



# Canadian Music Educator Musicien éducateur au Canada

VOLUME 65 - NUMBER 3



**Decolonizing and Indigenizing Post-secondary Music  
Teacher Education Through Teachings of the  
Grandmother Drum: Investigating In-Service Music  
Educators' Application of Indigenous Knowledge**

**Inviting Death In: Incorporating Death Education in Public  
School Music Classes**

**Challenging Eurocentric Pedagogies in the  
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adam patrick bell

In the process of reviewing and editing the articles featured in this issue, it struck me that many of the authors employ and model a careful (and care-full) approach in their writing. I want to commence this column by thanking them for setting the tone of this issue with sensitivity. I often remark to my students that we musicians may not be the best of the bunch when it comes to writing because we've invested more of our time and energy in singing and/or playing our instruments; however, I'd like to suggest that perhaps our respective musicalities somehow shine through in other things we do such as how we write about issues in music education. Admittedly, I may be falling prey to my own confirmation bias, but I think there is something in the way that we musicians approach and write about important issues that is distinctly different from what I have experienced in the other fields with which I engage. It is for this reason that I am perpetually drawn to the perspectives of music educators on a given issue, regardless if I agree or disagree with a colleague's position. When I engage with the ideas presented by music educators, the way I think about an issue is affected and ultimately enriched. This has almost an immediate ripple effect on my teaching and learning practices. What a profound and remarkable outcome this is for a relatively small investment of reading a colleague's article!

It is clear that we are at a point in Canadian music education in which many of us in the profession are navigating pressing issues related to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility, both in practice and in research. This reality is reflected in the articles submitted to and published in *Canadian Music Educator*. In this current issue, the peer review section features an article by Anita Prest and Hector Vazquez Cordoba on decolonizing and Indigenizing music teacher education. Their article commences with a truth that needs to be acknowledged and acted upon by our profession: "To date, most post-secondary music teacher education courses in Canada have not held space for Indigenous knowledge in ways that are substantive and accountable to local Indigenous individuals and communities." Amongst the many valuable lessons shared throughout this article, what I

found particularly helpful was reading the rich reflective statements of the teachers who participated in *Indigenizing Music Education* at the University of Victoria, and learning about how they are engaging with local Indigenous communities.

In the editorial review section, John Vitale provides an eight-point rationale to answer his question: "Would music education acutely benefit from dispensing with traditional Eurocentric pedagogies rooted in the reading of standard musical notation?" and notably part of his rationale relates to reconciliation and decolonizing the music classroom. Also in this section is an article by Gina Burgess, recipient of the CMEA's Kenneth Bray Undergraduate Essay Competition. Burgess' article discusses the importance of having a meaningful place for death education in music classes. In addition to providing a thoughtful rationale for the inclusion of death education in music teaching and learning spaces, Burgess provides some practical approaches that music teachers may find helpful in applying in their own classrooms.

Finally, in the music makers section we have three insightful columns from some of our regular contributors. First, in Indigenous Carvings, J. Alex. Young guides us through his understanding of White privileges and domination, the consequences of misinterpreting them, and their implications for music education. Reflecting on his post-secondary education in music as a person of Indigenous-Settler descent, Young shares a single sentence that poignantly illustrates his primary point: "I often felt that only my outward self was welcome on campus, while my thoughts and beliefs were not." Following, in Choral Connections, Mark Ramsay and Tracy Wong feature their Canadian colleagues Robert Filion, Shanda Lee, and Dr. Melissa Morgan. Ramsay and Wong provide a helpful rationale as to why it is important to incorporate new works and then turn to Filion, Lee, and Morgan to explain their respective perspectives on programming and selecting repertoire. Finally, in the Popular Music Education column, Steve Giddings provides some top-notch tips for teachers to simplify songs for young learners without compromising the authenticity and integrity of the music.

Giddings maps out practical strategies applicable to guitarists, drummers, keyboard players, bassists, and horn players.

Last but not least, this issue marks a transition of our editorial board. The three-year terms of several members have come to an end and we are grateful to them all for their service to the Canadian music education community. At the same time, we welcome our new members and I look forward to working with them for the remainder of my time as editor. Together, we will strive to continue publishing issues of *Canadian Music Educator* that reflect the care-fullness of our profession.

Au cours de la révision et de l'édition des articles de ce numéro, j'ai été frappé de voir à quel point un grand nombre d'auteurs écrivent de façon consciencieuse (et pleine de bienveillance) et sont un modèle à suivre. Je veux donc commencer cette chronique en les remerciant d'avoir donné le ton de ce numéro avec sensibilité. Je fais souvent remarquer à mes étudiants que nous, les musiciens, ne sommes peut-être pas les meilleurs rédacteurs étant donné que nous avons consacré plus de temps et d'énergie à faire de la musique qu'à écrire, mais j'aime à croire que notre musicalité peut transparaître dans nos autres activités, y compris dans notre façon d'écrire sur les enjeux de l'éducation musicale. Même si je suis sans doute influencé par un biais de confirmation, je pense sincèrement que notre façon d'aborder des sujets importants est bien différente de celle que j'ai observée dans les autres domaines où je m'implique. C'est pour cette raison que je suis toujours impressionné par les points de vue que mes collègues musiciens éducateurs expriment sur un sujet donné, que je sois d'accord ou non avec leurs opinions. En les lisant, ma perspective sur le sujet s'en trouve influencée et même enrichie, puis ce changement se répercute presque immédiatement dans ma pratique. C'est un résultat remarquable pour le si petit effort investi dans la lecture d'un article!

Force est de constater que l'éducation musicale au Canada se trouve à un stade où plusieurs enseignants font face à des enjeux pressants liés à l'inclusion, à la diversité, à l'équité et à l'accessibilité, et ce, dans la pratique comme dans la recherche. Cette réalité transparaît dans les articles soumis et publiés dans le *Musicien éducateur au Canada*. Pour commencer, l'article évalué par les pairs de ce numéro d'Anita Prest et d'Hector Vazquez Cordoba porte sur la décolonisation et l'autochtonisation de la formation des enseignants de musique. D'entrée de jeu, les auteurs soulignent un fait qui doit être reconnu et pris en compte dans notre profession :

« Jusqu'à présent, la place accordée à l'enseignement des savoirs autochtones dans la plupart des programmes d'éducation musicale de niveau postsecondaire au Canada n'est ni suffisante ni redevable envers les communautés autochtones locales et les individus qui en font partie ». Parmi les précieux enseignements tirés de cet article, je retiens tout particulièrement les réflexions étoffées des enseignants ayant participé au projet *Indigenizing Music Education* (Autochtonisation de l'éducation musicale) à l'université de Victoria, ainsi que leur description de la manière dont ils ont collaboré avec les communautés autochtones locales.

Dans la section des articles révisés par le comité de rédaction, John Vitale présente huit arguments pour répondre à la question suivante : « L'éducation musicale gagnerait-elle en efficacité si elle se distanciat de l'enseignement traditionnel eurocentrique axé sur la lecture de la notation musicale conventionnelle? » Son raisonnement se rapporte en grande partie à la réconciliation et à la décolonisation de la classe de musique. Cette section contient également un article de Gina Burgess, lauréate du concours d'essais Kenneth Bray de l'ACME pour les étudiants de premier cycle. L'article de Burgess traite de l'importance d'accorder une place significative à l'éducation à la mort dans les cours de musique. En plus de fournir des arguments sérieux pour justifier l'inclusion de ce sujet dans l'enseignement musical, Burgess présente quelques approches pratiques que les professeurs de musique peuvent appliquer dans leur enseignement.

Enfin, la rubrique « Music Makers » comporte trois articles inspirants de certains de nos collaborateurs réguliers. Tout d'abord, dans sa chronique « Indigenous Carvings », J. Alex. Young décrit la façon dont il conçoit les privilèges des blancs et la domination, ainsi que les conséquences d'une mauvaise interprétation de ces deux concepts et ce qu'elle implique pour l'enseignement de la musique. Évoquant son parcours d'études postsecondaires en musique en tant que personne d'origine autochtone et coloniale, Young formule une phrase qui illustre de manière poignante son propos : « J'ai souvent senti que mon apparence était la bienvenue à l'université, tandis que mes pensées et mes croyances ne l'étaient pas. » Ensuite, dans « Choral Connections », Mark Ramsay et Tracy Wong ont sollicité la participation de leurs collègues canadiens Robert Filion, Shanda Lee et Melissa Morgan. Ramsay et Wong expliquent pourquoi il est important d'intégrer de nouvelles œuvres, puis exposent le point de vue de Filion, Lee et Morgan sur la programmation et la sélection du répertoire. En terminant, la chronique sur la musique populaire de Steve Giddings offre

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Jeff Weaver

Wherever you are in this great nation, welcome to spring. I hope you are enjoying some nicer weather and the lighter days that spring brings.

In this message I thought I would share things that some of you experienced teachers probably already know but may not have given much consideration to; for those of you in the infancy of your career; some things I wish I had known earlier. I am now in my 20-ish year of being a music educator. It's been a roller coaster ride of triumph, failure, and some frustration. I have learned a lot about myself, music, and people.

Teaching music is both weird and wonderful. All teachers are unique in their teaching, but a music teacher is extraordinary. We teach before school, after school, at night, and even at lunch. If you don't believe this is extraordinary, go see what the other teachers do during lunchtime. They might actually sit down or talk to another adult...Us? We eat a sandwich with one hand and conduct with the other while telling the percussionists to stop building fires in the back row...Wildly different.

We exist in a world of education that only music teachers understand. Whether it is elementary ed, middle years, high school, or at university, not many people who aren't musicians understand what it is we do. Our colleagues who teach math, English, science, etc., do not always understand what it is like to teach classes where a student wants to be there—that our students are passionate about music and will show up at 7:30am to learn. One of my colleagues in Northern BC suggested we should try trading early morning class times or lunch rehearsals with the math teacher for a year. Wouldn't that be interesting?

We give up our time outside of school to make music with students. I did the calculations: Fourteen concerts on average per year that average 3 hours from start to end of cleanup—that's 126 hours a year! And 2,520 hours in my career that I have worked with students outside of my regular teaching hours. If I was working for a private company somewhere that would have all been overtime...but money is not the point and it's not time lost, it's experience gained. It is lessons taught and lives influenced in a positive way. I will continue to have concerts and make music with my students because they love it and I

love it. Their parents and our community love it and seeing the smile on a student's face shows that I taught that student something.

We are teaching more than music—self-respect, discipline, teamwork, how to fail, how to succeed, how to read, how to count, how to be a good human being—it's all there in the music classroom. As a young, new teacher, I substitute taught a Kindergarten music class one September. I taught students how to sit in a circle every day for a week of music classes, nothing to do with music, but an essential lesson to being in school and being part of a team and a group.

We're teaching the next generation how to fail. Music is one of the few areas in education where it is easy to make mistakes and do something wrong. It could be a wrong note, wrong lyrics, or the wrong song.

Our students are surrounded by social media and video games and are being rewarded constantly through these platforms. The music class is where it gets real...

Didn't practice your part? Didn't remember to write that repeat on your music? Forgot to bring your music? Forgot your uniform for your concert? Forgot your instrument? All life lessons for our students. They have to make these mistakes to learn, and these lessons transfer to their lives. In a music class it's evident when you make a mistake, it's real, and we all remember those lessons. What are the consequences of dying in a video game?

We get the best of our students. Time after time I hear from my colleagues statements like, "Oh, that kid hasn't handed in a thing"; "That student is (*insert negative comment here*)."

I'm quite happy to reply with statements such as, "They played a trumpet concerto last week and it was amazing," or "You should hear them solo," or even better, "They've never missed a music class." We get the best from our students because we give them something to care about and we give them a team and family to be with.

No matter what age group you make music with, no matter what geographical center you are in, remember you are important in the lives of your students. You give them something no other class does, and they will never forget it. For some of our students it's the only reason they

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The *Canadian Music Educator (CME)* The Canadian Music Educator (CME) is the official quarterly journal of the Canadian Music Educators' Association. CME publishes a wide range of articles pertaining to music education in Canada and across the globe. Articles reflect the diversity of music education approaches, methods, musics, delivery systems, and practices used across all student populations and teaching contexts in the 21st-century world. Topics pertain directly to music teachers in schools, communities, and postsecondary institutions, as well as music education researchers. Each edition includes a broad range of articles that may include promising practices, research and research-to-practice reports, advocacy, contemporary and community approaches, and commentaries. Updates from Canadian provincial and territorial music educators associations are also regularly included. A combination of peer-reviewed (generally research based) and non-peer-reviewed (generally practice-based) articles are published in all editions.

Authors wishing to have submissions considered for publication should keep the following in mind:

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- We accept a wide range of manuscript sizes, from short briefs to longer papers. Submissions should not normally exceed 6000 words. However, exceptions may be made if warranted.
- All contributions must include an abstract that summarizes content (50-100 words).
- Illustrations, graphics, photos, are welcome additions to manuscripts. Quality and resolution must be sufficiently high for publication (typically at least 300 dpi), and photo credits must be included.
- Submissions are welcomed in either English or French.
- Manuscripts should be submitted as Word documents and formatted following APA-7 style guidelines.
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- All submissions received will be acknowledged. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within one week of submission, please follow up with an email to the editor.
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- To submit a manuscript for consideration, please send a message to the editor, adam patrick bell at [journal@cmea.ca](mailto:journal@cmea.ca) and attach the Word document.

## MUSICIEN ÉDUCATEUR AU CANADA

Le Musicien Éducateur Au Canada (MÉC) est le journal trimestriel officiel de l'Association Canadienne des Musiciens Éducateurs. MÉC publie une variété d'articles sur l'éducation musicale au Canada et dans le monde entier. Ses articles reflètent la diversité des approches pédagogiques, des méthodes, des musiques, des types d'enseignement et des pratiques de l'éducation musicale à tous les niveaux et dans tous les contextes d'enseignement à travers le monde en ce 21<sup>ième</sup> siècle. Les sujets concernent directement les étudiants et les enseignants en éducation musicale, les professeurs ainsi que les chercheurs en éducation musicale. Chaque édition comprend un large éventail d'articles pouvant inclure des pratiques exemplaires, des rapports de recherche et de recherche pratique, des stratégies de réussite, des arguments pour la promotion de l'éducation musicale, des approches contemporaines, ainsi que des commentaires. Des nouvelles provenant des associations canadiennes provinciales et territoriales des musiciens éducateurs sont également incluses régulièrement. Une combinaison d'articles révisés par les pairs (généralement fondés sur la recherche) et d'articles non révisés par les pairs (généralement basés sur la pratique) sont publiés dans toutes les éditions.

