

Musicians

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In the vast and complex discipline of music, there are, to be sure, many areas of specialization, such as musicology, composition, performance, and music education, all of which require detailed study. Each has its unique problems, each its unique solutions, and each makes a unique contribution to the enhancement of musical experience and understanding. Yet these specialized areas are only segments of a larger whole—music. On the one hand, these areas are separated by their uniqueness. On the other hand, they are irrevocably interrelated and inseparable, because music as an art and as a discipline does not exist except as the sum total of *all* its parts. Therefore, we are first and foremost *musicians*, who specialize in such areas as musicology, composition, performance, or music education. There must be a very close relationship among all specialists—an “informational-inspirational exchange,” as it were. For example, the musicologist can contribute a great deal to a performer’s understanding of musical style; a composer can directly or indirectly provide compositions to aid the music educator in his work; the performer can contribute to the composer by bringing his works before an audience; through his teaching, the music educator can contribute to all by making music a vital part of the cultural environment. All musicians, be they musicologists, composers, performers, or music educators, should share a common bond and, one would hope, a common goal—to enhance musical experience and understanding, and to do this not merely among their colleagues but among all those who share an interest in and a love for music.

Musicology is perhaps the least understood area of musical activity. Musicians have long viewed it with suspicion because of its connotations of stuffiness and “nit-picking scholarship.” Traditionally, there has also existed a sentiment that music is a mysterious phenomenon, with its own Truth that can be neither fathomed nor demonstrated (in contrast to that of science, for instance). Therefore, some musicians have feared that the scholarly approach to music would somehow rob it of its romantic, veiled image. Fortunately, these ideas are losing popularity, since today’s musicologist is generally a competent performer as well as a scholar, and most musicians now realize that musicology has contributed a tremendous amount of exciting, viable information and useful performing editions to the world of music.

One of the most valuable tasks that the musicologist performs is to make available to the “practical” musician compositions which for one reason or another have been lost to the musical marketplace. Notation is the special language of the composer, and it is the language of the composer which the musicologist must be able to understand. He, more than any other musician, must comprehend the notations of the past and the present. One cannot expect today’s performer or general music teacher to be expert in such fields as medieval or Renaissance notation, for example. It is the musicologist,

therefore, who must transcribe unfamiliar notation into a notation which the performing musician can readily understand.

The activities of musicology have made the public aware of and interested in music that has been “buried” for hundreds of years—music that would have remained lost if scholars had not discovered its existence, studied its relationship to the artistic, political, social, economic, religious, and even geographic conditions of its time, and then made the music available to the performer (who in turn awakened the interest of the concert-going public). Thus, everyone cooperates and gains: the composer, who started it all by writing the music, but who must have an audience if his music is to have meaning; the musicologist, who has had the great satisfaction of “reviving” the music and learning to “know” the composer and his era; the music educator, who can apply this knowledge and music in his teaching; and the performer, who also comes to know the composer and his era and then presents the music to the public. This cooperative venture brings to all participants the ultimate satisfaction and, I think, the ultimate purpose of all musical creativity and research—the hearing and experiencing of the music itself. The recent, highly successful International Josquin Festival-Conference illustrates my point most forcefully.¹

It is obvious that scholarly research and performance must be closely related and that it is as important for the musicologist to be a competent performing musician as it is for the performer to have an interest in research. Scholarship enhances the performance of music, and the musician who bases his performance on deep and careful study is the one whose art is ultimately the most convincing. And, of course, playing and experiencing music is absolutely essential to the scholar if he is to infuse factual knowledge with excitement and meaning. Performing musicologists (*musicians*) are no longer rarities in the music world. Today one can seldom accuse the musicologist of dealing with all aspects of music except the music itself. And the old myth of the “dumb singer” or the “athletic performer,” who relies more on muscle than heart and brain, has been shattered by a considerable number of today’s performers. The notion that scholarship and creativity are incompatible should no longer exist in the world of music.

The composer occupies a rather special position in the music world. It is he who provides the materials which occupy and nurture the rest of his fellow musicians, materials which, I feel, must ultimately reach and nurture the audience. In some instances, however, composers in the 20th century have adopted an attitude of “artistic freedom,” which is concerned only with the artist’s self-expression. In search of this freedom the composer often ignores not only his audience but also his fellow musicians. A composer who writes only for himself, no matter what his motivations, seems to me to be as illogical and misguided as a performer who plays to an empty hall, a teacher who lectures to an empty classroom, or a musicologist who commits his research to the wind. Certainly there must be individuality, experimentation, and innovation in all areas of music. Freedom and individuality are basic

requirements for creativity, but no one can enjoy absolute liberty. Freedom depends on the circumstances of the moment; it is an adjustment to or a consideration of the freedom of others. Unfortunately, the world no longer allows anyone the serene isolationism permitted in the past. The composer cannot exist in isolation any more than can his fellow musicians. Each must make a viable connection between music and the life about him.

