience in the United States, is also probable; it must certainly have been appreciative of the nudge. Such alluring maxims as achieving 'parity among the world's musics - a true musical and cultural democracy' and 'breaking down social and international barriers to celebrate our humanness as citizens of a global village' flow freely in the advocacy literature for multiculturalism.

The feasibility of the dream in its grander aspiration, though still relevant, was naturally of less interest at MEND than its implications for Ireland - and for what was seen as a limited plurality of indigenous cultures currently confining us to, at most, three distinguishable streams - art, popular and Irish traditional music. And there has even been a tendency to further simplify the problem educationally into an ideological confrontation between traditional and other WAM-related musics - the bicultural view - but this is locked into the whole process as to how cultural difference is defined in the first place. The crisis, if it is recognized as such, is not solved by the superimposition of the multicultural campaign.

It became obvious during MEND that the practice of multiculturalism has not nearly settled down as yet to a consensus view. As perusal of the papers presented will show, internal inconsistencies abound, simply because such a range of possible applications is sketched that the term becomes nebulous, without a determinate meaning; it is reduced to an attitude or openness, to musics outside current experience, which can vary from evangelical fervour and total conviction to a mere tolerance akin to indifference. The National Standards in the US are (necessarily) so bland in their avoidance of advocacy that they could easily be interpreted as a consolidation of the *status quo* by anyone with an agenda so targeted. Thus multiculturalism could be seen as a serious threat to the stability of the system, if it could be imposed in one of its more extreme forms - or merely as a frill, not without its usefulness but to be adopted or ignored at will. The irony of the situation in the US, where the multicultural campaign is being fought, is that the battle is likely to resemble hand-to-hand combat, where every inclusion will be at the discretion of a local authority; advocacy will need the service of a taut and convincing rationale and prejudice can always have its day.

The mix of the multicultural menu in any situation will respond to the context but, other things being equal, it will and must stand or fall at every inclusion, even of individual items, on the criterion of quality. As an opening gambit it might seem to convinced multiculturalists that their campaign would

be helped by a feigned levelling procedure implying that all musics are equal. It was bound to come to this; the idea is superficially attractive (based on notions of the ‘brotherhood of man’ and ‘the global village’), but it is both meaningless and insidious. Multiculturalism and the simulated equality of all musics form a natural, convenient and predictable liaison, which has served its purpose in deceiving the unwary and impressionable, but the idea is a hubris that will eventually come to haunt the perpetrators.

To be fair to the varied statements tending towards this view in MEND documentation, they are mostly qualified, and not without skill, to safeguard the fragility of the assertion. David Elliott speaks of *innate* equality – an elliptical term; let him be given the benefit of the doubt by assuming that he means *provisional* equality, an innocuous claim, though his thesis does not eventually bear this out. Equality (or inequality) may be assumed until it is defeated; but, like a theorem in Euclidian geometry, it must be proved before the next logical step is attempted. We cannot assume a fact because it cannot be proved otherwise; that is a nonsense. And it is not to deny, either, that the necessary proofs are not readily available in musical contexts (see Reimer’s *Philosophy* [1989] pp133-138). The equality issue is insidious because it does a disservice to multiculturalism, which should not have to rely on such a shaky foundation - and merely for the uncritical acceptance of the many undoubted excellences which it invaginates. It is insidious, too, because it undermines the whole educational edifice by denying the powers of judgement. Pragmatism, on which the success of the whole educational system depends, is the cumulative essence of myriad judgements and their consequences. To put aside the functions of judgement or to declare them inappropriate or ineffective is to engage in relativism, which does not serve the search for excellence well.

The following emerges as a summary of germane observations from MEND on the subject of MC¹⁴¹:

1. Total multiculturalism is an implausible ideal and aspiration in education. This is obvious by juxtaposing the overwhelming scope of world music (its repertoire alone) and the merciless constraints of the time factor in education at all levels, especially in the general programmes at second-level. This aspect of multiculturalism can only be confronted, and even then with definitive incompleteness, in higher education. There is (or will be), however, a need for multicultural teaching competences to be developed in third level teacher programmes as a prerequisite to the satisfactory spread of MC in any form which is worthy of the name. MEND documentation, however, is much more convincing in locating MC, as an offshoot of ethnomusicology, most comfortably within third-level education, than in establishing its relevance within general music education at

¹⁴¹ ‘Pop’ is not excluded from consideration in the overall brief of this thesis, but the section being considered here (6.5) is specifically devoted to multiculturalism and would only involve ‘pop’ where the two overlap.

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lower levels. This, of course, is a developing situation in which emphasis can change if it is a part of vibrant and systematic policy and the decisions that flow from it.

2. Modified multiculturalism has, by definition, the adaptability to be compatible with many approaches to music education. Most contemporary music education is multicultural by definition; the so-called biculturalism issue in Ireland is also covered as a subset. But it is unlikely that these applications would satisfy convinced multiculturalists. Definitions are, withal, rather discretionary in the documentation. Versions of modified MC that are practised include:
 - i) Choosing particular ethnicities to correspond with the mix as encountered in the particular class situation. But this is reactive MC; it arguably defeats its own purpose in being a form of ethnocentricity, and, in content, it is unstructured as a model of repertoire suitable for general application.
 - ii) Choosing, eclectically, the best materials to give a flavour (which may be coloured by the prejudice of the chooser) of what is desirable.
 - iii) Illustrating concepts in one culture through relevant examples from another. Taking the time constraints into account, this may be all that is possible in a general music education programme. It is superficial and smacks of minimal compliance and the amateurism of the non-specialist teacher. It lacks the depth of a real commitment to MC as a significant component in a holistic approach to music education. It is nevertheless approved of in multicultural circles as a step in the right direction.

It should be noted that there are copious materials commercially available in the US to boost multicultural effort. These are often encapsulated in comprehensive methodology packs; they are expensive and are compromised by an aura of commercialism. On the other hand, there were persistent complaints at MEND about the paucity of materials in Ireland, especially of a kind that married traditional method with relevant offerings and systematically researched workings from indigenous folk music sources (see Albert Bradshaw - MEND 103).

3. It is not clear whether multicultural method envisages a holistic involvement in composing, performing and listening. It does seem, however, that ideas so far developed centre on performance or attempted performance of the music itself. MC may therefore be seen as boosting the performing function.
4. A strong consensus about the importance, even the dominance, of WAM in education (its panoply of method, well-researched and classified repertoire and assessment procedures)

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is still evident, even amongst multiculturalists. This, of course, applies particularly to education systems within the western tradition.

5. In approaching multicultural repertoire, choices should be influenced by musical considerations rather than respond to the additional bonus of musically ‘extrinsic’ benefits, such as reduction in mutual alienation, the development of tolerance, empathizing, general collaborative skills and teamwork, self-esteem and a host of transferable skills; these latter should be viewed as beneficial consequences but not as priorities. The music itself and its intrinsicity must be paramount. But this cautionary advice is not peculiar to MC.
6. The importance of judgement and valuing should not be denied in MC.
7. Depth over breadth is the preferred method in MC. Concentration rather than dilution is to be encouraged as an approach. Therefore teach fewer cultures in greater depth. If the music is to be performed or taught interactively, concentrated repetitive practice must be carried out in preparation, implying the inculcation of skills. There is a significant time dimension to be taken into account.
8. MC presupposes a purpose-trained teaching cohort of considerable sophistication, depending on the scope being attempted. It is unlikely that anything other than the most rudimentary exposure could be attempted by non-specialist teachers; this would be a problem in Irish primary education and it could spill over into second-level.
9. MC, if adopted as an additional dimension of music curriculum, should be fitted into a programme of music education balanced to include all of the time-honoured components (see the US National Standards MEND 303). Traditional repertoires should be supplemented by world musics. Blend the ‘old’ with the ‘new’. If a ‘structure of disciplines’ approach is the norm (teaching concepts), examples from non-western world music might be used for illustration purposes in western-type teaching. Shehan Campbell insisted on the right of world music to be *blended* into the curriculum, without, however, usurping it.
10. The concentric circle model for music education was proposed at MEND by several respected practitioners. This proceeds from an inner core of so-called first culture experiences (musical mother tongue derived from childhood experiences in family and community), to which are then added the wider repertoire of musics available in the immediate community, after which is recourse to the wider repertoire of world music an appropriate step.

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11. MC is resource-intensive. It is also typically hampered by the norm, at best, of imitative-authenticity in the presentation of the music. There are also difficulties in insinuating music of oral traditions into literacy-based formal education; these should not be underestimated. The process of mutual adjustment could be a stimulating *or* disorientating experience for learners. It is interesting, on the other hand, in this context, to study Santos's compelling reconciliation of conflicting views about literacy (MEND 207).
12. Method in MC education is still at an early stage of evolution. There can as yet be only a limited backup of research into the educational implications and methodology associated with the movement.
13. In modified MC there are problems with choice of repertoire to yield representative examples. Even the specialists in any particular cultural context are slow to make definitive choices in the search for the best materials. This is a further challenge to the judgement and valuing abilities of ordinary teachers, calling for relevant training.
14. Arguments for MC in education, based on a theory of the equality of all musics, should be treated with circumspection; nor should this caution be attacked as a dismissive Eurocentric reaction Santos has accurately summed up the situation with characteristic sensitivity and a measure of scholarly detachment. 'It is no longer tenable to impose the artistic valuation of one particular tradition on another ... Moreover, the equal regard for the autonomy and the immanent significance of each and every musical tradition suggests a breakdown of attitudinal barriers and prejudices that have been developed and much ingrained during the centuries-old colonial period.' And Santos is additionally helpful in defining the role that ethnomusicology played in the democratization of music which led to the MC phenomenon in music education. 'Ethnomusicology provides an intellectual-artistic impetus to the emancipation of individual traditions from limited definitions and classifications of music based on western artistic experience.
 - i) It has redefined a concept of universality in the field of musical experience.
 - ii) It has underscored the value of each and every individual tradition.
 - iii) It has emphasized the intrinsic relationship of music and culture. The conservative view of tradition as a static socio-cultural property is pitted against a more pragmatic concept as a living and ever-changing phenomenon.'

Santos's concluding observation is perhaps the single most significant comment made at MEND in the context of validating the efforts of multiculturalists and the aspirations of MC.

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15. MC is very sensitive to context, as can be seen from the variety of teaching styles which characterize it. There was thus no feeling of embarrassment or inconsistency in viewing Ireland's so-called bicultural needs as falling within the category of a special case of MC. Shehan Campbell was relaxed about tempering her otherwise idealistic commitment to total democracy of musics with a sympathetic acceptance and understanding of this context.
16. There is an arguable dissonance between MC and McCarthy's policy plea that bridges of mutual understanding should be built between music in the community and in school. 'Music in Irish education will best serve the country when there is a vital, ongoing symbiotic relationship between what students experience in school and what they experience in the socio-cultural context that frames their identity'. A too liberal advocacy of MC, with possible sorties into all kinds of exotic musics, would surely be as counterproductive here as the perceived downside of WAM.
17. Santos finally offers some underlying principles for multicultural music education:
 - i) Music cultures should be viewed as not in opposition but as complementary
 - ii) A most effective way of gaining musical understanding is through actual performance (see Elliott MEND 208)
 - iii) New repertoires will require new skills, new perspectives, new stylistic orientation and new levels of musical understanding
 - iv) Musical universality has taken on new meaning, encompassing the uniqueness and discreteness of individual traditions.

It is questionable whether Ramon Santos's vision here is not predicating a third-level context for MC. His ideas are convincing but seem to place the practicalities outside the capabilities of the general school programme to deliver. Perhaps it is not too surprising that five of the seven invited MEND speakers (on the MC topic) remained somewhat entrenched in a third-level perspective. Only McCarthy and Veblen chose to anchor their thoughts in the practicalities of community and school settings. The writer's ultimate impression is thus that multiculturalism has been visited precipitously and almost prematurely on an educational world not quite prepared for its inundating presence and self-generated urgency. That it will become a real, and in some ways a benignly disruptive, presence in music education there is little doubt. It merits flagging in any philosophical statement as to what is in store for Irish music education. But beyond injecting a tincture which meets the challenge of a token response to what is undoubtedly fruitful in it, without administering saturating doses, it must stand in line until what should be Ireland's more pressing concerns with its own traditional music have been engaged and solved.

6.6 Residual Dissonances

The resonances from Harry White's paper *A book of manners in the wilderness* have endured since that ultimate presentation at MEND, in November 1996; far from being convergent in relation to solutions to the problems of music education in Ireland, the paper generated, through its global exposure, a plethora of quintessentially important questions - those that define the irreducible intrinsicity of the music education dilemma in the developed world. The writer is nevertheless indebted to White¹⁴² for having set a new tide of rhetoric in motion. It not only evoked responses from Reimer and Elliott, each redolent of their characteristic views, but opened up the wider and fascinating enquiry into the source detail of those views.

It must be self-evident that to take an undisputed classic in music education philosophy (Reimer's *A Philosophy of Music Education*) and to pit against it a self-styled challenge (Elliott's *Music Matters*) amounting to and parading as an apparently polar counterposition, would be bound to highlight differences, weaknesses and strengths, enduring truths and vulnerabilities in both, sufficient to throw valuable light on the eventual path of progress. The scope of the exercise was greatly expanded by the fact that Reimer wrote a critique of *Music Matters* to which Elliott was invited to provide a rebuttal. While it is the writer's conviction that the analysis eventually uncovered more disguised similarities and agreement than genuine and irreconcilable antitheses, the study did produce a residue of real and virtual dissonance which must also be taken into account in proposing a rationalized position. In contrasting the two philosophies they are found inevitably to cast themselves as an established position and a reactionary one. But there is a third document - *The American National Standards: Music Content Standards (1992-94)*¹⁴³ - a ready template against which each might be measured.

The National Standards for the US are neither a curriculum nor a philosophy, so it is perhaps all too easy to disparage them as having been minimally challenged; after all, they had only to state what ought to be, without facing the task of implementation. But they admirably responded to their brief and are unexceptionable in embodying the classical content of the music curriculum viz. composing, performing, listening and appraising. Without measuring their potential against the searching parameter of time available in the curriculum, they have one commanding characteristic - that of

¹⁴² Harry White only enters the discussion in Chapter 5, where there is copious coverage of his contribution and impact. In fact, chronologically, White's epochal paper, *A book of manners in the wilderness*, was the last contribution to MEND itself. It therefore has to be considered as post-MEND catalytic material in terms of the all-important responses from Elliott and Reimer. But the 'philosophies in conflict' (Chapter 4) dilemma pre-dated White. The significance of his intervention is mentioned, however, at the earliest appropriate point under MEND Phase 3 (3.2.3).

¹⁴³ The decisive stimulus for the drafting of the VNS came in 1992; they were published and accepted in 1994.

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content balance¹⁴⁴. And it is this question of balance that dominates the whole philosophical and methodological argument. As Paul Lehman says (MEND 303, 6), ‘the truth is that we need a balance between the so-called “arts approach”, which emphasizes performance and creation, and the so-called “humanities approach”, which emphasizes analysis, criticism and history. ... In any case the precise nature of that balance is subject to honest disagreement’.

It is on the question of emphasis - or balance - in the performing/listening programme that we find Elliott and Reimer most at loggerheads. Reimer accepts some *responsibility* for the undue dominance - but also the acclaimed success - of performance (without the backing of the other classical components) in American music education, while Elliott focuses on the (Reimer?) MEAE listening programme as playing down performance. Neither system, of course, approached the ideal balance of holistic education; both are now superannuated by the intent of the National Standards. Needless to say, these models would not be suitable for Ireland.

Reimer is critical of Elliott’s praxial philosophy which ostensibly recommends such a preponderance of musical activity (especially, it might be added, performance, which is disproportionately emphasized, in spite of Elliott’s belated claims to the contrary) that, again, the balance is seriously compromised; this is especially so, claims Reimer, in the neglect of listening alone and the failure to recognize it as a valid activity in its own right. Clearly, on its face value, this objection would rule out the Elliott version of praxialism as a way forward. But what remains is the clear understanding and agreement that performance must be accommodated in music education; this may seem to be an obvious priority, but it has proved extraordinarily problematic and refractory in its educational implications, chiefly, the writer claims, as to its time constraints at any level of proficiency¹⁴⁵.

It is interesting, in all this rhetoric about the self-evident and undisputed centrality of performance in musical discourse, that neither scholar has drawn attention to the fundamental truth as to why this is so

¹⁴⁴ The question of balance refers to the need, within the implemented curriculum, to monitor the time allocation to the component involvements (performing and listening are typical and this is the usual context invoked in this thesis) to ensure that the curriculum is achieving its stated targets. Obviously the time distribution will vary, as, for example, between a general and specialist programme. The point has also been made in this thesis that the question of balance can actually highlight the differences (to be rationalized) between philosophies - again, as example, those of Reimer and Elliott or between product and process approaches. A search in the thesis for ‘balance’ will reveal many references to the word but, also, some quite unambiguous text as to its meaning and significance.

¹⁴⁵ An argument may be made for tying proficiency to the expectation that homework is a part of schooling. The argument depends, in any case, on how proficiency is defined. If inordinate amounts of homework are demanded, as the author considers to be the case for what he would regard as a proficiency to engage usefully in practical ensembles capable of giving the participants a knowledge of the exemplars of the repertoire, the argument breaks down. One must adopt a stance on the relative merits of an Elliott or Reimer approach in this regard. From the material exhaustively considered, the author is not convinced that Elliott has a case. His

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at a psychological level, and why popular perception is so heavily committed to it. It is simply that music is, at bottom, a performing art; that is not to say that it will survive on performance alone, but it is a basic consideration. The exercise of skill (whether physical, cognitive, artistic) as a demonstrable measure of achievement has always been so attractive to human beings that it might well be considered a congenital aspiration. This arguably accounts for the fundamental preference within musical options for performance, over listening, certainly in western society. But there are pragmatic considerations, too, which temper the trend of the distribution. Listening gives a much more immediate access to musical enjoyment with a bias towards satisfying cognitive and affective appetites over the physical (psychomotor). Performance, with its physicality and implied skills, is more *difficult*. The statistic confirming a low involvement (significantly diminishing with age) is therefore not surprising, but the aspiration can be strong and it unquestionably has huge psychological implications for the music education process.

The acquisition of cultured listening skills is a prerequisite in any effective musical engagement which is undividedly and intrinsically musical. It is required of necessity in any purely listening act and must be taken for granted as the indispensable guiding agent in any successful musical activity of the kind listed by Elliott (performing, improvising, composing, arranging, conducting). There is no disputing that pure listening (that is, without involvement in the process of giving the music presence in the first place) is overwhelmingly the most widely practised participation in music; it must obviously carry a huge educational burden. Not surprisingly, Elliott and Reimer are agreed on the need for listening to be part of the educational process. But we are presented with the two caricatures, first of MEAE being a ‘listening only’ form of engaging with music, and of praxialism virtually outlawing it except as a concomitant of music making (performance *et al*). Once more the question of balance arises. When both positions have been clarified, it is found that one limb of MEAE indeed concentrated on listening simply because the students in the programme did not wish to have performance (this, of course, encapsulated faulty philosophy, on educational grounds, as is now realized) while praxialism, when hard-pressed, admitted to the usefulness of the listening programme itself, as encouraged outside of other activities. Moderation in all things seems to be emerging as a maxim here. The extreme forms of these positions cannot be admitted as desirable in education; the substance of difference between Elliott and Reimer is evaporating as the literature is scanned for its unambiguous bedrock position.

Another storm in a teacup raged over the plausibility and relationship of two views of music education - as related to product or process. Reimer, in his 1996 Amsterdam address, connected the product and process views to two philosophical positions, namely Formalism/Absolutism and Praxialism. He chose

policy of unrelieved music-making, while it may be attractive to the talented and committed, is undemocratically biased and discriminates against ‘voluntary’ non-performers.

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to classify his own aesthetic position (Absolute Expressionism), with less precision, under a species of Referentialism (as ‘yielding or referring to auxiliary value for musical involvement’ [*Should there be a Universal Philosophy of Music Education* MEND 401, 8] but see also the discussion under Philosophy (Section 18.1 of the MEND Report); its muted absolutism is perhaps more appropriate in that connotation and avoids being coupled with the perceived extremism of unmodified Absolutism.

Reimer also points to the degree to which the four philosophical positions he sketches (Contextualism is the fourth) overlap with and adapt to one another, the musical intrinsicality of the approach being the base desideratum. But the effect is still to relate the so-called art object (product) to a form of unbending aestheticism (though not necessarily Reimer’s position) which would find its natural antagonist in Elliott. Nevertheless this *mise-en-scène* predictably was to cast Reimer as champion of the idea that all musical activity derives from the response to the primacy of the musical product (whether in existence, notated or in the course of composition); on the other hand Elliott, by his own hand, cast himself in the opposite corner with his opening gambit. ‘[I]n every example of a musical product that comes to mind, what we are presented with is more than a piece of music, a composition, an improvisation, a performance, or a "work" in the aesthetic sense. What we are presented with is the outcome of a particular kind of intentional human activity. Music is not simply a collection of products or objects. *Fundamentally, music is something that people do*’ (*MM*, p.39). [It is interesting to compare Reimer’s words apropos when, surprisingly, defining Formalism in music: “[m]usic”, then, is not the quality of the activity or product, but the kind of thing being *done* [writer’s italics] - to create with sounds, significant, or intrinsically meaningful forms, embodying sets of interrelations capable of yielding musical responses by those able to be engaged appropriately with them’.] However, as became apparent in the analysis of the Reimer/Elliott review literature on *MM* (Chapter 5), both scholars assert the indivisible relationship between product and process in musical discourse; it is simply not possible to have one without the other.

This reconciliation may be reassuring but it says nothing of balance; it contains the seed of further confusion in relation to that all-important question in music education as to what constitutes performance or, more crucially, as to how the ranges of its continuum are defined into general and specialized categories. The nub of the problem is that specialized performance (at expert or even proficient level) is a *sine qua non* if music is to flourish over its full range of subtlety, artistry and sophistication. This is to point the difference in attitude between professional and amateur perspectives on performance. The process is necessary to guarantee the product: the product is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the process. This is deeply to invoke standards and the assessment procedures that are inseparable from them (‘I see assessment as the supreme challenge and the defining issue for music education in the coming decade (Paul Lehman - MEND 303, 10).

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The burning question, derived from the MEND proceedings, is at last defining its significance, asserting itself and demanding a conclusive answer. America has spent the whole of the twentieth century in self-admitted error on this issue, or rather in the grip of a stubborn public consciousness (as to the equation of music education and instrumental performance); this somehow communicated itself to the seats of power and fed the political apathy that might well have persisted into the new millennium if the coalition of the arts had not intervened and demanded its due rights in 1992 (see Lehman and Straub MEND 303 and 205). The existence of the problem is palpable in the Reimer/Elliott confrontation.

It is difficult to be sure whether Reimer is not just rationalizing and confusing the many undoubted excellences in the underlying MEAE philosophy (the intended curriculum, as defined in *A Philosophy of Music Education*) with the unsatisfactory outcomes of the delivered curriculum. The bifurcation of MEAE (without its total school base, as in the US) has its resonances in Ireland. There is no ambiguity about the American product-biased performance programme (typically devoid of musicianship modules); there is considerably more even as to a token presence of (process-based) performance in the general programme of school music education, but none at all as to the abject failure of the programme as to its uptake. Again the problem has been one of balance. Clearly, however, Reimer has no illusions about troublesome differences in the educational approach to the two kinds of performance, particularly if there are moves afoot to minister to both in a single programme.¹⁴⁶ And it is inconceivable that the recently promulgated American National Standards could be entertaining this myopic aspiration, which would be incontinently discriminating against both cohorts of learners.

Depending on the innate balance (or bias) in Elliott's philosophical underpinnings, which seem unambiguous in recommending that '[a]ll music students ought to be taught in essentially the same way: as reflective musical practitioners engaged in music making generally and musical performing particularly. Artistic music listening ought to be taught and learned in conjunction with artistic music making', it is possible to conjecture that, (1) he is confining himself to school applications of music education, (2) he considers that his views on specialist performing training are not relevant to that brief or (3) that his philosophy envisages a single democratic programme to replace the dual (streamed) system of the past, with the implication that it can cope with both product- and process-based applications to performance and develop holistic musicianship, with minimal offerings of pure listening - all within the time constraints of typical music education curricula. Note Reimer's criticism that 'treating all students the same fails to honour the principle "that different musical goals require different programmes tailored to each."'

¹⁴⁶ It would be difficult to apply the same philosophy to general as to specialized music education, as the priorities differ.

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It is now possible to speculate further as to possible offerings in the US, pursuant of the inherent and situated intentions of the National Standards, remembering that they are, as written, not committed by policy to any philosophy or method:

1. A single statutory programme will be offered, with a balanced, but notionally also a flexible, menu of learnings (excluding for the moment the question of the inclusion or not of multicultural components). This will be mandatory for all students up to an agreed level and will minimally inculcate ‘what every young American should know and be able to do in music (typically at the end of grades 4, 8, and 12)’.
2. The above-mentioned single programme will generally be supplemented on a voluntary uptake basis with specializations, including performance - statistically the most sought after. This may or may not be school-based.
3. A single mandatory programme will be available with a bias towards activity-based involvements (such as performance [particularly] but allowing for others such as composition, conducting *et al*) with a view to guaranteeing, for all, levels of expertise approaching specialization (possibly proficient level) in addition to concomitant holistic musicianship.