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- Un résumé, de 50 à 100 mots, doit précéder toutes les contributions.
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- Les articles soumis en français ou en anglais sont les bienvenus
- Les articles soumis sont acceptés par courriel uniquement en tant que document Word.
- Veuillez noter que tous les textes acceptés peuvent être modifiés. Les versions révisées seront retournées aux auteurs pour approbation avant la publication.
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Builder's Award (awarded annually  
through nominations  
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Builder's Award for New Teachers  
Builder's Award for Teachers

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Excellence in Collaboration (awarded annually)

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## Inviting Death In: Incorporating Death Education in Public School Music Classes

### Parler de la mort : inclusion de l'éducation à la mort dans les programmes de musique des écoles publiques

Gina M. Burgess

*Abstract: In this article the author discusses the importance of, and possibilities around, including death education in school curriculum, particularly music education. Themes of death and grief are discussed, and possibilities are explored as to how these can be incorporated into K-12 music classes. Promising practices include the Orff Methodology, threshold singing, and songwriting circles. Through these activities music teachers can provide an environment in which students and teachers share, learn, and ultimately demystify death. They can sing and make music about death while offering a creative outlet for their emotions.*

*Résumé : Dans cet article, l'auteure discute de l'importance d'inclure l'éducation à la mort dans les programmes scolaires, en particulier dans l'enseignement de la musique, et des possibilités qui s'offrent à cet égard. Elle aborde les thèmes de la mort et du deuil et propose des moyens de les intégrer dans les cours de musique de la maternelle à la fin du secondaire (K-12). Parmi les pratiques prometteuses figurent la méthode Orff, le chant du seuil et les cercles d'écriture de chansons. Les activités réalisées créent un environnement où les élèves et les enseignants peuvent partager, apprendre et, en fin de compte, démystifier la mort. Ainsi, ils chantent et font de la musique sur le thème de la mort, tout en offrant un exutoire créatif à leurs émotions.*

Everyone will experience death and grief in their lifetime, and yet death is something rarely talked about in school settings. Deaton and Berkan (1995) believe that, "...people are uncomfortable discussing death issues and many times lack the understanding and skills necessary to express grief and loss" (as cited in Pfeiffer, 2003, p. 4).

I experienced my first major death at age nine. My parents did not have the words or emotional capacity to speak to me about it and I was left to grieve on my own. My school music teacher noticed my behavioural changes, and the next week taught our choir a new song, "You'll Never Walk Alone" by Rodgers and Hammerstein. She knew that through singing this song I would be able to release my emotions. Schools are a promising place for teaching students more about themselves, death, and grief. Klicker (2000) notes that, "school has a built-in support system of peers, teachers, counsellors, and nurses" (as cited in Pfeiffer, 2003, p. 5). As Deaton and Berkan (1995) state, "no other entity in the community has a better opportunity or the means to provide prevention, intervention, and postvention activities concerning death issues than the local school system" (p. 7). Stevenson (1984) defines death education as, "that formal instruction which deals with death, dying, grief, and loss and their impact on the individual and on humankind" (as cited in Pfeiffer, 2003, p.10). Music teachers in particular have opportunities to help students feel supported and even to normalize death through music education. This normalization will help to change the culture of fear surrounding death and dying.

Through an experience I had in one of my violin classes, I realized that death education is as important as any other subject. Not every student will go on to be a mathematician or musician, but every student *will* encounter death. Students deserve to have preparation and necessary tools for the inevitable. Like other sensitive issues, we owe it to ourselves and our students to bring in these realities of life. Through death education the overall social and emotional development of children is matured. Death education is a topic with which educators need to get more comfortable. In this article, I share some background on death education and explore ways in

which music educators might immediately add curriculum that explores the nature of death and grief. I examine the use of Orff methods to teach younger students about the life cycle. I forward the use of threshold singing choir material as a source of personal and collective expression for students to contemplate death and dying, using songwriting circles to help older students become more aware of the process of grief, and to recognize these methods as music-making exercises that music teachers are already using in their classrooms.

### Personal Background

I will share two stories which show how I came to be so passionate about death, dying, and grief.

#### *Story One*

While attending the University of Toronto I connected with an Indigenous elder named Fox. I had been making beadwork since I was a child and Fox and I connected through this craft. A mentorship and friendship ensued. For the next eight months, Fox taught me beadwork and took me to many events, including a death and dying workshop with an Indigenous elder. The elder talked about his experiences with death in White communities versus Indigenous communities. As a generalization, he said, White folks do not talk about death. It is hidden away until it can no longer be ignored, then it often comes out in fearful ways. The elder told me that it is important for me to get to know death since it is not a regular part of my culture. He suggested I volunteer in a palliative care ward to be around the dying. Although it was daunting, I saw the truth in what he was saying. I needed to know more about this experience we call death.

When I returned to Halifax, I contacted the palliative care unit at the hospital. To my surprise there was a music therapist looking for musicians to volunteer to play music for palliative patients and their families. I volunteered weekly for over nine years, and this began my journey as a “death worker.” Together we played music for people and their families in the hours before they died. The music we played was completely unique to each person. Sometimes families needed some up-beat Cape Breton fiddle music to lift their hearts. Sometimes a person needed just one sustained pitch to peacefully transition. There were Baptist families who came and sang amazing four-part harmonies. One family was Roma and requested I play Klezmer and Roma fiddle while their father transitioned. Through my work in the palliative care ward, I realized two main things: death must be normalized and music has an incredible power to bring comfort to the dying and their families.

## Schools are a promising place for teaching students more about themselves, death, and grief.

#### *Story Two*

Last year while teaching violin in the public school system I explained to my class that I was taking time off for an imminent death in my family. I was not sure if I should be so blunt, but surprisingly the students reacted with compassion and curiosity. They each in turn told a story of death in their experience. Some brought up the death of a pet, others talked about the passing of a grandparent. I realized these children did not have space to talk about death in school, nor outside of school. After our talk, I suggested we play our violins again and reminded them that sometimes playing music helps us to feel better when we are upset. Since this experience I have been working to incorporate death education into public school music classes.

#### **The Promise of Music—The Role of Music in Death Education**

As a music educator I see the value in education. As a death worker, advocating for and being with dying people, I see the value in a well prepared (when possible) death. How does one prepare for death? Through education and care. Our educational system is meant to contribute to students’ overall knowledge and health. It is just as important to know about death as it is to know about birth; it is all part of the same process. Having knowledge about death and dying will empower students, it will give them vocabulary to talk about their grief and ultimately help to free them from fear. According to Leviton (n.d.), “appropriate death education potentially contributes to one’s joy in living by reducing fear of death; if attitudes toward death and suicide can be enlightened then formal death education is justified” (as cited in Pfeiffer, 2003, p. 6). It makes sense that teachers, through curriculum and resources, should educate students on death and grief. In order to do this, teachers will need the support from the Ministry of Education in creating policy and developing provincial and territorial death education curriculum.

Music teachers get to know their students by making music with them. Having musical experiences with another person is an unparalleled way to connect. Making music, instrumental music in particular, allows one to communicate without words. As noted by Gao and Slaven (2017):

Experts indicated that several practices...are

## Death education is a topic with which educators need to get more comfortable.

valuable to grieving children. These practices include bibliotherapy, music therapy, art therapy, and play therapy...Music therapy can include drumming games, in which a child plays a rhythm, and the group plays it back, demonstrating mutual understanding. Because children are naturally inclined towards play, art, or music, among others, these forms of expression provide an accessible and comfortable way for children to share their feelings. (p. 123)

The music room is often considered to be a safe and welcoming space for students. A place where their voices are heard and where students can be themselves. Music is a powerful vehicle for change. Music therapists have been practicing grief therapy for many years and it is well documented that music making can be very effective in grief processing. I am not purporting that music teachers offer music therapy; only registered music therapists do this specific work. I am saying, however, general music teachers can implement some specific approaches that educate all students about the nature of death and how to deal with complex emotions.

### Applying Musical Techniques to Teach About Death

I explore Orff-based pieces, threshold songs for choir, and songwriting circles. These techniques offer a guide for a pedagogical approach to death education in music education settings. These three musical practices have proven to be very effective in assisting children with bereavement in music therapy settings. Public school music teachers are already using these practices. By adding death education to these musical practices, teachers can use them more specifically to teach about death and dying.

Through listening, responding, and learning about death through musical texts, students can acquire new vocabulary in which to discuss death and dying. It is this lively exploration of feeling and meaning that can give students the tools, interest, and vocabulary to speak with emotional intelligence about life and death. With safe spaces for singing, composing, and playing music on themes of death and grief, teachers can guide students through difficult emotions. Rather than offering specific treatment for children who are actively grieving, these musical strategies provide a way for music teachers to

include *all* students in learning about death and healthy grieving. If a student needs extra grief support, then the music teacher can be an advocate for them by bringing them to the appropriate school team specialists. I now explore the practical applications of classroom music in dealing with grief and teaching about death.

### *Carl Orff Methodologies*

Carl Orff was a composer and music educator best known for his approach to music education known as Orff-Schulwerk. This approach combines music, movement, singing, and drama. The emphasis in Orff-Schulwerk is “placed on child-centred, creative, active music making that allows children to express themselves” (Shamrock, 1997, as cited in Register & Hilliard, 2008, p. 165). The Orff method also encourages students to react to the music: “This reaction is in turn expressed by clapping, body percussion, chants, singing and/or playing instruments” (Brass, 2020, p. 5).

The Orff method, like the Kodály method, is an integral part of most Canadian K-6 school music classes. While the Kodály approach, which focuses on vocal training, can also be used as an avenue for emotional release through vocalization, Orff’s philosophy and approach to musicking lends itself particularly well to death education and grief processing. Orff’s method, with its focus on movement, speech, and playing of instruments, “provides more physiological facets and opportunities for emotional healing, building positive social relationships, cognitive reframing, and decreasing behavioural problems” (Register & Hilliard, 2008, p. 162). Orff exercises present an opportunity to collaboratively learn how to move intense emotions through the body. As noted by Register and Hilliard (2008), “Engaging in live, musical dialogue affords opportunities for emotional expression and encourages children to improvise within a safe and structured environment. Children need validation for their emotions, and they need the emotional aspects of grief to be normalized” (p. 164). The Orff method provides the safe and structured environment that Register and Hilliard are talking about. By making music together around death and grief, teachers and students alike are engaging in social-emotional learning, and students can feel free to express their emotions.

Orff methodologies can also provide ways for music teachers to dispel myths on death and dying. As noted by Register and Hilliard (2008), “myths about death and dying are common among children, and...providing honest information about death and dying...confronts cognitive distortions” (p. 164). Register and Hilliard (2008) offer an example of an Orff vocal piece written by

Dena Register that can be used to teach on the impermanence of life.

The piece, “Everything Changes” is for three voices; however, instruments and body percussion can be added to offer students a chance to improvise without using words. The lyrics refer to the ever-changing life cycle, how all things are born, and all things will die. Using recognizable characters from the natural world, such as caterpillars and frogs, the song exemplifies our connection to nature and all of life. This connects the death content with the real world. A social emotional teaching point comes through the line, “change can be happy, change can be sad.” It introduces a level of emotional intelligence for students, offering them a way to think about change in their own lives and how they can emotionally respond.

**“Everything Changes” (Register & Hilliard, 2008, p. 167)**

Part 1 Ev’ry thing is born and Ev’ry thing dies  
Part 2 Chan - - ges Chan - - ges  
Part 3 Change can be hap -py change can be sad

Part 1 Change is part of all of our lives  
Part 2 Cat - er - pil -ar Butt - er - fly Tad - pole  
Frog  
Part 3 Chan - ges Chan - ges can’t your make them

Singing helps to expel air from the body and encourages deep breathing, increasing oxygen flow to the body. By singing and playing instruments students are physically moving air and energy through their bodies. Moving and making sounds is a wonderful way to release pent up emotions. After this piece is sung and played the teacher can open space for dialogue around death and change. The teacher can ask questions such as, “What are other things that change?” and “What kinds of changes have you experienced recently?” These types of questions provide an opportunity for students to speak freely about their experiences. Register and Hilliard (2008) state the importance of asking questions such as, “What are some good points about change?” This question period offers a chance to learn about cultural values and differences when it comes to death rituals. Asking such questions as, “What do we do when someone is born?” and “How about when they die?” helps students to realize that there are many ways to express loss. This exercise helps to normalize death by showing that it is a regular occurrence within one’s lifetime (p. 167).

***Threshold Singing***

Threshold singing choirs provide another opportunity for students to explore themes of death through music. The

**Through my work in the palliative care ward, I realized two main things: death must be normalized and music has an incredible power to bring comfort to the dying and their families.**

modern concept of the threshold choir was founded by Kate Munger in 2000. Threshold singing involves a small choir which specifically sings to those actively dying. Munger (2022) states that the goal of the threshold choir is to, “bring ease and comfort to those at the thresholds of living and dying. A calm and focused presence at the bedside, with gentle voices, simple songs, and sincere kindness, can be soothing and reassuring” (Munger, 2022).

While singing at the bedside of dying people may not be suitable for all students, the nature of the songs sung by threshold choirs can initiate dialogue around death and dying. Music teachers can use the threshold choir philosophy as a practice and a resource. By adapting the threshold choir to a school setting teachers can provide a means for students to sing about and express grief with others in a safe space. Threshold choirs often compose their own songs specifically to communicate ease, comfort, and presence, and this is another activity music teachers can do with their choirs. Threshold choirs help to calm the anxiety people feel as they near death, and school choirs can help to ease anxiety students may have around death.

***Songwriting Circle***

A final promising practice is the songwriting circle. This technique would be best suited for junior and high school students. Adolescents are already dealing with extreme developmental changes, including newly emerging ideas around death and dying. As Batten and Oltjenbruns (1994) note, by the time a child is a teenager they have more than likely experienced at least one death. It is estimated that “up to 90% of all adolescents experience a loss associated with death” (Kandt, 1994, as cited in Batten & Oltjenbruns, 1994, p. 529). With such high numbers of teens dealing with death it is crucial that educators offer a place for youth to grieve in a healthy manner. Songwriting circles offer an experience for students to express and

## With safe spaces for singing, composing, and playing music on themes of death and grief, teachers can guide students through difficult emotions.

process their grief.

Many junior and senior high school music programs in Canada offer a guitar ensemble course. By writing their own song lyrics about death, students can negotiate their feelings through songwriting experiences. In their article, “The Grief Song-Writing Process with Bereaved Adolescents: An Integrated Grief Model and Music Therapy Protocol,” Dalton and Krout (2006) discuss the grief songwriting process from a music therapy point of view. General music teachers can include elements of this process in their guitar ensemble classes. Using the guitar for accompaniment provides a sense of musical security for the difficult emotions students may express through their songs. Dalton and Krout (2006) identify five main grief process areas. In their study, “adolescents created music and wrote original lyrics to songs that focused on each of the five grief process areas” (p. 95). By using these topics as a springboard, music teachers can create a musical situation for students to express their own experiences in these realms. The authors stress the importance of offering a variety of choices to allow adolescents as much control as possible in the songwriting process. They note:

These choices included making decisions about musical style, emotional tone, and instrument selection. Other choices were given in creating music or lyrics first; using singing, rap, or spoken word; using accompaniment rhythmic patterns on a drum machine or creating their own beat using acoustic or electronic drums and percussion; and using lyric substitution or creating original music and writing lyrics in a free form poetry style, narrative style, or spontaneous stream of consciousness style. (p. 97)

Music teachers can take a similar approach in their songwriting exercises by offering students much choice. The songwriting process can be an excellent way for teachers to get to know their students. To reiterate, music teachers are not music therapists and should not try to offer music therapy to their students. However, music

teachers are in a special position to offer students a musical outlet for *all* of their emotions, including grief and fear. By specifically addressing death and grief through techniques such as the Orff method, threshold singing, and songwriting circles, music teachers can create a safe environment for students to reflect on death.