To the musicologist, the composer, the performer, and the educator, the enhancement of musical experience and understanding should mean a knowledge of music not as an entity in itself, separated from the broad ebb and flow of culture and history, but as an integral part of the history of mankind and as an important factor contributing to the evolution of man's ideas and progress. I would think that every musician wants music to become a vital part of man's cultural environment, not only to provide him with a pleasing aesthetic experience—for we know that pleasure is as vital to man as food and shelter—but also, even more importantly, to give him a stimulating intellectual experience which can increase his understanding of all human activity.

The enormous task of making music an integral part of every man's environment must be shared by all musicians, or it will be forever unattainable. A large part of the responsibility lies with the music educator, who deserves and can rightfully expect help from all his colleagues in the other specialized areas of music. In a general education, music most often takes the form of some group activity in which the social aspect looms large. In these groups the spirit of fair play, cooperation, and united effort are all stressed. This is not a good reason for including music in a curriculum and cannot lead to a truly musically literate man. Any idea that music in the curriculum should be justified essentially for nonmusical reasons is not only foolish but dangerous as well, for it can only divert the student from a true understanding of the music itself.

Musicology has made available to the music educator a vast amount of material that should be utilized to broaden the scope of music which is taught at all levels of education. *The Play of Daniel*, for example, could be made just as meaningful and entertaining for elementary school pupils as *Bobby Goes to the Zoo*. A recent publication called the *Juilliard Repertory Library*² represents a cooperative venture among composers, musicologists, performers, and educators to provide a repertoire of folk and pre-Renaissance-through-contemporary music for the elementary school (but it is certainly appropriate through high school and represents an important step forward in music education).

At the earliest stages, music may be introduced at a level which involves cursory listening, often with extramusical perceptions. This must be the beginning of the musical experience, but it is absolutely essential that we do not remain at this level for long. In essence, what the music educator must do is widen his student's musical horizons and equip him with the proper skills for acquiring an understanding of and a liking for music. A major goal

should be musical growth in which taste and intelligent listening are ultimately shaped by the individual's own knowledge and judgment. Musical growth depends upon the study of and experience with music itself—all kinds of music, whether "classical," "folk," or "popular"—not only with its sounds but also with its symbols, its historical evolution, and its relationship to the society which nurtured it. This approach would make it unnecessary to bastardize such works as Mozart's Symphony No. 40 and Beethoven's Ninth in order for them to become popular and meaningful in American culture.

Whether we like to admit it or not, the future of music, its position in our culture, and its place in the lives of all our citizens, lies mainly in the hands of the elementary and high school music teachers. These music educators will ultimately guide and form the early attitudes of future concert-goers and can either help to make music an integral part of our environment or inadvertently create a cultural void in which music is a superfluous luxury for a small minority.

If the music educator is not aware of what specialists in his own field can offer him, music education will face a crisis. Moreover, it seems a shame that certain specialists who are well qualified musically for the task rarely have an opportunity to teach in the public schools. Often they are not welcome; often they teach their specialty only to graduate students and tend to ignore the problems and needs of the music educator. This situation widens the serious gap between such specialists in music and the general music teacher in our public schools, a gap that ought certainly to be eliminated if we are to guarantee music its rightful place in our environment.

I think it is imperative that all specialists in the various areas of music develop a close, cooperative working relationship. Each of the areas is obviously important in its own right. However, they are far more important as they interrelate and contribute to one another and as they together promote a widespread understanding and enhancement of the art and discipline of music.

NOTES

¹ See the report in this issue, pp. 47-64.

² Cincinnati: Canyon Press Inc., 1970, Preface. "*The Juilliard Repertory Project* began through a grant from the United States Office of Education to the Juilliard School of Music to research and collect music suitable for use in grades kindergarten through six. The research consultants collected works that were generally unavailable to the classroom teacher. The purpose was to enrich existing materials and to provide works of greater variety relative to historical era, ethnic validity and musical scope."