The unequivocal relevance to Ireland of such a notional raft of programmes must be obvious. Taking time constraints and individual propensities into account, it seems to the writer that the hierarchy as to the desirability and the educational plausibility of such offerings is also obvious. And it is not possible to dissemble on the nature of specialization. In any enterprise of potential educational diversity, such as music, specialization is necessary. Ireland, which ignores the specialist component as far as generally organized state subsidy is concerned, is no paradigm in this respect and is out of step with its European partners, not to mention America. The other side of that coin, which is equally deserving and demanding of close scrutiny, is the fact that many learners themselves arbitrarily choose to be in the specialist stream, although they do not give it the commitment of time that is its due; because this happens along the dichotomous axis of affordability, it has dubbed performance an elitist pursuit.

Elliott has this to say about the myth of elitism: ‘Teachers and students will find the achievement of competent, proficient and expert levels of performing (improvising, composing, arranging and conducting) central to the development of individual musicianship and therefore, central to the individual self’ (*MM*, p 74). And Elliott goes further in defining performance as the ultimate act of music-making: ‘Musical works involve intermediate agents ... who contribute substantively and artistically to the events that listeners cognize as musical performances. This is why we say that it is only in the artistic performance of a musical composition that everything a composer conceives and

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intends is decided'.¹⁴⁷ Clearly there is much work to be done to redeem this situation from the damaging misunderstandings that tarnish its image. But, as far as the general stream of music education is concerned, we are left with the pragmatic option that performing and unencumbered listening should coexist in a balanced relationship responding to achievable goals; and there should be a clear understanding of what those target outcomes are.

The remaining issues - the innate equality of all music cultures, the relevance of judgement and valuing as tools of education, philosophy in its contextual aspect, and its more arcane existential layer, as a route to the understanding of the nature and value of music, art (and music within it) as a discrete branch of human endeavour and knowing - form a nexus which can be approached from the connectedness within it.

There is a need to confront music in its *utilitarian*, as much as in its artistic, aspects, since this is at the deepest roots of much of the rhetoric in which currently perceived dissonances are expressed. What makes art is not the same as what achieves usefulness. 'This is not because (as Oscar Wilde said, with that curious talent for missing the truth and then giving himself a prize for hitting it) "all art is useless", for it is not; a work of art may very well amuse, instruct, puzzle, exhort, and so forth, without ceasing to be art, and in these ways it may be very useful indeed.'¹⁴⁸ Elliott aptly quotes Richard Taruskin on the same topic: 'A tremendous amount of critical activity is now devoted to ... showing that the music regarded as set off from the world is still in the world, doing worldly work; to showing that musical meaning continues, as before, to arise out of the relations between the musical artwork and its many contexts, pharisaically stigmatized as "extramusical"; to showing that artistic seriousness is not incompatible with social function . . . The dismantling of the utopian lie, runs the post-modernist argument, will be as much a cathartic and a therapeutic for art as it has proved of late to be for the body politic and economic. I certainly believe this to be the case.'¹⁴⁹ Note again the alignment here of music with art, obviously accepted by Elliott and calling for clarification of the intent of some, at least, of his extra-musical functions.

It should be remembered, too, that there is aesthetic theory that admirably dovetails with this view and which does not seek to divorce music from its essentially human context in its most quotidian manifestations. David Elliott himself stresses the wider intrinsicality of musical experience in his own characteristic way, balancing himself precariously and provocatively on the threshold of art, without doing violence to its aspirations. 'The situated nature of music cognition and musical works, the social

¹⁴⁷ Elliott, *Music Matters*, 173.

¹⁴⁸ R.G. Collingwood, *Principles of Art*, 41.

¹⁴⁹ Taruskin, R. (1995). *Text and act: Essays on music and performance*. New York: Oxford University Press. Quoted in David J. Elliott, *Continuing Matters: Myths, Realities, Rejoinders*. Bulletin of the Council for

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and cultural ingredients of particular musical ways of life, the affective specificity of musical enjoyment, and the centrality of *artistically* produced sound [writer's italics] - all these differentiate music and the values of music from all other human pursuits.¹⁵⁰ It is remarkable that in all of these extracts the idea of music as art still persists, and is even pervasive.

The idea of clothing the *context* of musical experience in philosophical garb comes as an invaluable placebo, indeed a catalyst, in blending (and, if needed, reconciling) the tenets of Formalism, Praxialism and Referentialism, in their non-extremist forms, without disavowing their artistic claims. Before expounding on this aspect, Reimer summarizes their shared features and interrelationships: Formalism, when understood as calling attention to the products created by musical processes and how those products can be experienced, and Praxialism, when understood as calling attention to the processes by which musical products come into being and are shared, are not, except in their extremist versions, incompatible. ... Referentialism is a powerful instrumentality for achieving values to which music can lead us. Consequent or derivative values are what count, over and above those evinced by considerations of music as product or process. Referentialism calls for interpretation as to what the music means. But it must still focus on the unique products and processes which give music its essential reason for being. In the sense of music as communication it is a valid candidate for inclusion in a universal philosophy.¹⁵¹ But the interdependency, interconnectedness and balance between these three philosophical positions must be taken seriously into account and allowed to function.

Context is what relates each position to its environment; it defines the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs. In the *Contextualist* view music is seen as a means of cultural social engagement; its sociocultural functions are the focus of attention. It becomes the aural portrayal of the psychological, emotional, political and social forces of the human context in which it exists. 'Music must be issues-orientated, value centred, sociologically and politically involved in the culture's ongoing life.'¹⁵² Contextualism, in being proposed as a fourth possible philosophical orientation is, of course, a highly adaptive position, interacting freely with the other three, distinguished particularly by the underlying courage to engage the 'an-aesthetic' at its crucial interface with art. In focusing on the functions of music in real life it can operate within the canons of art - or, it could fall prey to the

Research in Music Education' 129, 30 [MEND 416, 23].

¹⁵⁰ David J. Elliott, *Continuing Matters: Myths, Realities, Rejoinders*. Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education' 129, 32 [MEND 416, 24].

¹⁵¹ The passage is freely paraphrased from Reimer's Universality essay (ISME, Amsterdam, 1996), 17-20. [MEND 401, 7].

¹⁵² Bennett Reimer, *Should there be a universal philosophy of music education?* (International Journal of Music Education Number 29 1997), 4-20. Much of this exposé of Contextualism is paraphrased from the advance copy of the afore-mentioned lecture, made available to MEND before its official publication under ISME auspices (22-23) [MEND 401, 8].

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buffetings of the anti-aesthetic theorists or even to the relativist attacks of the ‘institutional’ theory that art can be whatever a culture’s institutional policy-makers decide to call art.

It behoves music educators to temper the fashionable trends of such nihilistic notions and to spare their art from being diluted and consumed in a truceless war over what is and is not music; this will not serve music education in its current fragile state. To convert such extreme positions into workable educational theory would, in any case, be daunting; this, seemingly, is not currently demanded by any system considered in the MEND report. But balanced contextualism is still full of possibilities. Applied to circumstances in Ireland, it could usefully expound on the ‘psychological, emotional, political and social forces’ that influence the reigning mentality on biculturalism as an interim phase of multiculturalism; on teacher training in all its aspects, including the policy on class teaching versus specialist teaching; on the burning question of performance and its accommodation; on the prioritization of musics within the curriculum; on the real potential of curriculum time to reach its targets; and on much more, such as streaming of music education cohorts, building of music-rich bridges between formal education and the community, the management/reconciliation of the so-called popular/art music dichotomy, the implications of considering music as art and as part of the arts education curriculum, aspects of balance in the curriculum in sociocultural terms, and so on.

Of course all of these issues are not individually peculiar to Ireland, but the complete nexus is unique. Yes, there is an Irish context and it can be made to respond to a thoughtful application of as comprehensive a philosophical stance as can amicably be negotiated between the forces of these influential positions, whose compatibilities are at least promising. But is there another universality that can encourage a more profound awakening of these stances to their affinities and their responsibilities. Reimer thinks so and, in his peroration, again invokes artistic criteria. It presupposes the artistic theory of how music functions. But let the outstanding issues first be addressed.

The writer finds nothing in Elliott’s philosophy that would suggest that he has a considered and deep-rooted antipathy to the idea of music as art. He describes a philosophy of music education as building ‘a concept of music by investigating the nature of music makers, listeners, music making, listening, musical works, and the contexts and interdependencies of all’. In connecting to the repertoire, he then explains that ‘works of music (in the praxial sense) are *artistic* [writer’s italics] cultural constructions involving several interconnected dimensions or facets of meaning including the following: interpretative, structural, expressional, representational, social, ideological and, of course, personal meanings’, adding the sensible disclaimer that, in education, ‘some musics are more suitable than others’. Of the processes of education he observes that ‘teachers and students work in relation to a variety of constraints - practical, curricular, moral, social, cultural, ideological, political.’ His vision

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and definitions are wide-ranging, and utilitarian too, but they do not disavow music as art, even selectively.

It must surely be non-threatening to claim that art is a universal and precious phenomenon occurring in all cultures - in particular that it is not being Eurocentric to make such a suggestion. Successful art communicates - having wrested order from man's teeming but initially chaotic ideation when addressing, from its inception, any instance of it. Art aims to be understood, and the essential response to art, which completes the act of communication, must be possible and 'lie within the available human repertoire. ... If the response is to be significant to the person who feels it, it must bear some relation to his life as a whole: it must be part not only of his enjoyment, but also of his *concern*'.¹⁵³ Langer's uncharacteristically muted but largely referential view is comforting when she observes that 'works of art are not in the end independent of their makers, their audiences and the wider world. ... Form may be the essence of art, but it should not deny emotion a place.'¹⁵⁴ And, again, she observes, in relation to music, that 'not communication but insight is the gift of music; in very naïve phrase, a knowledge of 'how feelings go'.¹⁵⁵

The *order* of musical communication, facilitating such insight, 'resides in the perceptual [feelingful] experience of those who hear with understanding'.¹⁵⁶ If the experience is insignificant in its potential for understanding, if it is not part of the listener's *concern*, or if the shortfall between the musical sophistication of giver and receiver is too great, the art is compromised and so, too, is the music's potential to communicate. Such experiences, if they can be even typically identified, define the material which is problematic for inclusion in the educational process.

The notion of the 'innate equality of all cultures' is, in the end, as non-contentious and naïve as stating that 'all men (generic) are born equal'. Yet it is interesting that in the reviews of David Elliott's *Music Matters*, David Aspin took grave exception to the claim while Bennett Reimer obviously did not see it as a threat at all. But it is dangerous when this pseudo-equality, in the case of music, is adduced as sufficient justification for admission to the educational cycle without any further pedigree or submission to the processes of judgement. Harry White may be gently taunted for bordering on the disingenuous, but he is surely right when he says that 'historians of music are not much concerned with implausible theories of musical superiority [equality?]. Nor should they be; they are a waste of

¹⁵³ Roger Scruton, quoted in Reimer, *Should there be a universal philosophy of music education?*, (International Journal of Music Education Number 29 1997), 25.

¹⁵⁴ Susanne K. Langer, *An Introduction to Symbolic Logic* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1937), 25.

¹⁵⁵ Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, 198.

¹⁵⁶ Roger Scruton, quoted in Reimer, *Should there be a universal philosophy of music education?*, (International Journal of Music Education Number 29 1997), 25.

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time and intellect'.¹⁵⁷ Emotion, as lack of detachment, clouds the powers of judgement and it is particularly true that artistic appraisals can be notoriously subjective and biased. What is needed is a canon of judgement that is easily applicable with a reasonable hope of reliability when plied in the hands of relevantly competent professionals. The irreducible criterion of art (aesthetics, as the philosophy of art, being the informing agent) - the presence of craft and expressiveness (feeling) - appears to the writer to provide, or at least to hold out the promise of, impartiality.

Viewed as indices on the continuum of art, the four positions sketched by Reimer (Formalism, Praxialism, Referentialism and Contextualism) have substantial interfaces of compatibility. The extrinsic utilitarian values of music within Referentialism need not invalidate the artistic. Only the extreme nineteenth century versions of Formalism and the anti-aesthetic and institutional theories of 'art' are, by definition, non-adaptable, but these need not be allowed to come into conflict with a mainstream rationale. Put another way, the notion of art, if carefully defined, can serve music very well and especially in its educational contexts, where the need for an informing and enabling philosophy is most felt. The criteria of art challenge educational principle at its most fundamental by bringing the forces of judgement into play to arbitrate on and prioritize the processes of music education itself in a systematic way. But art, too, provides abundant scope for further excursions into the realms of human consciousness to uncover its primeval characteristics and probe the universality within them.

In the epilogue of his essay on a possible universal philosophy of music education, Bennett Reimer, acknowledging a debt to the humanistic anthropologist Robert Plant Armstrong, establishes a crucial connection and common denominator which offers new hope for reconciling confrontational forces. It seems that man (generic) has a need to impose his consciousness on his world and that art is, perhaps, the most potent means at his disposal to achieve this at its most idealistic. Reimer's necessarily brief treatment of Armstrong's philanthropic insights is compelling and arrests this philosophical enquiry in a placatory, valedictory yet provocative way. Its entrained truths are as relevant to the intent of the Mozart scholarship extolled by Harry White as to the sociocultural trends of David Elliott's praxial philosophy, and are at one with all phases in the healthy evolution of Reimer's own protean philosophical views.

¹⁵⁸ Armstrong attempts to reach the level at which the condition and experience of being human in any culture can be glimpsed in its non-verbal acontextual nature as the very beingness, or phenomenality

¹⁵⁷ Harry White, *A book of manners in the wilderness: Model of University Music Education and its Relevance as Enabler in General Music Education in Ireland*, 56.

¹⁵⁸ This paragraph attempts to paraphrase Reimer's treatment of the Armstrong theme. For greater detail consult Bennett Reimer, *Should there be a universal philosophy of music education?*, (International Journal of Music

provided by the culture's patterns of activity, as exemplified in its art. We are on reassuringly familiar ground with his Langerian definition of 'aesthetics ... as the theory or study of form incarnating feeling'; nor is it surprising to find feeling then verbally transmuted into 'affect' in describing the work of art as the *affecting presence*, which may incarnate an unaccountable fact of awareness about which one feels significantly. The confrontation between art and a participant is an act to which the role of witness is of critical importance. This act is a phenomenon in the personal world of humans - an act ever in the process of enacting itself - an instance of incarnated experience in terms that are definitive ones - the living forms of consciousness.

The affecting work, insofar as it embodies the least common denominator of particularity which uniquely establishes one culture, is a presentation of the basic irreducible being of that culture. Great works, it goes without saying, greatly incarnate these vitalities. What is universal is not each culture's affective quality of life experience, which is uniquely its own, but music's power to incarnate a culture's affective consciousness, making cultural interconnectedness more feasible. Music universally is sonic form incarnating affect¹⁵⁹. Thus does man (generic) make the world! ... It is a human imperative that consciousness be imposed upon the world. The affecting presence incarnates consciousness itself, in its own terms, and it arrests flux, fixes the mutable, renders physical the metaphysical. ... The affecting presence ... *celebrates consciousness*.¹⁶⁰ The dimensions of form, practice, reference and context can be seen, through Armstrong's vision, to be inseparable components of music, in what music is, what it does, and how it serves the deepest human needs. Music education, too, celebrates that consciousness, mutuality and capability to create presences which make the human condition sensible. The extent to which such an outlook can help to achieve balance between the component (rather than thinking of them as the conflicting) views of the nature and value of music, will also be a measure of our success in bringing its fruits more potently into the lives of our students.

6.7 The Irish Context

Note: The writer is indebted to Bennett Reimer for his exposé of the generally less contentious philosophical issues which must be understood and taken into account before details of a particular (Irish) system and its idiosyncrasies are articulated for appraisal.

Education Number 29 1997 [MEND 401]). The Armstrong references are included in the List of Sources, Part 2.

¹⁵⁹ Note Langer's insistence on the interrelationship of feeling and form, and the copious references within this report to the characteristics of craft (form) and feeling which are necessary to legitimize artistic endeavour.

¹⁶⁰ It would be interesting also to compare these views with the philosophical writings of Arthur Schopenhauer, as expressed in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung (The World as Will and Idea*, trans. E.F.J. Payne, New York, 1969).

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The intention is to construct a matrix which clarifies, in a dynamic way, the current context of music education in Ireland. Basic reference points at this stage of the analysis will be the 8-point Agenda of MEND and its 6 Findings (see Chapter 7). The features of the music education dispensation will be sketched, drawing attention to its strengths and shortcomings, especially in relation to influential philosophical positions. The most pressing problems will be identified. These, together with the philosophical stances considered will be rationalized, to minimize internal dissonances, and reduced to a number of commanding parameters in which philosophy and progress are compatible. The following headings define the route taken.

1. Involvements and Diversity in music education. Balance.
2. Philosophical. stances on music education.
3. Towards a universal philosophy of music education.
4. Philosophy in action. Standards, curriculum, method.
5. The relevance of American practice.
6. Music as Art and in the arts programme.
7. The conceptual confusion about performance.
8. Diversity. The role of popular music and multiculturalism in music education.
9. The current state of music education in Ireland.
10. A way forward for Irish music education. The Time Factor. Achievable targets.
11. Philosophical Issues. Balance, Relevance and Time Management in Implementing the Curriculum.
12. Elliott and Reimer Philosophies as Models for Irish Music Education.

6.7.1 Involvements and Diversity in Music Education

Reimer sketches the basic understandings about music and music education in his *Universality* essay (MEND 401,3). They are general but are, of course, applicable to Ireland. The ideal of comprehensiveness is implicit. But the criterion of comprehensiveness in education is, by definition, inapplicable and unattainable, and immediately leads to difficult choices, typically responding to the demands of rival approaches, many of which may lay undue stress on one component of education over another. Choices and dichotomies may be between professional and amateur approaches to standard; between active involvements in music making and more purely academic pursuits; between music as product and music as process; between open and restricted repertoires, between music as art and music in its more utilitarian forms; between specialized and general streams; between music as

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entertainment of evanescent consequence and as profound experience. The most advanced and progressive curricula favour a wide range of involvements (depending on the diversity and sophistication of the musics to be transmitted and their cultural idiosyncrasies) such as composing (including improvising and arranging), performing (including conducting), listening, reading and notating, appraising, evaluating, understanding cross-cultural significance and so on. The American National Standards (Music Content Standards), produced by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC, Reston, Virginia) in 1992 is an unexceptionable statement of desirable outcomes (with their implied activities) in a holistic general music education package. The 1990s revision of music curricula for Irish schools is another example of arbitration between the opposing force of these dichotomies.

As to diversity of repertoire, there is currently much debate which, for systems, even the Irish one, naturally evolving from the overwhelmingly influential ideas of western culture, has tended, in advocacy literature over the past thirty years or so, towards an inclusivity defined, at its most extreme, as total multiculturalism. The supremacy of western art music has been seriously challenged as to its being either the only or even the dominant vehicle for the transmission of traditional skills in school music, even in western contexts. On the other hand, a clear picture is far from emerging as to the verified extent of other inclusions, their assessable merits and success in implementation, or their independence of methodologies associated with the transmission of WAM. Attempts to balance the offerings have tended towards undesirable dilutions, especially in general music education, where allocations of time are limited. It must be borne in mind particularly that involvements in music that have a significant psychomotor (skill) content are notoriously slow to develop to proficient (and even competent) standard; if undertaken seriously, they are apt to skew the profile of achievement (ratio of achievement to time spent), if indeed that profile must not itself be defined in terms which take into account the likely differences in resultant capabilities as between cognitive and psychomotor components for equal increments of time. Such considerations are very relevant to current Irish concerns.

Questions centring on the diversity of repertoire and the balance between involvements are amongst the most contentious in music education practice today; two in particular dominate current deliberations. Music is ostensibly a performing art; this is scarcely challengeable and is honoured by popular perception and professional endorsement. The exercise of the skills of performance is admired, coveted and exacting. It is right that the problems of managing the performance function in music education should be a perennial preoccupation; this is so for the simple reason that a satisfactory formula for its inculcation in general music education has eluded the efforts of the most imaginative music educators throughout the whole of the last century, and particularly so in the United States.

Ireland, too, is bedevilled by this dilemma. The question can only be satisfactorily addressed and resolved by treating performance as the specialization that it is. The other problem has to do with the apparent cleavage between the realities of music in the community and in education; this focuses on valuing systems, generally as between art and social function, which sets some forms of popular music and WAM on a collision course.

6.7.2 Philosophical stances on music education

The basic understandings about music and music education listed above gravitate towards an aspiration for music education, but they lack credibility if they are not underpinned by a statement as to exactly why music is a positive force in human affairs and, leading on from that, why it should be included in general education. *Tout court*, what is the nature of music and why is it, or should it be, valued? This is to begin to address the deeper issues; philosophy is the appropriate vehicle for such a study. The need for the understanding that a carefully-reasoned philosophy could facilitate was felt at a very early stage of MEND. Phase II was consciously devoted, *inter alia*, to the articulation of a plethora of philosophical statements. It was less surprising to find that consensus seemed to be lacking than to discover, as observed in the *Interim Report – Phase II* (MEND 603), that ‘philosophically, then, we [in Ireland] are in a protean field’ and invited ‘to heed, to think, to contextualize, to analyse, to adapt - in short, to “philosophize” ourselves’. In spite of the conviction and confidence with which Bennett Reimer and David Elliott delivered their philosophical packages they added disclaimers, too. Reimer warns that ‘aesthetic education, then, is not a dogma, or a fixed set of beliefs and actions, but rather an ever-changing, ever-developing, position that music is worthy of serious attempts to learn it, and that education must include musical learning if its unique benefits are to be available to all’ (MEND 203, 4). And Elliott concurs, by implication as to the mutating context of music education, calling for caution in invoking applicable philosophy: ‘of course, no philosophy can be perfectly applicable to all practical situations. ... [and quoting Kant] “the practitioner must exercise his judgement to decide whether a case falls under a general rule”’ (MEND 208, 1).

David Elliott’s address to MEND II (MEND 208) opens promisingly in spelling out the need for a philosophy of music education, by which he means ‘a critically reasoned set of beliefs about the nature and value of music education. ... nothing is more practical for a music educator than “a philosophy” (in this “critically reasoned” sense), because a reasonable philosophy, like a carefully drawn map, is essential for deciding destinations and goals, maintaining course headings, keeping the “big picture” in view, avoiding dead ends, and knowing when and where one has arrived’. A philosophy of music education should provide the insights to address and answer such fundamental questions as: ‘What are the aims of music education? What musical knowledge is most worth learning by all students? What

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is the role and responsibility of the music teacher? What is the role of the music learner? What teaching-learning processes, contexts, and assessment procedures are most appropriate for music teaching and learning?’ (MEND 208, 1)

Consensus or acceptable rationalization does not come easily. And David Elliott, before offering his own solutions to the multifarious problems facing music educators, gives further cautionary and salutary advice to the non-critical in highlighting the need for discriminating judgement. ‘... anyone who wants to consult or use a philosophy of music education must be prepared to query its general principles in relation to national, local, daily concerns. The application of a philosophy to a practical situation is not a passive process of carrying out suggestions; it is an active process of asking questions about practicalities with the guidance of critically-reasoned principles’ (MEND 208, 1). And quoting Entwistle he adds: ‘the job of a theory is to evoke judgement rather than rote obedience. The application of a theory to practice is the bringing to bear of critical intelligence upon practical tasks rather than the implementation of good advice.’ On the relevance of teaching inputs Elliott warns that ‘it is essential that these roads [teaching methods and materials] be taking students to the right places. To suggest otherwise is to abdicate responsibility to think intellectually about why and how one ought to educate people’. Elliott effectively constructs a *mise-en-scène* for philosophical enquiry.

If moderation, eclecticism and balance are to make their contribution to achieving consensus it must be obvious that philosophical theories should lend themselves to tolerable reconciliation one with the other. It is true that the two philosophical stances most singled out for comprehensive review in this analysis emanate from North America and are contextualized to that scenario; their relevance (or, rather, their adaptability) to the Irish case is, however, stoutly defended, as arising from the analysis, as appropriate, of their history, their strengths and weaknesses. The serendipitous consequences of Reimer’s independent attempt eclectically to fabricate a formula for a universally acceptable philosophy of music education (Amsterdam 1996) are that his admirable effort provides a convenient yardstick against which to measure the potential of individual theories to pass muster. Significantly, Reimer’s own philosophical position (assumed to be a cognate of MEAE) is, on the one hand, difficult to align exactly with any one of the four influential positions he treats; on the other, it has the flexibility to coexist with all of them and is perfectly congruent with the existential theory of music being a ‘celebration of human consciousness’, in turn an amalgam, if not an apotheosis, of form (product), process, reference and context. David Elliott’s philosophy, too, while easier, by definition, to focus onto praxialism, and the pre-eminence of process, is not irretrievably out of line with the broader sweep of the universal idea. This is to share the honours equally between the malleability of the synthesis of philosophical views (as enunciated by Reimer in Amsterdam, 1996) and the immanent plasticity of Elliott’s and Reimer’s base positions.