### Looking to the Future

There are many challenges and opportunities to including death education in the public school curriculum. Some challenges include lack of available curriculum, insufficient teacher training, and reluctance in bringing music therapy into the schools.

### *The Pallium Initiative*

Pallium’s compassionate school initiative offers an opportunity to learn about implementing death education. The Pallium program aims to create “compassionate schools” which they describe as,

A place of learning that incorporates death education into its curriculum, school policies and approaches to providing a supportive community for students, teachers, staff, and parents. Members of school communities know that all natural cycles of sickness and health, birth and death, and love and loss occur every day within these educational institutions. (Pallium Canada, 2002).

The program does this by offering schools age-appropriate death education curriculum. Pallium also supplies death education workshops to teachers and staff, recommending books to their libraries, and hosting death cafes at the school. Currently there are compassionate schools in Quebec, Manitoba, and Ontario. There is interest in compassionate schools from British Columbia, Northwest Territories, and the Nunavik Ministry of Education (Pallium, 2002). Imagine if these schools were found in every territory and province in Canada. What a difference this would make to students, schools, and communities at large!

### *Teacher Education*

Lack of teacher education is another contributor as to why death education is not offered in schools. With programs such as the Pallium Initiative offering death education training, teachers are gaining opportunities to learn these skills. Once ministries of education offer death education curriculum to pre-service teachers, they can acquire the necessary skills and language needed to offer death education to their students.

## Music Education and Music Therapy

Lastly, there seems to be an unfortunate disjunct between music education and music therapy in our professional communities. This greatly affects the way we teach and incorporate music into the school. While it is known that music therapy techniques are effective in many respects, including grief therapy, there still seems to be resistance to bringing music therapists into the schools. I propose that more music therapists be brought into the music classroom to share their expertise. This type of professional sharing will enhance connections and learning for students, teachers, and music therapists alike. I would also suggest that schools invest in having a music therapist on staff. I feel the opportunities outweigh the challenges of incorporating death education in schools. Programs such as Pallium are beginning to offer teachers death education training. Bringing music therapy approaches into the music classroom offers a promising practice of teaching about death using music. Finally, having registered music therapists as a resource on the school team can offer a new level of support to staff and students.

## Conclusion

In this article I shared why it is important for public schools to offer death education. Themes of death and grief can be explored in music classes, giving students vocabulary to talk about death while providing a safe space to discuss it. Younger students can share their cultural experiences around death by playing, singing, and sharing in the Orff tradition. Through listening to threshold singing choir repertoire, older students can learn about ancient traditions of singing to the dying. By singing and composing in a songwriting circle, students have an opening through which to express their emotions around death and grief. These musical exercises can be implemented right now.

Death is a part of life. Therefore, there will always be a need for death education. Music allows for expression of complex emotion and energies. It reflects the impermanent nature of life, and for these reasons it is my belief that music is a perfect medium to use for death education. Grief processing and death education can only enhance provincial music education curricula. The first two areas requiring advocacy attention are ministries of education and universities. Will ministries of education and universities look at the value and role of death education in the K-12 school setting? Will ministries of education make a commitment to providing more registered music therapists as resource personnel for schools?

Ultimately, the goal in view for music educators and death education advocates is for all people to benefit from these strategies in order to live more compassionate,

loving, and full lives. Let us work together to transform our understanding of death so all families, students, teachers, and community members may learn from each other. Research and writing for this article has fueled my passion for death education. Through awareness of my own impermanence and the inspirational memory of my violin class, I vow to be an advocate for death education through music in the schools.

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From Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia), internationally recognized artist Gina Burgess is a multi-genre violinist, composer, yoga instructor, educator, and musician wellness facilitator. A former member of the Juno nominated Iqaluit-based arctic rock band "The Jerry Cans," a four-time ECMA award winner with the Hot Swing group "Gypsophilia," and collaborator with numerous ensembles, Burgess is a sought-after performer. Her latest project "ISNOW" reflects her diverse experience by mixing classical music with Celtic folk and incorporating contemporary Inuit throat singing with elements of jazz. In addition to performing, Gina is passionate about the role music can play in end of life care. With over nine years of volunteer music therapy work in a palliative care ward, Gina has seen first-hand the power music has to comfort and ease end of life anxiety. Gina is a member of the Atlantic End of Life Doula Association and continues to volunteer playing violin in hospitals. Gina intends to pursue Death Doula training in the near future and will integrate this work with her yogic and musical training.

## Challenging Eurocentric Pedagogies in the Music Classroom

### Remise en question de l'enseignement eurocentrique dans les cours de musique

John L. Vitale

*Eurocentric music education is not a “one size fits all” approach to teaching and learning, particularly since many students do not relate nor connect with such formal and prescribed pedagogy. Hence, classroom music teachers have a responsibility to investigate and explore non-Western methods of musical practices, particularly since many classrooms in Canada are culturally diverse. This article does not debase traditional methods of music education but instead seeks to foster new and novel pedagogical techniques that are more inclusive and diverse, ultimately cultivating the growth of music programs while simultaneously inspiring more students to value and appreciate music as a lifelong endeavour. The principal goal of this article, therefore, is to provide eight rationales that collectively address the following question: Would music education acutely benefit from dispensing with traditional Eurocentric pedagogies rooted in the reading of standard musical notation?*

*L'éducation musicale eurocentrique n'est pas une approche d'enseignement qui convient à tous, surtout quand on constate que ses méthodes formelles et prescriptives ne fonctionnent pas pour bon nombre d'élèves. Par conséquent, ceux qui enseignent la musique à l'école ont la responsabilité d'explorer les pratiques musicales non occidentales, d'autant plus que de nombreuses classes au Canada comptent plusieurs élèves issus de différentes cultures. Cet article ne cherche pas à dénigrer les méthodes traditionnelles d'éducation musicale, mais vise plutôt à promouvoir des approches pédagogiques novatrices plus inclusives et diversifiées, afin de faire évoluer les programmes de musique, ce qui permettra ultimement à un plus grand nombre d'élèves de valoriser et d'apprécier la musique tout au long de leur vie. Le principal but de cet article est de présenter huit arguments pour répondre à la question suivante : L'éducation musicale gagnerait-elle en efficacité si elle se distanciat de l'enseignement traditionnel eurocentrique axé sur la lecture de la notation musicale conventionnelle?*

#### Contextual Framework and Problem Statement

Seven to eight generations ago, music could only be heard in a live setting. Fast forward to the 21st century, and we now have access to virtually unlimited musical selections through streaming services for just a few dollars per month. Hence, musical experiences and consumption habits have radically changed in recent times (Green, 2002, p. 3). At the time of writing this article, Spotify had over 100 million songs (Ruby, 2023), and was adding up to 60,000 songs per day (Benitez, 2023). Please take the time to ponder this staggering statistic—almost a half billion Spotify subscribers have 24/7 anytime, anywhere access to more than 100 million songs in the palm of their hand. This statistic has even greater significance for music teachers when we consider that 81% of adolescents listen to music every day (VanWeelden et al., 2019), which is a real opportunity for the cultivation and subsequent growth of music education. As someone who grew up spending a small fortune on vinyl records, cassette tapes, and compact discs, the musical consumption of my youth was a micro-fraction compared to that of today. Still, I had a world of music at my fingertips compared to my parents and grandparents, who grew up in the European countryside hearing predominantly live music performed by local villagers.

In terms of present-day music education, I have always been amazed at the number of teachers who spend countless instructional hours teaching students the rudiments of reading music at the expense of teaching meaningful musical experiences through active listening that promotes aural acuity, rhythmic movement, emoting, and reflecting. Moreover, there are many instructional aides and tools that do not rely on reading standard notation when teaching musical repertoire, such as the countless Boomwhacker, ukulele, and recorder play-along tracks on YouTube that use aural and visual cues as a method of instruction. Furthermore, YouTube also provides the same opportunities for vocal music, with sophisticated karaoke-styled videos for both solo and group singing that offer splendid instrumental backing tracks with vocal harmonies. Beyond YouTube, there are a countless num-



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when access to music and recording  
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trained musicians are  
becoming commonplace.

ber of non-Western musical traditions that do not rely on classical note reading—such as Indigenous drumming, for example, which I describe in detail later in this article.

The principal goal of this article, therefore, is to provide eight rationales that will address the following question: Would music education acutely benefit from dispensing with traditional Eurocentric pedagogies rooted in the reading of standard musical notation? I do recognize, however, that some students enjoy formal music education and even thrive in such settings (Byo, 2018). After all, if society wants to continue the classical tradition of musical forms such as orchestras, choirs, and operas, music educators need to teach students how to read standard music notation. However, Eurocentric music education is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach to teaching and learning. There are, in fact, many students that do not relate nor connect with such a formal and prescribed approach (Derbyshire, 2015; Green, 2008; Harrison, 2004). In fact, Boyle et al. (1995) and Grunow (2015), have noted a correlation between rote technical performance and decreased student interest that negatively affects program retention. Moreover, teachers have voiced concern about the relationship between retention rates and student engagement (McPherson & Hendricks, 2010).

Educators lament that, as with other courses, band can frequently fall prey to “teaching to the test” — in this case, teaching to the holiday concert. A class that by definition is meant to be a creative endeavor winds up emphasizing rigid reading and rote memorization, in service of a single performance. We need to abandon that approach. (Miller, 2023, p. 1)

Hence, classroom music teachers have a responsibility to investigate and explore alternative and non-traditional methods of music education that provide opportunities for students to “develop agency in constructing their own musical knowledge” (Countryman, 2008, p. 3), particularly in an era of acute ethno-cultural backgrounds and sensitivities in our modern-day classrooms. This article, therefore, does not set out to debase traditional methods of music education but instead seeks to foster new and novel pedagogical techniques that are more inclusive and diverse, ultimately cultivating the growth of music programs while simultaneously inspiring more students to value and appreciate music as a lifelong endeavour.

### Rationale 1: Traditional Musical Literacy Is Not the Only Conduit for Musical Success

I would be remiss if I did not mention my own experiences as a music learner. Although I can read and write music today, I became musically competent in my childhood without knowing how to read music. I learned how to play guitar, bass, and piano by ear. I played in several bands and composed several songs before learning and understanding the basics of note reading. In fact, the very concept of reading music seemed foreign and indeed strange to me, as my family always engaged in spontaneous musical outbursts and jams in which we all played various instruments and sang by ear. Hence, my first musical experiences as a performer did not involve reading standard notation. It was only when I entered my freshman year of high school that I felt compelled to learn how to read music, as I was expressing interest in music teaching as a career choice by the age of 14.

Ultimately, one does not have to be musically literate to be musically competent. In today's technological age when access to music and recording devices are ubiquitous, informally trained musicians are becoming commonplace. Indeed, there are many celebrated and famous musical artists who cannot (or could not) read music. Let's start with the Beatles, Elvis, and Michael Jackson—probably the three most significant and successful pop music artists or groups of all time. None of them could read music (Everett, 2001; Jones, 2018; Martin, 2022;), which begs the question: Would they have been as successful if they could have read music? Perhaps not knowing the rules and conventions of musical literacy allowed these artists to be more dynamic and creative. I find it very ironic and indeed curious that the three most significant and successful pop music artists of all time could not read music. It is also interesting to note that beyond the Beatles, Elvis, and Michael Jackson, the list of famous musical artists/composers who cannot read music is a lengthy one. Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony Award winner Hans Zimmer, for example, cannot read musical notation (Hall, 2021). Many of us have heard and enjoyed his prolific film scores, including *The Lion King* (1994), *Gladiator* (2000), *The Da Vinci Code* (2006), and *The Dark Night* (2008), to name a few of the 150 plus films he has scored. Pop music sensation Lionel Richie (Grammy, Oscar, and Golden Globe winner) cannot read music, and nor could Eric Clapton, Eddie Van Halen, Aretha Franklin, and composer Irving Berlin (Hall, 2021). Note too the highly successful blind musicians, such as Spanish composer Rodrigo, Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, and Jose Feliciano.

What about the not so famous? I have many friends and musical acquaintances who learned to play music by ear, many of whom play in successful Top 40 bands that frequent local bars and clubs. Moreover, YouTube has provided a free platform for fledgling musicians who learn to play popular songs on their instrument via the countless instructional videos that are readily available.

With the ability to slow down a YouTube video by up to 75% without compromising tonal integrity, the process of learning to play a particular musical passage becomes easier and more appealing. As a teenager, I remember learning the guitar parts to my favourite rock songs by trying to repeatedly place the record needle on the same spot (causing damage to the disc) and using only my ear to figure out what was being played without the benefit of slowing down the speed. Now, beginners can hear the music, slow it down, loop specific parts, and watch someone playing for correct finger placement. Indeed, times have changed, and the young musicians I am seeing and hearing on YouTube evince an astonishingly high level of musical competency. In fact, many of these musical YouTubers earn a posh living, such as Davide Biale from Savona, Italy (aka Davie504), who as a bass player has become an international sensation with 12.8 million subscribers and has amassed over 2.59 billion views of his videos. He was featured on the cover of *Bass Player* magazine in July of 2021, and has his own signature bass guitar released by Chowny Bass—the “Retrovibe EVO Davie504.” YouTube has been a game changer for the self-teaching of music. Hesmondhalgh (2002) recognized the importance to keep pace with social and internet-distributed media three years before YouTube officially launched in 2005.

Beyond YouTube, the youth of today also have a plethora of free music education software and instructional videos readily available through basic online access and smartphone apps such as Yousician, among dozens of other apps. Yousician offers instruction for guitar, piano, bass, ukulele, and vocals, and utilizes ingenious informal teaching methods that simulate video games such as Guitar Hero or Rock Band. Hence, beginning musicians, particularly adolescents, love this app as it is highly interactive, fun, and engaging. Thus, “students can do more musically at home without us than they can at school with us” (Williams, 2007, p. 21), and learn to play music that is meaningful and interesting to them. Kratus (2007) refers to this type of music learning as “individualistic, primarily nonclassical, satisfies the user’s personal and emotional goals and makes wide use of guitar and keyboard” (p. 47). Moreover, this type of learning promotes a lifelong relationship with music (Harrison, 2004). Further, MacIntyre and Potter (2013) discovered that guitarists and pianists linked informal practice (self-teaching) with heightened motivation to play music, and participants who honed their skills via informal practice, particularly guitar players, were more inclined to write and create music. This is unlike traditional music education methods in public schools, where most students in a concert band program, for example, pack their instruments away in the attic upon completion of secondary school (Isbell & Stanley, 2011). This phenomenon has been going on for the greater part of a century, as Revelli (1937) noted nearly three generations ago: “Perhaps one

of the greatest weaknesses of our school band program is that, for the majority of the students, active participation ceases upon the day of graduation from our high schools” (p. 33). Vocal music programs are in a similar predicament, as Arasi’s (2006) exploration of choir experiences at the secondary school level determined that there was negligible lasting impact of school music on lifelong music-making. In sum, Rationale 1 clearly illustrates that musical literacy is not a prerequisite for musical competency. In fact, formal pedagogies promoting musical literacy have been linked to transient musical experiences (Regelski, 1998), which diminishes the importance and value of music education.

