

**Ireland's Music Education National Debate:  
Rationalization, Reconciliation, Contextuality and  
Applicability of Global Philosophies in Conflict**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

in the

**Department of Music**

**School of the Arts**

**Faculty of Humanities**

**University of Pretoria**

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**January 2004**

To be sure, music is a miracle. ... What miracle wants of us is not that we, as thinking beings, shall capitulate to it, but rather that we shall do justice to it in our thinking. 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, 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.

*Victor Zuckerkandl*  
*Sound and Symbol p.6*

## Abstract

‘The young Irish person has the worst of all European musical “worlds”’. This seminal statement was discovered to be symptomatic of a general malaise. The Music Education National Debate (MEND 1994-1996) was a three-phase response to *Deaf Ears?*, the report from which the above statement was taken. The eventual aim was to set up a forum for music education which would systematically address the difficulties in Ireland. The scope of MEND was, thus, general, *ab initio*. Its progress was, however, inhibited by a specific concern, which was fundamental to the whole process of reform. It soon became apparent that consensus on a philosophy of music education to inform evolving strategies would be a *sine qua non*. Coincidentally, this was a time of debacle in the global field, instanced by the publication of a ‘new’ philosophy of music education (David Elliott’s *Music Matters* [1995]) which threw down the gauntlet to the undisputed classic - Reimer’s *A Philosophy of Music Education* [1970/1989]. This challenge amounted to a veritable counterposition and demanded a separate, albeit derivative, study before the MEND Report could be completed. This study was to become the substance of this thesis.

The aim of this work is to analyse these polar philosophies with a view to reconciling them. Beginning with some commonly held values about music education, the relevance of American music education practice to a wide range of global systems is suggested. The dominance of a western art (music) mentality is called into question by giving prominence to multiculturalism and popular music. Music Education as Aesthetic Education (Reimer) is compared with the praxial approach (Elliott). They yielded to rationalization, albeit posing residual questions of balance, relevance, and time constraints within the curriculum. The indispensability of performance and listening as a complementary pair is re-established. The ascendancy of artistic criteria in defining the music programme is affirmed. Finally the failure of the universal philosophy hypothesis is redeemed by sketching the compromises necessary to convert it to the adaptability of the contextual idea, leading the study to a conclusion of general, rather than specific, application.

## Keywords

Music education; Music listening; Music performance; Music curriculum; Philosophy; Aesthetics; Contextualism; Multiculturalism; Ireland; USA.

# Dedication

**For a life in music together I gratefully dedicate my work to**

**My wife, Ann, and children, Aisling, Paul and Ann.**

## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the Music Department of the University of Pretoria for affording me the opportunity to submit this thesis on a topic of mutual interest.

Professor Ella Fourie should be mentioned significantly as the person who first introduced me to music education in South Africa.

I am grateful to Professor Chris Walton for facilitating me in the eventual choice of a supervisor who was already familiar with the groundwork.

I cannot adequately acknowledge the help and encouragement provided by my supervisor, Professor Caroline van Niekerk, who never allowed kindness to come in conflict with duty, firmness and standards.

I owe a debt to Dr Brendan Goldsmith, President of the Dublin Institute of Technology, who supported the idea of the Music Education National Debate in Ireland, and nominated me as its organizer with continuing status as a Director of the Institute.

My wife and family suffered the deprivation which an eighteen-year-long project entailed. I hope the outcomes will be evidence of my undying gratitude for their patience.

Thank you especially, Paul, for the wonders of technology and for your skills of formatting; you proved again that with Paul, as with Tigger, all things are possible.

I can never forget my countless students, whose needs constantly stimulated my thoughts and led to the joyful accumulation of my life's expertise.

I am indebted to David Elliott, Bennett Reimer and Harry White for providing the stimulus to write this thesis.

To the participants of all nationalities at MEND, and to all who hold music and music education dear, be assured that this is your book too.

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

APA	The (National) Academy for the Performing Arts
DIT	Dublin Institute of Technology
ISME	International Society for Music Education
ITM	Irish Traditional Music
LC	Leaving Certificate
MC	Multiculturalism
MEAE	Music Education as Aesthetic Education
MENC	The Music Educators' National Conference (US)
MEND	The Music Education National Debate (Ireland)
MM	Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education (D Elliott)
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (Ireland)
RIAM	Royal Irish Academy of Music
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
WAM	Western Art Music

# 1 Background to the Study

## 1.1 Personal Motivation

In 1985 the Arts Council (of Ireland) commissioned a Report on the state of music education in Irish schools. The seminal finding of the Report (*Deaf Ears?* [Herron])<sup>1</sup> was that ‘the young Irish person has the worst of all European musical “worlds”’. Ireland’s **Music Education National Debate** (MEND) (1994-1996), which I proposed as a response, has been a professionally rewarding project. That, in itself, was, I suggest, evidence of motivation to reform. I am grateful to Dr Brendan Goldsmith, President of Dublin Institute of Technology, for the invitation to have been the sole co-ordinator of MEND. The period since the conclusion of its public phase has been, for me, a time of deep thought. I have wrestled with the copious material it generated, trying to extract some useful parameters to point a way forward in Irish music education. I have attempted, through the agency of the MEND initiative, to define and engage with the Irish music education dilemma<sup>2</sup> by comparing and contrasting it with the wider contexts of global concerns. A core issue evolved: the need to analyse and rationalize philosophies of music education which seemed to be in direct conflict. The philosophies of David Elliott and Bennett Reimer typified the challenge. I have been highly motivated to identify and affirm some of the realities that must be grasped before reform can be rewarded with lasting success. I therefore saw the focus of my motivation as attempting to reconcile these apparently polar philosophical positions.

## 1.2 Research Question

To what extent is it possible to rationalize, reconcile, contextualise and apply rival global philosophies of music education, in particular those of David Elliott and Bennett Reimer which, overtly or otherwise, lay claim to a universality which their polar positions vis-à-vis one another seem to call into question?

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Herron, *Deaf Ears?: A Report on the Provision of Music Education in Irish Schools*, Dublin, 1985, The Arts Council.

<sup>2</sup> An itemized list of concerns in Irish music education is given in 6.7.9.

### 1.3 Hypothesis

It is possible to find a satisfactory level of accommodation between the dissonances and apparent contradictions in current authoritative and highly respected philosophical statements on music education to facilitate effective application in their reconciled format.

### 1.4 Aim of the Study

This thesis aims to describe the work of MEND and to indicate how it has made possible, through the subsequent reconciliation of rival philosophies of music education, the development of a general yet contextualised philosophy of music education and the definition of key parameters for its implementation.

There are two separate, though cognate, strands in this thesis. In attempting to provide guidelines for the future of music education in Ireland, which was the primary objective of, and need for, MEND itself, a second concern of even more fundamental significance was generated. It was felt that recommendations would have to be anchored by stable philosophical underpinning.<sup>3</sup> This plan was inhibited, if not rendered impossible, by the emergence of a 'new' philosophy of music education - David Elliott's *Music Matters* (1995). This publicly disputed the very essentials of Bennett Reimer's *A Philosophy of Music Education* (1970/1989) - a veritable classic which had remained unchallenged for a quarter of a century. Clearly this *cause célèbre* had to be confronted and rationalized. This secondary strand drew away from MEND itself as a discrete study worthy of independent treatment in the context of its applicability to a wider field of influence than that defined by the Irish scenario. The documentation of this line of enquiry became the highlighted subject matter of this thesis, although the two topics remain interpenetrated.

### 1.5 Research Methodology

The Methodology for MEND, and as it relates to this thesis, is comprehensively laid out in Section 10 of the MEND Report (*q.v.*). In summary it comprises:

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<sup>3</sup> MEND was a direct response to the alarming conclusions of the *Deaf Ears?* Report. The plausibility of MEND Recommendations hung on the derivation of a workable philosophy of music education. But MEND highlighted major conflict in philosophical pronouncements, especially so as a result of the personal contributions of Elliott and Reimer. The philosophical enquiry and MEND outcomes are therefore inseparably interpenetrated in a theory/practice relationship.

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- An open forum debate, amongst the widest possible spectrum of Irish Music Education specialists, to formulate an agenda for the conduct of the research.
- Three conferences, strategically timed within a two-year period, to encourage and facilitate the participation of Irish and internationally renowned music educators.

Each conference was to comprise scholarly presentations and derivative open forum debates with direct relevance to the agreed agenda.

The proceedings were to be recorded and documented for subsequent analysis

The methodology for this thesis, derived from the MEND research project, is:

- To extract a suitable strand, from the MEND Initiative, which would encapsulate the derived essence of the research outcomes. This crystallized around the philosophical dilemma of having two rationales (those of David Elliott and Bennett Reimer) which appeared, publicly, to be in direct conflict, calling for reconciliation.
- To review a substantial corpus of relevant literature, first to re-establish the salient points of disagreement and, then, to essay the task of rationalization.
- To remove the outcomes from the ambit of theory and mere scholarly pronouncements, as a secondary, though germane, strand; to hold the rationalized material up to the template of a national system of music education (in Ireland), chosen to provide a context to test the applicability of the reconciled stances.
- To test the aspirations towards universality of the philosophies of Elliott and Reimer. In the event of failure of the universality hypothesis, to establish the degree of accommodation required satisfactorily to approximate to the universality aspiration. The level of compatibility of any derived rationale with classical philosophical stances is also to be investigated with a view to matching current expectations from formal music education.

### 1.6 Notes to the Reader

The reader should note that the subject matter of this thesis is a by-product from a much more extensive analysis (MEND) of problems in the Irish music education system. It thus, initially, proceeds from the general to the specific, in addressing a particular obstacle to the evolution of a strategy of reform.

MEND generated an enormous amount of documentation, not least from the approximately 70 lectures and debates, of which the initiative itself was comprised. The meticulously reported proceedings, together with the documents and secondary source materials (Elliott/ Reimer) associated with the global extension of the MEND enquiry, form the main literature on which the thesis relies. This is

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contained in the MEND Report (mend1.0pdf September 2001; last revision 13 02 04) which is available in CD-ROM form (publication of main text in hard copy pending [Spring 2004]). The appendices of the report (CD-ROM) contain all the transcripts of the lectures/presentations and of the independent reports of debates, together with copies (printed by permission) of all the secondary sources. The content of the CD-ROM, which accompanies the thesis, is considered quintessential to the appreciation of the ramifications of the exchanges which became the focus of this thesis. It is considered important that the reader should have ready access, not only to the material itself but, initially, to title information; this is listed both numerically and in alphabetical order (by author's name) in the List of Sources (Sources Part 1).

### **Search Mechanisms**

The MEND Report (CD-ROM version) is the definitive source for all information on Presentations and Debates.

The Table of Contents is provided with Hyperlinks to enable the items listed to be opened immediately.

Section 17 has a list of Key Concepts for coarse searching for topics.

Section 18 (TOC) may then be used to locate the analysis of the topic chosen.

Section 21 (Appendix) gives an even finer breakdown of the topics into lectures, debates and coding numbers, and may be used to open individual analytical items.

Section 15 (tables) provides further details of lectures and debates with the names of chairpersons, presenters, reporters, panel members and coding numbers.

Documentation is divided into Primary Sources and Analysis.

To open primary source material use the name of any person associated with that session (Tables Section 15). Go to supdocs.pdf and click on that name and session as instructed. The document will open.

To open the Analysis (in Section 18) of any session, if you know the title or code number of that session (available from Section 15) go to Section 21, scroll down and then click on the session and it will open.

If you have a contributor's name go to supdocs.pdf and click on that name for Primary Source document.

If you have a Document number go to docs folder and click on the number for Primary Source document.

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If you have a code Number for a session go to Section 21, scroll down and click appropriately for Analysis.

If you have the title of a session go to Section 21, scroll down and click on the title for Analysis.

The Analytical section within the MEND Report gives cross referencing to the Primary Source, which may then be opened by going to docs.

### **References, Footnotes and Assertive Language**

The footnotes are not the only corroborative means of supporting statements made in the thesis. There is also a system of cross-referencing within the text. This usually refers to a MEND Document (with a number; see above) which may then be consulted readily in the CD-ROM.

It should be remembered that the MEND Initiative was a very public affair. Understandings of the reality of particular situations affecting music education in Ireland came about in general discussion and by consensus, at the debate sessions. These understandings, together with reliably-based but unpublished statistics, will have formed the basis for any assertive statements in the thesis which may seem to lack corroboration.

### **1.7 Delimitations of the Study**

This thesis, which began as a specific analysis of apparently conflicting philosophies of music education, has been a by-product of the MEND Initiative, which was general in scope. Its field of enquiry may therefore seem to be delimited. Its specificity, however, became tendentious in itself as the analysis proceeded. In examining the ‘universal philosophy of music’ hypothesis, a derivative of the main hypothesis, a metamorphosis occurred towards a much more adaptable model. Contextuality, which was eventually to evolve as an arguably acceptable compromise position to replace universality, is proposed as a paradigm for general application, as much to other systems of music education as to the Irish dispensation.

## 1.8 Value of the study

The research findings of MEND, as a report in the public domain, were intended to be directed towards the widest possible audience of those involved or interested in the future of music education in Ireland (and elsewhere). Specific targets were:

- The main sponsor, the Dublin Institute of Technology, the largest third-level education complex in Ireland. The DIT was also the largest single provider of music education in the state. The urgency of the targeting was sharpened by a growing awareness, at the time, of waning interest (still a concern in 2004), at higher management levels, by DIT in supporting reform in music education in Ireland.
- The Irish Government and, in particular, the official strategists (e.g. the Dept of Education and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) influencing curriculum reform. At a more pragmatic level it was intended that the research would provide the philosophical underpinning for any proposals for reform going to Government, from whatever source. This latter aspiration has been vindicated in that the only two campaigns mounted since MEND have used the report (by request) to bolster their case. This has been notable in the case of the Music Network report (on the provision of music schools country-wide, published in March 2003 [see MEND 609]) commissioned by Government.
- The music education research lobby. The MEND Report (and by implication in its doctoral thesis format) is intended as an indispensable (Irish-based) enchiridion/resource document for the growing new generation of researchers both in Ireland and elsewhere.

## 1.9 Layout of the Study

The writer supports eclecticism (implying the optimization of selected sources of influence) in music education and has a lively personal interest in the areas of theory and academic music, musicology, performance, and education. As the director of a large music performance-based school in Ireland, it might have seemed unusual that he should take on the mission of contributing actively to the campaign for the amelioration of *general* music education. Yet the seminal finding of the *Deaf Ears?* Report that 'the young Irish person has the worst of all European musical "worlds"' became for him an epochal revelation, which was to change his whole conception of what priorities in music education should be, if it is to touch all. It is no exaggeration to claim that it changed his life in a very significant way. The MEND Initiative, the response to *Deaf Ears?*, was born; its scope was to occupy the following 18 years. In spite of a carefully planned course to investigate the situation in Ireland, with specific attention to the fundamental premise that school music education was the core around which the enterprise would stand or fall (see Final Recommendations), there were, nevertheless, uncharted

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waters to be navigated. If theory and practice were to be complementary, and if thought were to precede action, it seemed logical that philosophy should first be invoked, and respected stances critically examined to inform the way forward. Philosophy could lead to curriculum in its promulgated, implemented and delivered forms; that is the ideal.

The analysis of the documentation arising from the events of MEND was interrupted at the climactic second phase by the discovery that even in the area of philosophy there were, notably two, important counterpositions that were, at least on a superficial appraisal, polar in tendency. They were those of David Elliott (*MM*, 1995) and Bennett Reimer (*A Philosophy*, 1970/89). Since these purported to take the philosophy of music from its innocuous stage, as pure theorizing to be embraced or rejected at will, to the crucial stage of application in education, they could not be ignored (and would have to be rationalized) if the intent of the MEND Initiative was to be convincingly realized from its basic building block.

It occurred to the writer that a second stream of enquiry, of equal importance to the first but complementary to it, might be undertaken; this was to confront the discipline of music education philosophy with a view to restoring its credibility, threatened by this much publicized and destabilizing disagreement on issues of fundamental import. Thus the two strands of this thesis came about. It not only developed into an exercise in reconciling theory with practice, in terms of plausibility, feasibility, relevance, balance and time management, but it evolved towards the eventual aspiration of the utopian universal philosophy to inform curriculum and its aspirational outcomes. The possibility of the reconciliation of rival philosophies and their adaptability to some formula which accommodated universality were, of course, hypothetical, becoming, as such, the challenge of this thesis.

This challenge is dealt with in Chapters 1 and 2. In Chapter 3 it is necessary to give details of the MEND Initiative itself, to add focus to what follows. Chapter 4 introduces the dissonance of the conflicting philosophies of Elliott and Reimer; these were to have a crucial impact on the progress to the MEND recommendations. The Analysis in Chapter 5 examines a wide sampling of the literature dealing with the Elliott/Reimer case. In particular, the confrontational documented exchanges between them, in the form of Reimer's review of *MM* and Elliott's rebuttal, proved an invaluable resource in attempting reconciliation. Chapter 6 deals with the rationalization from a number of stances. It should be remembered that in the final chapter it is necessary to keep in mind the double-stranded nature of this enquiry. Chapter 7 therefore presents Findings and Recommendations specific to MEND itself, the Irish dispensation being chosen as the template of applicability for the reconciled philosophies; the



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Overall Conclusions then deal with the plausibility of the Contextualism idea as an approach to universalism, leading to Final Recommendations from the study.

In summary, then, the *Deaf Ears?* Report alerted Irish musicians to a malaise; the MEND Initiative was set up to respond to that. The application of the philosophy of music to music education became a prime *a priori* target for enquiry. The resulting discovery of philosophies in fundamental disagreement challenged the writer not only to essay reconciliation but further, to metamorphose the rationalization into a new, more benign and adaptable approach to music education in the new millennium - an approach in which inclusivity, although it might entail compromise, would heighten the sense of responsibility to uphold the highest aims for music in education and as a human pursuit. In this, music considered as art, including its moral/ethic dimension, proved to be a critical dimension in the dialectic. The idealistic marrying of theory with practice - the interrelationship of an enabling philosophy with its enactment - was meticulously targeted as a robust unifying idea in the unfolding of the thesis. This culminated in Findings which evolved from the double targeting, Recommendations for a contextual curriculum, and a proposal (with separate recommendations) that the idea of Contextuality is a highly adaptable approach to music education which conforms to the aspiration of universality and invites further research.

## 2 Overview of the Educational Challenge

... 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.

*George Bernard Shaw  
Preface to Pygmalion*

### 2.1 Music and Music Education - an Inseparable Pair

An investigation into music education presupposes that there are inherent problems stimulating a corrective initiative in the first place.

Music is given only to humans. The making and enjoyment of music, as active faculty or as vivid experience, are so undeniably a part of human discourse as to be arguably universal. That we are human because we are musical is a challenging and interesting speculation. The concept and defence of music as art, and as so-called aesthetic experience, has been provocatively absorbed in the underlying mentality of much western music education philosophy, although the dialectic has general application. But music can have other more modest and less sophisticated roles to play<sup>4</sup>- roles that are not wanting in validity. Lack of understanding, acceptance and management of this basic claim may very well constitute one of the root causes of music not being accorded universal validity as a core subject in education - that is, in actual practice (the delivered curriculum), rather than just in the lip service of stated policy.

Music may be made or listened to. But the most immediate sense of music is related to (and arises from) its performance, the central activity which concentrates the efforts of composer and listener alike; and there can also be absolute coalescence of the roles of composer, performer and listener. The idea of music as cultural heritage is also well appreciated. The process by which society passes on that which it values may serve as a definition of education. Music and (music) education may therefore be regarded as an inseparable pair, mutually indispensable if, as in other areas of human endeavour, music is to survive and progress from generation to generation. Music should thus be incorporated in the education process, which can be formal or informal, to name the generally accepted division in the perception of modes of transmission. With education as practised typically in so-called western society, we must come to terms with the reality that what is not incorporated in formal schooling is vulnerable as a credibly universal dispensation. In this scenario music must, therefore, compete for

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<sup>4</sup> See Heneghan, *Performance in Music Education* for expansion of this idea. *Music in Ireland 1848-1998*,

## Chapter 2

time in the curriculum, and try to establish a satisfactory level of presence and prioritization, by cogent defence of its case. This has not always been accomplished with the same degree of conviction as has been possible with other branches of the curriculum, more comfortably related to policies of economic pragmatism, material standards of living and employment.

What then defines the malaise of music education: what are the realities of the problems (historical and typically current) faced by music educators, who, after all, are the culture bearers who must shoulder the responsibility for successful advocacy?

## 2.2 Commanding Concerns in Music Education

A balanced approach to music education must look to what it is intended to achieve in particular circumstances. Obstacles to its implementation must be candidly appraised and countered, or the approach modified in the light of the appraisal. An underlying philosophy must be invoked which takes pragmatic account of the time constraints (especially in relation to the learner skills demanded), and of the other resources available successfully to apply philosophical principle to educational method. The following, *inter alia*, must be taken into account.

### 2.2.1 Taste<sup>5</sup> in Music

The spectrum of music and musical activity is vast and bewildering. Most people respond favourably to some kind of music. It is no exaggeration to claim that the world is drenched with music. In some form or other it obviously infiltrates the school, the home, the workplace and the social environment, and spills over naturally from one to the other; in this it differs radically from many other school-based subjects. A new *fin de siècle*, liberal and currently fashionable approach to education asserts the ultimate democracy of all musical genres; ostensibly there is no good or bad, better or worse. And so the private and personal world of subjective reality, where music resides, easily succumbs and validates the hubris of human taste - naïve or sophisticated.

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Thomas Davis Lecture, RTÉ, (Cork, Mercier Press 1998), 92.

<sup>5</sup> The question of musical taste sparked off the most controversial of all the topics discussed at the MEND Initiative. The reader is referred to the MEND paper *A book of manners in the wilderness* by Harry White, which in turn was taken up in an international context after its publication in the College Music Symposium, Journal of the College Music Society Volume 39 (1998), 47-79, attracting responses from both Bennett Reimer and David Elliott (with collaborator Kari Veblen) The whole question forms the substance of the tripartite exchanges between Elliott, Reimer and White (MEND 417, 402 and 308). The reviews are discussed in depth in the MEND report (Section 18.1.1).

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Taste is essentially value-free; there is no arguing with taste. Music, as a consequence, has become 'big business' in this commercially-driven world. There is fierce and seductive competition for the attention and approval of the listening public. The nature of the campaign is not just honestly to establish what the public wants but actually, by subtle, seductive and powerful means unrelated to the quality of the music itself, to control popular taste; the strategy invokes the alluring democratic aspiration that the majority must be satisfied most of the time - but the majority are being manipulated by means extrinsic and arguably inimical to the more classical statements of the benefits of music. The conflict implicit in this scenario is probably the most threatening but also the most challenging of all to educational stability. Those who enjoy music as entertainment are largely oblivious to its dependence (for its comprehensive delivery) on formal educational structures, and the professionalism that flows from them.

### 2.2.2 Which Music? Which Educational Strategy?

The basic task for music educators is to survey the pool of learners, accurately to determine their needs and to minister relevantly to those needs. Depending on the assumptions made, the strategies and outcomes will differ. The task becomes a dilemma when, in the choice of pedagogical materials, quality can be overruled by unschooled taste, or when educators lack the confidence to insist on an ascendancy based on well-tried principles of craft and expressiveness<sup>6</sup>. This is not to disavow any music, but to ensure that taste as a criterion is in its proper place; it should not have absolute authority at its disposal.

The problem in general education is to establish a convincing relationship between school music and the perception of the learners as to how music matters to them in real life. It is a disturbing fact<sup>7</sup> that the majority have difficulty in retrospectively correlating their school experience of music with its significance in their life, contemporaneous or subsequent. This is an important consideration with music, since it eventually is or becomes a part of real life. To the time-honoured methodology of presenting music as received product, based on the monuments and scholarship of the past, a counterposition is now commonly adopted which treats music as process and social text, stressing, *inter alia*, its value as entertainment. Advocacy of these approximately-stated approaches has all but locked philosophers of music education in a truceless war.<sup>8</sup> The proposals of the warring factions also

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<sup>6</sup> See Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1970 13th Printing, rev. 1989), 133.

<sup>7</sup> This perception emerged at several of the MEND debates. The dichotomy in musical mentality between school and community is, perhaps, best pinpointed by Marie McCarthy in her plea that bridges should be built to reconcile attitudes (MEND 307).

<sup>8</sup> The seemingly polar philosophical positions of Bennett Reimer and David Elliott led to important findings. The reader is referred to the relevant Proceedings and Analysis (Section 18.1.2 Contextual Philosophy).

correspond roughly to strategies championing music-making as a central activity, on the one hand, or a more eclectic dispensation, separating performing and listening strands along axes of time and levels of interest, on the other. Both are laudable solutions, internally consistent based on the assumed parameters, and worthy of scrutiny as models; neither is contextually suited to the Irish case, as will be argued in the analysis of the MEND documentation.

### 2.2.3 Music Education as Regenerative Cycle

Because western music (as one popularly-perceived paradigm)<sup>9</sup>, with its norms and derivatives, is such a protean, often complex, highly developed and sophisticated field, the challenges to educators striving to make suitable provision and limiting choices in the curriculum are daunting. Since the object of general music education is clearly not to produce a nation of professional musicians, the aim should be, within the constraints of curricular time available, to give a balanced exposure to and experience of the activities broadly defined as composing, performing and listening (including appraising). Some assert<sup>10</sup> that the resulting dilution of quality (a time-dependent parameter) from this levelling-out or sampling procedure is too high a price to pay for an all-but-bland result, and recommend streaming (quasi-specialization) to offset boredom in the talented and frustration in the less gifted.

Overriding all these considerations should be the concern as to whether the process is self-sustaining and regenerative; in other words does it (or should it?) produce an effective career route for the small percentage of learners who may wish to proceed to study music further? If the spectrum of expectations from curricular outputs is too wide, nobody will be well served in the end; to attempt to meet the goals of amateurs and aspiring professionals in a single course specification is too ambitious.<sup>11</sup> If, additionally, curricular time is limited, the claim that school music has the potential to be regenerative and self-replicating is unsustainable. There is a vast difference in aims between a course designed to give a balanced exposure to music and one which purports either to develop the more time-consuming physical skills (such as those demanded for adequate performance) or to encourage free composition or a musicological expertise at any level of pre-vocational competence. There continues to be much confusion, in global terms, in limiting curricular inputs to match time allocations and the delivered curriculum with credible results.

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<sup>9</sup> This is not to pre-empt the ascendancy of western culture. Other approaches to music education, including the oral tradition and multiculturalism, are also treated in this thesis and in the MEND report.

<sup>10</sup> The question of streaming or, in its full-blooded form, specialization, to cope with differences in aptitude, interest and commitment amongst learners, is a core issue in the Elliott/Reimer debate. Refer to Reimer's review of *MM* for a pertinent comment (MEND 402, 13).

<sup>11</sup> This subsection clearly has the Irish situation in mind. The details are defined in 6.7.9.

### 2.2.4 Performance and the Dimension of Skill in Music-Making

In appraising the feasibility of a music education package, there is merit in identifying those components which yield a high index of results to effort, but it is pragmatic also to take into account levels of learner satisfaction. It is surely axiomatic that, in music, the attainment of performing skills, if they could be painlessly procured, would outstrip all other learner aspirations. But physical skills are known to be notoriously refractory to ready acquisition; inordinate inputs of time are demanded, even for the naturally gifted. It seems, therefore, that special provision should be made for those (a minority) who are prepared to make the appropriate investment of time and effort to perform either proficiently or expertly<sup>12</sup>. Essentially, however, the nature of performance (including its psychological dimensions) should be critically examined and defined in relation to the inevitably modest levels achievable as a direct result of inputs in general school ambiances. To deal effectively with the dominant position of performance<sup>13</sup> as an aspiration must, however, remain an overriding preoccupation of all music educators. Non-performers might realistically, in the vast majority of cases, be construed as those who do not wish to invest time rather than those who lack the interest. Clearly, proficient performance is for a minority.

### 2.2.5 Other Values as Drain on Musical Competence

Even considering western music alone, its resplendent development and levels of sophistication lend themselves to specialization in education. But the school is not the appropriate ambience<sup>14</sup> in which this can be undertaken. The mode of delivery of a school music programme will vary considerably according to how its function within the curriculum is perceived. If music is seen merely as a non-examination subject which may add something significant to the quality of life, there are attendant dangers - of its not being taken seriously, if it is imposed, or of its being abandoned (as an option) when hard choices of credit-bearing subjects have to be made. If, on the other hand, the subject is married, without sensitivity, to appraisal, assessment and examination techniques, it can lose much of its charm and subjectivity. This is another problem for curriculum strategists when attempting to make the subject, whether mandatory or not, appealing to the learner. And an attractively constructed and

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<sup>12</sup> The terms competent, proficient and expert are used to define levels of attainment in music. These are relative terms and have not, to the writer's knowledge, been adequately defined as usable criteria.

<sup>13</sup> The author is suggesting that the aspiration to perform is arguably instinctive (dominant). Where this is matched with ambition and commitment there should be provision for its specialized development. Ireland is wanting in this respect. The inculcation of a strong musical valuing capability should be an aim of the general music curriculum but it should apply to all learners.

<sup>14</sup> The claim is being made that, in dealing with a complex system (such as WAM) which lends itself to specialization (e.g. performance), the Irish school system, with its curricular limitations on time for music (typically 2 x 45-minute periods in the week), cannot support such an activity.

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articulated curriculum is valueless unless the quality of teaching is assured and teacher training is comprehensively relevant to the curriculum - as promulgated, as implemented and as delivered.

A crucial consideration is also that of continuity between all components - primary/secondary, junior/senior cycle and second/third level; already there is concern, in Ireland, about the latter, where discontinuity has the most serious consequences as inhibiting, if not thwarting, at source, the flow of candidates to professional music, and therefore threatening the regenerative cycle.

### 2.2.6 A Contextual Philosophy of Music Education

It has already been stated that there is a seeming chasm separating the two main schools of philosophical thought where the approach to music education in the general (school) curriculum is concerned. The rationales both originated in the North American Continent. Although more than a quarter of a century separates the promulgation of these philosophies, they did not spring into existence independently. The first (Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education* 1970/rev. 1989) is an impressive and admirable reworking and drawing together, for the purposes of education, of the tenets of Absolute Expressionism, with attributable links to the earlier work of Dewey (1958), Meyer (1956 and 1967), Langer (1942 and 1951) and Leonhard (1959), *inter alia*.<sup>15</sup> It has become associated with Music Education as Aesthetic Education (MEAE)<sup>16</sup>. Ostensibly reacting against the ‘interpreted’ principles on which MEAE is based, the praxial philosophy of music education (Elliott, *Music Matters*, 1995) is arguably derivative; this is because it sets itself the task of deconstructing MEAE, in relation to which it would like to see itself in a somewhat polar position.

Superficially, then, the identified protagonists in music education philosophy seem currently to be in such total disagreement that it augurs badly in relation to any stable position being possible as a basis for music education. Détente seems improbable. This theme was copiously considered during MEND Phase III, with hope for positive results as to rationalization, and even reconciliation. And it is significant that the core of these philosophical disagreements resides in attitudes to the role of performance. Performance<sup>17</sup>, as has been stated, is obviously the central act and aspiration of music-

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<sup>15</sup> The appropriate readings are listed in the sources.

<sup>16</sup> It is necessary only to refer to David Elliott’s rebuttal (MEND 417) of Reimer’s review (MEND 403) of *MM* to find copious confirmation - of Reimer’s name being associated with MEAE, and as to his having provided its philosophical underpinning.

<sup>17</sup> For a thorough working of the topic of the significance of performance in music education, the reader is referred to two (different) papers on the subject by the author - Heneghan, *Performance in Music Education* (Arts on the Edge Conference, Perth, Western Australia 1998; published proceedings), and Heneghan, *Music in Ireland; Performance in Music Education* (Thomas Davis Lecture, Radio Telefís Éireann 1998, published Mercier Press).

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making. In the writer's view, all music education arguments which do not fully recognize the intimate relationship of skills to satisfactory and satisfying performance are fundamentally flawed.

The management of the performance issue is therefore a key dilemma in general music education. Because this basic truth is recognized, albeit only subconsciously at times, there is a great deal of posturing evident in proposals to give performance a central role in school music education. Ultimately the learners will decide what passes for a satisfying experience in performance; they will have their role models against which to measure themselves and they will unquestionably realize and experience the sometimes-painful realities of skill acquisition and its time-dependency. If skills and time are wanting, the music programme becomes emasculated and vulnerable; it is only the ministry of highly motivated and expertly trained teachers who can satisfactorily redeem that situation. By definition this introduces another problem for music education strategists; the delivered curriculum is only as effective as the relevant skills of teachers can make it.

For any music education system, if it is to work successfully, there must be, as an absolute priority, an underlying philosophy which suits the context. There is a marked degree of consensus that music (of any genre) is culturally significant and can be accommodated within the broader ideals of aesthetics, in general, and Absolute Expressionism in particular. This tendentious view is not seen as threatening to the tenets of the philosophies being compared, as will be argued in the body of this thesis. It is, therefore, not a question of pillaging the many admirable works of music philosophy to yield a hotchpotch masquerading under the name of eclecticism. It is, rather, a call to a careful search for significant points of agreement and an attempt to explain and even reconcile the differences in received theorizing. For the purposes of the evolution of this contextual philosophy of music education the following checklist may prove useful:

1. The general (school) music education programme is the essential nexus on which the whole edifice of universal music education depends, in western society. A general music education curriculum exists to celebrate and accommodate the notion that music is an important dimension in human discourse, worthy of inclusion as an element in education. At worst, it may be no more than a minimal experiential exposure programme, but, even as such, it is a key element in the campaign to promote music activities of all kinds. It is as important to be clear on what it is *not* as on what it *is*.
2. The general music education programme exists to recognize music as a life force while simultaneously recognizing that only a small percentage of learners will have any further pedagogical contact with it after the school experience. It should seek to define and convey what ought to be minimally absorbed by all learners in pursuance of the ideal of 'music for all'. Typically it should not be geared to professionalism (in learners) but it



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should have recognizable awareness of the need to regenerate. Above all, it should not see quality as irreconcilable with mass participation.

3. Specializations in music have their place in education; these must also be appropriately provided for. Performance is the central act of musical experience. It is still ripe for continuing research (see 6.7.9), not so much as to its place in education (which ought to be axiomatic), as to the strategies and methodology to insinuate it honestly, sensibly and effectively into the general curriculum.
4. The application of democratic principles in music education is not only laudable, when used skilfully and in a discerning way, but is also unusually adaptable. Thus the many ways in which music can be experienced should be accommodated and validated; it is not necessary to impose unchallengeable hierarchies. 'It is not surprising that several of the greatest composers who have established themselves among history's greatest wrote music that seems equally suitable for appreciation of its formal qualities or its sensuous qualities or its expressive power.'<sup>18</sup> Aesthetic experience may seemingly represent the highest reaches and explore the most profound depths of musical experience. But music enjoyed for its formal qualities or for the intellectual pleasure afforded by analysis should not be disavowed. Nor should we outlaw music which unashamedly seeks merely to entertain without engaging the mind in lofty thoughts. Music's cathartic potential and its associative referential qualities do not invalidate it as music, nor can we ignore the thinly disguised uses of music-making as a measure of achievement in performance or other musical activity.<sup>19</sup> But neither should it be that 'anything goes', and this dictates another adaptation of the democratic principle. Rather than validating all genres of music indiscriminately, as essentially of equal merit, especially in the choice of educational materials, judgement, an indispensable guiding principle in education, must be invoked. Criteria for judgement must be established and applied; there is no other way if education itself is to live up to its reputation as developing discriminatory powers in learners. Education principles should be virtually proof against the false moral pressure of being deemed elitist, and can succeed by defining quality in terms that are not essentially exclusive.
5. A contextual philosophy of music education must be sensitive to the overriding influence of real time, whether from the educational strategist's point of view, in fashioning curriculum and syllabus materials which can be delivered in the curricular time-slot available, or from the learner's perspective, in seeking to make study time available to

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<sup>18</sup> Harold F. Abeles and Charles R. Hoffer, *Foundations of Music Education* (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1984), 62.

<sup>19</sup> See Heneghan *Performance in Music Education*, (Music In Ireland, Mercier Press 1998), 92.

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meet the demands of the curriculum. Time becomes a crucial element when dealing with physical skills. Thus the performance option again becomes problematic.

6. A contextual philosophy of music education for universal dispensation must, by definition and above all, be feasible in practice when the constraints of the context are taken into account. Constraints may not invalidate the basic philosophical principles, but may seriously impede their success in action.

The most critical parameter in securing the success of a philosophy in action is the availability and quality of the teaching resource itself. It is not sufficient that teachers be relevantly trained in the pedagogical and methodological implications of the curriculum flowing from the philosophy. They must be familiar with the detail of the philosophy itself, if possible by involvement in the drafting of schemes of instruction or in ongoing reappraisals of the success of the philosophy in action. This involves the insinuation, for approval and acceptance (and even for modification in context), of the philosophy (or contending philosophies) at the earliest opportunity in the teacher training cycle.

## 3 The MEND Methodology and Agenda

### 3.1 Pre-MEND Perceptions

The findings of the *Deaf Ears?* Report were profoundly disturbing, all the more so because its promulgation coincided with the celebrations of the European Year of Music (1985). The suspected malaise in school music, disguised as it had been by policies of concealment, was at last made palpable. Furthermore, there was no plausible reason to believe that the situation in other branches of music education would be more encouraging.<sup>20</sup> The crisis was ineluctable and called for a response. Although there were isolated attempts to address particular problems from 1985 onwards, the perception gained ground that the time was ripe for a thorough, importunate, nation-wide investigation of the gestalt of music education to confront its debilitating demon.

#### 3.1.1 Towards an Agenda

The author of the MEND report was the Director of the DIT College of Music at the time he proposed that the national debates should take place. He was deputed to lead the MEND Initiative and redesignated, at a personal level, Director of Cultural Affairs of the Institute. His brief, however, was primarily to organize, in a systematic way, the conduct of the investigation. The object of MEND was not (indeed it could not have been) to effect solutions. It was, rather, to re-identify, collectively, the manifold problems of Music Education in Ireland and to offer them to the whole music-loving community, for open debate, in an attempt to take the findings of *Deaf Ears?*, and other related concerns, to a stage where procedures for reform could be formulated, and relevant strategies could evolve.

The establishment of a forum for music education was prefigured from the outset. MEND was not to be a regurgitation of the *Deaf Ears?* published material but, rather, a quasi-public investigation into the pessimism behind its findings - something that had not happened up to that point. And MEND was (obviously) not to have an executive function but rather to lead towards it. The prime concern in the early stages of the Initiative was to ensure that as wide a participation as possible should be achieved, and, then, to rekindle public awareness, in the first place, of what the problems were and the gravity of their consequences. To obviate any bias in the perception of what the critical areas might be, a plan was put in place to involve the music educators (and the music education lobby generally) themselves

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<sup>20</sup> For a summary of the problems by which Irish Music Education was beset see 6.7.9 (The State of Music Education in Ireland).

in an exercise of examining a possible agenda and prioritizing the most pressing concerns before the debates themselves were organized.

### 3.1.2 Basic Premises of MEND

Since school music education had been the target of the *Deaf Ears?* Report it was, as stated above, re-adopted as a major focus of MEND. It was felt that without this basic building block, all other provision would be contrived, discriminatory and elitist. Since the DIT was itself in the forefront of private (semi-state) enterprise in music education and educational reform, it was in a position to provide substantial intellectual advocacy in setting up the structures for the debates and in formulating the opening philosophical parameters. Thus a preliminary set of agenda items was assembled from the implications of the *Deaf Ears?* Report itself. This called for a detached and thorough search for what it is that music education in schools sets out to achieve. Subsequent events revealed how divided the world of music education could be on this basic issue.

Other derivative concerns were the interrelationships (continuum) between curricula at primary and secondary level, the quality and relevance of teacher training, the negative burden and artificiality of the practico-academic divide, the effects (psychological and pragmatic) of assessment as a tool, the nature of performance and its place in general education, and the recognition of the work of the private sector. The time had come for musicians to be proactive, to realize that there is a demanding world outside of music and that they would have to come to terms with its constraints rather than expect that it would accommodate their partisan ideas without question.

## 3.2 Methodology of MEND

The MEND proposal was ambitious from the start and was, therefore, resource-intensive. Once the main sponsorship of DIT had been negotiated, the project was guaranteed the long-term support to enable a wide net to be cast. It had always been envisaged, as the plan developed, that the focused participation of distinguished music educators from the global community would add lustre and effectiveness to the proceedings. But the intention to unleash the worldview on seemingly insular problems had to be prudently choreographed to ensure a phased effectiveness of its enrichment potential. This led to the first and crucial decision, from which the remaining methodology could then evolve. It was agreed with the sponsors that the MEND initiative could be heralded as a tri-partite enquiry, with a sufficient lapse of time between phases to facilitate a period of analytical reflection.

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This was to provide for the issue of interim reports and to encourage considered consolidation or reorientation of strategy.

### 3.2.1 General

In the history of the state, although there had been campaigns for a better provision in music education before, there had never before been such an ambitious enterprise in relation to it. There was reason to suppose that those potentially interested might be ill-prepared for the searching nature of the proposed enquiry and its long-term implications; yet without their committed and meaningful input the credibility of the outcomes would be open to question. Even still it is difficult to predict how effective MEND has been in stimulating a lasting awareness of the need for entrepreneurial activity from those with leadership qualities within the lobby. In anticipation of encountering a certain ambivalence in garnering general support, a *modus operandi* was formulated with a view to the active involvement, in the debates themselves (and not just as featured speakers), of leaders in the field of music education across the broadest global spectrum of remit. It was hoped that they would attract, by their very eminence, a participative, proactive and enthusiastic audience. This strategy proved effective; the underlying rationale was systematic, as the adopted sequence, described below, should illustrate.

### 3.2.2 Towards an Agenda for MEND

The agenda for the debates was an overriding consideration. It was necessary to demonstrate a convincing democratic spirit, from the very outset, in drafting it. It was therefore decided that a heralding one-day conference would be held to condition the prospective participants, and to explain the intention behind the main events. This was conducted by the distinguished British music educator, Keith Swanwick. During the course of the seminar the 130 participants (mostly professional music educators) were asked to consider a comprehensive list of possible issues in Irish music education, and to prioritize them. The response to this questionnaire was encouraging and workable; there was a marked level of agreement as to what were the burning questions for debate. The only moderation applied to the results was to place the final rationalization, in eight headings, into a logical sequence, so that the conduct of the debates would have a visibly plausible continuity. In the event, this agenda, although offered for modification, stood the test of time and proved to be a hardy irreducible which survived into post-MEND days as a statement of the commanding parameters of Irish music education.

### 3.2.3 Towards a Time-Frame for MEND

In deciding on the timescale of the initiative, many arguably conflicting approaches had to be weighed. It was necessary to stress the intention to be comprehensive and thorough. There was the need, first, to allow time, even leisure, to re-identify, simultaneously, the whole spectrum of concern, to present scholarly deliberations in relation to it, issue by issue, and then to debate it in forum; on the other hand the programme should be ‘telescoped’ to obviate a feeling of chronic futile debate and passivity. To engage and retain the interest of participants, individual events should be substantial and significant in content, especially since it was hoped to attract audience and speakers from the whole country, involving travel and personal expense over a period. Thus the convenience of sociable timing became critical, to justify an expectation of engaging the music-loving community widely. Furthermore it was desirable to adopt a mechanism which could psychologically benchmark key stage progress and stimulate a real sense of expansiveness followed by convergence.

In the certain knowledge that budgetary provision could be severely stretched in the process, agreement was successfully negotiated beforehand, with the sponsors, to allow the involvement, by invitation, of the international community of music education scholarship. Ireland had suffered too long from the narrowness and vagaries of post-colonial thought and the futility of a time lag in adopting new ideas, often when the promoters themselves had already superannuated them. It seemed timely to hear what the global philosophical, administrative and executive experts had to say in both general and specific terms. This suggested another strategy for flagging progression in the debates; it was therefore proposed to subdivide the enterprise along yet another axis - that of indigenous and foreign input – at least in the early stages. An exclusively Irish team would first define, delimit and debate the areas of concern; this work would form the basis of an interim report which would then be submitted to a representative team of internationally-recognized educator scholars. Responses in the form of focused papers, in the context of the thematic dominance of each specialist enlisted, would be elicited and would fuel the ensuing debates.

This process would be repeated before Phase III with the difference that the ‘faculty’ would then comprise a complementary array of speakers and panel members, drawn from Ireland and abroad, who could, at that stage, comprehensively debate the agenda with the delegates in its more refined, convergent and proactive context. It was planned to issue interim reports between the phases to ensure that the subsequent invited contributions would be cognizant of and reflect the progress thus far, and that delegates would have documentation with which to focus their intended participation more effectively.

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The logistic structure of the initiative soon evolved. It would comprise three weekend-long conferences. Because the agenda was heavy with (potential) detail, it seemed desirable to encourage delegates to stream themselves towards their areas of prime interest; it proved plausible to segregate the topics into differentiated families and time-slots that would effectively concentrate the substance and usable outcomes of each debate session while offering delegates a choice. All sessions would have an invited chairman. In order to safeguard the authenticity of the contributions as reported, all sessions would be audio-recorded for subsequent reference. In addition each debate would have an independent rapporteur whose function it would be to submit an interpretative summary, for the Proceedings, by adding independent thought to collective wisdom, while capturing the mood of each debate. The layout was carefully planned; in theory therefore it was promising.

The MEND, in the event, took the form of a series of strategically-spaced conferences and other events. There were thirty-four (34) formal presentations varying in length from 20 minutes to one hour. These were invariably conducted in plenary session. Thirty-three (33) debates took place, each timetabled for one hour, but these were streamed as mentioned above (trifurcation during Phases I and II; bifurcation at Phase III as the focus narrowed). The topics for formal responses were chosen (in consultation with the invitees) fully to explore the challenge of the agenda; these sessions were timetabled, as far as was possible, to precede the debates to which they were intended to act as stimulants. The details are as follows:

#### **MEND Heraldng Debate – October 1994**

As its name implies, this one-day conference (conducted by Keith Swanwick of the London Institute of Education) was to give information, set the scene, and work, by consultation, towards a suitable agenda. Approximately 130 people attended.

#### **MEND Phase I – April 1995**

During this intensive two-day conference, the agenda, ordered from the outcomes of the Heraldng Debate, was spoken to by an invited team of Irish music educators of stature. The formal presentations, which were specifically limited to Irish speakers, were intended to stimulate and focus the ensuing debates. The object was to expose, virtually simultaneously, the full spectrum of concerns in Irish music education, with their interrelationships, and to further validate the agenda. This was facilitated by the presence of a representative assembly of music educators and other relevant commentators. Some 500 attendances were recorded at Phase I.

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**MEND National Music Seminar – May 1995**

This half-day seminar, conducted by Professor Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (University of Limerick), addressed the specific problems and realities of Ireland's bicultural (as distinct from multicultural) music tradition. The question of the inclusion of native music elements in formal education was a specific concern in MEND. It was publicly acknowledged, by Ó Súilleabháin, that the invitation to the devotees of traditional Irish music to participate was a positive step in promoting mutual understandings and esteem, in educational terms, between general music educators and the currently coterie interests of national music, by whatever definition.

**MEND Phase II – November 1995**

This was the second of the three main two-day conferences. During Phase II the agenda and reported findings (Interim Report - Phase I [Document 605]) in relation to it were submitted (and had been in advance) to a team of international music education specialists, to achieve cross-fertilization with the global view. The intention was to keep the full spectrum of the agenda under review. All the invitees were personally briefed well in advance of their participation. All presentations were in the form of formal papers. The participation of Professor Marie McCarthy, an American-based Irish national with copious experience of the Irish music education scene,<sup>21</sup> was specifically invited to achieve a pivotal and informed linkage with the inputs of the other speakers.

It had been unambiguously established at MEND Phase I that shortcomings in the Irish music education dispensation could be traced, in part, to a paucity of philosophical underpinning in curricular policy and decision making. Phase II coincided almost exactly with the publication, in the US, of David Elliott's *Music Matters - A New Philosophy of Music Education*. Since this work had been heralded as, and proved to be, a stated counterposition to Bennett Reimer's celebrated *A Philosophy of Music Education*, it was not coincidental that these two protagonists were invited to Ireland to inform the situation in the most provocative and challenging way. The input of the eminent American music educator, Professor Richard Colwell (New England Conservatory, Boston, Mass.), who agreed to act as moderator for the whole conference, was particularly fortuitous and added a valuable extra analytical dimension to the proceedings. The topic of Performance (Agenda IV - see below), which was to become a key issue in the final analysis, was ably treated by Janet Ritterman (Director of the Royal College of Music in London) during Phase II, which was distinguished throughout by closely matched relevance of the formal presentations to the evolving nuance of the agenda.



### **The Establishment of the Music Education National Forum - November 1996**

It had always been understood by the promoters that MEND could do little more than begin the process of reform implicitly called for in the *Deaf Ears?* Report. The establishment of a forum for music education was therefore planned into the envisaged evolution of the MEND initiative, subject, of course, to a mandate being given (as it was), by the delegates, for this to happen. The inaugural meeting, held on 7 November 1996, was attended by Sir Frank Callaway, Honorary President of the International Society for Music Education (ISME, with links to UNESCO), by Professor Paul Lehman, a former president of the US-based Music Educators' National Conference (MENC), claimed at that time to be the largest national music education forum in the world (with 70,000 members) and by Professors Marie McCarthy (University of Maryland at College Park) and Patricia Shehan Campbell (University of Washington at Seattle).

### **MEND Phase III- November 1996**

The intention in Phase III was to submit the agenda in its enriched and converging stage to a team of music education experts drawn from the global community, including Ireland, with the widest spectrum of connections to what were emerging as the commanding issues in Irish music education. There was the hope that solutions to some of the identified problems might begin to crystallize at this stage. As will be seen from the analysis of this culminating stage (Section 18 of the MEND Report), the quality of the presentations was consistently high and arguably lived up to expectations. Furthermore the highly controversial paper *A Book of manners in the wilderness*, presented by Professor Harry White, not only focused on the central nexus of the whole MEND initiative, viz. philosophies of music education, but injected itself, on subsequent publication, into the international scene, eliciting responses from Bennett Reimer and David Elliott/Kari Veblen.

### **Attendance**

Phases II and III had approximately the same attendance patterns as Phase I. Roughly 500 attendances were recorded at each.