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The writer has always considered that it would be helpful if a single concept about music could be found which is implicit as a binding force in virtually all of the philosophical positions. The idea of music as art is proposed as such a notion; it is confidently believed that sufficient has been said on this subject to give it plausibility. Form is the essence of art and so Formalism is, of necessity, validated. Praxialism, being concerned about process and music as activity, *inter alia*, does not disavow its affinity with art, as Elliott's phraseology so amply confirms. Referentialism, while at one end of its continuum it accommodates outcomes that are not specifically musical, and also supports functions which may evaluate music on a technical (utilitarian) theory of art, need not deny its relationship to art, arising from its compatibility with other philosophical views, to preserve its integrity as a separate stance. Contextualism, too, is not inimical to the notion of art, even in the 'aesthetic consciousness' sense, unless it is specifically set up in this context.

6.7.3 Towards a Universal Philosophy of Music Education

[Note that the philosophical stances being considered here are four – Formalism, Praxialism, Referentialism and Contextualism. A form of Existentialism is also treated by Bennett Reimer above but it is drawn from a reflection on the power, significance, and the wider anthropological function of art as a human pursuit rather than of music specifically as a member of the arts family.]

The idealism in the notion of a universal philosophy of music education is appealing. Because it is a question of taking into account as many respected and influential approaches as possible, it becomes (certainly in practice) an exercise in compromise, in concession, in minimizing and rationalizing differences, in negotiating incompatibles out of the picture. It is essential to distinguish between a philosophy of music and a philosophy of music education and to realize that to progress from the one to its derivative, without becoming embroiled in questions of 'diversity and involvements' (see above), is a difficult exercise in detachment, if indeed such distancing is worthwhile. Thus Formalism and Referentialism are closer to examining the *nature* of music (how it affects people internally and subjectively), while Praxialism and Contextualism are more concerned with throwing light on its *value*, and are arguably more objective in their approach. Since education may be construed as being concerned with the preservation of what is valued in a culture, Praxialism and Contextualism may be taken as true philosophies of music *education*. And because they focus on activities and on diversity of repertoire and involvements (this is very clear in Elliott's praxial philosophy) they are characteristically further along the music/music education continuum, implementational in overt intent, and therefore more prone to being confrontational and dissonant, though no less interesting on that account, simply by virtue of their being at the very cutting edge of the sociocultural experience.

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Another aspect of universality is the diversity and ubiquity of musical experience itself. In the case of the vast majority who enjoy music, and across a bewildering spectrum, it must be obvious that they are not equipped, by a formed mentality or specific education, to grasp the proffered insights of scholarly enquiry as to how and why the experience is pleasurable; that it is gratifying is what counts and is sufficient. The epistemology of the aesthetic¹⁶¹ or of the forms of musical knowledge - even of the nature of music itself - is outside their range of immediate interest, although its absence does not inhibit the enjoyment in kind, whatever about degree. That music is valued is obvious when there is a propensity to repeat the experience; as Roger Scruton says - ‘it must be part not only of [one’s] enjoyment but also of [one’s] *concern*.’ It is the value of music that is universally felt; and value judgements (especially in education) should be predominantly cognitive and rational - and vigilant lest the power of emotional attachment or uninformed taste should lead to a feckless outcome.

Logically a philosophy of music in practice should evince some bias towards an enquiry into *value* as a pragmatic concern, important in education too, where perceived worth and curricular prioritization tend to be in a direct relationship. It seems that the philosophical stances under discussion can be placed on a continuum which suggests an index of musical intrinsicality in any experience being considered, without necessarily placing a premium on the value of that intrinsicality. Reimer, because of his association with Absolute Expressionism and his affinity with Langer, as the most eloquent proponent for those ideas, is spiritually a Formalist, especially since he is implacable on the primacy of intrinsicality in separating musical (*sui generis*) from pseudo-musical experiences, artistic from utilitarian applications. Yet his product-orientated bias spontaneously embraces praxialism on the understanding that product and process are inseparably bound. For the same reason Elliott’s praxial philosophy is compatible, at least partially, with Formalism, both process and product being of necessity intramusically conceived, and, as suggested, concerned with the *nature*¹⁶² of music. But neither, thus far, can account fully for the extraordinary spectrum of musical experience – above all for the range of values that music gives rise to, outside of its purely musical functions. Undoubtedly it is this worrying shortfall that resulted in attempts to account for this outcrop of values which normalize, as it is proper that they should, a vast area of musical experience defined within the alleged claim that

¹⁶¹ Throughout this thesis the author has made a plea for the study of artistic (aesthetic) theory, not only to reconfirm its non-threatening nature but to give the lie to its being in any way biased towards the ascendancy of western art music. The misunderstanding has given rise to the age-old prejudice that ‘what we do not understand must be bad’. Much trust may be placed in the idea that music as art is a powerful consensus with which to underpin music education practice.

¹⁶² There may appear to be some confusion here and a contradictory reorientation of pairs of philosophical stances as to the main thrust of their denouement. When, as is proper, the philosophies are examining the nature *and* value of music, Formalism and Referentialism, being concerned with the way the music is received, seem biased towards *nature*, as the other two, Praxialism and Contextualism, are *value*-centred. When, however, only *value* is being examined, Formalism and Praxialism, because of their concern about the inseparable relationship of process and product, enter into a closer liaison which is intra-musical, while Referentialism and Contextualism are compromise positions which open up the field of enquiry to the controversial but crucially important area of extramusical consequences from musical activities.

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more than 90% of all musical experience is non-aesthetic.¹⁶³ Referentialism comes close to being the panacea which validates all other music-related outcomes. It allows Reimer the scope to present the symbolic theories of music as art. Elliott is accommodated in that representational, social, ideological, personal and emotional (cathartic) references can have legitimate value. It must be obvious that any universal philosophy of music or of music education must come to terms with the value system of Referentialism if it is to be applicable to all species of organized sound which merit description as music. If the notion of music and music-making being universal experience and faculty is accepted, then it is natural that the idea of a search for a universal philosophy should suggest itself. It appears to the writer that this is more accessible in the case of music itself than in that of music education, where the question of diversity and possible guidelines for discriminating choices, if not actual exclusions, looms.

There is a feeling of unease that David Elliott does not sufficiently clarify his stance on ‘music as art’¹⁶⁴, probably for reasons of his obsessive aversion to and selective misunderstanding of the idea of the aesthetic and its association with Reimer and MEAE. The concern arises because of his insistence on the admissibility of functions of music outside the aesthetic, leading, in the writer’s view, to his rather vapid claim that all musical cultures are innately equal - and then, logically, to the conclusion that all music is on common ground as a candidate for inclusion in the educational curriculum. He

¹⁶³ The author can clearly remember being struck by the probable authenticity of this claim when he read it; unfortunately it cannot be attributed. The significance of the unidentified reference is to point up that probably most musical experience, while its validity is not in question, falls far short of the absolutist/formalist (*sui generis*) definition which ascribes a special and unique quality to the feeling reputedly generated by music as aesthetic experience (see Hanslick [Sources]). Clearly this is a poor candidate for the universality aspiration and demands considerable softening (as essayed by Reimer in his *Universality* essay) to be compatible with the full spectrum of sensibility to musical stimulation which a fully adaptable philosophy of music education should embody, while still applying quality standards.

¹⁶⁴ The following extract from Heneghan, *The Interpretation of Music: A Study in Perception, Expression and Symbol* (Unpublished thesis; University of Dublin, Trinity College 1990), 11-12 [MEND 608, 17] attempts to show the correlation between the evolution of music, leading to its art connotation, and its social realities. ‘The glory of music, as part of its claim to be species-specific, is its diversity (even within a culture) and its rejection of stasis. The broadest common denominators of music show its evolution to be non-Darwinian because it is exceptionally non-linear, and non-Spencerian in that it neither fits into the mould of “simple to complex”, nor conforms to the progression of “imperfect to perfect” or “lower to higher”. It now appears that the fascinating speculation of *homo musicus* (man the musician) is not merely beguiling, but is stamped with an eminent plausibility; the necessary and sufficient indications are that primitive man was endowed with a faculty to express himself in terms of the copious musical experiences which his congenital vocal and rhythmical capabilities made possible. Add to this the power, implicit in the same species – *homo sapiens* – to be creative and individualistic in a cognitive way, and the notion of music as art demands investigation. But the species is, according to the social anthropologist, John Blacking, not human, but *human and fellow human*. The social nature of man’s pursuits is pervasive. So, too, is the art of sharing, and the diffusion that follows carries with it the promise of universal experience and a common faculty.

‘The very condition of individual self-realization is sharing with others, just as a healthy community depends on the creative contribution of its individual members. ... A human being becomes human through other human beings. ... Art lives in men and women, to be brought out into the open by special processes of interaction’. (John Blacking, *A Common Sense View of All Music*, 25-26) Art encroaches on life, and the sharing which art makes possible can best be described as an attitudinal engagement between an art-object, such as music, and the individual perceiver; therein is the invitation to creativity to which music handsomely responds.’

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does, however, mitigate his insistence by allowing that some musics are more suitable in education than others. But Elliott himself can be credited with providing the solution to this problem in his admirable correlation of musical challenge and level of musicianship.

Challenge is not a value-free word; it suggests, in the educational interaction, an active cognitive engagement by the percipient/participant in a process, leading to understanding, assuming that there is ample material to understand in the first place. Presumably the greater the challenge the greater the satisfaction in meeting it and thus, even in an inter-musical sense, a musical hierarchy (or, at least, a progression in accomplishment and skill) is being sketched (assuming that the challenge is not a purely technical one); otherwise why would anyone seek challenges, unless there is the payoff of greater enjoyment? It follows that music which presents no challenge calls for no musicianship, and, by definition, is not a candidate for ready inclusion in an educational programme - truly an acid test. This is to suggest another criterion, though less precise than Reimer's (see his *Philosophy*, 133-142 for a highly cultured, honest and sensitive treatment of this difficult topic), for judging musical quality. It also renders the call for free access to all musics more malleable, more truly democratic, and more susceptible to the rigours of professional judgement responsibly exercised. It matters little how the decision to limit the repertoire of music admissible in education is arrived at, provided the route is one in which the criterion of excellence and the exercise of discriminating judgement are paramount. It appears that a workable consensus on this issue is not an unattainable target.

The last philosophical position to be accommodated in any approach to a universal understanding is Contextualism. It has a built-in universality of its own, in that there is a context to every instance of musical activity; Contextualism holds that it is this *context* that gives the experience its value. It is, as Reimer points out, a hybrid and derivative position, if not also a placatory synthesis, which interpenetrates freely with the others, as it superimposes its values on theirs and complements them. As Reimer so convincingly argues, no single position can stand alone with any hope of general acceptance or plausible ministry to the total remit of music as a human pursuit, and as universal experience and faculty, without interacting fruitfully with the contextual idea – indeed by either consciously accepting or first calling into question its canons, before embracing it.

Contextualism is an admirable post-modern mentality which courageously confronts the absolute and fundamental truth about music on which its claim to inclusion in the educational process rests securely; it celebrates the universality of musical experience and faculty by limiting, if not disavowing, elitism as a satisfactory route to the full appreciation of the significance and panoramic range of that universality. Contextualism, in its sometimes painful interactions and reconciliations (and possible impasses) with other philosophical positions, advances the search for a universal

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philosophy of music education, but there is an unquantifiable price to pay for that accommodation. Its area of concern is the whole corpus of music; it holds up for appraisal not just the naïve and the profound, but the ethically questionable too, and music with consequences that are infinitely more focused on functions other than purely musical ones, where the search for quality is foremost.

The Platonic ideal of virtue in art may be superannuated as too crude for the more complex and permissive mentality of the third millennium; the question of the broader morality, or the ethical authenticity, of our educational choices is, nevertheless, still pressing. The reader is again referred to Reimer's powerfully convincing analysis of this ineluctable problem, which arises from the need for quality appraisal in music (*A Philosophy*, rev. 1989, p.133 -144). And where Elliott is mercurial in his, no doubt, well-intentioned advocacy statement that all music cultures are innately equal, Reimer, rather, grapples with the problem without fear of being perceived or peripheralized as out-of-touch with current liberal ideas. Here is what he has to say:

Music educators especially must be informed about the criteria in choosing music for their students to experience and in assessing the quality of their students' handling of the music. Whether or not music educators care to think of themselves as 'arbiters of taste', an inevitable degree of control over musical experiences does exist and always will exist so long as formal teaching and learning of music takes place. It is impossible to avoid making value judgements about music when one deals with music as a professional. And while any overt imposition of musical values would be distasteful to most music educators and most students, the entire music education enterprise is built on the assumption that musical tastes can be improved, that musical experiences can be deepened, that musical enjoyment can be refined, that musical significance can be made more available to all people. These assumptions, all of which are very healthy and beyond criticism, do imply a movement toward 'better' musical experiences of 'better' music. The question is, what makes music, or any art, 'better'?¹⁶⁵

This indeed is an ultimate question. Philosophy can only offer guidelines and Reimer's is a remarkable effort in dealing with the criteria of craft, sensitivity (expression and *feelingfulness*), imagination and authenticity; but once the boundary is crossed by which philosophy proceeds to standard-setting, implementation and method, there is the inevitable confrontation with diversity, involvements in educational settings, and, above all, balance - and the notion of universality of approach comes under severe, though not insupportable, pressure.

Reimer, in his search for the parameters of a universal philosophy of music and music education, accepts that differences are as significant as similarities in thinking about music.

The tenor of our times, philosophically and politically, seems much more to be focused on differences among peoples than on similarities. ... surely an argument can be made that it is what divides people, musically as well as in so many other ways, that determines how we think, what we believe, what we cherish, and how we act. ... So it

¹⁶⁵ Reimer, *A Philosophy*, 133.

may not only be impossible or at least very improbable that we can articulate a universal philosophy of music education, it may even be undesirable or even harmful to attempt to do so.

I find such arguments to be quite persuasive. But I do not believe they are persuasive enough to cause me and others devoted to such issues to simply abandon the challenges they present and to retreat to less difficult ones also needing our attention. I believe the music education profession would benefit in important ways from attempts to articulate the issues related to a universal philosophy of music education, to go as far as we are able toward proposing resolutions of those issues, and to formulating positions that, while perhaps falling short of a single, completely acceptable, worldwide philosophy – a ‘*Gesamtphilosophie*’ if you will – would nevertheless portray what such a philosophy might look like. ... The task of a universal philosophy of music education is to build on insights, to further reconcile what only seem to be irreconcilable viewpoints, to honor the distinctiveness of each of the world’s cultures and music, and to continue to clarify that which is universal about culture and music.¹⁶⁶

Characteristically, it might be suggested, considering his eminence in the field, Reimer has laid out music education philosophy in a way which searches out the potential for accommodation between stances that are traditionally seen as mutually exclusive; he does this by playing down differences, but not in an unrealistic way, and by stressing moderation and balance as a means to maximize similarities and promote détente. He is professionally reticent about his own celebrated contribution to the field. It is not easy to appraise his own philosophical stance - which in its focus on the aesthetic is nothing short of a philosophy of art - in the extent to which he feels it approaches a universal philosophy. But in his climax he adduces art (admittedly as treated by a different hand - that of the ‘humanistic’ anthropologist, Robert Plant Armstrong) as the strongest of common denominators - a cherished practice and sacred cow in all cultures - ... art, the ultimate metaphor for all human experience, the ‘celebration of consciousness’. The rhetoric is powerful and it must give us pause to ponder that there is an agency (music) which is truly primeval and, at its best and most genuine, an apotheosis, too, of everything that is good and honest, noble and admirable in the transmission of human culture.

6.7.4 Philosophy in Action: Standards, Curriculum, Method

The need for a philosophy of music (and music education) arises from a *priori* basic understandings about the saturating presence of music in human affairs and the need to organize its functions in an optimal way, principally, it is suggested, through education. Philosophical enquiry is a quintessential exercise in probing the deeper issues to test the truth of and lead on from those basic assumptions, and to establish the intellectual foundations from which executive decisions might proceed; yet, although it is arguably in the sphere of the finest thinkers, it is still only an interim step on the road to a delivered curriculum. And again, in spite of the helpful clarification of issues which is its stock-in-trade, it is

¹⁶⁶ Bennett Reimer, *Should there be a Universal Philosophy of Music Education*. [MEND 401, 2].

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remarkable how seldom philosophy is directly invoked in practice, indeed how little it is studied and understood by teachers (in fact both Bennett Reimer and Charles Leonhard [author of a book *Foundations and Principles of Music Education*, which appeared in 1950, 20 years before Reimer's] have both commented on the worrying degree of professional vagueness and misunderstanding surrounding the definition of aesthetic education).

A great deal of lip service or tacit uncritical approval is given to philosophy in music education; but philosophy, nonetheless, is deemed *difficult* and expendable by many. In the writer's view this has impoverished the field and led to the acceptance of many abuses, such as those evident throughout the twentieth century in the US, where philosophical pronouncements (MEAE is an example) were ineffective in controlling or even refining the power of popular perceptions as to the nature and ascendancy of performance.

As has been seen, the first important finding of MEND was to draw attention to the need for a well-debated and consensus-supported music education philosophy together with the educational processes to insinuate philosophical dialectic into teacher training so that the underlying and underpinning truths about music education, however varied and disputed, might be well aired and understood. As David Elliott reminds us, philosophy helps in 'keeping the "big picture" in view', preventing educational managers and strategists from becoming bogged down in contentious detail at too early a stage in the evolution of policy. But this is problematic, too, as when philosophy can become so emaciated in the attempt to be adaptable to all views that its very generality and neutrality lack bite and can lead to its being ignored or manipulated with impunity. The real issues arise when philosophy retains the power to control and call into question the initiatives that arise from it; these are standards, curriculum and method, the tools of education which invite quotidian dissonances and from which philosophy cannot remain aloof.

The close liaison that should exist between philosophy, standards, curriculum and method is notoriously difficult to handle; failures to maintain a healthy connection in this respect can arguably account for many disappointments in educational achievement. Philosophy is supposed to transcend all the others, certainly as far as the chronology is concerned, as much as it should infuse them. Paul Lehman's lecture at MEND, on the 1992-4 American National Standards (MEND 303), was a model of information on the subject of this intimacy; it highlighted also some significant differences, which are worth noting, between the Irish and the American dispensations.

Ireland has had a national curriculum for many years, and it has traversed many vicissitudes, responding implicitly, in its various revisions, to a range of philosophical underpinnings. It is, through

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the syllabus of the current revision, specific on aspects of diversity (materials/repertoire) and involvements (activities) but has attracted many critics on the question of the credibility of its balance - and of its outcomes in terms of the standards achievable. It summarizes expected outcomes and therefore, by implication, standards, but does not specify method, for the obvious reason that the infrastructure of teacher training in its present form could not accommodate a single approach and there is, in any case, no special virtue in uniformity with the implied exclusions of many worthy methodological approaches. The American system is also liberal about the choice of method. But because the notion of a national curriculum is incompatible with state autonomy in education, American music educators have to be satisfied with a statement of expected outcomes as a starting point.¹⁶⁷ The Music Content Standards, specifying ‘what every young American should know and be able to do in music at the end of grades 4, 8 and 12 (Ages 9, 13 and 17 respectively)’, represent a considerable achievement in officially and mandatorily insinuating music into American general education for the first time in its history. As Lehman so pertinently remarks, the National Standards ‘represent the closest thing to a statement of philosophy’, underlining what should be an inseparable relationship in the sequence from one to the other; they ‘are not a curriculum, though they provide a basis for one’.

Should the philosophy of music education also challenge the processes of teacher training, method, too, can be infused with prevailing convictions. It seems, however, that, in an ideal dispensation, philosophy, curriculum development, standards (and assessment) and method should form a nexus in which all are mutually and severally compatible, complementary and supportive. But philosophy must lead, simply because, by assumed mandate, it must first pontificate on the deeper issues. In the US, the implementation of the National Standards is the equivalent of the implementation of the philosophical principles they embody, with little ambiguity. Lehman is very conscious that there are logistical problems produced by the structure of education in the US. ‘Implementation of any program, of course, is the key issue. It’s also the most difficult. Reaching consensus on the standards, difficult as that may have been, was easy compared with implementing them’. But there are also difficulties inherent in the way information passes from philosophy into curriculum and how this is perceived by the educators. This has to do largely with the balance or bias of the components of curriculum which are responding to prevailing philosophical precepts.

The confrontation between Reimer and Elliott was enormously helpful in raising these issues and biases, in probing some seemingly polar positions in relation to them and happily, in many instances, in showing that they could be rationalized, from the cut and thrust of the rhetoric. But what are these

¹⁶⁷ The meaning intended here is that the VNS should be a starting point from which to plan curriculum and activities, not a basic standard from which to build.

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parameters that flow from philosophy into curriculum - the first step in the process of implementation? It can be learned from the painful Reimer/Elliott battle and from equally painful analysis that *product* and *process* in music are indeed an inseparable pair; neither is possible without the other and both must be the concern of both teachers and learners in balancing what is on offer. So, although Reimer might broadly be deemed a product-orientated philosopher and Elliott a process-centred one, they are indispensable to one another, in spirit and in practice, if their pronouncements are to be seen to support a holistic experience of music.

On the question of *involvements*, Reimer and Elliott are eventually in general agreement on the specifics, endorsed in the National Standards, if not, however, on the bias - and this is significant. The traditional activities are supported; composing (including improvising and arranging), performing (including conducting), listening and appraising (with all the conceptualizing and cognitive learning that is entailed) are all included. Creativity is defined and encouraged, albeit with some honest disagreement as to its appropriate point of entry along the continuum of achievement (as a successful instance of bringing musicianship [and creativity] to bear on musical challenges). The validity of concepts and verbal knowings in the menu for musical advancement is proposed. The notion of music as art, together with all the paraphernalia of its aesthetic connotations and without any bias towards the specific canons of western art music, is admitted (both explicitly and by simple inference); the importance of this conclusion cannot be overstated for its potential to be a useful discriminating criterion in the qualitative analysis of repertoire, one of the most currently controversial of all educational processes.

But philosophy can and does go further in suggesting, if not insisting, that the technical theory of art (art, of all kinds, in its utilitarian context) and extra-musical values must be taken into account as applicable if the full spectrum of music as universal experience is to have real meaning in general education. This, of course, expands still more the scope of the controversy in music education and confronts one of the commanding essences of current concern, constantly invoked throughout Elliott's book, and covering two of Reimer's three identified dilemmas of turn-of-the-century music education; it is not difficult to infer that it concerns the right to a democratic presence, at the heart of the music education endeavour, for popular musics and multiculturalism. Nor is this to imply that musics other than WAM do not conform to and indeed honour the definition of art. Quite the contrary - and so much so that it might even be claimed that misconceptions in this respect, born of fear, ignorance and aggression, are at the root of a great deal of unnecessary dissonance in music education. Indeed to deconstruct these misconceptions calmly on the basis of adduced evidence would be to do a great service to the profession and to future generations of learners. But the manifold admission of musics of all kinds to the educational domain must always be seen against the background of inevitable

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dilution (Harry White's concern. MEND 308), as much as that of 'thinly-spread comprehensiveness', notions of relevance and excellence, the inescapability of the functions of judgement and valuing - above all, the ruthless levelling agency of time. The overriding importance of the art connotation is dealt with in 5.5.5 under the Reimer/Elliott critique/rebuttal of Elliott's *Music Matters* (see also 6.7.8 below).

There is one area of musical activity which, in the writer's view, has been inadequately served by philosophical advocacy and exegesis. This is the area of performance. It is dealt with, in further detail, in subsequent sections below. The most compelling evidence for this claim is the fact that in the United States of America, the richest economy in the world, and one traditionally committed by popular support to music education, it has only recently been admitted that there has been a major failing¹⁶⁸ in this respect; attempts are being made, within the remit of the National Standards, to redress the situation. But the National Standards are, of necessity, couched in such general terms that the issue is far from clear as to its implications.

Performance, as has been seen, is also a major bone of contention between Reimer and Elliott. And here is the distinguishing factor between, typically, the generality of philosophy and the particularity of the subsequent stages – standards, curriculum and method. In an activity so disproportionately demanding on time for the acquisition of even competent status and skill, it is necessary, in general education, to be honest and realistic in defining what is achievable (standards), the balance vis-à-vis other activities resulting from the time factor, the availability and expertise of the teachers - above all the reasons why learners choose a performance stream or not (assuming that it is an option). It is foolhardy to assume that a performance programme, initiated on the basis of good advice from an informing philosophy, will not, in the absence of time and expert teaching, add a moiety to failure statistics, if standards are also being targeted.

