TOWARD A RAPPROCHEMENT OF MUSICOLOGY AND MUSIC EDUCATION: SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Frederick D. Mayer and Jack Sacher

IT IS MOST UNFORTUNATE AND MORE THAN A LITTLE STRANGE THAT THOSE WHO consider themselves primarily scholars and those who consider themselves primarily teachers should consider each other little short of mortal enemies. In American education, the musicologist rarely regards the practicing teacher or professor of music education as his colleague, much less his ally; indeed, at many schools (Auburn and Columbia Universities, for example) the departments of music education and musicology are completely removed from each other. Making matters worse are the stereotypes of the musicologist as a denizen of the world of ivory-towered intellectualism, and of the "educationist" as a naive performer totally ignorant of music history, structure, and style.

Musical study, of course, is a healthy blend of theory and practice. Both the educator and the musicologist work within the same basic frame of reference but with different emphases. It is significant that both have the same ultimate goal: for professionals, the cultivation and refinement of a comprehensive musicianship; for amateurs, the cultivation and refinement of taste through knowledge and understanding. Why, then, the hostility and distrust? Why should the two national organizations (the Music Educators National Conference and the American Musicological Society) continue to regard each other with thinly-veiled dislike? Why, indeed, the unfortunate breakdown of communication between two professions deeply concerned with the condition of our musical culture?

Perhaps the most important factor in creating the schism is the frustration which must result from the mistaken idea that both have the same *immediate* goals, and the equally mistaken idea that there is little difference in how these goals are to be reached.

Music education is committed to three fundamental concepts: music is a means of affecting the attitudes and behavioral patterns in people; music education in the public schools is designed to benefit *every* child; a vital musical culture will exist in America only when many creative people dedicate themselves to music through study, composition, and performance. Musicology, for its part, is vitally important in providing the knowledge and skills needed to understand music.

FREDERICK D. MAYER is currently on leave from his post as assistant professor of voice and choral music, Teachers College, Columbia University. During his leave he will be singing with the Chicago Lyric Opera. JACK SACHER, assistant professor of music at Montclair State College, was director of music for the public schools of North Bergen prior to assuming his present position in the fall of 1964.

Before discussing the ways in which musicologists and music educators might recognize their interdependence and benefit from each other's work, let us examine some of the unique qualities of public school music education and of the training of its teachers.

Perhaps the most important cause of the musicologist's distrust is his failure to recognize the enormous scope of music education in America and the special problems which teachers—and those who teach teachers—have to solve. Even though music occupies a very small portion of the typical public school curriculum, there are still too few musicians available who have devoted themselves to public school education. Literally hundreds of jobs go begging every year because vast numbers of children swell the schools and only a minute number of musically-trained college graduates choose to teach them. Schools of education are therefore faced with the incredibly difficult problem of training the general classroom teacher to do a job which cries out for a trained specialist. If the teacher-training institutions with departments of music were to admit only students with thorough musical and humanistic training, the number of music educators would be lessened tremendously, and the problem of staffing schools with music teachers would become insuperable. The teachers college, therefore, must not only train the music specialist, but must also provide the general classroom teacher with musical skills and musical confidence, since both specialist and teacher are needed if music is to be adequately taught.

Another factor overlooked by those who lament the state of music education is the variety of situations which teachers must face throughout the country and even within the confines of a single school system. Some students come from homes with the worst possible musical environment, while others listen to opera on the radio every Saturday. Some administrators are forced to schedule music classes in boiler rooms, while others provide deluxe suites with professional equipment. In spite of great differences in the quality of individual schools and in the abilities of students, we must make every effort to meet the demands of our youngsters, whatever their talents, for to organize our music curricula around the needs of the intellectually-gifted alone would directly oppose one of the overriding commitments of American education.

To carry this point a step further, it should be realized that the typical high school must offer two types of courses: the required and the elective. Students who take elective courses will usually have both the prerequisites and the motivation for undertaking more advanced work. On the other hand, students in required courses usually titled "General Music" or "Music Appreciation" must be accepted regardless of background, attitude, and ability. This course must not only provide basic information, but also present material in such a way that the child will recognize the intrinsic worth of the subject and want to learn more. Music, therefore, is often "sold" to students. The introductory course in music must be especially well-taught and attractive, as it is usually the last such course the average high school students will take. Teaching music in the public school is quite a different cup of tea from teaching literature, history, or mathematics, all of which have a hallowed place in the curriculum.

The great diversity of standards and situations affects not only the role music plays in the curriculum as a whole, but also the knowledge, techniques, and skills required to teach it. Music teachers must have an exceptional range

of attainments in order to function effectively in a given school community. Most musicians and musicologists are especially ignorant of the different procedures required for teaching music at, say, the third-grade, junior high, and eleventh-grade levels. One challenge, for instance, is the selecting and editing of materials to suit the abilities of students of various ages, yet many critics take music educators to task for using materials which have been altered to meet the specific needs of different groups of children. For example, many choral masterpieces make demands of stamina and tessitura which boys in junior high can meet only at the risk of damaging their voices. Faced with the choice of either performing fine compositions or not performing them at all, we think it far better to perform the music, even if altered.

While it seems to us not at all improper to arrange compositions to suit the ages, backgrounds, and abilities of the children who will use them, there are those who insist that there is enough great music in its original form for the musical education of all children. Of particular interest in this connection is the Juilliard Repertory Project, which has the avowed goal of "revising the curriculum and repertory of the schools in America." The work of this panel, which is made up of some of our most distinguished musicologists, is eagerly awaited by all music educators for, if successful, it will have produced a series of books for grades one to six suitable for every intellectual background and ability, and organized to promote consistent musical growth. Since the compositions included in these books will be untouched by the arranger's pen, it will be interesting to see how effective they will be in comparison to arranged materials. At any rate, the Juilliard Project can only be constructive, for every public school teacher of music should be grateful for the revelation of unhackneyed compositions.