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<sup>21</sup> Professor McCarthy's book, *Passing It On*, is a notable contribution to the history and lore of Irish Music Education.

### 3.3 The Agenda for MEND

1. The Philosophical Theories. The concept of the state-funded general education system as enabler in music education. The segregated educational needs of composers, performers, teachers and listeners.
2. Appraisal of the music education network in Ireland as it currently exists.
3. The fractured continuum in music education in Ireland.
4. The conflict between the concept of the centrality of performance and the elitism stigma. Towards a reconciliation.
5. The Leaving Certificate crisis as paradigmatic flashpoint.
6. The role of National Culture in the music education curriculum.
7. Music at third-level. The professional training of musicians. The Conservatoire Aspiration.
8. The establishment of a permanent National Forum for Music Education.

#### 3.3.1 Philosophical

This agenda may seem unexceptionable, typical and even adaptable. However, national systems of music education all embody nuances, at least, and sometimes significant differences, in the emphasis of their operating parameters, in comparison with others, that make each one unique. This is one of the outcomes of MEND that has a message for all music educators, but especially for those who may lean lazily towards the adoption of ready-made solutions to their problems, based on half-digested theories that may be divergent in the fundamental educational questions they seek to address. All philosophies have definable limits to the applicability of their idealism.<sup>22</sup> Looking briefly at two lists of Irish concerns - those derived from the *Deaf Ears?* Report and the writer's own additional causes for anxiety - it can be seen how crucial it is that music education be guided by a philosophy that is sensitive to these issues in context.

From *Deaf Ears?*<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> It is sufficient to consider here the words of C.D. Burns in *The Sense of the Horizon* (quoted in Susanne Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key*, p5), who states that 'philosophers in every age have attempted to give an account of as much experience as they could . ... all great philosophers have allowed for more than they could explain, and have therefore, signed beforehand, if not dated, the death warrant of their philosophies'.

<sup>23</sup> On closer examination it will be seen that there is significant concordance between this list and the MEND Agenda (e.g. continuum, performance, assessment, third-level training are common items) which was designed to be a more systematic layout of the problems for the purposes of ordered debate (3.3). 'Irish music' (ITM)

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1. There has been insufficient concentration in the implemented curriculum.
2. There are regional and socio-economic inequalities.
3. There are serious discontinuities between Junior and Senior Cycles.
4. Pedagogical approaches have been lacking in active music-making.

Additional Concerns

1. Interrelationships between curricula at primary and secondary level are compromised by differences in pedagogical approach as between child-centred and subject centred approaches, between mandatory and optional status.
2. The quality and relevance of teacher training.
3. The practico-academic divide.
4. The effects (psychological and pragmatic) of assessment as a tool.
5. The nature of performance and its place in general education
6. Recognition of the work of the private sector.

These issues needed to be addressed in seeking philosophical underpinning for curriculum as observed.

### 3.3.2 Current Music Education Provision

In any plan for amelioration of a flawed system it is, of course, crucial to understand the exact nature and gravity of the problems to be addressed. These are not defined by an undifferentiated collection of coterie wishes or grievances, but by their interrelationships and interactions. The salient features of Irish school music education, as reported in *Deaf Ears?*, were seen as being incompatible with any reasonable expectation of a satisfactory provision. The irreducible essence might be stated as a historically implanted practico-academic dichotomy, which is as old as the tenets of Greek philosophy. It is suspected that this may be a feature of many other systems and be very familiar to many.<sup>24</sup>

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was added and seen as a *sine qua non*; the need for a forum (Item 8) to carry on the work of the necessarily ephemeral MEND was a strategic inclusion. The list was not included specifically to draw attention to the lack of philosophical basis for curriculum; this emerged as an outcome of Phase I of MEND, as has been confirmed in the thesis, and led to the study which became its substance.

<sup>24</sup> This is evident, from the literature studied, in the putative MEAE/Praxial (practical) divide in the US.

### 3.3.3 Continuum

The fractured continuum in school music education in Ireland is a direct result, *inter alia*, of differences between child-centred and subject-centred education - between a junior cycle teacher cohort inadequately prepared (because of time constraints in their training) for even the most rudimentary of music teaching tasks (Ireland does not have music specialists in the primary system) and an academically-oriented senior cycle force which, because it is generally inimical to performance as an unfamiliar tool, has little appeal, judging by the dwindling uptake.<sup>25</sup> But although this fractured continuum was identified as the root cause of the malaise in Irish school music education, it has many manifestations beyond the interface between primary and second-level education. Continuum and liaison - between philosophical thinkers and educational strategists, between second and third-level education for aspiring professional musicians, between general educators and music educators, teacher trainers and teachers in the workplace and, above all, between the interests and activities of practical and academic musicians - must be actively encouraged.

### 3.3.4 Performance

The most crucial of all concerns in music education is, in the writer's view, the place of performance within it.<sup>26</sup> The issue of performance in school education is at the heart of the differences in outlook between Bennett Reimer and David Elliott. The writer is convinced that the lack of a clear national policy on performance training is evidence of chronic misunderstandings and misconceptions in relation to it, particularly as to its spectrum and its demands at proficient and expert level.

### 3.3.5 Assessment

The interface between second- and third-level education is a natural focal point of concern, for it is the stage at which most lose their contact with formal educational experiences in music. It invites not only summative assessment of what has been achieved in some 12 years of schooling, but appraisal of how the aims of that formative period have been met. This includes the pertinence of assessment itself as a

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<sup>25</sup> This situation is changing according to reliable, though informal, statistics since the end of the public phase of MEND, but there is mixed opinion, as to its effectiveness, of the new curriculum in terms of enhanced real standards. This is a controversial area which is commented on in the appropriate place (see MEND Report - Assessment Section 18.5). At face value, however, a reported increase in uptake of music as a subject in Second Level schooling, especially at Senior Cycle, is to be welcomed.

<sup>26</sup> This is a subject of two separate derivative papers, by the author, to which the reader is directed. They are *Performance in Music Education* (Arts on the Edge Conference, Perth, Western Australia, April 1998; published proceedings) and *Music in Ireland: Performance in Music Education* (Thomas Davis Lecture, Music in Ireland: 1848-1998, RTE, Mercier Press, 1998), 87-97.

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tool and the refinement of the curriculum which should follow from the outcomes of assessment. Concerns in Ireland have ranged from the relevance of the curriculum itself, at senior cycle, to the standards expected in other subjects; to the social/musical needs of the majority being served by it (including management of the high/mass culture conflict); and to the interests of a minority who arguably have a right to expect their progression to third-level studies in music to be fully met by school provision.

There has been some disingenuousness, in this latter regard, within current strategies to reform the curriculum with a view to increasing the popularity of music as a senior cycle subject (arguably diluting its content), and to establishing credible continuity with the feeder systems. There has, on the other hand, been a laudable attempt to effect a better correlation between time spent and expected achievement, but this inevitably attenuates standards and threatens or reduces the relevance of school music to those who aspire to the profession, sending them outside the school system to ‘top up’ their skills. There is a realism here, however, not necessarily to be decried, for it highlights the need to recognize the contribution that the private sector makes to the total enterprise. And it continues, if accurately appraised as a policy, usefully to draw attention to the fact that performance, for those who aspire to third-level studies of any kind in music, is unlikely to be served adequately by school provision.

### **3.3.6 The Role of National Culture in Music Education**

Ireland has a rich heritage of traditional music, which has recently evolved dramatically to make a significant contribution within the ambit of the world commercial music market. At home, it is (inherently) community-based, popular, freely available, but not generally taken up by the majority of the population as a serious pursuit in perceived educational terms. It is outside the experience of most school children. MEND attempted to focus on its importance and potential, and to examine how its intrinsically social character and informality might be adapted to normalize aspects of it into the more formal setting of general school, to expose children to their natural cultural inheritance.

There is a danger that this bicultural nature of the Irish music education dilemma may be overtaken and further diluted or confused by premature attempts to superimpose multicultural modes upon it. This quandary may not be peculiar to Ireland; it needs sensitive, pragmatic and even-handed treatment in relation to progressive contemporary music education ideas.

### 3.3.7 Music Education at Third Level

Although school music education was the dominant enabler identified by MEND as the focus of the overall enterprise, there was still the problem, for the organizers, of where to access the system as a total regenerative cycle. It would therefore have been foolhardy to have ignored the sources of educational provision, since it is to the training of professionals that the formative influences, good and suspect, can be traced. Invoking relevance as a criterion, and including all third level music education - since it is axiomatic that the vast majority of professional musicians teach at some time during their career - it is desirable that all musical expertise, right across the spectrum, wherever acquired and whether practical or academic, should have instructional access to general music education.<sup>27</sup>

There has been a significant growth over the past two decades in third-level education in Ireland and in the number of institutions providing it; this drift has applied to the availability of music programmes, with a consequent buyer's market for those seeking them. There is arguably an over-provision (with a dilution of core curriculum) which has affected the very nature of the courses on offer as a result of the options within them. Although changes in emphasis are plausibly defended, the reality is that practical institutions have become more academic, arguably for the right reasons. On the other hand, traditionally academic colleges (typically the universities) have (sensibly, in their own interests) added practical modules, up to master's level, to attract the best talents, who almost invariably come from a practical background anyway. This system is overdue for rationalization, as is its total relevance to educational goals at lower levels in a national context.<sup>28</sup>

### 3.3.8 National Forum for Music Education

Finally, there was a need to signal a plan (for continuity of concern about music education) which would stretch beyond the culmination of MEND itself; pragmatism and the bitter experiences of the demise of previous initiatives demanded as much. It was obviously necessary to have the need for a national forum endorsed by the participants at MEND so that a comfortable transition from one to the other could be effected, if that was to be the mandate.

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<sup>27</sup> This collaborative method of music education is referred to in Harold Abeles's MEND lecture (MEND 302, Ref. III P ii) on *Philosophy as Basis for Teacher Training*.

<sup>28</sup> Professor Harry White's paper (MEND 308) deals dramatically with this topic. (It is also considered in the section dealing with the recently (Jan 2000) announced funding to set up an Academy for the Performing Arts in Ireland, in three locations. [MEND Agenda IV MEND Report, 400. Also see MEND 602.]

### **3.3.9 Resourcing for Music Education in Ireland – A Collective Agenda Item?**

The agenda items might have been cryptically regrouped as a single item - Resourcing for Music Education in Ireland, which, in turn, could have been subdivided into its human and fiscal elements. The first seven agenda items clearly underline the role of teachers. The question of financial resources, for whatever purpose, may seem, both retrospectively and in the account of MEND as it was enacted, to have been underdeveloped. Item 8 (the setting up of a National Forum for Music Education), which was and is considered by the writer to be the single most crucial outcome of MEND, without which the initiative itself and its sequel would be still-born, implicitly signposts the campaign for resources which would become a prime concern of this body, if established and enthusiastically supported by the teaching profession and by other interested parties.

## 4 The Emergence of Philosophies in Conflict

As the title suggests, this chapter marks a crucial transition point: the focus changes from general concerns about the malaise in Irish education (the main strand of MEND itself [see 1.4 Aim of Study]) to its root causes, treated in philosophical terms (the secondary strand). It marks, too, a change in emphasis of the respective strand roles in this thesis. In other words, the interpenetration of the Irish ‘context’ with identified philosophical positions in conflict demands, predictably, that they be rationalized, to find a route around a debilitating impasse. It is necessary to present a shortened version of MEND discoveries in this chapter in order to show the logic of this transition.

MEND concerns were foreshadowed in its Agenda. From the most cursory examination it can be asserted that its content forms a unique gestalt, related to but different from the collective problems of other systems. The gestalt may be termed the ‘context’ of Irish music education. It gathers together a variety of problems related to balance, relevance and time management in the curriculum; the bicultural/multicultural issue; music as art; the conceptual confusion about performance; dichotomies and discontinuities in the system including the ‘pop’/high culture divide<sup>29</sup>; the relevance of American practice ... and so on.

It was inevitable that a philosophical enquiry would be seen as offering a rationalization yielding the parameters of a dependable and balanced curriculum. It came as no surprise that the global philosophical field was, coincidentally, seriously dichotomized into seemingly incompatible positions of asserted mutual exclusivity. The gravity of this discovery halted, as it compromised, the MEND analysis. A satisfactory outcome could not be envisaged without plausible reconciliation of these rival stances, both of which engaged with the components of the Irish gestalt, though not specifically.

The remaining chapters move climactically from the review and analysis of the literature defining the counterpositions, to their reconciliation, their applicability to the context of Irish music education and to a definition of how the aspiration towards universality in music education philosophy might be met.

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<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that in listing the documentation used for the review of literature (footnote to 5.1) it comprised more than the philosophies of Elliott and Reimer as offered in their respective books (*MM* and *A Philosophy of Music Education*). In fact, the Elliott/Reimer exchange in the Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, and the tripartite documentation, Elliott/Reimer/White, in the College Symposium are, if anything, more crucial and searching as far as the arguments presented in the thesis are concerned. Harry White’s paper (A book of manners in the wilderness [MEND 308]), which was exhaustively reviewed in the MEND Report, is also discussed thoroughly in the thesis, together with the responses from Elliott and Reimer (5.1 and 5.2). In all of these five documents the ‘pop’/high culture divide features prominently. Since the applicability of the ‘reconciled’ philosophies is seen by the author as at issue (the two-stranded approach), curriculum, syllabus (literature selection) and, indeed, valuing and judgement (the relevance of the ‘music as art’ approach) come into play. The ‘pop’/high culture divide is less relevant to a philosophy of music than to a philosophy of music education, which, as the author suggests, is concerned with applied philosophy.



## 4.1 Key Concepts

Because of the streaming of the MEND debates, it would not have been possible for anyone to have participated in the entire proceedings. With a small number of exceptions<sup>30</sup>, hard copies of all the material generated by MEND were made available to the writer. In attempting to analyse this wealth of documentation in a manner which would be accessible to a reader with specific interests, the topics treated were segregated into categories. These were made to correspond with the Agenda under its eight headings. Each heading was then subdivided to embody a number of evocative key concepts drawn generally from the titles of the formal presentations and the debates themselves. Each of these key concepts is considered separately and any implicit or overt recommendations resulting from the proceedings are added at the end of each analytical treatment. The numbering is from the MEND Report, Section 18 (see also Notes to the Reader 1.6).

### 18.1 Agenda I. Philosophy of Music Education

- 18.1.1 Overview of Music Education Philosophy.
- 18.1.2 Contextual Philosophy.
- 18.1.3 Composing (Creativity): Performing: Listening.
- 18.1.4 Time Management.
- 18.1.5 Dichotomy.

### 18.2 Agenda II. State of Music Education in Ireland.

- 18.2.1 General Provision.
- 18.2.2 Music in the Community.<sup>31</sup>
- 18.2.3 Private Enterprise and Semi-State Provision.
- 18.2.4 Materials for Music Education.

### 18.3 Agenda III. Continuum in Music Education.

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<sup>30</sup> In the case of a small number of debates, for which the gathering subdivided into interest groups, relocated away from the main auditorium, the recording facilities are known to have failed to produce audible tapes. This was particularly troublesome during Phase III. However, the material available, exclusive of these lacunas, is considered to be generally adequate for the analysis. It should be remembered that the formal presentations and the debates were very closely related in thematic relevance.

<sup>31</sup> References to community music (in Ireland) in this thesis are to music as experienced outside the school ambience. This gives rise to the well-recognized dichotomy which separates the traditional emphasis on western art music, in education, from public taste, which tends more towards popular forms. The need to address this anomaly is one of Reimer's three dilemmas (see *Through Irish Eyes* [MEND 402]). As such it is a context of Irish music education.

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18.4 Agenda IV. Performance.

18.4.1 Performance and Elitism.

18.4.2 Specialization.

18.4.3 Music Schools.

18.4.4 Performance in Third Level.

18.4.5 Professional Training in Performance (incl. Academy of the Performing Arts).

18.5 Agenda V. Assessment.

18.5.1 General Comments on Assessment.

18.5.2 Assessment in the National Curriculum.

18.5.3 The Leaving Certificate Crisis.

18.5.4 National Standards (US).

18.6 Agenda VI. National Culture Biculturalism versus Multiculturalism.

18.7 Agenda VII. Music Education at Third Level.

18.7.1 Options.

18.7.2 Professional Training.

18.7.3 Teacher Training.

18.7.4 The Conservatoire Aspiration (Academy of the Performing Arts).

18.8 Agenda VIII. Forum for Music Education.

## 4.2 Overview

It was anticipated by the organizers of MEND that if the initiative was well attended by the teaching profession, their day-to-day concerns would dominate the discussions at Phase I; the proceedings were tailored to allow this to happen. It was predicted that there would, however, be many philosophical resonances in expressed wishes eventually to confront the fundamental parameters underlying difficulties rather than to be satisfied just with identifying them or with proposing random short-term solutions.

Thus the field of philosophical thought, and the insecurity of Irish educators in relation to it, was invoked and loomed large in the collective mentality as it was articulated at Phase I. But it is all too easy for practitioners to be suspicious or even dismissive of scholarly pursuits which they perceive to be remote from the cutting-edge of the class situation or the individual lesson. The claim that music was there before musicology, and that music education existed long before its multifarious possibilities were charted and exhaustively analysed by philosophers keen to pronounce on the subject, can easily lead to the spurious assumption that music and music education can exist and survive well enough without such scholarly inputs. As it transpired, the issue of philosophy in general, and performance in particular, transmuted the MEND *mise-en-scène* into a battleground where the first skirmishes of a much more global encounter were engaged in; two titans - Bennett Reimer, the reigning champion, so to speak, and David Elliott, the pretender - mounted the stage. Nor was this a coincidence. Elliott's iconoclastic book had just been published, following a series of well-aired 'trailers' indicating that it was going to throw down the gauntlet to the revered wisdom of Reimer, which had dominated the scene, virtually without challenge, for a quarter of a century.

But it was not merely the eminence of the participants that aroused interest. It was rather that performance was such a burning issue in Irish music education on a variety of aspects - availability, accessibility, continuity and affordability in education; its presence or otherwise in schools; the notion of élitism in relation to it; standard; assessment ... and so forth - that the idea of its new claims to dominance as a topic on the first-world stage was intriguing. Although the high profile publicity given to this struggle was played down by several of the visiting specialists, its significance for Ireland, in focusing on philosophy and performance, each *per se*, should not, in the writers' view, be underestimated. When this proximity debate (for the two never did engage in face to face disputation) was enlivened by Harry White's melodramatic intervention at Stage III (Ref. III P viii; Document 308), it had already produced a corpus of literature and this was further expanded in a way which now offers valuable scope to probe these two issues (philosophy and performance) and others in their Irish context. In addition there was the contribution of Richard Colwell in acting as the moderator of the whole international conference (MEND Phase II), apart from offering his own deeply penetrating papers (Documents 209a and 209b), which were also a fund of philosophical wisdom.

### 4.3 Introduction to the Elliott/Reimer Case

Why might it be helpful to analyse rationales which are known to be so publicly polarized? Who can arbitrate between them? How can they be made to converge in a way which is worthwhile? These questions would acquire more urgency if it were hinted that one more than another is now, arguably, a preferred approach to general education in Ireland, albeit in its own characteristic guise. Have we

made the right choices? Are these the only choices available to us? What are the possibilities for eclecticism? The International Society for Music Education engaged this same problem when it invited Bennett Reimer to give a paper entitled *Should there be a universal philosophy of music education?* at its biennial conference held in Amsterdam in 1996, only months after MEND Phase II. ‘No such universal philosophy of music has been articulated and has been recognized by the world’s music educators to be universally acceptable. ... Lacking such a philosophy, claims for the universality of music have no firm foundation. Yet the intuition that there is, indeed, a universal dimension of music education remains persuasive or at least attractive’.<sup>32</sup>

Already the notion of flexibility is being predicated; in other words, if the strategies of music education could be adaptable to their contextual demands, areas of disagreement might be reconciled, and universals could be applied without being threatened or invalidated by circumstances. In Ireland, to name but two burning questions, the place of performance in music education, and the degree or definition of multiculturalism that we apply to our endeavours, are two areas that need to engage flexibly with philosophies that address these areas, as most philosophies will and must, if they are not to appear bland and diffident in the face of these supremely challenging issues.

#### **4.4 Reimer’s Universal Philosophy of Music Education (*Should there be a Universal Philosophy of Music Education?*)**

In this epochal paper<sup>33</sup>, *Should there be a Universal Philosophy of Music*, Reimer, not without celebrating his own idea that philosophy is itself an ever-changing discipline, constantly responding to fertile ideas and renewing itself, laid out a most compelling contemporary vision of the many ways in which philosophy of music can work, the options that are available within the wider matrix of possibilities, and their interrelational (in)compatibilities. Coming from the acknowledged doyen in the field, this has profound implications for all thinkers about music and music education. The theorizing in this paper is admirably succinct and provocatively innovative. In brief, Reimer notes four philosophical approaches, condensing the traditional triptych of Formalism, Referentialism and Expressionism into the first two of these, and adding Praxialism and Contextualism; this last, almost by its very name, suggests the sought-after multi-adaptable model, if its fructifying interconnection with the other three in a balanced way (the *gestalt*) is also accepted and respected.

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<sup>32</sup> Abstract of paper by Bennett Reimer, *Should there be a universal philosophy of music education?*, delivered in Amsterdam in July 1996 (International Journal of Music Education Conference Edition No 29 1997), 4-20.

<sup>33</sup> Note that much of the précis draw, verbatim, from Reimer’s ISME paper, *Should there be a Universal Philosophy of Music*, read in Amsterdam in 1996.

The writer contends that this paper from Reimer's pen should be essential reading for all musicians, but especially for those who have any involvement in the pedagogical field. It is an impressively craftsmanlike assembly of the facts of music education that need to be correlated to make any sense of such a seemingly incompatible array of stances, all of which lead to specific but diverse practices within the global community. Even when Reimer constrains his still unrefined model of a universal philosophy (based on a co-existing relationship between the non-extremist norms of yet potentially dogmatic positions) to search for 'what is common at the level of our deepest values and fundamental beliefs', he does not lose contact with the reader. He makes a compelling case for understanding that ultimate involvement in the mystery of music which underlines its universality, and reconciles differences, whether music is experienced as 'light-hearted and momentary entertainment of modest proportions, or understood to offer the deepest, most profound satisfactions and meanings available to *homo sapiens*'.

#### **4.5 Commonly-held Values about Music Education (Reimer)**

Reimer has a three-tiered approach. The first is to suggest a range of commonly-held values about music. These are:

1. That music is a positive force in life.
2. That music and musical learning are worthy of support.
3. That there should be access, typically by the young, to music through education.
4. That comprehensiveness in music education (as for example the inclusion of offerings from a range of cultures) is a desirable goal; this is perhaps the most controversial of Reimer's claims (see MEND Report 17. 13. 2).
5. That support for music education should come from the culture.
6. That music education should be continuous and systematic.
7. That talent must be selectively nurtured without negating the aspiration of 'music for all'.

Note that 2 and 5 (above) are not the same.

This list of values, even allowing for differences of opinion in some areas, leads Reimer to the question as to 'Why, exactly, is music positive for people, or essential for people?' This is the point at which philosophical stances become important. The most difficult challenge to philosophy is in attempting to understand and provide principles for how humans can lead more fulfilling lives. It is tied into valuing, and must explain, in relation to music and music education, what their nature and

most significant values are. The idea that a universal philosophy may be a questionable ideal is not, in Reimer's view, persuasive enough to cause philosophers to retreat from trying to define its commanding parameters. 'We want to make ... a coherent whole, because we ourselves rejoice in the contemplation of a unity. Man loves unities'.<sup>34</sup>

## 4.6 Four Philosophical Positions

Reimer's second tier comprises a brief treatment of four philosophical positions that must be accommodated and reconciled within a *Gesamtphilosophie* before testing its canons in the crucible of human experience. This last challenge is a highly cerebral one. However, Reimer's insights into the differences and possible interactions between the component stances of the gestalt philosophy are, at a pragmatic level, most valuable as outstandingly user-friendly guidelines for bilateral testing of embryo strategies and practices against the spectrum of possible philosophical underpinnings. The philosophical stances explored are Formalism, Praxialism, Referentialism and Contextualism.

### 4.6.1 Formalism

Formalism, Reimer explains, emphasizes the *products* of musical creativity as being the key component in understanding what music is and does, and why it should be valued. Music is the making of particular kinds of events, different from all other events because they exist to do the particular thing music does - 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.

Pure Formalism insists that the experience of art is essentially unconnected to *all* other life experiences. These *aesthetic* experiences are dependent for their occurrence and enjoyment on inherent talent and/or concentrated education. It is this approach to aesthetics which is so vulnerable to attack from more liberal philosophies. Formalism may be associated with a focus on the great works of art as exemplars of artistic form suitable for study; it supports talent education, attempting to elevate, but not without pejorative insinuations, the taste of the masses for better listening; it recognizes and condones the high/mass dichotomy as an irreconcilable reality.

Reimer mitigates extreme Formalism by suggesting that intrinsically significant forms *musically* created, albeit explicable as to their total meaning by other philosophical approaches, can still be

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<sup>34</sup> Carlos Chavez, *Musical Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 28.

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construed as supporting Formalism. Clearly, however, Formalism is typically implacable in its judgements and exclusivist too, and establishes hierarchies in which *optimal experiences* are reserved for the few. Its tenets, emphasizing the craft of music-making, must nevertheless be included as a force in the gestalt.

#### 4.6.2 Praxialism

Praxialism, in contrast to Formalism, emphasizes the doing, the acting, the creating involved in music as being the essence of music. The products of the process are decidedly secondary. Music should be construed as a verb - ‘musicing’ to use Elliott’s term. Reimer warns, as he does in relation to Formalism, against fundamentalist tendencies. His interpretation of the approach to Praxialism espoused by David Elliott is that it is too extreme and doctrinaire, too radical in its overwhelming focus on process. The process is paramount, and he believes that Elliott concentrates exclusively on performance as the major goal, purpose and value of music and music education.

Reimer establishes such a case for the inseparability of product and process that it might have been more prudent not to have attempted to isolate them in the first place. ‘Formalism, when understood as calling attention to the products created by musical processes and how these 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. Indeed, music cannot exist without products and processes as completely interdependent.’ It seems that praxialism, thus emaciated by dependence, would have been better served as an adjunct to product or as being seen as a functional *context* of ‘musicing’. But Reimer’s classification is not without plausibility, particularly as he eventually includes praxialism, however conceptualized, as a necessary though insufficient component of the gestalt.

#### 4.6.3 Referentialism

Bennett Reimer’s thesis about a universal philosophy of music education cannot be easily construed as propaganda for his own philosophical position as expounded between 1970 and 1989, the dates of publication and revision of his own book. Treatment of the aesthetic idea, with which his name has been associated as being a staunch proponent, if not the architect, of the so-called Music Education as Aesthetic Education (MEAE) Movement in the US, appears only in the section dealing with fundamentalist Formalism - an unlikely ambience for Reimer philosophy. And its greatly mollified

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and much more adaptable version, known generally as Absolute Expressionism,<sup>35</sup> is nowhere to be found, except by implication, but is seemingly concealed in the section dealing with Referentialism.<sup>36</sup> It is here that Reimer is, in the writer's view, at his most subtle and brilliant; and his detachment is singularly effective in enabling him, with consummate clarity, to classify a considerable array of stances under one species. This is peerless philosophizing. He begins with the innocuous claim that 'under the heading of Referentialism I mean to include a variety of positions about the essential nature and value of music and music education different from those focusing on either music as product or as process'.

Again borrowing copiously from Reimer's succinctness of exposition<sup>37</sup>, 'in Referentialism the values of music are gained less from conceiving music as significant form or significant action than from conceiving it as a powerful instrumentality for achieving values to which music can lead us. The referentialist listener attends to the sounds being heard (the product) and to the sounds as they are made (the process), with the assumption that those sounds contain a message or messages not unlike those communicated by the sounds of language. 'Musical sounds, like words, refer. They point outside themselves to meanings, images, ideas, emotions [note that Reimer uses the word emotion, which is not aesthetic], descriptions of places, things, people and so forth' (MEND 401, 7). [In] (m)usic without words more imagination has to be exerted to locate and identify the meanings, ... the listener must 'interpret' its meaning by seeking a variety of clues, inside the music. Referentialism proposes that musical experience be conceived as the recognition of such meanings and their incorporation as an essential ingredient in one's experience. Music is a particular way in which 'communication' occurs, the language model of communication being the paradigm.'

Since Reimer, in first and correctly defining philosophy as a search for nature, meaning and value (*inter alia*), is subsequently attempting to evolve to a universal philosophy, he scrupulously decides that extrinsic values cannot be ignored. Reimer articulates his awareness and concern here that, by

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<sup>35</sup> This interpretation of the most natural placing of Reimer's own stance is purely authorial and does not in any way affect the line of reasoning adopted in the universal philosophy essay. It is hoped that Bennett Reimer may concede that this reading is possible. In relation to Formalism he claims that '[at] one end of the continuum the focus on formed products can be so narrow as to exclude many important dimensions of music not entirely attributable to the form of musical works. At the other end of the continuum formed sounds continue to be understood to be an essential component of music, but additional dimensions, such as represented by the three other positions I will explain [Praxialism, Referentialism and Contextualism], are seen to be important in establishing the nature of music as a way of bringing a particular kind of meaning into being through intrinsically significant forms musically created'. The writer sees this as a suggestion that the symbolic nature of music, especially in relation to the 'forms of feeling', to use a Langerian phrase, is a relevant value which, nevertheless, fits better in a referential than in a formal sense (MEND 401, 7).

<sup>36</sup> Reimer's reference on p 23 (as published) of the Universality essay could, however, lead to a different view. Here he refers back to Formalism: 'Musical products, and their intrinsically *expressed* (writer's italics) or significant forms, on which formalism focuses, always exist in the context of particular cultures and times, so they are contextualized by necessity' (MEND Document 401, 8).

<sup>37</sup> As already acknowledged, much of this précis is drawn verbatim from Reimer's Amsterdam paper.



recognizing a plethora of non-musical results (such as growth in self-discipline and self-esteem, optimal experience and ‘flow’) from musical activities as referential values, he is rendering music vulnerable to being rivalled or supplanted by other occupations offering the same extrinsic benefits, thus partially disabling a purer philosophy from pursuing the more refined ideals of *sui generis* worth. But, it seems that political correctness does enjoin caution, prudence and inclusiveness. So music’s instrumental utility is, rather uncomfortably, included under a referentialist view of its value.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4.6.4 Contextualism

The boldest step in Reimer’s exposé of a fully adaptable philosophy is to construct the backdrop against which the three approaches (Formalism, Praxialism and Referentialism) can engage, individually, interdependently and collectively with the essentially human milieu they purport to empower and explain. It was not a simple matter to envision the binding force of *context*, in which a *Gestalt* psychology creates, from the interactions between the components themselves and with their contexts, a new dimension in which the result is greater than the sum of the parts; the interesting correlation established between the workings of the philosophy of music education and those of music itself is elegantly conceived.

### 4.7 Functional/Utilitarian approaches to Music Education

Imaginative approaches to music education theory representing significant departures from the currently controversial ones of Elliott and Reimer are extant, notably and typically those of Merriam and Fowler (1996), stressing the *functions* of music. Although these may stray at times from the purer motives that might be more appropriately attributed to the modified versions of Formalism, they are very much concerned with that vital link between music and life as lived, from its most mundane and prosaic manifestations, through its pragmatism/utilitarianism and eventually to the upper reaches of optimal experience and to those all-too-rare instances of complete identification with the *sui generis* qualities of music. These approaches tie in very comfortably with the notion of context.

Contextualism stresses that the sociocultural functions of music are the focus of attention. Music is, first and foremost, a playing out of, or manifestation of, or aural portrayal of, the psychological, emotional, political and social forces of the human

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<sup>38</sup> The range of inclusions, under the heading of Referentialism, resembles a *Gestalt* rather than a continuum. The highly aesthetic concept of Absolute Expressionism, with its subtle interplay of the artistic, craft, feelingful, mimetic, expressive and symbolic significance of human perception (the referent), on the one hand, is set side by side with such utilitarian considerations as the attainment of discipline, social skills ... self-growth, enjoyment, self-esteem and optimal experience on the other.

context in which it exists; ... it is the function music plays in cultural participation which most explains its nature and value. Music must be issues-orientated, value centred, sociologically and politically involved in the culture's ongoing life.<sup>39</sup>

Reimer's ideas on Contextualism dovetail very well with his statement that the three commanding issues in current music education dialectic - multiculturalism, the high/mass culture dichotomy and performance training - are, precisely, both sociologically and politically involved in our culture's ongoing life.

In conclusion Reimer argues against the extremist rejection of the aesthetic ideal, a scenario in which 'music is whatever a culture's institutional policy-makers decide to call music'.<sup>40</sup> He proposes, rather, that a carefully constructed *Gestalt* philosophy, typically as he has attempted to construct one within the aspiration of universality, can guide us to a secure position where 'we can recognize the essentiality of context in our construals of what music is and does, while at the same time recognizing that what music is and does has to do with something identifiably musical.'<sup>41</sup> Relinquishing his claim to have the last word, Reimer quotes Roger Scruton, the British aesthetician, in a passage of provocative relevance. '... the work of art is designed as the object of a certain response ... Responses depend upon prevailing psychological and social conditions. And if a 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*'.<sup>42</sup> This all-embracing *aesthetic*, simply as a response to things perceived and intentionally value-free as enfranchising no particular stance to the exclusion of another, is a helpful way of rescuing the art work response from the realms of esotericism, and firmly establishing it as an almost domestic experience and resonance. In his *Universality* essay Reimer takes a giant step in seeking to accommodate the widest spectrum of musical experiences as worthy of consideration in the music education menu.

## 4.8 Bennett Reimer in Ireland

In a different forum<sup>43</sup> Bennett Reimer had this to say:

I feel more than just academically interested in the dilemmas facing Irish music education ... having found myself deeply immersed ... on Irish turf (an unlikely but welcome occurrence) but also, I admit, [with] a certain sense of frustration. This stems

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<sup>39</sup> MEND Document 401, 8.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Roger Scruton, *Musical Understanding and Musical Culture* (in *What is Music?*, ed. Philip Alperson [New York; Haven]).

<sup>43</sup> Bennett Reimer, *Through Irish Eyes* (College Music Symposium, Journal of the College Music Society, Volume 38, 1998), 74.

from the assumption on the part of the organizers of the (MEND) debate that voices from the U.S. could add something meaningful to it. ... Surely the glaring gaps between the two cultures were at least equally a limitation to what we could offer as our seeming similarities enabled us to be of some help.

In the face of this polite self-effacement, the decision to invite Bennett Reimer to Ireland should be explained and defended. Reimer has probably influenced more music educators than any other living music-orientated philosopher. His lecture in Dublin was, for many, a revealing introduction to one very sophisticated theory as to how music works as a human endeavour. The engagement with David Elliott, suitably distanced and muted by the logistics of the MEND timetable, added a fascinating if confusing dimension to the ongoing debate. The exposé in Amsterdam represented a giant step forward in significance for MEND outcomes. Reimer was already the richer for the Elliott challenge; his gift for clarity had an even sharper focus. He had moved on from his 1989 and MEND positions and was forging a new matrix of ideas in which he both questioned his own position and simultaneously reaffirmed it in a progressive way; the consequences for MEND analysis were spectacular in the clarification of the contextual approach. It may be claimed that, apart from the contextual ‘spin’, there was nothing new in the ideas propounded in Amsterdam, but it is in the synthesis that Reimer has scored his triumph, not for the corpus of his own evolving philosophy, but in the comprehensive philosophical formula advanced, a yardstick against which local strategies could be effectively measured for their contextual applicability.

In further defence of the MEND strategy to involve the American philosophical lobby in the debate, Ireland was ready for the novelty of personal inputs and further international fertilization, but from a pool not just defined by her British neighbours, whose thinking had dominated Irish music education from its inception in the nineteenth century and through both the colonial and post-colonial eras. As a cursory reference to the International Directory of Music and Music Education Institutions<sup>44</sup> will reveal, 40% of all third-level activity in music education in the world takes place in the North American continent.

## 4.9 The Irish Context

Ireland has a colonial, post-colonial and modern democratic history. In none of these epochs was a liberal attitude to arts education a feature. That ‘music is a positive force in life’ would certainly resonate in the Irish subconscious mentality as a commonly-held value. That music and music learning are worthy of support; that the support should come from the culture; that there should be access,

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<sup>44</sup> See Graham Bartle, International Directory of Music and Music Education Institutions (Callaway International Resource Centre for Music Education [CIRCME], The University of Western Australia, 2000.

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typically by the young, to music through education; that it should be continuous and systematic - all of these are embraced in Ireland more in theory than in practice, arising from deep socio-economic and politico-economic forces. Here is quasi-virgin soil for the application of contextual philosophy to music education provision.

Comprehensiveness in music education as a desirable goal is perhaps the most controversial of Reimer's *values* (as he himself describes them) and is certainly a significant context in Irish strategy, especially as influenced by MEND. The topic is confronted systematically under the National Culture Sections (Agenda Item VI) throughout this report; it is a complex and ongoing question which is not helped or even clarified by the plethora of options and variants by which the global scene of music education in developed societies is currently being bombarded.

Ireland may be located on the ethnomusicological continuum as responding to ethnic, popular and art cultures, with certain hybrids also contributing to patterns of general consumption in music. But this classification is not entirely typical; nor are the details of its internal composition uniform or predictable. Because of the familiar norms of educational practice, the music and the so-called aesthetic ideals of western culture maintain dominance, though much-threatened, in educational thinking; this is being diluted by responses (to sometimes polar philosophical stances) that have, arguably, not been fully-informed as to their consequences. Ireland is in the throes of the high/mass culture dilemma and is no nearer to a solution of its devastating dichotomization of the school/community relationship than any other known system battling with the same dissonance. The ethnic/traditional seam is a healthy subculture of oral/aural/non-literate community-based activity; its classification as a subculture may seem pejorative, but is factual, since the music has not yet been fully normalized within the formal education system.

Since judicious infusion of educational practice with values drawn from the traditional subculture is a desideratum, because of its scale and its cultural significance, a genuine contextual problem arises. Should the implied biculturalism, however defined (trad/pop, trad/art, non-literate/literate and there are other versions), be allowed temporarily to arrest mainstream philosophical persuasions while Ireland comes to terms with its characteristic mix of cultures? In particular, can all the plausible advocacy for music of the world's cultures prevail in the face of such a major indigenous concern, and sweep aside its claim to prior solution? To invoke the Reimer treatment of contextual philosophy, the 'psychological, emotional, political and social forces of the human context in which music exists' find here a challenging subject for serious consideration, simply because it is 'issues-orientated, value centred, sociologically and politically involved in the culture's ongoing life'. As will be seen in the denouement, discussions at MEND and the subsequent analysis of the Proceedings were inconclusive

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in suggesting an immediate way forward on this issue of the choice between biculturalism and multiculturalism.

Talent Education, even in its more narrowly-construed sense of specialization in performance, which is the more usual instance of the need in young musicians, is another of Reimer's *commonly-held values* which must be confronted and accommodated in music education philosophy. It is, like the world-culture issue discussed above, highly controversial in the sense that it is invaginated in the whole performance issue. This is apparently too fundamental and intrinsic a concept in relation to music, and therefore might even be deemed to transcend the need for consideration as a commonly held value (that music should be performed!). It is nevertheless and surprisingly a major sticking point in inhibiting agreement in philosophical terms.

This is yet another issue in which there is undoubtedly an Irish context. The claims of American talent educators, as to provision in the US, may incite envy, but the Irish can learn much from the widespread confusion within American practice in relation to performance. Reimer boasts, with irrefutable justification, that 'at present, estimates of the number of students in middle schools and high schools taking advantage of our [US] unmatched generosity in this regard [performance training] range from 9-15%. I regard that as an achievement of which the profession deserves to be very proud. And the quality achieved by many young performance groups approaches the astonishingly good, especially given that most participants have no intention of pursuing performance as a career after high school.'<sup>45</sup>

This sense of ownership of an idea must be viewed, initially, against Reimer's claim that Elliott is now insisting that *all* learners should perform, which is at the core of the Elliott/Reimer dispute, as indeed it isolates the whole problem with performance as a skill-based activity. And, around the same time, Reimer is recorded as saying that 'there seems to be, around the world, a growing recognition that we have served students poorly by being so narrowly focused on performing'.<sup>46</sup> Paul Lehman, speaking of performance in American *schools*, puts it pragmatically: 'vocal music gained universal acceptance in the 19th century because kids enjoyed singing. Instrumental music became a fixture in the early 20th century because kids enjoyed playing instruments. If it hadn't been for that emphasis on performance we wouldn't be in the strong position we're in today'.<sup>47</sup> Both claims are couched, and are further commented on in context by the authors, in terms that recommend a cautious attitude to claims for the manifold benefits of performance-rich programmes in schools. The contrast with Ireland could not be more provoking; but the enunciation of the problems of America, especially as to recent attempts to

<sup>45</sup> Bennett Reimer, *Through Irish Eyes*, Response to Harry White, *A book of manners in the wilderness*, 78.

<sup>46</sup> Bennett Reimer, *Universal Philosophy* (ISME; Proceedings from Amsterdam 1996 [MEND401, 6]).

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address them (National Standards), clearly define the underlying principles, which are of universal application.

Here we are being asked, at last, to confront and demystify the realities of what music in education means in terms of product and process when construed in their performance/performing context. The context invites clarification in terms of the nature of the skills demanded and the critically significant timescale of their acquisition, between rudimentary, competent, proficient and advanced achievement outcomes, *inter alia*. North America presents the notion of 9-15% of school-going students with free access to performance and performance training, guaranteeing, at best, 'astonishingly good quality'. The cohort is typically and euphemistically portrayed as mounting 'the challenge to expand that emphasis into analysis, music of other cultures and so on'<sup>48</sup>, implying that the empowering musicianship (Elliott's admirable aspiration) is, somehow, currently being neglected. This 'privileged' minority is offset by the approximately 90% majority who have, voluntarily it seems, relegated themselves to the mercies of the Music Education as Aesthetic Education Movement, where their low prioritization of music in their stated interests is being rewarded with dry-as-dust acquisitions of literacy and passive listening skills; or so it is implied selectively.

The two models of music education are sketched provocatively here but are, in the American system, juxtaposed as positive or negative options in general music education. The significant point is that the majority have volitionally declared their non-performing option with the naïve but accurately-divined wisdom in observing that to perform satisfactorily takes time and effort; they are reluctant performers only in their mature sense of prioritization and time management. A philosophy of music education which essays to change those biases significantly faces a daunting challenge, not least in defining performance potential in terms of time spent and skills required.

No such options, approaching the American dream, have been available to the typical Irish school child. Solo possibilities as a freely accessible school facility have been and are virtually non-existent, and ensemble insignificant. Other offerings, where they have been available, have been literacy-based rather than listening-intensive; performance has played virtually no part in them. The teaching force has mirrored that bias; in fact it might even be claimed that they have been mutually determining. In primary education the child-centred model, as distinct from the specialist system widely in operation in America, has failed the system - and for reasons that cannot be laid at the door of the music teachers or *their* trainers. In secondary cycle the subject is largely examination-oriented, further consolidating the information (objective) base over the subjective. Talent education is not a desideratum in Irish

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<sup>47</sup> MEND Document 303, 6.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

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schools, if that is taken to imply that the official support system of the culture recognizes its claims to free education through a school network.

The American and Irish systems of school music education are not directly comparable; the one is not a paradigm for the other.<sup>49</sup> The American system dichotomized school music education cohorts in the past, but there is room for grave doubts as to whether the homogenized stream now mooted will serve the united cohorts with the benefits of universally satisfying challenges. There is also the paradoxical realization that, in the historical context, it was performers (the high interest group) who were being marginalized by inattention to their wider musicianship needs. However, the admirable aspiration of the new National Standards (if they succeed) seems to be redressing the balance in widening the scope and the prescription of desirable musical experiences across the board.

Nevertheless, side-by-side with all this putative progress, it is almost certain that the mechanisms for identifying and nurturing talent of all kinds will still be securely in place in the US. The sheer weight of scholarly input to the National Standards<sup>50</sup> defines a system which is unlikely to countenance mandatory imposition of particular philosophical stances advancing curricular, pedagogical or methodological statements as to how general aims are to be achieved, especially should they attempt simultaneously to sweep away or supplant the celebrated achievements of past method. It is thus irrelevant to conjecture as to how the application of a praxial philosophy, such as that advocated by Elliott, would empower the comprehensive system, even if it were possible to arrive at agreement as to what exactly he is proposing in terms of what is pragmatically achievable.<sup>51</sup>

As far as talent education is concerned, it is thus also irrelevant, unless someone undertakes to metamorphose its strictly philosophical approach into a suitable rationale for specialist applications. There is encouraging evidence that the American National Standards have been accepted. If their aims are achieved, with the flexibility to enrich the so-called musicianship experiences of performers while attending to the purely musical experiential involvement of the volitional non-performers, they must be counted as an outstandingly significant advance on previous efforts. It is to be hoped that the

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<sup>49</sup> Detailed discussion of the Irish curriculum would have increased the length of this thesis inordinately. The specifics are dealt with in the MEND Report under the various headings of the 8-point Agenda. The reader is referred to the 'Hyperlinked' version of the Report (Analysis [II]) contained in the CD-ROM which is the mandatory support provenance for the thesis

<sup>50</sup> The National Standards in the US had just been promulgated in 1994, when MEND was mooted. Time has moved on since then and the primacy of state autonomy has asserted itself in the standards becoming known as Voluntary National Standards

<sup>51</sup> The plethora of statement and counterstatement in relation to Elliott is confusing. But it is on the question of the pragmatic applicability of his philosophy that most questions arise. The ongoing prolix exchanges are as much evidence of Elliott's impotency as they are proof that reigning philosophies have been dealt a body blow, demanding that both sides continue to clarify their position and reach détente for the benefit and credibility of the profession. This continuing dialectic is enthusiastically supported by Elliott in his writings.

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application of standards of such intentional flexibility will not produce a dull homogeneity, but will continue to accommodate a range of options that can still selectively minister to the comprehensive needs of students, and to the collective requirements of the total socio-cultural music endeavour which it hopes to serve. As far as the United States are concerned, the now magisterial presence of the National Standards and the favourable, and not just sanguine, reports as to their general acceptance and implementation leave the impression that:

1. There will continue to be two distinct categories of music learners to be serviced - performers with high motivation and non-performers with correspondingly more modest aspirations in music studies. This is a broad categorization which covers the majority.
2. Using the criterion of the 'product of numbers and motivation' as democratically compelling, the above are, thus, two equally important cohorts.
3. The philosophy of music as 'product' (a version of Formalism) is still persuasive for the performing stream, but the notion of performance as process - a totally different approach (Praxialism) - should not be ruled out as capable of informing all other musical endeavours in general education, including the broadening in outlook of committed performers. There has, however, been insufficient time since the publication of Elliott's book to develop a convincing statistic that his particular version of Praxialism is gaining ground.<sup>52</sup>

Defined thus, it can be seen that there is potentially complete agreement, derivable from analysis, between the ideals of the American and Irish music education systems; and it is a simple matter to appraise the overall Irish implemented curriculum and to search for its shortcomings. It appears that, in general music education in Ireland, there is a sincere effort being made, not only to meet the demands of a so-called well-rounded musical education, giving appropriate weighting to composing, performing and listening, but also to enshrine continuity of that education as a desideratum. The system stubbornly denies any leanings towards particular methodologies, but the underpinning philosophical stance evident in the syllabus literature can easily be aligned to a hybrid of Praxialism and Referentialism; music as product (in the sense outlined by Formalism) is conceptually outside its brief, as it is also outside its capability, and there is already concrete evidence of a levelling out to lower overall standards. The system therefore still falls down, in ignoring the committed performing stream, and in effectively banishing it to the realms of private enterprise. This is culpably discriminatory, as it is to create and perpetuate the notion of elitism.

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<sup>52</sup> When the source material for this thesis was being generated (c 1997-99), this was true. The writer has no knowledge of how this may have changed since 1999, but it is not relevant to the pure logic of the arguments being made.



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Furthermore, it is accurate to trace, and now consolidate, its origin as being not totally in prevailing socio-economic perceptions, but in the mentality of official Irish music education itself and of general education strategists, too, who are creating this sharply-etched dichotomy in the first place. Once this crucially important cohort is removed from consideration in general education, it raises important questions, truths and considerations:

1. Is serious performing so time-consuming that it has no place either in the ‘school’ ambience or aspiration; must its status as a component in examination-driven syllabi be questioned?
2. If the answer to this question is yes, is it still accepted that it is an important component in overall education (typically for a significant minority), and where should the responsibility for its promotion lie?
3. Is the cost of suitable practical training an inhibitor in politico-economic terms and how can this cost be met?

MEND deliberations unequivocally and unanimously confirmed that performance is quintessential to the whole music and music education endeavour. If it is culpably ignored in general education provision, then undesirable tensions are set up, not least owing to the separation of the school subject, music, from its most natural manifestation, performance (at proficient and expert level); this cannot be healthy. The fall-back position is that other agencies must be found equitably to minister to the need, especially if that need is a matter of public concern. Here MEND reinforced the many previous statements that provincial Ireland is particularly deprived. Outside the urban areas, a questionable standard has always been the norm and this is, to a large extent, self-perpetuating, because a professional cadre of teachers cannot accrue from such an indifferent base. Availability, accessibility, quality and continuity of performance training are problematic in rural Ireland. It may be claimed that Ireland did not have the resources to provide for quality music performance in state schools<sup>53</sup>, but it is high time that attention be drawn to the state’s neglect of music education, in its broadest sense, and that positive mitigation of its devastating effects be sought.

If potential success in music education endeavours in Ireland is measured by the possibilities enshrined in the ‘common denominator’ nature of current syllabus revision; if the establishment of an Academy for the Performing Arts (APA) is to be taken as a positive step towards professionalism; if these two ends of the spectrum are seen to have been addressed sincerely, there is but one area that

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<sup>53</sup> There can be no doubt that there is an economic dimension here. It appears that, in the US, the state system traditionally values performance to the extent of absorbing its costs in general education on the basis that the subject is a core option and not sufficiently ‘minority’ in uptake to warrant its separation from mainstream education. At least in this respect the American system seems ideal.

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remains the Cinderella in the piece. If performance (in the nature of specialist) education is not now taken seriously as an area that cries out for development on a nation-wide and equitable basis, it will continue to act as a reproach to the otherwise worthy efforts of school music education strategists and will make a mockery of the ambitious plans to develop a super-structure (APA) on a diminishing or virtually non-existent base.