Philosophy and curriculum which do not recognize performance as a specialism, by nature, are doomed to upset the balance of the general music programme and to compromise the success of the other components; this is particularly the case with listening. To be peripheralized as an activity in its own right (after all, says Reimer, 'listening is also musical praxis'); to be offered as an alternative to the performance programme; to be impoverished by the demands of an unrealistic performance

¹⁶⁸ The major failing is rooted in Reimer's statements (see MEND 402, concluding paragraph) about the promise of the VNS (note that at that time [1995], the qualifier 'voluntary' did not seem necessary). It was admitted that performing alone, as a specialism practised in American music education, is not sufficient without stricter attention to musicianship training. Reimer refers to a future 'balance of learnings, including but surpassing those available from performance'. The 'failure' of traditional MEAE, however unfairly exaggerated, as a 'last ditch' means to give the non-performing group an exposure to musical experiences, is sufficiently pointed up by the intent of the VNS to balance the offerings with hands-on performing.

expectation - none of these is a fate that should befall that most ubiquitous, and arguably therefore the most important of all musical activities. But these are some of the real consequences that have ensued in the curricular implementation of philosophy. Is it any wonder that Lehman should remind us that 'implementation of any program, of course, is the key issue. It's also the most difficult'. Philosophy is necessary but it is not sufficient in itself to guarantee effective implementation; neither are diversity and involvements, no matter how painstakingly defined, sufficient. Implementation must also take balance into account.

6.7.5 The Relevance of American Music Education Practice

In the final presentation to MEND, the relevance of American practice to Irish music education concerns was called into question by Harry White in a valedictory and provocative shrugging off of the huge, helpful and highly influential input to MEND by American philosophers. After all, in relation to Ireland, America was seen as intrinsically multicultural, having superannated phases of music education which Ireland had not yet reached and, above all, capitulating in education to the 'pop and rock forms of the present day, those that press down with such ubiquitous insistence on the musical imagination'. But White did not reveal that, as he spoke, arrangements were already in place to secure responses to his paper from both Elliott and Reimer; in a sense this was to extend the deliberations of MEND into a new international phase. Reimer, however, having first been substantially in agreement about the non-relevance of American practice, found his 'second wind' and deftly redirected the enquiry, in a comparative way, which examined how the state of music education in Ireland could be reflected in current American concerns.

In the course of his reply, Reimer touched candidly on the art/popular music dichotomy and on multiculturalism in America. His conclusions - in relation to the first, that 'I wish we could say that they [other countries, including Ireland] could look to America for thoughtful leadership in this matter. I don't believe they can', and, in relation to the second, that 'we [in America] have a long way to go to get our own house in order, let alone being a model for Ireland with its very different cultural identity' - may be taken to imply that these are perennial problems still pressing in the United States but applicable to Ireland too, the similarities being more significant than the differences. However, it is when Reimer identifies the performance problem that the relevance to past and current difficulties in Ireland is apparent. If the Irish 'got it wrong' (and it is the writer's view that Harry White's interpretation of this concern [*The Conceptual Failure of Music Education in Ireland* as he terms it. MEND 108] is also open to question), it is true that the Americans did also. Harry White's concern that the traditional craving for performance (any kind) in Ireland, when indulged, has not produced good (listening) musicians and has impoverished the uptake and the quality of general music education

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- and Reimer's that the performance programme in the US was implemented with scant regard for the holistic training of performers, and dichotomized the music education cohorts to the detriment of both – are surely the same in kind. Certainly the solutions that are currently being implemented in both countries are similar and must fall unless they exist beside a well-supported specialist performance stream to cater for the more committed and for the embryo or potential music majors (professionals) of the future.

The policy decision to include the American lobby of music educators in MEND was something of an act of faith, but it was based also on a thorough survey of the global music education scene, to establish a profile of the density of and investment in proactive engagements with current problems in the field. This was greatly facilitated through the ISME connection, three important World Conferences on Music Education having been staged (Seoul, Korea in 1992; Tampa, Florida in 1994; and Amsterdam, the Netherlands in 1996) around the time of the MEND initiative. Many useful contacts were made during this period. It was particularly important that access to published work by direct involvement with distinguished authors should be possible. The following is a summary of how the American model suggested itself as admirably applicable to Irish concerns:

1. At the most fundamental levels - of music education philosophy - the US could arguably boast the most celebrated writer, on the subject, of the post WW II period in Bennett Reimer. In Reimer's *A Philosophy of Music Education* there was, thus, a generally respected prototype (no more was expected by MEND) from which debate could be initiated. But, well-orchestrated publicity material at the time when MEND was being mooted made it known that Reimer's philosophy was in the process of being challenged. This added zest to the prospect for provocative proceedings, particularly, as turned out to be possible, if the protagonists in the anticipated confrontation could be invited to present at MEND. Nothing could guarantee an exciting debate more than the idea of the open disavowal of tenets long accepted and honoured by the passage of time
2. The issue of Elliott's book *Music Matters* in the US coincided almost exactly with Phase I of MEND. The publication of the book destabilized the US music education lobby which had just completed a reappraisal of the requirements of general (school) music education in publishing the American National Standards.
3. America, for reasons broadly related to the educational autonomy of each state, did not have a national curriculum or any recognizable equivalent. From 1989 onwards the omission of the arts from the proposed Goals 2000 educational legislation led to confrontation with Government and successful lobbying, by the National Coalition for Music Education, to have them admitted. The non-statutory National Standards (Music)

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date from 1992-1994. Although their drafting in very general terms contained no more than a hint of dissatisfaction with the unevenness in outcome and selective bias of the binary school music education programme, their intent was to introduce (if accepted state-by-state) a mandatory single programme for general music education which would, at the very least, call previous practices into question. This melting-pot scenario had a close affinity with the Irish situation, except that our binary system, of nominally practical and theoretical training, did not (and does not) typically operate within the school system.

4. The period between the revision of Reimer's *Philosophy* and Elliott's *Music Matters* was a time of great soul-searching in the US on the subject of school music education. It was the first time that music education had become a real political issue, and this is also significant. The National Standards were thus a response to Government, a move in the direction of a possible national curriculum, a manifesto for music - an extra-musical apologia which listed the aims of music education side by side with those of other subjects. This quasi-political aspect of the times had particular relevance to any initiatives which Irish music educators might have had in mind.
5. Current information (1989-1994) on the state of music education in the US and dissatisfaction with the overall success of its provisions centred on two key areas of the curriculum – performance and listening. The writer must add the disclaimer that, in his copious reading of the literature, he has never found outright dissatisfaction expressed with the way composing is handled in the general music education programme. He interprets this as confirming the obvious – that composition/creativity is daunting to popular perception, that the level of interest in it as a student priority in education (much less as a professional aspiration) is statistically low and that it is overwhelmed as an adult pursuit by the universality of listening as a musical activity and the very significant and educationally sensitive survival of the performing instinct. A third problematic area was concerned generically with diversity (repertoire), but was less explicit in articulation. All these issues have common ground in one fundamental quandary which, in the writer's opinion, has always been, not just understated, but ignored. There has always been and there will always be an intrinsic conflict between time and the notion of comprehensiveness. The diversity issue is a case in point. The containment of the repertoire has been subjected to a two-pronged attack, both on the presumed authority of combating elitism. The much lauded notion of the school-community bridge seems to rest on the desirability of reaching détente with popular musics; the more insidious intramusical pressure comes from within - the multicultural lobby with the claim that music education should be opened up, ideally, to all musics. That is not to question the

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validity of either as an extender, but to point to the difficulties that can arise in searching for pragmatic balance. All of these concerns appeared to be as relevant to Irish music education as to the American system.

6. MEND has highlighted the need for thorough research into the *philosophy* of performance - an investigation of its nature and value. This arose from the seriously flawed and incomplete perceptions of the activity coming from the debates at MEND; it acquired greater force from the realization that American music education, too, was dogged by its own inability to maintain a convincing profile of performance informed by musicianship (and its complement - musicianship supported by performance). Again the balance issue was seen as being as applicable to Ireland as it was an ongoing concern in the US. Another version of the same dilemma - seeing the listening (largely conceptual and academic) programme as an alternative to performance, and practical music as not requiring the underpinning of some sophistication in listening - found the two countries grappling with the same problem.
7. Though no particular teacher training¹⁶⁹ mode can be taken as characteristic of American school music education, there is sufficient reliance on the idea of music specialism for teachers at lower levels that Irish music education could benefit from reporting on this question. In the event, the arguments for and against the idea of relying on non-specialist class teachers to teach school music at lower levels became a rich source of debate and has now surfaced as a major concern about the potential of the new primary school curriculum (1999) in Ireland to deliver the music programme.
8. Summarizing the relevance of American music education practice to the Findings of MEND (see Chapter 7):
 - i) There was already evidence, borne out by the American input to MEND, that lack of understanding by teachers of **philosophical underpinnings** was a problem in America. In other words there were signs (1994) of impending instability (see 2 above) in the philosophical approach to music education, coupled with soft policies as to how or whether relevant philosophical discourse **should be a component in teacher training** and at what stage (see Harold Abeles - MEND 302).

¹⁶⁹ The reference is to the applicability of American practice to Irish concerns. Clearly this has resonances in both strands of the thesis - the MEND concerns and as an outcome of the application of philosophy to the drafting of curriculum. The author understands that there are two basic streams of American teacher training - general and instrumental - whereas in Ireland there are primary teachers, some with specialization but typically without, and secondary school music teachers who are specialized but neither typically nor officially skilled as instrumental teachers. There is room here for comparative studies and enquiry as to how the American teacher training programmes are responding to the new demands of the VNS.

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- ii) The **dichotomy**¹⁷⁰ separating practical from general music teachers was sealed, at close contact, into the school system in the US, as it was supported by the teacher training modes which specifically offered those options to postulant teachers training for school careers. Clearly this was also further consolidated by a self-generating system, in which good performers would opt for performing (teaching) careers while the less gifted (or failed performers) would be automatically steered towards the less glamorous ‘listening’ programme. It could, arguably, also have accounted for the malaise in the general music programme of MEAE, eventually bringing it (through its worst examples) into disrepute.
- iii) It would be impossible to overstress the **time management** problem in music education. This is particularly troublesome the richer the involvement in activities that have a psychomotor (physical skill) aspect, such as **performance**. The problem of available time, or just the prioritization of the time available towards specific activities, eventually led, apparently and typically, to the complete divorce of practical from musicianship streams in the US. The success, on occasion spectacular, of the practical (performance) programme in the US should not, however, be gainsaid and has been a source of national pride. The downside, which was addressed by the Goals 2000 legislation and the National Standards research, was the overt promotion of performance as an elitist pursuit (albeit optionally available to all); the poverty with regard to holistic offerings within the performing and non-performing cohorts; the abysmal uptake of the non-performing option; the pragmatic acceptance of virtual failure to promote the idea of ‘music for all’; the absence of anything approaching a national curriculum. The relevance to Ireland of desiderata based on some of these shortcomings is all too obvious.
- iv) The National Standards (1994) with their implicit common denominator approach to a single ideal minimum musicianship programme mandatory for all would undoubtedly change the pattern of **teacher training**,¹⁷¹ if their implementation were to respond to campaigning by MENC for their manifold state-by-state adoption. Because of the prevalence of specialist teacher training, even for lower levels, the problems would be less severe than in Ireland, where the burden of an ambitious programme must be borne by non-specialists. However, the proportion of practical to general teachers would have to change drastically, practical teachers

¹⁷⁰ The author understands the VNS to have had the aim of harmonizing the performing and non-performing streams into a single programme as outlined in the VNS content document. That there are two discrete streams is borne out by the fact (Colwell’s authority and see footnote 72) that there are some (practical?) teachers in the US who do not think that the VNS apply to them.

¹⁷¹ Whether or not this happens, or takes the form of closer liaison between teachers while still cleaving to their

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being less in demand for purely performance specialisms with some being diverted into the general programme. All of these considerations were to make American views on teacher training very germane to Irish concerns.

9. Examining the MEND Agenda itself in relation to American practice resulted in further proof of affinities between the two systems:
- i) **Philosophical pronouncements** from the US on music education, beginning with the Reimer *Philosophy*, were as rich, varied, scholarly and provocative as those from any other single source.
 - ii) The key issues, subsequently identified as a nexus by Reimer, defining the **state of music education** in the US, had important resonances in Ireland, too. The status of popular music and multiculturalism (Irish ‘biculturalism’ being a species of multiculturalism) in the music education dispensation and the stabilization of the performance issue were not far from the Irish mind.
 - iii) **Continuum**,¹⁷² in the sense described in the *Deaf Ears?* Report (1985), does not seem to be a burning question in American music education.
 - iv) **Performance** as an issue was and is very high on the agenda of American music education. There was little doubt that the Americans would have a great deal to offer by way of experience and mature comment on this topic, especially in the light of their own successes and failures, from philosophical concept to practice.
 - v) **Assessment** seems to have had a lower profile in American school music education than other curricular aspects. It is suspected that the dominance of the performing option and the relative unimportance of the general programme in terms of its uptake at higher levels may account for this. The writer has seen the American practical system in operation; it seems to rely more on the enthusiasm engendered for communal performance (the band movement is an impressive example) than on the measurement and documented evaluation of the results achieved. With the introduction of the National Standards that is going to change. To quote Lehman (MEND 303, 8 et seq.): ‘The existence of standards has changed the educational landscape utterly and completely by emphasizing evaluation and assessment. ... standards do more than make assessment possible. They make it necessary. We cannot have standards without assessment. ... I believe that assessment is not only

own specialism (as suggested by Colwell), does not affect the thrust of the arguments in this thesis.

¹⁷² Continuum was a major issue in the findings of the *Deaf Ears?* Report and referred to the debilitating discontinuities between music at primary and second level as rooted in misunderstandings at the interface and the virtual collapse of the primary school music teaching programme, itself sourced in the inadequate training, in music, of non-specialist general teachers to deal with teaching of a specialized subject.

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helpful but inevitable. ... Unless we begin to take assessment more seriously we will likely find our discipline has been relegated to a position on the periphery of the curriculum. ... I see assessment as the supreme challenge and the defining issue for music education in the coming decade.’

- vi) It was absolutely essential to sample American views on the multicultural education issue as throwing light on the specific Irish context of so-called biculturalism. The writer, as the organizer of MEND, was particularly concerned that the rapid development of the multicultural programme, especially in the US, and the urgency with which it was being promoted in advocacy statements to the global community, had the potential to overwhelm the, as yet, underdeveloped campaign for the enhancement of the position of **traditional music**¹⁷³ in Irish music education. The contributions, from America, of Marie McCarthy, Patricia Shehan Campbell and Kari Veblen were very helpful in establishing a better perspective on the combined issue, since they covered aspects of both approaches.
- vii) Most of the American contributors were concerned more with school education, as being a prime concern of the MEND initiative in the first place. However, there was one representative, Harold Abeles, who contributed significantly to the teacher training topic as one critically important branch of **Third Level Music Education**.
- viii) The existence in the US of the Music Educators’ National Conference (MENC), as arguably the largest **national forum** in the world (70,000 members) for the processing of problems related to music education, was sufficient to suggest that its well-documented wealth of expertise should be invoked as a stimulation towards the inauguration of a similar body in Ireland. As has been stated elsewhere, if a single recommendation were to be demanded of MEND it would stipulate the setting up of such a forum, without which there would be no mechanism to perpetuate the work undertaken by MEND. In the event, contributions by Dorothy Straub (MEND 205) and Paul Lehman (MEND 303) were extremely concise and focused in introducing the MEND delegates to the copious advantages of having such an assembly.

¹⁷³ As noted in the treatment at MEND of Irish Traditional Music there was difficulty in finding a name that would unambiguously identify what was meant by traditional music, but it may be taken to mean Irish folk music. It was included in MEND (Agenda Item #6) as a bicultural aspect of multiculturalism, and is treated exhaustively in this context, without, however, yielding a satisfactory outcome, as reported.

6.7.6 Music as Art and in the Arts Programme¹⁷⁴

‘If it is art it is not for all, and if it is for all it is not art’.¹⁷⁵ There is something humanistically depressing about the remark attributed to Arnold Schönberg; for the self-styled liberal contemporary music educator it may account for a subconscious or even overt feeling of threat when the notion of music is exclusively coupled with that of art. It accounts, too, for the happily superannuated assumptions of musical elitism which have little place in current deliberations on music education. The problems in music education are not generated by elitism so much as by the need to make potentially rewarding musical choices and the time to explore them gainfully. In other words, the question of balance always looms.

There are many aphoristic statements by eminent writers eulogizing art in its sublime manifestations and in its educational contexts. ‘Great art proposes the alert mind of the educated listener’,¹⁷⁶ claims Schönberg. And Bernard Shaw, in the Preface to *Pygmalion*, adds that ‘it is so intensely and deliberately didactic, and its subject is esteemed so dry, that I delight in throwing it at the heads of the wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that great art can never be anything else.’ Walter Pater adds another dimension, relating art to its musical context: ‘All art constantly aspires to the condition of music, because, in its ideal, consummate moments, the end is not distinct from the means, the form from the matter, the subject from the expression; and to it therefore, to the condition of its perfect moments, all the arts may be supposed constantly to tend and aspire.’¹⁷⁷

But all music is not, all the time, aiming at such lofty goals; if it were, it would be only a part of life and unfitted to its claim to be a universal experience. The comforting reality is that much music is far more modest in its pretensions and therefore more generally accessible. All musics worthy of respect must be contained within an educational plan aimed at compatibility with prototypical guidelines. The spectrum of musics admissible in education can be made wide enough to satisfy most demands, but the choices must be responsibly made. In this context the sense of music as art need not be so intimidating and unnerving.

¹⁷⁴ As far as the arguments in this thesis are concerned, whether one is considering music in its practical or academic aspects, its being treated as art, in the aesthetic sense, is a crucial point, and one which, it is claimed, leads to a valuable consensus view. See, also, footnote 161.

¹⁷⁵ The remark is attributed to Arnold Schönberg. Ian Crofton and Donald Fraser, *A Dictionary of Musical Quotations*, (First published 1985 by Croom Helm; London paperback 1988 by Routledge), 116/12.

¹⁷⁶ Arnold Schönberg (*Memories and Commentaries* 1960). Ian Crofton and Donald Fraser, *A Dictionary of Musical Quotations*, (First published 1985 by Croom Helm; London paperback 1988 by Routledge), 8/13.

¹⁷⁷ Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, 1873, ‘The School of Giorgione’ (in Ian Crofton and Donald Fraser, *A Dictionary of Musical Quotations*, (First published 1985 by Croom Helm; London paperback 1988 by Routledge), 13/29.

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1. The idea of art is universal and transcultural. Although western culture has contributed a great deal to the philosophy of art (aesthetics), the rubrics are not and should not be construed as having been derived from coterie notions of western art. The concept of music as art and as the intentional expression of some internally felt concern, often in an idealistically (Platonic) cultural context, is pervasive, too, and there seems also to be an intuitive need to have this process recognized for what it is, whether as communal or personal expression. There is probably very little music that does not align itself in some way with this criterion. Music in this context is valued, but must yield to the detached and disinterested forces of judgement, if called upon to be comparatively evaluated.
2. Music as defined by the canons of so-called strict aesthetic theory (proposing a *sui generis* feeling of pleasure divorced from the popular perception of the arousal of a spectrum of empathic feelings [even emotions] of quotidian occurrence) has its own validity but is not adaptable to the notion of universality. It must relax into a more accommodating definition of what art entails. This is a genuine educational concern, which is at the heart of current deliberations.
3. The symbolic theory of music, in its broadest sense, where music, standing proxy for some internal condition, which craves expression, effectively externalizes it, is attractive and adaptable without the need to refine it with Langerian precision. In other words, art as imitation, although, of course, not universally acknowledged, is not only an influential theory but is compatible with the deeply pondered psychology and wider aims of much music that is likely to be proposed for inclusion in education.
4. Evidence of craft, the plying of those objectively-acquired skills which can give external form to musical ideas, is another necessary though not sufficient artistic criterion, which is nevertheless applicable as a test of worthiness when appraising music in a comparative way – a process that is ineluctable in educational practice. It is even allowable that an appreciation of the subjective ministry of imagination can enhance the effectiveness of music so judged. In fact, there seems to be very little in artistic theory that is, so far, exceptionable.
5. The idea that the experience of art being uplifting - at the very least that it should not be debasing – is persuasive in educational ethics and might be argued as arising from the fundamental option of normal human beings. The goodness and virtue in art – its didacticism, so to speak, with its ethical Hellenic overtones – is a difficult notion to put aside. But, as Bernard Shaw reminds us: ‘Music will express any emotion, base or lofty, she is absolutely unmoral’.¹⁷⁸ Music which, by consensus view, is deemed vulgar,

¹⁷⁸ George Bernard Shaw, *Music in London* (1856-1950), quoted in Ian Crofton and Donald Fraser, *A Dictionary*

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debasement or even decadent by virtue of its associations or its dedicated functions, must be confronted and contained in a way which, without visiting it upon vulnerable and captive audiences, confines it to those who intentionally seek it.

6. The technical theory of art, which can elevate the perceived value of well-crafted music in recognition of its usefulness, should not be despised. The philosophical stances of Referentialism and Contextualism are particularly benign in validating a wide variety of outcomes, from musical activity, that are, to a greater or lesser degree, not intramusical. These could include such instances as expressions of non-musical cultural ideas, cathartic discharge, exhortation, amusement, advocacy and persuasion, the reaping of extrinsic benefits and so on – values that loom large in the Elliott philosophy. There is no reason why music should not be experienced as utilitarian, to some extent, in its outcomes, while retaining its purely musical features; to argue otherwise would be to divorce it from human concerns, as something contrived and artificial. It is the writer's view that music which apotheosizes feeling and form, which brings craft, imagination and authenticity (to use Reimer terminology) to bear, and to expressive ends, must, by definition, have more *musical* value by virtue of that intramusical connection than could accrue from its other functions. But, put another way, music which is true to its artistic connotations should not be invalidated as art because it serves a number of other functions. And stated pragmatically, the admittance of diverse music practices to education should not so elevate the importance of artistic criteria as to ignore or devalue the other useful functions which the music may perform.
7. Finally, it is argued that the verbal phraseology to do with music is so imbued with the trappings of artistic lore that it would be difficult to find examples of music that are independent of it. This gives further licence to the demand that music should not be divorced from its artistic base. It is generally accepted that music education belongs within the arts programme; as such is it unreasonable to expect that it should be true to the values of art? Lest there should be any doubt about the implications of this conclusion, judgements applied in accordance with the general trend of the arguments presented above should not be expected or manipulated to favour one musical culture over another.

6.7.7 The Conceptual Confusion about Performance

In proceeding from a philosophy of music education to its implementation, the means - towards the end of making music present - must be confronted and appraised; ideally, balanced choices must be

of Musical Quotations, (First published 1985 by Croom Helm; London paperback 1988 by Routledge), 13/42.

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made if holistic education is the aim. Keith Swanwick's CLASP model of how music works in education succinctly summarizes the components,¹⁷⁹ while adhering closely to Reimer's 'diversity and involvements'. But it is the *act* of performance that typically and uniquely makes the music present for the vast majority; and it is this witnessing of performance (live, through CDs and so on) that so possesses the mind as constituting an instance of music. In the case of those to whom musical experience is an important life dimension, it is to follow an easy psychologically-based enquiry to arrive at the conclusion that performance, in some form or other, would be attractive to such people as a means of playing out their musical fantasies.

Performance may be the hubris of music education: of its primacy, as the most refractory and problematic component in the dispensation, there can be no doubt. Performance as an option is the activity which most typically evinces a response and initiative from postulant learners, who might be quite passive and malleable where their attitudes to other components of the curriculum are concerned. And we have seen how, in the US, performance has been a powerful force in dichotomizing the music education cohorts. But there should not be, nor is there, a mandate to curb this most healthy of instinctive drives. And it should not be assumed that by closing the avenue of performance to those who wish to use it they would or could be made into better musicians; this is the mistake Harry White makes in partially attributing musical illiteracy (as far as cultured listening is concerned) to self-indulgence in mediocrity by the performance cult. Appreciative and informed listening is not thwarted because people want to perform, but because they don't.

David Elliott has a very valid point to make in this respect though it lacks moderation, in the writer's view. The problem for performance is to achieve peaceful and fruitful coexistence with the other components of holistic education. It might even be argued that music education through performance could be a route to a holistic outcome, though not the most resource-efficient. Therefore, let it be stated from the outset that the confusion about performance arises from misunderstandings, misconceptions and mass self-deceptions as to the disproportionate time-factor involved; this is simply because it is physically skill-, and therefore time-intensive.¹⁸⁰ Until music education comes to terms with this reality, while upholding the basic premise that music is a performing art, there will continue to be serious problems.

