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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

Throughout the millennia of recorded music education history in the West, two streams of musical thought have existed side-by-side, sometimes integrated, other times disjunct, but both impacting the practice of music education. *Musica practica* traditionally focused on the doing or making of music; *musica speculativa* or *musica theoretica* on the philosophical, mathematical, scientific, and more recently, psychological foundations and elements of music. These strands intersect in our contemporary world. In focusing on musical practice viewed philosophically, our contributors in this issue unpack various elements not only of the practice of school music education, but of praxial ideas on music education that have surfaced in recent years.

There is some slippage between notions of musical practice and musical praxis. These words do not necessarily mean the same thing nor is it necessarily the intent of praxial writers to dichotomize the worlds of theory and practice as writers in the past distinguished between *musica practica* and *musica theoretica*. The word praxis was employed in music education philosophy in the 1990s by Philip Alperson and invoked by David Elliott to describe a view of the musical experience and ideas about how it ought to translate into music education practice. This view was distinguished from other previous philosophical perspectives, including that of music education conceived as a form of aesthetic education suggested by such writers as Charles Leonard and Robert House, Abraham Schwadron, and Bennett Reimer. In recent philosophical literature in music education it has come to encompass a variety of differing particular perspectives and strategies. Some European writers have begun to think of praxis as one aesthetic approach among a number of others, when the descriptor “aesthetic” is interpreted generally to refer to the intersection of philosophy and the arts. Whatever the merits of

this particular approach, notions of what is meant by practice and praxis have yet to be interrogated, and it is toward this purpose that the present issue is devoted.

Michael Apple's essay, "Competition, Knowledge, and the Loss of Educational Vision," reminds us of the importance of the philosopher's role in questioning music education practice and forging a vision of what education can and ought to be. His criticism of the political, commercial, and other forces that combine to blunt educational purposes toward a more humane society serves to validate a critical stance towards what music educators do.

Scott Goble's essay, "Perspectives on Practice," highlights some of the differences in the philosophical views of two self-identified praxialists—David Elliott and Thomas Regelski. His piece is important in its focus on the growing divergence among the praxialists and suggests the possibility of praxes—a variety of praxial approaches to music education.

Heidi Westerlund's piece, "Reconsidering Aesthetic Experience in Praxial Music Education," and Pentti Määtänen's article, "Aesthetic Experience and Music Education," evoke the writings of John Dewey by way of demonstrating, respectively, that aspects of the praxial critique of the notion of aesthetic education are invalid when adjudicated by Dewey's philosophy, and how Reimer's views differ from those of Dewey and what the implications are for music education. Both these authors see music education practice as an important philosophical focus and they show how Dewey's ideas can illumine the nature of the aesthetic experience in music education. In similar vein, Elvira Panaiotidi's essay "What is Music?" brings together notions of aesthetic experience and musical practice.

Following Erik Shieh's review of Derek Scott's *Music, Culture, and Society: A Reader*—a collection of readings which provides some useful theoretical perspectives on the intersections between society, music and culture—we conclude the issue with an Index of the first ten volumes of *PMER*. This marks something of a milestone as, beginning with this issue, Volume 11, No. 1, the journal will take on a new look and a greater presence in our professional deliberations. We celebrate the publication of the many essays, dialogues, symposia, and book reviews during the past decade on an array of themes important to the theory and practice of music education philosophy. For all those who have contributed to past issues of *PMER* we are grateful for your participation and for promoting the exploration of music education in its many dimensions as these are informed by philosophical assumptions. We look forward to the next decade with confidence that the work of philosophical analysis and deliberation will continue their lively exploration of ideas toward making music education more reasoned, seasoned, and sound.

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