The above summary of Irish attitudes to Reimer's list of commonly held values of music education may help to explain why there are continuing problems about a healthy, caring and democratic response to established needs in Ireland. Apart from a history of patchy provision, music education in Ireland has a variety of contexts within which to engage the traditional philosophical approaches. There is a distinctive character about the diversity issue which first begs for strategies to incorporate it meaningfully in the school experience in a phased programme which moves from the urgency of biculturalism to a more modestly-paced multiculturalism availing of the hindsight benefits of the more successful projects and methods. The bifurcated (general/ specialist) question of performance studies needs to be addressed in the contexts of urgently-needed provision of product-centred (specialist) performance (in schools or suitably subsidized in the private sector), in some cases *ab initio* - and careful monitoring of the process-centred provision calls for vigilance, especially as it arises in secondary school experience. And all of these concerns need to take into account the time constraints, so that curricula are not overloaded, and that achievable goals are being set which will maximize experiences and the artistic growth which accrues from them.

In the case of traditional (specialist) performance studies, should the system be boosted, the most likely philosophical positions may very well outgrow current perceptions and begin to respond to universal criteria with linkages to Formalism, Praxialism and Absolute Expressionism (the form of Referentialism expounded by Reimer), and subconsciously also to the deeper implications of a humanistic universality engaged at philosophical levels by both Reimer and Elliott and by a host of other luminaries.

## 5 Analysis of the David Elliott/Bennett Reimer/Harry White documentation.

In the review of the literature, which is the main concern of Chapter 5, the crucial connection between the two strands of the thesis had to be re-established and maintained. The main thrust - the existence of the philosophies in significant conflict which it is the aim to reconcile - is addressed by examining, as a minimum, the condensed versions of Reimer's and Elliott's philosophical work as offered by them in their MEND presentations, together with the Reimer review of *Music Matters*, and Elliott's rebuttal of that review. Harry White's paper, *A book of manners in the wilderness*, in its wider circulation within the scholarly ambience of global philosophical dialectic beyond MEND, unambiguously forged the vital link between the Irish context and the Reimer/Elliott debacle. This was especially so since the scholars concerned became entangled in a productive tripartite exchange, White as the self-styled Devil's Advocate, the others as his baited respondents. White's paper (MEND Document 308) is exhaustively reviewed in the MEND Report (CD-ROM [mend09g.pdf - Section 18.1])<sup>54</sup> Note that the bracketed references to MEND refer to MEND Numbered Documents which are contained in the MEND CD-ROM (supplied for ready reference with this thesis), permission to reprint having been obtained beforehand, where required.

### 5.1 Overview of Performance as an Issue in Music Education Philosophy

Had the principal findings of MEND (see Chapter 7.1.2) not already been crystallizing prior to Phase III, Harry White's paper would, substantially, have formulated them, as indeed it now endorses them. In his MEND Phase III paper, White reviews, at the very outset, 'prevailing ideologies of music education insofar as these have been expounded in all three [only two, surely, at that juncture!] phases of MEND' and finds them wanting, if not as to their internal consistency, certainly as to their indiscriminate applicability to or possible implementation in Irish music education curricula.

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<sup>54</sup> There are, thus, seven critical documents, apart from the understanding that Reimer's *A Philosophy* and Elliott's *Music Matters* are essential background reading:

1. White's *Book of manners* . . . (MEND 308).
2. Reimer's review of White (MEND 402).
3. Elliott's Review of White (MEND Document 417).
4. Reimer's presentation at MEND (MEND 203).
5. Elliott's presentation at MEND (MEND 208 a and b).
6. Reimer's Review of *Music Matters* (MEND 403).
7. Elliott's rebuttal of Reimer's Review (MEND 416).

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Clearly White is already arguing that the context in which a philosophy operates has a bearing on the case. And since he concludes that attitudinal ‘change begins with the educators’, he is predicating that music education theorists should look to *relevant* models of thought and filter these through to the educators, at source. White is concerned that, within the more obviously learned reaches of professionalism in music, ‘the Beethoven scholar provides a necessary equilibrium for the philosophers of music education, even if the two can sometimes seem to exist in a relationship of mutual incomprehension’. How much more should his concern be focused on dialogue being instituted between academics and practitioners, where dichotomy is rampant and misunderstandings have been even more mutually isolating and damaging. He deals with the breakdown (which he welcomes) of the Oxbridge-influenced universal model in university education in favour of the astonishing variety of options that are almost self-threatening to their own credibility in terms of their failure to define a recognizable model at all. White then makes the vital connection which links third-level courses with subsequent employment of graduates in the teaching profession. He warns, presumably in relation to the proliferation of other models, which, he feels, are responsible for over-dilution of what remains of the old university paradigm, that that model should retain its close connections with the ‘European tradition [which] becomes a permanent educational resource - in performance, in composition, in research. ... If university music is to “enable” music education at large ... our sense of a university model of music education ought to be more informed than it is’. This can only mean that he is fully aware of, and treats with due urgency, the responsibility to provide relevant training for teachers, as the irreducible resource in music education.

Finally, it is in relation to *performance* that Harry White’s paper gratuitously throws down the gauntlet to music educators in identifying, with unerring accuracy, the hubris, as it is the blind spot, within the whole enterprise. In so doing he eloquently verbalizes on the notion, which he holds responsible for many of the ills by which his ideas for a balanced and efficient music education system, at any level, are beset. It is not by accident that his named musicians of popular culture - Presley, Cash, Ellington - all belong within the performer category. But it is especially notable, too, that, coming from a self-styled non-performer, White’s detachment magnificently outshines any academic prejudice which might be attributed to him.

Performance is at the heart of music. The wish to perform is so strong in many that it can eclipse all other musical drives. It feeds vanity and massively begets self-deception; it is unexceptionally admirable, too, and deserving of encouragement, but it can disrupt and skew the whole music education process, especially in its general context. It can challenge time management to its ultimate limits. It is a vital component of music considered as product or as process. Performance, not surprisingly, is at the core of much music education philosophy. It features as a dimension of music in

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Reimer and Swanwick as it does in the rationale of the functionalists (typically, Merriam and Fowler); it seems totally to usurp Elliott's thought processes as a perennial preoccupation. It is the most aspired-to prize - the jewel in the crown - of music education as much as it is the *bête noire* of academics in music education who must fight a constantly losing battle for time against its allurements. Performance in music, especially at the early stages of training, and at any satisfactory artistic level, is largely dominated by the need for psychomotor skills; although this is often challenged in philosophical terms (Elliott's theories being typical) it remains true as an immanent problem in much music education.

In real terms performance is for a minority, but it has become a fashionable *sine qua non* of late, in response to the niceties of philosophies which define musical attainment targets, in general music education, in terms of composing, *performing* (own italics) and appraising. So well might Harry White vent his frustration: 'the cult of performance has so overtaken our sense of music (from the regiments of Suzuki to the peaks of the international competition) that our conception of music has narrowed accordingly'. And this is undoubtedly true, nor are we compensated in Ireland by any evidence of the polished performance 'problem' that actually, we are told, spawned the 'Music Education as Aesthetic Education' movement in the United States, and dichotomized the cohorts of school music learners in the process.

Harry White develops his theme by claiming that the trend in Ireland towards the North American model of the ascendancy of performance as a vehicle for music education has led to the 'conservative complaint from university teachers that standards<sup>55</sup> are already down, that school leavers know less and less as the years go by'. This would be logical if it were not for the paradoxical reality, based on reliable information, that the standard of performance is also down. But the numbers are up! In pinpointing performance as a problem area in music education, White usefully exposes a whole spectrum of related concern. He believes that the core conceptual problem with performance in general education is due to a basic confusion between instruction and education; 'the resultant destabilization of the subject in schools will ensure its minority status'. It is, nevertheless, crucial that the question of performance in music education continues to be addressed in Ireland, as elsewhere, in a way which

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<sup>55</sup> This claim about Ireland refers to the standards in school examinations, and is based on reliable statistics (from school examiners and from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment [NCCA, and again informally]). A possible explanation is that the standard is set at such an abysmally low level, to promote participation in music as a subject (and a statistic!) in second-level schools, that it only encourages high expectations for minimal work in the performance branch. It is arguable that the Voluntary National Standards in the US, if conscientiously applied with 'standard' in mind, are having the opposite effect [?]. The author feels that this is an area which is so subjective, and unquantifiable with any hope of reliability, that, beyond noting the information and the contrast, a comparative study would be fraught with difficulty and would seem well beyond the scope of the MEND enquiry and of this thesis.

does not endanger the regenerative cycle by which music as a social grace is enabled to survive and grow.

If there is a recognizable drift here towards the notion of performance, in real terms, as a specialization and as, therefore, elitist - if the embryo professional stream (e.g. music teaching) is not to be nurtured by school music as defined in curricular statements, these lacunas must be separately addressed. It is essential that these problems be recognized for what they are and that bridges be built, or barriers be deconstructed, to preserve continuum across crucial interfaces in the macrostructure of music education (as, for example, between second- and third-level music education). In the absence of a teaching cohort with the transcendental skills to incorporate performance meaningfully into school education (the Elliott ideal which has its own validity, in context, but merely as an ideal), the honest reappraisal of sham notions of performance and the restoration, or establishment, of a true balance in the menus of school music education may yet clear that vital space for listenership, without its pejorative connotations, for which Harry White so compellingly argues.

## **5.2 The Reimer/Elliott Reviews of Harry White's Paper - *A book of manners in the wilderness***

Harry White's paper (MEND Document 309), which has been exhaustively reviewed for MEND, was arguably the most provocative presentation at the MEND proceedings. When the promoters of MEND offered presenters the facility to publish their writings further, beyond the MEND boundaries, White took up this offer and, in submitting his controversial paper to the College Music Symposium (Journal of the College Music Society) in the United States, was guaranteed significant responses, which in turn could be added to the MEND analysis.<sup>56</sup> Little was it suspected that the respondents would themselves have been active participants in the MEND process itself. So it has proved to be a particularly valuable outcome of MEND that the triumvirate of Harry White, Bennett Reimer and David Elliott<sup>57</sup> should have been drawn into a fruitful philosophical dialogue which has yielded a rich harvest in terms of reidentifying most if not all of the key issues of MEND, offering comment as to their hierarchical importance in the *denouement* of the Irish music education dilemma. But Harry White's assumed role as Devil's Advocate, and a line of questioning that challenged North America to

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<sup>56</sup> Permission has been sought and granted to reprint Professor White's paper and the responses in the Appendices of MEND (Documents 308, 402 and 417 respectively).

<sup>57</sup> It is not immediately clear as to why Dr Veblen's name was added as co-author with David Elliott of his response. The material is drawn exclusively from Elliott's writings and the style is unmistakably his, as comparison with his rebuttal of Reimer's review of *Music Matters* would confirm. Equally, the commentary is not recognizable as emanating from Dr Veblen's paper at MEND. With due respect to Dr Veblen, it is assumed, for the purposes of this analysis that only the triumvirate referred to in the text above needs to be considered as providing the material for the analysis. Dr Veblen's contribution to MEND is reviewed under the appropriate

vindicate or explain its alleged growing influence in Irish music education affairs, elicited two characteristic if profoundly dissimilar responses, from Reimer and Elliott.

### 5.2.1 Bennett Reimer's Response

Reimer begins by voicing some doubt as to whether the organizers of MEND were justified in assuming that American philosophers could contribute useful ideas in an Irish music education context; and he believes that White rejects that assumption. Perhaps Reimer is being too self-deprecatory here - of himself and on behalf of his colleagues. There is a vast middle ground between White's disenchantment with the patterns of music *consumption* in North America (and its assumed connection to processes of music education in schools and at higher levels) and the possible levels of frustration amongst American music educators that their model is flawed as currently dispensed.

Deliberations at MEND had to confront the current debacle in the field of music education philosophy in North America with, it is to be hoped, beneficial results from the attempt to analyse and rationalize it. And this is precisely the context in which Reimer is very helpful. In a presentation of outstanding honesty and self-examination he allows White's concerns to boomerang back into US music education philosophy. Reimer's observations are deceptively simple and disarmingly lucid. In addressing three commanding issues, he confirms MEND findings in placing these same issues high in any agenda for the amelioration of the Irish situation. They are:

1. How does a local/national culture (a subset of the multicultural issue) influence what music education should be?
2. How can the 'pop music versus art music' issue be handled?
3. What are the appropriate roles of performing and of listening as educational objectives?

Only in the first of these questions is there a significant difference between Ireland and North America. In both countries there is a need to define cultural pluralism, whether truly multicultural or some modified form in which only a limited number of cultures is competing for the aural, mental and social space of learners/consumers. In the Irish context this issue has also been discussed under the National Music section of MEND (Agenda Item 6). Broadly speaking there needs to be absolute clarity as to whether the general Irish response to music accommodates only three genres - art, popular and traditional music - and in what proportion.

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heading (Ref. II P vi; Section 18.6; MEND Document 206).

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For comparative purposes American, or indeed any multi-ethnic, society should also be clear as to how its music education needs are being served. In other words, is multi-ethnic synonymous with multicultural and what, if any, are the truly *widely* practised strategies to include offerings from many musics in the music education curriculum? There is little doubt that these basic issues are in a confused state in both systems and are far from resolution, as Reimer freely admits in the case of the American context. He takes up the issue and makes the following points, before agreeing that ‘White cannot be faulted for characterizing American multiculturalism as being “amorphous”. We 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’.

1. Only Irish music educators can resolve, for Ireland, the issue of (multi)-culturalism, based on their own culture and history. This may be construed as a reference to the Reimer idea of Contextualism in arriving at a workable philosophy for any system of education. And note, significantly, that this is also confirmed by Elliott (Ref. II P viii; MEND Documents 208 a and b).
2. Multiculturalism is a supposed remedy for any failure to resolve the effects of cultural differences.
3. The extent of multiculturalism in education may, a) just reflect the number of cultures present and needing to be reconciled or, b) take on the universalist brief of being open potentially to all cultures. This is a vexed question, which contributes to the confusion in the US, especially over materials for multicultural education.
4. Heightened political consciousness may dictate, or be influenced to dictate, a policy of bridging the gap between traditional models of school music education and the socio-musical diversity outside the school walls. This has enormous relevance in Ireland, as elsewhere, in attempting to take cognizance of the endemic dissonances between these two streams.
5. The ‘new’ National Standards for music education in the US ‘rigorously promote diversity in the music to be encountered at all levels ... [but] choice of specific music is scrupulously left unstipulated’. It must be observed here that perusal of the American National Standards (Music Content Standards [MEND 303]) would uncover sufficient ambiguity to allow the demand for diversity to be channelled away from cultural diversity. The jealously-guarded criterion of state and even local autonomy in education would facilitate widespread ‘dodging’ of the multicultural issue, with impunity. And it is another question as to how truly widespread the acceptance and implementation of the National Standards is, in a federal sense.



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6. Few if any counter arguments to multiculturalism have appeared up to now in the US, but this situation is changing. Questions are being asked, such as “Why do it?”; “Should political/social ends be permitted to drive music education into multiculturalism to the possible detriment of intrinsically musical benefits?” (a burning Reimer question); “Can music foreign to one’s own culture be understood authentically rather than superficially or inappropriately?”; “Are we slipping into a chaos where judgement and value are no longer cherished criteria and relativism reigns supreme?”; “How can any uniformity in the approach to multiculturalism be achieved if communities, and therefore their needs, are so diverse?”; “Can repertoire be left to local discretion?”; “How can teachers be enthusiastic about music of which they have little or no experience and with which they therefore cannot identify?”; “Could such teachers be entrusted with a leadership role in a multicultural programme?”, and so on.
7. It is confirmed that there is an overwhelming dominance, at college and university level, of western classical music in American music education. This could be encouraging news (or cold comfort) for White in seeking to explain his conviction that pop music continues systematically and inexorably to replace western art music and folk music in American attitudes to listening. How can teachers accustomed to and trained in this [western art] tradition have possibly internalized musics outside of it - sufficiently to help their students to become more musically broadminded than they are likely to be themselves?

Reimer pragmatically raises a plethora of questions here. He believes that multiculturalism, certainly of the multi-ethnic variety, may be ripe for reappraisal as to its agenda and potential and as to the accuracy of its documented success. In this regard he is undoubtedly correct in counselling caution in Irish strategies, context being the only safe criterion.

### 5.2.2 Reimer on the ‘popular’ versus ‘classical’ dilemma

On the assumption that what the reader takes as meaning is of greater significance, in analysis, than what the author may have intended as the meaning in the first place, White leaves no doubt that he considers art music as superior to ‘the pop and rock forms of the present day’. Reimer relies on this muted assertion as an opening premise for his response. Again the honesty of his remarks is striking:

1. It is probable that a great many American music educators would be in sympathy with White, regarding pop music as a vast wasteland of musical mindlessness. ‘But while many might agree, few would be so boldly politically incorrect as to publicly proclaim their position (let alone with White’s pungent style)’. This is a significant point,

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highlighted by White, as to the way art music has been backed into a corner where it must almost apologize for itself; such is the force of commercialism and the people power, fomented by it, which can even threaten educational stability.

2. Popular music is seldom represented in school music, in the US, with anything like the presence and seriousness of western classical music. Its dominance in the musical life of students outside of school is quite another matter. Reimer believes that most teachers are unfamiliar with the specific ‘chart’ pop music that their students enjoy, and while they themselves may have been involved in some aspects of recent pop, as consumers and even as performers, they are not equipped with a methodology to teach it. This latter is a very significant point; a self-evident historical fact that the methodology of teaching art music is highly developed, and dies hard.

Surprisingly, having listed some of the parameters that define the pop dilemma, Reimer relinquishes it without offering any solutions. Yet his having raised the issue is sufficient to focus it as one of fundamental importance to music educators and music education. It may be that the cult mentality, in both its reactionary and milder manifestations, is inevitably pitted against the educational system as a social phenomenon, and that the best that Harry White can hope for is a stemming of the tide and the emergence of strategies to achieve some acceptable balance. Many concerns and many shades of opinion were expressed at MEND in relation to benign bridge-building which would achieve *rapprochement* in what is undoubtedly a deteriorating situation in the prospects for art music in schools. Marie McCarthy (MEND Document 307) and Patricia Shehan Campbell (MEND Document 305) were probably the most eloquent in proposing that the community and the school be linked more closely so that the traditional musical tastes characteristic of both can be brought into better alignment.

Twentieth century music educators have largely deplored, but also ignored, the issue of this troublesome dissonance, but they cannot be said to have succeeded in establishing music education (in schools) which is universally admired, availed of, and guaranteed as natural a place in educational priorities as so-called employment-orientated subjects. Harry White is to be applauded for his frankness in eschewing political correctness by raising the matter in its most controversial manifestation. And Bennett Reimer deserves praise for his ingenuousness, and courage too, in admitting that solutions are still refractory and are eluding efforts (even by the massive ‘think-tank’ that America is bringing to bear on the subject) to secure educational control over these vagaries.

### 5.2.3 Who (*sic*) is music education for? (Reimer Response)

We are on very familiar ground when the question is raised as to the appropriate prioritization of performance, *vis-à-vis* listening, in general music education. White, ignoring for his purposes the holistic nature of the best in performance teaching, prefers to point the distinction as between instruction (performing) and education (listening). The issue is ineluctable, and merits Reimer's classification as 'perhaps the central question now facing music education in the US as well as in Ireland'. Apathy towards the status of performance and lack of understanding and appreciation of its centrality in music education are listed amongst the substantive findings of the MEND initiative. Performance also, of course, marks the battle line of the wider Reimer/Elliott debate, accounting, with the addition of White, for the significance of this tripartite engagement. And here Reimer wisely warns against what he interprets (presumably from White's paper) as a current Irish tendency to promote performance as a dominant strategy finally to banish the vestiges of the imperial models which, at their worst, can be held accountable for the barren academicism typical of much Irish music education in the past.

Here Reimer and White are of one mind. While the latter couples an outcome of the 'current climate of self-expression', through performance, with a magisterial cry that 'we have ostracized the listener', Reimer still gallantly and directly expresses the same concern in a way which has invited the obloquy which Elliott would heap upon his head. It is strange that education seems no longer to be charged with the traditional duty of training listeners in the sense of ensuring that performers have appreciative audiences - currently deemed an opprobrious suggestion, requiring the ministry of euphemism to disguise its perceived discriminatory intent. But Reimer has this to say:

America's problem in regard to the health of its musical culture is certainly not a lack of excellent performers - quite the reverse! Its major problem is its marginal level of audience support for those musics outside of the popular genres. Surely a wholesale neglect by the music profession of the development of a discerning, enthusiastic audience has made the profession largely irrelevant to the actual musical lives of the vast majority of our population, which has no interest in becoming performers. Yet practically 100% of people are consumers of music, often with a great deal of ardor. The profession's disinterest in - often its disparagement of - the consumer of music remains among our major shortcomings. ... To the degree that we succeed in attaining ... a balance of learnings including but surpassing those available from performance, we will have better fulfilled our professional mission, and will serve as a better model from which other countries can gain useful insights.

While it would be foolhardy to accept Elliott's arguably distorted image of *Music Education as Aesthetic Education* (MEAE), it would be equally unsafe to lay its reputed failures at Reimer's door, just because his philosophy, first promulgated comprehensively in 1970, happens to lay out the case for an aesthetic view. Reimer is but one voice in the American chorus of philosophers and he could

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not be credited with the power, of words only, to change a whole tradition in performance, of more than a century in the making, and of which he is himself openly very proud.

Without undue exaggeration, the American system could be described, at its best and most beneficent, as freely offering performance to those who wish to take it up. And this performance module seems to have succeeded, generally, in siphoning away the talented and interested, often short-changing them on other more academic, but necessary, pursuits in music education, leaving (we are told) a complement of some 85-90% of all students, who opt out of performance. Is it this latter group, almost by definition the apathetic, who have been targeted for the benign intent of the MEAE programme (?); this is not clear. In fact, we are told, statistically, that only 2% of this cohort actually take music as teenagers (post-elementary).

These figures simply don't add up to an unambiguous statement of what the American situation has been, nor do they reveal who, in fact, are the students who are suffering from the imputed ravages of the MEAE programme. Staying with numbers, it seems logical to suggest that listeners to music produced from the 15% of performing students, many of whom take their interest right through to high-school (but few of whom go on to be professional musicians), could number almost 40 million nation-wide. This figure, providing stable audience participation, could be claimed and greeted ecstatically by music educators as a massive achievement. But this is simply not the case, while the population at large (almost 100%) are consumers of music, or so it is claimed. It is not that the others (85%) do not matter, but that they have opted out voluntarily and have been facilitated by the system in that decision.

This really did reduce music to an optional, not a mandatory, subject - an important distinction. And the sensitivity in the US about imposing educational standards federally is a further inhibitor to changing this situation, which in America produces too many performers, too few listeners and a vast population which is in neither category from an educational standpoint; the parallels with Ireland are exact as far as the latter two are concerned. According to Reimer, White's 'critique of the imbalance in Irish music education in favor of performance instruction over audience education is dead-on accurate to describe music education in the US'; but neither he nor White is correct if this is assumed to be typical of school music education in Ireland.

Reimer places great faith in the potential of the new National Standards to turn this situation around. (See Lehman [MEND Document 303] for a thorough exposé of the history and progress of this recent phase in American music education). Most significant in this regard is the fact that the music education lobby succeeded in shaming Government (no other description will suffice) into including

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music in the US Goals 2000 legislation for education. This is as near as it is possible to get, within the American system, to ensuring that music is on the agenda for adoption, state by state, as an important component in education, and equates approximately to the aspiration of our national curriculum, the most recent revision of which is currently being implemented. Reimer goes on to praise the intent behind the long battle for the recognition of music. ‘This represents a major event in our [US] history toward finally recognizing that an authentic musical education must be wider than what performance can encompass, and must be made available to the vast majority of people who are not performers. ... With the guidance of the national standards we can now hope for a more balanced, more comprehensive conception of music education to take hold, relevant to the musical needs of all rather than only of a small minority’.

Reimer, still deservedly regarded by many as the doyen of American music education, has several times revised the philosophical views he held in 1970. Far from detracting from confidence in the plausibility of such a protean stance, it is refreshing to find him so open to revision as propitious, especially in vindicating changes as timely and contextual. It should not be surprising that Reimer and White are predictably close in their views of the three commanding issues (see above) raised by Reimer as defining the world, as the Irish, dilemma irreducibly.

#### **5.2.4 David J. Elliott and Kari Veblen: Response to Harry White’s paper - *A book of manners in the wilderness***

The differences between Reimer’s view and those represented in this response could not be more sharply etched. The Elliott rebuttal is awkwardly poised with regard to the use of the first person pronoun and virtually dispenses with Veblen’s view, for it cannot be assumed that they agree on everything; at least that is the sense of its impact. And the unfortunate recurrence of invective (all too prevalent in Elliott’s defences of his philosophy), which resorts to such words as prejudice, and worse still, ignorance and arrogance in referring to the basis of White’s views, is ill-advised, offensive and unacceptable. This tendency has been seriously criticized before by respondents to Elliott’s writings (as, for example, by David Aspin when reviewing *MM* for ISME) but it seems that Elliott is unheeding, in the process rendering his own views susceptible to unnecessary hostility. This is regrettable, as Elliott is passionately sincere and has much to contribute that is worthy of sympathetic and discerning perusal.

In Elliott’s paper under discussion, we are again confronted, after a perfunctory opening gambit, with yet another defence of his praxial philosophy, almost as if White had no other thought but to demolish it. This is to misunderstand the subtlety of White’s enquiry, if not to dismiss the brief he held, which

was to define a university model of music education as an enabler in general education (music) in Ireland. But, in many ways, Elliott's commentary also provides further material, in the guise of clarification, to focus more effectively on the essential claims of his praxial philosophy; these are, nonetheless, still controversial, hotly disputed, and very far from consensus acceptance, if we are to measure their minuscule influence as enabler in the adoption and implementation of the American National Standards.

### 5.2.5 Harry White's Concerns

Look again at a paraphrase of Harry White's concerns:

1. He was asked to sketch a model for university music education. He could not do this in a vacuum.
2. It was necessary for White to anchor his arguments in causal relationships; he did this by identifying the system to which a university model might respond and by which, in turn, it would be influenced. It was natural that music education (especially in schools) and music preferences in the community would have come in for scrutiny.
3. He deplors the equation in educational ambiances of western art music and inferior music, which he identifies within the syllabi for Irish schools. He finds no justification for the lengths to which egalitarianism has progressed. (Chronologically, White's paper was being written when Elliott's book - *Music Matters* - was barely in publication. It must therefore be assumed that Elliott was mistaken in believing that White was attacking the philosophy promulgated in *Music Matters*.)
4. He is at pains to address the context of Irish music education, which he sees as 'so far behind the rest of Europe, to say nothing of North America, that apparently useful comparisons break down under the stress of near primitive conditions'. He is impatient of the 'cultural imperialism which prescribes that we abandon or drastically relegate that which we have not yet properly attained'.
5. He raises issues as to whether the total multiculturalism now so fashionable in American philosophical provenance is appropriate for Ireland; as to the current imbalance between popular and art forms which is tending to obliterate the latter in Ireland; as to the autonomous nature of the listening process which can offer real musical experience and benefit to those who engage in it for its own sake.
6. He is aware that the so-called universal model of university education has been superannuated, and he is attempting to define a new dispensation, at first by stating what

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it should not be. This focuses on the American system and its truck with indiscriminate (and as yet unstable) multiculturalism, and the legitimized wholesale infiltration of the university model there with popular music, on an equal footing with western art music, but with its grossly less sophisticated didacticism.

7. White cannot be faulted for observing (MEND 308, 5) that the ‘fundamental tenet of Elliott’s philosophy is that all music is a human activity rather than a product of that activity’. White repudiates the egalitarianism and relativism which he sees as authorized by this ‘music as process’ approach. He is concerned that Ireland has embraced the commercialism of American pop music as a social reality, but that this has not been balanced by respect for the ‘imaginary museum of musical works’ which he sees as an essential part of the university repertoire, if it is to ‘enable’ music education at large.
8. White believes that whatever the condition of music in a society happens to be, it is ultimately in the hands of educators to influence. ‘Change begins with the educators’. If it is axiomatic to consider music education as, in the first place, guided and influenced by philosophy, it is hardly surprising that his cry of pain should also throw down the gauntlet to the philosophical lobby.
9. Perhaps it is taking the aversion to total multiculturalism too far when White ‘advances Ireland’s right of access to the European tradition (after centuries of denial and neglect) over and above the interests of egalitarianism in North America’, as if the latter had no claim in cherishing the traditions of Europe to speak of. White nails his colours to the mast by providing his own theory as to the underlying cause of what he considers to be the lamentable condition of music education in Ireland; and he sees this as a continuing reflection of global trends, exemplified in Britain and America as the precedence which performance - ‘any kind of music and at any standard of competence - takes over understanding and reception. ... The deliberate eradication of this form [listening] in the interests of pragmatic self-advancement seems to me an irresponsible abnegation of the past. What most distresses me [claims White] about this high-handed repudiation of art music is the assumption that one generation is free to dispense with its obligations to the generation that follows’.
10. White’s last point, that the ministry of even a contextual philosophy of music education, the development of which is seen, in MEND terms, as a *sine qua non*, is in the nature of ‘too much theory before the fact of our deprivations’, may well be a Parthian shaft to focus, rather, on the lack of material resources (library and performance facilities) for the support of effective third level education in music in Ireland. But the imbalance which he deplors in the components of school music must surely have its origins in the

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philosophical underpinnings which dictate the curriculum. Since he believes that the model for a relevant university music education must engage in a continuum with, and be influenced by, the model being dispensed at second-level, he might be persuaded to reappraise his priorities, since without a stable all-embracing philosophical rationale chaos must result at all levels, both internally and at interfaces.

It might be expected that White's ideas, *inter alia*, about the roles of performance and listening in music education would place him on a collision course with David Elliott. And his pejorative view of most performance as scarcely meeting the criterion of competence, not to mention proficiency or expertise, is undoubtedly at variance with what Elliot would like us to accept as an outcome of his praxial philosophy. Elliott's response to White can now be more effectively analysed.

Harry White's concerns may be linked essentially to three of the most dominant parameters in education - time, judgements (and value) and the philosophies that inform those judgements. In an ambience of limited time he fears that the inevitable dilution of the hitherto cherished norm, in music education methodology, of western art music, by potentially innumerable other musics, is becoming so disproportionate that so-called high culture music is threatened with redundancy. He calls into question the judgements that sanction such an indiscriminate and relativist valuing system and by implication, philosophies that coincide with this view. In particular, and again in an obvious context of the use of time (a scarce resource), he identifies the cult of amateurish performance as contributing additionally and significantly to the neglect, if not the total eclipse, of listenership as a musical goal or autonomous activity.

White is not necessarily saying that performance should be eschewed, but he is asserting the primacy of the art work to empower a much wider range of activities, all leading to more holistic experience. In stating his case, he is not so unsubtle as to claim that the praxial philosophy is invalid, but allows his case to stand as an invitation to the reader to reach his own conclusions. He criticizes what he sees as the prevailing American mentality in musical preferences and agrees with Roehmann (though from a vastly different stance [MEND 308, 6]) that only education can change this mentality. What he does not do is rush to judgement on whether the situation in America is due to the power of commercialism, capitulation by educators, or a flawed philosophy.

White must be credited with the knowledge that there are many rival philosophies, that the defederalized nature of education in America is such as to accommodate them selectively, and that not all of them are inimical to his point of view. The philosophies that were formally presented at MEND were two - namely that of Bennett Reimer (still, presumably to be considered *prevailing* if his



involvement with the drafting of the 1994 National Standards is to carry any weight), and of David Elliott, both paraphrased from their published works.<sup>58</sup> It cannot be assumed that Elliott's *new* philosophy of 1995 has supplanted the earlier work. Since Elliott's philosophy, quite apart from the arguably parenthetical material, is generally committed to music as activity, it seems unexceptionable for White to assume that he is more process- than product-orientated - but no more.

If the openness of *Music Matters* favours total multiculturalism and a methodology that elevates performance to a superdominant position; if it refuses in general to legitimize listening as an autonomous and separate activity of value commensurate with that of performance; if it inevitably gravitates, by playing down product against process and stressing music as a human practice or activity, towards a statement of the equality of all these practices ... then it is easy to deduce that Elliott and White are mutually in counterpositions. And we have ample material, by way of documented understandings, to show that White's claim that 'the fundamental tenet of Elliott's philosophy is that music is a human activity rather than a product of the activity' is reasonable. If David Elliott now refutes that claim, it offers a revised understanding which goes part of the way towards reconciling his with other stances. This reconciliation will be attempted in the Reimer/Elliott rationalization, based on the review of *Music Matters* and its subsequent rebuttal (Chapter 6).

David Elliott seems to be presenting *The Facts of the Praxial Philosophy* as if all 'past approaches [have] failed' and he is credited as 'taking dead aim at the distinctly western notion of art objects having value in themselves' (MEND 414, 3). Much of Elliott's philosophizing in this section of his response is totally unexceptionable, and has been in circulation for some time, but he is mistaken to call into question or attempt to expose an imagined fallacy within the aesthetics of western art, *inter alia*, which has always insisted that art is not centred in the art object but in the response to it. Reimer, amongst many others, in his perception/response theory, is very clear about that.

### 5.2.6 The Idea of Music as Product

It appears, however, that Elliott's idea of product, which he defends as being fundamental to his thinking, is considerably different from and more flexible than White's. Yet it is generous, too; he wishes music to be relevant to the widest spectrum of participation and this is a worthy aim of any music education philosophy. But his insistence that 'MUSIC [see footnote 47] is a diverse human *practice*' leading to *activities* and the efforts of musical *practitioners* who '*make music*' [writer's

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<sup>58</sup> Bennett Reimer *A Philosophy of Music Education* (1970; rev 1989) and David J Elliott *Music Matters* (1995). The presentations at MEND by Professors Abeles, Colwell, Lehman and Swanwick, while they touched on philosophy, were not specifically focused on it.

italics] is palpably to elevate process above its results - namely 'products, works or listenables'. This is the thrust of his phraseology, however he wishes to temper it for his purposes. And he *has* 'ostracized the listener', simply because he pejoratively plays down listening alone as making music - a negation of the aspirations of the 100% who indulge it. One may tolerate his rejection of Music Education as Aesthetic Education (MEAE) on *his* evaluation as valid 'scholarly difference of opinion' but it is not acceptable that the listener who, after all, creates the music in his response, should be so summarily excluded from music making except when he doubles his role by being a performer (improviser, composer, arranger, or conductor).

While not everyone would agree that music should be aligned with the social sciences, Elliott's praxial philosophy is attractive in having pillaged the literature, for our benefit, to highlight the social-cultural dimension of music. There is a need, not so much to repudiate the inflexible aesthetic approach to music as to expand it to fit other contexts and functions. But Elliott, unfortunately, seems intent on purging music education of the very notion of aesthetic response - or so it reads from the pungency of his rhetoric whenever he focuses on it. The writer is convinced that there is sufficient in the quieter backwaters of Elliott's opus to bring about reconciliation on this issue also. And it is surely interesting to point out that, in considering the Reimer/Elliott hybrid statement (MEND Phase II [MEND 603]) that philosophy is itself protean, Elliott is aiming at a moving object when he levels his criticisms at Reimer, who has gone through many acceptable and courageous metamorphoses since the publication of his 1970 book, and even its 1989 revision.

### **5.2.7 Diversity and Multiculturalism: 'The Innate Equality of all Musics'**

The multicultural case is by no means cut-and-dried; but neither is it the intellectual property of David Elliott. There are indeed several senses of music that must be urgently considered and reviewed. The writer doubts if either Reimer or White would have any problems in accepting the reality that music may be considered in the contexts of human intent, artistic-social process/event, artistic/social product, and social-cultural communities of action, achievement and evaluation. Nor is there an argument against Elliott's statement that 'musical works and the musicianship required to interpret, listen to [this being an ambiguous activity in Elliott's definition] and make musical works originates in the contexts of identifiable music cultures. In this view, MUSIC (writ large) is multicultural in essence'. It is his proposal (which is a *non sequitur*) that, *therefore*, 'music education ought to be centrally concerned with inducting students into a *reasonable* diversity of music cultures during students' educational careers' that is open to challenge, and especially so in the context of available time. The idea may be attractive to some and a logical outcome of following the praxial philosophy, but is it practical? Much depends on what *reasonable* diversity means. In the context of Harry White's fears about the dilution,

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if not the annihilation, of the primary and, for many, the music-fostering culture, this proposal has to be treated with circumspection.

On the question of *Musical Diversity and Music Education* (Elliott's next heading), we are again confronted by a mixture of well rehearsed wisdom which has been current for a long time and which Elliott cannot, and presumably would not, claim as his intellectual property. But, in the first place, the opening paragraph is an unfair exaggeration of White's point. White speaks of *difference* and it is true that he also speaks of *privilege*, but surely in the sense that western art music has now been reduced to articulating its claim to the privilege of survival; it is the threat to western art music that concerns him and not necessarily the rejection of other music cultures. And it is interesting that Elliott even extols, in context, the virtues of 'belonging to and living deeply in a particular [monocultural] way of musical life [as] something to be cherished'.

Elliott's comparison between languages and Musics<sup>59</sup> is not convincing as he gravitates towards his theory that 'no Music is innately superior to any other'. While one can give guarded support to this claim while the qualifier, *innately*, is included, that is not the condition of Musics which is being compared. We are not considering Musics *ab initio*, but in their developed states. And there are philosophical principles which command respect in making judgements, notably in Immanuel Kant's *Analytic of the Beautiful*<sup>60</sup>, and which stipulate, *inter alia*, that the judges should be recognized experts in the field [or multiple field]; that they should be free from emotional involvement with any of the subjects being judged; and that some criterion should be agreed or accepted in claiming universal validity - from a consensus that approaches unanimity. These seem to be pragmatic criteria which *are* attainable.

Few would deny that the dozen or so most dominant spoken languages are also the most developed, for reasons of the richness of their vocabulary and/or their literature. There may be genuine differences of opinion as to their relative excellence (Elliott makes the point), state of development or whatever else we choose to call the criterion. But a hierarchy of some kind will emerge, and precisely because of this fact, in the case of Musics, the cult of ethnomusicology stoutly defends the rights of the minority to parity of esteem; after all, that is a natural outcome of working in that branch of the art.

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<sup>59</sup> Elliott's idiosyncratic nomenclature for the nature of music, combining 'musical practices, products, processes and contexts' is retained here. He refers hierarchically to MUSIC (a diverse human practice), Music (the individual practices each combining *music making* and music listening) and music (products, works, or listenables).

<sup>60</sup> Details of Kant's important theory can be found in the List of Sources under Hofstadter and LeHuray.

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Multiculturalism is a noble aspiration but, if it seeks to enhance the esteem of all Musics collectively by a process of levelling down rather than setting challenges to develop on an upward trend, it invites serious losses in the total achievement of the combined enterprise. When Harry White says, ‘Historians of music are not much concerned with implausible theories of musical superiority. Nor should they be; they are a waste of time and intellect. ... Abstract notions of musical superiority are self-evidently reprehensible’, he may be suspected of disingenuousness. However, the fact remains that David Elliott’s stance as to the equality of all musical practices, based partly on the supporting quotation from Slobin and Titon (‘it would be foolish to say that any one music-culture was “better” than another’ [MEND 208a, 6]) can be challenged and solved by the Kantian method.

If Elliott’s dream of a multicultural musical world of education were to be even minimally achieved, there would be a sufficient number of true multiculturalists who could pronounce authoritatively on such questions. The answers will not and should not amount to a dismissal of the lesser; there are always contextual reasons why all cultures should be cherished in the appropriate setting. Deciding on what that setting should be, and the factors that confer privilege upon it, is one of the challenges that faces music educators both globally and locally; it is at the heart of White’s rhetoric. And David Elliott corroborates the pragmatic approach; there is nothing surprising or *new* about much of this reiterated wisdom, but Elliott does introduce some useful concepts in addition to a raft of controversial, conjectural, unproved and therefore challengeable material. Thus the idea of the equality of all musical practices, a foundational principle of the Elliott philosophy, may not be taken as indisputable; and it appears, from Elliott’s placatory words (see below) that he does not wish to impose his views. The following is a summary of what might be inferred from his rhetoric:

1. If the socio-cultural and multicultural approaches to music education are desired (a controversial stance) then they should proceed in the belief ‘that fundamentally all musics are good, and we should compare them ... by what message they bring from their society’ (Bruno Nettl). ‘Each music-culture is a particular adaptation to particular circumstances. ... Ethnocentrism has no place in the study of world music. (Elliott again quotes Mark Slobin and Jeff Todd Titon [MEND208a, 6]).
2. Some musical practices may be educationally more appropriate than others (Elliott). There is room here for scholarly difference and, more importantly, for rapprochement between White and Elliott. ‘Teachers and students work in relation to a variety of constraints - practical, curricular, moral, social, cultural, ideological, political.’ Here Elliott, in recognizing the non-uniform nature of the challenge, is refreshingly non-prescriptive.

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3. ‘It is essential for musical self-growth that novices achieve a match between their nascent levels of musicianship and the first challenges they meet in music education curricula. ... teachers should take account of a student’s immediate musical contexts’ (Elliott). This useful principle is generally applicable to all musical challenges and is clearly enunciated and developed by Elliott in Chapter 5 of *Music Matters*, with illustrations on pp122 and 132.
4. ‘ ... musical diversity should not be sought at the expense of musical depth’. This eminently practical piece of advice is, of course, double-edged, and could lead to Elliott being hoist with his own petard. As Elliott proceeds along this common-sense path, it is difficult to reconcile his suggestions with the wider aspirations of his praxial philosophy. The passage on pp 68-69 (*MM*) should be read in its entirety for some sound rationality and real wisdom. The following are selected extracts to capture its pertinence and general applicability.

When curricular time and resources are limited, the praxial philosophy supports an emphasis on musical depth over breadth. Teachers’ central responsibility is to deepen students’ musicianship. ... Thus, and in addition to the obvious criteria of students’ interests, the availability of authentic repertoire, and a teacher’s knowledge and/or disposition to learn new Musics over time, it makes perfect sense to emphasize the musical practices of one’s local culture as a basis for music teaching and learning.

This raises many questions which dictate a departure from the full-blown praxial rationale, leaving some doubt as to how many variations are possible in applying the praxial philosophy. If it is too loose in its essentials it begins to disintegrate in favour of a liberal contextuality, tending towards relativism. This is what Elliott has to say:

The praxial philosophy supports the comprehensive study of people’s most familiar and treasured musical traditions. At the same time, however, there are four basic reasons why the long-term scope of music curricula ought to include a wider diversity of music cultures: (a) MUSIC is a diverse human practice; (b) induction into unfamiliar Musics links the values of music education with the values of humanistic education (Elliott, 1995, p.209); (c) the self-identity of individuals in a music class *may* [writer’s italics] benefit from affirming individual music-culture identities (pp. 211-212); and (d) the development of musical creativity can advance significantly when students realize how music is made and valued in other cultures.

Clearly the praxial philosophy does not advocate musical diversity at the expense of teaching a people’s indigenous musics. Also, in my presentation of these views in Dublin I emphasized that I was not interested in imposing any views on my Irish colleagues. To do so would be contrary to the themes of curriculum making I advocate, including the praxial emphasis on local decision making by reflective music practitioners. ... these decisions call for reflective music educators teaching in critically reflective ways.

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While there is no doubt about Elliott's intention to be universalistic and prescriptive, in turn, about aspects of his own philosophy, and why no other will do, it is fatuous to suppose that his dismissive attitude to counterpositions lies well with such statements as not being 'interested in imposing any views on [his] Irish colleagues' and 'I advocate ... local decision making by reflective music teachers. ... I propose that teachers decide issues of repertoire, teaching strategies and so on; ... these decisions call for music educators teaching in critically reflective ways'. Surely critical reflection suggests the exercise of judgement, valuing and choice; and teaching strategies are the natural outcomes of an informing philosophy towards which eclecticism is a plausible approach? As Elliott himself said in his revised presentation at MEND (Document 208a): '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' (MEND Document 208a, 1); that presumably allows for disagreement with the theory and advice in the first place.

### 5.2.8 Context and the Aesthetic

It would be reassuring to know that Elliott has a liberal attitude to possible outcomes of what he is apparently sanctioning - a contextual philosophy. There is sufficient in what he is saying here to identify an accommodation of Harry White's aspiration and plea for the protection of the aesthetic, although he rejects White's notion of the 'privileged position of art music' on the basis of an equally, if not more, challengeable assertion about 'the innate equality of all music practices' and the criteria they invoke. And it is also worth noting that not one of his four reasons, given above, for diversifying into multicultural music education, has general acceptance. Two of them are purely speculative. For example, the use of language and medicine are both diverse, indeed universal, human practices, but in neither case is their diversity rammed down the throats of learners, even at professional levels. Why? Because in both cases there are understandings about a hierarchy and there are pragmatic limitations as to prioritization, both in turn a reflection of the relationship between the time factor and feasibility. And the linking of the values of music education with those of humanistic education is surely achievable even within a single culture; and it is questionable as to whether this criterion should take precedence, in any case, over aims based on imparting music's intrinsic benefits. Clearly there is a need for rationalization to establish what, exactly, Elliott means, and to purge his offering of ambiguity.

### 5.2.9 Listening as a Hybrid Activity

It is in the final section, *Musicing, Listening and Music Education*, that Elliott reveals himself most palpably, by proposing and claiming in relation to ‘all forms of music making ...[that] music education should enable all music students to achieve the values of music by developing their musicianship and listenership in direct relation to: performing-and-listening, improvising-and-listening, composing-and-listening, arranging-and-listening and conducting-and-listening. I propose that “all music students (including so-called general 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.”’

The intent of this statement is, of course, in direct conflict with Elliott’s apparently liberal sanction that ‘teachers ... decide issues of repertoire, teaching strategies and so on’. And it is not just prescriptive: it is also exclusive. Seen in the light of White’s defence of listening as an art in itself, Elliott’s curriculum-as-practicum is arguably as narrow as any of the philosophically-based strategies that he attacks, notably MEAE (Elliott’s view). Three astounding dicta emerge unambiguously from this single statement, with the intended force of precept. Their effect is that:

1. Listening as an activity in its own right is not just ostracized as a form of music making; it is excluded, albeit revalidated, in a narrow definition and in a typical Elliott backtracking disclaimer, in the next paragraph. And this is a constantly exasperating outcome of Elliott readings. He could be respected, even admired, for the courage of his iconoclastic outbursts, but when he attempts to cover his tracks in the fear of advantaging his critics (see also later), he emasculates the impact of his views.
2. While occasionally Elliott omits to add the parenthetical (composing, improvising, arranging and conducting) to his basic concern with performing as dominant activity, he clearly states here that while these other forms of music making are valid (as they are), ‘students ought to be taught ... as reflective musical practitioners ... engaged in musical performance particularly’. He is clearly championing performance; the case for the other activities is only flimsily developed, by comparison, but here they are finally deprioritized.
3. There is no room for choice or specialization. ‘All music students (including so-called general music students) ought to be taught in essentially the same way’.

Elliott’s obvious obsession with distancing himself from his chosen interpretation of how MEAE operates has resulted in a very inconclusive, incomplete and woolly definition of listening, especially

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of listening *per se*. That he has a vested interest in being *different* is clear from the very title of his book, which purports to be a *new* philosophy. But it is axiomatic that listening be taught and practised within all the activities that he lists. Listening is cognitive by definition and musical activities do not exist in a vacuum of pure sensation; indeed they scarcely function at all in the absence of listening. So there is nothing *new* in Elliott's philosophy from this standpoint. But to suggest that listening to recorded music (which after all stands proxy, and very effectively, too, thanks to the miracle of digital reproduction, for live music) cannot be regarded as the fullest kind of music listening is an affront to the countless millions whose only music making it is, and to the professional efforts of the teachers who teach it professionally, musically and comprehensively.

It is even arguable that listening without the added distraction of having to make the music physically oneself is a highly concentrated and beneficial mode of learning how to perform. Of course the exercise is also necessary in reverse; the physical must be re-imposed progressively but the two methods, in all their permutations, are indispensable for performers and especially for artistic performance, which is Elliott's admirable objective. Nor is there an appreciable difference from the pronouncements of Reimer when Elliott, by a gradual slippage, first advocates listening to recorded music as an allowable option (though only at first in conjunction with his five practices [performing, composing etc.], and specifically in relation to the works they are dealing with), then praises the use of verbal and graphic descriptions, which he vilifies elsewhere, and finally moves on 'to recordings of related works and, then, [to] listening more widely inside and outside the musical practices students are learning in class'. This comprehensive routine is time-intensive and well beyond the capability of the general music programme to deliver<sup>61</sup>. But if we are generous enough (as Elliott should be since he is constantly recommending that teachers be trusted to do their job professionally and effectively) to credit so-called MEAE teachers with teaching to listen *for* - critically, reflectively and artistically, we must surely be making it well nigh impossible to detect that finest of distinctions between what Elliott recommends and what he abhors.

It might be claimed that Elliott *plays down* the importance of listening *per se*; in this he is in direct conflict with White and, not surprisingly, never reaches rapprochement with White's views. But to play down listening of the kind White yearns for is to deny its integrity, as for example when he (Elliott) proposes that listening be '*deliberately and systematically* taught in the context of authentic music making because four of the five kinds of cognition involved in music listening are situated forms of knowing.' (See Chapter 3 of *Music Matters* for details). Without going into lengthy

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<sup>61</sup> Another example of pure idealism in this respect is outlined (in 5.5.6) in Elliott's routines for teaching a Zulu song. The author struggles to envisage a time dimension unfolding manageably from such an aspiration, so redolent is it of the specialized study (ethnomusological in this case) more appropriate to the undergraduate level (or higher) described by Shehan Campbell and Santos in their presentations ( MEND 305 and 207).



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explanations of what these forms of knowing are, the writer suggests that Elliott's five forms of knowing are as easily and perfectly applicable to the process of listening as they are to his five hybrid pairs (performance-and-listening, and so on). His omission of listening as a holistic activity in itself, and as worthy of addition to his five-fold list of co-dependent pairs (e.g. composing-and-listening) is in itself a significant statement that he must account for. And it is significant, too, that the majority of his critics see this as his stance.