¹⁷⁹ The mnemonic CLASP stands for Composing, Literature, Audition, Skills, and Performing. *Skill*, of course, is partly redundant since the activities may be assumed to include the skills. Literature and skills correspond to Reimer's Diversity (materials) and Involvements (composing, performing, listening/appraising). The CLASP mnemonic is developed in Swanwick's *A Basis for Music Education* (NFER-NELSON Publishing Company Ltd; Windsor 1979, reprinted paperback 1989), 45.

¹⁸⁰ It is true that listening is also a skill and time-intensive; as Reimer says, 'listening is also musical praxis', albeit only reluctantly conceded by Elliott. As already explained several times (see footnote 88 above) listening

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It has been suggested that all the philosophical pronouncements of the twentieth century have failed to banish the popular myth that education in music is and should be primarily concerned with training in performance. A whole culture evolved in the US around this myth; its results were impressive but failed to address the fact that the vast majority (the non-performers) were paying the price, albeit voluntarily. Music educators looked on helplessly at this undesirable proof of strategic (even political) failures. In Ireland, would-be performers took themselves off to the caring ministry of the private sector, earning the unmerited tag of elitism in the process. Both countries had much in common and it can be seen how recognition, by the interested public, and pursuit, of performance as a specialism (outside of school), encouraged and even sanctioned academicism, and ultimately barrenness, in the approach to school education. There might even have been a subconscious sense of relief that it did not have to burden itself with performance, though this is purely conjectural. One unfortunate outcome, especially troublesome in Ireland, was that the nature of the overall dispensation bred the nature of the teaching cohorts that served it; it could not have been otherwise. This further consolidated the differences in the approach to music education. It will be interesting to see how a nominally balanced ‘curriculum’, recently introduced in both countries, can be served without drastic retraining and reorientation of music teachers.¹⁸¹

Current progress in rationalizing the curricular options (in the US and in Ireland) is soundly based and admirable. It should continue to be monitored critically and analytically. The writer is convinced that the outcomes (delivered curriculum) from recent reform, if appraised honestly, will place the performance issue in true perspective. It will show that what is possible in school performance, based on derisory time allocations, will amount to little more than what Reimer describes as ‘exploratory’. This, of course, will be even more acutely obvious if teacher training and expertise are not, meanwhile, upgraded to deal with the expanded brief. What will be realized, too, is that the music programme is very thinly spread because of its new diversity; and it will have to be appreciated by all that to upgrade it, accepting the time demands entailed, would be to discriminate against the majority who need, individually, a corresponding balance in the mix of the total curriculum (all subjects) followed, and are therefore less inclined to allocate more to music than to other subjects. Performance will re-emerge as the specialism that it is, to be pursued and encouraged, without stigma, by those who choose that option. It is therefore to be hoped that, in the US, the current well-supported performance programme will remain, but will enter a new and even healthier phase, while in Ireland an upgraded

is the easiest way to familiarize oneself with the exemplars of the repertoire. The point is not that listening takes time, but that performance takes disproportionately much more, granted that it has different objectives and the associated unique rewards.

¹⁸¹With the introduction of new syllabi in the 1990s in Ireland, there was a concomitant concern about and intention to provide parallel teacher in-service training at all levels to cope with new features. Whether judgement be passed, or not, on the nature of the changes being full-blown philosophical rethinking or merely syllabus revision, there is a connection between the retraining (in-service) and the changes introduced.

performance programme, whether available through the public or private sector, will be made available, accessible and affordable.

6.7.8 Diversity: The Role of Popular Music and Multiculturalism in Music Education¹⁸²

With the perception of a shrinking world and the availability, through technology, of so much music that was hitherto inaccessible, a new conscience has developed as to how such a vast resource might be turned to good account in education. It is not a simple dilemma. An abundance of information, seen against the background of a virtually unchanging level of human absorption, is challenging. Being spoiled for choice is a phenomenon that transmutes itself into an educational nightmare. Teachers are faced with the need to expand their base of knowledge and skills; learners have to respond to the pressures from other curricular choices (also suffering from the growing pains of the information boom) and the inevitable dilutions, at personal levels, which occur in such circumstances. The tensions at the interfaces between general and specialist studies are mounting.

Against such a background, this turn-of-the-millennium issue about the diversity of musics in education seems a natural outcome. But it is fuelled also by notions of global artistic democracy, the demand that educational decisions be politically correct and, in western societies, the subtly implanted sense of guilt that, in undertaking ‘the cultural colonization of the world and the imposition of European values and habits of thought on the whole human race’,¹⁸³ much music had been ignored and ostracized and is now ripe for reappraisal. These sometimes sophisticated socio-political arguments can be persuasive, but they are strengthened by the post WW II mentality that no system is impervious - that challenge is the order of the day, to be welcomed rather than discouraged. This is the scenario in which the erstwhile undisputed position of western art music as the enabler of music education in western contexts has been seriously called into question. And many music educators who have hitherto been happy with the *status quo*, and never considered the incursions of other musics into education as a serious threat, now feel themselves under siege. They are painting themselves into the corner of believing that they have been alienating their students by creating two mutually incompatible perceptions of what music is as a life force, without taking into account that they may be going against the sociological phenomenology confirming, perhaps, that this is precisely how the students want to perceive it.

¹⁸² The discussion here is centred mainly around the position of WAM versus all other genres of music. It is not necessary, for example, to distinguish between ‘pop’ and ethnic.

¹⁸³ Christopher Small, *Music: Society: Education* (London, John Calder Ltd, 1977, rev. 1980, second Impression 1984), 1.

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Harry White seems to see the problem as sourced in the overwhelming commercially-generated influence of popular music outside of school and its pretensions to infiltrate the education system indiscriminately, through a form of people power, bypassing any kind of formal appraisal of its worth in educational terms. Bennett Reimer, being, by calling, better focused on the niceties of school education, is probably more accurate in seeing the campaign as bifurcated and coming from different sources, multiculturalism being one. In this sense, diversity has come to mean *all* musics, and the system is thus left trying to cope with an amorphous collection of possible candidates for inclusion in education. In Ireland, western art music and its derivatives, popular and traditional forms, and the ultimate diversity of world musics, or multiculturalism, are all potentially pressing for equal rights in the curriculum. Music education has been trying to respond to this.

Time is the overriding factor. There is no calling into question the intentions of music educators to optimize, even to democratize, the musical experiences of their students in a way that is informed by mature judgements. But in addressing the question of diversity in the repertoire, their choices are limited by what can be dealt with in the time available.

Although the typical delegates to MEND, being music educators, might be taunted with the tag of belonging to the old hard-line school of music education, there was convincing evidence of openness to new ideas, especially concerning the widening of the school music repertoire to include a more catholic exposure to world trends. **But this was always seen against a background of the security of western art music, in itself invaginating comprehensive diversity.**¹⁸⁴ The defence of western ideals was convincingly based, not so much on an impregnable repertoire, as on the crucial importance of its peripheral elements and infrastructure, chief amongst them being methodology and phraseology (see Harry White *A book of manners in the wilderness* [MEND 308] for an interesting comment on the borrowed use of phraseology). There are many aspects of traditional method that are specific to western art music; they would have to be adapted to other repertoire or vice versa. These include teaching by concepts and verbalizations (both, remember, eventually accepted as being part of music education by reconciling Elliott with Reimer), the product-centred listening programme, highly sophisticated technical method in vocal and instrumental training (*cf* Kari Veblen - MEND 206), notation/literacy, appraisal and criticism.

¹⁸⁴ The point at issue here is the threat to WAM of diversity of repertoire coming from both popular forms and multiculturalism. The thesis stands on the comments made in this section 6.7.8 (Diversity: The Role of Popular Music and Multiculturalism in Music Education). It is not suggested that WAM should capitulate, but that the criterion of balance be once again invoked and that this be guided by judgement and valuing in establishing quality standards over inclusions in the repertoire. Reimer is particularly helpful in this regard (see *A Philosophy* [rev. 1989], 133). In the hands of sensitive and reflective teachers this can be a challenge, but one that can result in honest outcomes which are both discriminating and acceptable to all parties in the educational process.

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A glance at the American National Standards, for all their attempts at neutrality/impartiality, betrays an implicit model based on the canons of western art music - adaptable, it is true, but nevertheless there. And it is interesting, too, to note that Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin draws attention to this need for adaptability when different cultures are juxtaposed in education (MEND 306). **There was not a single voice raised at MEND against the need to retain the undoubted advantages of western lore in education. This pragmatism is hardly surprising, but it should nevertheless be noted as a seminal statement.** It should also be borne in mind that the scholarship which has fed on and grown out of western art music is but a reflection of the genius explicit in the music's outward manifestations; if one survives, so must the other. It follows that there is agreement in principle that WAM still has a place in music education, if only as *primus inter pares*. It appears also that its characteristic approach to scholarship, the sheer scope and sophistication of the corpus of knowledge itself, its application and conformability to educational method, are indispensable and worthy of preservation.

The question of **popular music** in education is less clear-cut but no less worthy of serious consideration. Its sheer intra-genre variety and its interfaces with almost all other musics are bewildering. It is relevant, in the context of the understanding in the MEND report, to review that aspect of it that is associated most typically with the American version, its commercial significance and the hold it has established globally. Viewed from a traditional music education viewpoint it seems more and more to be an overwhelming presence of music, independent, self-sustaining as a genre but consciously ephemeral in specifics, with a total infrastructure often sophisticated and complex, almost untouchably external to educational practice and intractable as a subject for conventional study by traditional means in school education. Popular music is in no need of educational respectability; it is not pretentiously didactic in an artistic sense. But there is a need for music education to subsume the musical essence of popular music, simply because without this working interface it is in danger of peripheralization by compromising its role as dispenser of music in its claim to universality.

Relative to so-called classical music, which lends itself so readily to contemplative, introspective and cerebral pursuits, the typical function of popular music is overtly social and gregarious; it is, almost of necessity, music for easy listening, and, in spite of the professional and technological refinement which often characterizes its presentation, is normally not challenging in a way that interests educational methodologists or that is comparable in power to that of the great and enduring exemplars of the classical repertoire. Or perhaps it is just that this kind of study has not suggested itself on either side of the divide. There is no question about the abundance of melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, textural and formal excellence to be found in popular music (if this is not too western-orientated a means of categorization) and ready for assimilation into the processes of music education. It is just easier for the

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average music educator to choose examples from familiar repertoire; on the other hand, there is no convincing profile of ‘pop’ educators, and the practitioners are typically unconcerned about educational possibilities in what they are doing.

What is left is the arbitrary and indiscriminating absorption of popular elements in music education which is the source of a concern that could be obviated if the challenge were to be taken up systematically at a higher and more analytical level. Meanwhile there is the pressure arising from the presumed right of popular music to a presence; and there are the worrying preferences of learners for music that is foreign to the didactic experiences of their teachers. Above all, there is the conviction visited upon the profession that what is needed are musical bridges, between school and community, which are notionally largely associated with a working *détente* between the repertoires of each, stable in one case, protean in the other.

Without prejudice to any music chosen for educational purposes, absolute quality is not the only criterion; if it were, the repertoire could be inaccessible to most. Quality must be coupled with diversity and tempered with the criteria of relevance and musical accessibility. It is suggested that music be screened to establish an ‘index of related social behaviour’; this should amount to a filtering procedure which can assess the relative values of the musical *vis-à-vis* the social experience. It may be that the former is not compromised by the latter, in which case the judgement can then proceed along artistic lines. The choice cannot be arbitrary; there must be standards and guidelines. The writer believes that the art criterion is the only option - and it will not be disavowed by the ‘pop’ aficionados. The Reimer suggestions for assessing the quality of any work of art and, in the case of the performing arts, its performance, are to test the embodied (1) craftsmanship, (2) sensitivity (quality of feeling), (3) imagination (originality, creativity, cultured unpredictability) and (4) authenticity (control, by honest giving way to the demands of the material).¹⁸⁵ There is no hidden agenda in this listing; it is capable of isolating the banal as it celebrates the genuine and inspired, regardless of the cultural origins of the music.

On the basis of diversity, then, the infusion of music education with popular musics is plausible and feasible without compromising standards or quality. But once the criteria of relevance, diversity and accessibility are honestly satisfied, it seems not unreasonable that the final balance should reflect quality.

It was anticipated that, at MEND, the place of **Irish traditional music** (ITM) in general music education would produce a plethora of provocative comment and apologies as to the desirability of its

¹⁸⁵ Reimer, *A Philosophy* (rev. 1989), 133-139.

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augmented presence in the future. The opening salvos were promising, but in the end the collected commentary was inconclusive, especially, it might be added, as to the low level of alarm evinced in relation to the threat to Ireland's still underdeveloped biculturalism from the tide of multiculturalism, which has global significance in its urgency and in its advocacy. It ought to be a truism to claim that Irish traditional music is important in Irish general music education; but the facts do not bear out the assertion. Music itself still has a far from secure presence in the system, although recently worked curricular revisions have attempted to reshuffle the options at second-level to make them more accessible and attractive. Traditional music as a practical option is one such possibility but, like related options in classical music, it relies on expertise imported from community effort. While this has undoubted merit in the bridge-building context it still emphasizes the *external* base of traditional music. The music is by nature more practically than academically based, so it might be argued that the school system, always ill-at-ease with performance-based education, has moved to accommodate it, but has done little more. And primary school music, still dogged by the 'pragmatic' decision that class teachers rather than specialists should carry the burden of music education, is arguably two steps away from a satisfactory presence of native elements in the menu; this is, first, because class teachers typically cannot be expected to have the expertise to guarantee manifold exposure to even minimal offerings, and second, because music specialists would be hampered by the norms of the overall system (teacher training), which does not adequately support native music.

The traditional music issue is interesting in other ways. It highlights the fact that performance-based music is, in the official mind, intuitively regarded as an unmanageable intrusion into school music and bears out much of what has been observed in relation to performance in the dedicated section above. It confirms the normal status of performance as a specialized study. It draws attention to the vibrant, though by no means universal, presence of this genre (ITM) in the community, as a selectively sought-after and satisfying artistic pursuit. But if school music cannot cope with the skill/time base of music that is practical in essence, what is left to import into the system if ITM is shorn of its predilection for the performance mode?

If the writer's interpretation of Ó Súilleabháin's comments is correct, we are led to believe that traditional music is dependent for its effect and its appeal on a kind of holism in which the music and the performance, the repertoire and the activities, the performers and the listeners are integrated inseparably. Thus the question to be answered is whether music education in Ireland is ready and sufficiently flexible to accommodate ITM activities, without which its repertoire is emasculated as to its function in energizing the activity itself. Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin's interview (MEND 306)¹⁸⁶ takes

¹⁸⁶ Ó Súilleabháin's participation was, in the end, rather unsatisfactory as to his providing guidelines for the inclusion of ITM in general music education in schools. But as the doyen in the field it was appropriate and

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on new meaning in the light of this question. His complacency with the *status quo* (ITM mainly thought of as a community activity) and the fact that 'he does not give the impression that he is about to spearhead an immediate and serious campaign to marry it to school music education as a means of enhancing its popularity' may very well be rooted in a conviction that the task is either too difficult or not worthwhile. Ó Súilleabháin did not evince any overt enthusiasm for a mere presence of the music in schools as an opportunity for listening. On the other hand there was significant enthusiasm at MEND for the importation of the aesthetic of ITM, as represented by the pioneering research of Albert Bradshaw (MEND 102), into the teaching repertoire for schools.

There is an unanswerable case for the inclusion of ITM in Irish music education, whether as a passive presence of the repertoire itself for its intrinsic beauty or on the terms of the aficionados; this latter is a matter for the devotees of ITM to take up as a challenge, since it can happen by no other means. As to the repertoire it can be judged by the criteria (listed above) side by side with all other music being considered for inclusion. That it is relevant and accessible is endorsed by its current status as a significant quasi-cult music in Ireland, a categorization that is necessary because it is not universally supported as, perhaps, it should be. (Sadly, ITM cannot be claimed as securely within the first-culture experience of all Irish children.) It is capable of adding an important moiety to the diversity of offerings. The guarantee of quality must be the responsibility of music educators, by informed collective approval or simply by individual preference. That other crucial dimension of ITM - the performance itself - especially if it is to be excluded from the school experience, lends force to the argument that it is a specialism, that it must be encouraged and supported as much as all the other, perhaps less contentious, branches of musical activity if music as a life force is to be celebrated, as it ought to be, as a dimension of the Irish psyche and of Irish culture.

It should follow from an appraisal of the Irish context that the case, in Ireland, for **Multiculturalism**, especially of the absolute variety, is weak. Its trump-card shibboleth - multiculturalism for a multicultural society (such as that in the US or UK) - is simply not applicable in Ireland at present. Shehan Campbell, a distinguished protagonist, especially, in the context of Irish concerns, as to first and second level applications, argued persuasively at MEND, and with moving humanitarianism, but she left many unanswered questions in her wake. Bennett Reimer, a latter-day, though arguably reluctant, convert to the principles involved, probably gave the most detached, and therefore the most objective view of the phenomenon in his response (MEND 402) to Harry White's MEND paper. With searing candour he throws the whole issue back into the melting pot. Here is what he has to say:

desirable that he should be invited; this was done with openness and great expectations, even if they did not yield a positive outcome.

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Few if any counter arguments to multiculturalism have appeared, but I sense we may well begin to have some reservations expressed before too long because pendulum swings always, sooner or later, reverse directions. Already, the issue ‘why do it?’ has been raised. Can political/social ends drive our efforts convincingly, or do we not need an authentically musical benefit from opening ourselves to diversity as a goal? I have argued that the essential benefit of understanding music that is foreign to us, to whatever extent that is possible, is that it enlarges our experience of those meanings which only music can express. We need to continue to clarify our philosophy of multiculturalism - our understandings of its intrinsic nature and value - if we are to sustain present efforts beyond the short term, and I look forward to a growing debate about this fundamental issue. ... We [in the US] have a long way to go to get our house in order.

There is a consistency in David Elliott’s praxial philosophy being coupled with absolute multiculturalism. In considering the knowings relating to music (Reimer’s admirable and succinct subdivisions into knowing *within, how, why, about*), it must be obvious that those approaching any music from outside its culture would selectively concentrate on knowing *about* and *how*; of these two, knowing *how* is the most musically intrinsic, the most practical and therefore the most congruent with a praxial philosophy. This is borne out in the literature and in the advocacy presentations concerning multiculturalism; Patricia Shehan Campbell’s lectures are uniformly permeated with grass-roots examples, practical demonstrations and participant sing-alongs. As multicultural music education currently stands, it exhibits therefore (as has been seen in relation to ITM) an intimate bond between its advocacy theory, the repertoire and the practice. Its inclusion in music education, beyond mere tokenism, presupposes an allocation of time that may just not be practicable. This is the problem with all augmentations of the content of the curriculum. The questions must be asked, “Is there time; is it relevant; what is compromised in the process?”. The price of multiculturalism must be weighed. If the common denominator approach is invoked, allocating minuscule time slots in the interests of diversity, there is the obvious danger of dilutions so damaging that the hope of developing any musical or cultural identity in the students is seriously compromised, if not forlorn.

Because of the fact that the philosophy of multicultural music education has not stabilized beyond statements (and not fully convincing ones at that) as to its desirability, a great many questions have still to be answered before it can be adopted as an understood dimension in all general music education.

1. Is it, ideally, conceived in terms of the importation of both its repertoire *and* practices into music education?
2. Using the concentric circles model of early music education (see Shehan Campbell and McCarthy, MEND 305 and 307), are meaningful offerings in comprehensive multicultural education feasible in the time allocations available, considering the scope and demands of other prioritized experiences?

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3. Should the study of multiculturalism be reserved as a specialism, for third-level work or as part of another sector of education (social anthropology?)?
4. What is the nature of the dilution that will occur in the overall educational package as a result of introducing or expanding multiculturalism?
5. What are the implications for teacher training in proposing a programme of multiculturalism?
6. Authenticity has been described as ‘a red herring’, a non-issue, in intracultural terms (see Santos - MEND 207). But there is a very different context when music is being approached from the stance of another culture. Is it better that children should be taught from the model of a ‘best-fit’ culture (rationalized from the experiences of the teacher, assuming these to be relevant and sympathetic to the dominant or adopted culture of the classroom) or exposed to second-hand or sometimes sham examples which will achieve little in terms of a better understanding of other cultures?

The insinuation of musics of the world’s cultures into education is less problematic in terms of the music itself than of its practices. It is, of course, resource-intensive and, considering its near infinite possibilities, it must be prohibitively expensive, especially if ideal conditions approaching authenticity are sought, using culture bearers to lead the music making. Notions of political correctness and of promoting the idea that music is a binding force in the ‘global village’ are really too idealistic to warrant visiting a programme of multicultural music on mercilessly overloaded curricula. Nor should general music education be burdened with the responsibility of unfolding the significance of the socio-cultural elements of the music being taught when these will have little significance for naïve learners and are more appropriate to the area of social studies.

In the final analysis, in the view of this writer, the case for multiculturalism in Irish school contexts falls short of a persuasive argument. The subject is of absorbing interest and is worthy of scholarly input, but this should be selective to those whose propensities lean in that direction. In the United States, which may be reliably regarded as the source of the movement, a convincing profile has not yet emerged, although there are examples of brimming enthusiasm which ought to be encouraged for their philanthropic intent. Significantly, the latter-day promulgation of provisional national standards for school music education in the US are specific on activities, but not on diversity; although they are ostensibly neutral it would be difficult to argue that their intent is truly multicultural on any ambitious scale. In Ireland, apart from the need to address the bicultural issue, as a subset of multiculturalism, in a more proactive way, reasons for not embarking on full-blooded multiculturalism are more prolific than are the grounds for proceeding. Questions of genuine relevance to the current needs of Irish

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children, time within the curriculum, teacher training to produce a competent teaching force, the policy decision not to employ music specialists in primary schools, authenticity in the offerings when compared with the corresponding potential of more familiar musics - each of these is a daunting obstacle to the successful development of a multicultural programme. Where specific cases of personal teacher expertise exist, the skilful weaving of multiculturalism into the seam of music education is an interesting possibility. And the seeking out of materials which painstakingly, and with good musical heart, explore multiculturalism without aggressive incursions of time would seem prudent as a provision against the uncertainties of the future.

6.7.9 The State of Music Education in Ireland

The most fertile starting point for an enquiry of this nature is to establish the historical quasi-political disposition towards music education which influenced the evolution to its current state. Two significant factors emerge. There was pre-philosophical recognition in Ireland from the first half of the nineteenth century that music was sufficiently important, in an aesthetic sense, to merit inclusion in the curriculum of schools (typically and almost exclusively at primary level). The universality issue is implicit here since schools were singled out as the conduit through which this enlightenment would find expression. Second, and flowing from the first, a national curriculum was developed in the early days of the independent state. These positive attitudes persist, but they were offset in the early days by the typical colonial reality of the most rudimentary offerings to schoolchildren contrasting with the elitist opportunities of the well-to-do, which bred the popular perception that ‘real’ music education amounted to performance education. The interactions and dynamics of these parameters pretty well define Irish music education as it currently exists. Stated at its most naïve, there are still problems with the working of the school base, the curriculum, the understanding of performance and the elitism issue.

It is not surprising that there is no convincing evidence that serious **philosophical enquiry**, leading to consensus, informed the music curriculum for Irish schools; this became a fashionable global trend only in the post-WW II years, which found Ireland still educationally in a post-colonial phase and not yet ready to take its own initiatives based on a wider pool of knowledge. School music education in Ireland responded therefore, but always belatedly, to many trends, the creativity phase (*An Curaclam Nua*) of the 1970s being perhaps the most notorious and fully acknowledged failure, as reported so tragically in the *Deaf Ears?* Report. But that there was a growing interest in serious philosophical underpinning became obvious once the work of the statutory body, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Music Sub-committee got under way in the 1980s.

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MEND has added a significant chapter to this enquiry into the nature and value of music and music education. The lacuna in philosophical confidence was evident at Phase I of MEND; it was alarming to find many of the music educators ill at ease with the subject, in some cases being dismissive in self-defence. But the discovery was made and acted upon; it is to the credit of those same music educators that they returned in strength to participate in the appropriately philosophy-laden Phase II.

Summarizing the state of music education in Ireland:

1. There is not a high music education profile.
2. The inherited and prevailing culture in education is that music is low in priority, with low optional uptake.
3. The popular perception of music education still centres on the idea of performance. Performance as elitism is a divisive force.
4. There are serious disparities between urban and rural opportunity.
5. Performance in school contexts is no more that exploratory; more serious performance studies (extramural specialism to proficient and expert levels) receive very little state subsidy and are of questionable availability, accessibility and affordability at the standard required.
6. There still are serious discontinuities in music education, now particularly between second and third level.
7. Philosophical underpinning for music education has been inadequately researched as a collective exercise.
8. Irish traditional music is seriously under-represented in general education.
9. Teacher training in music education needs ongoing review. Specialist services in primary education are problematic. Necessary growth in the performance area will demand progressive upgrading of teacher expertise.
10. Problems are anticipated in the conversion of the intended curricular reforms to delivered curriculum.
11. Rationalization of scope and intent (Academy for the Performing Arts) with regard to third level studies in music, as a performing art, is necessary.
12. The time factor in music education needs to be considered more realistically.