The problem of materials is but one concern of music education in the schools. Equally important is the music teacher himself, who is presented with a breadth of tasks unique in the teaching profession. The school teacher of general music, for example, must not only know music literature with respect to history, structure, and style, he must also be competent in such areas as the learning process, the psychology of the adolescent, and the use of teaching aids. If the teacher is to meet the needs of the school, it is essential that he play the piano. To teach instrumental music, he must be able to play at least seven or eight instruments, and teach the basic techniques of the four classes of instruments. If he teaches vocal music, he must sing well himself and also be able to analyze the vocal problems of various age groups. As a conductor of choral and instrumental ensembles, he must master baton technique, be armed with effective rehearsal procedures, be temperamentally equipped to handle discipline problems without dampening the enthusiasm of his charges, and be familiar with a wide repertory of compositions suitable not only for the stimulation of musical growth and for concert performance, but also for the irritating series of pep rallies, sports events, and Rotary Club luncheons which continually intrude upon the conduct of school music activities.

Admittedly, there is much curricular clap-trap, duplication, and time-wasting in many of our liberal arts and teacher-training colleges. To sweep catalogues clean of methods courses, however, is as dangerous and pointless as to avoid any teaching of subject matter. Teaching music is a skill which

requires not only a knowledge and love of music, but also an understanding of the best ways to reach children and a mastery of teaching and performing techniques.

Even if every teacher of music were versed in musicology as well as in music education, another factor bars the way to the establishment of a musical Elysium. That is the prevailing attitude toward the arts of boards of education, school administrators, college deans of admissions, guidance counselors, the general public—in short, of everyone who has a voice in determining curriculum. This attitude is accompanied by others which hold the arts to be either European (hence, worthy of suspicion), the playthings of the moneyed few (hence, undemocratic, irrelevant to the general good, or both), or effeminate (hence, to be contemptuously ignored).

The American public school curriculum has stressed the basic tools of business and citizenship, with the result that music, art, and drama have been squeezed into the curriculum only when time is left from "more important" studies. A particularly insidious example of this occurs in California, where state legislators have limited the number of class periods per day in such a manner that there is no room for courses other than English, foreign languages, science, history, mathematics, and physical education. Since all students must take each of these courses every year, it is impossible for them to elect courses in the arts.

Compounding this curricular imbalance is the typical list of courses that liberal arts colleges require for admission. Few, indeed, are those colleges which recommend or approve the study of the fine arts as part of a high school curriculum preparatory for college. Whether colleges will not accept high school courses in music because the courses are given too little time and attention, or the courses are weak because the colleges will not accept music courses is a case of the chicken and the egg. It is dismaying to find that the best students in high schools shun music because it is granted no status by desirable colleges; that high schools continually upgrade literature, science, and mathematics at the expense of courses in art and music; and, perhaps worst of all, that music educators are forced to justify the place of music in the educational scheme of things.

Because of this monstrous predicament, school music has taken a disastrous turn in the last decade or so. We have already mentioned the need for "selling" music to students. Music teachers, too, have often been forced to dress up the music program in the outlandish garb of the marching band, simply to persuade the community to support the music program. It often happens, then, that music educators find themselves as much in the entertainment as in the education business, a hapless condition resorted to for reasons of survival.

Let us turn, finally, to a brief discussion of the mutual interest educators and musicologists have in each other's work.

Those teaching in the public schools are desperately in need of accurate, interesting books written specifically for children of varying ages. Such books can only be written by those who are free of the Papa-Haydn-the-Jolly-Peasant syndrome. It is most important, however, that authors consult with educators about the problems of vocabulary, motivation, background, and ability found at the various age levels for which these books are to be written. Most of all, books intended for youngsters in the schools must take into ac-

count the nature of public school education, particularly its universality.

In the realm of performance practice, it would be a boon to music educators if more musicologists would contribute articles to the *Music Educators Journal* on, for instance, how to add modern instruments to voices in the performance of Renaissance choral music. Teachers would be grateful if editions of choral, band, and orchestral music included clear indications of performance practice. Musicologists might find it rewarding to cooperate with school performing groups by suggesting repertoire, visiting rehearsals, or attending clinics to learn the particular conditions of teaching music to children of various ages.

An especially potent way in which musicologists may help educators is to further the acceptance of music as a curricular study in the schools. It would be most beneficial to teachers, children, and eventually to musicologists themselves, if colleges and schools could jointly agree on the characteristics of a good program of music education so that colleges would then accept music as a course of study as valid as a course in mathematics. The stress here must be on "jointly agree." Neither educators nor musicologists are so omniscient as to be able separately to dictate on these matters. However, it is not enough to communicate with those already persuaded of one's own view. The essential traits of a sound course of studies in the arts, and the justification for it, must be communicated to deans of admission, members of the American Association of School Administrators, the National Parent-Teachers Association, in short, to those who pay the bills and make the decisions.

Music education may also be of direct assistance to musicology. A broad program of music education reinforced by creative experience in composition and performance will eventually produce outstanding recruits for the field of musicology, provided that our schools and colleges add the background in language, history, and philosophy necessary for musicological study. A more immediate benefit of a well-planned and well-taught program of music education is the creation of a larger, more sophisticated music community able to assimilate the fruits of musical research, and an increasing body of composers and performers willing to cultivate them.