It ought to be emphasized again that a reader must be able to extract from any philosophy, but especially from one as daunting, in the reading, and as complex and multi-faceted as Elliott's, a commanding, mainstream, line of thought, divested of its panoply of minor options. Even the most diligent reader may be mistaken, but the responsibility for the misunderstanding must largely rest with the author. As Elliott says: - 'Music students can achieve competent, proficient and expert levels of music-listening.' But to teach and learn this kind of thinking effectively requires that its development be embedded in efforts to develop musicianship through performing, improvising, etc. (*Music Matters*, p. 106). Could anything be more clear or devoid of the possibility of misinterpretation?

The writer, while readily accepting that these hybrid activities are a part of the paraphernalia of teaching and learning to listen, doubts that they fully or individually meet the criterion of being either necessary or sufficient; the educational matrix is incomplete and therefore calls into serious question the plausibility and reliability of this aspect of Elliott's methodological claims. Elliott's claim that 'in reality, then, my concern for music listening as praxis - the nature, values, teaching and learning of music listening - outweighs the attention I give to any other topic' can be taken on its face value. If, in relation to this claim, it is assumed that Elliott's irreducible ideas of praxis as proceeding from music as a diverse human practice to mandatory multiculturalism (which is ill-at-ease with the predominantly western idea of listening *per se* - the pejorative notion of developing 'passive' listeners) - to music as predominantly and functionally a process rather than product-generated; if the seriously restricted and therefore arguably flawed definition of listening that proceeds from Elliott's line of argument is arrived at and sincerely rejected, it must be cold comfort to him that his efforts have been so lavish, but so futile in failing to convince universally.

In answering White's concerns, Elliott side-steps the issue of the established ascendancy of pop as a threat to the stability of traditional music education as much as being a phenomenon that must be reconciled within it. He is unapologetic about the validity of multiculturalism as a tool of music education, but inconclusive (as indeed Reimer was, but by admission) as to how it can be invaginated within the time constraints of the subject in schools. His polar position on listening, as needing the mediation of an active phase (in his view) of music-making to validate it, ensured that he would not

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concede that White has a point to make. But his valedictory statements reveal conclusively that it is not White, but Reimer (whom he identifies with MEAE) who is his real *bête noire*. In a characteristic and unmerited piece of invective, he concludes that ‘White’s concerns ... about music education’s lack of attention to ... the development of “informed listenership” can be traced in large part to the theoretical and practical weaknesses of the aesthetic philosophy in which listening to recorded music for structural elements takes precedence in general music and performing is reduced to an activity of mere sound-producing’.

The writer just does not find this interpretation to be the case, based on readings of Reimer, regardless of the realities of American music education curricula, the delivery of which could, however, very well be at considerable variance with their published intent. But Elliott’s attack does not merit a response. There is little difference in essence between White’s focus on poor performance programmes (a reality in the Irish system) without crediting the work of a small cadre of teachers who excel - and Elliott’s singling out of this excellence while ignoring the more typical situation. However, White, in pinpointing the majority case, is nearer to the truth that must be addressed, in philosophical pronouncements as much as in the classroom. The same applies to Elliott’s rejection of White’s observation that university courses in Canada are now, typically, being forced into remedial action for freshmen who are poorly equipped for third level studies because of performance programmes in schools that deprive them of the ancillary essentials of a rounded education in musicianship.

White is an astute observer and a scholar of renown, and he is not disavowing the ‘work of hundreds of excellent music educators leading comprehensive programs that send well-educated young musicians to study the diversity of musics we teach at the University of Toronto ...’ He is merely trying to highlight the incompatibility between the sometimes extreme ‘performance only’ mentality in North America (which at least emphasizes performance for those who have chosen it) and the university model which must restore a balance. In this context, David Elliott’s Parthian shaft, in summing up White’s concerns and his articulation of them, is extremely distasteful. In detracting from his own credibility and status as a scholar bound by the conventions of seemingly critical behaviour, he does little to advance his own cause or to entice music educators to study his theories.

### 5.2.10 Conclusion - White/Reimer/Elliott

In the introduction to his *Music: Society: Education*,<sup>62</sup> described as ‘an important stunningly original book certain to provoke debate, for it is an unflattering mirror of our time’, the New Zealander Christopher Small pens these obviously cautionary words:

It is generally acknowledged that the musical tradition of post -Renaissance Europe and her offshoots is one of the most brilliant and astonishing cultural phenomena of human history. ... It is understandable, therefore, for those of us who are its heirs (which includes not only the Americas and many late and present colonies of Europe but also by now a large portion of the non-western world as well) are inclined to find in the European musical tradition the norm and ideal for all musical experience, just as they find in the attitudes of western science the paradigm for the acquisition of all knowledge, and to view all other musical cultures as at best exotic and odd. It is precisely this inbuilt certainty of the superiority of European culture to all others that has given Europeans, and lately their American heirs, the confidence to undertake the cultural colonization of the world and the imposition of European values and habits of thought on the whole human race.

This is a pre-1977 view of great perception, predating the obsession with multiculturalism which has swept the world of music education in the quarter of a century which has followed it. Small, in a brilliant account, could easily be aligned with David Elliott in his plea for reappraisal and a new order. Writing for the average reader, he describes the function and social role (key ideas) of music in radically new terms for their time, including a defence of ‘music as process’, and he inveighs against the perceived excesses of the ‘music as product’ lobby. But he carefully prefaces his provocative stance with that reference to the paradigm of western art music as ‘one of the most brilliant and astonishing cultural phenomena of human history’.

The exhaustive review, which follows, of the kaleidoscopic philosophical engagement between Harry White, Bennett Reimer and David Elliott will take its cue from Small’s prefatory words. There is an obligation on the world of music education to preserve its rich legacy of western art music, quite apart from its attentions to other forms. Reimer has analysed its aesthetic significance impressively, and from his fundamental wisdom an order may be seen to have developed, for it has remained virtually unchallenged for more than a quarter of a century. Harry White has gallantly and idealistically formulated a plea for its survival, which he sees as seriously threatened by current trends. There is much of value in his arguably, but perhaps consciously blinkered, approach to stemming the encroaching tide of cultural and ethnomusicological offerings which compete for the impossibly straitened time allocations for music in general education. The writer sees White’s urgent plea as stimulated by the spirit of conservation - less by a desire to banish other worthwhile musics from the places of learning; he does not suggest easy options. David Elliott is the evangelist of the new order,

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<sup>62</sup> Christopher Small, *Music: Society: Education*. London: John Calder Ltd, 1977 and 1980, 1.

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prefigured to an extent in Small's prophetic writings. The writer's conclusion is that all three must be taken seriously.

Reimer has certainly moved away from the somewhat dated paradigm of the 1970 aesthetic dictum contained in his book - *A Philosophy of Music Education* - and it is greatly to his credit that he has had the flexibility and the philosophical honesty to do so. As Keith Swanwick has so elegantly and flatteringly phrased his euphemism: 'There may have been some underlying conceptual confusion and perhaps the paradigm has done its main work and could be laid aside' (MEND 304, 11). Times have changed, and with them the social order. Pure aesthetic theory, with its wealth of philosophical support from a distinguished array of commentators - from Schopenhauer to Hegel,<sup>63</sup> from Collingwood to Dewey, from Meyer to Langer - is no longer in phase with the wider and fashionable concepts of the nature and significance of music in human discourse; it needs not to be abandoned, but to expand its understandings to admit other aspects of the functions of music without doing irreparable violence to its cherished principles.

Elliott, though he might not see himself quite in that role, has essayed this flexure in the potential of music education by a serious and at times brilliant reappraisal of many of the fundamentals of music and music education. He has done this, for this writer at least, in spite of some serious reservations arrived at in this analysis. He may have overshot the target in his enthusiasm, as he has certainly antagonized many of his colleagues unnecessarily by the carelessly dismissive aggression with which he rejects *some* of his direct philosophical forebears and *all* of those who, in paying him the considerable compliment of examining his theories seriously, find them wanting in some aspect or other.

White, through the helpful mediation of Reimer, has brought the real issues - multiculturalism, pop music versus western art music, the nature of performance and listening - clearly under the lens of philosophical scrutiny, but also close to the bone of staunchly held philosophical difference. He has thus been the provocative catalyst in stimulating a further survey of the ground between the perceived polar positions of Reimer and Elliott, where some rationalization, better mutual understandings and compromise may lead to solutions that could be near at hand.

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<sup>63</sup> For readings on Schopenhauer and Hegel, the reader is referred to (eds) Hofstadter and Kuhns (1964); Beardsley (1966) and Le Huray and Day (1988).

### 5.3 Aesthetic Education: Past, Present, and Potential for the Future

**Dr Bennett Reimer (Professor of Music Education at Northwestern University, Evanston, Chicago, Illinois) [MEND 203]**

Reimer's paper was reviewed very favourably in the Interim Report of MEND Phase II (MEND 603). It is fascinating to recall its detail in the light of the subsequent exchanges between himself and David Elliott and their responses to Harry White's paper *A book of manners in the wilderness*, given at MEND Phase III (MEND 309). And it is interesting, too, to compare this 1995 statement with Reimer's considerably expanded palette when he addressed the aspiration of a universal philosophy of music education at the 1996 ISME Conference in Amsterdam (MEND 401). Although there is change, it is generally negotiated without inconsistency.

It is very significant that Reimer's *Philosophy of Music Education* (1970, rev. 1989), which masterfully correlated and significantly added to the ideas of distinguished philosophical thinkers who were active in the three decades or so before the publication of his book, not only informed the influential Music Education as Aesthetic Education (MEAE) Movement in the US but remained a unique and virtually unchallenged statement for a quarter of a century<sup>64</sup>. It has been enormously influential and must be credited with the tacit approval of more than a full generation of scholars - a notable achievement in a field so currently active as the philosophical lobby in the United States. One should feel confident, therefore, that it encapsulates wisdom of an enduring kind, while mustering the forces of a sharp intellect in examining a challenge. Reimer must be acknowledged for the gifts of simplicity in presentation, clarity, lucidity, easy logic, accessibility and applicability which suffuse his writings, making them acceptable as seminal statements in their time. And there is little substantive evidence that, although they have been challenged, they have been superannuated in American music education practice.

When Reimer clears a way for the exposition of an evolving philosophy of aesthetic music education, his pragmatism is evident in sometimes quite subtle shifts of emphasis which reflect the concurrent evolution of social/cultural and political/cultural values. Thus we find rejection of the extrinsic values of music in education being replaced by cautious inclusion; the transfer of formalism to its mitigated version of relating to the Langerian 'forms of human feeling'; the advocacy of 'classical' music

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<sup>64</sup> In his review (1996) of David Elliott's *Music Matters*, Reimer acknowledges it as 'an important and interesting event in the history of music education scholarship, because it brings to an end a very long period during which only one book, entirely devoted to the explication and application of a philosophical viewpoint on music education, my own *A Philosophy of Music Education*, was widely recognized to exist, at least in North

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yielding seamlessly to the politically more correct multicultural model; the dominance of performance (based on the outmoded nineteenth century perceptions of its indispensability for familiarization with repertoire) giving way to the legitimate promotion of a wider range of experiences, without, however, dispensing with the performance option; emotional discharge transmuted into the expressive possibilities of embodied feelings; the substitution of the trade (training) idea of music education by the professional (reflective; see Mary Lennon [MEND 114]). All these essentially fluid positions are validated by Reimer's statement that 'aesthetic education, then, is not a dogma, or a fixed set of beliefs and actions, but an ever-changing, ever developing position that music is worthy of serious attempts to learn it, and that education in music include musical learning if its unique benefits are to be available to all'. This, it seems, is basic to the agenda of the position that Reimer holds, and seems unexceptionable.

The adaptability of Reimer's criteria for *quality* in music is particularly attractive and is open to application in all kinds of judgements of musical repertoire suitable in education. By using craftsmanship, sensitivity, imagination and authenticity<sup>65</sup> (another laudable shift from the 1970 position)<sup>66</sup>- 'characteristics sufficiently broad to apply to all the world's music' - 'a powerful means for making substantive and defensible judgements of merit exists'.

Reimer replaces the preoccupation with performance, skills and repertoire by the Tylerian and neo-Tylerian model of structure-of-discipline and concepts as organizers of learning. This, he claims, enabled music study to become more organized and pedagogically defensible than had ever previously been possible, and enabled music education to expand its notion of music curriculum dramatically. This form of prescription is attacked by Elliott as 'resulting in a steady stream of "teacher-proof" curricula that continues to flow to the present day'.<sup>67</sup> It is arguable, however, that the idea, limiting as it may be and too redolent of the 'verbal concepts' approach for the small percentage of teachers who may prefer to transcend it in their personally imaginative methodology, is probably welcomed by most teachers, who prefer prescription over the responsibility of liberal choice. The prevailing attitude of the majority of teachers is an important consideration and, if we are to take the climate at MEND as indicative of Irish feeling on the subject, it would favour the Reimer model.

Reimer's final contribution to overcoming former insufficiencies in music education proposes a balanced approach to teaching for variety and comprehensiveness which he defines under the headings

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America'.

<sup>65</sup> The question of authenticity requires another shift in definition to accommodate the more recent claim by ethnomusicologists that the implied dichotomy is largely artificial, biased and negatively value-laden.

<sup>66</sup> Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education* (1970), 103.

<sup>67</sup> Elliott, *Music Matters*, 244.

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of knowing *how* and knowing *within*, knowing *about* and knowing *why*. This approach, he suggests, suffices for all involvements and learnings, whether relating to general music education or in elective experiences across particular aspects of music (performing, composing, etc.).

In his peroration Reimer mentions the unfinished agenda of music education and indeed puts a pragmatic finger on the pulse of current concerns, not only in the United States but in Ireland too, albeit not always in an identical context:

1. He recommends that teachers in training should be exposed to readings on the philosophy of music education in order better to understand the reasons underpinning their pending decisions and to act as advocates for quality music education. (See also Abeles, MEND 302.)
2. He gives cautious support to the idea of promoting musics of the world's cultures - cautious in the sense of his pragmatic awareness of the difficulties involved in a relatively young discipline. Implicit are his concerns about suitable ethnic choices, appropriate repertoire and the inexperience of the vast majority of teachers (including those in the United States). This problem, referred to above under the Irish context, would, of course, present a different dimension for Irish music educators - one that needs urgent consideration, taking into account the importunity of the multicultural lobby in turning to its advantage the politically correct pronouncements concerning the relevance of other musics.
3. Reimer is conscious of the destabilizing effects of obsession with performance. Although there is a very different view, as articulated above, in Ireland, being in a sense on the other side of that coin, his warning might be heeded about perpetuating modes of instruction which are in themselves restricting, and efforts applied, as seems to be the case, to the fertilization of academically-based curricula with more experiential involvements with music. There is little likelihood in Ireland, in the foreseeable future, of high quality performance in schools, or the professional interests of performance teachers, being a negative burden on the comprehensiveness of music education. Reimer's admonitions might be generically classified as concern for the relevance of teacher training, also referred to above in the Irish context.
4. The question of equal opportunity is an issue very close to the heart of all Irish music educators and needs no special emphasis.

It is the immediacy and the common-sense of Bennett Reimer's philosophical dialectic that so commends it for serious consideration. And it is worth reiterating that his leadership, which is neither

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dictatorial nor claustrophobic when exerted in a benign climate, has had no small part in the shaping of American music education in the past three decades. Reimer's work seems to have had the long-standing admiration and support of a critical profession and it is still influential in the underlying rationale of the American National Standards, which are likely to dominate music education effort in the US for 'several decades' (Reimer [MEND 203, 6]). Reimer tacitly and anonymously acknowledges the challenge of Elliott in his MEND address, in a way which is almost inconsequential. His 1996 book review, a retaliation to Elliott's iconoclastic attack in *Music Matters*, is, on the other hand, much more in the open, as is the Amsterdam statement which, in tending to destabilize itself and thus the whole thrust of an otherwise scholarly and impeccable presentation, acknowledged that the Elliott challenge was to be taken seriously, since he himself, in taking notice of it, had so perceived its threat as a real one.

There is an exact parallel to the American National Standards for schools in the promulgation of revised music syllabi<sup>68</sup> in Ireland, completed (1999) with the issue of the Primary Schools documents. The Irish problem is not, as in the US, one of advocacy for their adoption since there is a *national* curriculum. The concern of music educators in Ireland should be to keep the implemented curriculum under active and constructive review as to its philosophical underpinnings and to try to influence ongoing policies and effect necessary modification (as provided for in the NCCA manifesto, confirmed by the chairman of the Music Syllabus Committee, Seán MacLiam) as our continuing absorption of philosophical pronouncements matures.

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<sup>68</sup> The groundwork for these revisions was carried out before the MEND Initiative took place. Problems with the delivery of the curriculum (especially with Senior Cycle) were debated copiously at MEND (though obviously not in a comparative sense, which would not have been possible at that time) and recommendations made; these are fully reported in the 'docs' section of the CD-ROM. The problem in Ireland has always been (see *Deaf Ears?*) a poor correspondence between the promulgated (intended) and the delivered curriculum (a disparity nicely pointed up by Colwell in his presentation [MEND 209]). A government White Paper (1995) on the subject showed concern that resourcing of the curriculum, especially in the matter of teacher support and in-service training, needed to be increased. There are still problems in the delivery of the curriculum. The discovery at MEND Phase I that Irish music educators were, in general, not philosophically oriented, leads to the certainty that Irish documents predating MEND would not have been informed by rationalized philosophy, if indeed it would have been adopted as a fundamental in the first place. After the event, so to speak, the application of MEND Findings and Recommendations must await the next 'round' of revisions. The MEND Report and this thesis must therefore remain archival until such steps are mooted. As noted in the Final Recommendations of this thesis, there is scope for new researchers to make the comparison between operative curricula (published or delivered!) and the MEND paradigm to inform the decisions of the future. The adoption of the MEND Report by the Forum for Music is obviously of great importance in this context.



## 5.4 Music Education, Music Performance, and the Irish Music Educator

**Professor David Elliott (Professor of Music and Music Education, University of Toronto; currently [1995] visiting Professor at the University of North Texas at Denton) [MEND 208]**

It is imperative to have a cadre of teachers who themselves ‘embody’ the knowledge that they are expected to teach.

*Howard Gardner, quoted by David Elliott*

It may seem that the philosophy of music education as emanating from the North American Continent disproportionately dominated the deliberations of MEND and that it continues to exert too much influence, if not to the point of distortion, on the analysis of proceedings with a specifically Irish relevance in mind. It is true that ‘any peg will do to hang one’s hat on’ - to get a point across, so to speak - provided the context is clearly established. Paul Lehman (MEND 303) states it with consummate succinctness: ‘Philosophy and practice are mutually reinforcing because philosophy provides a basis for practice and practice provides an opportunity to test and validate philosophy’.

But the process by which philosophy transmutes into practice is considerably more fraught than the scholarly and clinically isolated exercise of developing rational underpinning in the first place. There is copious evidence, not so much as to how philosophy has failed in practice, as to how practice has deviated from ideology. The post-MEND III readings have clearly illustrated how North American experiences, in highlighting these dissonances, from the beginning of the twentieth century right up to the publication of Elliott’s *Music Matters* (in 1995, the year in which he addressed MEND), can be usefully applied to the whole Irish dilemma to discover fascinating and helpful correlations.<sup>69</sup> This might be said to revolve around the nature of performance. The reader is again referred to the papers given by Reimer (MEND 203), Straub (MEND 205) and Lehman (MEND 303).

1. It appears that, in the midst of an uncharted conflict between music educators and the great American public, ‘instrumental music became a fixture (in schools) in the early 20th century because kids enjoyed playing instruments’ (Lehman). But this is not a simple, unexceptionable fact. If we peruse the above readings it can be learned that this answered

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<sup>69</sup> The applicability to Ireland of American experience and practice has been copiously defended in this thesis. Harry White was a formidable sceptic in this regard. For instance, as stated in 6.7.5 (The Relevance of American Music Education Practice), ‘. . . 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 in MEND 108] is also open to question), it is true that the Americans did also’. See also 4.8 (Bennett Reimer in Ireland) and 5.5.10 (The Realities of American Music Education).

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to the public perception (*cf* Harry White's papers [MEND108 and 308, but especially the former]) of what music education should be - not the well rounded education (of composer, performer, listener) as advocated properly in more recent philosophical pronouncements, but simply an exclusive concentration on the skill- and product-based fruits of the one-to-one mode of teaching; and there was plenty of justification for the ascendancy of this form of access to music. The sophisticated thinking of the Absolute Expressionists was also evolving simultaneously from the early part of the century, but independently, it seems. It rounded the edges of the too formidable stance of Hanslick<sup>70</sup>, but might now be admitted as having also been a child of its time<sup>71</sup>, or at least in need of the kind of tempering which Reimer has subtly applied to it in the 1990s.

2. When Bennett Reimer's epochal *A Philosophy of Music Education* first appeared in 1970 it must have been a rationale responding to a system, not searching for one. And, as can be extracted from the authoritative readings (see Straub - MEND 205), music in American schools was/is strictly an elective which has been allowed, for reasons that must have much to do with established norms of the match between teacher skills/employment and student demands, to create the extraordinary dichotomy (in context) of performers and non-performers (compare the Syllabus A [non performing] and B [performing] dichotomy in Ireland which, though less drastic, produced enormous problems). This was barren ground indeed to support the well-intentioned provisions of the Music Education as Aesthetic Education (MEAE) Movement, since the performers, with an arguably cultivated minimal commitment to a rounded musical education, had already been syphoned off; the remainder were, by conscious choice and not by MEAE pre-classification, non-performers. It seems to an outsider, therefore, that American highschool music education failed, by its very structure, either to challenge or to empower MEAE. More than twenty years later the National Standards are now attempting to correct this intolerable abdication from eclecticism. But there is still copious visible evidence in the US that the long-established system dies hard.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Eduard Hanslick, a nineteenth century critic, whose polemic *The Beautiful in Music* supported the Absolutist view

<sup>71</sup> See Swanwick (MEND 304) who referred euphemistically to Reimer's philosophy as a paradigm that 'has done its main work and could be laid aside'.

<sup>72</sup> The author would be amazed if slavish adherence to the provisions of the (Voluntary) National Standards were allowed to threaten the outstanding performance achievements in American schools (Reimer's boast). It comes as no surprise (and, in a sense, it is consoling too) that a significant number of performance-oriented teachers in the US are 'in denial' about the applicability of the VNS to their curricular options (authority - Colwell), while others are compromising by partial compliance. The state-by-state autonomy in US education (as distinct from individual autonomy [a novel version to the author]) has been copiously noted in this thesis. See 6.6 (Residual Dissonances).

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In the midst of all this confusion and transition the Elliott book appeared. If one is to be guided by various critiques of *Music Matters* he had MEAE rather than American Music Education in his sights. The book is, putting it bluntly, iconoclastic, sets out (from its structural features alone) unashamedly to be so, and has drawn a great deal of negative criticism in this context. However, that is not to invalidate its ideas, which are fresh and stimulating, teeming with imagination and striving towards comprehensiveness. But for its conscious nonconformist tendencies, it would have been difficult to understand how two such eminent scholars as Elliott and Reimer could have worked themselves into stances so ostensibly and diametrically opposed. If the chameleon-like Reimer philosophy (responding, as it openly purports to do, to the changing circumstances which are the guiding principle empowering shifts in philosophical stance in the first place) represents the middle ground of twentieth century thinking, Elliott indubitably is more provocative and is even subversive. Given the plethora of philosophical stances that variously inform music education, it is obviously not a question that any one has to be embraced or that there are absolutes of right and wrong; if it were so, there would not be so many. What is important, however, is that music educators have the confidence, born of familiarity even with the verbal statements (more is seldom possible), to debate the issues and eclectically to apply consensus, where possible, to the contextual realities of particular cases.

Since the writer believes that the philosophies of Reimer and Elliott encapsulate as wide a spectrum as is likely to be encountered on a first reading, it is hoped that young professionals, by comparing them, will be encouraged to continue the debate - to analyse, call into question, demystify, clarify, challenge, accept, reject, modify, and reconcile - and eventually implement ever-better and more relevant philosophical ideas to ongoing practice. This is the proffered value of the exercise, undertaken below, to Irish music education.

The Reimer-Elliott debate has a copious bibliography; in fairness to the pretensions of David Elliott and to the extent to which his book has attracted international notice, the writer has consulted a representative sample of the literature (as listed in the footnote).<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> It should be made quite clear that the impression made by David Elliott - from his somewhat sketchy MEND presentation (which he chose to deliver informally) to the more formal (and much more sophisticated) offering which the writer succeeded in eliciting subsequently from him; from the most thorough and painstaking perusal of his book (*Music Matters*) to the multiplicity of reviews (including his own lengthy rebuttal of the equally lengthy Reimer critique); from the fascinating triptych which the Reimer and Elliott responses to Harry White's paper (*A book of manners in the wilderness*) created - is not one that can be dismissed as insufficiently researched. The writer has been conscious of the responsibility to consult the widest feasible range of literature before coming to the conclusions presented in this report. It should also be stated that the nature of the debate itself and of the opening salvo by which Elliott's book created a hostile climate, must logically devalue the direct encounters (Reimer's book review and Elliott's rebuttal, analysed exhaustively in the MEND report - Section 18.1.2) on the Kantian principle of emotional involvement, lack of disinterestedness and detachment, and vested interest.

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The writer has argued that the universality of music has two manifestations - as experience and as faculty. 'Music-making is posited as a universal species-specific experience and faculty at least as old as language, born of a desire for communication between human and fellow-human.'<sup>74</sup> Experience may be minimally thought of as a kind of passive listening exercise of the kind attributed by Elliott to the thinking behind MEAE, while faculty could be construed as active music-making in the form of an indiscriminating involvement in performance, an equally far-fetched view of Elliott's praxis, as, for example, in the hands of the volitional non-performer. The writer has a much more interpenetrative and interactive view of both which, indeed, he believes the philosophies of Reimer and Elliott also reveal, as far as their intentions go, to the sympathetic reader.

Let it be assumed, for the purposes of this exercise, that the simple division, into experience and faculty, does correspond roughly to the aesthetic experience (perception and response as centred in listening) of Reimer and the musical activity ('fundamentally music is something that people do') of Elliott<sup>75</sup>; neither is fully served by the definition but the premise seems plausibly non-pejorative and

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The following is a list of the sources consulted:

Harry White, *A book of manners in the wilderness*, (Vol.38 of College Music Symposium) [MEND 308].

Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education* (1970, rev 1989).

Bennett Reimer, *Should there be a Universal Philosophy of Music Education?*

(Music Education, ISME Number 29, 1997) [MEND 401].

Bennett Reimer, *Through Irish Eyes*, Response to Harry White (Vol.38 of College Music Symposium) [MEND 402].

Bennett Reimer, *Music for Performers Only: Review of Music Matters* (Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, Spring 1996, No 128) [MEND 403].

David J. Elliott. *Music Matters* (1995).

David Elliott, *Continuing Matters: Myths, Realities, Rejoinders: Rebuttal of Reimer above* (Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education) [MEND 416].

David Elliott, *Of Irish Myth: A Response to Harry White* (Vol.38 of College Music Symposium [MEND 417].

A (why from here do you suddenly start using only initials, as opposed to first names? LeBlanc, Review of *Music Matters* (Music Educators Journal, January 1996) [MEND 411].

E.V. Stublely, Review of *Music Matters* (Philosophy of Music Education Review, 4 (1) 1996) [MEND 412].

N Sarrazin, Review of *Music Matters* (Ethnomusicology 40(3) (Fall 1996) [MEND 413].

J.T. Humphreys, Review of *Music Matters* (Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education, 17, January 1996) [MEND 414].

David N. Aspin, Review of *Music Matters* (Music Education, ISME Number 27, May 1996) [MEND 415].

<sup>74</sup> Frank Heneghan, *Interpretation in Music: A Study in Perception, Expression and Symbol* (Dublin, University of Dublin, Trinity College and Dublin Institute of Technology, unpublished thesis, 1990), iii.

<sup>75</sup> Lack of clarity or fluidity as to the nature of the intimate relationship between performance and listening (rather like the complementarity between music as product and music as process) has made for difficulty in arbitrating between Reimer and Elliott, since it has led to semantic wordplay which supports Reimer's defences as much as it enables Elliott to plead with such regularity that he is being misunderstood. It is relevant to ask whether listening is in itself an activity, separable from performance, and whether its notional optimal experience is one of vicarious performance. It is not quite clear in dealing with Elliott's overweening advocacy of performance (and the irksome parenthetical litany of related activities - improvising, composing, arranging, conducting - which are not treated with quite the same generosity of explanation) whether listening is conceptually just the other side of the coin in relation to any one of them, or how it fares on its own.

Considering that listening (without physical [muscular] participation), accounts for probably more than 99 % of all musical experience, it is unsatisfactory that doubts linger over these questions, particularly over the very respectability of listening alone, and at all developmental stages, as an unencumbered musical pursuit in its own right. Is it possible to exert one's full concentration on listening in the ambience of the technical distraction of

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the distinction is not made with any covert agenda of distortion. Provided it is suitably qualified, it is therefore as valid to claim that the ineluctable and truly universal binding force of music is listening - and that we make music so that we can listen, as it is to assert that music-making is the central act and that we listen because music is made. Both confirm the interdependency of the two activities; in general neither is disavowed by the philosophies in question and it would be misleading to make such a suggestion for rhetorical or any other purpose. The nature of and the emphasis on each activity may need to be commented on, but the principle is established. Both Reimer and Elliott would claim to be fully vindicated, in their own regard, in relation to this basic feature of the intrinsic interrelationship of music-making and listening, without positing their necessary coalescence in a single agent.

Both scholars attempt to produce a universal philosophy of music and it is here that the difficulties they encountered reveal themselves as implacable taskmasters in dictating the final form of each putative philosophy. It is interesting to speculate here whether composing, performing and listening (or simply making and appraising) were separately confronted by the authors as potentially fertile starting points for the fabrication of a universal philosophy of music education. Certainly the results seem to confirm some such search for a dominating premise, as indeed they also bring into focus their polarities, since they, characteristically, choose different routes.

Reimer presumably started from his own aesthetic ideal of listening (with implied performance). As already commented on (Amsterdam ISME lecture, 1996; MEND 401), he invaginated his Absolute Expressionism in a Referential definition. He allowed for Formalism, paid lip service to Praxialism without in any way justifying it as a special categorization (in spite of the current disproportionate attention being given to it) apart from its separation from music as product and its basis in music as process. He gradually enlarged his matrix with reference to the extrinsic (anti-aesthetic/functional) benefits of music in education and finally introduced the social/political and historical/cultural contexts which affect the way music can be thought of.

Reimer had already included multiculturalism as a value held in common, though this may be questionable in the context of its appearing as a response to political correctness in very recent years (a definition as to what multiculturalism means or actually entails is also called for). He leaves no doubt as to the incompatibilities between many of the stances in his matrix and the need for reconciliation 'to clarify what it is we hold in common at the level of our deepest values and fundamental beliefs'. Left with an amorphous array of humanistic influences he then attempts to relate these, by reference to the

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performing oneself, which, after all, is fully validated as a cognitive act (in a purely craft sense) too? If the optimum way of gaining access to music is through activity (something one does [Elliott]) and if listening is an activity (which it certainly is), is it so naïve to suggest that the best way to learn how to listen is to 'concentrate while hearing' or to 'listen while listening' (!) in the same way as one listens while conducting, while

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work of the cultural anthropologist Robert Plant Armstrong, to the nature and value of human experience - to the 'beingness or phenomenality' which every culture provides for its members. With terminology which echoes the writings of Hanslick (sonic form - 'Tönend bewegten Formen') and Langer (consciousness charged with feeling) Reimer tries to transcend the idea of music simply as communicating object or function or symbol. He presents it, rather, not as a universal, characteristic yet unvarying affect, but as capable of first incarnating each culture's 'affective consciousness', celebrating it in all its particularity and separateness while transforming its experiences and values into sharable embodiments.

'The dimensions of form, practice, reference, and context [Reimer's four stances] are seen through his [Armstrong's] vision to be inseparable components of music, in what music is, what it does, and how it serves the deepest of human needs'.<sup>76</sup> This peroration is less convincing than the more objective philosophical mosaic which Reimer so carefully defines, simply because it descends, however eloquently, into the metaphysical; it is, withal, elegant, and invokes music as art<sup>77</sup>, a criterion which assumes crucial significance as this analysis seeks to isolate irreducibles. Reimer cautiously relinquishes the *sui generis* ('Music means itself' [Hanslick]) qualities of music in order that it might be all things to all humanity. This is a more politically correct approach but one that he is obviously fearful about, lest it degenerate into a kind of musical anarchy which validates indiscriminately; this caution is admirable without being ungenerous.

David Elliott's stance (for he, too, is undoubtedly attempting to define a universal philosophy of music education) may appear, at first sight, to be altogether more robust. His *carte blanche* approach is made possible by two radical shifts which virtually deconstruct prevailing ideologies. One could imagine Elliott being happy with what Reimer, quoting Danto [1964], describes as music being 'whatever a culture's institutional policy-makers decide to call music', and ministering to that. He is mainly concerned with music as faculty, activity<sup>78</sup> and process. Although he is an expressionist (his choice of

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performing, and so on?

<sup>76</sup> Bennett Reimer, *Should there be a Universal Philosophy of Music Education?* (Music Education, ISME Number 29, 1997), 19-20. [MEND 401, 11].

<sup>77</sup> The suggestion is made in this thesis that the idea of 'music as art' is seldom disavowed in educational terms and is therefore a useful consensus view. Art and the aesthetic are cognate, although the latter term is generally avoided because of misunderstandings (as to its truly non-threatening nature) and therefore in the interests of political correctness. The acceptance of music as art does, however, heighten the responsibility to use valuing and judgement towards the goal of quality in repertoire. This is non-discriminatory and does not confirm a hierarchy in which western art music, even in western societies, enjoys privilege.

<sup>78</sup> The use of the word *activity* is arguably redundant here. In this thesis the author makes claims about the universality of music as 'faculty and experience', suggesting the roles of music makers (composers and performers) and listeners (though listening is, in the author's view, also a vicarious music-making function, the vicarious idea being to stress the coalescence of the three modes). *Activity* came to mind as a generic term that suggests the holistic experience which is at once cognitive, affective and psychomotor. See 5.5.3 (the Reimer criticisms of Elliott's proposals, where a case is made for the bodily (psychomotor) involvement of listeners (quotation Judy Lochhead)).

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terminology confirms this), he rejects Absolute Expressionism, as a paradox, simply by denying, by default, the subtle differences between emotion and feeling; and all the extrinsic benefits of music (self-growth, optimal experience, social skills acquisition, discipline, etc.) are validated without question, provided they conform to his basic premise of activity-based learning - curriculum-as-practicum. And all of this is acceptable as a basic stance.

The other obstacle to a panacea universal philosophy of music education would be any hint of hierarchy between musical cultures; this David Elliott rejects out of hand. While this view does not invalidate his philosophy, it does serve to emancipate it as highly adaptable and attractive in dealing with multicultural education; Elliott is a committed multiculturalist. It appears that this claim by Elliott has stimulated a great deal of honest disagreement, judging by the fact that virtually every document that has come from Elliott's pen in relation to his philosophy has dealt with the subject (and in the same way), seeking to justify his stance (see Elliott *Music Matters* but also MEND 208 [both versions] and his responses to both Reimer and White [MEND 416 and 417 respectively]).

This is what Elliott has to say: '... it would be foolish to say that any one music-culture was "better" than another. Why? Because such a judgement is based on criteria from inside a single music culture. To call another music-culture's music "primitive" imposes one's own standards on a group that does not recognize them (Slobin and Todd). But while no one Music is innately superior to any other, some musical practices may be educationally more appropriate than others. In other words, music education does not occur in a vacuum, but rather in relation to a variety of constraints - practical, social, cultural, ideological, political, and so on. Chief among these is the practical problem of curricular time. There is simply not enough time to teach all the world's Musics to all children. Thus, difficult choices must be made.'<sup>79</sup> There is much food for thought in Elliott's words.

Elliott suggests criteria for attempting to establish musical hierarchy (but see also Reimer *A Philosophy*, 1970, p 103), only to claim the absurdity of each one. However, he fails to consider the possibility of evaluating the relative merits of two cultures by one skilled in the practices of both. (See Ó Súilleabháin's remarks on this subject where he refers to a growing number of bi-cultural scholars [MEND Document 120]). The influence of taste and prejudice is still, of course, a problem, but the exercise of evaluating between cultures is not to be discredited; it is an eminently possible scholarly pursuit and discipline which is highly desirable in certain circumstances. For Elliott to claim that 'no one Music [not even Western European art music (!), for that is the implication; let us be at least as honest as Harry White is - writer's insertion] is innately superior to any other' is a *non sequitur*, in the context of a denial that there are ways of establishing this within the normal processes of valuing and

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<sup>79</sup> Elliott, *MM*, 210.

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judgement, without which there really is a kind of anarchy. The use of the word *innately* does, however, soften the tone and should temper the possible thrust of any challenge to his assertion.

As I have argued elsewhere (see review of Harry White - MEND 308 and MEND Report Section 18.1), there seems to be little objection to intra-cultural evaluations, but the idea of differences between cultures seems always to touch a nerve centre. Are some Musics, by inference, so fragile that they need the protection of such an arrogant agenda? The claims of some multiculturalists in this regard are unworthy. There should be no problem with parity of esteem (see Santos, MEND 207), nor should the claim of the multiculturalists for curricular time be disavowed, but to imply the equality of all Musics, from any stance, is surely not the strongest of arguments to put forward, if indeed the argument is necessary in the first place (see White [MEND 308] and the Reimer response [MEND 402] to the same for interesting views on this debate), as Elliott seems to think it is.

Nowhere else does Elliott directly try to shackle the powers of judgement, which are quintessential to the education process in any case; he speaks freely of valuing and selection, which are implicit in his statement that ‘some musical practices may be educationally more appropriate than others’. But judgement must be invoked in choosing the best materials. It seems inconsistent to suggest that the powers of judgement may be used provided they are not used to arbitrate *between* cultures in certain circumstances. If it is impossible to judge the relative merit of another culture how then are outsiders, by definition, empowered to judge its products in an intra-cultural sense, in the first place, and isn’t this privilege against the powers of judgement an affront to the capability of any culture to be self-justifying?

The writer has to admit bewilderment and honest frustration at this central tenet of David Elliott’s line of argument, which just does not make sense. And it is not fully congruent with the more subtle tones of the other multiculturalists at MEND (Patricia Shehan Campbell, Ramon Santos, Mel Mercier, Hormoz Farhat in particular). It seems that this moot point is still insufficiently clarified in multicultural dialectic to form, so prematurely, such a defining role in a universal philosophy of music education. It would seem almost preferable to make it clear that, while all musical cultures may not be equally developed, they are all entitled to parity of esteem in a humanistic sense and to special ascendancy in context. ‘When such recognition is withheld, or dishonest, the consequences can be grave. ... [it] can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being’.<sup>80</sup> There must be some way to take the tension out of this sophistry.

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<sup>80</sup> Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and ‘The Politics of Recognition*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) 25. Quoted by Elliott in his paper (MEND 208).



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As to the results of these two attempts to define a universal philosophy of music, it appears that here, too, the world community is still in an evolving state. Bennett Reimer admits that there are differences in ideology to be addressed and enumerates them in what is a very helpful exposé. It should be recorded that his lecture attracted a capacity audience at the ISME Conference in 1996, surely indicative of the way the world, with some justification, looks to him as doyen for guidelines in the search for this utopian model. David Elliott's gratuitous efforts (for it is the writer who has proposed, in these pages, Elliott's New Philosophy as a candidate for universality) seem flawed or incomplete. First he rejects some philosophical stances as untenable while ignoring the existence of other divisions (intrinsic/extrinsic); secondly, the generally assumed inference to be taken from his writings - 'that no one Music is innately superior to any other' - seems too sweeping, controversial and eccentric to the middle ground of multi-cultural thinking that it raises more questions than he may think he has answered.

But it is time to proceed to a further detailed appraisal of David Elliott's own philosophical stance which, it can be predicted from copious preparatory reading, is rich in positive elements and applicable ideology, and is eminently worthy of the world's appraisal. Since an evaluation has already been carried out (post MEND II [MEND 603]) what it is intended to do at this post-MEND III stage is to extract the most persuasive arguments and to set these against both the negative aspects (as identified) that seem to be counterproductive and against the emerging findings of MEND itself.

It is a factor worth noting that Elliott is a former student of Bennett Reimer, a fact he acknowledged significantly when he said that 'I would not have been able to do what I did if Professor Reimer had not done what he did'. In this sense he casts himself in the role of taking 'the ideas of the past and weighing them'. His central premise is that music is a matter of actions and sounds - hardly a definition but an acceptable opening gambit. He also confirms his belief in the inseparability of product and process when considering music (or musicing as he calls the activity) and in the context (relevance to time and place) of what happens. Listening is described as a constructive cognitive activity, but a covert one. He fashions a matrix of musician, listener and context and claims that this set, or musical practice, represents what is universal in music. He goes on to map out the nature of knowledge involved in musical practices. He invokes the literature of cognitive science, cognitive psychology and philosophy of mind to define musical understanding as the possession of musicianship, which always includes listenership. It should also be noted that Elliott's personal readings seem, from his bibliography, to have been comprehensive and he is blessed with a command of language that is impressive, even if it occasionally leads him into ambiguity; there is sometimes a rather forbidding reconditeness.

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Elliott places great importance on music-making as the central activity or practice, appending listenership to each practice (performing, improvising, composing, arranging, conducting) in a series of linked pairs. It is significant that listenership on its own, while it is not disavowed (it is dealt with comprehensively in Elliott's book, though less so in the MEND lecture, opening up the possibility for misunderstanding as to its importance), is played down. This is a stance that must, of course, be challenged. Elliott, in championing 'musicing' (action) believes that Descartes is misleading in suggesting that thought is essentially verbal. He proceeds to enumerate five kinds of knowledge (thought in action) which are used in music as an activity, only one of which (formal) is verbally based. The first and most important is *procedural*, which may be informed by *formal* (verbal) knowledge but goes far beyond it. The writer has to comment that he finds Elliott's downgrading of knowledge-base in favour of action knowledge, without a context (or by using an arguably spurious one - skier/surgeon) is less than convincing; he has a point but it is too facile. The other kinds of knowledge that Elliott enumerates are *informal* (drawn from experience) *impressionistic* (or intuitive) and *supervisory*.

Although these are, as Elliott himself admits, artificially separated for consideration, it is arguable that they might all be classified as being experience-determined but are a plausible set, however theoretical in concept, as useful in musical activity (and Elliott convincingly presents them so). What is difficult to reconcile is why he is so insistent that the listening process can virtually never be separable from the musicing activities themselves (although there is grudging reference later on, based on a quotation from Gardner, to having the rest of one's life to listen, whereas the younger years should be given over to the overt 'skills'). It is relevant to record here that, when asked about the need for skill acquisition to advance in performing, Elliott remarked that 'skill is not a word in his vocabulary'.<sup>81</sup> This is a crucial consideration in the final analysis of his position. He seems reluctant to accept that a performance-based curriculum cannot ignore the time demands<sup>82</sup> of skill-acquisition if it is to operate at the kind of levels that are occasionally very explicit in the Elliott literature.

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<sup>81</sup> The context of the discussion with Elliott (on the campus of UNT, Denton, Texas in 1995) was the need for objective physical skills (painstakingly acquired) for the successful communication of musical ideas through instrumental performance. The author had no other option but to assume that Elliott understood the inference and was perhaps in denial in relation to the threat it posed to the successful implementation of a performance-intensive curriculum on a limited time basis. Fundamentally this is the source of the author's scepticism about the practicability of Elliott's method, whatever about its idealism.

<sup>82</sup> This thesis enquires as to what is achievable through equal increments of time. In terms of the inculcation of a value system in relation to active appreciation of music as a life force, the options are between listening, performance or a balanced exposure to both with the limitation imposed by non-reliance on imported skills. The 'performance only' approach, imputed by Reimer to Elliott, even if it were the preferred method, would be heavily reliant on inordinate amounts of homework to reach the level of proficient skill to be satisfactory. It would be an imposition on those who should have the option to comply or not, on the basis of balance of time in their overall curricular options. In the author's view, the only democratic way forward is to treat performance as a specialization. And there are the additional complications that performance tuition may not be available in the

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Elliott goes on to stress the importance of valuing and judgement (see above). ‘There are no criteria that apply to all musical practices’; so says Elliott. As already stated, an implied inability to judge across musical practices would be the single greatest inhibitor to the progress of multiculturalism. And it calls into question the sincerity in following his advice that ‘engaged with excellent musical works within musical practices, we have an educational responsibility to teach as many musical practices as reasonable’. How can the excellence of musical works be decided on if ‘there are no criteria that apply to all musical practices’, unless it is taken by prescription and on trust from culture bearers; and Elliott is not enthusiastic about prescription, always favouring the independent judgement of teachers (see *Music Matters* p 246). Elliott recommends, in curriculum building, ‘a very careful choice of musical practices and then find the best examples of those practices and develop musicianship in relation to that. Music education is the development of musicianship in balanced relation to excellent musical works’. The advice is sound but the method is compromised. And there is another practical contradiction implied in his suggestion that ‘if your time [as a teacher] is short, music education should dominantly be involved in performing, which always involves listening. ...[If] we want to help create ... excellent listeners ... do it ...[D]ominantly through making, through action, and then through performing, because in that situation you can get a lot done in terms of targeting intention.’ To develop musicianship through performing must assume the acquisition of a certain level of technical competence, which in itself is a slow and time-consuming process. The writer has genuine difficulty with this piece of unguarded advice also.

In the hard-copy (formal) version of Elliott’s paper (MEND 208a) there is a great deal of further valuable information which, though not all (in the writer’s view) consistently argued, is applicable to the Irish context. Fundamentally he is presenting a philosophy which he defines as ‘a critically reasoned set of beliefs about the nature and value of music education’, with the rider that ‘of course, no philosophy can be perfectly applicable to all practical situations.’ The general principles of any philosophy must be queried ‘in relation to national, local and daily concerns’. This is to stress the contextuality of philosophy, a criterion which will later severely test the Elliott version. And Elliott himself is the strongest advocate of this bringing to bear of critical intelligence by evoking ‘judgement and not rote obedience’ (Entwistle 1982).

According to Elliott, music, by definition, is intentional human action. ‘Fundamentally music is something that people do’. Again Elliott defines the practice as comprising a doer, a product, the activity and a context. In fairness to Elliott, note the inclusion of both product and process (activity) in the set, as this was subsequently challenged in one of the peer group reviews, as one of Elliott’s

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school (typical for Ireland and serving to classify imported skills as elitist) and the students may not have the instruments to practise on at home.

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omissions. Furthermore he also stresses the importance of listening as a force which binds musicians, music and musical products together. The interlocking pair of intentional human actions - making and listening - he calls a musical practice; there are thousands of Musics, or musical practices, each with a specific style. The practitioners of a Music, classified at competent, proficient and expert levels (interesting that there is no mention of a lower category of performing [beginner] at this stage), construct, transform, judge and interpret the emotional expressiveness - and so on. Elliott is punctilious in defining listening as cognition (minding) which processes “information” that arises in consciousness through interactions between, (i) our powers of attention, cognition, emotion, intention and memory, and (ii) the artistically created aural patterns we call a musical work. At this juncture in the paper, all (with the exceptions noted) is unexceptionable and succinctly laid out. It is in the process by which these actions (performing and listening) are carried out that Elliott begins to break new ground and to attract criticism.

Up to this point he is stressing the overt and covert construction characteristic of making and listening to music, the expression and impression of musical relationships. Again, he stresses that ‘there’s a direct and intimate relationship between music making and music listening’; this is also less than fairly conceded by his critics. It is only when he posits the inseparability of the two ‘actions’ (in other words when the action of listening ought not to be combined with the action of making by a different agent) that the theory becomes problematic for some, understandably so. This appears in the illogical jump by which Elliott claims that ‘the proof of my musicianship lies in the quality of my music making. ... to understand and assess that quality my evaluators (and other listeners) must possess a reasonable level of procedural competency in music performing themselves.’<sup>83</sup> This pre-justification for performing (composing *et al*) as the only means towards the acquisition of musicianship and listening skills is immediately challengeable on the grounds that the overwhelming majority of human beings are non-performers and presumably some (or many) of them are capable of listening and of judging intelligently. That is not to say that competence in performance will not assist and enhance their listening, but mandatory performance for all learners seems a rather drastic *modus operandi* to propose.

Elliott goes on, in this second document, to present again his five forms of knowledge - procedural, formal, informal, impressionistic and supervisory. In relation to informal knowledge there seems to be a suggestion that it cannot be taught (though this is later denied). ‘Music making and music listening are not simple matters of “habits, behaviours, routines and skills” ... and cannot be reduced to

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<sup>83</sup> There is an interesting endorsement of this in Aristotle’s *Politics* Bk. VIII 1333b; 5-10. ‘Why cannot we attain true pleasure and form a correct judgement from hearing others, like the Lacedaemonians? - for they, without learning music, nevertheless can correctly judge, as they say, of good and bad melodies. . . .why should we learn ourselves instead of enjoying the performances of others?’ Ancient wisdom - but still arguable as to its

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verifiable methods that always work and that can always be expressed in words. ... The effectiveness of musicianship hinges on the critical selection and deployment of all forms of musical knowing'.<sup>84</sup> It thus seems that as many as four out of five of these knowings are empirically-based (this may very well be the strength of Elliott's proposals, in his own estimation). When it comes to formal knowledge, which of course he must include, Elliott's earlier concern to deconstruct if not to demolish Reimer's aesthetic education model is scarcely concealed when he so openly declares that 'music curriculum development ought not to take its direction from verbal concepts, not from so-called "aesthetic qualities", and not from recordings.' This *bête noire* obsession with MEAE frequently succeeds in destabilizing Elliott's logic. And this leads also to the putative aberration of Elliott's assertion that 'no musical practice or music-culture is innately better than any other'; this is clearly a question of informed judgement (which is possible) and is neither true nor false in relation to any pair of cultures, in the abstract. While Elliott's very logical, though not original, advice about choosing musical practices in education that conform, at first, to student's 'local' musical culture (see Shehan Campbell [MEND 305] and McCarthy [MEND 307]), he is not correct in assuming that for Irish children this would necessarily always include traditional music.<sup>85</sup>

One must sympathize also with Elliott in his reference to time constraints in the curriculum while simultaneously recommending that "'music education" should be concerned with MUSIC in the broad sense (as opposed to just, say, one or two western "art music" practices, or just jazz practices and so on)'. It is admirable that he eventually comes down on the side of limitation. 'In short, musical breadth is not necessarily a virtue. Accordingly, when time and resources are limited, this praxial philosophy supports an emphasis on musical depth over breadth'. But he should not be so (frankly) astonished to hear an Irish music educator hesitate about the central (and rightful) place of Irish traditional music practices in Irish music education.