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13. There is dissonance between school music (education/learning) and popular music (leisure). The establishment of education-community bridges is a priority to encourage reconciliation of these views.
14. There is a clash of interests between practical and academic streams in music education at all levels.

There can be reasonable hope, based, at least, on the stated intentions of the curricular reforms of the 80s and 90s, that the damaging and disorientating **discontinuities** between primary and second-level school music education have been addressed. The chronology of the reform took the form of a top-down exercise in which primary music was the last to be addressed - a questionable strategy. What is generally agreed to be a watering-down of the standards at Leaving Certificate level, effectively narrowed the total spectrum and must, therefore, have facilitated an accommodation at the interface of first and second level; but it was at the cost of compromising another equally fragile and pivotal bridge between second and third-level music education, threatening if not necessitating devaluation of the latter and therefore of the whole trend of music education.

In the writer's view, the notion of a single programme leading to assessment (Leaving Certificate), with the multiple aims of 1) (laudably) making the subject attractive to a wider cohort of general studies music students, albeit typically interested in university entry credits only, and 2) (equivocally) suggesting, without guarantee, that the programme might also provide a secure transition to third level music studies (without the benefit of imported [generally practical] skills?), is highly questionable, if not dishonest. The dangers inherent in this compromise are fully discussed in the body of the MEND Report (see Refs. I P xiii; I D iva; II D iiib; III D iib); the writer regards this issue as one of the most significant to be addressed in the evolution of the music education endeavour in Ireland.

Apart from the commanding continuum fracture, with its sinister consequences, described above, there are other discontinuities, within mentalities and in physical terms, which should be mentioned, as each contributes negatively to the flawed panorama of Irish music education.

1. Between the aspiration and the achievement realities of the performance base in school music education, ignoring the spurious importations of skills from outside. This should lead to the recognition of performance as a specialization, indispensable to the ultimate survival of music at a respectable standard, and worthy of support.
2. Between the availability of copious, albeit conflicting, philosophical underpinnings and their effective transference through teacher training. It is not necessary, however desirable as an end, that there should be agreement on the empowering philosophies of music education; it is, however, desirable that there should be discussion.

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3. Between teacher training and the demands of the curriculum, especially where the performance aspiration is concerned within the new dispensation at second-level (see [1] above).
4. Between music as experienced at school and popular music, endorsed by the community.
5. Between the academic and practical biases of teachers, leading to misconceptions, misunderstandings, over/under-estimates of time demands, and intolerance. This is a perennial problem which causes much tension and distress, not only for learners but at professional levels also.
6. Between the artistic (aesthetic) and functional (utilitarian) aspects of music as a performing art.
7. Between the components of musical diversity (typically WAM vis-à-vis popular and multicultural offerings) as to their suitability for admission to the general music education system.
8. Between practical (vocal/instrumental) teachers and performers, leading to the pejorative misconception that all teachers are ‘failed performers’.
9. Between significant coterie systems (such as ITM) and the general music education system to which they seek access by right.
10. Between literate and non-literate methodologies.

The Irish context of **performance and performance education** may be summarized as follows:

1. Performance would normally be understood as meaning skills in the delivery of western art music; the teaching profession generally reflects that understanding.
2. The profile of performing in Ireland is not a distinguished one. It followed colonial and post-colonial trends, from the nineteenth century onwards, in which music education was a low priority, but it also paralleled the norms of British practice (the dominating culture) of the same period, where elitism had the effect that only those who could afford it had the opportunity to excel. But British norms evolved more promisingly, probably in relation to indices of economic prosperity, leaving Ireland behind for most of the twentieth century. Latter-day trends in Ireland are, of course, very heartening, but the country lacks the cadre of expert teachers in sufficient numbers, even should the initiative to promote performance be taken more seriously. Significant improvements are not merely a question of the will and the fiscal resources; as far as the delivered curriculum in music education is concerned, they move in phase with the supply of that most wanted of resources - trained teachers within a secure employment structure that attracts others of

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high calibre into the profession and, indeed, produces them. That this cannot happen overnight is an unfortunate truth. It must start somewhere, but it must start now. This is not a call to produce a nation of performers; rather it is an attempt to see performance for what it is, as a specialism, to identify and encourage those whose propensities seek it out, and to provide adequately for that currently under-appreciated resource. This is not happening in an organized and convincing way.

3. For most of the last century instrumental teaching was a feature of some convent school education, but standards were low, mirroring the expertise of teachers. This became a self-perpetuating phenomenon. Institutions offering specialized performance studies were few in number and confined to the cities. There was very little organized teacher training for performance studies. Even in very recent times (1990s), reliable statistics reveal that more than 90% of Irish candidates for the instrumental teaching diplomas of reputable external examining bodies in the UK fail.
4. Instrumental performance as a feature of general music education in schools has only recently been included in the curriculum as a result of reform in the past decade. There are no reliable indicators of its success; rumour tends, however, towards the unimpressive. Suffice it to say that unless it is taken to mean mere exploratory activities made possible through the minimal expertise of non-specialist teachers (even in secondary schools) it could potentially be a destabilizing factor in the time balance of the whole enterprise.
5. There is no other way of thinking of performance¹⁸⁷ except as a specialism with optional status in the curriculum. Where this option is sought, it ought to be accommodated. The US is the prototypical example of this principle in action, except that it seemingly divested the general programme of performance, and the performance programme of ancillary musicianship studies, both contributing to an unbalanced and unsatisfactory provision, now the subject of radical revision.
6. Performance in Ireland has tended to be a non-school-based specialism. As such, quality tuition which is available, accessible and affordable has been very unevenly distributed throughout the country. The peripatetic system is insufficiently invoked or exploited in rural Ireland; the better-qualified teachers seem to gravitate to the cities and, once established, are reluctant to make themselves available for outreach. The band movement has made significant strides in recent years but the organizers, with great honesty and some frustration, are constantly complaining about the shortage of qualified and experienced teachers. An unpublished Arts Council Report, *Listening Ears* (Phelan,

¹⁸⁷ The specialist instrumental (including singing) programme is in mind here.

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1998), on the state of the provincial music education provision in performance, outside the state or semi-state sector, is a pathetic commentary and is an almost unrelieved chronicle of only moderately-qualified staff, derisory salary expectations and under-financed management structures. This cannot augur well for the future of this branch of music education; it needs massive restructuring and subsidy, under the guidance of an official hand, if provision is to be seen to be fair.

7. It must be obvious that skilled performance is not for everybody, simply because only a minority of learners will be prepared to make the investment of time to acquire the skills. It is astounding that not just the uninformed public but even many music educators have not sensibly absorbed this hard fact. Reliable statistics from the US indicate that when the performance option is freely available (i.e. built into the financial structure of the education enterprise) an uptake of up to 15% may be expected. The corresponding and well understood statistic is that only a small percentage of that number can be expected to carry any expertise acquired into later adult life. But that does not detract from the need to inculcate a performing mentality at a general or specialized level. David Elliott's praxial philosophy helpfully draws attention to this fact, but he focuses less on specialism than on the idea that performance (active music making) is within the capability of all, and should therefore be imposed as a uniform mode of music education, a view which has attracted much adverse critical commentary. Yet performance is the lifeline that guarantees the transmission of music from one generation to the next. It must be cultivated on a 'milk and cream' basis so that the culture bearers can be identified and given the opportunities appropriate to their talent and their commitment. The current state of music education in Ireland still indicates a substantial shortfall in provision. Serious performance tuition opportunities are not built into the general education system but neither are they adequately supported by the state as subventions to private enterprise. And the new phase of exploratory performance, which forms part of the revised curricula in schools, lacks the technical support of relevantly trained staff. Teachers cannot teach what they cannot themselves adequately do.
8. Talent education is a special case of performance. It is one of the commonly-held values of music education that talent must be supported, since it is well understood that, as in all other areas of human endeavour, abilities and particular aptitudes are not evenly distributed. The willingness to foster talent should never be interpreted as indifference to the needs of the majority. While there is a plausible theory that 'talent will out', the current structures in Irish music education are inadequate for the timely identification of giftedness and its subsequent and satisfactory support in its crucial formative stages.

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There is a need for a radical review of the nature of performance, a campaign to have its features understood, accepted for what they are and pressed home at the level of political advocacy. The essential understandings are 1) that performance, in the traditional public perception of music education being performance education in a solo sense, is not for all, though it is a crucially necessary component in the overall fabric of music education, 2) that this kind of involvement, being necessary for the artistic fulfilment of a large minority, but, more importantly, for the successful transmission of the benefits of music to all, now and in the future, must be separately supported as a specialism outside the general music education mainstream and 3) that a suitable but more modest programme of performance should be systematically developed and insinuated into general education without disturbing the holistic balance of the curricular provision.

9. It is arguably spurious to claim that the low level of interest in cultured listening by the population at large is attributable to unhealthy preoccupations with amateur performance, identified as a prevalent feature of musical activity and enjoyment in Ireland, as far as it goes (see White [MEND 108 and 308]). Performance is something that many people do because they want to; there should be no sanctions against it. And it is likely, too, that those who make such investments of time are probably also the most avid listeners and form the backbone of the concert-going public. On the other hand learners should not be unduly constrained to perform (the implicit reality of David Elliott's philosophy), since for the reluctant performer the difficulties are even greater and the rewards fewer than for those to whom performance is attractive. Harking back to Harry White's concern - 'we have ostracized the listener' - it should not be seen just as mere rationalization or, worse still, compromise, to suggest that the effective promotion of a balanced curriculum in compulsory general education (the American National Standards as a plausible prototype), in which performance, *inter alia*, is accorded no more than is its due, is the safest means of producing a musically cultured community. This is the basic building block of a satisfactory music education dispensation.
10. On the positive side, performance has been well served in Ireland, in most cases for well over a century, by the ministry of a small number of city-based institutions. Their services have evolved into concerns about the transmission to future generations; a raft of fulltime courses, amongst them teacher training, have been developed and have accelerated in impact over the past decade. The Government announcement (January 2000) to set up a National Academy for the Performing Arts must be welcomed as giant step forward in political recognition that performance (as far as the music element is concerned) should be on the national agenda. There is still much ground to be covered before the APA grinds into operation. It is to be hoped that its deliberations will take account of the need

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to recognize the collective effort that went into the encouragement of performance in the last century, the developments that flowed from it and the desirability of allowing that wealth of experience to flow into and participate fully in the functions of the new umbrella institute. A submission (MEND 602), incorporating the coverage of the topic at MEND, was submitted to the task force considering the proposals for such an institute, and the enabling report presented at the launch reflected many of the recommendations made in the submission.

The inclusion of **assessment** in the MEND Agenda, although general in intent, had a predetermined focus on the problems relating to the Leaving Certificate (LC) examination and its ambiguous functions; these have been ongoing for some twenty years, with sources still further back in history, and are likely to go on causing concern as a flashpoint in Irish music education. As long as school music education is deemed the commanding vehicle for a universal dispensation, so the Leaving Certificate, as its culmination, will remain a cynosure. The invited contributions at MEND comprised a scholarly treatment of the subject of assessment by Swanwick (MEND 304) in the context of the new national curriculum in the UK, a valuable exposé by Seán MacLiam (MEND 113), which courageously laid out the contentious parameters of the LC saga for subsequent discussion at the debates (MEND 157, 160, 258 and 354), and a windfall bonus from Lehman (MEND 303), whose commitment to and ideas on the importance of assessment arose from his intimate connections with the National Standards campaign in the US.

While the individual contributions were, individually, admirably coherent, the synthesis did not convey a sense of uniformity of approach or of status in the three implicit systems, dubbing assessment a currently confused topic as to its underlying philosophy (as a statement of its nature and value). Britain, as far as statutory music education is concerned, is obsessed with the idea, and seemingly bogged down with overprescription and cumbersome, perplexing and time-consuming reporting procedures which must be detracting from the educational process itself. On the other hand, the US, at least as far as ‘pre-National Standards days’ are concerned, is characterized by *laissez-faire*; this seems to be confirmed by Paul Lehman’s warning salvo (MEND 1996) in relation to a possibly successful implementation of the American National Standards: ‘I see assessment as the supreme challenge and the defining issue for all music education in the coming decade’. Seen against this background the Irish system is indeterminate as to its concern with true intramusical assessment which, *inter alia*, should be used to inform the processes of teaching and learning.

Concentrating on school education in Ireland, historically there have been three assessment points - at Primary, Intermediate and Leaving Certificate levels. The primary examination, the only one

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associated with mandatory education, which did not assess music anyway, has long been dispensed with. It is arguable that the Intermediate Examination, certainly as far as music is concerned, has had the function of grading and sorting students into suitable senior cycle options (pass or honours, or some equivalent means of classification) and has been usefully retained in this context. Thus the only really significant assessment (or evaluation as it characteristically is) is summative, at LC level, and seems to have no relationship to ongoing or incremental progress or to influencing the musical education of any particular cohort of students. This raises the question as to what its purpose is. Assessment is not an end in itself; it must have a link to the optimization of the teaching and learning processes. There is much fundamental wisdom to be drawn from the distanced comments of Swanwick and Lehman to point up the flaws in the Irish system, as far as it has progressed on this issue:

1. A distinction must be made between activities and outcomes; they are not interchangeable. Activities alone are insufficient; there must be *measurable* outcomes to prove that the activities are reaching their targets. Clearly this is redolent of a political/resource agenda; this has always been relevant, but has also been insufficiently exploited in Irish music education, sadly to its great disadvantage.
2. The defining features of satisfactory assessment are few but crucial. There are many reasons for and modes of assessment; each must be relevant to the circumstances. The criteria of quality, complexity and range are applicable but they are not of a kind; judgement of quality tends towards subjectivity, the other two being largely objective. Reliability seeks to establish uniformity between samplings. For pragmatic assessment in music, at one end of the spectrum the subjective element should be minimized (without compromising the validity of the result) or converted, as far as possible, into objectively measurable components; at the other, a case can be made for suggesting that music education, as to teaching and assessment, should be handled only by specialists. In Ireland, as policy dictates, only the first of those options is feasible. But insistence on the subjectivity of the exercise should not be an argument against assessment in the first place. Routines of this subjective method in operation in Britain have been shown to have remarkably close correlations between results (statistics of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music). But in the end, the contribution of subjectivity cannot be eluded as adding a small, tolerable but unquantifiable margin of 'error' in results. It is notable that Swanwick, for all his criticism and subsequent skilful manipulation of methodology into manageable steps, could not, in the end, eliminate the subjective element in artistic appraisal. Music is not like the exact sciences; as to complexity and range these can be specified in the enabling documentation (syllabus) of the curriculum, objectively provided for and monitored in continuous assessment or demanded explicitly in the procedures for summative assessments.

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3. It is doubtful whether the niceties of Swanwick's concerns, about measurable progress in music education, have unduly troubled the Irish mind intent on producing a statistical profile of summative achievement which, incidentally, has been, and presumably still is, subject to political review and moderation. Nor is there a reason to believe that Leaving Certificate examination results are not internally consistent and reliable. What is of much more concern is the function of an assessment which, though it may ostensibly be shown to measure cumulative progress in music education (albeit as possibly a single benchmark at the end of 12 years of tuition), is locked unavoidably into a system of credits, relative standards and confusion over curricular time allocations for comparable achievement - all concerned with its very objective value as a criterion of suitability for entry to *general* third-level education. If the curriculum is being manipulated to that end, while simultaneously undertaking unprecedented augmentation of the performance elements, as seems to be indicated, it seriously calls into question the credibility of senior cycle school music to produce a meaningful profile of musical achievement which can guarantee an advance on previous efforts. If the assessment statistics of the LC are used to modify the internal musical attainment targets downwards to make the subject more user-friendly; and if they are instrumental in converting senior cycle music into a dead-end which fails to offer a secure entry to third-level music for those who score highly - then they are informative, if they are being heeded, though they may be contributing little to the advancement of musicianship in the population. The obvious conclusion is that a single syllabus, albeit with inbuilt options, is inadequate for the wider aims of music education in Ireland, unless the shortfall in provision is selectively made up through some other state-supported agency. This is particularly the case where performance is concerned. These are issues that must be addressed by the educators most intimately involved, and through their professional representative bodies. It should not be a question of settling for minimum standards, or that 'anything goes', when the future of the whole sense of Irish musical culture is in question.

The assertion that music is a universal experience is not the same as the claim that *all* musics are universally experienced. The case of **Irish traditional music** is an interesting one. It has broken into the charts of global commercial popular music, and with a substantial holding. As the indigenous music of the island of Ireland, it might seem appropriate that it should have a place in every Irish ear, heart and mind. That was certainly David Elliott's expressed understanding at MEND, nor was it surprising that he, as an outsider, should have had this expectation. But it is not so. There are complex historical reasons why traditional music has a cult-like, though vibrant, presence in the Irish music scene; it is beyond the scope of this thesis to address them. Nevertheless, a comment on the state of

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music education in Ireland, if approached from a school perspective, might very well bypass traditional music without being guilty of too grave an omission for, in relation to the hedonistic abundance of the music securely woven into the seam of the community, there is but a token presence in formal education.

In addressing any enquiry into music education in Ireland this phenomenon had to be confronted. Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin was identified by the promoters of MEND as the main protagonist and natural advocate for ITM. But he was so unshakeable, and not without justification, about the secure place of ITM in community settings that he was undismayed at its virtual absence from formal education, a fact that he did not regard as particularly discriminatory in a passionately resentful way. On mature reflection the writer is convinced that the MEND result could not have been otherwise, and for reasons that neither spell failure for MEND intentions, nor cause any undue alarm.

1. Traditional music seems to function most comfortably in the community, where it enjoys the charm of informality, which seems to evoke and to accommodate the full spectrum of its expression as a social, gregarious, multi-functional activity encouraging, and thriving on, audience participation. Although it is not implied that it cannot be otherwise on occasion, and for its purposes, its more usual manifestations as popular music for easy enjoyment - practically-based, non-academic, non-literate, improvisatory, non-notational, non-conceptual, non-contemplative, indissolubly integrated - seem to place it in a polar position to WAM, the methodology of which dominates the education scene. Despite Ó Súilleabháin's confidence that it could merge in a mutually fructifying way into formal education, the question has to be asked as to whether the price would be too high for both genres, considered, in the case of ITM, as being at the cost of threatening its freshness and its freedom to develop outside the constraints of formal settings.
2. The question might be asked – 'is ITM not more natural in its community setting where it can function for the pleasures of those who seek it'? There is always a danger with mandatory elements in education that they might produce an adverse reaction, as happened in some instances with the campaign for the preservation and restoration of the Irish language in the middle of the twentieth century.
3. Does ITM need to be imposed since, as a culture, it is in no danger, in its popular forms, of facing extinction? And its less popular forms are well served in research through the University of Limerick, as Ó Súilleabháin has pointed out. In some ways ITM is an ideal and paradigmatic form of musical experience since it has a plausible claim - a sizeable following, and all without formal imposition, surely an attractive combination. And yet Irish children should all be more aware of their musical and cultural heritage, and its

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skill-base, calling for a more systematic approach to its inculcation. It is another interesting phenomenon that ITM was the subject of much cross-cultural (so-called native/ascendancy) interest at the turn of the twentieth century, as can be ascertained from the history of Feis Ceoil, the national music festival, founded in 1896,¹⁸⁸ so socio-cultural and socio-political barriers to its general acceptance are not easy to adduce.

4. There are significant differences in the way ITM and WAM are dispensed in education. Veblen's paper (MEND 206) gives evidence of a charming if quasi-bucolic naïveté in the methodology of transmission of ITM which would be ill-at-ease with the saturating academic and practical modes of WAM, fed by systematic evolution over centuries of inclusion in formal settings. In spite of Ó Súilleabháin's assurances that the two are not incompatible, does Ireland need the not inconsiderable challenge of forging an adaptable interface? As a genre ITM is not universal, though it is potentially more so through the possibilities opened up by technology and commercialism; it does not have the now tarnished pretentiousness of WAM, in seeking to be all things to all people. Should it not just take its place as one of the many genres that contribute selectively to the overall condition of universality and remain in its natural habitat? These are questions for ongoing debate.
5. The pressures for inclusion of ITM in formal education in Ireland are not as importunately strong as those for its close relation, Multiculturalism, in global contexts. If, as is doubtful, there is accommodation within the music education curriculum in Ireland for the inclusion of worthy additions, it would seem reprehensible that ITM might be bypassed in any such campaign by multicultural modules, which, in the Irish context, have far less claim to the attentions of Ireland's dominantly monocultural western society.
6. There is a rapidly growing research base for ITM, notably in the University of Limerick through the agency of the Irish World Music Centre, located there. It is notable, however, that very little of the research so far undertaken there, or indeed anywhere else, is education- or methodology-oriented towards ITM. This must be interpreted, *prima facie*, as the most reliable indicator of low prioritization on the part of the lobby from which a new and proactive agenda might be expected to issue.
7. Following on from 6), expertise in teaching ITM is community-based at present, as Veblen typically describes, and lacks the sophistication and technical assurance of established teacher training modes, either practical or academic, associated, again typically, with music education using WAM as its basis. And, after all, as folk music this

¹⁸⁸ A monograph on this subject by the author, Frank Heneghan, is available by application to the Director of Feis Ceoil, 37 Molesworth St, Dublin 2 or by application to the author.

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should not be unduly expected of it. It therefore suffers from the double drawback of paucity of time-honoured, agreed and efficient methodology (Veblen's authority again) and its not unexpected absence from the curriculum for teacher training, such as it is. This comment is, of course, also applicable to multiculturalism, though *it* has the advantages accruing from a global movement, supported by American initiatives and material resources.

8. One of the most interesting aspects of ITM, in considering its applicability or adaptability to formal education settings, is its unashamed performance base. Whether this is to its advantage, in this instance, is equivocal. Without it there could be little future for its convincing presence in formal education. Imported into formal education with all its other misalignments (see [1] above), calling for absorption and reconciliation, it could threaten to dominate and destabilize the curriculum, where the availability of time must always be one of the most relevant of all issues when optimizing education. Is it any wonder that Ó Súilleabháin's response was not without tentativeness as to a clear way forward?

MEND raised the issue of ITM to a level of urgency that has paved the way for a more thorough and searching analysis of the parameters involved, especially as to its educational implications and possibilities. Although it has a less saturated hold on the mind and affections of the community than that assured, by massive commercial promotion, to 'pop' (American-style and -derived), it still has a satisfactory presence characterized by hands-on performance opportunities and much sought-after social serendipity of immediate, if hardly over-sophisticated, gratification. Its deeper artistic meanings may be for the professional to discover, but as useful art its utilitarianism is supreme. It is worthy of its place in the educational mentality but it is doubtful if it could be considered a self-styled vehicle for maximizing educational return across the wider spectrum envisaged in formal education; in this it could run into difficulties were it to place education under siege. The leading question is - what has ITM to bring to formal education and to gain from it; currently there is too much ambiguity and conjecture in the answers proffered.

The acceptance of widespread **professionalism**¹⁸⁹ in music is fairly recent in Ireland. Almost until the last decade of the twentieth century, fulltime courses in music were university-based and dominantly

¹⁸⁹There seems, to the author, nothing exceptionable in defining the 'state of music in Ireland' to comment on a development by which a growing raft of courses at third level will ensure a better music education service in the future. It is not the need for teachers to associate themselves into a professional group that is being suggested, but the implication for education of an enhanced professionalism in the teaching force and a new attitude to mutual understanding between practical and academically oriented teachers. This features largely in the MEND Findings (directly or by implication in 5 out of the 6). Again the MEND connection establishes the relevance. Of particular importance is the suggestion (Findings 1 and 2) that philosophical awareness is important and that it must find a way into the training of teachers so that it can fertilize, through their professional careers, their thinking on curricular reform, on an ongoing basis.

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academic, as if no other sense of musical professionalism was worthy of the name. There was a bitter harvest from this stranglehold, which dichotomized academic and practically-based musicians into roles of mutual suspicion, bred from the exclusiveness of their specialisms. This troublesome elitism, with its roots as far back as Hellenic models of music philosophy, is still with us and has been highlighted as a MEND Finding which needs to be addressed. There are, of course, three main categories of third-level music specialism – 1) the academic/musicological, 2) performance, and 3) teacher training (general and instrumental [including vocal]), but these overlap a great deal, especially nowadays when such studies are job-orientated and must therefore be as eclectic as possible, both to attract students in a competitive situation and to equip them with versatility.

Third-level music education cannot exist in its own right; it is evolutionary and derivative. It is inevitably and indelibly coloured by what is happening at lower levels, or should be. The scant provision in Ireland until the 1980s was ample evidence of second-level music that was similarly deprived and unsure of its aspiration. But there has been an efflorescence to the point where delivered standards have to be questioned because the incoming cohorts still reflect second level education which is inadequate, simply because most schools do not offer music at senior cycle (much less performance) - and those that do are largely content with standards arguably lowered and compromised by the LC crisis of the 1980s and its fallout. Preparatory education (for third level) through private enterprise is not sufficiently available, accessible and affordable. Third level education can deliver only in relation to the entry standards of its students and the breadth of their pre-third-level experiences. This is particularly true of the performance and instrumental teaching streams (where the problematic psychomotor skills, *inter alia*, are called for, at proficient levels, to start, being notoriously slow to acquire in the first place); the former, for reasons already alluded to (see Agenda IV - Performance above), is a much sought-after option in third-level music education for those who have had the benefit of good performance tuition and feel they can reach the standards required.