### Rationale 2: Formal Music Education Can Be Tedious

Teaching students how to read notes and understand basic rhythmic values as part of a formal music education has historically been a fundamental principle in the music classroom (Regelski, 2009). This philosophy is “large-group oriented, primarily classical, satisfies curricular goals, and focus[es] on instruments that restrict musical involvement after graduation” (Kratus, 2007, p. 47). A pedagogy rooted in musical literacy, however, can be somewhat tedious. Music is narrowly defined, and contemporary music culture is essentially absent (Anttila, 2010), to the detriment of music students. Green (2008, p. 3) sums this up perfectly: “we can surmise that many children and young people who fail and drop out of formal music education, far from being either uninterested or unmusical, simply do not respond to the kind of instruction it offers.”

Similarly, in my own experience as a music teacher educator, my students have recounted countless tales of elementary practicum experiences where learning rudimentary music notation and note values dominated the host teacher’s lesson plans at the expense of music listening and performing. In fact, my students also attested to the fact that these lessons were lacklustre, boring, and did

I have always been amazed at the number of teachers who spend countless instructional hours teaching students the rudiments of reading music at the expense of teaching meaningful musical experiences through active listening that promotes aural acuity, rhythmic movement, emoting, and reflecting.

## Wholeheartedly integrating informal music practices into our music classrooms is not a privilege for our students, but indeed a right—and to some extent a rite.

little to promote the dynamic and exciting nature of music, ultimately creating apathy amongst the students. One particular student said that music was taught for two 40-minute periods per week during her 6-week Grade 4 practice placement, and her host teacher did not play any music even once; rather, it was 480 minutes of worksheets that addressed note values, drawing treble and bass clefs, and copying music notes on to a staff. This is like Anttila (2010, p. 241) who found that “forms of music making were limited and active music listening [was] absent from lessons” in Finland. I suspect the aforementioned host teacher was a generalist with little or no music training, which is not atypical, as only 46% of elementary schools in Ontario, for example, have a specialist music teacher (People for Education, 2018). In essence, lacklustre musical experiences send the wrong message to students, thus music making and listening of all kinds should be at the forefront of the music curriculum (Elliott, 1995). Moreover, Small (1998) referred to music as an activity, and called it “musicking”—a verb that embodies all musical activity such as performing, singing in the shower, and streaming music on an electronic device. Hence, classroom music teachers need to be careful about how they teach music and what beliefs and mindset they are espousing, as Lind and McKoy (2016) have stated:

Whether we are aware or not, music educators are sending messages to students and society about what music is, what a musician is, and how people should interact with music. For too many students, that message is that the music that interests them and their ways of music making have no place in the school music curriculum. (p. 134)

This is a perilous situation for the current and long-term success of music education in public schools, which is tenuous. Hence, it is critically important that students have positive experiences with music education. Wiggins (2001) has aptly stated: “As students begin musical study for the first time, it is important that the experiences they encounter both establish a basis for further study and invite and intrigue them to be motivated to pursue further study” (p. 114). Similarly, Cabe do-Mas and Díaz-Gómez (2013) found that “positive musical experiences encourage students to extend their musical lives beyond the classroom by recognising different musical identities and promoting improved coexistence” (p. 455).

Moreover, Wigginton (2010) argues, music educators need to understand that traditional methods are antiquated and not in tune with the aspirations of many modern-day students. This is particularly true in the vocal music classroom, where students want to sing for the sake of singing and emoting, without having to worry about proper technique and procedure. In sum, Rationale 2 intimates that teaching conventional musical literacy can indeed squander the very spirit out of music education, turning students off from further musical study.

### Rationale 3: The Auditory Aspect of Music

Music is a multi-sensory art form where learners of all types can succeed. For instance, I recently had a deaf teacher candidate in my junior/intermediate music education course who was successful at playing the Boomwhackers and the ukulele in a group setting through the use of visual cues and prompts. However, it is still fair to say that the auditory aspect of music education is implicit and deducible, as much of the music curricula across Canada and beyond suggest. Why then, is so much value placed on learning to read notes, particularly at the elementary level? Stanley Schleuter (1996) argues that children learn languages by listening and being given the opportunity to speak and engage in conversations well before learning the alphabet (the symbolic elements of speech), and that music (since it is also a language), should be taught in the same way. Internationally renowned bassist and music educator Victor Wooten (2013) argues the same basic principle; however, he takes it a step further by providing a critical pedagogy (Freire, 1998) approach; that is, students should be co-creators of knowledge (transformation paradigm) rather than empty vessels waiting to be filled (transmission paradigm). Wooten (2013) argues that music students are not allowed to play with better musicians until one learns the basics, which is unlike how we learn language:

But with language, to use a musical term, even as a baby you’re jamming with professionals, all the time, to the point that you don’t even know you’re a beginner. ... You’re never even corrected when you’re wrong. Think about it, when you’re 2, 3 years old and you say a word wrong over and over, no one corrects you. If you say it wrong enough times, instead of correcting you, your parents learn your way and they start saying it wrong too. (1:26)

This reminds me of a recent Boomwhacker workshop I was doing with a Grade 2 classroom. I was teaching a group of four students how to play *Mary Had a Little Lamb* by rote memorization. There are four notes in the song (C, D, E, and G), and the student who was playing the “E” accidentally picked up an “Eb,” converting the song into a minor key. After I exchanged the note to an “E” natural (to be true to the song), the student said he preferred the sound of the Eb. So, I gave him the Eb and the group performed the song in minor. Although the initial playing of the Eb was unexpected and fortuitous, it

## Drum circles get participants to think about interconnected relationships to each other, their community, their environment, and the larger global village, cultivating many spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical benefits.

demonstrates that children as young as 7 years old are actively calculating and appreciating the sounds of different musical notes, corroborating the belief that music is primarily an auditory art form. This brings to mind Doran's (2020) observation that,

A dependency on notation to identify which note to play and when to play it undermines the development of the ear. Students are robbed of aural problem solving opportunities critical to their ear training. Music, after all, is something we hear. (p. 30)

In essence, time spent learning to read music comes at the expense of musical experiences, such as active listening and music-making. As Garofalo (2011) puts it, Making Western music notation—indeed, reading music of any kind—the central focus of music education presents a number of challenges that can discourage participation. In the first place, it does not represent the way that most people learn to play music. (p. 21)

Or, to use the speech metaphor provided by Schleuter (1996) and Wooten (2013), classroom music teachers are not giving their students an opportunity to speak—to hear and interact with their voice. Jazz music, which has many non-Western elements, is a musical example of the speech metaphor:

[Jazz] musicians are compositional participants who may say unexpected things or elicit responses from other musicians. Musical intensification is open-ended rather than pre-determined and highly interpersonal in character—structurally more similar to a conversation than to a text. (Monson, 2009, p. 81)

Moreover, Berliner (2009, p. 22) contends that jazz musicians learn through “osmosis” via numerous informal pedagogies such as “jamming” and “sitting-in” with bands. It is important to note, however, that the Orff Approach, which is a Western manifestation, encourages children to learn music the same way that they learn language. Students are encouraged to listen to music, play percussion instruments, clap, dance, sing, and chant rhymes. The Kodály Method, the Dalcroze Method, and the Suzuki Method each provide a comparable methodology, ultimately allowing early learn-

ers to hear, perform, and kinaesthetically move to music prior to learning the nomenclature of music. Although Orff and Kodály are common in some public elementary schools across the country, especially in Alberta, many of these programs, however, are offered in private (extracurricular) institutions, necessitating disposable time and income that many families cannot manage. More importantly, however, these programs eventually promote traditional curricular directives that promote note reading in middle school where Western musical traditions eventually prevail and dominate.

Throughout my lengthy music teaching career, I have come across numerous piano-playing students who were more concerned with the rules and regulations of performing rather than creating and emoting music. Furthermore, many of these students could only perform with the sheet music readily available. Hence, these students were more emulators—a conduit of the composition—than free agents capable of investigating and exploring musical space. In sum, Rationale 3 implies that music should be primarily taught as an auditory art form, where aural acuity should be the principal objective.

### Rationale 4: Curriculum is a Reflection of Society

One of the principal directives of curriculum documents is to reflect society (Alsubaie, 2016). The problem, however, is that curriculum guidelines take an enormous amount of time to revise and redevelop. Many years go by before such guidelines make their way into teachers' hands and become comfortably integrated into daily practice, by which time they are often obsolete due to rapid changes in society. Case in point, the most recent Arts curriculum in Ontario, which has been revised, has a publication date that is 15 years old (2009). This has created a vicious cycle that has caused music curriculum guidelines to lag, and despite a concerted effort to incorporate more pop music in the classroom, classically based music still dominates. Even when popular songs make their way into the music classroom, formal music practices rooted in note reading have been the preferred method of pedagogy. “As our profession works toward a conception of popular-music education, we must concede that there is a difference between simply having popular music in the schools and educating through and with popular music” (Allsup, 2011, pp. 33-34). Moreover, pop music is often considered as inferior to classical music, as Green (2003) states: “The case of popular music provides a clear example, insofar as it is understood, by contrast to classical music, as ephemeral, trivial, derivative, or commercial” (p. 264). Rather, popular music needs to be valued and taught via learning techniques rooted in informal musical approaches. Although there is a responsibility to expose our students to classical practices and methods of music education, it is also equally important to expose them to non-traditional pedagogies that are rooted in auditory culture.

Auditory culture in its broad definition is a sum total of values acquired through the perception,

reworking, and transmission of auditory information. Auditory culture in its narrow definition is an integrative quality of an individual, which is based on the ability to perceive, evaluate, interpret, transmit and creatively transform information encoded in sounds, speech, and music (Kazakova, p. 194).

Wholeheartedly integrating informal music practices into our music classrooms is not a privilege for our students, but indeed a right—and to some extent a *rite*. Incorporating technology into music education can significantly help music teachers incorporate and develop informal music practices and auditory culture. Students, for example, can use technology to help with creativity (Watson, 2011), musical knowledge, skills, and understanding (Bauer, 2020). Remember, educators are now teaching digital natives, not digital immigrants, and hence music teachers tend to struggle with the integration and application of technology more than the students.

Technology can alter in profound and irreversible ways the means by which music is taught and learned in school just as it is altering in profound and irreversible ways the roles that music plays in peoples' lives outside the school. We should embrace those uses of technology that are helpful. (Lehman, 2020, p. 70)

In sum, Rationale 4 suggests that the music curricula should be imbued with informal music practices that look and feel like society's interaction and consumption with music, which is primarily popular music in a digital format. Such an approach will help mend the current disconnect between what students listen to and what is being performed in the music classroom (Doran, 2020), and align itself with Allsup's (2011) view that "popular music is actually an opportunity, a chance to test out a new way of teaching and learning music" (p. 33).

#### Rationale 5: Classroom Music Teachers Need to Stop Reproducing Themselves

It is no surprise that there is a close correlation between having a positive experience as a student and selecting a career in teaching (Akar, 2012). Hence, what looks like a viable and desirable career pathway ultimately perpetuates a continuous cycle of reproduction in the teaching community where the product (education) remains essentially stagnant and unchanged. Teachers who reproduce their own experiences provide very narrow and restricted instructional methods that will, by default, isolate and ignore a large segment of their students. Hence, when it comes to teaching, the proverbial apple does not fall far from the tree:

Individual teachers are too often unaware that their own teaching practice is strongly rooted in that collective practice. Their formative experiences as music students, for example, often lead to uncritical acceptance of the practices of their

music teachers. (Regelski & Gates, 2009, p. v)

The old adage "if we always do what we always did, we will always get what we always got" certainly does not bode well for music, which is a subject that has consistently subsisted on the periphery of the overall school curricula and that relentlessly attempts to validate its very existence (Lehman, 2020). Much of this philosophy stems from Leonhard's (1985) belief that music educators are responsible for the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage to succeeding generations. Instead, music educators should be cultivating innovative and novel philosophies and not be apprehensive of shortcomings along the way. For example, teachers should differentiate their instruction, which provides a framework for responding to students' unique learning needs by varying what they will learn (content), how and when they will learn it (process), how they will demonstrate their understanding (product), and/or the learning environment (Grant & Vitale, 2014). Teaching in non-traditional ways is in and of itself a form of differentiation, particularly in the music class, where moving away from visual learning and engaging in auditory learning is practical and desirable. Teaching in new and novel ways, however, is not as easy as flipping on a switch. Music teachers must commit to being lifelong students of music well beyond their formal musical education. It is only by authentically expanding their own musical experiences, traditions, and practices that music teachers can genuinely and effectively use them in the classroom.

Doing things differently in the music class, therefore, requires pioneering a new path, which becomes quite a challenge itself, as the lofty demands of the classroom music teacher creates stress and burnout (Vitale, 2012). In sum, Rationale 5 advocates that music teachers cannot rely on reproducing their own formal education, otherwise the product will stagnate and ultimately suffer. Avoiding stagnation requires music teachers to be lifelong students in order to alter their own musical experiences and change the narrative.

#### Rationale 6: Reconciliation and Decolonizing the Music Curriculum

Colonial systems have perpetuated the notion that Western methods are modern and advanced while Indigenous methods are outdated and backward; clearly, this notion must be expunged (Isabirye, 2021). Music educators across Canada must also play their part in the decolonization of the music curriculum in this era of Reconciliation. This mandate is particularly important given that "an Indigenous-led think tank says progress is moving at a 'glacial pace' seven years after the final report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was released" (Malone, 2022, para. 1). Although there is great diversity among the music of Indigenous peoples, music has always been a vital and integral aspect of Indigenous cultures, which is worth studying and learning for its own sake.

Indigenous cultures in Canada and other places

around the world traditionally have been rooted in oral tradition—essentially an auditory culture in which history was not written down but rather gifted through storytelling by an esteemed elder. Music in Indigenous cultures is much the same way, thus, I propose the term “aural tradition.” Melodies, harmonies, and rhythms are absorbed and learned informally through imitation and participation, as most Indigenous cultures have traditionally not developed a form of musical notation. Even when Western music scholars have tried to document Indigenous music, most notation systems and conventions ignore Indigenous concepts, failing to capture the intricacies of Indigenous aural notations (Stone, 2008).

Specifically, I would like to elaborate on Indigenous drumming (drum circles), which does not rely on standard notation. Before I elaborate, however, it is critical to note that the teaching of Indigenous approaches and perspectives be conducted by an Indigenous person to ensure authenticity and legitimacy. Donald and Cardinal (2020) made it clear that most learning about Indigenous peoples focuses on informational content rather than learning directly from Indigenous peoples, and this is something that must change moving forward in this era of Reconciliation.