The distinct impression results from Elliott's incontinent attack on aesthetic education that he believes that to leave it with any vestige of credibility would threaten his own; and Reimer's provoked retaliation in his review of Elliott's book, *Music Matters*, is similarly barbed, unnecessarily diminishing *its* dependability. It appears that each has felt the tip of the other's weaponry. It is difficult to resist a negative reaction to both as read. To suggest pejoratively that listening to recordings is considered to be the proper focus for general music programmes is overstating and distorting the

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Epicurean propriety.

<sup>84</sup> The works of Langer (*Feeling and Form, Philosophy in a New Key, et al*) and Collingwood (*Principles of Art*) engage this issue of the difference between craft and art in the context of selection.

<sup>85</sup> In fact, in Ireland, not surprisingly, the hierarchy in this respect might show a dominance of western popular styles followed, as poor contenders, by Irish traditional music and western art music. This, of course is one of the problems of contemporary music education - the question of the relevance of educational repertoire to life as lived by the majority.

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MEAE case, as if there is no intrinsic pleasure to be derived from listening as an activity. This is just an unacceptable premise and is an insult to the skills of teachers who may use that mode of listening as part of their teaching schemes.

It must be remembered, as has already been copiously discussed, that the MEAE system was responding to a situation which had to be assumed to have been already totally denuded of those with any interest in performing. It is true that perhaps it should have attempted to change that situation (as the US National Standards are now trying to do) but the power of tradition and the jealous guardianship of state-to-state autonomy in the US would have been formidable obstacles to have challenged with a subject so precarious in its prospects at the time, as the history (see Straub [MEND 205] and Lehman [MEND 303]) copiously illustrates. Elliott makes no mention of or allowance for this severely restricting dilemma. And the ineluctable implication of his quotation from Peter Kivy that ‘to have Beethoven’s Third Symphony in one’s blood and bones’ one must participate in the performance as a proof that ‘to play is a necessary part of musical literacy’ is to place the pleasure forever beyond virtually 100% of the population. This is intolerably elitist, if not ridiculous and unacceptable. *Tout court*, both Reimer and Elliott (but the latter is really more culpable) should realize that to convince their peers they will not advance their philosophies one whit by this kind of banal hyperbolic overstatement or quotation out of context.

Elliott’s admirably logical progress from the nature of music, musicianship and knowledge, and musical practices - to values and aims, has a convincing sequence. He suggests that approaches to music education based on his praxial philosophy, as prescriptively excluding other approaches (especially that of having any truck with the principles of MEAE) produce the ‘life values’ of self-growth, self-knowledge, enjoyment (or optimal experience) and self-esteem. This is because the two necessary conditions exist: (i) multidimensional cognitive-affective challenges (i.e. musical works) and (ii) the knowledge (i.e. musicianship) required to meet these challenges. His failure to mention the psychomotor element is, in the writer’s view, significant. His explanation of how the matching of musical knowledge to musical challenge can produce musical enjoyment and ‘flow’ (and this is well illustrated in his book - see p 132) is very convincing and attractive, if it did not have this hidden agenda of exclusivity about it. The end of this section (Values and Aims) is also laudably inexorable in the way it leads to ideas of performing (the writer nevertheless feels that the parenthetical nature of listening is problematic) propelling upwards to higher levels of complexity, to preserving a sense of community and self-identity and to an important form of multicultural education.

The writer has two concerns here. There is reference to Gardner’s advice as to the importance of ‘continuing involvement in the arts as reflective practitioners. There will be time enough in university,

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and beyond, for more “distanced” forms of artistic appreciation to become dominant’. And Elliott himself adds ‘that students have the rest of their lives to sit quietly and listen to recordings after schooling is over’. It appears that the importance of listening alone is not in question, but it is ostracized (to use Harry White’s reproachful word) because of its distorted connection to the MEAE mentality, quite apart from the facile abdication that is implied - that listening alone need not be taught. And Csikszentmihalyi (admired and regularly quoted by Elliott) downgrades listening on the grounds of its being insufficiently challenging and complex in relation to performing and interpreting – surely, in itself, a very judgemental appraisal of how the majority of listeners function, and very unflattering to the true nature and immanent complexity of informed listening.

The above stances are bold in statement but are potentially very vulnerable, being consciously exclusivist. The problem with listening may be that it is not taught well, but how much more could this be problematic in the more daunting challenge of teaching combined performing and listening (a notoriously demanding task for both teacher and learner - a phenomenon in which the writer has had copious experience ... and the problem is even severe with the very talented). The concern here is that Elliott’s philosophy in action, viewed at this culminatory stage of his presentation, seems to presuppose music school students and not general music students, judging by the inferred complexities of the activities involved and, especially, the time constraints. When there is reference to a music curriculum for Ireland including broadly based practices reflective of pluralism; engaging in the multidimensional nature of MUSIC as a reflective, artistic and social practice; production (performance) at the centre of the artistic experience; the absorption of musicianship at five levels of knowledge (all of which can and should be taught and learned, according to Elliott); *comprehensive* understandings of the musical works being interpreted and performed and/or improvised; formulating musical expressions of emotions, musical representations of people, places and things, and musical expressions of cultural-ideological meanings; self-examination and the personal reconstruction of relationships, assumptions and preferences ... this agenda, while admirably idealistic, seems out of touch with what Irish (and I suspect many other) educators would see as feasible in the time available.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> It is a ‘Devil’s Advocate’ argument to suggest that time is as much a constraint for a Reimer as for an Elliott approach to general music education. The claim is belied by the very nature of popular involvement in music, which is so overwhelmingly through listening that it rather proves the point that familiarity with and musical enjoyment of a piece of music are most immediate through listening, for equal increments of time. Again, Reimer’s definition of the performance mode of engagement with music mentions a minuscule repertoire painstakingly acquired, with the appropriate personal compensations and gratification. (See ‘Performing as the Basis for Music Education’ [MEND 403, 8-10] for an exposé of this topic). It is not just the *a priori* time in acquiring technical skills that is in question; the sheer physical burden of familiarizing oneself with repertoire through performing is obviously far greater than in the listening mode.

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Yet the idealism in Elliott's vision is attractive. Were there not constant evidence of a 'queen bee' attitude to listening alone as an activity (threatening to his stance) to be cultivated and duly honoured without in any way threatening the importance of performance, the philosophy would be commendable in circumstances where the time to match musicianship and challenges at *technical* levels could also be made available. But perhaps the idea of teaching through action alone is so deeply implanted as the cornerstone of Elliott's philosophy that it really is intractable and cannot compromise.

Reading the conclusion (summary) alone of David Elliott's paper (*Music Education, Music Performance, and the Irish Music Educator*) gives a very clear view of his obvious idealism; few of the objections that arise come easily to mind. The aims of self-growth, self-knowledge and musical enjoyment leading to self-esteem and self-identity are not just unexceptionable, but are highly desirable end products of music education. The idea of close approximations to real musical practices, if they were expanded to include listening alone as another fully constituted *action* responding to the five kinds of knowledge, could not but be ideal for optimum teaching and learning experiences.

Musicianship as the embodiment of the five ways of knowing and as capable of objective acquisition - and applicable to all - is also an idealistic concept that is worthy of support. The slogan that 'the best music curriculum for the best students is the best curriculum for all students' is worthy of approval, provided the learning situation has the flexibility to accommodate different levels of sophistication in balancing musicianship to musical challenges. But ... the separation of performing and non-performing streams - the time honoured reality of American high school music education - is an equally worthy and pragmatic approach; volitional specialization as against general study, as options, need not negate Elliott's ideas of the best curriculum.

The development of 'the capacity in students to adopt different stances toward a work, among them the stances of audience member, critic, performer and maker' is idealistic too, but it seems that the Elliott (and Gardner)<sup>87</sup> philosophy is not taking a literal reading of its own advice. And the implication that works can only be absorbed through a student's involvement in the actual performance (which must be minimal, and restricted in any case, by definition, to one of the many streams in, say, an orchestral work - and by technical shortcomings as well) is not only idealistic to the point of being ridiculous, but is not even true to the criterion of 'as close an approximation of real musical practices' which the multi-billion music industry evidences in the sale of CDs which are bought typically for the joy of non-participative listening. The disclaimer - 'in support of artistic listening-in-context, carefully

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<sup>87</sup> Elliott relies heavily on Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. The appropriate references are given in the List of Sources.



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selected recordings are introduced parenthetically: in direct relation to the musical practices the students are being introduced into.

Similarly, formal musical knowledge is filtered into the continuous stream of authentic music making and listening as needed' is an amusing example of how Elliott regularly feels himself obliged to placate, or even to exorcise, the ghost of MEAE which benignly stalks him. The training of young musicians as apprentice musical practitioners is good, as is the standard teaching practice of directing listening to the music being made by students themselves, provided this is done within the discipline and moderation of a balanced curriculum. And this is hardly served by an almost exclusive involvement in performing (or any of Elliott's other parenthetical activities), which provides only for a severely limited *repertoire* of listening. Admirable though those experiences are in context, they are not sufficient.<sup>88</sup>

The biggest problem in the application of Elliott's philosophy is the way he upturns the idea of music specialism which, whatever about the theory of how the American system is working, is certainly dear to the heart of the American public as an exclusively performance-centred concept. And balance this against Harry White's reference to 'the small measure of general music education that is available to Irish children'. It appears that Elliott would replace these input extremes with a master race of expert teachers; and his idealism again must be admired, however lacking in realism.

The competent music educator requires two forms of knowledge: musicianship and educatorship. One without the other is insufficient. To teach music effectively, a teacher must possess, embody and exemplify musicianship. This is how children develop musicianship themselves; not through telling, but through their actions, transactions and interactions with musically proficient and expert teachers: 'it is imperative to have a cadre of teachers who themselves "embody" the knowledge that they are expected to teach.' (Gardner). In other words, musical standards in teachers beget musical standards in students. ... novice music teachers require music education professors who can model musicianship and educatorship through their own vivid examples.

In Ireland this ideal is negated by the student-centred<sup>89</sup> system in primary schools which could not accommodate a performance-centred curriculum (of the Elliott intensity) at present. And secondary education<sup>90</sup>, while it is changing, is currently embroiled in a low quality performance mode which is a

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<sup>88</sup> The problem seen in Elliott's preferred mode of listening is that it must always be coupled with another activity (such as performing, improvising, etc.). Reimer states categorically (and the author concurs) that listening is an activity in its own right. This is the core of the difference, between the two philosophers, that is being analysed.

<sup>89</sup> Student-centred education, in the Irish context, means that the (typically musically unsophisticated) classroom teacher in primary schools is responsible for all subjects. This is in contrast to the subject-centred approach in secondary schools where there *is* teacher specialization.

<sup>90</sup> Secondary school music, which now includes a performance option (varying from the acceptability of a very rudimentary [and perhaps school-based] competence to highly sophisticated imported proficiency [with negligible discrimination between the standards achieved in terms of results posted]) is a subject-centred

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far cry from the idealism of Elliott, even if it were to parallel or shadow it. The regenerative quality of the education procedures, as envisaged by Elliott, are thus just not in place. In the US it is to be feared that the drastic changes in attitudes and mentality which would bring both academic teachers and practitioners into line with the musicianship approach of Elliott, highly desirable as much of it is in principle, are still to be negotiated.

David Elliott's *Music Matters*, and the material generated from it, break new ground in music education philosophy. His thoughts are presented in language that is compelling for those who take the time to immerse themselves in its complexity. The thrust of his arguments has been blunted severely (and, subconsciously, almost called into question) by an approach which seeks to discredit, if not to demolish, much earlier highly respected scholarship - and not just that of Bennett Reimer. This has tended to produce a secondary corpus of parenthetical method (the listening programme copiously discussed above is an example) which grudgingly acknowledges the discounted value of what he rejects. It has also made him, himself, particularly sensitive to criticism (of which he has had his share), evidenced by his frequent claims that he is being misunderstood. Yet the philosophy is fresh, original and provocative; but, as yet, it lacks a successful track record. Elliott's philosophy is modern in that it poses, directly or by inference, many if not most of the questions by which contemporary music education is beset:

1. Is it high time to superannuate the exquisite theories of the Absolute Expressionists, and the aesthetic ideal, as failing to touch the majority in their engagement with music of all kinds? Is music as product finally to be recognized as only a part, albeit an important one, in the totality of musical discourse?
2. How are music educators going to deal at last with the nature of performance and how are they going to reconcile the notion within the constraints of curricular time and skill acquisition? The question is raised by Elliott's own theory of the centrality of performance (action) in education. How are the separate needs of amateur and nascent professional performance to be met in music education?
3. Are the processes of music-making unique as forms of knowledge (and cognitive skill) and how does this impinge on the importance of music in the curriculum?
4. How are music educators to cope with the promise of multiculturalism - again within the constraints of curricular time? How is multiculturalism to be defined? Is the claim of the

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activity, in that it is taught by specialist teachers, though these are typically non-performers. It was formerly very academic in content with two streams (performing and general syllabi). The curricular revision of the 1990s has resulted in higher uptake (one of the intentions of the curricular reform) but a lowering of academic standard and greatly rationalized (downwards) performing standards, again to accommodate the mediocre (competent in American terms?) performers.

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equality of all Musics sustainable and by what definition? How is the position of western art music to be sustained democratically in education without blunting the benefits of its pedagogical content and methodology through partial neglect? How is the high/mass culture dichotomy to be broken down in education and how can formal education bridge the gap and relate more effectively to the community?

5. How are the standards of valuing and judgement to be set in the future? Does musical taste have a legitimate place in curricular development?
6. How is the function of listening to be defined in modern music education?
7. How will the nature of and the training for music educatorship change with new approaches?

The writer's view is that Elliott's broadside into a complacent music education philosophical field will generate a great deal of new thinking and may yet rescue the profession from the doldrums of its chronic failures<sup>91</sup> and galvanize it into an action that will find new solutions to ongoing problems. They may not always be congruent with Elliott's current ideas, but his intrepid interventions will play no small part in a new dispensation which reflects the ideals of a new millennium.

The Elliott book, *Music Matters*, has been extensively reviewed. Footnote 11 (*qv*) gives a list of reviewers, whose writings give a flavour as to how *MM* was greeted by the profession. They, in turn, are reviewed in Section 18.1.1 of the MEND Report. By far the most extensive review is that of David Aspin (MEND 415), reprinted with ISME permission.

## 5.5 The Reimer/Elliott Documentation

### **Review/Rebuttal on *Music Matters* - Bennett Reimer's Response: David Elliott's "New" Philosophy of Music Education; Music for Performers Only and the Elliott Rebuttal of Reimer's Response: Continuing Matters: Myths, Realities, Rejoinders**

In the field of contemporary writing on the philosophy of music education, there is arguably no more significant pair of complementary papers than the two which are listed for review in the above heading. As has been mentioned, Bennett Reimer's classic - *A Philosophy of Music Education* - has

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<sup>91</sup> The failure to normalize the conceptual confusion about the nature of performance and to ensure that performers are mandatorily trained in musicianship is a case in point, as is the failure to bridge the gap between popular forms and high art, except as a concession to 'student power'. Elliott's attitudes to these problems, while hardly orthodox, are nevertheless provocative and invite reappraisal. In this sense they are an antidote to

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not just profoundly influenced more than a generation of music educators; there is compelling validity in the claim that, as far as North America is concerned, there has been virtually no other, for a quarter of a century, of sufficient weight and concentration to rival it. But once one has penetrated beyond the arguably pretentious sub-title - *A New Philosophy of Music Education* - of David Elliott's 1995 book - *Music Matters* - one realizes, from its length and the elaborate treatment of the subject matter alone, that here is a serious challenge. *New* is not a value-free term; it predicates the old and outmoded. One doesn't just feel this sense; one is made keenly aware of it from the very direct approach of the writer and the openly-stated commitment to superannuating the earlier Reimer work, not just on a variety of details but in absolute terms as to its very essence.

From the outset it must be admitted that a philosopher who essays the levelling of a rationale of such globally recognized stature, in such unequivocal terms, and with such unmitigated and relentless attempts at deconstruction, must be intrepid, passionately convinced of his counterposition and superlatively informed in the area in question. David Elliott, acknowledging himself as a scion of Reimer, is all of these things. It is important to realize this relationship, since it singles out Elliott as perhaps the obvious protagonist to mount a challenge to a philosophy that he may be assumed to be familiar with in its finest detail.

The nature of his dissent is, however, so total and unalloyed as to border on the melodramatic. As might easily have been predicted, Bennett Reimer, nearing the official end of a long and illustrious career, and vulnerable as to the timing of Elliott's attack (for that is what it was), reacted with perhaps less equilibrium and circumspection than is usual in his writings. Emotion can cloud judgement, to the benefit of one's adversaries. It is arguable, in hindsight, that Reimer would have been prudent not to have accepted the editor's invitation to review Elliott's book. That was not indeed because he lacked the skills to do so, but simply because it was a veritable snare, with all the trappings of a supremely logical choice of invitee; it was also because the world of music education would stand by with bated breath to witness this titanic clash, in which Elliott's anticipated rebuttal, as the grand finale, would be given the last word, so to speak. The exercise was, of course, productive in many senses. It enabled these two opponents to work off their mutual repugnance, albeit in the full spotlight of the world stage and in a manner that is difficult to present in analysis as having been at a level of detachment that one might look for in scholarly criticism. It served, too, to place side-by-side the essences of both philosophies, most particularly as to their perceived incompatibilities.

Claim and counterclaim, thesis and antithesis, denial and rebuttal and selective quotation of varying degrees of ambiguity and ethical gravity - all of these appear and even abound in both essays, each

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complacency.

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running to considerable length. It becomes very obvious from the outset that they were, and still are, a necessary part of the launch of Elliott's philosophy on the world of music education. They are, in fact, indispensable to one another. Without a thorough reading and understanding of Reimer's *A Philosophy of Music Education*, and its fall-out in terms of moulding the 'intended' curriculum (notably MEAE from the 1970s on) for American music education in recent decades, it is difficult fully to appreciate the cut and thrust of this contest for credibility.

One thing is certain. Without Reimer's philosophy, whether accepted or not by the reader, the substance of Elliott's would lose much of its point. It is an antithesis on an epic scale, so much so that one wonders, if the wealth of disparagement and the constant self-assessment (and self-aggrandizement) by a Reimer yardstick were to be expurgated, what, of substance, would remain. Indeed, one wonders whether Elliott, bereft of a *bête noire*, would have put forward quite the same theories and in the same way. The writer believes that this attempted analysis is crucial to the derivation of a contextual philosophy for the Irish case. As it is expected to be long and involved, drawing, for the reader's benefit, in quick succession from both essays, rather than dealing with them separately, the following format is being adopted.

1. The Reimer claims for MEAE (Music Education as Aesthetic Education).
2. What is considered (by Reimer) to be admirable in the Elliott philosophy.
3. The Reimer criticisms of Elliott's proposals.
4. Elliott's rebuttals.
5. The writer's reading of what the realities of American music education are in relation to the claims and counter claims in the essays. It is critical that the potentially wide differences between the curriculum in its intended (published or theoretical), implemented, and attained (delivered) aspects be kept in mind. The writer is grateful to Professor Richard Colwell (MEND 209) for highlighting these necessary distinctions.
6. Rationalization.

Reimer's case is a strong one and is well argued, in a logical sequence, with admirable use of supporting quotations from his own and other germane writings, including those of Elliott, of course. It argues convincingly for MEAE as an enabler for the implementation of the aesthetic theory in music education. Superficially, at least on a first reading, it inveighs successfully against the praxial philosophy as defined by Elliott *but* there is one overriding caveat; the Reimer interpretation of what Elliott means must be accurate. If it is not (and there is ample scope for Elliott to proceed to further exegesis, especially in relation to his meaning of the performance/process bias) we will undoubtedly

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be left with a new understanding of Elliott's philosophy which may, paradoxically, emasculate it in terms of its difference and newness as an alternative to MEAE as (re)-defined by Reimer below. After all, the caveat must allow for both scholars to have the opportunity to clarify their intentions.

It must always be borne in mind, in examining the Reimer/Elliott writings, that both points of view are potentially compromised by the similarity of the generic approaches they unarguably adopt. Each has a philosophy to defend and each has one to deconstruct and disparage, simply because each represents a threat to the other. Why else would the Reimer review be so isolated by Elliott as worthy of such special treatment, a procedure not adopted in the case of any of the other reviews, including that of David Aspin (MEND 415), which seems, to the writer, to be potentially as damaging to *MM*, simply because it has the virtue of greater detachment. Although it is more evident in Elliott's essay, which unrelentingly maintains the antithetical stance of *MM*, there is a tendency for stark rejection by each of the other's point of view, giving the impression, at this stage of analysis, of total mutual polarization. There is little common ground admitted and weaknesses are identified and attacked as if they are unmoderated by redeeming features.

Nevertheless this 'dog-eats-dog' confrontation succeeds for the reader, as might be expected, in that the vulnerable aspects of both philosophies are gratuitously highlighted and scrutinized; this is helpful, too, for the analyst who is trying to preserve sufficient detachment to rationalize the points of view, as, indeed, seems eventually to be a real possibility, at least in some significant aspects. But there is no denying the fact that it was Elliott who fabricated this *mise-en-scène*. Although there is often a strong feeling that these two philosophies cannot coexist, if one were to allow oneself to be swayed one way or the other by the rhetoric of mutual exclusivity, it must, nevertheless, be unthinkable that they do not also have a considerable corpus of common ground. It is the writer's aim to search out this shared thread in pursuit of what Elliott himself describes as the eventual evolution of 'individual philosophy building', eclectically fashioned.

The emotional tone of both essays is evident in the choice of language. It is to be regretted that Bennett Reimer allowed himself to be goaded into a partial adoption of Elliott's abrasive style, which the latter adopted with renewed vigour in his rebuttal; in the event, and much to the displeasure of the reader (any reader) the result is to do no credit to either, on that score. Yet, each evinces impressive strengths and palpable weaknesses, in the writer's view.

### 5.5.1 The Reimer claims for MEAE (Music Education as Aesthetic Education)

1. 'Performance is an essential component of any vision of music education but it is simply insufficient to carry the entire weight of the music education enterprise at this point in history'.
2. MEAE is 'notably inclusive of all the ways that people engage themselves with music - listening, performing, improvising, composing, judging, analysing, describing, and understanding contexts and relations to other arts and other aspects of culture.'
3. A comprehensive musicianship movement grew up alongside with, and complementary to, the aesthetic movement. It is assumed here that the aesthetic movement itself is the body which, ostensibly, supports, and is attempting to implement the Reimer philosophy. The musicianship movement is therefore MEAE itself, or the application of the philosophy in the implementation of the curriculum.
4. The aesthetic idea is concerned with four dimensions of cognition, or musical 'knowing' - knowing *within*, knowing *how*, knowing *about* and knowing *why*.
5. Reimer constantly implies that the new national standards in the US (see Lehman, MEND 303) are synonymous with the intent of MEAE. Take for example the passage on page 7 (MEND 403): 'Students of every age deserve to be acquainted with the musical goods of their cultural inheritance, through singing and playing, ... through listening, through composing and improvising, ... and through learning about contexts'. This compares very well with the sense of the National Standards document (see Lehman, MEND 303).
6. 'In my view, performance is an essential component of general education in music as both an end, for the sheer sake of performing, and as a means, for what performance teaches about the music being studied.' It is uniquely a way of knowing, unavailable except by acting as an artist. Creating art (knowing *how*) is meaningful in and of itself, and adds an educative dimension to aesthetic meaning. In the performance elective it is performance itself that becomes the point, the purpose, and dominating involvement chosen by the student. This principle applies equally to all the other branches of elective musical involvement; they should be represented but not dominating in general music. Nor should the elective focusing on a particular musical engagement be allowed to be redundant within the overall scheme.
7. There must be a balance between general and specialized music (in this case performance), between experiencing and creating. General music has the entire world of music as its essential study material; it is *extensive* and *comprehensive*. Performance, on the other hand, has only a tiny percentage of the world's music as its essential study

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material but with each piece being experienced exhaustively; performance is *intensive* and *selective* in its approach to the art of music.

8. [G]eneral education must include performing, and performance electives must include learnings wider than the strictly performative dimension of playing and singing.
9. Reimer offers a theory to encompass the uniqueness of performance.
  - i) ‘The special nature of the performing act (in music as distinct form the other arts) is that it requires that ‘craftsmanship, sensitivity, imagination, and authenticity be brought to bear on the inherent expressive needs of a piece awaiting actualization. ... It is a double obligation - serving the music yet bringing it to life with individuality. ... People who are performers serve their art uniquely. Arts [*sic*] serves such people uniquely.’
  - ii) ‘Musical performance is a unique form of intelligence. In addition to giving sounds meaningful form, this form-giving is dependent on and springs from the skills of the knowing body ... the body as executive, in which *executive* is simultaneously noun and verb. Form and action, product and process, are inseparable in this conception. Mind and body, or thinking and doing, are also unified’. ‘Although the bodily movements are not in and of themselves the music ... the action of *making* the music is a powerful factor in the intimacy, or “self engagement”, we feel when listening to live performances.’

This useful definition of performance from the acknowledged architect of the aesthetic philosophy of music education is a far cry from the accusation levelled by Elliott at MEAE as condoning a reduction of performance to mere ‘sound producing’. (Note that a *definition of performance* has been highlighted by MEND as a quintessential prior clarification so that performance can be dovetailed meaningfully into all phases of music education.)

### 5.5.2 What is considered (by Reimer) to be admirable in the Elliott philosophy

1. Reimer accepts that scholarly specialists devoted to the essential task of probing fundamental questions as to the nature and purpose of music education will precipitate philosophical contention and debate, as in this case. The benefit will be in the form of enabling philosophers better to assimilate into their work more deeply understood reasons for their professional existence (and presumably to continue to clarify areas of current differences).



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2. Reimer draws attention and gives commendation to the fact that Elliott uses copious readings, and references to the literature of the subject, to strengthen his case. He does not equate this to mere borrowings (plagiarism), but believes it to be an enriching dimension of scholarly research.
3. Reimer commends Elliott's treatment of the parameters of performance (and listening), which he acknowledges, at its best, as being mindful and intelligent (confirmed also by other reviewers), but on the grounds that he is merely restating accepted wisdom. Reimer enumerates the characteristics of good performance, relating them to Elliott's forms of knowledge:
  - i) performers act with intention.
  - ii) they select, deploy, direct, adjust and judge as they act.
  - iii) their actions are specific to their particular practice.
  - iv) they practice before they perform.
  - v) their performance demonstrates understanding (procedural knowledge).
  - vi) the performance can be influenced by verbal understandings converted into actions (formal knowledge).
  - vii) 'savvy' (informal knowledge) affects what performers do and the way they think.
  - viii) intuition (impressionistic knowledge) guides the performer to what is appropriate.
  - ix) performers monitor what they do (supervisory knowledge).

Reimer's simplification removes the metaphysical tone.

4. Reimer is largely in agreement with Elliott on the *nature* of listening. '... it is not that Elliott does not understand what listening entails - he certainly does. What is disappointing and illogical about his position is the stunning *non sequitur* he propounds as to what we as educators should do about cultivating listening abilities: to have all students become performers!'
5. Reimer, while he does not trivialize Elliott's five forms of knowing beyond observing that 'some of the language [he] uses is particular to him', claims that all these ways of thinking about performing (and presumably also about the other four phantom-like activities regularly conjoined by Elliott - improvising, composing, arranging, conducting) belong to the familiar territory of music education philosophy.
6. Reimer is not opposed to praxialism and deals with it in his paper on universal philosophy (MEND 401 but see also the review of Reimer's MEND paper above for

details [MEND 203]), read at the 1996 Amsterdam Conference of ISME. This is a very important document as representing Reimer's revised thoughts beyond those contained in *A Philosophy of Music Education*.

### 5.5.3 The Reimer criticisms of Elliott's proposals

Note: This long subsection has proved to be the most recalcitrant of all the material presented in this thesis in terms of reader-friendly navigability. And yet the analysis is crucial to the attempted reconciliation of rival stances. It did not prove possible to itemize the points with their immediate cross-referenced contexts into a strict concordance, since both writers ranged freely from topic to topic, not all of which are of equal importance to the denouement. The most critical parameters (the product/process issue, the nature of listening [and performance], music as art and the aesthetic, the relevance of American music education to context in general and to the Irish case in particular) have been extracted as separate headings, since they eventually define the cornerstones of the reconciliation. In Elliott's rebuttal he uses Gardnerian phraseology with pejorative intent, referring to Reimer's criticisms as Myths; the reader will notice that only a selection of the most relevant is included, but can be assured that there are no selective omissions on the grounds of potential to weaken the thrust of the arguments in this thesis. Both documents are reprinted (by permission) in the Appendices of the MEND Report (CD-ROM MEND Documents 403 [Reimer] and 416 [Elliott] respectively), supplied with this thesis.

The writer's comments are interpolated in the text.

1. There is a suggestion that Elliott's philosophical treatment has not been managed with scrupulous professional honesty and that it fails to be deeply relevant to the existing and emerging musical/cultural realities of the times for which it is being proposed.
2. Reimer notes two 'remarkably faulty premises' used by Elliott as bases for his philosophy:
  - i) His understanding of the purpose of philosophy itself as a 'species of competitive sport in which the ultimate goal is to "win" by defeating an opponent.'
  - ii) Performing is the essential good and the essential goal.
3. Elliott supports his proposals on two basic premises:
  - i) He offers a philosophy that is in opposition to the prevailing one, which he terms MEAE (Music Education as Aesthetic Education) and identifies with Reimer. This 'new' philosophy is seen as a 'clear alternative to past thinking'. It seeks to

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identify, first, a dimension of music not in any way recognized by the view he wanted to overthrow and, second, to demonstrate that it is important enough to sustain the whole music education enterprise. This dimension was provided by praxialist thinking, emphasizing engagement in actions [construed, by Reimer, to mean performance]. Reimer claims that the ‘sub-title “new”, as signalling that the “old” should be discarded, is not compatible with reflective scholarship’.

- ii) That MEAE neglects or denigrates performance. Reimer claims that this is not true, simply because MEAE has been extensively adopted by the profession, and performance is flourishing. He even quotes the MENC publication *The School Music Program: A New Vision*, which presented the new national standards, as stating that ‘frequently music programs have been based exclusively on performance’.
4. Elliott is not presenting a ‘balance’ issue. He is claiming that, i) performance should be the central dominant, essential involvement and that, ii) MEAE is opposed to performance.
  5. Elliott’s agenda forces him to separate process from product. In this context he makes a distinction between the questions “what is a work of music?” [product] and “ what is music” [process]. Reimer gives an interesting sample of answers to the latter question, which he found to be overwhelmingly product-orientated. Reimer claims that ‘it is not possible to have a musical product separated from the processes that went into its creation’ and that Elliott needs the distinction so that he can build his philosophy on it. Reimer uses a quotation from Elliot Eisner (1973) which very relevantly points the issue (against Elliott) - ‘This myth argues that what is educationally significant for children is the process they undergo while making something, not what it is they make ... whether that product is ideational or material. ... we will never be able to see the processes the child is undergoing. What we see are the manifestations of those processes. ... To disregard what the child produces puts us in an absolutely feckless position for making inferences about these processes. In addition, without attention to what is produced we have no basis for making any type of judgment regarding the educational value of the activity. ... Product and process therefore cannot be dichotomized. They are like two sides of a coin. ... To neglect one in favor of the other is to be educationally naïve’. Elliott is creating a caricature of MEAE programmes, which rely heavily on composing, improvising and performing, along with listening, as essential ingredients of musical experiencing and learning. He has eventually to accept that works (examples of Elliott’s phraseology are given) are important, but he denigrates the product side of the coin, by

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confusing works with notated compositions. According to Elliott, ‘... music is a matter of singing and playing instruments. And even in the West ... there are many kinds of musical situations in which the actions (in the intentional sense) take precedence over music in the narrow sense of esteemed works’. Reimer finds this globally condescending to the oral/aural tradition but especially to the musicianship of people outside the West and goes on to claim, convincingly, that works and the esteem paid to the best examples (instances) are the norm, and that such paradigms - ‘exemplars of music - are ubiquitous throughout the world and in all styles and types of music’.

6. Reimer claims that the praxial philosophy reneges on its ‘obligation to acquaint the young with the cherished achievements of [their] culture’ by being so performance-obsessed as to endanger the healthy education of youth.
7. A result of Elliott’s obsession with process is that the praxial philosophy, which he espouses, plays down the specifics of chosen repertoire (‘esteemed’ and ‘revered’). His approach denies the need to balance process and product and to recognize their interdependence. His single-strategy approach - ‘treating all music students (including “general” music students) as apprentice musical practitioners (*MM*, p. 266) - fails, by definition, to honour the principle that different musical goals require different programs tailored to each’.
8. Reimer draws attention to a recurrent implication in *Music Matters* (it is never developed sufficiently to be more than an implication) that what applies to performance is equally valid for improvising, composing, arranging and conducting (but *not* to listening *per se*). This causes some confusion, as when the philosopher Wolterstorff is quoted (by Elliott) as saying that ‘[m]ost of all, musicing reminds us that performing and improvising through singing and playing instruments lies at the heart of MUSIC as a diverse human practice. ... the basic reality of music is not works or the composition of works but music making’. This seems definitively to anchor Elliott’s philosophy in championing performance; listeners (uninvolved in any other musical activity) are disfranchised in the process, Elliott’s strategy being to channel them all into performance, whether or not it is their choice of involvement in music.
9. Elliott’s catalogue of the component varieties of knowledge applicable to performance fail to capture ‘what there is about performing music that is particular to its nature beyond what is shared generically with so many other human/cultural activities’. Reimer believes that professional music educators must ‘(a) demonstrate that performance opportunities should be supported in education and (b) teach for what performance offers that is unique

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to it and not just as easily attainable by doing a host of other things.’ This is a very characteristic Reimer stance.

10. Reimer is concerned about the possible redundancy threat posed by technology to performance, and finds Elliott’s failure to address this problem surprising and disappointing. Reimer’s definition (which deals with the single case of a composer using computer technology to bypass the performer) does not go into the numerous psychological aspects of how the human psyche relates to the experience of ‘real’ performance - or as Reimer himself puts it ‘the value of being involved in the act of musical creation at the performance stage’, giving it uniqueness in its musical function. Rather Reimer advances the query because the use of technology represents, he concludes, a devastating prospect for Elliott’s ‘performance only’ mode, in the special context of the claim that ‘music is a *performing* art’ and that the only way to know music is through performing it.
11. Elliott disagrees when ‘[s]ome people want to claim that musical understanding is distinct from knowing how to make music well. The claim is false. It rests on the dualistic assumption that verbal knowledge about music represents true understanding, while the ability to make music well is a mechanical skill or behavior. ... This book’s praxial philosophy of music education [i.e. referring to *Music Matters*] holds that musicianship equals musical understanding’. This statement, based on Elliott’s belief in a much respected theory that cognitive and psychomotor modes (dualistic above) cannot be separated, is sweepingly presumptive as an implication about MEAE and how it defines the connection between music making, understanding and musicianship. Note Reimer’s description: ‘Musical performance, I am suggesting, depends on the body as executive ... Notice that form and action, product and process are inseparable in this conception. Notice too that mind and body, or thinking and doing, are also unified’. The Elliott passage is consistent with his tendency to play down, if not to outlaw, the fructifying contribution of verbal knowledge of all kinds to the musical enterprise, in turn identified by him as one of the fallacies promoted by MEAE (he does, however, eventually but grudgingly acknowledge verbal knowledge in his book). Reimer counters Elliott’s claim with an array of scholars (among them Nettl and Sparshott - both Elliott heroes) whose literary works manifest supreme involvements with and understandings of music. He goes on, in decrying Elliott’s ‘narrow, exclusive vision of musical understanding (which equals musicianship as defined in its five-fold aspects in *Music Matters*) by asserting that ‘there is simply far more to music, and musical understanding, musical learning, musical experience, musical value, musical satisfaction and growth and delight and meaning, than performance can encompass. Performance surely offers all these goods; they are offered

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as well in a great variety of other modes of involvement for which music education must be responsible, if it is to reflect the diverse ways music is manifested, and understood, in our culture.’

12. Elliott has contempt for teaching listening directly, rather than always as a concomitant of performance. Thus claims Reimer, and he goes on to query Elliott’s reference to a coterie group for each culture who ‘act specifically as listeners or audiences for the musical works of that practice’ as a bizarre idea which is not in touch with the reality of listening activities in all cultures. Reimer asserts that ‘all people in western culture (and most other cultures) are music listeners. ... The vast majority of people in our culture engage in music only by listening. ... That music education has poorly served the needs of all 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 % or so of students who choose to learn to be performers. Elliott, unfortunately, by focusing entirely on performance as the only valid way to be involved with music, would severely exacerbate this failing of music education’. An intervention, however premature, by the writer here seems necessary to draw attention to Reimer’s persistent assumption that Elliott sees music making as the activity which alone can effect musicianship and that the activity is narrowly conceived as performing (‘through singing and playing instruments’). Although there is some justification for arriving at this conclusion, it is factually a misinterpretation, albeit a valuable one in opening up the discourse, and throwing additional light on the activity of performing; in other words, it serves the purposes of MEND and of this analysis.
13. Reimer takes issue with Elliott’s key statement that ‘[i]n sum, educating competent, proficient, and expert listeners for the future depends on the progressive education of competent, proficient, and artistic music makers [performers] in the present’. As stated above, it seems perfectly understandable and excusable, at this stage, that Reimer should interpret *music makers* as meaning *performers*, since that is the general thrust of Elliott’s rhetoric; his other branches of musical activity are almost always mentioned merely parenthetically, creating a distinct impression that he has performance in mind as his paradigm, as much as he certainly is *not* thinking in terms of listening alone. A very pertinent and useful quotation from Richard Colwell (a MEND presenter [MEND 209]) is appended here: ‘The development of aesthetic perceptual abilities in the arts does not automatically result from performance experiences; the teachable aspects in such development are knowledge-intensive and dependent on direct, focused learning experience ....’ And Reimer raises the very point that the MEND analysis (of Elliott’s paper) has also focused on. ‘Whatever learnings do accrue from performance are

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learnings unavailable to the vast majority of people in our culture, very few of whom can become, or choose to become, competent, proficient and expert performers, despite Elliott's illogical premise that this is achievable simply by involving them in exploratory performance experiences in ... school-supplied simulations [lacking authenticity] of what musical performing artists are required to do. ... Elliott so overestimates what school music programs can possibly produce by way of performing expertise, even if all instruction were given over to performance as he would desire, as to insure that the music education enterprise would topple on such an insufficient, narrow base.' With reference to the enjoyment of the arts in general (and music in particular), '[h]ow illogical and irrelevant it is to insist that only those able and willing to achieve competence in producing these arts can possibly enjoy or understand them ... including, if we are not to be hypocritical, many music educators, who are also incapable of performing competently, proficiently, or expertly most of the music they enjoy in their lives.' Reimer insists that performing and listening are disparate faculties, that levels of capability in them are typically and healthily unequal (in children), yet they can listen effectively to, enjoy and benefit from relatively complex music which is far beyond their capability to perform. 'To limit the musical experience of students - at every grade level - to that which they themselves can perform "competently, proficiently, and expertly", is to deprive all students of satisfying musical experiences readily available in their culture'. He summarizes this section provocatively by stating that 'the mistake Elliott makes - and it is a profound mistake - is to reject the obvious fact that listening, too, is musical praxis, deserving of cultivation as much as (or, given its centrality and ubiquity in the actual musical lives lived by all people in our culture, perhaps more than) all the other ways music can be experienced.' He draws on Foster McMurray (writing as early as 1958) for support in this. Speaking of non-professional performers, McMurray claims that 'there must be a great gap between their level of aesthetic insight and enjoyment on the one hand and their technical ability as performers on the other. ... Whatever the values of musical performance might be, we must recognize that performance is not a *primary* means to development of aesthetic sensitivity.' Since it is axiomatic that performance must invaginate sensitive listening to be considered a truly valid musical activity, it must be assumed that McMurray is referring here to listening *per se* as a valuable source of aesthetic experience and learning. And it must be remembered that listening *per se* is a universal activity across all cultures.

14. Reimer finds Elliott's neglect of the sensuous and his dismissal of the creative characteristics of listening to be ungenerously pejorative in relation to the cultural power and potential of the activity. As in the case of the bodily gesture used in the

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communication of musical essence through performance, he attributes the same gestural significance to the act of musical reception, drawing on a Langerian quotation from Judy Lochhead: ‘Perception is not a mechanistic process ... or the intellectual process of interpreting the data of sensory input, but rather it is a *bodily enaction of meaning*. I meet the sounds with my body and through it I enact the melody as a felt significance’. On the question of the essential creativity of listening - the construction of musical meanings by the exercise of imagination - apparently rejected by Elliott, he has this to say: ‘The active contribution to the process [of perception] by the percipient is also an essential factor in aesthetic engagements. ... Aesthetic experiencing requires a reconstruction by the imagination of the percipient of the imagined interplay of occurrence built into the form by the artist [both composer and performer. In other words the listener is a vicarious performer]’. Elliott claims that this is a covert act, that it cannot be witnessed, that it is not assessable and therefore is without creative value. Elliott’s inconsistency is remarkable. Because, in his opinion, creativity in listening is not witnessable and assessable, he rules against it; yet, on the question of ‘the innate equality of all musical cultures’ he claims, selectively, that because hierarchy is not assessable, equality may be assumed! As Aspin remarks, he can’t have it both ways. Reimer disagrees with Elliott and believes that evidence of success in listening assignments can be effectively and readily collected. He quotes T.M. Amabile as claiming that ‘creativity can be regarded as the quality of products or responses judged to be creative by appropriate observers, and it can also be regarded as the process by which something so judged is produced’ and uses this to define the responsibilities of professionals in influencing ‘the process by which students engage themselves with music as listeners as well as performers, improvisers and composers. ... The process of learning to create musical meaning through listening is challenging, as is creating meaning through performing, improvising, and composing’. Again he observes that listening is concerned with both product and process as an inseparable pair, both of which can evince the measurable presence of creativity.

15. In relation to *Concepts as Learning Tools*, Reimer again interprets Elliott’s concentration on performance as ‘the curricular goal [which] is to organize music classrooms and programs as effectively and genuinely as possible by simulating the ways in which musicing and listening are carried out by artistic music practitioners [performers]’. This is factually an over-simplification as Elliott does include, however parenthetically, four other forms of activity as germane to practitioners. And presumably Elliott does, in some grand sanguine sweep, imply that all the other ‘activities’ listed by Reimer as part of a well-rounded musical education (the acquisition of musicianship) accrue from the ways in which these practices are taught, learned and implemented. But it is in response to



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Elliott's claim that MEAE 'negates the procedural essence of music [*inter alia*] ... by reducing these knowledge domains to simplistic verbal objectives and concepts' that Reimer takes the ethical high ground by pointing to the use of selective, out-of-context, quoting; and certainly the example he analyses is clearly a transgression of significant proportion (although Elliott adduces a similar misquotation by Reimer to balance the account, so to speak [see below]!) and creates a false impression, diametrically opposed to Reimer's intention and professional caution when he elaborates about verbal concepts: '... they are *only* tools , and it is important that we understand that, so we do not misguide our activities as we teach. ... Conceptualizing, when it goes on without sufficient listening to music exemplifying what is being discussed, without sufficient performance to keep learning musically creative, without appropriate probing of inner musical conditions through analysis, and without musical assessments, becomes academic in the worst sense.' In further defence of language as an indispensable tool in music education, Reimer adds two more highly pertinent quotations. The first, again in Langerian vein, is from Lochhead: '... concepts are the perceptual tools by which humans know their world. They are not simply intellectual abstractions from experience, but rather are the practical implements by means of which meaningful and varied experience arises.' The second, from Tait and Haack's *Principles and Processes of Music Education (1984)*: '... we need to explore the language connection ... to identify and develop those forces that contribute to our feeling moved when we experience music. Language is not the same experience, the words are not the same feelings, but language is the essential tool that allows us to conceptualize and think about, to analyse and teach about these vital musical matters that ultimately can take us beyond words'. He also gives a useful reference (Dennie Palmer Wolf's *Becoming Knowledge; The Evolution of Art Education Curriculum*' (*Handbook of Research on Curriculum 1992*) as further material to set against what he believes Elliott is portraying as a model for curriculum building.

16. As in the case of performance, perceived by Reimer as effectively Elliott's preferred, to the point of being the exclusive, means of training musicians, Elliott's failure to discriminate between the intrinsic and extrinsic merits of music itself (and music education) are targeted as leaving 'the profession in a more vulnerable position to being perceived as unnecessary in education'. Reimer calls for a celebration of the uniqueness of music by identifying qualities that it does *not* share with other activities. This has always been a fashionable and compelling stance, held stoutly by MEAE practitioners. As has been stated elsewhere in this report, it could very well be that Elliott's confidence in the robustness of music as an educational option dispenses with the need to be so fearful for its survival; but this is surely open to the criticism of being foolhardy, considering the

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unflattering statistics world-wide on the voluntary uptake of the music option in general education. But, let it be said, Elliott does engage and deal with the intrinsicity issue in his own terms (MEND 416, 24).

17. It is interesting to compare Reimer's calling into question of Elliott's statement of the essential features of music itself (especially in the context of how the affective dimension is dealt with and the dangerous reference to 'expressions of emotion'), and Elliott's claim that Reimer's aesthetic theory has also been superannuated. We are left here in a limbo in which the fine distinction between the discharge of emotion and the expression of feeling, surely that most significant and hotly debated discriminating dimension in musical experience, is thrown into a new confusion.
18. Reimer finds Elliott's treatise wanting in the encouragement of understandings of the relationship between music and the other arts. This is highlighted in the fairly recent (1992-94) drafting of the US National Standards for music education, in which music, for strategic and political reasons, was allied to the other arts for the purposes of their promotion, as a group, in the successful campaign to have them incorporated in the *Goals 2000* US legislation for education.
19. Reimer takes issue with Elliott's restrictive definition of general creativity as 'a congratulatory term that singles out a concrete accomplishment that knowledgeable people judge to be especially important in relation to a specific context of doing or making'. While this may seem to be merely a question of definition, Reimer is concerned that it excludes the many more modest acts of creativity that occur regularly along a continuum, which stretches right back to the most elementary instances of musical achievement which 'music educators - of *all* people - should immediately recognize' and reward. But it is surely educationally reprehensible in principle (and contrary to the *Implications for Music Education* so thoroughly and convincingly treated on page 131 of *MM*) to ridicule a commendable balance of musical challenge and musicianship at the novice level by denying that 'a beginner's toots are as creative as a solo by Wynton Marsalis'. That is not the point.
20. In his *Conclusion* (summary), Reimer returns to his irreducible objections to Elliott's philosophy, which he believes to be pursuing a 'doubly false agenda by any possible means'. His objections are grounded, first, in a model of philosophical discourse, which 'descends to ridicule ... and stoops to deceitful tactics no scholar can condone', which Reimer believes to be 'potentially damaging to music education scholarship'. His second major reservation relates to his conviction that 'Elliott's limited vision is so fixated on the most traditional, most entrenched, most conventional aspect of music education -

performing - as to represent a species of music fundamentalism, a deification of a historical value no longer able to satisfy [did it ever? Writer's intervention] all the music/cultural needs of our times and how our times are quickly evolving. He has put forth a philosophy for a time that has passed, based on a musical culture no longer dominant and quickly becoming transformed by new possibilities. Elliott's "new" philosophy at best enshrines the status quo; at worst, it would direct us backward'.

#### 5.5.4 Elliott's Rebuttals

Elliott's response to the first four Reimer objections (listed above) is taken *en bloc*.

He gives four motivations for the formulation of his philosophical thoughts:

1. To act as spokesman for the plethora of philosophical theory that has been accumulating since Reimer's 1970 and 1989 publications.
2. To insinuate the ethnomusicological case into music education theory and practice. Elliott comes through as a convinced multiculturalist.
3. To provide another foundational text-as-tool [alternative] to spur critical thinking.
4. To link philosophy with practice, reflecting the expertise of artist-teachers, hence the praxial philosophy.

Elliott explains that his application of the word *new* to his philosophy is unexceptionable as emphasizing *alternative* or *recent* perspectives. He goes on to suggest that the praxial philosophy is 'only one possible view ... unlikely to replace completely what has already been done let alone discourage others from producing alternatives'. This is not borne out by some of the language of dismissal he uses in dealing with Reimer's work. 'A philosophy has been proposed in *MM* that includes "contending arguments" and "alternative views" - nothing more, nothing less.' This, too, would be acceptable, and an encouraging introduction, were it not for the vehemence with which he seeks to discredit other opposing views, as if they have no merit whatsoever.

With characteristic lack of caution in relation to his own vulnerability, Elliott claims that 'if even one basic principle in a highly systematic set of beliefs [MEAE, Tyler, Bruner?] is invalid, then the others must be considered suspicious, if not invalid'. He goes on to quote Borhek and Curtis as saying that '[f]or highly systematic belief, any attack upon any of its principles is an attack upon the system itself; if one principle is abandoned, all the others must be, too. Therefore, the greater the degree of system, the greater the importance of negative evidence for the whole belief system. ... In consequence a

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systematic belief system is at the mercy of its weakest link' (*MM*, 38). Presumably Elliott considers that *MM* presents a systematic belief system (the writer hopes so), too, and would accept, therefore, that it is subject to the same iconoclastic and nihilistic criterion of judgement. This search for human infallibility is clearly doomed to failure.

Many of Elliott's critics have commented that he does not stop short of offering an alternative, but rather seeks to raise his own stature by attempting to dismiss his opponents' views out of hand. Thus we find him not only rejecting MEAE but also the whole foundation on which it is based, including distinguished offerings by Charles Leonhard, Susanne Langer and Leonard Meyer, in addition to Reimer's synthesis and expansion of those views. Consider C.D. Burns's far more positive view of philosophy in evolution (used elsewhere in this report because of its constant appositeness): 'philosophers in every age have attempted to give an account of as much experience as they could. ... all great philosophers have allowed for more than they could explain and have, therefore, signed beforehand, if not dated, the death warrant of their philosophies'<sup>92</sup>.