Realistically it might be argued that the number of fulltime courses for musicians is adequate for the currently expected standard of entry, but not so in relation to the combined need for a more comprehensive dispensation at all lower levels, both in schools and in the community, and the teachers to service it. The comparatively small number of existing places available (in relation to the national population) is difficult to fill with candidates of reasonable calibre; the best invariably come from the schools of music, but they are not sufficiently numerous to guarantee an impressive overall profile. This buyers' market competition between the institutions offering music is such that the universities offer performance options, that they do not teach, to attract performers (normally the upper crust of candidature) into their courses, but the resulting double specialism is beneficial. EU (and other) opportunities, and lack of confidence in the resources available in Ireland for the highest levels of

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performance expertise, ensure a steady and emaciating haemorrhage by emigration of many of the finest talents at under-graduate and post-graduate levels, a large proportion of which is then lost forever to the national enterprise.

The notion of third-level music education must pragmatically be focused on **employment**. Much has been written about job opportunities that do not fall into the teaching stereotype; it is the writer's view that these are often impractically conjectural, at best applicable to the most talented and imaginative candidates (who are probably not going to find it difficult to secure employment anyway), relatively few in number and, most damaging of all, unflattering to the dignity and fascination of the teaching function which it should not be the policy of counsellors to denigrate, even by implication. It is healthy and characteristic for young musicians (especially performers) to look beyond teaching as their first option but the realities have to be faced; those to whom teaching is unattractive as a prospect, ought to be made to rethink in the light of statistics alone. Most of the practically-based colleges in the world are faced with the problems caused by enrolling more students than the job market for performance (exclusively or partially) can comfortably accommodate, and have the perennial task of quasi-psychological counselling of the so-called failed performers, who have to be conditioned to accepting employment, usually as teachers, that is far from their starting aspiration. In the end the teaching scene must be probed as infinitely the most promising for employment, especially should official attitudes to music education be influenced appropriately. It is arguable that Ireland is ripe for such an enlightened approach to music education.

As has been suggested, if there are problems in **third level music education** in Ireland¹⁹⁰, they must be traceable to their roots at lower levels. It is arguable that this complex manoeuvre has not been satisfactorily completed to establish, in real perspective, what the fundamental issues are. The exercise calls into play many of the parameters already alluded to. Philosophy, curriculum, standards and assessment must all be considered systematically, and eventually brought into a working relationship in which balance and relevance are guiding principles. It has been proposed that curriculum underpinned by consensus-backed philosophical principles is a desideratum. But a curriculum can be validated eventually only in its delivered form; otherwise it is merely an aspiration.

The delivery of a curriculum can only begin to be guaranteed if it is tied to **standards**, which in turn must be confirmed as realistic by assessment. Paul Lehman argued convincingly at MEND (MEND 303, 10) for this enabling nexus; it is indispensable and ineluctable. Furthermore he argues, pinpointing a burning issue that was separately well aired at MEND, that:

¹⁹⁰ This is treated extensively under Agenda Item #7 of the MEND Report.

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standards provide a basis for insisting on qualified teachers. Having standards enables us to bypass the argument about whether music should be taught by classroom teachers or specialists. If the music curriculum is expressed in terms of activities rather than in terms of outcomes, then it's difficult to argue that the teachers need a high level of musical skills. But if we expect to teach specific skills and knowledge as outlined in challenging standards, then we need teachers who possess those skills and knowledge. There are some places in the U.S. where music is taught primarily by specialists and other places where music is taught primarily by classroom teachers. If a district expects classroom teachers to teach to standards, then it has to ensure that the teachers they hire possess those skills. Discussions about specialists and classroom teachers become irrelevant because the label is irrelevant. What counts is the results.

Sound advice but is it practicable? And how does this seeming digression impinge on third-level education in Ireland?

Looking first at academic third-level courses, if they can be assumed still to exist in their pure form, they are currently responding to a double agenda. First there is the training of those who wish to proceed to worthy careers and pursuits outside of teaching and performing; traditionally they should define the real essence of what these (pure) courses should comprise. Harry White sheds no tears about the superannuation of the old 'Oxbridge' model, but the value of disciplines lost, whatever about their practical value over the widest spectrum of applications, is surely lamentable? But these courses must also keep an eye on the job market, defined largely in terms of school music education, but only at second level, where teacher specialism is the norm. Here they are responding to curricula which are themselves changing radically, reacting to philosophical and political agendas which are also protean, to standards which are vague, inconclusive and deteriorating in relation to the pressures of *their* double agenda, described above. And assessment, such as it is, at LC standard, is not aimed at charting the content of third-level courses in music, as has been made clear by the NCCA spokesman. In fact it is unclear whether assessment, as practised in Ireland in that context, has any purely musical function. There is, then, the worrying fracture in the continuum between second and third level music education, which goes hard with those seeking admission to the latter on the basis of school-acquired skills, and on the trainers of the trainers, too, who are trying to re-establish the connection with this severed and disadvantaged group. And now, to add a new twist to the confusion, school music is ostensibly concerning itself with a broadening of the performance base, adding new challenges for the architects of academically-rich third-level courses (traditionally unconditioned to this new demand), simply to keep them relevant to the job market. Clearly some rationalization is called for, first, to establish what exactly third level education is supposed to be responding to.

Performance training at third level in Ireland, in the form of fulltime (4-year) courses comparable with those in the rest of the developed world, has a short history of little more than a decade. Outstanding achievement in performance by young Irish student-artists in the past has been attributable to small

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pockets of inspired teaching which has been recognized in the ease with which they have gained admittance to prestigious performance institutions and courses in Europe and in the US; but this has not been the norm. These new courses are labouring under the burden of the historical fact that Ireland does not have a tradition of outstanding performance. Because scholarly travail is singularly unproductive in matters of a philosophy and curriculum defining *performance* studies, most courses seem to get by with an understanding that what is required is abundant talent, which is easy to recognize when it occurs, an inspirational teacher, unrelenting practice, and mere adequacy in the non-performance modules of the course.

Performance courses are a law unto themselves, as far as their unspoken aims are concerned or interpreted by those who thrive on them. They are almost invariably the first option of those with superior performing talents; and, as has often been observed, ‘talent looks after itself’. There is a huge downside to performance courses, and Ireland is particularly prone to the effects of this dilemma; but that is not to imply that they should not continue to be sought after and supported for their eventual potential in the overall scheme of things. The problem in Ireland is that, because performance at any level worthy of pursuit in a third-level sense has been and is absent from the school experience and from the concerns of state support, it has been abandoned to the benign devices of private enterprise and to the limited provisions, by necessity, that have been possible through these means. Thus, while many aspire to excellence in performance, truly only a few have the opportunities and the encouragement at the crucial stages.

The harvest from this culpable neglect is visited upon fulltime courses hungry for students and fighting for survival in the belief that there are better times in store. Because there are few accredited music schools in Ireland, ideas about philosophy, curriculum, standards and assessment in relation to performance are only imperfectly understood and applied; the arbitrary standards, because unrelated to a time scale, which usefully proceed from the graded examinations of a system such as the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, are no substitute for the workings of an officially-supported indigenous system applied nationally. Clearly third-level performance courses are dogged too by the inadequacies of the infrastructure of their recruitment sources. All eventually comes back to second level and the wider context of what is happening or not happening in schools.

Having highlighted the difficulties and ambiguities under which pure academic and performance studies have to operate, it is possible to consider the multi-faceted and internally disparate residue of **teaching options** aimed at primary and second-level education, in and outside of school. First it must be observed, provocatively, that it is probable that the reconfirmed policy decision to rely on class teachers rather than on specialists for primary school music education under the revised curriculum

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(1999) is probably a matter of fiscal expedience rather than of considered educational logic. The fear of change and of giving hostage to the strength of the philosophical arguments adducible has taken refuge in the historical norms of straitened educational budgets which may no longer be valid as reasons for inaction.

It is too soon to pass judgement on the much publicized and ambitious intentions of the 1999 curricular revisions. The reality, however, is that third-level courses for primary school teacher training have always, of necessity (time constraints), had but minuscule offerings in music methodology, though the survival of the music specialism does hold out hope and may be taken as turning a blind eye towards the various unofficial local subterfuges aimed at maximizing the potential of that specialism. Many compromises, showing considerable fertility of imagination, were advanced at MEND (see McCarthy - MEND 307). And there are other lifelines built into the arrangements (such as education centres) that, at least, give an indication that a serious and sincere attempt is being made to upgrade education across the board. But the grandiose idea¹⁹¹ of a curriculum informed by philosophical principle, defined by standards and outcomes and tested by assessment, is too sophisticated to be suggested to or applied by teachers who are themselves typically uninitiated in such refinement of approach.

The virtual absence of music as a specialism in primary school, apart from the still valuable token offered in training colleges, which nevertheless must act arbitrarily in practice, is a serious drawback to progress in recognizing music as a significant component in education; this is especially so when measured against the relative allocations of time to the subject in teacher training. Ireland is in a transition period when new teacher support initiatives are to be implemented, and these are to be welcomed, but it is still far from the situation when music specialists who are musicians, by calling, will be admitted to schools; to them it must seem inconceivable that current provisions can do more than advance musical awareness infinitesimally. Irish music education is thus still faced with the task of making up ground at second-level where music is, nevertheless, reduced to an expendable option. This raises the question as to whether real progress is being made which would also clarify the potential for teacher employment, in turn encouraging students privileged with music specialisms, however acquired, in their second level years to consider third-level studies in music as an option.

¹⁹¹ This is a summary of the honest frustration being experienced by those concerned with the well-being of music education in primary schools, in Ireland, at the idea that satisfactory outcomes can ever accrue from the typical non-specialist approach of the classroom teachers being responsible for the music content. It has long been a concern that they are either not coping or dodging the issue (see *Deaf Ears?*); it is not yet known how the promised curricular support system is functioning. The basic concern is that unschooled teachers cannot be expected to be open to sophisticated ideas about underpinning philosophy in relation to their minuscule and often reluctant involvements in teaching music.

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There remains the crucial residue of third level music education which is itself, whether overtly or by simple inference, focused on employment in education at pre-third level. Because the graduates from such courses are by definition, music specialists, primary school teaching is closed to them in current circumstances. University graduates who are accepted, through various mechanisms, by the Registration Council for Secondary Teachers, have some prospects, and those who take the dedicated baccalaureate in music education seem to be very well placed for employment in second-level schools, such as is available; this latter course is, nevertheless, having difficulties in filling its quotas, an indication either that secondary school music teaching is not seen as a promising employment option, or of a dearth of suitable candidature. There are claims that the uptake for senior cycle music in secondary schools has increased dramatically under the provisions of the reformed syllabus/curriculum implemented in the 1990s, but this only confirms that it is now an 'easier option', completing the vicious circle that bedevils the recruitment to third level studies of candidates with basic attainment. Harry White reported ominously on North American practice in this respect, which now regards the freshman year as remedial in many instances. And there are well-populated 'foundation' courses in Ireland, too, aimed, at the cost (or benefit) of an extra year, at making up the shortfall in second-level music education by recognizing it for what it is.

Those who are destined to teach performance at all levels, depending on the calibre of their innate gifts and the sophistication of their training, normally come through performance-rich courses; they may be professional performers who enjoy some teaching, the 'failed' performers already alluded to, or those, of more modest ambition though no less commitment, who graduate from specialized courses in instrumental (including vocal) music teaching. [Alarming, the charlatans who are trading without qualifications of any kind, deceiving the gullible public, have been and still are a feature of performance education in the community; they must be alluded to here as a cohort ripe for exposure, and elimination from the scene.] Some graduates may be lucky enough to find employment (wholtime or part-time) in dedicated music schools: others may choose or settle for the solitary role of the private music teacher. A word must be said in their praise. Teachers of practical music have had to contend with a kind of second-class citizenship, which is unmerited in the majority of cases, but which nevertheless has tended to reduce their self-image, while opening their profession as a sanctuary for the unqualified charlatans, referred to above, who beguile the unsuspecting public. And yet the best of these worthy musicians have provided, over the years, and for derisory fees, the training in performance which has not otherwise been available and which is so indispensable to the health of the whole music education enterprise. Until this branch of music education is subjected to fundamental reappraisal in Ireland in a way which recognizes its indispensability to the comprehensive curriculum, in both its general and specialized aspects, and its worthiness in philosophical terms, while defining

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attainable standards confirmed by assessment, it is the writer's view that music education will continue to be problematic and unconvincing in its delivery.

While third level music education may be expected to continue on its path of growth and achievement (albeit arguably under-achievement), which is not being gainsaid in this analysis, it should be prepared to consider ongoing reappraisal of its goals, both on an institutional basis and in relation to relevance and balance within the whole corpus. A forum exists for such exchanges (heads of third-level music departments) but its deliberations could be focused more precisely if its agenda were open to bilateral discussion with representatives from its crucial recruitment source area at lower levels, where the idiosyncratic problems are more pressing and prototypical, as the MEND analysis has been attempting to show. Alternatively, and perhaps even more fruitfully, the services of the Music Education National Forum,¹⁹² inaugurated during the final sessions of MEND, or of some like umbrella body, might be pressed into service to ensure that all interested parties have an input.

There is no area more in need of the collective wisdom of all its members or their representatives than that of performance, where a chasm exists between the standards aspired to and expected at third level and the general health of the discipline in the community. While the existence of a vibrant performance base is no guarantee that the aspiration of holistic music education is being met, as witness the US dispensation for the whole of the twentieth century, its absence can only be interpreted as evidence of uncaring attitudes and of policies uninformed as to the guiding philosophy of the performing arts and unwilling to accede to its considered demands. The long awaited announcement of the establishment of a **National Academy for the Performing Arts**¹⁹³ (APA) in January 2000 raises hopes that these issues can now, at last, be addressed.

¹⁹² The National Forum is mentioned in the Abstract and at 3.3.8 as an important item on the MEND Agenda. It should be remembered that the MEND Initiative was privately commissioned and did not have 'the ear of government', so to speak. It was necessary to make provision, at the very earliest stages, for a mechanism that could process MEND findings and recommendations as a lobbying force. As events turned out, the Music Network Report (2002. See MEND 609) was commissioned by government and used the MEND Report as the underpinning philosophical provenance for its recommendations on the provision of nationwide performing centres, perhaps the most important of all MEND recommendations, although it is merely complementary to the school focus of the Report itself.

It is unnecessary to go into detail about the 'politics' of the failure of the National Forum for Music Education, which was part of the MEND plan. Suffice it to say that the Forum which replaced it is a very democratic body, is very sympathetic to and appreciative of the work of MEND and is well placed to take up any lobbying which might be appropriate in relation to MEND Recommendations. The final report of MEND was highlighted and officially launched at a plenary meeting of the Forum in Sligo (Ireland) in April 2002; it was very well received and is an official archive document of the Forum. Thankfully there is no anti-MEND feeling or deprioritizing of music education issues in the agenda of the Forum.

¹⁹³ Again, the MEND connection and its enquiry into the State of Music Education in Ireland is the justification for this inclusion. And even in the philosophical enquiry, the conceptual confusion about the nature of performance is constantly in focus, so much so as to be a dominating issue. The provisions of the APA, now

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Political advocacy for the APA was ably canvassed with impeccable timing, which married the undoubtedly glamorous idea of a national institution with the dramatic upturn of the nation's economic fortunes. Although it is arguable that a case should first have been made for the state-sponsored upgrading of general and performance education at lower levels, the fashionable top-down strategy has been known to work in terms of its inspirational potential to influence the whole dispensation by establishing an aspirational model. It is to be hoped that the considerable efforts which brought about this exciting development can be applied in turn to the ancillary areas that must now be built up to complement the proposed activities of APA. In particular, the existence of the APA will, if it becomes a reality, highlight the lacunae in the national provision for performance education at lower levels, as indeed this will indubitably become a major concern of the management of APA on the question of its own viability.

Amongst the tasks that could very well come within the eventual remit of this national institution, a number immediately arise from the most cursory survey of the current state of performance-based music education in Ireland.

1. Spurious understandings of the nature of performance together with attitudes to and policies on performance in general music education are at the root of the whole (global) music education dilemma, and centred in the feasible extent of school experience. During the past 30 years in the US the spectrum of options covered minimal (or even zero) performance to maximized (total) involvements, neither of which is ideal and both of which have been justifiably criticized. Hopefully curriculum development agencies within the APA, in their wider brief, will be able to take this matter up as a pressing concern for clarification and help to normalize it in the popular and indeed the professional educational mentality, while ensuring that performance studies develop apace from their currently neglected status at lower levels, with very necessary subsidies from within the national education budget.
2. Either meaningful performance experiences have to be incorporated in school, which is clearly impossible in currently available time allocations and because of the established norms of Irish school music education, or acknowledged as a specialism for which school still has some residual responsibility in drawing attention to what it cannot itself provide and stressing its importance for the sizeable minority that should have such extended options. If performance is to be a part of music education, its implications just cannot be ignored by the main provider and by the resourcing agency for general education, viz. the Exchequer. The APA may have a function in monitoring this situation and in making

sadly aborted, would have addressed this concern and could have drawn on the philosophical outcomes of this thesis to add weight to its negotiation with government (see 1.8 - Value of the Study).

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provision, even in its own interests, for servicing the area so identified and delimited. This, of course, is to suggest that the APA activities will stray outside those normally associated with the training of performers exclusively at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. But, if teacher training is assumed to be open to it, there may very well be confrontation, rather than mere competition, with other institutions, already legitimately providing this service in a market saturated in relation to current demands (that is, those backed by acceptable entry standards). This situation will have to be monitored sensitively.

3. The APA will have another legitimate reason to extend its brief to garner support for these currently problematic lower levels, since it, too, is dependent on them for its recruitment if it is to have a distinctively *Irish* character (and no other is honestly feasible as a priority concern for Irish music education, if the intent of the advocacy campaign is to be taken seriously). The notion of talent education (one of Bennett Reimer's 'values held in common' [ISME Amsterdam: *Universal Philosophy of Music Education* Paper Section 17.1.4 [MEND 401, 3]) and the possibility of a feeder school for the APA will, again, call for the sensitive negotiation and collaborations mentioned copiously in the official documentation, if a solution that avoids the tag of elitism is to be achieved. Obviously the APA must be a party, though neither a dominating nor the only one, to any survey of the overall structure, taking all levels into account, of performance education in Ireland. At scholarly levels it seems appropriate, too, that the APA should provide leadership in issuing statements, from time to time, on the philosophy and the psychology of performance, a much neglected area of research.
4. The APA will open up new vistas of possible involvement and achievement by young people in performance, but there are risks that must also be taken into account and acted upon so that postulants understand the problems inherent in this tempting profession. The performing field has only limited employment opportunities, based simply on the levels of audience interest and support. The idea of institutions committed to excellence is admirable, but if the 'reject' level is high there is the obvious danger that many still talented young musicians will be left scarred and embittered, with a reluctance to face alternatives with enthusiasm. There may be little alternative to this refining fire for sublimating the ultimate culture-bearers in this sophisticated profession, but the collective problems of the whole cohort are very real and recognized internationally in third-level teaching institutions. The 'failed performer' syndrome is, of course, not a reason to demur on plans for an APA. The dilemma is there anyway and is not attributable to the Irish APA, specifically, as its cause; but it has to be faced nonetheless. Balancing the output of performers to the job market, particularly an indigenous one, is particularly perilous in

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Ireland. In spite of the nebulous talk of other satisfying employment possibilities for performers outside the limited possibilities of performance itself as a sustaining profession, teaching is pragmatically the most obvious outlet, invoking the direct applicability of performing skills, albeit ideally with the aid of additional craft arising from methodological training. There is thus an intimate link between performing and teaching so strong that one respected approach to performance teaching, even at the highest levels, is on the understanding that the skills being inculcated should be transferable in a regenerative way ... in other words, that performers in training should be able demonstrate that they can teach what they can do. At a more systematic level it has become standard practice that performers are expected to take some teaching methodology courses as part of their training. The need both for additional employment opportunities for (all) performers and, in Ireland, for the setting up of a lower level performance base in education which satisfies the ambitions of a significant minority is to identify a complementarity that could well be turned to good account in furthering an enlightened educational rationale. Whether the APA, as enjoying the favour of official recognition, should have unbridled and overwhelming powers to develop this potentially fruitful idea to its own ends, without taking into account the destabilization of pre-existing arrangements, is another matter. This again calls for sensitive collaboration rather than rampant disregard of the still serviceable provisions which paved the way for the successful APA campaign in the first place.

5. The establishment and maintenance of the APA represent a major national investment of confidence and resources. It seems axiomatic that its supremely dominant involvements should be with Irish students, in the first instance, while those from abroad should be welcomed, as a supplementary dimension, and accorded parity of esteem in their studies. This raises the question of critical student numbers for a satisfactory image as a fully complemented conservatory; in the writer's view this is, predictably, a problem area. While no musician would be expected to disavow the idea of the long-awaited APA, the danger of virtual cannibalization of the provisions of other respected and well-established third-level performance providers is very real. The well-founded resentment resulting from such an unchecked procedure could be a very negative feature in Irish performance education. The binding together of all interests in the field should be a commanding concern of those charged with the task of ensuring the general acceptance of the APA as the epochal and unifying development it ought to be. Its management structures must be seen to transcend internecine dissonances by adopting a conscious policy, in advance, aimed at minimizing them, recognizing what has already been achieved in the field, and negotiating relationships which are healthy, open, collaborative and democratic. This was

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compellingly argued in Janet Ritterman's address on the subject at MEND (MEND 204). At this stage the APA still has a challenging campaign of advocacy to address in its own regard; this should never be allowed to compromise its image as seeking what is best for the collective movement forward of performance in Irish music education.

6. If the eventual stability of this new institution is to be made secure, the real need, then, is to boost the performance base in lower-level education, and to train the teachers to minister to it; otherwise, the simultaneous attention to the glamorous pursuit of training performers will be threatened at source. But that is not to suggest that it is the sole prerogative or responsibility of the APA exclusively to do all or any of these things. What is needed is the collaborative effort of all the agencies of music education and of the music-loving public to mount a campaign for the amelioration of the performance dispensation at the feeder level; if successful, this could satisfy both amateur and professional demands equally. Eventually the enabling nexus of philosophy, curriculum, standards and assessment will have to be invoked and applied sequentially so that the political will can be stimulated by the evidence of a convincing and systematic approach, assisted by the importunate pressures of a national campaign. The APA would have a leadership role to play in this campaign. Here American experience and practice can provide useful guidelines; Paul Lehman's realism is persuasive. He is insistent that when philosophical principles have evolved into curricular options, it is crucial to focus, not on activities, but on outcomes (the delivered curriculum), which in turn must be validated by reliable assessment. It seems to the writer that if the APA, by consensus with its social partners in music education, were to promulgate a statement of what (the significant minority of) young Irish persons should be able to do as performers to ensure the viability of the performance function at higher levels (and therefore the healthy survival of music as an activity endorsed by public approval and demand), it would clarify a much confused scenario once and for all. If, in addition, it were to take steps to put into place a nationally agreed system of assessment which would test those standards, a case, based on statistical evidence, could be made for a performance education dispensation which could work towards normalization of those statistics to the expectations of a developed and artistically-aware society.

In spite of some encouraging developments such as revised school curricula and the promise of the APA, the question must be asked whether anything has changed appreciably since the *Deaf Ears?* Report. The claim is not made for MEND that by an act of association and convocation it could, by collating the views and suggestions of the music education lobby, no matter how representative and innovative, bring about change, unless its presence could somehow be perpetuated as a continuing

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reminder and a collective conscience. This reality was not lost on the delegates to the heralding pre-MEND Conference in 1994, when they effectively drafted the agenda for the MEND initiative – an agenda robust enough to withstand the test of time and to endure virtually intact to the very end of the public phases. In it provision was made for the establishment of a **permanent forum for music education** and this was, in due time, enacted and endorsed in November 1996. In fact, no such body, dedicated uniquely to the interests of music education rather than to music itself, had existed in Ireland before 1996. It was hoped that when the proceedings of MEND had been rationalized into a common expression of needs, hopes and aspirations, the results of the analysis could act as a working document and be used to revitalize the agenda as a catalyst for change and for collective action. It seemed that to allow the pointedly relevant commentary from this massive and unprecedented exercise of music education concern to languish for want of a continuing voice would be to squander the collected wisdom of every agency of music education in Ireland and to betray the interests of the caring public.