The experience of participating in a drum circle is closely connected to the experience that a child has when learning how to speak, in a similar manner to the philosophies proposed by Schleuter (1996) and Wooten (2013). That is, participants encounter and absorb various Indigenous rhythmic patterns, and are given an opportunity to echo and/or answer such patterns, which enhances and strengthens Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding, while simultaneously improving musical competency. Although such rhythmic patterns can be roughly notated, such practice runs contrary to Indigenous thought processes and methods of learning. Moreover, drum circles get participants to think about interconnected relationships to each other, their community, their environment, and the larger global village, cultivating many spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical benefits (Laurila & Willingham, 2017). It is critically important that music educators also teach the meanings of Indigenous songs, not just the songs themselves (Prest et al., 2021).

Ultimately, the decolonization of the music classroom requires us to “de-center Eurocentric canons of thought by interrogating and reconceptualizing ... curriculum in ways that restore and renew and re-center Indigenous histories, epistemologies, [and] knowledge systems in respectful and meaningful ways” (Centre for Teaching and Learning, Concordia University, n.d., para. 2). Similarly, Lamb and Godlewska (2020) maintain that “educating all students not only about Indigenous content, but also from Indigenous perspectives and with Indigenous ways of knowing, is a key part of transforming Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations” (p. 15).

Part of decolonizing the music classroom is de-centering

the role of the music teacher, who is not the only expert from who students learn. Rather, music teachers should foster a more diverse and open concept of teachers, creating a learning space that welcomes more artists and knowledge holders. Hence, music practitioners, particularly those who are Indigenous, should play an important role in the educational experience of students, not just certified music teachers. It is also important to note that there are examples of non-Western music that use a form of notation, such as Indian classical music, which uses a system of notation (sargam) that uses syllables to represent musical notes. Sargam, however, also requires a significant amount of improvisation and aural creativity (Burke & Evans, 2012), like jazz (Ackerman, 2022).

In sum, Rationale 6 states that classroom music teachers can decolonize the music curriculum by teaching Indigenous music via aural acuity rather than traditional note reading. In addition, the decolonization of the music curriculum provides a huge opportunity for growth that builds bridges with the Indigenous peoples of Canada, while simultaneously helping to realize Reconciliation directives. De-centering the music teacher’s role is also a critical aspect of decolonizing the music curriculum.

### Rationale 7: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Eurocentric instruments, methods, and repertoire have dominated music programs in Western countries. In fact, “it’s become common place nowadays to cite the ways in which colleges and schools favour an elitist and narrow focus on Western art music between 1750 and 1900” (Cavicchi, 2010, p. 98). Doran (2020) has also stated that,

European and European-American musics have been “put on a pedestal” as the most refined and sophisticated musical cultures of the world.

Often, this elitist perspective positions western music as the ideal standard while other musics are not considered for school curriculum. (p. 2)

Moreover, Eurocentric pedagogical methods dominate most of the world and are even erasing Indigenous methods of teaching music in east Asia and the Middle East, as such methods are not compatible with Eurocentric paradigms (Vali, 2022). With a large and rapidly expanding multicultural student body, music teachers have a responsibility to diversify the curricula, so it is reflective of and commensurate with the racial and ethnic composition of their students. There must, however, be a concerted effort for teachers to authentically engage in multicultural pedagogies, which for the most part have been shallow (Goble, 2010; Schippers, 2010). By authentically engaging with multicultural pedagogies, students of non-European ethnic backgrounds will feel that their musical traditions have been appreciated and respected; otherwise, such students may feel ostracized and excluded. Lind and McKoy (2016), for example, have maintained that traditional music programs have “a history of contributing to a sense of learned helplessness among students of color” (p. 19). Furthermore, students from a European background will also benefit from a non-Eurocentric approach:

**With a large and rapidly expanding multicultural student-body, music teachers have a responsibility to diversify the curricula, so it is reflective of and commensurate with the racial and ethnic composition of their students.**

“In addition to experiencing a comprehensive music education, students will forge cultural understandings of their diverse worlds while also acknowledging the human factor of music’s social power” (Howard & Kelley, 2018, p. 9). Furthermore, “inducting learners into unfamiliar musical practices links the central values of music education to the broader goals of humanistic education” (Elliott, 2005, p. 10). The idea that music professionals need to study different musical traditions was formally introduced by Hood (1960), who coined the term “bi-musicality” in reference to musicians learning a foreign music, especially Western musicians who study Eastern music and vice-versa. I contend that music teachers should strive to engage in bi-musicality in an effort to make their classrooms worldly and diversified, giving them more tools to be culturally responsive.

Ultimately, music teachers must practise a culturally responsive pedagogy that has the capacity to enrich the lives of all their students and contribute to the development of a more culturally aware and representative society (Doran, 2020). Bond (2017) asserts that culturally responsive pedagogy “calls for the public validation of culture, which should include not just heritage repertoires, but also explicit use and valuing of various music literacies” (p. 160). Furthermore, Lind and McKoy (2016) maintain that “being culturally responsive means that teachers work to make informed curricular and programmatic choices that connect to what they know about their students” (p. 95). In sum, Rationale 7 advocates that music teachers should be culturally responsive to their diverse students’ ethnic and cultural aspirations.

**Rationale 8: Equality, Inclusiveness, and Democracy**

With 12 years of public-school music teaching experience and 16 years of experience as a teacher educator, I have concluded that Western music curricula is generally non-inclusive and, to a certain extent, oppressive, particularly for individuals who are attracted to music but are turned off by traditional Western-based pedagogies. Many students would benefit from alternative learning styles in the classroom, such as peer-directed learning (Green, 2002, 2008; Söderman & Folkestad, 2004), where the music teacher is more a guide on the side rather than a sage on

the stage (King, 1993).

Peer-directed learning involves the explicit teaching of one or more persons by a peer; group learning occurs as a result of peer interaction but in the absence of any teaching . . . it can occur separately from music-making activities or during rehearsals and jam sessions. (Green, 2002, p. 76)

Hence, music teachers should tailor their programs based on students’ interests, needs, and goals—what Ricci (2011) refers to as “the willed curriculum” that “nurtures body, mind, spirit, and emotions in authentic, organic, and genuine ways, and prepares learners for a full and rich life” (p. 45). Such pedagogy would be beneficial, given West and Cremata’s (2016) position that “school music can be inhospitable, undemocratic and non-creative, and not conducive to the development of independent and self-directed learners” (p. 72).

In essence, music students indoctrinated in Western pedagogies are told exactly what notes to play, how to articulate such notes, the speed at which said notes must be executed, and the volume level at which each note must be played, among other strict and stringent rules that are justified for the greater good of the larger group. In fact, the greater good of the larger group is rooted in the demands of public performances, competitions, and music festivals that collectively promote Eurocentric pedagogies in the music classroom. Hence, there is a concerted movement from process-oriented learning (where students have a voice and a say in their own learning) to product-oriented learning (where students are being told what to play and how to play it). This is a very dangerous predicament, as the very spirit of education can be compromised:

Too often, teaching and learning resemble training (or even indoctrination) more than education. The do-it-this-way mode of instruction, in which modeling rightly figures centrally, can, if not carefully monitored, foster critical compliance and nurture dependence rather than the independence and empowerment that are hallmarks of true education. (Bowman, 2005, p. 151)

Rationale 8 thus dictates that music teachers need to remove the bias from the music curriculum and promote equality, inclusiveness, and democracy (Freire, 1998) for all students, regardless of what music they identify with and what instrument they play.

**Final Thoughts**

I have presented eight rationales in this paper that challenge traditional Eurocentric pedagogies in the music classroom, and I am fully aware that informal learning has critics. Teaching “approaches that have fallen under the banner of ‘informal’ have often been subject to bandwagon over-enthusiasm, with proponents inflating their virtues beyond what the concept appears to warrant” (Jenkins, 2011, p. 180). Yes, informal teaching is predicated on students who are motivated to learn in environments that are peer-directed and even individualistic

(Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Mardis, 2013; Yang et al., 2013). Yet, the teacher is not excused from cultivating such environments; rather, teachers need to empower students (Downes, 2010) and understand that their primary role is that of a motivator (Jenkins, 2001). Regardless of what side of the fence one is on (formal or informal pedagogy), academic discourse on the nature of music education is very much needed. At the end of the day, there has been a decline in public school music education (Aróstegui, 2016; Bath et al., 2020; Pergola & Ober, 2012) and it is no surprise that music education needs a complete restructuring and reform (Branscome, 2012; Kratus, 2007; Miksza, 2013; Regelski, 2009), otherwise it will continue to subside on the outside looking in. This restructuring and reform that I am referring to are in many ways embedded in the eight rationales that I have presented. Ultimately, music education in today's school system "disempowers learners and produces graduates who cannot address the musical needs of their worlds" (Isabirye, 2021, p. 151). Hence, too many students are not realizing meaning, relevance, and worth in a music program rooted in traditional Eurocentric pedagogies.

Music programs must offer new and novel pedagogical techniques that are more inclusive and diverse, ultimately inspiring more students to value and appreciate music while simultaneously cultivating the overall growth of music education. Perhaps placing so much emphasis on teaching students how to read musical notation needs to be significantly downgraded. Classroom music teachers need to get out of their comfort zone, question what and how they were taught, and challenge themselves to deliver a different type of pedagogy (Vitale, 2018). As Allsup (2015) maintains, "while our training and subsequent life history may place our growth along a constrained trajectory, we can expand our interests and expertise into larger and more diverse arenas" (p. 22). After all, the overnight shift to online learning that many music teachers endured during the global pandemic proves that they can swiftly pivot their pedagogical style. Aiming to produce musically competent students rather than musically literate students is not such a bad thing. After all, music is primarily an auditory art form.

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## Decolonizing and Indigenizing Post-secondary Music Teacher Education Through Teachings of the Grandmother Drum: Investigating In-Service Music Educators' Application of Indigenous Knowledge

### Décolonisation et autochtonisation de la formation postsecondaire en éducation musicale par l'enseignement du tambour grand-mère : enquête sur l'application des savoirs autochtones par les musiciens éducateurs en exercice

Anita Prest and Hector Vazquez Cordoba

*Abstract: To date, most postsecondary music teacher education courses in Canada have not held substantive space for Indigenous knowledge. In this paper, we first examine the broader efforts of Canadian universities to decolonize their institutions, then discuss issues that Indigenous scholars have raised that are relevant to embedding Indigenous knowledge in postsecondary music education classes. We describe one course at the University of Victoria dedicated to the process of decolonizing and Indigenizing music education and share our study's findings regarding the course's effect on the teaching practices of some of the educators who took the course.*

*Résumé : Jusqu'à présent, la plupart des programmes d'éducation musicale de niveau postsecondaire au Canada n'ont pas accordé une place importante aux savoirs autochtones. Dans cet article, nous examinons d'abord les efforts que les universités canadiennes consacrent globalement à la décolonisation de leurs institutions, puis nous exposons les enjeux soulevés par des chercheurs autochtones qui sont pertinents pour l'intégration des savoirs autochtones dans les programmes postsecondaires d'éducation musicale. Enfin, nous décrivons un cours de l'Université de Victoria consacré au processus de décolonisation et d'autochtonisation de l'éducation musicale, et présentons les résultats de notre étude relatifs aux effets de ce cours sur les pratiques d'enseignement de certains des éducateurs qui l'ont suivi.*

We acknowledge and respect the ɫəᓕʷəŋən peoples on whose territory the University of Victoria stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. To date, most post-secondary music teacher education courses in Canada have not held space for Indigenous knowledge in ways that are substantive and accountable

to local Indigenous individuals and communities. In this article, we first examine the broader efforts of universities in Canada to decolonize their institutions, then discuss some issues that Indigenous scholars have raised that are specific to embedding Indigenous knowledge in music education classes. We describe one course at the University of Victoria dedicated to the process of decolonizing<sup>1</sup> and Indigenizing<sup>2</sup> music education and share the findings of our study on the course's effect over a two-year period on the teaching practices of some of the K-12 music educators who took the course.

The goal of this study was to determine which aspects of the course's curriculum and pedagogy supported music teachers in their efforts to decolonize and Indigenize their teaching practices once they returned to their communities and schools. We also wished to learn with which Indigenous partners music teachers developed relationships to do this work, and the activities they undertook. We wished to understand their processes of embedding Indigenous content, pedagogies, and worldviews in their contexts. More broadly, we wished to learn if and how teachers, as a result of this course, are moving from a place of fear/inaction to 1) taking responsibility for decolonizing their practices, and 2) implementing the new British Columbia (BC) K-12 music curriculum that had rolled out between 2015 and 2019, specifically the content and curricular competencies related to Indigenous Knowledge(s).<sup>3</sup>

#### Decolonizing Post-Secondary Institutions in Canada

Following the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action in 2015 (TRC, 2015), universities in Canada have sought to respond to specific Calls pertaining to post-secondary institutions, including Call 62, "educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms" (p. 11), and Call 65, "establish a national research program ... to advance understanding of reconciliation" (p. 12).

More recently, the Government of Canada has published an Action Plan (Department of Justice Canada, 2023) to implement its endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). Relevant to our study are the goals of the Education, Information, and Media priority area, which are “to ensure a Canada where Indigenous peoples enjoy the equal right to education, including post-secondary education, with necessary funding and supports, and have access when possible to education in Indigenous languages and cultures” and “All Canadians have increased knowledge of the UN Declaration as well as Indigenous rights, cultures, histories, stories, and ways of knowing” (p. 45).

Post-secondary institutional efforts to engage in the process of decolonizing and Indigenizing have led Indigenous scholars to examine these endeavours, with the goal of holding universities accountable for their progress in this area (Brunette-Debassige et al., 2022; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) have developed a spectrum to categorize university decolonizing efforts from shallow to transformative, providing examples of the three stages they have identified: Indigenous inclusion, reconciliation Indigenization, and decolonial Indigenization. Following this work, Brunette-Debassige et al. (2022) conducted a literature review to determine current approaches to curricular change. From their findings, they discerned five approaches: “1) including Indigenous knowledges and perspectives across the disciplines; 2) capacity building through curriculum support and informal learning/unlearning opportunities; 3) mandatory Indigenous course requirements; 4) increasing Indigenous autonomy by elevating and creating Indigenous programs and offices; and 5) creating partnerships with Indigenous organizations” (p. 2).

Brunette-Debassige et al. (2022) noted that many post-secondary teacher education and other professional programs have an Indigenous Course Requirement (ICR), which provides “foundational information and context regarding settler colonialism in Canada as well as Indigenous Nations, languages, and knowledges” (p. 14). For example, teacher candidates in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria (UVic) currently take a minimum of one 36-hour Indigenous education course, which is “An exploration of learning and teaching approaches to better address the educational requirements of Indigenous children, youth, and adults through understanding Indigenous peoples’ relationship with land, language, and community” (University of Victoria undergraduate calendar, 2023). Moreover, half of all secondary teacher candidates, including music teacher candidates, elect to take four additional courses on the History of Indigenous Education in Canada, Indigenous Pedagogies, Special Topics in Indigenous Education, and Helping Each Other to Learn during their 16-month Bachelor of Education programme.

Although Indigenous curriculum, pedagogies, and worldviews are discussed in some UVic music education courses, as of 2019 there had been no stand-alone music education course taught by an Indigenous instructor that focused entirely on Indigenous creative practice (including “music”) and the pedagogies, worldviews, Protocols,

and considerations involved when teaching this cultural knowledge in schools in British Columbia (BC).