Elliott's attack on MEAE, whatever the degree of vindication that eventually emerges, is more in the nature of total deconstruction, and ill-at-ease as evidence of his claim that '*MM* has begun to serve as a tool for critical thinking; this critical-companion text [a collection of critical essays responding to *MM*] is intended to contribute another meme to the ongoing process of philosophy-building in music education'. In other words, is Reimer's essay here to be included in the collection? In rejecting MEAE he faults Reimer's theory of 'absolute expressionism' as combining two views of music that contradict each other, both views being deeply flawed in themselves. Yet Elliott fails to make the fine distinction himself between emotion and feeling (arousal/discharge and expression) which gives such a subtle and fine edge to Langer's theories - and between disappointment and surprise which modifies the significance of Meyer's *inhibition* theory and permits compatibility with Langer's view.<sup>93</sup>

These speculations are far from an open-and-shut case for facile adoption or dismissal and are still subject to scholarly dialectic and fine-tuning. And there is no reason to believe that Elliott's first premise in attempting 'to build a concept of music by investigating the nature of music makers, listeners, music making, listening, musical works, and the contexts and interdependencies of all' would not also serve to define the aims of the aesthetic movement. Nor is there any contradiction or incompatibility evident when Elliott claims that 'listenership involves the covert construction of intermusical and intramusical information, relationships and meanings through the same *kinds* of knowing that make up musicianship: procedural, formal, informal, impressionistic and supervisory

<sup>92</sup> C.D. Burns, *The Sense of the Horizon*, quoted in Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, 5.

<sup>93</sup> S.K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (see Index under Emotive theory) and Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and*

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musical knowledge. The knowings required to listen effectively for the musical works of a given practice are the same kinds of knowing required to perform, improvise, compose, arrange, and/or conduct the music of that practice’.

If listeners/musicians are to know even a reasonable cross-section of the mature works of a musical practice, he is surely not suggesting that it can only be done by personal efforts at performing them? There is more than a hint here that Elliott covertly validates a very large amount of listening separate from music making; and it would be comforting if it were true. But Elliott differs typically in failing to credit listening *per se* as a fully qualified musical activity in itself, this in spite of his admission that it has a place, but one of far less significance than the practices that he names (performing, improvising, etc.) as mandatory concomitant activities with listening. And in this section Elliott also points to another significant difference in his view - ‘that *works* of music (in the praxial sense) are artistic cultural constructions involving several interconnected dimensions or facets of meaning including the following: interpretive, structural, expressional, representational, social, ideological and, of course, personal meanings.’

Already he is calling into question (and rightly so, in many respects) the indiscriminate unyielding application of the artistic theory of music so pertinently commented on by Arnold Schönberg: ‘If it is art it is not for all: if it is for all it is not art’. Nor can Elliott’s view be faulted in this attempt at democratization which seeks to open up music, in a humanistic sense, to all kinds of manifestations (social, ideological, personal, cathartic). But it must also be noted that Elliott’s frequent preoccupation with, and usage of, the phrase *artistic performance* aligns him, even perhaps inadvertently, with the aesthetic theory of the interplay of mimesis (imitation), craft (skill) and human feeling (in spite of the fact that in a pre-MEND II personal interview with the writer [Fort Worth, Texas, 1995] he declared, in relation to praxial applications, that the word *skill* was not in his vocabulary!).

In responding to the arguably less intrinsic characteristics of a great deal of music, the pure aesthetic theory, having metamorphosed, so to speak, from Hanslick to Langer, needs now to relax, without abandoning its more absolutist tendencies, to embrace a much wider spectrum of musics as worthy of its attention and of reconciliation. Elliott gives a very pertinent quotation from Charles Leonhard (MENC 1985) where he reminisces: ‘I began emphasizing aesthetic education more than thirty years ago in *Education*, a now defunct journal, with an article titled “Music Education: Aesthetic Education.” At the time of publication of that article and during the intervening years, I never anticipated that the concept of aesthetic education would come to be used as the major tenet in the justification of music education. That has, however, happened. As a result, the profession has been

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*Meaning in Music* (see Index under Surprise).

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sated with vague esoteric statements of justification that no one understands, including, I suspect, most of the people who make those statements'. This is surely cautionary in delimiting aesthetic education as to its potential for manifold application (*MM*, p.300). And Reimer, too, has shown great resilience in this respect, and his hand is evident in the flexible and non-prescriptive provisions of the US National Standards for music education, as indeed his attempt at sketching a universal philosophy of music education for the new millennium (Amsterdam ISME Conference of 1996 {MEND 401}) is also a worthy effort at compromise, validating as it does a wide array of function for music and music education (including praxialism).

It might usefully be argued at this stage that MEAE (or the more extreme aesthetic ideal in music education) needs to essay *détente* with a much wider range of musical experience outside western art music (to which it is perhaps best, though not necessarily uniquely, suited). On the other hand, the praxial philosophy (if we are to believe Elliott), which is an open manifold of accommodation for all kinds of music, needs to exercise caution in setting discriminating standards of judgement and value. However, already, Elliott is declaring his hand. His openness to social/cultural values is either influenced by ethnomusicological interests or directs him towards them; and, let it be said, there is nothing unworthy in that either, if thoughtfully managed. But ethnomusicology, itself a respected and growing area of scholarship, when education-targeted, is currently more concerned with the practices (music-making) of various cultures than with their indigenous scholarship, certainly as far as incorporation in school education curricula is concerned. This inevitably leads Elliott to his praxial *processual* philosophy and to his thesis as to 'the equality of all musical practices'- a stance he visits (unconvincingly) on Harry White's paper *A Book of manners in the wilderness* (MEND 308). Curiously, this is not challenged by Reimer, although it contributed largely to Aspin's rejection of Elliott's praxial philosophy.

It is a great pity that Elliott, beyond acknowledging Reimer's contribution to MEAE as an important development in music education (but in 1970!), has absolutely nothing to say in its praise; this, of course, inexorably mutes the plausibility of his own views. Considering the influence Reimer's *Philosophy* has exerted over the past 30 or more years (and indeed continues to wield), his rejection of an entire order (and the countless colleagues who have plied it over the years), without offering any means of accommodation or *rapprochement* whatsoever, is so unflattering, if not eccentric, as to discourage ready allegiance to his alternative rationale. And his wholesale misinterpretation of MEAE practices (as, for instance, equating its performance programme to mere sound-producing) is also damaging to his own credibility. The objections to MEAE, which he lists in his counter-attack, render *it* no more vulnerable, as to detail, than the praxial philosophy itself.

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So, the writer believes that, in spite of Elliott's protests, perusal of *MM* will provide abundant evidence (particularly and significantly in the earlier part) that he set out to overthrow MEAE from the outset. If this is so, the ethics of the philosophical approach in his book must, at least, be open to question. Similar comments have been made by professional colleagues (see the review by David Aspin); certainly his aggressive style is most unattractive. On the other hand, it was a rash overstatement, on Reimer's part, to claim that the praxial philosophy is for 'performers only'; there may be abundant evidence in *MM* that this is a tendency, and this aspect will be teased out, but Elliott potentially includes much more than performing in his definition of music making.

It is never clear, for the purposes of comparison, from any of the documentation studied, what the total remit of MEAE is in the perception of even American music educators. The writer's understanding is that, in the US, the performance option pursued by the 15% or so of all school-goers can, at worst, be exclusive of many, if not all, of the other learnings insisted upon by MEAE (as ideally conceived), as Reimer himself has conceded. In fact it is not clear, either, whether the aesthetic movement can claim the performance programme, such as it is, as its own since, according to Paul Lehman (MEND 303), performance has been entrenched in school music in the US for most of the twentieth century anyway. And if MEAE is then taken to apply only to the remaining 2% who follow the general music programme as (volitionally) non-performers (Reimer's authority again - 'Fewer than 2 % of students after elementary school are involved in any music classes except performance, meaning that, starting in grades 6. 7 or 8, 85 to 91% [or so] are completely untouched by music education' [see the Reimer reply to Harry White, MEND 402, 4]; the parallels with Ireland are very real here), it is easy to see how a listening-rich education could be construed as anti-performance. This, of course, is not the case either. As Richard Colwell so significantly remarked at MEND II (MEND 209), it is very difficult to find out exactly what the true situation is in relation to a *delivered* curriculum. But Elliott tends to interpret selectively for his purposes in this regard.

As stated, Reimer, although he still has a valid point to make, was unwise to extract from *MM* an interpretation that 'performing is the essential good and the essential goal' of music education. 'Elliott's limited vision is so fixated on the most traditional, most entrenched, most conventional aspect of music education - performing - as to represent a species of music education fundamentalism'. The writer would, on the other hand, have a different problem with Elliott's vision as being so idealistic (admirable in itself), and tending towards an all-inclusiveness (five species of music making - all mandatory to a greater or lesser degree), that it crumbles under the very notion of time constraints and practicability. And it might have been better for Reimer to have organized his rebuttal of *MM* by trying to anticipate Elliott's counter-rebuttal (being reviewed here) and stating the

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full range of his notional activities only to highlight the impossibility of taking such a plan to fruition. However, Reimer does use this strategy later on.

Elliott's activities and comments will now be examined.

Elliott urges that 'music education should activate students' musicianship and musical creativity [a problem word, and a source of disagreement between Reimer and Elliott] in *all* forms of music making.' ... laudable so far. He then proposes that '*all* 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'. For the moment let him not be taken to task as to what he means by artistic (from art!), which is dangerously encroaching on the whole field of aesthetics, mimesis, form, craft, feeling and their interconnections. His five forms of music making (each with a conjoined listening dimension, which it should be hardly even necessary to enjoin) are performing, improvising, composing, arranging and conducting. The writer maintains that all of these activities demand considerable levels of skill (craft/technique) to be effective, quite apart from the problem of balancing the offerings to and capabilities of each student (all being taught in essentially the same way!).

Already a considerable input of time is being predicated for students in the general music curriculum, most of whom typically (if we take the US statistics, such as they are) do not want to be involved anyway. Conducting is an early casualty in Elliott's essay, meriting only a perfunctory mention in what follows. Since composing and arranging in a curriculum-as-practicum must have outlets in performance, Elliott then notionally elevates performance and improvising to a position of *first among equals*. He further expands (or contracts?) his ideas with the instruction 'teachers must decide which forms of musicing to select. ... [they must] focus primarily (*but not exclusively*) on music making through performing and improvising. Composing, arranging and conducting ought to be taken up with reasonable frequency. ... In addition, ... listening ought to be taught in direct relation to the musical practices and works students are learning in and through their own active music making'.

It seems to have escaped Elliott that this closed system, where everything, seemingly, is dictated by what students can themselves perform, is limiting to the range of artistic experiences that composers, arrangers, conductors and improvisers (and even performers) can have. It certainly places the onus on performance to do more than its part and cries out for a less restrictive way of teaching listening, which cannot be fully fertile under such a constrained definition. It is only in this limited view that Elliott's musicianship is wanting. Otherwise his statement about matching cognitive challenges and musicianship is an elegant and convincing way of defining how students achieve the primary values of



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‘musicing’ and listening [music education?]. And he continues with a further expansion of his multiculturalist views, all perfectly acceptable as one valid stream of philosophical dialectic about music. The writer, in disagreeing with the term ‘educating feeling [rather than *taste*?]’ (attributed to Reimer) as an outcome of music education, finds Elliott’s goals of self-knowledge, self-growth and enjoyment (flow) to be feelingful terms and not unacceptable as valid and desirable outcomes of music education, if, as Elliott demands, ‘they are generated in an intrinsic way unattainable in any other domain, artistic or otherwise’. Note that here Elliott is reaching towards the criterion of intrinsicity, denied him by Reimer.

But we are left with Elliott’s own (quoted) progressive portrayal of priorities in the implementation of the praxial philosophy. In the writer’s view (but it is, of course, for each reader to judge for himself), pragmatism itself defines performance as by far the most important (Reimer claims it to be the exclusive) activity in Elliott’s scheme, and the only feasible one, as the time/skill factor alone relegates the other activities to nominal involvements, whatever the laudable aspirations of the philosophy. And unless Elliott is proposing a model for music education which literally uproots the norms of current practices (and this may be the case) with all that it entails in terms of the training of teachers alone, a simple statistic drawn from the numbers of school leavers who would currently rate their relative expertise in performance, improvising, and so on, there is little doubt that performers would greatly outnumber all the others together. This is further proof that Reimer was not astray in his basic assumption.

In the writer’s view, Elliott also hints broadly that, even with music education as praxial education, the mix would not significantly change. It is a matter of some concern also (see Aspin’s review) that Elliott seems to take considerable pride in Custodero’s (1996 review)<sup>94</sup> summary of praxial themes in that ‘students are perceived by the author [Elliott] as apprentice performers, composers, improvisers, arrangers, conductors and dancers’. The apprenticeship model of education, redolent of practical training by one-to-one instruction, imitation and skill acquisition (and necessarily limited personal repertoire), is a difficult concept to promote in general education. The failure to encourage the idea of the kind of listenership *activity* which does *not* depend on a concomitant form of intrinsically limited music making (see above) for validation, and which alone can ensure that students of all activities have an open opportunity to know the widest spectrum of the repertoire relevant to that activity, is a cause of concern. It must be attributed to Elliott’s lack of generosity in failing to consider or allow that listening, according to his exaggerated and pejorative notion of how MEAE operates, might often, like

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<sup>94</sup> Lori Custodero, Book Review of “Music Matters: a New Philosophy of Music Education”. (American Music Teacher, 2, February/March), 63-64.

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the many other commendable teaching styles that he attributes to praxialism (alone), also be effectively guided in MEAE by knowledgeable teachers acting as ‘reflective music educators’.

It has to be stated once more that Elliott’s typical and unrelieved condemnatory tone (quite apart from its naïveté as a dialectic procedure), from which one might be forgiven for deducing that all MEAE teachers are uniformly in error, simply by virtue of their truck with the concept itself, and all praxial teachers now and in the future can only, by contrast, be exemplary, does not advance his case one whit. In fact, it is very little short of a gratuitous insult to ‘tens of thousands of music educators who are not as stupid and misguided as Elliott portrays them, nor as hopelessly simplistic’ (MEND 403, 16).

In passing it should be acknowledged that Elliott’s response to Reimer’s criticism (which should, in fairness, be read in context) that in *MM* ‘no mention is made of the teaching of composition as a major new opportunity for the music education profession and for creative musical experiences in schools’ reads very well as a statement of recurring concerns about facilitating the teaching of composition for the relatively small number of learners who choose to pursue it seriously. While no broad-minded musician could deny that the composing option is worthy of equal support with other activities, and while talent for it must be identified and subsequently encouraged at all stages, there must also be a balance in the extent to which it can feed, as a right, on other activities, unless such collaborations are in the best communal interests.

There is no reason to believe that MEAE, or the new US National Standards programme, or the praxial philosophy is not fully cognizant of the problems in supporting this activity appropriately or that they are at odds with one another in this regard. Elliott’s answers often create the impression that only the praxial philosophy has the answer; in this particular application the writer has no sense of a basic difference in approach. If one is accustomed, at this stage, to ignoring such fatuous statements as ‘[f]or example, I have often seen MEAE-based classes [only?] in which students “compose” ... by chunking sound patterns together in meaningless, sloppy, “chance music” productions’, the rest of his response reads like an enchiridion of good composition teaching practice, including the cautionary advice that ‘until students come to know the essential nature of musical works as performances ... composing should not be the primary way of developing musicianship’. This is at once proof of pragmatism and focused deprioritization.

Elliott’s response to ‘Myth 4. Reimer claims that computer technology “effectively renders performance obsolete for music from this time forward” and that Elliott never mentions the “precarious position of performing at this moment in music history”’ should be acknowledged as very

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convincing. The question of composers being able to convert their ideas directly to sound through technology, thereby apparently giving them the power to dispense with the services of performers has, naturally, raised temporary concerns of a superficial nature. Stravinsky (see his *Poetics* [1970])<sup>95</sup> is known to have favoured the idea of a milieu in which composers could dispense with the services of performers. Theoretically it is possible, by the most sophisticated techniques of digital sound derived from real acoustic models (if that is the desired end-product) to simulate a ‘performance’ of a work in a laboratory, and this facility undoubtedly has its uses, attractions, verisimilitude and advantages. But the recorded sounds of the greatest music makers have a tendency to lose their immediacy even after the first rehearing, even for the ordinary listener, let alone the aficionado; it takes very little reflection to arrive at the psychological reasons behind this phenomenon. Feeling, interpretation and sensuousness (Reimer’s word) are protean qualities which give performance (not ‘sounds as produced’, to use another unmerited Elliott criticism of MEAE) its quintessential and unique quality, a deliciously ephemeral characteristic which is intrinsic to the process and can create the appetite for further hearings. Technology has its part as a single (or even a random multiply-controlled) stream in this process, but it hopelessly lacks the human characteristic of creative whim or definitive artistry (where the end product is unpredictable while the performing art is in process - an essential quality if it is to be judged as true art and not just as craft). By this criterion, art has little to fear by way of being superannuated.<sup>96</sup>

It is surprising that ‘Homer nods’ in relation to this issue, considering that aesthetic theory so magnificently defines and supports the art process and its essential attributes. And Reimer himself is at his most impressive when he discriminates, within experience, between the necessary dimensions of perception and response if the experience is to have artistic value; this is to point the difference between ‘sounds as produced’ and ‘sounds as interpreted’, whether in the ear of the composer, performer or listener. Elliott makes the most of this extraordinary lapse on Reimer’s part; his response is eminently sensible in its theory, but caution is urged on those who may still wish to avoid the subliminal absorption of some questionable praxial thinking, especially when it is derivative, without acknowledging its sources.

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<sup>95</sup> Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music*, (Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press).

<sup>96</sup> Frank Heneghan, *The Interpretation of Music: A Study in Perception, Expression and Symbol*, (Dublin, University of Dublin, Trinity College, 1990; unpublished treatise), 12.

‘Art encroaches upon life, and the sharing which art makes possible can best be considered 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. Steinbeck provides a fitting epilogue (though couched in non-inclusive language, this does not compromise its message [East of Eden]):

Our species is the only creative species, and it has only one creative instrument, the individual mind and spirit of a man. Nothing was ever created by two men. There are no good collaborations, whether in music, in art, in poetry, in mathematics, in philosophy. Once the miracle of creation has taken place, the group can build and extend it, but the group never invents

Elliott is totally convincing when he states, in relation to authentic ‘performing’ that ‘[p]erforming music expressively - through singing or playing instruments ... involves listening keenly for all the dimensions of the musical work one is attempting to *interpret* and express creatively in relation to the standards, histories, and artistic ethics of a musical practice. Musical interpretation-in-context is central to musical artistry and creativity’. But this statement takes for granted so much received wisdom on the nature of art and is so redolent of the pronouncements of the aesthetic lobby (to which Reimer would admit himself to being but a minuscule contributor, such is the abundance of relevant, and, yes, often mutually-contradicting literature) that Elliott would have to clarify his view as to how universally applicable his statement above is to all forms of music making. In particular, he should clarify his understandings of expression (of emotion or feeling?), *their* place in the artistic/creative scheme of things, the compatibility, mutuality and inclusiveness of art and craft as a pair, the conditions under which music may lay claim to artistic integrity, the interface of art and function in music and a great many other parameters that are left vague in his otherwise laudable but all-embracing accommodation of music as ‘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*’.

There is very little in this quoted opening gambit (*MM*, p.39) that is intrinsic to music. Yet it is interesting also to note Elliott’s unattributed cleavage to some form of artistic definition of the nature of music. And one is entitled to reserve judgement on the absolute truth of his alluring statement that ‘the best preparation for listening to and enjoying the fruits of present and future musical practices is to engage students in a balanced program of music making in relation to a reasonable diversity of musical practices’ until the significance of every word is pondered as to its potential to exclude unstated but necessary experiences. If, for instance, unencumbered listening to a reasonable diversity of musical practices does not qualify in itself as a *reasonable* example of musical practice, there is ample cause to demur. MEND insisted (in an Irish context, but also as a generally applicable concern) that the nature of performance must be defined. But it seems that, in the light of the praxial philosophy as defined by David Elliott, the activity of listening is even more urgently in need of definition and advocacy.

### 5.5.5 The Inseparability of Product and Process

In what is probably the core issue (product versus process) of the differences between Reimer and Elliott, there is again another example of each writer presenting the ‘worst case’

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anything. The preciousness lies in the lonely mind of a man.  
Here, then, is the heart of the matter; can there be a philosophy that would cavil at that?’

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understanding/interpretation of what he believes the other means. Elliott always seems, flatteringly in a sense, to regard MEAE as synonymous with Reimer's ideas, acknowledging in turn the power that seems to have been invested in this one man through a virtually global acceptance of his philosophy, as unassailable, for a quarter of a century - a formidable admission of an educational institution in itself. One must ask, therefore, whether MEAE is really so eccentric that it devalues *process* by raising the idea of *product* (esteemed works) to a place of such disproportionate eminence. The answer simply is no, as can be attested by any musician who is sensible and fair-minded enough to observe the scholarship that has fed on it and the reliance which a significant part of the music education force in America alone has placed in it (and in practice too) over an unprecedentedly long period.

It cannot be assumed that American music education in that era (1970 onwards) has been the dismal failure that Elliott now predicts for it if any vestige of MEAE remains in operation. The writer would not expect an exact converse to be the outcome if similar but suitably rephrased questions were to be advanced in relation to the so-called praxial philosophy; and Elliott's simple denial that he is denigrating product in favour of process is sufficient to point the imprudence of Reimer's case, in spite of the many valid points made *en route*. In fact it leaves Reimer's questions and observations somewhat without a real target. As in much dialectic of a cavilling nature, so much depends on definition and authorial intention, as on the broader view which must normally be invoked by an outsider, often suggesting means of reconciliation. And after all, surely that must be an aspiration of true philosophical enquiry - to allow admirable theories to coexist without the feeling of total antithesis, which is damaging to the good faith of those who seek eclecticism and not just an either/or option. If these writers had pondered the significance of every word written in the context of its vulnerability to the other's case, eventually leading to this *dénouement*, it is likely that the phraseology would have been much more carefully chosen and guarded; but perhaps it is an advantage that music educators are, in the process, witnesses as much to their weaknesses as to their strengths.

Elliott's response to Reimer's concern contains much which is interesting, compelling and persuasive, but it attracts criticism also in terms of its incompleteness, its misunderstandings, or rather of his implication that his so-called multi-dimensional ideas of a musical work are all, save one, foreign to the notions of *aesthetic* thinkers. It is true that Elliott carefully and systematically constructs his model of *A Musical Work* (MM, 93, 155, and 199); in that he can defend himself ably against Reimer's accusation. But it cannot escape notice that the first of its basic dimensions is not the pristine conception (as begotten, so to speak, in the ear of the composer, and independently of such niceties [of its eventual overt aural realization] as notation, improvisation and so on) ... but the *performance* or *interpretation* (correctly to point the need for meaningful expressive performance).

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It is, of course, admirable that Elliott invokes P.G. Woodford's confirmation of a widely held view of the democracy of creativity (with which it is unthinkable that Reimer would disagree) that '[t]he performer's work may be treated as a distinct composition in itself. Performance, itself, is viewed as a process of realizing musical ideals (i.e. cognitive representations of musical composition).' This is surely to give advantage doubly to Reimer, yet again, as stressing performance and the performer(s) (and not, typically, the conductor/ arranger/composer or even an improviser's unique skill), by definition, over the work itself which has, and had, conceptual existence prior to the performance. His other dimensions are musical design, standards and traditions of practice, expression of emotion [feeling?], musical representation and cultural/ideological information, none of which can be excluded from the paraphernalia of aesthetics, albeit requiring some clarification as to definition.<sup>97</sup>

It is inaccurate, and even a little churlish of Elliott, to impute to the hated verbal concepts, which are only part (and a very small part in context) of aesthetic education, the sole intention of constraining students to listen (and, therefore, to perform, compose and improvise) narrowly. And generically to confuse processes in human experience (as, for example, listening) with the theories of how they happen, is to make nonsense of philosophical endeavour, even his own. Is he seriously suggesting that listeners cannot and do not have aesthetic experiences without understanding the complex theory of aesthetics? The theories are merely attempts, *a posteriori*, to analyse the processes; they may be flawed but they do not invalidate the experiences they are trying to explain. And is it to be assumed that it is not possible to be musically active without being aware of separate faculties of using procedural, formal, informal, impressionistic and supervisory knowledge? Of course not!

In fairness to Elliott, this theory of knowledge is a fascinating exposé, but musical activity, right up to the highest levels, does not depend on its tenets. The writer can accept that the more inflexible form of aesthetic theory, which can comfortably accommodate and inform the absolutist ideals which work for Epicureans, needs to relax into a more familial attitude towards other forms of musical experience which Elliott champions. It is interesting to observe Reimer's metamorphosis in this respect where, in his model for a universal philosophy of music (Amsterdam ISME 1996), he seems to favour classifying Absolute Expressionism as rooted in Referentialism (the *representation* of human feeling). What is important here is that perfectly adaptable theory should not be so summarily dismissed, but rather subjected to careful reappraisal and modification to suit the case in point.

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<sup>97</sup> The reader is again referred to the writer's treatise dealing, in great detail, with the subject of interpretation in music. Frank Heneghan, *The Interpretation of Music - A Study in Perception, Expression and Symbol* (Dublin: University of Dublin, Trinity College, and Dublin Institute of Technology, unpublished thesis 1990 [MEND 608]).

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There is no reason to suppose that aesthetics does not have manifold applications to praxial themes. Aesthetic theory, as distinct from MEAE, seeks to define the features of music in artistic (art) terms - no more, no less - or so it should be. Its function is not, nor should it be, to demean other related activities,<sup>98</sup> but merely, within its brief, to define them. Thus the word *musical*, which figures largely in Elliott's writings, is less related to music as a generic ontological term than to a certain mode of performing music which is artistic and therefore interpretative in nature. In her critical analysis, *On Interpretation*, Annette Barnes<sup>99</sup> reinforces Danto's insistence on the intimate relationship between art and interpretation.

The moment something is considered an artwork, it becomes subject to interpretation. It owes its existence as an artwork to this, and when its claim to art is defeated, it loses its interpretation and becomes a mere thing.<sup>100</sup>

This is a very strong and apposite statement - one which, the writer believes, handsomely accommodates both MEAE and praxialism without any need to insist on mutual exclusivity. But praxialism cannot have it both ways. If Elliott deals with interpretation (as he does, and not only when he refers to *musical* performance) he is predicating art. This forces him into difficult choices when he is admitting all kinds of music, which he may not necessarily be including as art, into the wider domain of music as experience. No disrespect for music is entailed here, nor does it fail to have meaning, if it does not pass muster as art by the canons of aesthetics (and no others will do, nor are they necessarily Reimer's, Elliott might be relieved to hear). It is a matter of definition and it is unlikely that Elliott sees himself as the ultimate authority in this area. He cannot usurp the rubrics of aesthetics and coin his own definitions, nor is there any need to do so.

Examining Elliott's blueprint for the nature of music, combining 'musical practices, products, processes and contexts' we find a reference to MUSIC (a diverse human practice), Music (the

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<sup>98</sup> The reader is referred here to the excellent and highly relevant treatment of this subject by the British aesthetician R.G. Collingwood. Collingwood (1889-1943), philosopher and historian, was Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy, Oxford University. One of the most learned men of his generation, he had a remarkable breadth of interest and knowledge and originality of mind. He is the author of many notable books, including *Essay on Metaphysics*, *Essay on Philosophical Method* and *The New Leviathan*. *Speculum Mentis: or The Map of Knowledge* (cover note to *The Principles of Art*). His theory of aesthetics, equating art with expression, is generally linked with that of Benedetto Croce. According to Monroe Beardsley, however, "the extent of his indebtedness is not clear, but it must be considerable (despite the fact that Collingwood hardly refers to Croce in his works), even if we allow - as we must for such a strong and go-it-alone mind as Collingwood's - that he could have worked out a great many of the ideas himself, given only a few suggestions. Collingwood is not to be dismissed as a mere follower, in any case; his own originality shows in his determined search for the differentia of art, as opposed to all manner of things confused with it, and in his detailed analysis of *imaginative expression* as a process in which inchoate emotion becomes articulate and self-aware" (Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, 324).

<sup>99</sup> Annette Barnes is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Her work is valuable in that her treatment of the interpretation of art works refers to textual in addition to the more conventional aspects.

<sup>100</sup> Annette Barnes, *On Interpretation - A Critical Analysis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988), 167.

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individual practices each combining *music making* and music listening) and *music* (products, works, or listenables). There is always an element of ambiguity in Elliott's use of the term *music making* (which he normally attributes to five sources - performer, composer and so on), but turning to his own definition of a Musical Work on p 93 of *MM*, it is found that it refers to a *performance* (see Figure 4.2), hardly to be construed as the composition itself and therefore the work of a composer (even by the broadest of definitions). This, probably quite consciously, obviates alignment with what Elliott would see as an MEAE idea from which he seems to feel the need to distance himself unequivocally. So what remains is the equation of Elliott's *music* (lower case, the third of his blueprint components noted above) or 'products, works or listenables' with a *performance*, aided by Woodford's corroboration (MEND 416, 10). The writer has no major reservation about this somewhat idiosyncratic nicety of definition (believing that the work as authentically interpreted is inseparably bound to the composer's concept anyway [but not so to Elliott, it appears]); but the comment is necessary to show how Elliott, by his own hand, invites an interpretation of his blueprint for music which really *is* a matter of process. Reimer's claims, so based, are not so absurd as Elliott would like his readers to believe.

The nub of this matter is surely the nature of aesthetics as a discipline, removed from all association with Reimer and his sophisticated treatment of its applicability to music and music education. Such an appraisal would obviously be a gargantuan task and would not be appropriate in this analysis. But there are a few vital elements that must be taken into account in attempting to explain some of Elliott's too facile (mis)understandings of how this highly respected discipline can illuminate much of what happens in the *feelingful experience of music*, if that would be accepted by Elliott as applying to most, if not all, of his open list (by definition) of musical practices. There is a danger that one can become incarcerated in one's own culture to such an extent that its products can be taken for granted and even misapplied in a philosophical sense.<sup>101</sup>

It should, therefore, constantly be borne in mind that most of the philosophy of music (obviously excluding the contribution by the Greeks) and of music education (including MEAE and Praxialism), and the disciplines of aesthetics and ethnomusicology are themselves largely rooted in the cultural traditions of post-Renaissance Europe. Ethnomusicology is the most recent and is, of course, by definition, not ethnocentric. But aesthetics, although as a scholarly pursuit it has its origins in 18th century Europe, is nevertheless also not Eurocentric. Described variously as the science of perception (Baumgarten), philosophy of the arts (Sulzer) or simply as a study of response to things perceived, it invariably plays down the idea of the art object; response is the crucial quality. But it essays to

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<sup>101</sup> The reader is again referred to the writer's thesis - Heneghan, *The Interpretation of Music - A Study in Perception, Expression and Symbol*, 13.



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examine response to all the arts in all their manifestations; it thus does not place European art music in any privileged position. The eminence of the European musical tradition in its own right must also be recognized, and - more importantly, the scholarship associated with it, particularly that related to educational theory, methodology and practice.

It is now crucially necessary to come to some understanding of music (or Elliott's *Music/music*) as art. This should be merely a question of examining the definitions and coming to a decision on the basis of the dozen or so criteria that are in general circulation. They include mimesis (or imitation); craft; unity in variety; judgements of beauty (again with their own canons, conventions and contexts; it is not just a question of taste or fiat but of the exercise of judgement based on experience, which may [or should] be cross-cultural); feeling/emotion; expressiveness; function - and so on. If a segregation of musics is necessary, it should be well founded and should carry neither stigma nor accolade, being merely a question of classification. But this is where the problems and misunderstandings arise.

In spite of what Elliott claims about the innate equality of all musical practices (dealt with in detail elsewhere; see review of Elliott's MEND lecture [MEND 208] and the treatment in David Aspin's *MM* book review [MEND 415]), there is an almost instinctive and very prevalent propensity to elevate some music above others; this may be a question of conditioning, social/cultural perceptions, and the like, but of its existence there is no doubt. There seems to be little objection to intracultural judgements of excellence and value. In fact it seems almost crass and inane to deny that, for example, in western art music (even within the output of one composer) some pieces are palpably better than/superior to others. The writer struggles to find a vestige of substance in the claim that similar judgements, backed by experience and scholarship (invoked by Elliott in his treatment of creativity, in which he has no qualms about elevating certain manifestations over others in value and authenticity), cannot be applied interculturally.

If there is a hierarchy within each culture or genre (note Elliott's treatment of Duke Ellington's *Daybreak Express* as a masterpiece) why are intercultural judgements not subject to the same relativity when authentically appraised by multicultural experts? No disrespect for what is excellent in any culture is entailed in the belief that the inter-cultural continuum of excellence would reveal a substantial amount of overlapping between cultures, should the exercise ever be necessary to establish this. However, it is important to recognize (as Reimer suggests) that a hierarchy does exist, that there is a basis for judgement, and that reflective practitioners bring to bear their experience and differentiating powers in ensuring that the best examples of any culture should normally be offered in a curriculum in which that culture is a worthy component.

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On one side of this exercise in discrimination there is rejection akin to elitism: on the other there is resentment, accounting for many well-known phenomena. Harry White referred to one of them, in which the aficionados of musics other than European art music borrow its academic jargon to storm its citadel in academia; another is the common practice in the publicity surrounding pop stars to refer to them as *artists*, again showing that most musics aspire to the condition of art. Artistic endeavour may be a labour of love, but its achievements are time- and work-intensive; there is a tendency for the pseudo-arts to aspire to the inner sanctum. If they cannot all be admitted, the blame cannot be laid at the door of aesthetics. In the case of music, the writer is convinced that there are exclusions which define themselves, but they do not cease to be music on that account. Thus, for example, it is not inconsistent in an artistic (musical/expressive/interpretative) sense for Reimer to refer, in a non-derogatory way, to practices which are unmusical simply because they are outside the consideration of art (see Collingwood [*Principles of Art*] [footnotes 98 and 103]). If these practices, on the other hand, and as seems to be hinted at by Elliott, are found to invaginate artistic qualities by virtue of their craft and/or expressiveness, then they are candidates for readmission as art. But this is not a theory attributable to Reimer.

There is a real need for Elliott to reappraise aesthetic theory with a less jaundiced eye. The writer is unsure as to how Elliott views music's claim to being globally and indiscriminately artistic. If he supports it unconditionally, he is just being iconoclastic in relation to a wealth of well-founded and highly respected aesthetic theory, which evolved, not with the idea of exclusion but for metaphysical clarity. If he does not, he is, on the other hand, opening up an abundantly helpful area of relevant and potentially fruitful enquiry as to an enlarged context for music, which *is* pressing. This is a major concern for music education in the new millennium. It was raised by Harry White in his paper, and commented on by Reimer in a very candid and honest way, which pinpointed three issues - multiculturalism, popular music and performance (definition) - as being central to the dilemma. In the writer's view, Elliott's stance which, *inter alia*, seems to be saying that music education should just become multicultural in its broadest sense (even if one were to ignore the confusion about product and process and the dominance of performance in the scheme) is simplistic, if the methodology of doing this is not crystal clear, which it certainly is not from Elliott's generalizations.

Whatever about attitudes within MEAE (as the 'official' music education philosophy in the US, according to Elliott), certainly Reimer has long ago dispensed with notions of absolutism (if he ever had them); he has expanded his ideas into the softer version of Absolute Expressionism which aligns it with Referentialism; he has adopted the developing ideas of multiculturalism, which were not so relevant when he wrote *A Philosophy of Music Education* (1970) as they are now; he has included praxialism as a possible approach to music education and philosophy (though he specifically does not

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support what he considers to be Elliott's extreme version). He seems, on this evidence, to be ripe for détente. While Elliott is writing such obviously spurious comment as that 'MEAE assumes that the Navaho people listen to and value their musical achievements as "unconsummated presentational" symbols and for structural elements (e.g., contrasting sections high and low, nasal timbre) to achieve "insight" into the general forms of feeling (Reimer, 1989, p.86 [which does not seem to refer])', he seems very far from compromise or rationalization.

### 5.5.6 Aesthetic Theory

Aesthetic theory has much to offer to the widest spectrum of musical experience to explain its nature. As proposed above, the wealth of philosophical material available from the treasury of European cultural history has blossomed into an elaborate and multidimensional pedagogical and methodological system. To this MEAE is one, though by no means the only, contributor, as far as music goes. At least it has had the courage to lay out systematic approaches to the teaching, appreciation and enrichment of musical experience for learners. Whatever the flaws imputed to it (and Elliott can find little else) it does attempt, even in the example quoted above (Navaho music) to provide some point of entry (no more - and typically to an ethnic example within a multicultural programme), not for the Navaho Indian (who doesn't need it anyway - and Elliott's mocking tone noted above is impertinently irrelevant here) but for the novice outsider. Such outsiders typically represent most learners who may have little opportunity to hear or witness an authentic performance except through recordings; even that is a resource issue by no means easy to make provision for comprehensively, which is fair to the diversity of music which Elliott is at pains to stress.

There is nothing to prevent the reflective practitioner (even an MEAE devotee), who is enthusiastic about such music and judges it to be a valuable experience for his students, as a priority, from taking all kinds of initiatives to bring the experience nearer to the reality of a Navaho involvement. Contrary to what Elliott is suggesting, MEAE is not trying to 'educate the feeling' of a Navaho Indian; neither, presumably, is it attempting to give to the arbitrary listener anything more than a flavour of the music with some practical help in its absorption and enjoyment. And neither is it essaying the impossible task of so identifying with the culture as to ensure that the alien listener will have the same rich experience as the Navaho in recognizing the music 'as a cultural identity that belongs to [him] and to which [he] belongs ... this sense of musical belonging is something to be cherished' (*MM*, p 211).

Pragmatism alone, in relation to choice from the myriad experiences that constitute a well-rounded musical education (within the virtually insupportable time constraints of the general music programme) rules that little more than Reimer's suggestion is possible. This may be typical of the

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Concept as Tool approach, but it is not just trying to tell ('notify, inform, advise') students of something (since it is merely a preliminary to the experience of the music itself), but is an aid which most listeners will attest to as a real help in enriching the experience, no matter what Elliott says. While it cannot be denied that he is idealistic and well-intentioned (except in his outright refusal to credit MEAE with any merit whatsoever in the educational process), Elliott's slice-of-life answer to MEAE (p.14 of his essay) is hopelessly out of touch with the realities of the general music curriculum, even in ambiances which are much more benignly multi-cultural and better resourced than (say) Ireland; the criticism is, however, generally aimed.

Taking any example of music (Elliott chooses the Zulu song *Siyahamba*) and gathering from his comprehensive list of how it should be taught we find him insisting that the 'performative, expressional and cultural dimensions ... together with the structural dimensions' should be dealt with; that the music should be evaluated comprehensively, contextually and authentically in *all* relevant dimensions; that it should be performed and interpreted according to genuine tradition; that other performances (live and/or recorded) should be critically reflected upon [without the crutch of verbal concepts?- writer's insertion]; that a video should be watched with a view to identifying and solving problems, and leading to enhanced performance; that another work from the same culture should be introduced and studied; that composing, arranging and performing works in that style should form part of the class activity. Presumably there would still be sufficient time to 'learn to sing arrangements/compositions chosen from more (or less) familiar musical practices ....'! The writer struggles to envisage a time dimension unfolding manageably from such an aspiration, so redolent is it of the specialized study (ethnomusicological in this case) appropriate to undergraduate level (or higher) described by Patricia Shehan Campbell and Ramon Santos in their presentations (MEND 305 and 207). It seems far beyond the scope of the school general music programme if a balanced menu of music is to be attempted, and particularly in the contexts of (a) the relevance of the music to the population and cultural needs of the school (a problem that the multiculturalists and ethnomusicologists are far from having solved as yet. There is no disrespect implied here for Zulu music); (b) the readiness of the class to participate in the niceties of absorbing cultural, contextual and interpretative 'information' from the music itself with no other props, such as conceptual tools; c) the ability of average teachers to be so comprehensively 'clued in' to a potentially wide variety of unfamiliar music; (d) the resource implications; and (e) the problem of authenticity, style and tradition in performance, which will tax the average teacher, typically, in most of the performing/interpreting repertoire, and not just in that of unfamiliar music.

Multiple questions arise, as one reads his essay, as to what extent Elliott is providing well defined and workable alternatives to the more comprehensive statements of the aesthetic movement. Even if one

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were to indulge his criticism of MEAE as effectively attempting to ‘homogenize the diversity of musical endeavors and musical products worldwide’, when his own generalizations are discounted and the extravagance of his alternative slice-of-life pondered as to its feasibility and its capability to ‘target, teach and esteem all dimensions’ in a typical course time-allocation, one is as daunted by its impracticability as much as one can admire its starry-eyed intent. There are obviously questions of balance and curriculum management to be taken into account here. And one must honestly ask whether aesthetic thinking in practice (by reflective practitioners, who are engaged in ‘the bringing to bear of critical intelligence upon practical tasks rather than [in] the implementation of good advice’ (Elliott MEND 208a, 1) cannot be aligned with the very processes that Elliott seems to be claiming as his own. There is an uneasy feeling that the amount of distortion, of both aesthetic and praxial themes, introduced by both Reimer and Elliott, is occluding a considerable amount of common ground.

Elliott’s quotations from his reviewers, when he considers them complimentary to his approach, raise similar questions. Thus one must ask in relation to Natalie Sarrazin’s review (MEND 413), whether there is consensus that music education should be responding meekly to the demands of the social sciences and ethnomusicology. She cannot have been aware in 1996 of Reimer’s work on a universal or ‘inclusive philosophy’, placing music in psychological perspective, in addition to ‘placing music education in the company of most recent ideas in the social sciences’ without having recourse to theories that are no more than hypothetical. And the attribution of the idea of the multidimensional work to Elliott by Stublely (MEND 412) could be challenged in all its dimensions as having been debated long since by various contributors to the aesthetic dialectic and, indeed, rejected by some on convincing arguments.

To conclude his commentary on what he refers to as Myth 5, Elliott repeats his insistence that neither he nor his colleague Jerrold Levinson ever stated ‘that music exists only as a process’ and, also, that ‘the praxial philosophy makes a central place for musical works/products in its concept of music’. What he *does* say in his book, by equating musical products or works with performance, which is clearly process-based, is reported above for the reader to reflect on how justified Reimer was in his converse interpretation. But it does not alter the heartening reality that both philosophies recognize the inseparable interrelationship of the two (product and process). Elliott claims that the question “What is music?” cannot be answered by some version of the aesthetic concept of music, which denies ‘the epistemological and social nature of music makers, music making, musical works (broadly conceived)’. Admittedly Elliott is putting forward a burning question here that must be a preoccupation of music educators, in this millennium, faced with the ever-widening chasm between many purely social experiences of music (and music making) and the perception of how music is taught in schools. But it would be more cautious to essay an enquiry into the musical epistemology

and nature of some social behaviours as to rule that *all* socially- as distinct from humanistically-based musical experiences must be allowed to usurp the musical picture and skew the image.

In this context aesthetic theory, which is humanistically based, by definition, has a great deal to offer in the analysis. Elliott's philosophy must come clean on the artistic nature of music and, in the resolution, if certain musics emerge as unduly dominated by their social content<sup>102</sup> we must know what to do with them - above all how (or if) they should be taught. As Reimer pragmatically and provocatively observes, '[m]uch of popular music is a vehicle for non-musical experience and therefore has little to do with the function of school music as aesthetic education. We can bypass such music safely because few youngsters would expect or want it to be brought into the school' (*A Philosophy of Music Education*, 1989, p.144. The passage must be read in its entirety to derive its full significance.). The writer is comfortable with the idea that the teaching of music, in school, by enlightened and reflective practitioners, who may wish to adhere to the most recent thoughts on the application of aesthetic theory to music teaching, can prepare students to be more discriminating in their choice of music for listening. If learners value music merely for the social experience of it - and this (being a perfectly normal human behaviour) is not necessarily being denigrated - they do not need to be inducted into the process by elaborate and painstaking methodology. And indeed one wonders whether, in fact, such methodology exists in the same refinement as in more conventional approaches. But Elliott obviously has more in mind than clarifying the place of pop music in the western tradition. His multicultural preoccupations are beginning to emerge and dominate; these must now be rationalized as to their feasibility for inclusion in the general music curriculum.

### 5.5.7 Elliott's Response to the Works of Music/ Product/Process Criticism

In conclusion (Product/Process), Elliott makes the following additional points:

'A central aim of the praxial philosophy is to offer students and teachers a comprehensive model of musical products that can be used as an open and flexible guide for listening to music ... as an alternative to the *aesthetic* concept of works'. This ought to be challenged on several fronts - not with the intention of demeaning Elliott's idea, but with a view to rescuing aesthetics from the restrictive and narrow interpretation that Elliott invokes with monotonous regularity. Elliott himself eventually accepts the idea of usefulness of verbal knowledge (which is equivalent, if one does not cavil unduly,

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<sup>102</sup> There is some music which is important as an accompaniment to social functions of young people and which is validated by fashion and mindless taste rather than by qualitative/artistic analysis. Reimer's comment a few lines further on puts the point in context.

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to ‘concepts as learning tools’) but it seems reprehensible that he should so repetitively latch onto this as, seemingly, the only educational device in the armoury of MEAE.

It is true that both Reimer and Elliott impute to one another a failure to have read the supporting documentation in relation to the points they make. Here it might be commented, in fairness to Reimer, that the scope of his book is infinitely wider and more sophisticated than the image which Elliott’s caricature of it presents, which takes little account of a wealth of sensitive analysis in the treatment of the subject. For the purposes of this analysis (though Richard Colwell’s cautionary words should be heeded (MEND 209), that theory, practice, and outcomes seldom, if ever, coincide) we must take Elliott’s evaluation that Reimer’s philosophy (presumably only that of 1970-89 but obviously ignoring later pronouncements) and MEAE may be taken as being in a theory/practice relationship. If Elliott also accepts the idea of the equal importance or interdependence of product and process and the notion of esteemed works, performances or manifestations in all cultures (and there is no longer any reason to doubt this, although it is distorted in Reimer’s apologia) it is amazing that he accepts and portrays, as approval, the statement of one of his reviewers (Humphreys) that ‘[h]e [Elliott] takes dead aim at the distinctly western notion of art objects as having value in and of themselves, apart from their cultural contexts.’ This just is not true (see Harry White’s *A book of manners in the wilderness* [MEND 308] for an unambiguous statement of how great works are mediated through their culture and *vice versa*, apart from their additional qualities of timelessness) if the ‘western notion’ spoken of is assumed to be in line with aesthetic theory, which is also careful to stress response - the effect the so-called art object has on the sensibility of the person who engages with and *experiences* it visually, aurally and so on.

In the writer’s view it is splitting hairs, if indeed it is not pure misrepresentation, to claim that philosophies of music other than Praxialism are unconcerned with ‘meanings pivoting on shared thought processes and public standards of evaluation that arise in and work through the music making itself’; that assumes, of course, that music *listening* may also be included as an act of music making. The concept of listening artistically, supported within MEAE, is equally as benign, flattering to the ear, democratic and all-embracing as anything that Elliott brings forward by way of opening music to the most comprehensive interpretation of its nature, significance and value.

Elliott is not the first music educator to show well-intentioned concern about the sociological phenomenon of the cleavage between ‘high’ and ‘popular’ cultures and the compromised condition of ethnic musics (‘whatever ethnomusicologists, say, would agree is music in cultures other than our own’) in western perception, in spite of their validity. But in seeking to sanction ‘the widest most inclusive central usage of “music” [in the product sense] current at the present time’ his starting point is obviously an aspiration towards a universal philosophy of music education, and is setting a task that

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may very well be impossible because of the levels of adaptability to so many standards that it entails. One wonders, therefore, whether he is not being too idealistic and whether, indeed, if the mysterious candidates who are being outlawed (according to Elliott) by artistic theory (Reimer, MEAE, or simply classical aesthetics) were to be identified, one is not dealing with a marginal and minuscule area of music that can be validated, for their purpose, by other worthy criteria. The writer believes that music as art is a hardy and compelling notion that encapsulates ideas of judgement, value, quality, excellence and comparative standards to which he would not imagine Elliott to be averse; it is totally interpenetrated with aesthetic theory and is too pervasive and valuable a mentality to be discarded, if indeed this would be Elliott's intention. And the idea of music as art is not peculiar to western culture. Elliott's obsessive and somewhat myopic aversion to Reimer's philosophy is therefore placing him in a compromised, if not in an inconsistent, stance.

In claiming that the praxial view goes beyond the 'design' dimension and evaluates musical works comprehensively, contextually and authentically, in all their relevant dimensions, it is not clear to the writer how Reimer's philosophy fails in this respect. The multidimensional concept of the musical work is honoured comfortably in the aesthetic approach which certainly takes account of the nature of performance, and interpretation (and not just by equating them to 'sounds as produced'), to musical design, to standards and traditions of practice, to expression of feeling (discriminating between it and raw emotion), to representation (in the symbolic sense which is a highly respected general theory, not to be despised or trifled with, of how the human condition functions and expresses itself) and cultural information. There are differences between it and Elliott's form of praxialism, of course; but it is certainly not unidimensional and actually addresses Elliott's six dimensions (*MM*, 199) in a significant way.

Just as it must be accepted that Elliott recognizes the inseparability of product and process, Reimer must be credited with the same belief in all its fullness. Thus there is no 'narrow [aesthetic] sense of esteemed works', except in the narrow [aesthetic] sense of inflexible Formalism (which Reimer places in admirable perspective in his Amsterdam paper as to its theoretical value but superannuated fashionability). Nor can it be claimed that Reimer's philosophy ignores or plays down the importance of 'performative, expressional and cultural dimensions' in music. Reimer suggests criteria for evaluating music (*A Philosophy* 1989, p. 133 *et seq.*); it is true that they are related to music as art and that they eventually create a hierarchy and a continuum with a flexible threshold of acceptability. But they are, significantly, open to all kinds of music (typically western art music, popular and ethnic musics and their hybrids, which define a very large, if not all-embracing, constituency in themselves).



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There is more than an implication that Elliott supports the idea of excellence (e.g. the Ellington masterpiece). One wonders specifically, therefore, as to which of his *musics* is beyond the pale of Reimer's criteria and indeed on what grounds he would validate them himself, if they are. Since human feeling is deeply embedded in the social context of music it seems to be a 'red herring' to point to an appreciation of the social aspects of music making as a significant, differentiating and polarizing feature as between praxial and aesthetic approaches. And note Reimer's confirmation that in certain cultures (e.g. 'that of Bali, famous for its integration of art with life') 'few if any distinctions are made among arts or between artworks and life itself; the process of doing art, and the products of those processes, are recognized as necessarily interdependent, in which specialized products are made by people who specialize in the process of making them' (Reimer review of Elliott *MM* [MEND 403, 6]).