Although the group decision to establish a national forum for music education was really no more than a spontaneous act of common sense, it could not have anticipated the plethora of concerns that would find expression during the ensuing conferences and would call for rationalization and the services of a forum. Nor could it have divined the endorsement that almost contemporaneous events (1992-94) in the US would bring to it. It so happened that the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) in America, a body that subsequently provided massive support to the fledgling forum in Ireland, had only recently scored, through its coalition for music, an epochal victory, in literally forcing the US Government and Legislature to include the arts in the Goals 2000 legislation for education, a symbolic decision which has changed the course of music education forever in that country; and it has helped, in other ways described in the MEND Report, to bring into focus many of the ultimate issues in music education for the benefit of those who are ready to learn from vicarious experience.

It is notable that the **continuing influence of western art music**, in music education in Ireland, received overwhelming support at MEND, transcending, without coming into conflict with, the interests of coterie groups. This endorsement had less to do with the music itself than with its peripheral techniques, in educational methodology, which were deemed indispensable to it and generally applicable by informed, sensitive and reflective practitioners. Neither popular music nor multiculturalism was disavowed as worthy of a place in the repertoire, which was generally circumscribed, for all admissions of music, by the overriding influence of the time factor and the need to have readily applicable quality criteria. These were found, through painstaking analysis, to derive most naturally from artistic considerations, eschewing the excluding and more extreme rigours of pure aestheticism, allowing for the functional and utilitarian aspects of music (accommodated by Referential and Contextual theory), when these coexist with more conventional artistic qualities. A

general theory of art which is open to all cultures is assumed, if this is not already incontrovertibly apparent by definition. It may not be surprising to find MEND in support of moderation but it must be useful to find this endorsement proceeding, not from rule of thumb or ready cliché, but from a serious and sincere appraisal of the controlling parameters.

6.7.10 A way forward for Irish Music Education - National Forum for Music Education

As its title suggests and as its progress evidenced, MEND was a national initiative. Considerable effort ensured that virtually every agency of music education in the country was involved. It was not unreasonable to assume, therefore, that its outcomes would have national significance and should have the ministry of a dedicated body, capable of commanding the respect of government, for the furtherance of any revised objectives based on them. Such a forum was consciously planned to be autonomous from inception, not being required to acknowledge a debt to MEND or to be bound in any way by its findings. This was an obvious gesture of true democracy which did not, however, rule out the forum's probable eventual interest in MEND outcomes as being an expression of the aspirations of the nation's music educators and the wisdom of some of the world's most distinguished contributors to the lore of music education.

The forum was duly established.¹⁹⁴ But it has to be reported that, following a year of genuinely enthusiastic activity, it was aborted by default, and without the mandate of the large membership, on the basis of one (the fourth) plenary meeting¹⁹⁵ which was poorly attended (for reasons that were entirely plausible). This reflected no credit on those responsible and the suggestion that the reconvening of the forum should await the MEND final report was hardly convincing in the light of the group's complete independence, as outlined above. However, it is of little consequence as to how the music education forum orders its business provided it exists in the first place, nor is it important who is credited with the idea. Out of the still smouldering ashes of the 1996 forum a new body was established, presumably at first with no particular aspiration to supplant the earlier one. The Forum for Music in Ireland (Fóram don Cheol in Éirinn), which ostensibly, from its title, took a markedly different direction (music rather than music education) from that agreed as the dedicated focus (music education specifically) of the original forum, has developed along lines that would seem to indicate that it could very well absorb the considerable work of the forum for music education (MEND outcome) amicably, without the need to have two bodies in existence in a counterproductive way that would send out a very questionable message - to those interested in the progress of music in all its

¹⁹⁴ Although it was termed the Music Education National Forum, its title as an association was never finalized; the membership did, however, agree that the title should contain the words *Music Education* and not just *Music*, since the education brief was being especially endorsed.

forms, if not to politicians, who are seldom impressed with bifurcated advocacy of the same cause. It should be taken as positive that an active forum still exists, and the writer submitted the completed report of MEND to the Forum for Music in Ireland for its consideration in April 2002. The report was well received and incorporated as an official document of the new forum.

6.7.11 Philosophical Issues: Balance, Relevance and Time Management in Implementing the Curriculum

The policy of seeking out fundamentals and of approaching music education from the stance of the copious corpus of philosophical scholarship inspired by it may seem to have dominated MEND almost as a preconception. The spectrum of seemingly conflicting views examined in relation to this seminal philosophical stage was so bewildering that it represented an enormous challenge in the analysis of MEND contributions to essay some kind of rationalization; but there seemed to be no other way to proceed. Certainly until this course was attempted there could have been no trustworthy foundation for viewing the Irish music education dispensation as to the reliability of its basics. The writer believes that the cumbersome exercise did lead to helpful clarification for those who would chart curriculum and the course of music education pedagogy and methodology in Ireland.

It is important to take into account, from the very outset, that two promising cornerstones exist, on which the educational edifice of music in Ireland is built and on which it can and must be strengthened. They are 1) that the value of music is officially accepted as a desideratum in education, general statutory education being seen as the vehicle through which this value should be inculcated and 2) that a national curriculum exists to be implemented, and modified from time to time - mandatory, if problematic, in early education, largely optional and somewhat less quantifiable in second-level (with low uptake). This may not be a totally satisfying situation from the point of view of music educators, but neither should it be dismissed as of little value. There is a secure starting position from which to continue building.

6.7.12 The Elliott and Reimer philosophies as models for Irish Music Education

Elliott's and Reimer's philosophies of music education were considered choices for close scrutiny at MEND because one (Reimer) was the generally accepted classic and the other (Elliott) was an up-to-the-minute self-styled counterposition. It was assumed, too, that they could, together, throw light on the many positions punctuating a possible continuum between them. Apart from the feasibility of

¹⁹⁵ See footnote 192.

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rationalizing their points of difference, it was first a question of discriminating between the boldly confident and provocative novelty of the one (Elliott) and the chameleon-like but admirably prudent revision of accepted wisdom of the other (Reimer). Nor was the choice going to be the clear-cut result of an adjudication which endorsed the one over the other as a panacea for Irish music education.

If Elliott's praxial philosophy has to be called into question in an Irish context, it is because it cannot respond satisfactorily to any of the three determining criteria of a workable curriculum – **balance, relevance and effective time management**.

David Elliott

1. It is impossible to disregard the insistence in *MM* that active music making, by implication performance (but with under-developed references to other activities such as improvising, conducting, composing and arranging), should dominate over every other 'activity' (inferring listening *per se*, appraising and academically-orientated pursuits). Some of Elliott's critics take this up aggressively. There is the deceptive attraction that Elliott might be effectively rationalizing and possibly offering a solution to the dilemma of performance in general education by refusing to regard it as a specialization (at its proficient stage). (Note that, nowhere in the entire documentation, and not just in Elliott's, dealing with performance, has the writer ever got the vaguest sense of what it actually means to be even a competent performer. As a teacher skilled in the area of performance teaching, he suspects that any definition would be open to much honest disagreement.) And Elliott, in face-to-face discussion with the writer, also effectively refused to acknowledge the overriding importance of the skill-acquisition factor, which determines basic and subsequent success in performance. This in turn, whether accepted or not, distorts the time element, since the psychomotor sequences in acquiring the technical command to perform are implacably time-dependent. Thus Elliott is caught between the Scylla and Charybdis of constraining those who do not wish to perform (out of lack of interest but perhaps, also, from an intuitive awareness of the time demands to do so), while simultaneously destabilizing the curriculum, for when **time** is disproportionately allocated, **balance** is threatened.
2. Elliott's commitment to total multiculturalism is arguably explicit in his claim as to the 'innate equality of all music cultures'. While this stance is unequivocally post-modern, and has also been challenged by the writer, the plain truth about multiculturalism, some distinguished advocacy notwithstanding, is that it is not a fully tested approach to music education (at least MEND did not evoke this sense), with a proved record of widespread application and successful implementation. Many of the advantages adduced in advocacy statements are not directly

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relevant to Ireland; the main drawback is, however, the **time** factor since, in its overt commitment to active music making, MC has a potentially disproportionate time-dependence. Its repertoire is dauntingly diverse, so its inclusion in any representative way (and no other seems to make sense if ethnocentricity is to be avoided) would demand more containment skills, and the will to use them, than are currently obvious.

3. Until usefully challenged by Reimer, Elliott played down the pure act of listening (i.e. without a concomitant activity such as having the listener simultaneously perform). Although he claims to have given listening more priority than any other topic in his praxial philosophy (a claim that is not being challenged), it is circumscribed as having a diminished function in the sense of contemplative and analytical, or concentrated listening of any kind to the *separate* performance of *others*; such 'separate' listening is characteristic, as Reimer reminds us, of the greater part of musical activity in human discourse, being in fact the truly universal experience in that form, isolated from the activity of music making itself, as generally understood. It is, after all, itself a form of music making, by definition. Furthermore, to suggest that familiarity with the repertoire of the great exemplars of music, in any culture, should arise first from personal involvement in the performance of such music would be unacceptable even if it were not so far-fetched as to call into question whether this is the sense that Elliott actually wished to convey. While there would have been merit in reacting against an exclusive listening programme, such as there is reason to believe existed in the American curriculum ... to replace it with activities that virtually dispense with it is equally to be avoided. The fact that Elliott eventually, under pressure, revalidated listening as a separate activity does not fully compensate for the jaundiced view which *MM* seems to portray.
4. The idealism in Elliott's philosophy should not be gainsaid. After all, there is nothing immediately exceptionable in the aspiration to inculcate the highest levels of musicianship through the direct hands-on experience of the widest diversity of music as intentional action. But is the idea lacking in pragmatism? It is irrelevant to any but the most limited notion of a delivered curriculum because of the overweening demands of skill-acquisition; it wants, too, for the precious input of **time**; and, because the skill/time parameter is so dominant, **balance** of activities must also suffer. Overriding all is the question of **teacher expertise**. Elliott's philosophy in action, under ideal conditions (implying a super-race of inspiring teachers, all with double-specialisms - instrumental and general music education, not to mention unprecedented spectra of diversity) could address the undoubted difficulties inherent in the comparably idealistic American National Standards of recent promulgation (idealistic, that is, unless their implementation assumes a closer collaboration between practical and academic teachers in *collectively* delivering the curriculum - a situation that has not obtained in the past). And let it be noted that Elliott himself has admitted that he envisages such a new breed of

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highly qualified teachers. The problem of **relevance** arises again. In the Irish socio-cultural context there is no immediate or long-term prospect that teachers individually capable of teaching an academic *and* practical curriculum will be available in number. The inspirational rationale of the BMusEd course (jointly taught by DIT, RIAM and TCD), which aims at this double expertise, but for second-level teaching only, is a hopeful sign for the future, though its current intent is not quite focused on that mould (and its output of graduates is small). While the praxial philosophy could have relevance to the American scene if it were adaptable to the grand idea that *two* cohorts of specialized teachers would address the curriculum, it is difficult to see any relevance in applying it to the Irish non-specialist-taught primary curriculum. And if it cannot be envisaged in primary education there would seem to be very little logic in imposing a performance- or ‘activity’-dominated regime at second-level if the need for continuum is taken seriously - as it ought to be following the grim warnings of the *Deaf Ears?* Report.

There is no evidence, that the writer is aware of, that the *MM* philosophy of David Elliott has evolved, as Reimer’s *Philosophy* did, into a methodology uniquely associated with his name. And, without any implied disrespect, it is unlikely that this could happen in these days when every opinion is open to challenge and when the level of philosophical scholarship is at an unprecedented high in his field of operation. Although his book now appears in the bibliography of Irish official documentation on school music education, there is no reason to believe that his ideas have seriously influenced cross-curricular thinking, since most of the ground work for revision had been completed before he came to Ireland as a long-term visitor. As stated, his ideas are bold, refreshing and provocative, at best, if pointedly iconoclastic and therefore overweening at times, and self-devaluing in terms of their ready acceptance. While the writer regrets that he cannot go along with the quintessential substance of Elliott’s recommendations for school music education, as explained above for the Irish context, he is quick to acknowledge that David Elliott has done a great service to music education, thereby realizing one of his own ambitions, in opening up the topic of music education philosophy, appropriately at the turn of the millennium, for radical reappraisal, this thesis being an example. His philosophy has been an incredibly useful sounding-board against which to test the validity of other ideas, and not only that, but in stimulating the refining processes which have sharpened the focus on many of the burning questions in music education.

Bennett Reimer

It must be observed that Bennett Reimer has had ‘several bites at the cherry’. This is not by way of criticism, but rather to point up how astutely he listens to his own advice: ‘Aesthetic education, then, is not a dogma, or a fixed set of beliefs and actions, but an ever-changing, ever-developing position’

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(MEND 203, 4). Reimer would probably be the first to admit that his thinking has not remained static since the publication of his epochal *A Philosophy of Music Education* in 1970. Its position was still secure in the 1990s when David Elliott mounted the first serious challenge, which developed into the mutually bruising exchanges analysed in the MEND Report. But the confrontation was also not only fructifying to the revised thinking of both, but benefited the field of music education philosophy enormously.

Reimer's aesthetic theory has always enjoyed the natural advantages of being couched with extreme literary elegance, which is immediately appealing. It is still eminently plausible, of course, all the more so since Reimer continues to defend it ably from the stated stance of its never having been deflected from its artistic integuments, but its original containment within a Formalist understanding has seen it progressively pushed, in educational thought, to the conservative right of centre. Reimer has, with formidable and admirable skill at times, himself taken up the challenge of justifying it in the context of the three ineluctable and still unanswered questions (see 6.2) which music education in developed western societies has irreducibly focused on at the turn of the millennium, and which he himself has articulated in his reply to Harry White's *A book of manners in the wilderness*. They concern the place of Popular Music, Multiculturalism and Performance in the music education of the new millennium. But although his thoughts are immaculately clear as to how classically-defined aesthetic education stands in this unresolved *mêlée*, he admits, with a candour that could be construed as disguising indecision in a less distinguished scholar, that solutions are not imminently at hand.

The admittance of the *repertoire* of 'pop' and multiculturalism is expertly covered under the quality criteria which he suggests; this writer has attempted to boost this methodology against the suspicion of aesthetic-shy readers by insisting that the criteria of music as art are safe, cross-cultural, non-Reimer-derived and arguably unexceptionable as to the status of the vast majority of musics, provided they can acquiesce in notions of graded excellence and a socio-cultural index of *musical* integrity. On the infinitely more contentious questions of their place in formal music education, their relevance to, time demands and balance in the curriculum, Reimer, obviously conscious of the rough and tumble of the ongoing philosophical debate on the global stage, which seems to favour increasing diversity, is constrained to political correctness and contents himself with marvelling at and indulging Harry White's impatience with it. This adds little to what the writer has himself been able to infer from the presentations at MEND, the substance of which has already been put forth.

There are a few aspects of applied philosophy on which Reimer comes close to dissembling. They concern the all-important place of performance in music education and the attempt to reposition the aesthetic in the centre ground of music education philosophy. Mindful of Reimer's willingness to

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modify his stance, and his consummate skill in effecting this, seamlessly, on issues that are not absolutely crucial to the stability of his aesthetic theory, we find him in his 1996 Amsterdam address masterfully attributing to theories of Referentialism and Contextualism a way of accommodating the widest possible spectrum of formerly suspect musics on the basis of their function and utility. This admission (for that is what it is) that music in high art (in whatever culture and not necessarily that of WAM) needs to adapt to the idea that thresholds that are set too high, on the basis of cognition and hyper-sensitive affect, exclude much music and the modest aspirations of the masses, is helpful, if painful for Epicureans.

This is accurately to place a finger on the pulse of current concerns and must surely underpin Marie McCarthy's appeal for bridges between school and the community (MEND 307). The commanding concern of contemporary music education strategy is, without devastating compromises, to make school music more relevant to the music that dominates societal perspectives, rather than the converse, in the achievement of which it has greatly diminished powers. Pragmatism now seems to be demanding that general music education should start from a common denominator of what level of musical enjoyment and capability best conforms to the definition of universality of experience and should take that as the given from which to work, if music education itself is to aspire to universal acceptance. This should not be seen as capitulation to the forces of commercialism but rather as a challenge to professional and reflective music educators, at philosophical and executive levels, who, by being prepared to engage in an informed, systematic and disciplined way with musics of all genres, can develop and evoke in their students discriminatory powers born of naturally evolving maturity which no fiat can produce. As might be expected, Bennett Reimer, eschewing any idea of a biased 'hidden agenda', has succinctly defined such an approach:

And while any overt imposition of musical values would be distasteful to most music educators and most students, the entire music education enterprise is built on the assumption that musical tastes can be improved, that musical experiences can be deepened, that musical enjoyment can be refined, that musical significance can be made more available to all people. These assumptions, all of which are very healthy and beyond criticism, do imply a movement toward 'better' musical experiences of 'better' music. The question is what makes music, or any art, 'better'?¹⁹⁶

And Reimer has answers to that question, too. He has, like so many influential music educators of our time, conscious of the palpable failures of contemporary music education generally to commend itself and its canons to the majority of learners, embraced the idea of continuing compromise. The writer is convinced that, provided the sizeable minority of students who evince a more actively searching attitude to music are identified and selectively nurtured in relation to their interest and commitment, the future of the music that they are expertly and democratically trained to value is as secure as it

¹⁹⁶ Reimer, *A Philosophy* (rev. 1989), 134. It seems appropriate, at this point, to repeat the quotation.

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needs to be. Music educators must shoulder the responsibility for the task in hand and work to an eclectic understanding of the philosophy of music education, and the criteria deriving from it, to ensure that **relevance, balance, time management, and matching challenges to developed musicianship** (Elliott, *MM*, 122), within the curriculum, prepare ALL their charges adequately to exercise discerning artistic judgement to arrive at considered values.¹⁹⁷

Judging by the spate of dissatisfaction, on the question of performance training, that has recently (2000-2001) received much coverage in the media in Ireland, it must be assumed that MEND outcomes on this issue were accurately divined. The one area of music education that has not been adequately addressed, in spite of a promising attitude in the 1995 Government White Paper, is specialized performance at the crucial lower levels. In the writer's view this is because its significance is not fully understood.

Reimer's pronouncements on the subject, although some are somewhat equivocal, are nonetheless helpful in focusing on both the similarities and differences between the American and Irish systems. Performance training was the subject of massive misunderstandings and misguided targeting between Reimer and Elliott; the scope for misinterpretation seems to single it out as an area of maximum confusion. Elliott accuses Reimer, through MEAE, of neglecting the performance element in general music education. Reimer, disdaining to explain the true relationships between his philosophy and MEAE in its ideal concept, neither admits nor denies the alleged failures of MEAE in its narrower form and then goes on to claim, apparently, that the levels of performance training in the US and the outstanding achievements associated with them are exemplary in global terms and are attributable to MEAE. This is not borne out by the considerable history of performance in the US which predates his philosophy and MEAE by more than half a century. In his address to MEND, Reimer implies that the new American National Standards are a triumph for the principles enshrined in MEAE, but elsewhere that the old ideas of the dominance of performance in education were misguided and that the National Standards would achieve the eclectic balance of diversity and involvements in which the old either/or, academic/practical division failed abysmally.

While there is more than a grain of truth in these statements, it takes more than a grain of salt to accept them unequivocally! As already stated, the American system is faced with the nightmare scenario, in seeking to implement the terms of the National Standards, of crash-training, even if it were possible, specialist teachers who combine the two specialisms already in existence separately (school general and performance), or negotiate an agreement where the separate specialisms are recruited to teach the

¹⁹⁷ This is, of course, an idealistic statement. It was not thought of as particularly original; but it does resonate with an MEAE-type manifesto and is not out of line either with Elliott's aspirations for music education.

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curriculum (performance included) in tandem. And such matters are, in any case, subject to state-by-state control, if not to more microcosmic variations. The message for Ireland is that performance was valued over all other activities in the US, and by implication, that this will continue to be the case, except that it will now be mandatory, presumably, at exploratory levels, for all students, and at expert levels as a generally available option to be taken up by a minority. This could be a highly desirable model, as to the idea itself, for Ireland, except that there is not a comparable Irish teaching force of specialists.

Reimer accuses Elliott of reverting to the flawed system of the past by promoting a performance-dominated general curriculum. Elliott refutes this interpretation. From an Irish perspective it might be said that Reimer is faced with the claim that the performance regimes in the past were not ideal (an interpretation he would not deny); neither can he claim with any accuracy that the approach to performance teaching in the future is as yet fully formulated in detail as to how the teaching force will deliver it. But Reimer, with characteristic prudence, summarized the current interim position in his MEND address: ‘As the profession learns how to put the standards into effective operation over the next several decades (for it will take that long to accomplish their aspirations, the quality and relevance of music education will finally begin to approach the potentials its visionary thinkers have dreamed of.’

In conscientiously following Reimer’s advice to contextualize a philosophy of music education to the specifics of the Irish circumstances, it is necessary to pronounce against what can be interpreted as the current position of his own philosophical stance, and on the following grounds:

1. The universality of music as experience and faculty is the most promising starting point for any advocacy campaign to establish and maintain music as an essential component in education. The pure aesthetic model (Reimer’s original position) cannot establish an unanswerable case without some modification by way of admitting a wider spectrum of music, based on function (utilitarianism) and broadly defined socio-cultural value, to the repertoire. The precise position of Reimer (and MEAE) on this issue is not clear; Reimer does, however, helpfully advance adaptable criteria to address the issue (see *A Philosophy*, rev. 1989, p.133 *et seq.*).
2. Reimer has recently highlighted performance as one of the three commanding issues in contemporary music education but also as the one most adaptable to ready solution. However, the history of music education in the US since 1970 does not offer convincing proof that performance has been well served in the sense of its always existing in an ambience of holistic music education, the current aspiration. Neither MEAE, in its narrower sense as promoting listening rather than performance, nor traditional

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performance studies (typically devoid of ancillary musicianship in the US) erroneously inferred as arising from MEAE in its broader applications, answers to current needs, either in the US or in Ireland. The American National Standards and the Irish Reformed National Curriculum both envisage a broader dispensation in which performance is combined with the other essential components of music education (listening, composing, appraising) in a holistic approach. The teaching expertise available in the US is infinitely more sophisticated than that in Ireland, but it has not, as yet, been adapted to the implementational demands of the stated aims in the National Standards. Thus, while the Reimer philosophy recommends performance as a balanced component in music education, if we are to take MEAE as the enabling method based on the philosophy, it is currently in need of physical overhaul to adapt the teaching force to the new task. The problems are the same in kind in the US and in Ireland, but the realities of the teaching expertise available are just not comparable.

6.8 Conclusion

The rationalization of the Elliott/Reimer positions, undertaken in Chapter 6, may very well lead to authorial reaffirmation of the essential differences seen by these scholars as sealing the mutual unadaptability of their stances. It is hoped, rather, that they will recognize the will of this author to respect what is noble and meritorious in their work. And it must also be affirmed that the writer is not posing as a philosopher with yet another ‘new’ message, but as a willing arbitrator, ‘standing on the shoulders of giants’, so to speak, in a confrontation that has so much potential for progress. Music education must move on, ideally with an eclecticism that benefits from apparently irreconcilable views; impasse, on the other hand, is barren.

In the course of the rationalization, Chapter 6 has continued to confirm the connection between the two strands of the thesis. On the one hand it has taken the reader to the identification of the crucial dissonances between Elliott and Reimer and the plausibility of reconciliation; it has clarified misunderstandings about MEAE while matching the aspirations of the American National Standards to a mediated position. On the other hand, it has shown the similarities and differences between American and Irish practice while emphasizing the need to clear up the conceptual confusion about performance and to confront the notion of music as art, two of the key issues which loom large in both systems. Relevance, balance, time management, and matching challenges to developed musicianship emerged as desiderata in curriculum building. It is now possible to define a model curriculum¹⁹⁸ for

¹⁹⁸ As stated, the model curriculum is an outcome of the analysis and rationalization of the rival philosophies. The word ‘curriculum’ is often shrouded in connotations both mysterious and arcane. It is worth quoting Reimer’s definition here, at length, to demystify the term. ‘But while a convincing philosophy is necessary if a

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the Irish context based on a synthesis of Elliott and Reimer ideas, to examine the synthesis itself for proof of genuinely internal reconciliation, and to test the hypothesis. Two strand-based sets of recommendations are considered necessary - those specific to the Irish curriculum and more general recommendations deriving from the Research Question and Aim of Study, leading to suggestions for further research. This summing up is reserved for Chapter 7.

subject is to be accepted in education, it is not sufficient. The subject must also be able to fulfill the requirements that it be teachable to all students, learnable by all students, and developmental for all students. It must lend itself to a rational plan requiring selection of essential subject matter content, an organization of that content appropriate both to the subject and to the cognitive capabilities of learners, a sequence of learnings that is authentic to the subject and to the developmental abilities of young people, ways to demonstrate that learning is taking place, and adaptability to the structures and processes that define schooling in our culture. In short, the subject must be able to become a curriculum.' (*A Philosophy* [rev. 1989],149). The MEND Recommendations (Chapter 7) lay out the possible inclusions in such a curriculum, to suit the Irish context.