There are many factors that must be considered when teaching Indigenous cultural practice to future, mostly non-Indigenous K-12 music educators in post-secondary institutions. As defined by Biin et al. (2021), instructor skill set and lived experience; a focus on local worldviews, cultural practices, and pedagogies; and Indigenous control are key to decolonization and Indigenization. In the context of university ICR courses, Bullen and Flavell (2017) contend that non-Indigenous instructors must have specific skills to teach Indigenous knowledge.

In the rush to “Indigenise the curriculum,” there has been a tendency to assume that almost anyone can teach effectively in this space ... those teaching must have undergone ... the same transformational process of “unlearning” which is being asked and expected of students. (p. 590)

However, in the context of music education, in Young’s (2023) view, “unlearning” on the part of non-Indigenous music educators may not be sufficient. Rather, he has expressed his concern over K-12 music educators without lived experience of Indigenous culture sharing what they have learned with their students. In the context of music performance, Robinson (2020) details the real possibility that well-meaning, non-Indigenous musicians’ efforts to “include” Indigenous content without ongoing engagement in self-reflexivity, developing an awareness of “the ontological differences between Western and Indigenous conceptions of song” (p. 40), and “developing relationships with Indigenous artists, singers, and knowledge keepers” (p. 68) might result in extractivism and epistemic violence.

Both music scholars have exposed the real possibility that non-Indigenous music educators might ignore the contextual knowledge, worldviews, and values informing and expressed through drumming and singing, and intrinsic to holistic cultural practice. This disregard might occur in part because some current music educators—influenced by aesthetic music education philosophy (Reimer, 1989, 2003) that implicitly and/or explicitly permeated their experiences in music teacher education programs—consider these aspects “extra-musical,” and therefore superfluous. As Robinson (2020) has noted, when musicians and composers treat Indigenous music merely “as aesthetic material rather than as a cultural practice that has more-than-aesthetic significance” (p. 131) and disregard the relational ontology that underpins this cultural practice, they may make decisions that lead to cultural appropriation. Those practicing K-12 music educators who continue to hold Western music’s intrinsic meanings and values as neutral and paramount and do not consider the context in which music is created as fundamental to understanding the meaning and values ascribed to that musical expression, are most at risk of such appropriation and may be ill-equipped to adapt to new curricular and pedagogical directions.

Despite the caution of these Indigenous music scholars, many Indigenous education scholars, administrators,

and professionals in the BC context argue that it is the responsibility of all postsecondary instructors (Allan et al., 2018) and K-12 teachers (Chrona, 2022) to become educated about local Indigenous peoples, and then commit to embedding local Indigenous knowledge, pedagogies, and worldviews in their classes under guidance. The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), which supports Indigenous learners in BC, is cognizant of the fact that only 5% of people living in what we now call Canada self-identify as Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2022); therefore, in its view, all teachers, regardless of their heritage, must facilitate the embedding of Indigenous knowledge, pedagogies, and worldviews in their classes to support Indigenous students and educate all students (FNESC, n.d.).<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, in the context of British Columbia, Indigenous education organizations, scholars, and professionals are working with educational institutions (e.g., BC Ministry of Education and Child Care, BC Teachers Council, BC Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, individual school districts) to effect curricular and pedagogical changes whereby all K-12 teachers in all subject areas are now responsible for embedding Indigenous worldviews, pedagogies, and content in ways that are approved by local Indigenous communities.

To facilitate these efforts, Indigenous educators have created frameworks, structures, and governance models that outline processes whereby Knowledge Keepers from local Indigenous communities might partner with educators to support them in enacting curriculum and corresponding pedagogies, and in creating spaces for experiential learning that uphold Indigenous ways of knowing and being. For example, Chrona (2022) has created Authentic Resource Evaluation Criteria (pp. 179–80) by which K-12 non-Indigenous and local Indigenous educators might determine collaboratively whether a given resource was created by or in collaboration with Indigenous writers, and the degree to which it represents the diversity, contributions, languages, and lives of Indigenous peoples. Likewise, FNESC has created a set of Indigenous pedagogical principles entitled the First Peoples Principles of Learning (2008), which emphasize holistic, experiential, intergenerational, and relational approaches to teaching.<sup>5</sup> Educators are encouraged to use these principles in their teaching practices. Some of these efforts may attend to Robinson's (2020) caution that:

[T]o truly move beyond settler colonial structures of perception ... requires more than ... the centering of Indigenous knowledge within music curricula, music program notes, and in everyday discussions ... [it] requires reorienting the form by which we share knowledge, the way we convey the experience of sound, song, and music. In an academic setting, this involves reorienting the normative places, flows, and relationships wherein we share this knowledge. (pp. 14–15)

In summary, both Indigenous music scholars and Indigenous education scholars emphasize the imperative of local Indigenous representation in classes that is Indigenous-led; however, some music scholars have misgivings regarding whether non-Indigenous educators might in time

lead activities once they have demonstrated that they know the teachings, Protocols, and worldviews that inform the knowledge—including songs—that has been shared with them. However, in BC, the efforts of Indigenous education scholars and practitioners we have described above are slowly creating systemic shifts in K-12 education.

To those of us in postsecondary institutions, it has become evident that current tertiary music education programs are at risk of not preparing future and current music educators for these new responsibilities, and that this work must be done thoughtfully. For example, it is essential that university administrators and instructors recognize that cross-cultural post-secondary spaces are not sites of “inclusion.” Rather, they are sites of “cultural interface” (Nakata, 2007) in which different “cosmological, epistemological, and ontological positions” meet (Bullen & Flavell, 2017, p. 586). Moreover, these sites and the efforts within them should actively support Indigenous self-determination (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020). In keeping with the notion of ontological pluralism, we recognized that an epistemic and ontological foundation enabling the interrogation of the very definition of music and its functions should underpin music teacher education courses that operate within Schools of Music and Faculties of Education, which currently focus primarily on Western art, jazz, and popular musics. We also realized that, among other changes, a specific course on decolonizing and Indigenizing music education classes designed for in-service music educators was needed to fill this gap of knowledge.

### Description of Course

Indigenizing Music Education was a 36-hour course embedded within a larger Music Education Summer Institute at the University of Victoria held in 2019. The explicit overarching goal of the Institute was to provide students with an embodied understanding of how ontologies and epistemologies (i.e., ways of being and knowing) inform musical engagement and music education practices. Over a five-week period in July and August 2019, twenty-four students (mostly in-service music teachers) took a 72-hour Kodály Level 1 course and a 72-hour Orff Level 1 course. Both the Kodály and Orff courses were endorsed by their respective Canadian bodies (Kodály Society of Canada and Carl Orff Canada). In weeks two, three, and four, Indigenizing Music Education was deliberately embedded in daily (mostly two- to two-and-a-half-hour) segments to provide a third approach. Sarah Rhude, a high school teacher who, at the time, was employed by the Greater Victoria School District's Indigenous Department as a cultural facilitator, taught the course, which was informed by local *łəkʷəŋən*, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw perspectives, plus *Mi'kmaw* teachings that Sarah brought from her own lived experience. In the syllabus, the instructor, described the course as follows:

In this course we will be following Oral Traditions by looking, listening, learning, and doing through an Indigenous Lens. Repetition, sharing in circle and being immersed in the teachings of

grandmother drum will deepen respect for various Indigenous ways of expressing music that can only come from directly engaging and developing a relationship with our drums and each other in the process. In lieu of books/readings, cultural knowledge keepers will be invited into our circle including Elders, educators, and community members to share their experiences and teachings with us. (Rhude, 2019, p. 1)

Sarah modelled experiential, intergenerational, and Land-based pedagogies to her students. According to Younging (2018), capitalizing the word Land denotes recognition that Indigenous peoples have an historic and ongoing relationship to places where we live. The activities Sarah facilitated included “prepare and bring to life a drum; make a story rattle; share in ceremony; learn, sing, and drum songs; share knowledge and story in circle; and finally feast and celebrate our communal learning experience” (Rhude, 2019, p. 1). Classes opened and ended in circle, and students were encouraged to acknowledge the Land on which they lived and worked, drum and sing, and reflect on specific prompts while in this space according to the local Protocols they were taught. Guests supported students in their learning by instructing them how to make, paint, and awaken drums; teaching them songs; explaining how to bring drumming and singing into their classes according to the Protocols and teachings of their local First Nation communities; and offering examples of how they had embedded Indigenous knowledge in their music classes. To finance honoraria for the multiple guests and the services of a research assistant, Sarah and the first author applied for and received a one-time University of Victoria Strategic Initiatives – Indigenous grant.

### Research Questions

Sarah and the first author designed the following research questions together:

1. Which aspects of the course’s (EDCI 499 Indigenizing Music Education) curriculum and pedagogy were most effective in supporting music teachers in their efforts to decolonize and Indigenize their professional practices?
2. How have music teachers, as a result of taking this course, moved from a place of fear/inaction to taking responsibility for decolonizing their practices and implementing the Indigenous components of the new K-12 music curriculum?
3. How have music teachers specifically applied the teachings and modelling processes of this course to their own educational settings?
4. What further questions do teachers have as a result of their experiences regarding embedding Indigenous ways of knowing and being in their classes?

Sarah and the first author also designed the interview questions together. Originally, we had conceived that the first author would converse twice with participants during the course of the 2019-2020 school year. Due to the interruptions/modifications of music instruction in BC schools during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns and restrictions from March 2020 to late

2021, the first author interviewed educators once in the first semester of the 2019–2020 school year, then paused, and eventually extended the study to spring 2022 to capture teachers’ responses more fully. Thus, during the second interview in spring 2022, teachers discussed their applications, processes, and reflections over a longer period of time than we had initially conceived for the study, and their perceptions reflected the ruptures, challenges, opportunities, and shifts in approach caused by both the teachings of the course and the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns and restrictions.

### Methodology

#### *Participants*

This study required that participants 1) were enrolled as students in EDCI 499 Indigenizing Music Education, and 2) were current music educators in the K-12 school system. Twenty-one of twenty-four students fit these two criteria. The first author recruited participants for the study by informing all students of the study on the first day of the Music Education Summer Institute. She provided Invitation Letters and Letters of Consent in paper form and asked those who were interested in participating in the research to submit their signed Letter of Consent to her prior to the first day of the Indigenizing Music Education course (the following week) without the instructor’s knowledge. She emphasized the voluntary nature of the study and that a student’s decision to participate or not participate in the study would have no bearing on their evaluation in the course, and that the instructor would have no knowledge of which students were participating in the study until after the course was over and she had submitted her evaluations. Eight of the twenty-one eligible students agreed to participate in the study.

#### *Methods*

The first author employed two semi-structured interviews (in-person and via Zoom), and teachers’ reflexive journal writing as methods to elicit their answers to research questions. Initially, she had wished to interview participants twice, once in the Fall of the 2019-2020 school year, and once in the following spring. She also asked participants to provide two journal entries in Fall 2019 via the SurveyMonkey tool regarding their reflections on the process of embedding the teachings learned from EDCI 499 Indigenizing Music Education in their educational settings, and two more journal entries in spring 2020. She completed the initial interviews with six participants, also eliciting their journal entries via SurveyMonkey. The two remaining participants asked that their initial interview be postponed, as they had gained only temporary employment by that time and wished to be more established before beginning the work of developing relationships with Indigenous partners.

During the pandemic restrictions, the first author communicated with participants that the research would be temporarily suspended and that she would be in touch following the reinstatement of in-person music classes and the return of Indigenous mentors and Elders in schools. In

spring 2022, she conducted follow up interviews with only four of the six participants she had interviewed previously, as, in the interim, one teacher had moved to another country and one teacher no longer wished to participate in the study. At that time, the first author was also able to interview the two educators whose interviews had been postponed, as they had gained more permanent employment in the interval. She did not request additional journal entries from any of the participants at this time in recognition of teachers' extra workload resulting from the ongoing effects of the pandemic. The first author audio-or video-recorded the interviews, and the second author created transcriptions, asking participants to review the transcriptions so that they might make any changes they deemed necessary. As the instructor had previously expressed that she was not interested in participating in the analysis or write up of this study, only the two authors coded and analyzed the interviews separately, reviewed and compared the codes they had created, and generated themes together (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### Findings

#### *Which Aspects of the Course's Curriculum and Pedagogy Were the Most Effective in Supporting Teachers in Their Efforts?*

All participants expressed their great appreciation for the course and the instructor, one stating, "It was one of the most impressive and valuable courses that I've taken in my whole time I went to UVic" (Giles, 2022), and another expressing, "having three weeks with a wonderful Indigenous teacher ... it just sort of helped me to see things from a different perspective" (Jessi, 2022). Several teachers stated that taking this course fostered their self-confidence in teaching Indigenous content.

Everything we did in the class—like bringing in Elders as guests, and how that looks, and the Protocols that we all went through—was super helpful on how I'm moving forward with now hosting Elders at our school as well. So yes, I was able to move forward a lot more confidently with the knowledge of how that should look and feel, and the Protocols involved and everything. (Trevor, 2020)

### Curriculum

Teachers reported that the experiential process of making drums and rattles was central to their curricular and pedagogical experience. As one participant explained, "The hugest part I would say is coming out [of the course] with my own experience of what it is to create a drum, a story rattle, and then the amazing gift that Sarah gave me of the eagle feather that we used in our class" (Ali, 2020). Protocols, teachings, stories, and songs were shared during these hands-on experiences, providing students with the tools to embed Indigenous content in music classes. Invited guests facilitated drum making, awakening the drums, and sharing songs, and two music educators (one non-Indigenous and one Indigenous not local to the area) role modelled how it was possible with

guidance and over time to share local Indigenous cultural practices with students in ways that were deemed appropriate by local Culture Bearers. Participants also reported the importance of learning not only the Protocols and songs that were local to Vancouver Island, but also to the territories in which they taught.

### Pedagogy

All participants observed that the pedagogical approach in this course was different from what they had previously experienced in any other music education course. They noted that being able to articulate how the instructor modelled this pedagogical approach was one of the learning objectives of the course. This approach, which reflected the First Peoples Principles of Learning (see footnote 6), included oral transmission of knowledge, use of sharing circles to share and create knowledge, storytelling, experiential and Land-based learning, and putting students' experience at the centre of the learning.

[O]ur homework was most often podcasts so that we could listen to Indigenous voices speaking ... [I]f she had something to tell us, she would tell us in speech, and she wouldn't give handouts; she would expect us to remember. (Jessi, 2022)

One participant also observed how experiencing these forms of pedagogies helped her know how her own students might feel. Several students remarked on their sense of belonging and feelings of safety. For example, one stated, "Connecting to my peers through song and drumming was ... a super powerful experience" (Trevor, 2022). Others described how Sarah modelled and created a respectful learning environment in which students supported one another.

[It] was ... a very different approach to music education ... [compared to] what I've done in my undergrad ... everything was about participation, rather than just kind of observation or notation, or individual work. Yeah, it was very collective; when we were building the drums, we were all helping each other. When we were learning the songs, we were all helping each other. (Sean, 2022)

He remarked on the significance of this pedagogical approach in preparing him to "Indigenize" his music class.