Again it should be noted with satisfaction that Elliott, in being goaded by Reimer into clarifying his sometimes unguarded statements, confirms his belief in revered pieces (e.g. Ellington's *Daybreak Express*) and honours the musicianship of artists outside the western tradition (e.g. the Dagomba *master* drummer [note the hierarchical and élitist connotation here], 'who knows why, when, and how to shape the "ongoing texture of rhythms" in ways that are artistically and socially significant' [again note the use of the purely aesthetic term *artistically*]). The confusion is clarified, but Elliott's phraseology makes him vulnerable to misinterpretation, as, for instance, when he claims that '[in] many cultures, music is not a matter of revered pieces ...; music is a matter of singing and playing instruments. ... And even in the West, there are many kinds of musical situations in which the actions of singing and playing (in the intentional sense) take precedence over music in the narrow sense of esteemed works.'

Elliott is admirably drawing attention to the social dimension of music (an aspect of music on which there is consensus in present day music education as to its importance and as to the urgency of developing a more benign attitude towards its influence on the way many people regard and enjoy music), whereas Reimer is justified in querying the artistic content of such performances and in suggesting a continuum in which each performance can be classified, with each potentially becoming a revered work. The writer has no problems with either stance or with the compatibility of both. It is merely a question of how their own words can expose these adversaries to mutual misunderstanding and inevitable criticism and point-scoring, a practice disavowed by Reimer but one in which he is tempted to indulge throughout his essay.

'Making music, and listening to the music one is making, is both an end in itself and a stepping-stone to understanding and cherishing more challenging works in the same musical practice that students may never have the opportunity or level of musicianship to perform themselves' (Elliott). While this is

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unexceptionable as it stands, it should not be taken to mean, categorically, that it is the only or best route to understanding and cherishing other music, as Elliott states elsewhere: ‘the best preparation for listening to musical performances in the future is full participation in music making in the present’ (MEND 416, 14). And participation (even as a listener) in more challenging music is less a question of opportunity than of developing musicianship; this, in turn, is related to the inculcation and acquisition of skills which, in the variety and complexity suggested by Elliott (improvising, conducting, composing *et al*) are far beyond the capability of general school music programmes (as we currently see them in operation). Both MEAE and praxialism aspire to the same involvements in music making that Elliott lists; but MEAE seems to be more pragmatically based and vehemently attests to the value of unencumbered listening as an aid to appreciation (as, also, to active music making), which it undoubtedly is when artistically and imaginatively taught as context demands - a possibility that Elliott does not seem to envisage as normally feasible or desirable.

As one delves further into Elliott’s essay (and indeed, at source, into *MM*) one is struck more and more by his insistence that listening to music (and, yes, simply and baldly interpreted, only because it is an essential component in the MEAE approach) be disallowed as a ‘key to “systems of meaning”’ which relies on ‘a unique, multidimensional, and practice-specific form of thinking and knowing called musicianship’. Is one to assume, then, that listening to music is a grossly inferior way to inculcate musicianship and that it is neither a unique nor practice-specific form of thinking and knowing about music? Although Elliott will argue that listening *per se* is allowed for in the praxial approach, it is not accorded the status of being a musical practice; it is deprioritized as a passive pursuit (which it certainly is not) in relation to the active components such as performing; it is *postponed* as a private procedure more fitting to adult life, and is denied the specific teaching (unattached, for its purposes, to active music making) which must surely be necessary to ensure that it can be indulged to maximum effect in that form, which is typical of most involvement in music, if we are to trust the statistics and the commercial evidence of investment in music listening.

The writer finds nothing in Natalie Sarrazin’s description of Elliott’s philosophy (as based ‘on ethnomusicological theory ... a multidimensional model aimed at aiding musical understanding . ... This multicultural music is subsumed through praxis, where all learning is to occur through culturally informed significant musical challenges’) which is outside the scope of the aesthetic approach (as fully treated in Reimer’s book). Again what is wanting here is a clear definition of what *cultural* means and the extent to which it should be allied to artistic considerations (enlightenment and refinement of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic/artistic training) or just considered as the typical behaviour, customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial or social group. This latter meaning does

little service to the artistic aspirations of such groups, which may be very real and very valid indeed in many, if not most, of their musical manifestations.

Clarification of this confusion (in which Elliott constantly refers to *artistic* performance and *interpretation*, both redolent of aesthetic treatment - which does not recognize the artwork as an entity in itself, divorced from the response of the percipient, let it be said)<sup>103</sup> would throw considerable light on the apparent contradiction in which Elliott first asserts that ‘*MM* never states or assumes that “music” is different from a work of music’ and then follows this by challenging the assumption that “What is music?” is the same as the question “What is a *work* of music [in the *aesthetic* sense]”. It does appear as if Elliott, in his investigation of the social nature of ‘music makers, music making and musical works (broadly conceived)’ regards the art connotation (in spite of his constant invocation of artistic phraseology) as insufficient and unnecessary for his purposes. It certainly leads to an interesting (if somewhat pointless, because it is a too loose) definition of music as a diverse human practice. While it celebrates music as a mere skill-based artefact (although he disavows the need for skill), it does little, on the one hand, to establish a sense of distinctiveness or even of uniqueness for music which has no aspiration to artistic utterance; on the other, the definition is pejorative for an overwhelming repertoire of music which definitely is conceived by its makers (composers, interpreters and listeners) in artistic terms.

### 5.5.8 Listening

In 5.5.3 (8) above, Reimer draws attention to a recurrent implication (it is never developed sufficiently to be more than this) in *Music Matters* that what applies to performance is equally valid for improvising, composing, arranging and conducting (but *not* to listening *per se*). This causes some confusion as when the philosopher Wolterstorff is quoted (by Elliott) as saying that ‘[m]ost of all, musicing reminds us that performing and improvising through singing and playing instruments lies at the heart of MUSIC as a diverse human practice. ... the basic reality of music is not works or the composition of works but music making’. This seems definitively to anchor Elliott’s philosophy in championing performance; listeners (defined as those uninvolved simultaneously in any other musical activity) are disfranchised in the process, Elliott’s strategy being to channel them all into performance, whether or not it is their choice of involvement in music.

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<sup>103</sup> R. G. Collingwood epitomizes this concern in his *Principles of Art*, 41 and 108:

Aesthetic theory is the theory not of beauty but of art. The theory of beauty ... is merely an attempt to explain away the aesthetic activity by appeal to a supposed quality which is in fact nothing but the activity itself, falsely located not in the agent but in his external world. ... There is in art proper a distinction resembling that between means and end, but not identical with it;

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What emerges from the section on ‘Musical Listening’ (MEND 416, 13), when it has been divested of the predictable trappings of thesis, counterposition, claim, counterclaim and defence, is that both Reimer and Elliott value listening, although their approaches are somewhat different, notably in the way Elliott consciously avoids overt enthusiasm for any procedure that might be seen as aligning him with MEAE. It is palpable how he damns with faint praise (verbal concepts and listening are particularly targeted) only to readmit the perceived so-called MEAE practices with cautionary qualifications. The point at issue is not whether active music making (performing, conducting, etc.) demands cultured listening, which no reasonable person would deny.

Enough has been said about Elliott’s failure to stress the importance of listening as an independent activity, as employing situated forms of knowing, and as a comprehensively challenging activity in its own right; and his isolation of performance (by various comments that deprioritize the other activities into parenthetical and nominal roles) as his effective route to musicianship and to listening has also been commented on. The dominating effect of Reimer’s (MEAE?) philosophy is evident in Elliott’s repeated reactions to it, resulting in implausible sequences, simply because they are incomplete (except in the *small print* or as elicited by Reimer’s criticism). The central issue here is the status of listening as a freestanding activity in its own right. It can be taken from Elliott’s defence that it may now be admitted as a valid pursuit. And Elliott may be credited with sincerity in the assertion that his ‘concern for music listening as praxis - the nature, values, teaching and learning of music listening - outweighs the attention [he] gives to any other topic’. This, of course, should be axiomatic in any philosophy of music education.

The upshot of all this selective and pejorative interpretation by each writer of the other’s intentions, and a dogged insistence on playing down the full spectrum of activities provided for in the rival philosophical approach, attempting to deny it credibility, is that the similarities between the two eventually emerge more vividly than their incompatibilities, at least on the subject of listening. Elliott’s activities (all five, but on a rapidly diminishing scale of feasibility, leaving performance implicitly as the dominant mode) are included in the wider context of MEAE (or so the writer believes). It seems grossly unfair to single out the school curriculum for *voluntary* non-performers as defining the totality of MEAE - an impression that may easily be taken from Elliott’s implications. And Elliott is at pains to correct Reimer’s interpretation of praxialism as discouraging listening when it is unrelated to one of his (Elliott’s) activities. There is, of course, still the question of balance and emphasis which, in a North American context, is imponderable since the autonomy of individual state control of the curriculum (or the adoption of proposed standards) intervenes, adding an extra

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something to do with emotion, with a resemblance to arousing it, but [which] is not arousing it; something to do with making things ... but not by skill.

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dimension of confusion to the shortfall between the intended and delivered curriculum. And there is as yet no edifice of methodology devoted to the wholesale delivery of praxialism (and the National Standards in the US, couched in very general and neutral terms, evince no special commitment to it), so its effectiveness remains conjectural.

The section dealing with musical understanding is another case of futile arguing and point-scoring on an issue which really is as unsolvable as the theories in each philosophy are unprovable in absolute terms. Ignoring Reimer's unwary isolation of performance (which is irrelevant to this issue anyway) as Elliott's only substantial activity, there can be little doubt that immersion in one or more of the activities of performing, improvising, composing, arranging and conducting will lead to enhanced musical understanding. The number of professional musicians (including scholars) who have been untouched by some form of music-making (as defined by Elliott) must be minuscule. It is also probable that the vast majority of these musicians have been exposed to a balanced (pre-praxial) diet of both practice and so-called academic experiences. There is therefore little substance in an argument (Elliott's) that just *asserts* that their musical understanding emanates from a specific component of their training (music-making). Many people have their experiences and understanding of music enriched by their reading and by listening *per se* (two areas of involvement that are accorded only a kind of second-class citizenship by Elliott). And those who make their contribution to the music enterprise by writing about it certainly contribute to those understandings, both in their own concentrated listening-based research and in the subsequent appreciation of their readers.

It is a truism to assert that all understandings in music must, of course, and by definition, be music-based. If, as seems now to be the case, Elliott has made a place (albeit a relatively lowly one) for listening *per se*, it follows that listening as an activity in itself can and must contribute (and handsomely, the writer believes) to musical understanding. Apropos, it seems an artificial distinction which denies listening a full role (or accords it only a compromised one) as an activity, since Elliott claims that it, like all his preferred activities, employs the full range of five forms of knowing that he proposes for our consideration. It therefore also seems ungenerous and pessimistic, if not spurious, for Elliott to assert that 'intelligent writings about music are not manifestations of *musical* understanding in the fullest sense'. The writer knows non-practitioner musicians in academia who write about music, not only with great appreciation, understanding and passion, but in such a way as to stimulate their readers and to communicate to them much of what they feel, which is undeniably truly musical. Nor are such understandings to be equated to mastery of certain concepts like 'style' or 'rhythm' or 'the Renaissance', as Howard Gardner suggests pejoratively. If one keeps listening in mind, as one of *now six* modes of music-making, Gardner's definition fits very well: '... any notion of understanding ought to center on the capacities exhibited and the operations carried out by masters of a domain

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[including writers/listeners?], and each domain features its own characteristic constraints and opportunities', though doubtless this is not Gardner's intended meaning.

It is becoming increasingly obvious in this comparative study that there are two scholars who see themselves, and behave, as if they are in polar positions, while the writer believes that the polarity is without real substance. In one case it is assumed the better to ward off siege and threat: in the other, by deconstructing the strongly established and widely recognized position of the first and by distancing itself from its 'suspect' tenets it is hoped to persuade the readers to reject them and embrace the opposite. Elliott places this polarity apparently at its most extreme when he quotes Reimer as saying that '[p]erforming, in the general music programme, is an essential but contributory mode of interaction with music' whereas his stance is that '[l]istening to recordings in the general music program, as in all praxial curricula, is an essential but contributory mode of interaction with music'. But are these statements also not merely variants of the same basic principle - that performance (activities) *and* listening are quintessential in the music education dispensation? It seems to the writer that Reimer is being cast as a pragmatist and Elliott as an idealist here but, apart from these differences, each defining a respected approach to philosophy (in practice and in concept, though paradoxically they are in reverse roles here, Elliott being the more academic and Reimer the more practical in approach), it is not always a case of comparing like with like.

### 5.5.9 Towards Rationalization

The parameters that need to be weighed in the balance are sketched below:

1. Although Elliott is Canadian, it may be taken that both he (*MM*, Chapter 12) and Reimer (*A Philosophy* [1989], Chapter 9) are addressing the school music education scene in the United States, for the purposes of their confrontation in this instance.
2. Music education in the United States is not uniform in approach and this accounts for much of the confusion. Reimer's position has changed with the realities of the perceived successes and failures of the dispensation, as far as it can be assessed in general terms, and this has always been made admirably clear. It should be affirmed, however, that his base philosophy and his commitment to the aesthetic principle has not changed and this is stated in the 1989 edition of his book (*A Philosophy*, xiii). There is no doubt that the system - Music Education as Aesthetic Education (MEAE) is largely attributable to him, as intellectual property, but much further confusion has been generated over the years as to its total remit (and Elliott has compounded the confusion). If one is to be guided by *A Philosophy of Music Education* (1989), it is clear that the approach considers the

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comprehensive programme in schools and so, for the purposes of this study, does not elevate listening over performance, as any honest reader will soon discover. To interpret Reimer's book otherwise would be to do him an injustice. There is thus no cause whatsoever for Elliott to be triumphalist (see Note 11 of his essay [MEND 416]) about the order in which the American National Standards (MENC Music Content Standards [MEND 303]) list music activities; it would be very strange indeed if performing music did not occupy an important position, as it would be if listening were not also included. But it should be remembered that, as Paul Lehman states in his paper on these very standards (MEND 303, 3), they are no more than an aspiration, an attempt to make a 'clear and explicit statement of what every young American should know and be able to do in music. ... Our [US] standards summarize what results we seek from music instruction rather than what *activities* [writer's italics] we think the students should engage in. They are not advocacy statements. They don't promote any particular methodology. They are not a curriculum ... They say nothing about how they are to be achieved; that is left to the school districts and individual teachers'. Could anything be stated with more neutrality or less hierarchical intent?

#### 5.5.10 The Realities of American Music Education

The realities of American music education, with a long history which predates Reimer by half a century or more, are that music *is* and *has been* perceived as a matter of performance, with supplementary ancillaries as dictated locally by music educators and education policy. Nor is this surprising; there has been a similar attitude in Ireland, which is the concern in Harry White's paper. Reimer cannot be credited with or criticized for the performance programme as it has evolved in the US. And he has made it clear on many occasions that, in spite of its successes, which are considerable and impressive, it tends to be too unidimensional; it is doubtful, reading Elliott's *MM* as he would wish, that such a programme would meet with *his* unqualified approval either. The problem that faced Reimer and the music education strategists (before 1970 and even up to the present) is the stranglehold that the performance programme exerts over the music education mentality, in its widest contexts, and for reasons that are complex, socially and politically, and far beyond the scope of this study to explain. Suffice it to say that the performance programme is a sturdy irreducible and fixture that presents an enormous challenge to the National Standards, in their acceptance and enactment, to modify.

The performance programme is a matter of national pride in the US, but its robustness (tied, *inter alia*, into issues of the employment of performers as music teachers) is such that it also controls the attitudes of student participants. Thus only a negligible part of the performance cohort participates in the general music programme and, considering its optional status in middle and high schools

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(whatever about the future), there is little that could have been done in the past to change that. Thus there were and are two music education programmes in schools - one performance-dominated to the point of suppressing or merely paying lip service to the many supportive activities, the other, erroneously assumed to be MEAE, by definition or by a natural process of students exerting options (or not) being virtually bereft of performers. It is arguable (and Elliott's idealism is compelling here) that this pseudo-streaming, in operation, has had discriminatory effects (on both cohorts) but, considering that it is only in the 1990s that the arts have been accepted as essential in education (see Lehman - MEND 303), Reimer and his colleagues were faced with a virtually immutable situation in the 1970s. This gives a totally different perspective to Reimer's statement that '[p]erforming, in the general music program, is an essential [note *essential*] but contributory mode of interaction with music'.

Faced with this entrenched socially-based (as distinct from school- or educationally-based) dichotomy, with music education in a weak and vulnerable position *vis-à-vis* the employment potential of other (core) subjects, the question might very well have been asked as to what options were open to music educators. It must have seemed plausible and compelling that they should have tried to salvage some musical experiences for those who were, by choice, non-performers (in the sense of falling short of even competent, not to mention proficient or expert level) by exposing them to the widest feasible repertoire of music through listening, and (presumably with the mediation of inspired and inspiring teachers), to help them to listen with more enjoyment, purpose and understanding. There is no reason to believe that Reimer and colleagues would not have been delighted, if they had been presented with the resources (teacher training), the time and the guaranteed interest of students, to have developed performance-rich curricula which would also have included balanced offerings of other activities, including listening. Now the situation is vastly changed, at least potentially, but, as noted above, although music is included in the Goals 2000 Education Legislation, the National Standards have no power to impose a single programme to replace the two-stream one hitherto in operation.

MEAE responded and adjusted (through the MENC document [National Standards]) to the promise of the legislative provisions. Indeed, since the advocacy movement was already showing signs of a major breakthrough as early as 1992, Elliott's book (1995) could also have taken advantage of the enhanced status of music education, even to the point of assuming that in its delivery the new dispensation would not be inimical to praxial ideas. The National Standards do not amount to a mandatory national curriculum; they rely for their implementation on state-by-state adoption, but statistics and predictions (2004) are encouraging that this is happening. It is heartening, too, that federal legislation supports the arts in education. However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict the detail of their implementation, especially in such matters as the balance between curriculum-as-practicum (Elliott's



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maxim) and the more traditional approaches of MEAE. Comparing the Standards broadly with the terminology of the multiple British systems, we find the three-fold and two-fold elements (composing/performing/listening, or just music-making/appraising) predictably included. (Only conducting and arranging are omitted.) In fact it is difficult, in the light of the template provided by the National Standards, to imagine how Praxialism and MEAE (in its broadest sense) differ, since they both seem to fit so comfortably (and would claim to do so) with the aspiration of the published Music Content Standards (see MEND 303).

Circumventing the argument about Elliott's five (only!) forms of music making and assuming that performance is typical of the challenge in each, as involving all his suggested forms of knowing (procedural, formal, informal, impressionistic and supervisory), there are two philosophies to be compared on basics. Each recommends thorough involvement in performance and listening; each is cognizant of the intimate relationship between and mutual inclusivity of product and process; neither eschews concepts as learning tools when appropriately employed. Both are concerned with giving to all learners the best possible legacy of truly musical experiences. There is a range of relevant parameters to consider in deciding on the best approach to this classical dilemma of optimizing the educational experience:

1. The nature of music and the characteristics that we wish to transmit in education. While the ultimate goals of music education remain unfulfilled, this must be a perennial preoccupation with strategists. In particular it is necessary to relate music to art, not to define it so absolutely (because of the danger that it would fail the criterion of universal validity), but simply because the relationship is a common perception of the nature of music and is probably and primarily so in most cultures, whether conscious or intuitive. This is not to revive any spurious and obsolete dichotomy which distinguishes between the terms 'fine art' and the so-called 'useful arts' (based on function and the technical theory of art as an example of craft, means and end). The aim here is to be sure of and honest about educational motivations. Music may be related to anthropology, but we should be clear as to whether we are teaching it in this context or for its intrinsic qualities; it is not to disavow either approach when vindicated in practice, but it is necessary to be sure of the precise orientation. If music as art is insufficient for some contemporary views of comprehensiveness (and this is becoming increasingly problematic), there must be clarity as to when it is *not* art and why and how we teach it in that context. That is to throw down the gauntlet to certain praxial ideas and to demand more finely wrought and unambiguous theories than are currently available. Theory should flow from empiricism and should in turn fertilize practice. But it appears to the writer that the relationship of music and art is not satisfactorily resolved in Elliott's philosophy; he consistently uses

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terms in reference to music making (musical, expressive, artistic, interpretation) which are redolent of art contexts, yet he shies away from the aesthetic connotations, for reasons that have become obvious.

2. The distribution of talent, interest and commitment amongst the student body. This is typically Gaussian and makes a strong case for streaming.
3. The nature of performing and listening, how each contributes to overall musical refinement as a product of teaching/learning, and the possible dominant reliance on one or the other as a vehicle for instruction and participation.
4. Whether to have one or two programmes and the relationship between them (see 2 above).
5. The availability of relevant teaching expertise.
6. The realities of the terms competent, proficient and expert and the associated time constraints in the acquisition of these skills.

The remaining so-called ‘myths’ to which Elliott has responded will now be examined. Reimer claims that ‘whatever learnings do accrue from performance are learnings unavailable to the vast majority of people, in our culture, very few of whom become, or choose to become, competent, proficient, or expert performers, despite Elliott’s illogical premise that this is achievable simply by involving them in the exploratory performance experiences in schools (what he terms “curriculum-as-practicum”)’. Elliott’s response runs as follows: ‘Reimer seriously underestimates people’s musical capacities and the expertise of music educators past and present. The vast majority of people have sufficient musical intelligence to achieve competent (if not proficient) levels of musicianship through systematic programs of music education. Musicianship is a form of knowing that is accessible, achievable and applicable to all. ... Reimer’s tendency to undervalue the artistic potential of music students and music educators is a major weakness in his philosophy’.

The realities and the statistics are overwhelmingly against Elliott’s theory. It is not a question of doubting people’s musical intelligence or the expertise of the best music educators. It is just undeniable that propensity seldom runs to the commitment of time to acquire serviceable skills of performance (Elliott’s ideal); the Gaussian distribution will ensure that performance is exploratory (to use Reimer’s word) for the vast majority, even if they are forced into it. And its exploratory nature will undoubtedly limit it as a vehicle for even modestly sophisticated learnings and exposure (through the music making itself) to the wealth of music to which they should have access. It is not valid for Roberts to cite ‘the most impressive successes of our profession [as having] already proven his [Elliott’s] case’. The music programme has to be implemented within the capability of the average teacher. The levels of expertise assumed in Elliott’s philosophy (and he has admitted it to the writer in

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an interview [Fort Worth, Texas, September 1995]) are aspirational and therefore idealistic. And even if all were paradigmatically excellent, it is still impossible ‘to make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear’ when attitudes are indifferent and time is wanting, especially in a performance programme.

The writer contends that the skill element, in which time dominates over levels of commitment, interest and talent, militates against the potential of Elliott’s curriculum-as-practicum, in spite of his sanguine assertions to the contrary. And Stubley’s words, quoted by Elliott in his own favour: ‘[t]his perspective differs from pragmatic approaches in that the problems to be solved arise in and evolve through the music making itself ... through exploration and interpretation of musical works as multidimensional challenges’, would not define a real Elliott/Reimer difference if listening were to be considered as an act of music making with all its wealth of musical problems to be solved; the flattering proposition of ‘listening as vicarious performance’ is not lacking in distinguished advocacy. Finally the writer, who has a lifetime of experience in the teaching of performance up to the highest international standards, can attest to its value and suitability as a vehicle for exposing learners to the most transcendental musical experiences but, at the levels typically attained in school settings, it is so hampered, as it is dominated, by the multifarious tasks of mere technical control that it is severely limited in its scope to maximize other musical achievement outside of itself.

Myth 10 - ‘that Elliott makes clear his aversion to language to clarify musical structure’ may be taken as a misapprehension on Reimer’s part in the light of Elliott’s response, which simply denies the claim, providing ample quoted material from *MM* to reassure us on the question of the undeniable usefulness and, indeed, the indispensability, of language in music education. It is on the question of using verbal concepts as organizers of the curriculum that Elliott takes his stance, leading us to consider Myth 11 (Elliott’s curriculum ‘in its massive concentration on performing as the only proper way to encounter music ... allows for only the performer’s perspective on what musical experiences can properly consist of’). Reimer’s accusation clearly overstates the case here, by stressing the bias on performance and ignoring the other activities which Elliott almost always includes, albeit usually parenthetically, leaving himself, withal, open to facile misinterpretation.

This is balanced by Elliott’s distortion of the listening issue and his pejorative description of how it is approached in MEAE; this is at the core of how these scholars can so easily misinterpret, rather than misunderstand, one another by conveying the impression that their philosophies are incompatible and mutually exclusive in application. If Reimer’s insistence on Elliott’s exclusive championship of performance is unfair, it is, on the other hand, illogical for Elliott artificially to separate listening from the other five activities and, further, to deprecate it by minimizing, if not denying, its creativity (see below). Furthermore it is misleading to claim that MEAE (only [writer’s insertion]) ‘organizes

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curricula in relation to verbal concepts about musical elements (tied primarily to recordings)' whereas, in fact, on the one hand, it is treating listening as a music making activity and, on the other, it also has a performance programme where, in all probability much of what Elliott is recommending is taken for granted as an inclusion. Is this tendency to ignore Reimer's ideas about the performance programme (see *A Philosophy*, pp. 182-213) deliberate?

Apropos, in the writer's view, amongst the music makers who do not physically make the actual sounds (composers, arrangers and conductors) it is inconceivable, anyway, that listeners should be excluded as music-makers, since, interestingly and generically, without them there is virtually no music at all. It is also true that listening is the least egotistical of music making activities; and without the 'thousand-headed public' to communicate and share with, all other forms of music making are relegated to a much smaller and solipsistic world. It is vehemently suggested, on the writer's total conviction, that if Elliott were to abandon his subconscious aversion to listening *per se* (because of its MEAE connotations?) much of the phraseology of his praxial philosophy would read more naturally and more convincingly. The feeling of an anti-MEAE (Reimer) agenda is so pervasive as to detract constantly from his plausibility. Read, for example, the following passage, in praise of praxialism, without excluding listening as a 'focused artistic transaction' (a credible and not extravagant claim): '[f]irst the values of music arise from focused artistic transactions with meaningful musical challenges. Achieving musical values depends on developing students' musicianship-listenership (forms of *working* understanding) in direct relation to excellent musical works'. Such a passage could arguably have been written by Reimer, and he would have been proud to have acknowledged it; the writer can find no incompatibility with Reimer's ideas.

It is close to dissembling when we find Elliott, again reacting to a perceived MEAE device, first legitimizing verbal knowings and then damning them with faint praise although, as 'formal knowledge', they are included in his five forms of knowing. 'The core of musical understanding is essentially tacit and procedural: it is the non-verbal know-how, intuition, savvy, and metacognitive strategies that listeners and music makers (of all kinds) use to construct musical patterns and meanings as listeners and music makers.' Again anything that smacks of MEAE lore is downgraded. But what is to be made of these passages in themselves as revealing Elliott's inconsistencies? He speaks of *excellent* musical works, explicitly declaring that judgement, valuing and hierarchy are in his educational armoury (as they should be), although he disallows them in any intercultural sense (note his insistence on the innate equality of musical practices. And see Aspin, [International Journal of Music Education, Number 27, May 1996, p. 56] for a direct challenge to what Elliott is interpreted as implying). And is he saying that non-performing listeners (who *are* validated) *do construct* musical

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patterns and meanings using all of his musical knowings (though it is derisory as to how verbal formal knowing can be selectively downgraded relative to the rest in the process)?

Surely the sensible attitude to verbal concepts about music is to see them for what they are - an aid to the better understanding, and so the more fruitful experience, of music itself. It seems perfectly normal and unexceptionable that concepts or principles would evolve naturally within any system taking a philosophy to the practical stage of methodology. This is implicit, too, in Elliott's philosophy although, because of its newness, it is perhaps less developed in this context. But reflective practitioners (Elliott's term) must be trusted to use these tools with prudence and circumspection. Concepts are not to be viewed as a set of solutions in search of problems, or, as Reimer so wisely advises, 'we do not use concepts for the sake of teaching concepts'.

Swanwick is even more pragmatic in observing that 'the only good reasons for choosing anything are that it has musical potential'. But let Elliott have the final word, which does not, in the writer's view, contradict the clear intent of MEAE as articulated by Reimer. Here is what Elliott says: 'the praxial philosophy advocates a context-sensitive use of all forms of language and conceptualization; *MM* gives verbal concepts an important but contributory role in music teaching and learning'. In any pragmatic approach, not influenced by bizarre and far-fetched interpretations of what aesthetic theory is proposing, the two philosophies being compared here are not appreciably at variance. If indeed MEAE is as narrow in its outlook and method as Elliott is claiming (and this is open to question if we are to credit the profession with a thoughtful and analytical approach to the implementation of the curriculum and the primacy of the music itself over method), it is high time that the underlying philosophy be reappraised and modified as appropriate.

There is clear evidence that this has been done. If the 1992-94 National Standards (Music Content Standards) in the US are scrutinized, they can be seen to reflect federal approval for the idea that students will no longer have the option to minimize their participation in performance; nor will educational strategists be faced with the impossible and depressing task of coping with that option. In this sense American public opinion itself (and Reimer is the first to draw attention to it. See his response above [MEND 402] to Harry White's paper *A book of manners in the wilderness*), in confronting and defeating government on its initial failure to include the arts in the *Goals 2000* legislation, has finally brought about a review of the worst features of the dual system. It is to be hoped that in the state-by-state enactment of the Standards a more balanced approach to music content will be possible - one that neither reaffirms the predestined failures of MEAE (in the general programme) to cater effectively for the non-performer, nor swings too far towards a skill-intensive

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praxial approach which places impossible constraints on student availability of time to cope with even the performance component.

In this sense Swanwick is justified in claiming that ‘music education as aesthetic education [but only in its attempt to save the general programme (writer’s insertion)] seems indeed to have had its day’. And in this context Humphreys’s comment (MEND 416, 19) acquires real significance, though not necessarily that envisaged by Elliott: ‘Elliott is so convincing in his numerous discussions about the narrowness of MEAE and the inadequacies of its handmaiden - listening-centred general music curriculums - that music educators should settle the arguments about the utility of MEAE as a comprehensive philosophy for the field once and for all’. Humphreys, perhaps unknowingly, is confirming the fact that MEAE indeed has and had *two* forms (performance and general), which together comprised its comprehensive form. It will be interesting to see how the aesthetic principle enshrined in Reimer’s work can metamorphose in practice to match the as yet undefined mode of reformed American music education in schools. The burning question will centre, as it always has, around the nature of performance and its accommodation and growth without loss of the outstanding and historical achievement of a talented and committed minority cohort of learners in this branch of music making. This, too, is a problem for Ireland, though the scale and the context are obviously different.

In spite of Reimer’s claim that Elliott has ‘contempt for any interest in the idea that music might be fruitfully studied as one part of a larger family of the arts’, they are found to be of one mind. The question arises because of the provision in the National Standards for students ‘understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts’. One would expect music educators to insist that inter-art collaborations or the study of music which is combined with other arts (dance; poetry; drama) should not unduly dilute the intrinsically musical components in the hybrid study. In fact, Elliott is perhaps a little too accommodating (when the time element is considered in relation to what can be achieved within a limited allocation) by suggesting that ‘to learn how to make and listen for musical works that involve other artistic practices requires reference to the whole web of beliefs, concepts, traditions and standards that explain how certain musicians and listeners understand the contribution that other performing and non-performing arts make to their music cultures’.

Suffice it to say that in relation to the polarity of the two philosophies this is really a non-issue. It is interesting, however, to note Elliott’s heading for this section - Music and the other Arts - which can only mean that he considers music to be an art; if this is so it would be equally interesting to have clarification on the aesthetic theory that he espouses. Aesthetics is, after all, the theory, not of beauty,

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but of art (Collingwood)<sup>104</sup> and exists in a massive corpus which predates Reimer's excursions into the field. In this respect, Reimer's derivations are admirably lucid. To reject them in the name of music 'in the broader sense of musical practices, cultures, works, processes and more' is acceptable as a thesis only if the earlier aesthetic theory is suitably revised and presented in a modified form which satisfactorily explains the artistic connotations of music that aspires to the condition of art.

Even in this context, it has to be stated that Elliott's pejorative description of the aesthetic concept (21 *et seq.* of *MM*) is not flawless as to accuracy; the sweeping statement that 'music is a collection of objects or *works*' is immediately challengeable, and he plays down the insistence on response, which concentrates the value of the experience in the person and not in the work. Elliott himself has conceded that product and process are inseparably interpenetrated, so whatever his aesthetic stance, he, too, is bound into the idea of music as works. Elliott's code of values (implicit in his treatment of the aesthetic concept) includes 'social religious, political, personal or otherwise practical connection these qualities may embody, point to, or represent'. He is therefore enmeshed in the technical theory of 'art' as the useful arts. But there is that marked preponderance of reference to artistic and musical interpretation which constantly confuses the picture.

The question of musical creativity is another issue on which there is a considerable difference of opinion (between Elliott and Reimer) but it is not one on which either philosophy will stand or fall. It really arises from Reimer's situated view that the recognition of creative effort in school music contexts should be as flattering and encouraging as possible to students over the widest spectrum. Creativity is arguably an artistic term as it is certainly subjectively loaded and refractory to exact definition. We may take it that Elliott is correct when he says that originality is necessary for creativity, but it is not sufficient; however, he also refers to originality (see the quotation in his essay from p 221 of *MM*) in a way which seems to imply otherwise. In responding to Reimer he is impaled unnecessarily in contradiction.

First there is a vast difference in degree between Elliott's relatively modest idea of creativity, as arising from 'a person engaged in thoughtful processes that result in a tangible achievement judged as innovative (or not) by people who know the standards and history of a domain', and the supporting statement he offers from Csikszentmihalyi, who insists that 'the creative individual is a person who regularly solves problems, fashions products, or defines new questions in a domain in a way that is initially considered novel but that ultimately becomes accepted in a particular cultural setting'. The matter can only be solved by agreement on a definition and these two do not coincide. Elliott tells us that 'musical creativity and musicianship are mutually interdependent and interactive' and that

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

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‘creativity and musicianship should be taught concurrently’; he illustrates musicianship on a continuum (novice to expert. See p132 of *MM*), yet he denies creativity the same continuum. He also states that ‘children (and all music students) can achieve creative musical results in their performing (*et al*). ... because developing students’ musical creativity overlaps and extends the process of developing students’ musicianship’.

Elsewhere Elliott claims that ‘musical creativity is not something that a novice can achieve’ yet musicianship is, and the two are inseparably bound; there is something very arbitrary about this distinction. The writer struggles to equate this view with those of Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi in Elliott’s further invocations. It appears that the real crux of the matter is not Elliott’s own views on creativity (which merit Aspin’s praise [MEND 415], without pontificating between Reimer and Elliott) but his insistence that creativity can only occur at the higher levels of achievement (competent is one suggestion [see MEND 416, 19]), and his aligning himself with Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi in adopting a highly sophisticated definition such as the ‘best professional examples’ but also descending to ‘what expert music educator’s recognize as good artistic and creative secondary-school jazz improvising, middle school composing, children’s choral singing, and so on’.

Holding Elliott’s own views up to Collingwood’s artistic theory might help to place the matter in true perspective. Collingwood demands something more than means and end or the exercise of skill or craftsmanship; and he expects a feelingful element that is not equivalent to emotional arousal (expressiveness is the Langerian word). What is involved here are artistic choices (and not just random decisions) by the use of intuition and indeed by the skilful combined use of Elliott’s own five ways of knowing that constitute musicianship in its development and achievements and at whatever level. It is inconsistent and educationally questionable to set a lower limit on when the mutual inclusivity of musicianship and creativity has its earliest manifestations. There is, of course, no question of suggesting that the judgement of creativity is a self-congratulatory process at the disposal of every musician who makes music. What Csikszentmihalyi calls social validation (Kant calls it universal validity) is necessary, but this should not arbitrarily exclude part of the musicianship continuum. It is perfectly plausible (and is enacted typically every day in the examination of performance candidates in the British system) that a cohort of reflective music practitioners (teachers/ assessors) would individually agree that the performance of a child at the most rudimentary level can be particularly musical (the writer has observed copious examples of this) and, therefore, that the performance can be artistic and, by definition, creative too, because of a unique combination of craft, feeling and musical intuition.



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As to the denial by Elliott that there can be such a thing as creative listening, this obviously is influenced by his exaggerated aversion to his own interpretation (and distortion) of MEAE's so called 'listening-centred general music curriculums'. To deny that listening has no tangible musical achievements that can be witnessed and measured is a denial of the whole purpose of listening and its educational potential. Why would anyone want to listen or teach listening if it represents no achievement, educational or otherwise? The most rudimentary popular perception immediately debunks Elliott's assertion. This is also a denial of one of the most serviceable of all teaching strategies in or vocal teaching - that of modelling. If a teacher, by a practical illustration or by using a recorded performance, stimulates a student to an immediately more artistic/creative performance, the creativity is the direct (measurable/witnessable) result of the listening itself, which by any reasonable interpretation would itself have to have been open to creativity. Creativity is, in the end, merely a matter of definition but it should surely hinge on educational usefulness in a philosophy of education. Elliott is not convincing in the defence of his definition of creativity as to its serving the education of the young in the most encouraging way.

Reimer's deconstruction of Elliott's six dimensions of music to point out their flaws is one of his less successful critical ventures. He is, in a sense, hoist with his own petard when he acknowledges 'the growing literature of music in which performance is absent' and suggests that it threatens the survival of Elliott's performance-rich strategies. It is surprising that Reimer does not refer to the aesthetic barrenness of this type of music, which is 'devoid of affective consequences' because the production is pure craft, which is necessary but not sufficient for an artistic event. Elliott is much more focused here in stating that 'even in those very few musical practices where compositions are made "directly available" to listeners through technology, composers are inevitably concerned with much more than producing patterns: they are concerned with the artistic and creative presentation of musical events.'

Elliott does speak of *performance-interpretation* which not only establishes that quality of performance which uniquely distinguishes it from technologically produced sounds, but gives it artistic credibility and integrity. And it also makes the provision for feelingful content which then allows him to separate the idea of syntactic and non-syntactic parameters without incurring the allegation of not taking affect into account. But he goes on to explain (what is not obvious from his terminology) that 'cognition and emotion are interdependent. There is no such thing as emotion without cognition (of some sort) and vice-versa'. So listening to musical structure or 'listening deeply to excellent music demands the full range of our conscious powers (attention, intention, cognition, emotion [feeling?], memory)'. The affective content, therefore, is implicit. The difference between Reimer's and Elliott's views here is not a matter of the subtle distinction, drawn by Elliott, between pleasure and enjoyment, but rather of that between emotion and feeling.

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There is a vast literature on the nature of expression; it is a quintessential quality of the arts which has occupied philosophers, aestheticians and other thinkers for centuries; it is epistemologically rich in potential but it is unlikely that agreement or even consensus will be reached on its matrix of characteristics. However, much is made of the distinction between the direct *expression of* something and simply being *expressive of* its qualities. Thus, whatever about Elliott's real intentions here, he uses the terminology that a performance-interpretation can be an 'expression of emotion' (*MM*, 155). In his essay (MEND 416, 22) he modifies this to 'music being *expressive of* [writer's italics] ordinary human emotions'. And the authority he quotes (Davies) is circumspect about phraseology, which can hardly corroborate Elliott's ambiguous stance: 'music is expressive by presenting not instances of emotion but emotion characteristics in appearances. ... Emotions are heard in music as belonging to it, just as appearances of emotions are present in bearing, gait, or deportment ...' Much depends here on an understanding and definition of what constitutes emotion and/or feeling. There is little doubt that both are cognitive and thoughtful. But if emotion is thought of as the *demonstrative partial* of feeling - something which craves discharge, while feeling is embraced as something to be retained in and by the thought processes, it is unexceptionable that Reimer should take Elliott to task and demand greater clarity in relation to this artistic concept. But it is clear from this and other passages that these scholars differ radically in this aspect of how music functions.

The question of 'musical representation', listed by Elliott as one of the six possible dimensions of a Musical Work (*MM*, 155), is tied into another philosophical stance - that of simple Referentialism, which has been rejected by all schools of Absolutism from Hanslick to Langer. As its name implies, referents outside the music are constantly being searched out; this extrinsic interest distracts the listener from the sounds themselves - or so the aesthetic lobby would claim. Harold Abeles (MEND 302), who is very eclectic in his philosophical preferences, states in *Foundations of Music Education* (p.57) that 'not only does it focus attention on things other than the music itself; it also doesn't work'. But if one ponders the claim that probably more than 90% of music experience and participation is non-aesthetic in intent (though this does not mean that it fails as art or that there is no aesthetic experience), there is a case to be answered.

Whether Elliott's laudable attempts to recognize and obliquely to point out this fact will succeed in changing the educational approach, and open the school repertoire to all kinds of Musics, is not clear at this stage. The argument that teaching music as art is educationally straightforward, well developed methodologically, and prepares the student for the accommodation of most, if not all, other forms of music, is a comfortable and robust stance, although one that is being increasingly challenged by idealists, Elliott included. But the idea that art can be useful and functional too, without ceasing to be art, is not incompatible with aesthetic theory. While it is inaccurate to claim that in Reimer's

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philosophy ‘everything “outside” structural elements is stigmatized as “extramusical”’, especially if the argument above as to the relationship between cognition and feeling is taken into account, there is still a need to relax the canons of aesthetics if music in education is to have a real significance, at all times, to life as lived, in whatever community. Reimer’s response (MEND 402) to Harry White’s *A book of manners in the wilderness* is a very candid comment on the difficulties to be faced in effectively widening the repertoire and providing for the expert and effective teaching of music in the general school programme with this expanded brief.

Elliott responds very convincingly to Reimer’s suggestion that he (Elliott) misses ‘the sensuous dimension, in which what we experience as we listen is, in important ways, experienced in, through, and by the body. Without this dimension the experience can be conceived of as entirely cerebral and therefore devoid of an essential aspect of its pleasure and meaning’. This tit-for-tat recrimination on the subject of the lack of appreciation of sensuous qualities or affect, quite apart from being mildly puzzling, is another example of how these two writers regularly choose to misinterpret and misrepresent one another’s pronouncements. Reimer’s mistake is that he finds Elliott’s six dimensions of a Musical Work too bland in failing to emphasize the affective (Reimer does not accept the validity of ‘expressions of emotion’); this is perhaps a plausible view until Elliott’s response, linking cognitive and affective responses inseparably in a general phenomenological way, corrects the misunderstanding.

Elliott’s theorizing, if it did not have such an air of assumed infallibility, and were it not couched in such dismissive terms (an attitude all too prevalent also in Reimer when addressing Elliott’s claims), is compelling in relation to a widely held belief that ‘the mind and body are one’. But Reimer makes this very point in his essay (MEND 403, 10) when claiming that performance is ‘giving sounds meaningful form - a condition shared with composers and listeners - form and action, product and process, are inseparable ... mind and body, or thinking and doing, are also unified’. Bearing this in mind, his statement that ‘sound is experienced and enjoyed with the body as well as with the mind’ is confirming that belief, not contradicting it, as Elliott seems to think. Reimer is not trying to separate body and mind, but emphasizing that the integrated bodily experience should be artistically rich, a view with which it may be assumed Elliott would concur, since he constantly stresses the artistic dimension in performance as in all musical experiences. The outcome of this altercation is to confirm that both Elliott and Reimer value the affective and artistic in music, in all its forms, and that this artistic criterion is insufficiently served by certain kinds of cognition, such as the recognition of syntactic and non-syntactic elements alone, devoid of their feelingful charges. In other words the intensity of the feeling must be concentrated in the artistic, if the performance and listening experience is to be an artistic one. Presumably neither is denying that there is a vast difference in essence between

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the feelings generated by structural elements only and those that are produced by an interpretation which discovers and celebrates their artistic relationships.

Elliott's response to Myth 15 is probably the best example in the whole essay of the way in which these adversaries can be at cross-purposes. Here Reimer levels one criticism and Elliott seems to answer a different question. According to Reimer, 'self-growth, enjoyment, self-esteem, and optimal experience' [ends highly prized by Elliott as outcomes of music education] are 'bereft of qualities unique to music'. He charges that the praxial view of musical values puts our profession 'in a more vulnerable position to being perceived as unnecessary in education'. The intrinsicity of music, in an aesthetic sense, has always been a crucial part of the Reimer philosophy; it is therefore not surprising that he should have challenged Elliott's intentionally more liberal view of the meaning of music in human discourse - 'the situated nature of music cognition and musical works, the social and cultural ingredients of particular musical ways of life, the affective specificity of musical enjoyment, and the centrality of artistically produced sound - all these differentiate music and the values of music from all other human pursuits.' Elliott's response goes on to define many aspects of how engagement with music is to foster unique experiences; as he defines these involvements, their properties and their significance, he succeeds in giving a revealing précis of the basis of his whole philosophy, which is not wanting in conviction, post-modern novelty (gleaned and gathered from a variety of sources- psychological, ethnomusicological and philosophical, enriched by his own persuasions) and plausibility.

Elliott's theories are compelling in the current climate of searching - for ways to bridge the gap, in western society, between school and community, without excessive erosion of traditional and cherished educational values; to bring about a revolution leading to a utopian multicultural democracy without overstraining the resources of student capability and interest, teacher expertise and available time; for a formula to endow music as a subject (within the arts programme) with a benign ambivalence and adaptability to function as art, within the canons of aesthetics and all that they entail, while ministering to the unarticulated and subconscious demands of a much wider dispensation which, on the one hand, may be pseudo-art and on the other a social/cultural construct which is not without validity as an objective of education in the broadest sense. Elliott's philosophy has many suggestions to contribute to this massive problem-solving exercise which currently preoccupies the music education lobby at the beginning of a new millennium.<sup>105</sup> But so, also, does aesthetic theory when permitted to make its case, fructified (see Reimer, *A Philosophy*, rev.1989, xi) by its own adaptability to metamorphosis, whether attributable to honest and frequent self-appraisal in the light of imported

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<sup>105</sup> Elliott's ideas may not constitute a panacea for music education, and they are not so advanced in this thesis; but neither should their fertility and usefulness, in the ongoing debate, be gainsaid.

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progressive thinking or to a survival instinct that recognizes a threat. The motivation matters little if the modifications are educationally consistent and convincing.

Since Elliott's philosophy is the one on trial in this review of the literature in relation to it, the question must be asked as to whether it is internally consistent; this criterion can be applied to Myth 15. Elliott, it is assumed, would acknowledge that he has written what is, in essence, an anti-aesthetic philosophy. And yet his work is permeated, if not dominated, by aesthetic references which leave an aura of ambivalence that is difficult, and would be misleading, to disregard. Consider Elliott's definition: 'The term aesthetic experience refers to a special kind of emotional happening or disinterested pleasure that supposedly arises from a listener's exclusive concentration on the aesthetic qualities of a musical work [note that Reimer uses the words *musical*, *artistic*, and *intrinsic* interchangeably with *aesthetic* <writer's insertion; Reimer, *A Philosophy*, rev.1989, xiii>], apart from any moral, social, religious, political, personal, or otherwise practical connection these qualities may embody, point to, or represent' (*MM*, 23).

It may be assumed that these other connections are valued equally by Elliott. This is a clear discriminating factor between the two philosophies. But Elliott's uniqueness of music is so redolent of aesthetic theory, in its articulation, as to be deeply indebted to it, as, for example, his reliance on 'the situated nature of music cognition and musical works, the affective specificity of musical enjoyment and the centrality of artistically [aesthetically?] produced sound'. It is not even clear whether the social and cultural ingredients of particular [not all?] musical ways of life are without artistic connotations. The precise nature of these social and cultural interactions is rather vague and is certainly not covered in any great detail in Elliott's essay, and yet they seem to be the key to the essential difference between Reimer and Elliott.

To return to Myth 15, Elliott does not address the question that Reimer puts. He admirably gives his version of the intrinsicality of musical experience, and this is well done, but he does not justify 'self-growth, enjoyment, self-esteem and optimal experience [perfectly valid *educational goals* though they may be, as Bruner (1996) confirms]' as intrinsically musical. Here again is Elliott's 'technical' theory of art which, if it be insisted that he should also invoke the truly aesthetic, comfortably aligns the two philosophies - one (Reimer's) as a pragmatically modified version of strict aestheticism, and the other (Elliott's) as an expanded variant and derivative which seeks to open music (and education) to a considerably wider and, incidentally, a more refractory brief, in an artistic sense. As Reimer wrote in 1989: '[w]hile many of the concepts of aesthetic education remain imperfectly understood and many of its implications remain imperfectly applied, the general view it proposes has become the bedrock upon which our self-concept as a profession rests'. While the assertion may be gratuitously self-

congratulatory, and while the time may be propitious to reappraise the tenets of MEAE, it is not without truth.

## **5.6 Rationalization**

Although there can be little doubt that Elliott's and Reimer's philosophies would have had North American practice as their primary target, it is equally obvious, from readings of their work, that they had a much wider sphere of influence in mind. Besides, the relevance of American practice to global concerns has been argued vehemently in this thesis. It has also been suggested that both philosophies have pretensions towards a species of universality. In taking the analysis further, it is intended, first, to rationalize the outcomes of Chapter 5 more clearly to consolidate the reconciled features into a workable rationale, and to establish guidelines for its applicability in a real situation of school music education, that in Ireland being chosen because of its claims on the second strand of the thesis. This will be undertaken in Chapter 6. The universality hypothesis (see Research Question - 1.2) is a separate issue; this will be tested in Chapter 7 (Overall Conclusions).

## 6 Reconciliation of Rival Stances

In Chapter 6 the connection between the two strands<sup>106</sup> 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 education<sup>107</sup>, 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 amelioration<sup>108</sup> – too many obvious targets in sight that scarcely needed a philosophy to

<sup>106</sup> 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.

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

<sup>108</sup> 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 consistent<sup>109</sup> 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 faculty<sup>110</sup> - 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

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<sup>109</sup> 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).

<sup>110</sup> 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 considerations<sup>111</sup> 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

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

<sup>111</sup> 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 community<sup>112</sup> (popular music is typical), must be of deep concern to educators who are trying reconcile them - without any certainty that they are reconcilable.

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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).

<sup>112</sup> 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)<sup>113</sup> 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

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<sup>113</sup> 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.<sup>114</sup> 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

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<sup>114</sup> 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.<sup>115</sup> 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.

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Section 18.1.1 [MEND 402]).

<sup>115</sup> 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 MEAE<sup>116</sup> - the one which is now

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<sup>116</sup> 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.<sup>117</sup>

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

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

<sup>117</sup> 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]<sup>118</sup> in the present.'<sup>119</sup>

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

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

<sup>119</sup> 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.<sup>120</sup>

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.<sup>121</sup>

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'<sup>122</sup>.

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

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

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

<sup>122</sup> 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’<sup>123</sup>.

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)<sup>124</sup>, 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’.<sup>125</sup> Art is communication, expression, and implies inseparable dualities and complementarities - perception and response, objective and

<sup>123</sup> 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].

<sup>124</sup> 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.’<sup>126</sup> 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 cleavage<sup>127</sup> 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 predestined<sup>128</sup> 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

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

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

<sup>127</sup> 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*).

<sup>128</sup> 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 served<sup>129</sup> in education. Does there seem to be a

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<sup>129</sup> 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)<sup>130</sup> 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

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<sup>130</sup> 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 “humanities<sup>131</sup> 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

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<sup>131</sup> 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 education<sup>132</sup>; that much is immediately relevant and in agreement with MEND ideas.

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<sup>132</sup> 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

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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 questions<sup>133</sup> must be answered:

1. What is the assessable first culture<sup>134</sup> experience of the cohort to be taught and is it uniform across the matrix of cells? Continuity is also a criterion.

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<sup>133</sup> 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).

<sup>134</sup> 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.<sup>135</sup> 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

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<sup>135</sup> 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’?<sup>136</sup> But in current circumstances it is not so easy to ignore the pressures of popular forms for inclusion in the curriculum. One

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<sup>136</sup> 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’<sup>137</sup>; 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’<sup>138</sup>. 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

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<sup>137</sup> 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.

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

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 book<sup>139</sup>, 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”

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

<sup>139</sup> 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.<sup>140</sup> 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

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<sup>140</sup> 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

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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 MC<sup>141</sup>:

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

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<sup>141</sup> ‘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 White<sup>142</sup> 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)*<sup>143</sup> - 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

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<sup>142</sup> 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).

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

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content balance<sup>144</sup>. 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 proficiency<sup>145</sup>.

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

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<sup>144</sup> 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.

<sup>145</sup> 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

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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 intrinsicity 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.<sup>146</sup> 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."'

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<sup>146</sup> 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'.<sup>147</sup> 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.'<sup>148</sup> 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.'<sup>149</sup> 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

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<sup>147</sup> Elliott, *Music Matters*, 173.

<sup>148</sup> R.G. Collingwood, *Principles of Art*, 41.

<sup>149</sup> 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.<sup>150</sup> 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.<sup>151</sup> 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.'<sup>152</sup> 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

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

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

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

<sup>152</sup> 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*'.<sup>153</sup> 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.'<sup>154</sup> 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'.<sup>155</sup>

The *order* of musical communication, facilitating such insight, 'resides in the perceptual [feelingful] experience of those who hear with understanding'.<sup>156</sup> 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

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

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

<sup>155</sup> Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, 198.

<sup>156</sup> 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'.<sup>157</sup> 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.

<sup>158</sup> 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

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<sup>157</sup> 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.

<sup>158</sup> 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 affect<sup>159</sup>. 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*.<sup>160</sup> 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.

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

<sup>159</sup> 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.

<sup>160</sup> 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 aesthetic<sup>161</sup> 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*<sup>162</sup> 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

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<sup>161</sup> 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.

<sup>162</sup> 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.<sup>163</sup> 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’<sup>164</sup>, 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

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<sup>163</sup> 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.

<sup>164</sup> 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'?<sup>165</sup>

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

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<sup>165</sup> 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.<sup>166</sup>

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

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<sup>166</sup> 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.<sup>167</sup> 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

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<sup>167</sup> 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 failing<sup>168</sup> 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

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<sup>168</sup> 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 training<sup>169</sup> 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).

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<sup>169</sup> 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**<sup>170</sup> 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**,<sup>171</sup> 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

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<sup>170</sup> 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.

<sup>171</sup> 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**,<sup>172</sup> 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

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

<sup>172</sup> 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**<sup>173</sup> 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.

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<sup>173</sup> 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 Programme<sup>174</sup>

‘If it is art it is not for all, and if it is for all it is not art’.<sup>175</sup> 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’,<sup>176</sup> 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.’<sup>177</sup>

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.

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<sup>174</sup> 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.

<sup>175</sup> 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.

<sup>176</sup> 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.

<sup>177</sup> 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’.<sup>178</sup> Music which, by consensus view, is deemed vulgar,

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<sup>178</sup> 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

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*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,<sup>179</sup> 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.<sup>180</sup> 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.

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<sup>179</sup> 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.

<sup>180</sup> 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.<sup>181</sup>

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

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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.

<sup>181</sup>With 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 Education<sup>182</sup>

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’,<sup>183</sup> 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.

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<sup>182</sup> 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.

<sup>183</sup> 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.**<sup>184</sup> 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.

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<sup>184</sup> 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).<sup>185</sup> 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

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<sup>185</sup> 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)<sup>186</sup> takes

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<sup>186</sup> 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:

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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 performance<sup>187</sup> 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,

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<sup>187</sup> 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,<sup>188</sup> 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

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<sup>188</sup> 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**<sup>189</sup> 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

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<sup>189</sup>There 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 Ireland<sup>190</sup>, 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:

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<sup>190</sup> 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 idea<sup>191</sup> 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.

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<sup>191</sup> 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,<sup>192</sup> 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**<sup>193</sup> (APA) in January 2000 raises hopes that these issues can now, at last, be addressed.

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<sup>192</sup> 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.

<sup>193</sup> 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

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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.<sup>194</sup> 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 meeting<sup>195</sup> 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

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<sup>194</sup> 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

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<sup>195</sup> 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'?<sup>196</sup>

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

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<sup>196</sup> 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.<sup>197</sup>

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

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<sup>197</sup> 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

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 curriculum<sup>198</sup> for

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<sup>198</sup> 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.

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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.

## 7 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 7.1 MEND Findings and Recommendations

Having maintained and respected the interpenetrations of the two strands of this enquiry (appraisal of the Irish music education dispensation and of philosophical pronouncements in apparent conflict), productive outcomes must now be offered as to how these separate lines of enquiry have cross-fertilized to the benefit of music education in general. These two strands have interacted in such a way as to distil certain truths that owe their discovery and (re)statement to the comprehensive documentation under consideration. The enquiry into the malaise in Irish music education has exposed certain underlying concerns leading to findings of general application, and the philosophical study has corroborated these conclusions.

The need for stable and applicable philosophical underpinning; to address and correct dichotomies and discontinuities of all kinds in the system; the confusion about the nature of performance; teachers as irreducible resource; the relevance of time management in curriculum planning - these have surfaced time and again as commanding issues which must be confronted. Response to these MEND Findings is the cornerstone of the edifice of practicable curriculum. With the helpful catalysis of White in binding these strands fast, it is hardly possible to pronounce on one without feeling that it is being stalked by the other. As Paul Lehman says: 'Philosophy and practice are mutually reinforcing, because philosophy provides a basis for practice, and practice provides an opportunity to test and validate philosophy' (MEND 403). The recommendations that follow are an attempt to fit philosophy in its rationalized and contextualized form to the template of Irish concerns. This concluding chapter then speculates further as to how this research could be expanded in other fertile contexts.

#### 7.1.1 MEND Findings<sup>199</sup>

1. There was little evidence at MEND of a **consistent philosophical stance** underpinning music education strategy in Ireland, apart from what has been tacitly imported as part of various methodologies favoured from time to time. There is a need for greater awareness and discrimination in this respect.
2. Without the benefit of ongoing philosophical dialectic, prospective teachers have been starved of opportunities to engage in philosophical discourse and to apply considered philosophical

principles to their teaching situations. The **route for philosophical underpinning to communicate** effectively from original thinkers to the taught cohorts is therefore inhibited.

3. There is a damaging dichotomy between academic and practical streams of music education in Ireland. This appears as mutual lack of understanding and intolerance between professional groups but also impinges on the learners, especially when questions of curricular **balance, relevance** and prioritizations of **available time** are concerned.
4. **Performance** as a component in music education is seriously misunderstood as to its potential (and limitations) vis-à-vis other components in the curriculum, its technical and interpretative demands, and its time constraints.
5. **Time management** of the curriculum demands constant reappraisal as to realistic estimates and expectations of quality, diversity and range in the *delivered* curriculum.
6. Teachers who are relevantly trained are the single most valuable resource in (music) education. There is concern that **teacher training** for music education in Ireland is neither adequate nor always relevant to the demands of the published curriculum, particularly so in relation to the revisions of the last decade at all levels of school music education. This must be reflected in progressively lower student standards - expected and/or achieved. The lack of teacher specialization in primary school music contexts necessarily limits or defines the standard and quality of the educational outcomes; these must reflect into higher levels.

## 7.1.2 MEND Recommendations

### MEND Agenda I - Philosophical Considerations

#### General

1. Music education in Ireland should be underpinned by an informing philosophy. If this is to reflect the universality of music and music making as experience and faculty, it should itself aspire to universality of appeal and it should, at least, be based on a considered statement of minimal consensus. The philosophy should also take into account generally agreed understandings as to the nature and value of music/music education, appropriate involvements and diversity in what is offered in the curriculum. There should be ongoing collective invocation of fully informed (and ideally detached) judgement on matters germane to music education and support for the values arising therefrom. Promotion of the universality issue is

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<sup>199</sup> The Findings were separated as not being specifically curriculum-based. The MEND Recommendations, on the other hand, are either direct curriculum suggestions or are curriculum-linked.

assisted by making **SCHOOL music education the preferred vehicle of transmission**; all other provision should be seen as related to and deriving from that basic dispensation.

### Contextual

2. On the understanding that pure aesthetic theory (even that of Absolute Expressionism [Dewey, Langer, Meyer, Leonhard, Reimer]) is too restricting as a basis for contemporary music education with universal appeal, a philosophy which is open to referential and contextual applications should be adopted alongside one taking into account formal and praxial principles. Socio-cultural, functional/utilitarian dimensions in the educational experience should be valued, provided the bias is typically towards musical (artistic) intrinsicity over other considerations. The experience being a function of the repertoire, there are eminently serviceable criteria for making judgements of suitable music for the curriculum - based on inherent craft, sensitivity ('feelingfulness'), imagination and authenticity.
3. If music is to be part of the arts programme, it is unexceptionable that the conduct of the curriculum should conform to artistic theory. There should be a place, as demanded by circumstances, for the application of pure artistic theory, but the more adaptable the programme seeks to be, the more flexible it should be in admitting a wider range of musical experience. It should be noted that respect for aesthetic theory is not the equivalent of conforming to the canons and/or repertoire of western art music alone; it is therefore not necessary to disavow it in the interests of supporting other musical genres.
4. The criterion of quality/excellence is typically ineluctable in choosing educational materials and should be the guiding principle.
5. Product and Process are inseparable in music. Music education should seek to respect the importance of both and keep them in constant balance, both in practice and in inculcating attitudes.
6. Music education should seek to match musical challenge with the musicianship to respond to it. The recognition of creativity in learners at all levels should reflect their ability to manipulate materials with increments of skill and originality above the norm, and should be rewarded on that basis.
7. Variety (repertoire) and involvements (activities) in music education should reflect the demands of the class culture. Performance and listening should be in a balanced relationship. The possibility of either demanding specialist status should be carefully monitored and provided for. In particular the importance of the special place of performance in music education should derive from a validly popular attitude to it which has been honoured from time immemorial.

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Ministry to performance in general music education should not be confused with or equated to its specialist demands (see Performance below – MEND Agenda IV).

8. While music education should generally focus on the musical experience itself, as far as possible, it should be remembered that learning *about* music is a valid and necessary pursuit, which should be encouraged. Verbalization (use of language and concepts) cannot be dispensed with if this branch of music education is to be adequately covered.

### **MEND Agenda II - The State of Music Education in Ireland**

9. Advocacy efforts in Ireland should aim at establishing a condition of music education which recognizes school music education as the prime vehicle for inculcation in which:
  - i) Balance, Relevance and Time Management are in a compatible relationship which sets achievable targets, protects standards and interfaces satisfactorily with other areas of music education;
  - ii) such music education is available, accessible and affordable for all, on a countrywide basis;
  - iii) the defining characteristics of performance as a branch of music education are recognized and afforded appropriate support across its spectrum, distinguishing between its exploratory and specialist modes and their characteristic demands;
  - iv) deleterious discontinuities are identified and removed; (The fractured continuum between second- and third-level music education is a current case in point.)
  - v) practical and academic components of the curriculum are brought into balance and compatibility which characterizes holistic education;
  - vi) it is underpinned by well-understood philosophical principles and supported by ongoing methodological research;
  - vii) the norms of western art music are respected, especially in the area of methodology (**Specific MEND unanimous recommendation**);
  - viii) the repertoire and practices of other musics (popular, traditional and multicultural) are reviewed on an ongoing basis as to their timing and suitability for inclusion in the overall dispensation;
  - ix) teacher training is relevant to and adequate for the delivery of the curriculum;
  - x) the scope and intent of third-level education in music is subject to ongoing rationalization to ensure the most democratic provision and the optimization of the resources available;



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- xi) specialist teaching services are provided and readily available as the need arises;
- xii) all genres of music are initially afforded parity of esteem which is, however, subject to the refining processes of quality assurance and relevance for the ongoing educational need. In particular there is a need (as much socio-cultural as aesthetic) to close the virtual gap between western art music and popular genres if the school experience in music and the realities of music in community life are to be complementary and compatible. **This is one of the commanding challenges of contemporary music education.**

**MEND Agenda III - Continuum in Music Education**

10. The curricula for primary and second-level (junior and senior cycle) music education should be systematically reviewed on an ongoing basis (this is provided for in the NCCA documentation) and, if necessary reformed, for theoretical (documented) and practical continuity. This exercise should be completed by a committee drawn from representation of all the parties involved.
11. An effective continuity should be developed, linking second-level (LC) with third-level music education which does not arise merely from a lowering of standard of entry to third-level with the cumulative and downward-spiralling effect of this on the eventual standards reached by graduates. The possibility of developing a two-credit LC music option should be reconsidered, failing which special provision (by subvention) should be made for providing booster studies in music for suitable candidates, particularly in senior cycle for those identified as likely to pursue third-level studies in music. The 1995 White Paper on education referred to such a provision (see McCann - Ref. I P vi).
12. Talent education should be a feature of the overall music education dispensation. This should proceed along lines which recognize giftedness, disproportionate over-achievement and personal commitment as worthy of special provision. Talent education should not discriminate or be seen to discriminate against the general stream, but should be based on the understanding that the profession itself and the overall educational dispensation benefits from the selective encouragement and support of giftedness.

**MEND Agenda IV – Performance**

13. The subdivision of Performance into competent as distinct from proficient and expert levels should be recognized as defining the level at which it must be treated as a specialization. Effective performance cannot be divorced from ideas of skill acquisition and the time frame necessary to achieve the psychomotor facility, *inter alia*, to support it. Considering the provision, in theory at least, that has been made in the school curriculum in the last decade of

the millennium to boost music education at all levels, and in third-level through the proposed ministry of the Academy for the Performing Arts (APA), **the only serious lacuna in Irish music education (again in theory only) is the lack of support, by government subvention, for the performance function at lower levels.** Effective performance typically cannot be achieved in the school ambience, considering the curricular time frames in question. An outgrowth of proficient and expert performance is necessary to support the global enterprise. This must be seriously considered as a specialization deserving of support in the overall interests of music education. **It should be encouraged by way of setting up arts centres throughout the country or by subventions to existing institutions to ensure an adequate distribution of services countrywide.** The peripatetic scheme, if it ever functioned effectively, is ripe for replacement by more permanent structures. Such a provision would merely mirror similar activity throughout the EU, Ireland being the least developed system in this respect within the union (see *Deaf Ears?* Report 1985).

14. Proficiency in Performance should continue to be demanded for third-level entry to music education (**another agreed MEND recommendation**), but this should now be seen against the background of widespread provision of expert performance teaching at lower levels and on the understanding of its being generally available, accessible and affordable.

#### **MEND Agenda V – Assessment**

15. Assessment is an underdeveloped resource in Irish music education and there is evidence that it is being inappropriately applied as to its aims (see Ref. II D iiib). The fact that assessment in music can be subjective by nature should not inhibit its being carried out in the first place. Initiatives in this regard should be pragmatically based and should not be taken to levels of obsessive preoccupation with the assessment procedures themselves, which can tend to interfere with and detract from the teaching process. (See Swanwick - Ref. III P iv for a simplified model worth exploring.) It should be used judiciously to test the standards implicit in curricula, and to inform the teaching/learning process; it should always be musically orientated. Assessment is a useful tool across a wide spectrum of applications (see Lehman - Ref. III P iii for an impressive exposé of this theme); without assessment the idea of standards is meaningless, accounting for much of the malaise in Irish Music Education.

#### **MEND Agenda VI - National Music (Multiculturalism)**

16. The possibility of the increased presence of Irish Traditional Music and Musics of the World's Cultures (multicultural repertoire) in schools should be kept under constant review by a

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dedicated sub-committee of the Forum for Music. The outcomes of MEND deliberations and analysis are inconclusive on both counts.

17. Pedagogical interaction, in a dedicated sub-committee, between the traditional and formal systems of education should be encouraged to lubricate the processes of cross-fertilising current educational provision with the most promising dimensions of the ITM (Irish Traditional Music) enterprise.
18. The research base dedicated to **methodology** for the enhancement of Irish traditional music modules in formal education should be strengthened at the University of Limerick.

**MEND Agenda VII - Third-level Music Education; Teacher Training; The Academy for the Performing Arts**

19. Standards of entry to third-level music education should be maintained and should not reflect the problems of the lower standard currently built into and therefore attainable (typically) from the Second-level Senior Cycle (Leaving Certificate) curriculum. Skills in performance should continue to be esteemed highly in prospective candidates for all third level courses in music. Facilities for the inculcation of these performing skills should be more widely available to ensure fairness to the candidature on a countrywide basis (see MEND Agenda IV - Performance above).
20. Rationalization of all third-level music courses should be undertaken by a dedicated sub-committee to ensure the widest range of discrete options; the results should be presented in composite form for the guidance and benefit of prospective candidates.
21. Teacher Training should be perceived and provided for as an ongoing professional evolution in three distinct phases: (i) pre-service, (ii) induction/probationary with links to parent institutions, and (iii) continuing professional development assisted by rationalized and co-ordinated in-service modules.
22. The newly-established Academy for the Performing Arts (2000), to be functional within five years, should be the flagship committed, above all, to multi-lateral collaboration with all educational institutions in the state committed to the promotion of music, as is implicit in its promulgated brief. Its functions should be carefully monitored to ensure that it does not unnecessarily destabilize current provision. The Academy should establish liaisons and be influential at all levels of performance training and assessment.
23. Courses committed to the (continuing) professionalization of musicians should be more available. These should, in general, widen the knowledge base in philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, methodology, advocacy for music education and other promotional skills, research

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method, ethics and so on. Such a programme could be spearheaded by the Forum for Music (see MEND Agenda VIII below) in collaboration with the Academy for the Performing Arts and other interested agencies acting for the profession.

24. Philosophy of Music Education modules should be considered for inclusion in the curriculum for all music teacher training programmes.
25. There is a need for specialist music education services to schools if standards are to be set and maintained. The intimate relationship between promulgated (intended) curriculum and the levels of specialism required to deliver it should be invoked in reviewing the entrenched government position on the primacy of the class-teacher input to child-centred education at primary level. If curriculum is tied to (and synonymous with) standards expected, its ongoing review should be coupled with enquiry into ways and means of making specialist music education services available at all levels. The current situation as the culmination of a history of neglect is unacceptable.
26. There were consistent calls at MEND for the promotion of research-based materials<sup>200</sup> for school music teaching based on Irish folk music themes. The work of Albert Bradshaw in this respect was cited as particularly germane and worthy of further encouragement and development.

#### **MEND Agenda VIII - A Forum for Music Education**

27. The successful outcome of MEND deliberations depends on the continuity inherent in the workings of a permanent forum for music education in Ireland. Such a forum was established in November 1996 as part of the MEND proceedings and as mandated by the delegates to the MEND conferences. While the forum is theoretically still extant (2001), its work having been arrested in late 1997 by default in reconvening its plenary membership, there seems little point in its coexistence with the similarly dedicated but more recent (1999) Forum for Music in Ireland. The recommendation, which existed in embryo from the early days of the MEND Heralding Conference in 1994, therefore stands that:

**A permanent forum for the processing of issues related to music education in Ireland should be established, maintained and supported by all agencies of music education in the state.**

<sup>200</sup> The support for Recommendation 26 comes from the detail of the MEND debates (some of which produced their own recommendations). The work of Bradshaw (in the area of Irish-folk-music-related teaching materials) was consistently praised for its quality and appositeness.

## 7.2 Overall Conclusions

### Background: The MEND Aspiration

It was arguably predictable that the Irish initiative called the Music Education National Debate (MEND), because of the tendentiousness of its 'back to basics' approach, would evolve towards a preoccupation with the light that philosophical dialectic could throw on educational malaise. MEND started as a well-intentioned attempt simultaneously to identify the factors which define the gestalt of Irish music education, and its problems. However, it was quickly to expose the initial shortcoming of an inability unambiguously to establish the interrelationships, interdependencies and interpenetrations of the components in the gestalt to fashion a hierarchy for a systematic reform strategy. Questions about such diverse matters as access, relevant involvements, diversity and balance in the curriculum, repertoire, aesthetics, skill acquisition, teacher training, assessment, quality and standard, entertainment, the effective use of time, specialization and streaming, continuum, definitions and so on, jostled in a Babel of self-interest. Individually and collectively they were all linked to and dependent on an understanding of the nature and value of music itself and of its inseparable facilitator, music education, predicating philosophical enquiry and the advocacy that flows from it.

But a philosophy of music is not the same as a philosophy of music education. Theories about the nature and value of music itself are interesting to scholars, *inter alia*, but they are not innately threatening; it is only when they lead to a *modus operandi*, such as education implies, that they can become aggressively contentious. In fact, it is difficult to keep an aspirationally pure philosophy of 'music education' from becoming prescriptive; it is a somewhat unstable discipline and, because it is so susceptible to emotional and highly charged challenge, it tends to be reactive. The drama of the confrontation with scholarly pronouncements on music education philosophy which followed in the wake of the MEND enquiry could not have been predicted. This transported the whole exercise onto a different plane, which was to witness a fortuitous and fructifying interaction with a contemporaneous debacle in the global scene. The *dénouement*, if it can be so termed, of this wider conflict was to become the substance of the current thesis. This thesis, therefore, owes its origin to the MEND Initiative.

### **The Universality Aspiration and the Irish-American Linkage**

Music and music-making have been shown, and are assumed to be, universal experience and faculty.<sup>201</sup> The universality claim calls for philosophical enquiry. As to the value of music, the observable and overwhelming human involvement in it can be taken as irrefutable evidence, and as justification for its inclusion in education. On the other hand, there are so many extant theories as to the nature of music that the feasibility of a universal philosophy of music must be called into doubt; philosophical enquiry itself is so protean, almost by definition, and ever-changing in its discoveries. It follows that the search for a universal rationale for music education is likely to be barren if it seeks the accommodation of all views. However, in the interests of ideology, the attempt should be made, beginning with music itself and moving towards a rationalization of rival stances. If the exercise leads, as it almost ineluctably must, to the defeat of the universality claim, the search must continue for a compromise position which will effectively accommodate the wide spectrum within which instances of music occur.

The triumvirate that formed the nuclear force and the source of much of the material with which the MEND Report engages were the North American music education philosophers, David Elliott and Bennett Reimer, and Harry White, Professor of Music at the National University of Ireland - the catalyst, so to speak. White's seminal and provocative paper, with the cryptic and puzzling title - *A book of manners in the wilderness*<sup>202</sup>, was calculated, from its philosophical stance, to draw the other two into a response which linked the Irish case into the broader context of theory and practice in American music education.

The management of the general and specialist streams of music education and the intimately-related conceptual confusion as to the nature of performance within them were at the centre of a vituperative exchange (1996) between Elliott and Reimer, each putatively aspiring to recognition as the prime philosophical underwriter of the new US National Standards which had just been issued (1994). The US held its breath, as Ireland did, in anticipation of a new order in music education to usher in a dawning millennium. Few could have anticipated the destabilizing force of the presence of two such seemingly polar theories about music education. Both scholars are respected in their shared field. The rationalization of these counterpositions, when first examined, was thought to present an impossible challenge; yet, a secure path for music education would remain dangerously obfuscated until the two were reconciled. The aim of this thesis, in the interests of giving clear direction especially to Irish

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<sup>201</sup> Frank Heneghan, *Interpretation in Music: A Study in Perception, Expression and Symbol* (Dublin, Trinity College Dublin and Dublin Institute of Technology, unpublished treatise, 1990; MEND Document 608), 8.

<sup>202</sup> Harry White, Music Education National Debate (Dublin, MEND Report. Document 308, 1996).

music educators, was to accept the challenge to offer a satisfactory clarification of the issues at stake. As detailed below, this proved to be possible.

### **Philosophies in Conflict**

Elliott's book<sup>203</sup> was the self-styled antithesis of Reimer's still unchallenged pronouncements of a quarter of a century earlier<sup>204</sup>. Because of their virtual polarity it could be assumed that the theories invaginated a comprehensive middle ground; to reconcile Elliott with Reimer would be to re-establish some normality in music education theorizing, at least as far as formal approaches to schooling were concerned. Both scholars attempted the exposition of a universal philosophy of music education. The two versions are approached from diametrically opposed stances and, therefore, offer a valuable overview of the terrain to be rationalized into adaptability to contextual considerations, the eventual template used for reconciliation. Reimer's is characteristically systematic and candid (it is only when he deals with Praxialism [Elliott's favoured approach] that he betrays any suspect emotion). But the universal philosophy theory, while it is a model of balance and containment, was a self-admitted utopian ideal and therefore a failure - a noble one at that - and as such was no more than a compromise(d) paradigm lacking universal adaptability; after all, Absolutism and Referentialism, in their wider claims, had always been incompatible. However, in a magisterial epilogue Reimer rounded off his essay with an invocation of cultural anthropology in seeing music as a vehicle for the expression of the essence of any culture, through its art, with a relationship to the Platonic idea(l). Although Reimer does not develop his own views on art at this stage, he leaves us with two valuable access points to an understanding of the nature and value of music and music education, viz., context as validation, and artistic integuments relating music to aesthetic theory which, in its purest form, can act as a template for all musics - and not, significantly, just for western art music.

Elliott's work, for all its flashes of brilliance, is as aggressively reactionary as it is elusive. The universality which is encapsulated in his rationale stems from his insistence that music is a universal experience and faculty - surely an unexceptionable assumption. This yields the two cornerstones of his theory, namely a manifold multicultural approach, claiming that 'all musical cultures are innately equal', and an insistence that *active* music making, by a definition that has also come under severe attack, should be the preferred educational methodology.

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<sup>203</sup> David J Elliott, *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Elliott's book was heralded around the time that MEND was being planned, but had been published before MEND Phase II, at which Elliott was a featured speaker.

<sup>204</sup> Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Second edition, 1989).

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The problem in Elliott's addressing of the universality issue is that the 'innate equality' claim is as meaningless and naïve as asserting that 'all men are born equal' and the null hypothesis criteria that Elliott advances to prove it are spurious. Besides, the allegation that he fails to give full status to listening as an independent form of music-making places the universality claim under unsustainable pressure.

Elliott's equality theory, too, is indiscriminating and his unmediated ideas on listening are too revolutionary, on such a fundamental issue, to garner general support. Yet he tempers his equality claim by conceding that not all musics are suitable for educational purposes, thereby, and in an important way, arguably approving Reimer's criteria for quality in music and in music education. The acceptability, in principle, of the main thrust of his 'universal' philosophy (because, in his case, it lacks balance in the distribution of time to the various involvements), depends for its validation, like Reimer's, on the concept of context - the interrelated conditions under which an instance of music occurs and by which it can be validated or otherwise (notionally there are contexts that would be unacceptable in education, on ethical grounds). This is a powerful means of adapting a refractory philosophy to the demands of society but it must be seen as a pragmatic alternative to universality rather than establishing it in the first instance. It accounts for, as much as it confirms, the failure of the universality hypothesis. Context is, therefore, a potent criterion in essaying the reconciliation of rival philosophies.

### **Reconciliation**

The review of David Elliott's book by Bennett Reimer and the rebuttal by Elliott are quintessential to an understanding of the cut and thrust which advanced their mutual positions vis-à-vis one another to a point where polarity seems to evaporate on most, if not all, of the substantive issues. It is the individual biases and balances, rather than the presence or absence of the components themselves, that set them in opposition. There is a plausible way forward for music education which is not anarchical and which can coexist with the widest possible occurrence of variation in approaches, without appearing to single out Elliott and Reimer as the only two. The next step is the ultimate question as to claim to universality.

It is no criticism of Reimer to say that the universality aim is defeated. It just is not possible, except by massive distortion, to bring such theories as Absolutism and Utilitarianism (as a referential value) or Langerian Expressionism<sup>205</sup> and the claims of the extrinsic benefits in music, into agreement. Even

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<sup>205</sup> The reader is referred to the works on aesthetics of Susanne K. Langer (see bibliography in Heneghan, *Interpretation* above (MEND CD-ROM Document 608) for her comprehensive treatment of the subject.



Reimer's own sensitively conceived version of Absolute Expressionism (Music Education as Aesthetic Education) is ill at ease with 'the incessant pressure of "Me" and "Mine" and the present tense of American popular culture'<sup>206</sup>. Nor would David Elliott advance the claim by offering for our consideration an amorphous array, such as total multiculturalism suggests, with its innate equality or common denomination, its implied right to inclusion in the educational canon without justifying itself, but above all with its spectrum of motivations such as he lists as accruing to it - interpretive, structural, expressional, representational, social, ideological and, of course, personal meanings. The extrinsic benefits of music education are refractory to any template of pure art. So the universality aspiration must metamorphose into something more adaptable to life as lived, and more compatible with the saturating presence of music.

### **Referentialism as Model for Contextualism**

So what must move; obviously ... the enabling philosophy, but by how much? It is axiomatic that philosophy must be adaptive; it should not seek to impose pre-conceived canons on its subject, but rather it should allow its topic to suggest its own delimiting parameters.

Reimer's definition of Referentialism, which is not itemized as to all its possible inclusions, is already adaptable. It might even be seen as encapsulating all the theories about music not covered by the Absolutist and Praxial approaches, the two that uniquely, admirably and separably align themselves to the music itself. 'Musical sounds, like words, *refer*. They point outside themselves to meanings, images, ideas, emotions, descriptions of places, things, people and so forth.'<sup>207</sup> Reimer also articulates his awareness and concern that by recognizing a plethora of non-musical results (such as Elliott's growth in self-discipline and self-esteem, optimal experience and 'flow') from musical activities, as referential values, he is rendering music vulnerable to being rivalled or supplanted by other occupations offering the same extrinsic benefits. There is a curious but distinct feeling of a slightly motley collection of values (well defined, it may be added, in educational advocacy literature) in search of philosophical sanction.

Referentialism is therefore beginning to take on the guise of standing proxy for, or masquerading as, the universal idea. It is even adaptable to an interpretation that, since musical sounds refer, the ivory tower engagement of the Absolutist, in his cerebral (and, yes, hedonistic) preoccupations with form and the Epicurean delights of Hanslick's 'Tönend bewegten Formen', is acceptable as an instance of Referentialism. Even the process of music (Praxialism) conjures up a wealth of meanings and ideas, if

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<sup>206</sup> Harry White, *A book of manners in the wilderness*, (MEND 308, 9).

<sup>207</sup> Reimer, *Should there be a Universal Philosophy of Music Education*, (MEND 401, 7).

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we accept Elliott's unexceptionable claim that 'works of music are multi-dimensional thought generators ... [and] music making is thought-impregnated action', and can arguably be included. So Reimer's Referentialism, as defined, is already a highly adaptable stance to accommodate the widest imaginable spectrum of musical experience. But since it is, *a priori*, an accepted theory of how music interacts with the human psyche, and with, perhaps, a somewhat narrower focus than here outlined, it is prudent to rename it in its wider, and indeed, comprehensive applications. Reimer has chosen Contextualism to define this stance which, because of its manifold adaptability, itself has the trappings of universality.

Contextualism, in Reimer's definition, is an all-embracing description of music as social text, and as such it can interact with any philosophical position in its ready adaptability to the human condition. 'In the contextualist view, the sociocultural functions of music are the focus of attention. What matters most about music is not its products or its processes or its messages or their consequences, but its status as a means of cultural/social engagement. Music is, first and foremost, a playing out of, or manifestation of, or aural portrayal of, the psychological, emotional, political and social forces of the human context in which it exists. As such, it is the function music plays in cultural participation which most explains its nature and its value. Viewing music as bearing certain cultural traditions and values, as transmitting those traditions and values, as inculcating them, commenting on them, sometimes calling them into question or even opposing them; that is, viewing music as an instrumentality for engagement with the traditions and values of a particular culture, is what is emphasized in the contextualist point of view. Music must be issues-oriented, value-centered, sociologically and politically involved in the culture's ongoing life.'<sup>208</sup>

As intellectual property, Contextualism can hardly be criticized as a mere clever semantic side-step to rehabilitate the universal idea with a socio-cultural flavour - surely an attractive option, in keeping with contemporary egalitarian ideas. All contexts are validated and all musical experiences are therefore candidates for inclusion as adding to the wealth of human interaction with the forces of music as universal experience and faculty. It is not that all musics are equal, by whatever definition, but rather that all instances are entitled to parity of aspiration until they prove themselves as worthy of being embraced in the music education enterprise.

### **The Criterion of 'Music as Art'**

There remains the ethical question, and here again Reimer is helpful. The writer suggests that music in the curriculum (in other words, in music education), if it is to be included in the arts programme, has

nothing to lose from insisting that its artistic qualities be weighed as its justification. In this it cannot be seen as standing aloof from the aspirations of almost all music that is likely to be suggested for inclusion in the curricular repertoire, for ‘music as art’ is a binding force that can be embraced by all, provided the criteria are sensitively enlarged to include well-crafted music that has not lost contact with a basis in formal beauty. There is a compromise involved here, but it is surely a small price to pay for the enveloping security. Contextualism is a flexible philosophical tool, but it should not deny ethical or artistic considerations a place in its protective armoury.

The range of observable musical experience is bewildering to confront in this third-millennium world, which has shrunk to the confines of a ‘global village’ through the wonders of committed scholarship, communication and technology. It may be difficult to reconcile the symbolism of an African ritual dance<sup>209</sup>, embracing all the arts and music within them, on the one hand, and Bach’s Art of Fugue, with its declared erudition, on the other, as two of a kind, unless the validating philosophy is extremely accommodating. But accommodation is the stuff of philosophy.

### **The Ascendancy of Contextualism as satisfying the Universality Aspiration**

The attractiveness of the universality aspiration as a gestalt, bound, it is true, by the strong instrumentality of music, but comprising elements which are individually incompatible, is limited in scope; the amalgam is unpromising as an agency to bind all instances of music in a comfortable liaison. Referentialism, on the socio-cultural left, contains the embryo of compromise, though it is hard-pressed by the demands of Absolutism on the extreme right of the continuum. Because of the acceptance that product and process are inseparably bound, Praxialism has a tendency towards the right, too, since all musical processes presumably aspire, through the agency of their artistic intentions, which are not in question, towards the ultimate perfection and condition of ‘esteemed works’.

Education, bound by definition to the ministry of judgement and evaluation, which are natural to the human condition, is the facilitator. Process, no matter how valued in itself, eventually gives way to optimization. But all the music defined within these stances exists in a context - the interrelated conditions in which each example occurs. This is the binding force that must now be pressed into

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 8

<sup>209</sup> The writer was privileged to have been invited as an International Reporter to the Second Pasmae (Pan-African Society for Musical Arts Education) Conference on Music Education in Kisumu, Kenya in July 2003. The experience has added copious affirmation to the views here expressed. A typical indigenous African music group presentation, taking all that is claimed for it into account, is essentially a self-contained community-based experience in which there is coalescence of the musical arts (music, drama, dance, theatre, poetry *et al*). It is, on a first hearing, dramatically different from western art music in its presentation, involvements and expression. It is a perfect example to test and prove the canons of a contextual philosophy, in responding to the question ‘what

service to bring them all within the same rubric. If the defining dimensions of craft, feeling, imagination and authenticity (morality in its general sense) are further enjoined when exercising judgement, the philosophy of Contextualism benefits by being compatible with the commonly accepted norms and aims of education and adapts to a definition of what a music education philosophy should be.

## 7.3 Final Recommendations

In listing these recommendations (7.3.4 below), an evolutionary synthesis of ideas is being offered so as to provide an entry for scholarship, where further comment and research, aimed at clarification, are called for.

### 7.3.1 Background to the Recommendations

Music is a universal experience and faculty (MEND 608) and predicates the ministry of education. The commanding problems in music education for a new millennium were identified by Bennett Reimer (MEND 402; also 5.2.1 and 6.2) as i) the conceptual confusion about the nature of performance, ii) the high culture/pop dichotomy,<sup>210</sup> and iii) the impact of multiculturalism. To respond to these, a philosophy of music should be plausible: a philosophy of music education should be applicable. In enactment it should be feasible in a time-sensitive way; relevant (contextual is a proposed word here); balanced in the circumstances to which it is applied; flexible, if possible, to allow for a variety of applications. There is an aspiration towards universality of philosophical approach to music education. In curricular choices of repertoire the notion of music as art (though without any bias towards western art music as a paradigm) is persuasive as a criterion. The concept is strengthened by an approach through pure aesthetic theory, again without any pejorative preconceptions as to its favouring Absolutism, but with openness to compromise and adaptive universality. Finally, the MEND Agenda (Chapter 3), as debated, and the MEND Recommendations above, as outcomes, are offered as adaptable contextual models for the application of music education philosophy.

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is it that we want music to achieve'?

<sup>210</sup> The nature of performance is clearly more important to any philosophical differences between Reimer and Elliott than the dichotomy or multiculturalism. Reimer's three dilemmas were, nevertheless, treated on their merits in separate sections. The performance issue, is, in the author's view, a major concern. See Recommendations 13 and 14.

Reimer's *A Philosophy* (1970/1989) must be acknowledged as a classic, but surely, after a quarter of a century of perceived infallibility, it was, more and more inviting, if not expecting, a challenge. David Elliott's *Music Matters* (1995) threw down the gauntlet, and is epochal in having forced reappraisal on the complacent world of music education philosophy. But at a personal level the inevitable exchanges, fortunately documented, between these two scholars revealed a reactionary sharpening of focus on the essential issues that at first seemed to define their stances as incompatible; in other words, they were mutually fructifying. Product and process have been re-established as an inseparable pair, validating a wide spectrum of respected philosophical stances. It has been conceded that activities (performing and listening being typical) have to exist in a balanced relationship, whether thought of as separate or integrated. There is agreement too on the use of focused learning experiences based on verbal techniques (Colwell - MEND 403, 12). The relevance of music as art is celebrated either implicitly or overtly, though the writer feels that concessions from pure aesthetic theory will be required. Elliott is a total multiculturalist by necessity, for the idea is integral to his praxialist ideas; Reimer in a series of subtle, but honest, shifts, over the years, has brought himself in line - with political correctness, it might be added. Therefore both scholars are responding in characteristic ways to the Reimer-defined tripartite dilemma of turn-of-the-millennium music education, as noted above. Elliott's philosophy is at ease with viewing context as an approach to music education which respects its nature and value; Reimer is less so, but since the neologism of Contextualism is his, it is obvious that he is prepared to embrace its low level of inbuilt dissonance to forge a philosophy which is adaptable to contemporary ideas about user-friendliness in music education. Reimer and Elliott have addressed the universality issue. It has been argued that, under the concept of Contextualism, a formula for reconciling their differences has been found, thereby satisfying the universality claim, as far as it is possible in an imperfect world.

### **7.3.2 Whither Contextualism? Research Possibilities**

In analysing the philosophies of Elliott and Reimer with a view to establishing a compromise position and a way forward, the flexibility of Contextualism has opened up an inviting field for further enquiry. By definition, context will vary from system to system. Differences might be expected to be quite dramatic; each system therefore could benefit from the lead provided by this study. There are two obvious examples. Since the study insisted on the relevance of American practice in music education to the problems being investigated, it would be surely relevant now, as Reimer pointed out in his response to White (MEND 402), to examine the possible impact of its findings on evolving American practice. And since the thesis is being submitted to an African university, it is hoped that its findings may be worthy of investigation in an all-African context.

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The philosophical lobby in the United States has scarcely had time to recover from the putative destabilization caused by the Elliott/Reimer debacle. However, music education in the US is both compromised and challenged by the fact of state autonomy in the matter of the implementation of curricula. It is arguable that the level of unscriptiveness invaginated in Contextualism would be welcomed by individual states as they continue to come to terms, as is known to be the case, with the effective implementation of the 1994 American National Standards.

The African situation is one which seems very ripe for the kind of study that was undertaken in Ireland. Here the context of multiculturalism, as a single strand, could not be more different from the Irish case, or, indeed, from the American. The Pan African Society for Musical Arts Education (PASMAE) is currently addressing this issue. It is complex and refractory, since multiculturalism in the continent of Africa is not an imported phenomenon; it is an indigenous one. The potential for Contextualism to validate, if indeed this is necessary, an African approach to an African problem can hardly be overstated. But Contextualism, in its fertile relationship to and compatibility with other respected philosophical stances, carries with it the responsibility to keep the curriculum balanced and respectful of the parity in esteem that is due to all musics.

### 7.3.3 Research Question and Hypothesis

Since the issue of *MM* in 1995, the philosophical stance taken up by Elliott has attained some notoriety in the global scene of music education as being a direct challenge to that stated in Reimer's *A Philosophy* (1970/89). The writer's brief in offering guidelines, through MEND, for reform in music education in Ireland was so inhibited by this celebrated disagreement that he had to essay a reconciliation of opposing views to provide the basic building block for plausible recommendations.

In the course of the Analysis (Review of Literature - Chapter 5) and the Rationalization (Chapter 6), the essential parameters of perceived core difference were isolated, these being mainly the inseparability of product and process; the balanced relationship between performing and listening as activities in the curriculum; the significance of music as art (a covert dimension) and the related criteria for choosing repertoire. When the direct confrontational literature (Reimer's review of *MM* and Elliott's rebuttal) was analysed in detail, together with the source material, it was found that both scholars subscribed to these principles. **It is concluded that the philosophies are therefore reconcilable and that the hypothesis is proved.** In other words, it has been possible to find a satisfactory level of accommodation between the dissonances and apparent contradictions in current authoritative and highly respected philosophical statements on music education (those of Elliott and Reimer) to facilitate effective application in their reconciled format. The questions of relevance,

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balance and time management (6.7.12) are more in the area of implementation, and are therefore adaptable in the hands of local educators, and less generically crucial to the main thrust of the philosophies themselves, which are not mutually invalidated by differences in possible enactment.

**The research question** as to whether the final, reconciled, positions of Elliott and Reimer could further be refined into a stance approaching universality was a natural sequel. Reimer, in coining the word Contextualism and carefully guiding his readers to subsume other stances (Absolutism, Praxialism and Referentialism) under that rubric, fabricated a very plausible verisimilitude in relation to the aspiration towards universality. Elliott's philosophy is, by definition, contextual. The analysis and rationalization, leading to reconciliation, thus also **led to the discovery of an effective and benign interface (Contextualism) which would support universality**, depending on (albeit possibly compromised by) the informing definition of music as art.

#### 7.3.4 Recommendations

1. Where music is concerned, school music should be the central educational target in western cultures, aimed at the initial refinement of universality of experience and faculty.
2. Hellenic notions of the separation of academic and practical (performing) streams (with hierarchical implications) should be abandoned in favour of encouraging closer liaisons between, if not actual merging of, teaching disciplines in school contexts.
3. Curriculum development should be underpinned by a consensus philosophy of the relevant subject.
4. Curriculum, to be feasible in enactment, must be relevant, time-sensitive and balanced.
5. The promulgated curriculum should be the template for the delivered curriculum; quality assessment procedures should exist to evaluate the match.
6. Philosophies of music underpin philosophies of music education, which are, by definition, derivative. Since philosophies of music education impinge on the actual educational process they must be reconciled for individual applications.
7. Such applications form a context; each is a unique gestalt, which must be responded to.
8. Teacher training must be relevant, and be informed by and sensitive to the gestalt.
9. Where music education is to be part of 'education in the arts' - an unexceptionable classification - it should be compatible with a workable aesthetic rationale. This should not give preference/priority to any particular culture. In particular, aesthetic theory should be re-

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examined to maximize its compatibility with contextual ideals; this may entail compromise, which should, nevertheless, be carefully delimited, by consensus.

10. The nature of performance (especially in its psycho-motor demands with its associated heavy time-dependence) is such that it must be recognized as a specialism, in addition to its 'exploratory' dimension (a Reimer term [MEND 401, 9 and 13]) in general education, and supported in both modes.
11. The art of listening to music must be cultivated in the school ambience, since this is the main musical 'activity' of the majority of the adult population in western cultures. Performance at proficient or expert level is neither necessary nor sufficient for this to be possible. School music, on the other hand, should not be confined to listening only; a balanced syllabus of making and appraising (composing/performing and listening/evaluation) should be offered. The American National Standards (1994) are recommended for consideration as a balanced formula for school music applications in western and related cultures. Listening stimulated by performance is an ideal; listening as 'vicarious performance' is a pragmatic compromise which can simulate that ideal.

### **Recommendations for FURTHER Research**

12. Contexts outside of western culture form other *gestalten*. (Ireland, a western economy, was the target of one strand of this thesis, hence the emphasis, which does not, obviously, preclude other research targets.) These may and should be examined as possible applications for the contextual philosophy advocated as the outcome of this thesis. In particular, the musical arts in Africa, which are considerably more integrated than in western cultures, offer a fascinating field of study to test the contextual approach.

Of the two philosophies of music education examined in this thesis, that of Elliott (the Praxial) had many ambiguities and inconsistencies to be clarified, but it fitted comfortably with the idea of context (praxis itself being a context) as conferring value on musical experience in education. Reimer's universality essay (the latest position examined in the thesis [MEND 401]) accepted Praxis as an approach, modified Absolutism, and used Referentialism tendentiously to propose a new position - that of Contextualism. There is material for further study in holding a variety of aesthetic theories up to the flexible template of Contextualism - to establish the full scope and implications of the latter, and the degree of compromise necessary the better to harmonize one with the other (in the case studied, Elliott with Reimer). The North American scene of music education, which spawned the rival philosophies in the first place, is particularly ripe for further scholarly research and dialectic along the lines of enquiry opened up by this thesis.



### 7.3.5 Envoi

It has been painstakingly stressed in this thesis that national systems of music education and the philosophies on which they are based (Ireland being the specific target of this study) ideally look to unbiased theorizing as a fundamental building block for reform strategy. It has been argued that the American system, imperfect as it is by admission, is a useful paradigm, as revealing the typical shortfall between theory and practice, its being also impossible to trace its kaleidoscopic manifestations to a single doctrinal provenance. However, philosophical dialectic in North America, and in relation to music education, has been at such a confrontational level in recent years that it may be taken as encapsulating the widest spectrum of views, as indeed its search for universality of approach and adaptability must now become increasingly tendentious.

As has been suggested, a universal philosophy of music education is a utopian ideal: but the notion of Contextualism, binding all systems of music education to one another as to the context in which they operate, is not. It is a plausible compromise position, accommodating and only minimally dissonant with respected theories of how music education works in practice; it depends on the acceptance of training in music as a species arts education, by a flexible definition. The concept was clearly sublimated by the rationalization study to bring rival American philosophies (Elliott and Reimer) into practicable agreement. The desire for reform in music education in Ireland spawned MEND. The Report and Recommendations from the initiative were stalled by the need for an underpinning philosophy - a reconciliation of existing conflict - from which consensus could follow. The purpose of this thesis was to work towards that end. The strategy of keeping an intimate and constantly cross-referenced relationship between the progress of the theoretical adaptation exercise and its practical application to a named system (the Irish one) has not only shown Contextuality to be a plausible approach, but has confirmed its adaptability to the needs of other systems, too (see 1.9). In keeping with the twin-stream format of this study, the two sets of recommendations underline this interdependability and show how generality and specificity in approach (philosophical enquiry and the parameters of the system [Irish] in benefit) can be mutually fructifying.

## 8 List of Sources

Note 1. Since this thesis is in the somewhat unusual context of relying on and deriving from a completed research project (The Music Education National Debate [MEND]) as its main source of supportive material (Sources Part I), the reader is referred to the relevant CD-ROM (Frank Heneghan, MEND (1994-1996): Music Education National Debate) which contains some 70 substantive documents (including 35 original [specific to MEND] scholarly papers as asterisked), which comprise the primary source material for the analysis. These are additional to the references listed further below in the Sources Part II. See also Notes to the Reader (1.6 of this thesis)

### 8.1 Sources Part I

**CD-ROM supplied with the thesis. The following is a list of contributors in alphabetical order, with a concordance in numerical order giving author's name for quick cross referencing. Each document has a MEND number, and a Reference number (where appropriate) for immediate Hyperlink location within the Analysis section of the MEND Report itself (also included within the CD-ROM).**

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103	Buckley, John	253	(Mercier, Mel)	403	Reimer, Bennett, (Review of Elliott <i>MM</i> )
104	Withdrawn	254	Ó'Cuinneagáin, Pádraic	404	Reimer, Bennett (Beyond Performing)
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151	Carty, Philip	305	Shehan Campbell, Patricia	603	Heneghan, Frank (MEND: Interim Report Phase II)
152	Sherlock, Bernie	306	Ó Súilleabháin, Mícheál	604	Heneghan, Frank (A Future for Music Education in Ireland)
153	Ó'Cuinneagáin, Pádraic	307	McCarthy, Marie	605	Heneghan, Frank (MEND: Interim Report Phase I)
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155	Cleary, Bernadette	351	Mooney, David	607	Heneghan, Frank (Revision of Leaving Certificate Music Syllabus)
156	Collins, Sinéad	352	Barrett, Martin	608	Heneghan, Frank (Interpretation in Music)
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201	Heneghan, Frank				
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207	Santos, Ramon				
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### 8.3 Sources Part II

Note 2. The entries marked with an asterisk are reproduced in the CD-ROM provided herewith and with the MEND Report. Some have themselves got copious notes and/or bibliographies.

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