In terms of preparedness, I think that [pedagogy] helps me and the other participants understand how practice, changing practice is just as important, or more important than adding in content. Adding in First People's content is fine, but if you're still teaching in the same frameworks and still teaching in the same instructional sort of setup, then I think you're not really Indigenizing music education; you're maybe just adding in portraits, or a multicultural approach. So, I think the difference in structure, and the story and storytelling were really helpful in getting me to re-orient. (Sean, 2022)

Teachers acknowledged that this course had taught them how to continue their learning, that making mistakes

would be inevitable, and that it was important that they keep trying.

*How Have Teachers, as a Result of This Course, Moved from a Place of Fear/Inaction to Taking Responsibility for Decolonizing Their Practices and Implementing the Indigenous Components of the New K-12 Music Curriculum?*

### The Effect of Teachers' Contexts

Although we did not have a research question that specifically pertained to how teachers' contexts might complicate their efforts to apply what they had learned in the course, we asked the following interview question that elicited many responses, especially in 2019/2020 during the first interview, immediately following teachers' completion of the course: What are some areas of support that you feel you need to embed Indigenous ways of knowing and being in your class?

Teachers reported that their perceived level of administrative support, current scheduling and space allocations, degree of access to Culture Bearers/Indigenous Education Workers, level of funding, perceived school and school district's commitment and action concerning decolonization, perceived relationships between the school and the local Indigenous community, and the degree of racism they observed within the larger community all complicated their efforts to embed Indigenous ways of knowing and being in their classes.

**Level of Administrative Support.** Participants stressed the importance of administrative support and involvement to succeed in their efforts. They expressed that leadership must come from the top and that administrators must be active in the decolonization process. One spoke of their administrator's excitement for embedding Indigenous culture in their school. Some administrators, when asked, had told some participants that there was no funding for making drums; one chose to take direct action.

Another exciting development in our school is—our vice-principal is [name of First Nation], and she applied for ... and received a \$10,000 grant for a class sets of drums to be created in a traditional manner with the collaboration with Elders of the community. (Jessi, 2020)

**Scheduling and Space.** Scheduling within the school (and between schools for those who taught in two settings) created challenges for embedding Indigenous knowledge. For example, Culture Bearers who accepted invitations to music classes required periods of time that were typically longer than the average 30-minute allotments for music in many primary schools. For those educators who taught across two schools or more, communication with other teachers across two settings proved to be difficult, especially when trying to materialize projects. At least one teacher spoke about the challenge arising from the music classroom being in constant use and fully booked, and not being able to find a time when it might be used for a special project. Another educator expressed both his initial

uncertainty regarding how to incorporate Indigenous knowledge along with the other aspects of music learning within the time allotted for music, and his determination to do so.

The time constraints at my school are making getting to all musical concepts to teach difficult. I have roughly 410 students from 19 divisions that I see for only 70 minutes each week ... Students really seem to be drawn to Indigenous drumming and I am trying my best to feel comfortable drumming the songs with students and finding the time to include these songs in a way that best reflects the ways and being of the [name of First Nation] people. (Giles, 2020, Journal #2)

**Access to Indigenous Education Workers/Knowledge Keepers/Elders.** The music educators we interviewed recognized the vital role that Indigenous Education Workers (IEW) at their schools might play in music teachers' efforts to access local Knowledge Keepers/Elders. Although the primary focus of IEWs is to support the well-being and academic pursuits of Indigenous students, they may also assist non-Indigenous teachers in decolonizing their practices. However, music teachers reported that many IEWs are not Indigenous to the locality where they teach and may not have links to the local Indigenous community and, by extension, to local Knowledge Keepers. One participant articulated another nuance of which she was not initially aware.

[Often], non-Indigenous teachers go to their school's (possibly one and only) Indigenous support staff [person] and assume they possess every fine detail of Indigenous knowledge. When the teachers are advised to seek other resources, it's interpreted as not offering assistance, or being willing to share their knowledge. When I first started the project, I was also confused why I couldn't get more assistance from [name of IEW] on drum making. Later on, I learned (through self-reflection and sharing thoughts with each other) that I, too, was assuming without understanding and recognizing my Indigenous colleague's individuality. (Ruby, personal correspondence, June 1, 2022).

Teachers also described how IEWs are often assigned to multiple schools and may visit their school only once a week, as the amount of time IEWs spend at a school is dependent on the number of self-identifying Indigenous students in that school. However, students' self-identification does not always accurately represent the actual number of Indigenous students in each school, as some Indigenous students are reluctant to self-identify as such. Educators also explained that IEW schedules (and the schools they serve) were sometimes changed during a given year, creating a challenge to develop relationships with them. Yet, some of the participants and IEWs persevered in their efforts to communicate with one another and eventually developed relationships, which led to the conception, development, and implementation of a project.

One music educator described their school district's Indigenous role model program, and how the school district had hired Elders who were assigned to specific schools. Teachers engaged the role model or Elder through a centralized scheduling process. The participant who described these initiatives was grateful for them, but he noted that the role model program operated only from October to May. Thus, role models were not available for two federally designated days created to bring awareness to the ongoing effects of the residential school system and to honour Indigenous Peoples in Canada: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30 and National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21.

**Drums and Funding.** Participants reported a range of financial support for creating a class set of drums and for paying invited guests who offer cultural support. Although one teacher described how their school district granted funding to develop initiatives in collaboration with the local First Nation, most educators reported in 2022 that lack of funding to make drums and hire Culture Bearers was a continued source of frustration.

I would love, love to have more guests like Elders come in and different guests come in, but again, budgets being tight, money is always an issue and, like this year, more than ever, [it seems] ... they're just clamping down on every little thing they can to not spend money. (Trevor, 2022)

Teachers in this situation restrained from engaging in activities on their own without the express approval and participation of local Indigenous community members and/or Knowledge Keepers. Rather, they continued to work with administrators and others to find paths forward.

**Policies and Decolonizing Efforts of Schools and School Districts to Date.** In 2019/2020, music educators had emphasized the importance of the new curriculum as a rationale to create space for Indigenous content in their classes. Although some schools had Indigenous hand drums at that time (often found languishing in libraries or in storage rooms), others did not. By 2022, at least one music educator reported that elementary music instruction was at risk in their school district due to cutbacks. However, he and most participants communicated that they had received School District Professional Development on Indigenous topics, that their school administrators prioritized embedding Indigenous content in classes, and that they had received some sort of structural support. They also noted that within their school districts, music educators had differing responses to decolonizing music education.

**Larger Community.** Participants cited some challenges related to their community contexts. For example, one teacher remarked on the confusion within his school district regarding embedding local Indigenous knowledge, as it is located between two territories and there is some tension between the two First Nations concerning land issues. In 2020, a second teacher had experienced resistance from

an Indigenous person who disagreed in principle with a non-Indigenous music educator introducing Indigenous drumming and singing in their class. Another educator described how existing anti-Indigenous racism in the town where they lived might inhibit her efforts to embed Indigenous ways of being and knowing in her music classes.

### Teacher Realizations

Despite these structural and relational challenges, over time, teachers expressed several realizations that had helped them move from a place of fear or inaction to action, regardless of their contextual limitations. They recognized their agency, and they were motivated to change their practices.

Back then, I felt that I didn't know what to do. It was a lot more like, "I would like to advocate," but "I don't know how." But this time, I feel that I'm encouraged to do this, I'm encouraged to do as much as possible. Yeah, I am more confident to introduce this. (Ruby, 2020)

Several participants spoke about the danger of universalizing Indigenous knowledge, the importance of following local Protocols, and the need to use a distinctions-based approach by embedding local knowledge. One teacher differentiated between decolonization and multiculturalism, while another articulated that decolonization might require an additional layer of self-examination. Several teachers mentioned time as an important factor—time to reflect, plan, build relationships, and change their pedagogical approaches. Others noted how they had come to realize that it was important to listen carefully, to be more circumspect, and to think before speaking. At least two stressed that music class content must be relevant to Indigenous students and that Indigenous students feel represented in music class. One teacher reflected on moving beyond fulfilling a curriculum mandate, explaining "It's not so much about a unit plan. It's more about we talk about the Indigenous modes of learning and about look, listen, learn so that we're all in the right headspace, and then we watch" (Jessi, 2022).

Another participant spoke about how her mindset of what it is to be a music educator had changed.

I feel like everything we were gifted in the summer was very much a privilege, and maybe, before this course, there was more of a mindset of this wanting to get something, like, "Oh I'm gonna get a drum!" A lot of us talked about that at the course, ... we're all music people, we like drums, but had no clue what that was actually going to symbolize, and what we were going to learn in the process. I think there's, like, a shift from, like, a medium materialism, or, like, an ego-based "I just want what's mine and I want to get something good out of this for my teaching practice" and "me" and "my school" and that sort of ego-driven, versus like, "Oh! I'm a tiny cog in this giant reconciliation machine that I'm trying to be a part of in a good way." (Ali, 2020)



In this case, the participant, who had originally conceived “acquiring” new knowledge from an individualist and human capital perspective (i.e., What can I gain with this new knowledge?), realized the responsibility to others entailed in this new knowledge (i.e., How might I serve others with this new knowledge?).

### *How Have Music Teachers Specifically Applied the Teachings and Modelling Processes of This Course to Their Own Educational Settings?*

Central to music teachers’ journeys were the relationships that they eventually developed with IEWs, Culture Bearers, and Elders, which enabled them to develop localized activities based on the teachings and modelling processes they had experienced during the course. Moreover, teachers reported on how these activities had affected their students.

### **Current Relationships, Activities, and Pedagogical Practices**

**Relationships.** Although participants described the material resources they had found (e.g., drums, funding to make drums) and the songs they had learned during professional development opportunities and from the Culture Bearers they had engaged, they also expressed an awareness that forging long-term, respectful relationships based on reciprocity and trust with IEWs, local Cultural Bearers, and Elders were foundational to developing local resources. Resources “obtained” through relationships were always provisional, dependent on responsible stewardship, following Protocols, and ongoing communication with the person who had taught them. One participant described an activity for over 100 students that an Elder and she had hosted and facilitated over the course of one day, asking students to bring small gifts to the Elder for sharing her knowledge and blanketing her at the end of the day. She then stated:

It was my experiences in the summer that gave me the confidence to host an Elder visit and know that I could make [name] feel welcome and appreciated by following the appropriate Protocol. At the end of our day, I gifted her a jar of rosehips that I harvested locally around [name of community]. She and I spoke of their medicine, and she asked me about how I prepare the tea. I had some with me, so we sat down and shared some. We visited and she invited me to come visit her in [name of her community]. It wasn’t until later that evening that I realized what had just happened. Sarah and my professor of another Aboriginal Teaching and Learning course that I took last semester, spoke about creating relationships and the appropriate way to go about doing that. And then there it was, happening in the moment between me and [name]. (Ali, Journal #2, 2020)

Other music educators also described how they had initially met and developed relationships with the IEWs and Culture Bearers with whom they worked. One participant observed that in order to form positive, collaborative

relationships, it is first necessary to establish goodwill with community members. She stated, “I need to establish my goodwill, and I think I need to build community, and hopefully, you know, get enough people around that understand ... what I’m about, and then maybe I can ask for something” (Jessi, 2022). She expanded on her reflection, adding that sometimes people tend to approach Indigenous community members because they wish to solve issues or collaborate on a project immediately, which she defined as a Western approach, rather than first spending time to build relationships, establishing trust and reciprocity.

**Activities.** Participants described diverse activities they implemented with their students. Some of the activities went beyond the classroom setting and became part of the school’s culture and learning environment. In this regard, one participant shared the following:

I established a routine wherein I would drum the students to and from music class. We used it as an exercise in mindfulness. I would say to the children, all the way from Kindergarten through Grade 6, we hear the beat, we feel the beat, we put the beat in our body, and we would head down the hall. The students understood immediately that this ritual was something special. As I walk down with one class, other passing students and even staff will walk to the beat. Parents grin from ear to ear when they see us go past. Other classes calm down when the drum goes by. My Aboriginal students have absolutely lit up and are walking a little taller. Aboriginal staff have approached me to say how happy it makes them to hear the drum in school. (Jessi, Journal # 1, 2019).

Two participants described a collaborative project with a Knowledge Keeper in which students were able to learn outside of the classroom in contact with nature. This experience provided them with the opportunity to relate the stories and sounds of the instruments to their natural environment. One said:

... [W]e’re at [name of school], and [name of school] is right next to a creek and a forest. We have these giant cedar trees and these paths through the forest, and we got to hang out in the forest for a good couple of weeks. And have each class come out and we had drums and instruments, and we created a whole kind of story again with kids like first telling us about observations in nature, what did they see? What animal did they see? What was the animal doing? And then we started finding instruments that would maybe match the animal or match the movement and then we got kids actually moving and acting things out like the animals in small groups, and it was really, really great project. (Trevor, 2022)

One music educator focused on the First Peoples Principles of Learning, and their application in a concert band class and subsequent concert.

We also talked about you know, the First People's Principles of Learning, and [I] actually had the students ... share a little bit about their own thoughts, like "How does this apply to music?" and we incorporated that into ... the MC speech, when we were announcing our song at our concert ... So, students introduced it and ... talked about what they had learned [in relation] to the piece, which I thought was pretty cool. (Jonnie, 2022)

Another educator obtained external funding to make drums with her Grade 6 students. She designed her "curriculum based on the ideology of gifting, the idea of gifting the drums away" (Ruby, 2022). She described how—after introducing students to local Indigenous cultures, protocols, and worldviews over the course of a few classes—EAs, support workers, and teachers, plus her school district's Indigenous department vice-principal collaborated to assist students in making 30 drums over a two-hour period. Later, prior to students creating and painting a design on the drums in groups of three, the music teacher used the concept of a tattoo to explain to students the role of the painted design on a drum in expressing a teaching or personal life experience.

That's [the painting] going to be the teaching. When people see that ... if they see a tattoo on your skin then you'll be able to explain to them, "Oh, you know, this means this and this to me," and there's a story behind it, so I want you to be able to do that on the drum. So, the drum is actually a living thing that can tell story; the drum is a storyteller. (Ruby, 2022)

**Pedagogical Practices.** Two teachers emphasized their use of sharing circles so that they and their students might learn more about each other.

I have this giant pinecone in the room ... I use it as a talking circle sort of like Sarah did with the stick, sort of pass it around and "whoever has the pinecone is talking"... and today I said, "[Describe] how you're feeling, say your name, and tell me where your ancestors are from if you know." And some of them knew, and some of them didn't, so [I said], "Well, if you don't know, who can you ask? Try and find out, because it is really neat to know ... where your family comes from, and what part of the world they lived in," just ... inquisitive sort of stuff. (Giles, 2020)

Another teacher, who worked in a school located in a community with many immigrant and refugee families, noted the complexity around self-identification when using sharing circles, the changes in her students' willingness to self-identify with practice, and the degree to which students still identified with their heritage culture(s) if their families had lived in Canada for more than one generation. She worked with her classes several times before students felt comfortable expressing themselves in their heritage language before others in a circle, modelling to them how they might share this information while also ensuring cultural safety to the degree that she was able.

The first time we practiced, they were so reluctant to introduce themselves because they didn't want to seem foreign, even though the majority of them are all immigrant kids. And the second time, [they] started speaking more and then you would notice that they started flushing [with embarrassment] when they were speaking because they were very nervous. But nobody interrupted them, right, ... and I had to give them that affirmation ... "It's okay you're doing great. This is exactly what I want you to do." ... The last time before the ceremony when we practiced, it was so powerful. Everybody all got up in different classes, and ... they were speaking their home languages. (Ruby, 2022)

Thus, teachers' thoughtful and deliberate use of sharing circles as a form of pedagogy facilitated Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' exploration and affirmation of their personal and cultural identities, one of the core competencies of the new BC curriculum.<sup>7</sup>

One educator remarked on how he had found ways to engage young students in difficult conversations, in this case, the banning of various ceremonies, known collectively as the potlatch.

That's been another good thing ... teaching kids about how the potlatch was taken away. I ... talk about it, like "What if someone came and said you can't have Christmas, and you know you can't get presents and ... if you even try and celebrate it, someone will come and take all your lights, like the Grinch?" And they're "Like, that's not right!" Then I said, "Well that's kind of what happened for ... 60 years or more, no one was allowed to do their ceremony and it's totally not right!" And now they that are doing it again, you know, how much was lost? (Giles, 2022)

The educator explained that, over time and with experience, he had developed more effective ways of explaining these difficult issues with his young students in terms they understood.

Participants shared stories of student responses to the initiatives that they had introduced in their music classes in the two years following the course, after educators had begun to adapt the knowledge and strategies that they had learned in the course to their professional contexts.

**Teachers' Reports of Indigenous Students' Responses.** Particularly relevant are teachers' reports of Indigenous students' positive responses towards seeing their cultures present in their school settings. For example, one participant stated, "My First Nations kids are so much more proud in general. Whenever we learn about anything Indigenous you can see it in their face that they are just so happy" (Jessi, 2022).

According to one of the participants, providing space for Indigenous songs in a recent concert provided an unexpected and positive experience:

[W]e opened the concert with an Indigenous song, and [I] invited, I think, two kids from each

class to participate on the stage, and we opened with the “Helping Song” or the “Heartbeat Song” ... [I]t was actually, probably, the highlight of the whole concert for me. I looked over at a kindergarten girl who isn’t identified as Indigenous, but when I was teaching the song, she says, “I know this song ... my grandpa showed me this song and [we] sing it together.” I was like, “Okay, you’re coming on stage,” and I looked over at her and she just had the biggest grin on her face, and she’s smiling and saying ... it was just wonderful. (Trevor, 2022)

### Teachers’ Reports of Non-Indigenous Students’ Responses.

One music educator expressed the outcome of incorporating the instructor’s teaching in an educational context where students have diverse cultural backgrounds. She mentioned that ensuring students had enough time to feel comfortable expressing their cultural heritage in a circle had had a greater impact than she had initially expected:

I don’t want them [the Grade 6 students] to actually leave the school thinking that “I still don’t belong” or “I’m still not this,” right? So that’s one thing I will say, that ... the ... social emotional learning in this project is actually, is greater, has made a greater impact than I actually originally planned. (Ruby, 2022)

Another teacher shared the liner notes that students had created for their year-end concert, which described how they had made connections between the First Peoples Principles of Learning and their music learning in band class.

Through the process of learning this piece we have discussed some elements of Indigenous music and have applied some of the First Peoples Principles of Learning. We have learned that not all music is meant to be taught or performed in rows. We have learned that music can have many purposes, and some music is sacred and should only be shared with permission or in certain situations, and we have learned that learning music involves patience and time. We have learned some of the teachings of Mother Drum and of the importance of drumming in Indigenous cultures. We have learned to embrace the emotional impact that music has on all of us and the importance of feeling the music in addition to reading the music. Before playing this piece in full, we would first like to share Bob Baker’s Eagle Song melody, un-conducted, in circle, and invite our fellow [name of school] musicians to participate by clapping softly with the back of your hand along with the drum. (Jonnie, Concert Liner Notes, 2022)

*What Further Questions do Teachers Have as a Result of Their Experiences Regarding Embedding Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being in Their Classes?*

### Questions and Ideas for Future Initiatives

The music teachers with whom we spoke articulated an awareness that their decolonizing and Indigenizing work was ongoing and never ending. They did not have questions per se, but took responsibility for self-education, developing relations, and seeking opportunities. One participant stated that for him, the next step in his learning was, “the local piece and learning more about what are some of the Protocols with the local Nations and yeah, I think just connecting a little bit more at the at the local level” (Jonnie, 2022). Another participant, a new music educator who had described the overwhelming demands of his employment in light of the pandemic, expressed his readiness to begin a drumming circle open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students:

One of the best places to start maybe a drumming circle or drumming group that could be open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous kids. So, if I can make it work next year, to have time at lunchtime or after school, or something and, if I can make good connections with the high school counselor and kind of see if there’s interest in this. I would love to get that going in the high school next year, and if it’s not next year, maybe it’s the year after that. (Sean, 2022)

Another participant explored the possibility of engaging in a holistic, interdisciplinary project, integrating Language Arts and Music, while also applying Indigenous pedagogy:

To make some literacy connections like storytelling. I thought that’d be a nice way to bring some of the content into the classroom. Storytelling through music and through drumming and through song, and story, and animals and you know, maybe the grandfather teachings—all those kinds of things could be a nice connection. (Trevor, 2022)

### Suggestions

Participants offered no suggestions for the course itself. Rather, they articulated that the course’s structure, content, and pedagogy had taught them how to continue their learning on their own in their teaching contexts and had given them the confidence to do so. One participant suggested, “If Sarah’s course could get offered and it wouldn’t even have to be part of a five-plus group of courses [for upgrading teacher classification] – it could be more like a pro[fe]ssional] d[ev]elopment] opportunity or something” (Ali, 2020).

### Discussion

Participants’ narratives reveal four themes: 1) the course’s effects on their habits of mind; 2) recognizing and navigating challenges; 3) the use of pedagogies and knowledge learned during the course; and 4) the outcomes of activities and pedagogies on students and school culture. These four themes are linked, and they may be described as having a symbolic “domino effect” on each other, where the movement of the first domino piece plays the most crucial role, enabling the application of what has been learned to make an effect in praxis (see Figure 1).

*The Course's Effects on Music Educators' Habits of Minds*  
Using a “domino effect” analogy, the first domino that needs to fall to produce the domino effect is change in music educators’ habits of mind (Goble, 2010). One of the most prevalent habits of mind among BC music teachers concerning embedding Indigenous knowledge has been the habit of avoidance, preventing them from moving from inaction towards meaningful collaborations with local Indigenous Culture Bearers (Prest et al., 2021). In a previous study (Prest et al., 2021), we learned that fears of misrepresentation and appropriation of Indigenous ways of knowing are the most common among in-service teachers. On one hand, in-service teachers need to attend to the BC curriculum, including the embedding of Indigenous perspectives across all subjects. On the other hand, most of the in-service teachers did not have post-secondary education that helped them to meet the expectations of the new BC curriculum; therefore, postsecondary music teacher education programs must ensure ample learning opportunities for both in-service music educators and music education teacher candidates to learn Indigenous perspectives and ways to embed them “in a good way,”<sup>8</sup> with the support and guidance of Indigenous Culture Bearers.

Participants stressed the relevance of having hands-on learning experiences such as building drums and learning local Protocols to establish relationships based on goodwill and reciprocity from Elders and Knowledge Keepers from First Nations local to Vancouver Island, and that making mistakes is often inevitable, but that this is also part of the learning journey. Such experiential learning opportunities provided the perfect space to change their habits of mind since the course instructor provided a safe and supportive environment for students to learn without the fear that would usually impede them from moving beyond their own given pre-conceived boundaries. One illustration is Ali’s realization that what she does is

connected to a larger goal of which she is a part: “Oh! I’m a tiny cog in this giant reconciliation machine that I’m trying to be a part of in a good way” (Alli, 2020).

### *Recognizing and Navigating Challenges*

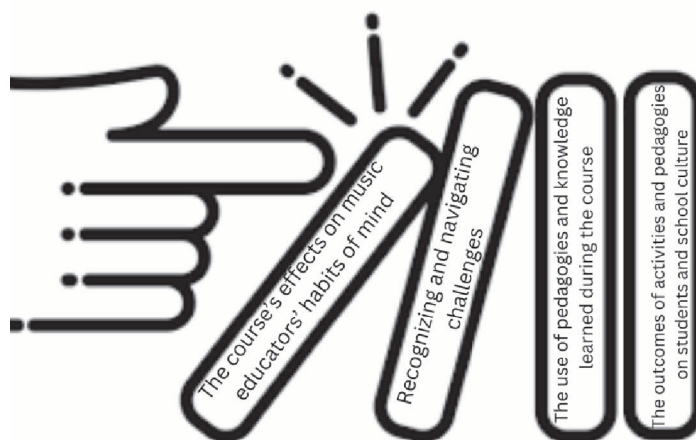
Participants also experience challenges in enacting what they had learned in the course due to factors such as: limited time to facilitate in-depth activities that they had conceived; lack of access to an IEW; insufficient funding to build drums or financially compensate a community member for sharing their knowledge with students; and the effects of COVID-19 in their given contexts. Nevertheless, participants expressed how, despite the diverse challenges, they had found ways to seek collaborations among local community members and colleagues and communicate with administrators to bring their ideas and projects to fruition. Their agency to navigate the challenges associated with their given contexts is a clear example of how overcoming habits of mind may also lead to overcoming the daily challenges that teachers face in their schools, and to perceive the challenges rather as area opportunities for growth.

### *The Use of Pedagogies and Knowledge Learned During the Course*

Participants expressed how the course had provided them with a path to envision ways to embed Indigenous perspectives in their given contexts, from applying and receiving grants to build drums in collaboration with a local Knowledge Keeper and their former course instructor to shifting the physical places where learning occurs. They envisioned and enacted activities where children learned their relationship with the environment via storytelling, drumming, and being in direct contact with nature. Participants provided students with learning opportunities with local Culture Bearers to embed perspectives local to the territories where they lived. Concomitantly, some of

**Figure 1**

*The Domino Effect*



the general First Peoples Principles of Learning that participants had learned in the course were useful beyond embedding Indigenous “content” in their classroom (e.g., Ruby helping students to connect with and feel proud of their own ancestry).

### *Outcomes of activities and pedagogies on students and school culture*

The effects of participants’ actions resulting from taking this course transcended classroom settings and played a significant role in transforming their school cultures. This may be due to the sheer number of students that music educators teach in any given school. It is particularly interesting how daily routines (e.g., drumming in school hallways) may eventually become a symbol of pride among Indigenous students and staff. Moreover, this daily routine may also “normalize” the presence of Indigenous ways of knowing and being present in schools. Drumming transcended the classroom activity and became a “ritual” as Jessi described it. Drumming became part of the school environment, not separated, or restricted to a given or designated space; rather drumming became the space.

Participants’ narratives describing how Indigenous students are walking a little a bit taller when they drum in the hallways, or a student recognizing an Indigenous song she sang at home demonstrate that music educators can play an important role as allies in disrupting the historical lack of presence of Indigenous perspectives in the educational system, and in society at large. As one of the participants expressed, although racism may be present in the context where she works, the presence and activities of allies have helped to decrease societal acceptance of Indigenous-specific racism. Thus, music educators demonstrated agency in changing aspects of their school culture and providing students with meaningful opportunities to bring what they had learned into their daily lives, thereby nurturing a more respectful and welcoming society for all. Significantly, none of the music educators compared their efforts to others’, nor did they boast about what they had accomplished.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

Participants’ experiences provide an important rationale for reframing the role of BC postsecondary music education institutions in their provision of courses that afford the necessary knowledge and practical skills to upcoming generations of music educators through meaningful learning experiences so teachers can implement all aspects of the BC curriculum. Moreover, as one of the participants expressed, fundamental to change is that culturally significant learning experiences be also available to all in-service music teachers through Professional Development opportunities. Much work lies ahead for universities to embrace the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action in meaningful ways. Regarding Call 62 (“educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms”) (p. 11), courses such as Indigenizing Music Education can provide a path for linking these aspirational Calls to practice, both in postsecondary edu-

cation and in the K-12 system. However, it will require universities to provide not only goodwill, but also ongoing and concerted financial support to ensure such courses are permanently available to pre- and in-service music educators.

### **Acknowledgements**

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### **Notes**

- <sup>1</sup> According to Biin et al. (2021), decolonization in education is the “recognition of the power imbalances and the harm of normalizing Western knowledge in education as the only way of knowing and all other knowledge systems and practices as lesser and invalid. Deconstructing colonial ideologies involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledges and approaches and questioning biases and assumptions” (p. 63).
- <sup>2</sup> Biin et al. (2021) define Indigenization as “A relational and collaborative process that involves various levels of transformation, from inclusion and integration to infusion of Indigenous perspectives and approaches in education” (p. 64). We argue that the word *embedding* might be more appropriate, as it implies a body of knowledge that is maintained on its own terms rather than the dispersal, segmentation, or dissipation of this knowledge within a dominant paradigm. We uphold the view that Indigenization also necessitates relational accountability to the Indigenous people who are part of the collaborative process (Kennedy et al., 2021).
- <sup>3</sup> See <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/curriculum/indigenous-knowledge-and-perspectives/arts-k-12-indigenous-knowledge-and-perspectives.pdf>
- <sup>4</sup> Secondary teacher candidates have already secured a four-year Bachelor’s degree in their specialty area. Currently, the 16-month Bachelor of Education program consists of additional educational coursework, including zEducational Psychology, Sociology of Education, Assessment, Curriculum in their specialty area, Technology Innovation, Multiliteracies, a six-week practicum, and a 10-week practicum.
- <sup>5</sup> For example, see here for summer professional development opportunities FNESC provides for all educators. <https://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/>
- <sup>6</sup> See <https://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PUB-LFP-POSTER-Principles-of-Learning-First-Peoples-poster-11x17.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> See <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies> for more information on the range of overarching core competencies that span all BC curriculum documents.
- <sup>8</sup> Ball and Janyst (2008) suggest that research done “in a good way” ensures “that topics under investigation are identified as priorities by Indigenous people, reinforce Indigenous values, are informed by Indigenous frames of reference, and yield benefits to Indigenous individuals and groups” (p. 48)

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Dr. Hector Vazquez-Cordoba is originally from Naolinco, Mexico. He completed his PhD in Educational Studies at the University of Victoria. His research was supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellowship, and it addressed the embedding of music with Indigenous roots into Mexico's national elementary curriculum. Hector's current research project envisions collaborations between teacher candidates and Indigenous culture bearers on Coast Salish Territory (Canada) and in the Huasteca region (Mexico). His research is supported by a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship, an ISME-SEMPRE Music Education Research Grant, and funding from Agrigento: Music for Social Change.

## The Who, What, and Why of Programming and Repertoire Selection

### La sélection du répertoire et la programmation : qui, quoi, comment?

Mark Ramsay and Tracy Wong  
with Robert Filion, Shanda Lee, and Dr. Melissa Morgan

*Abstract: In this article, the co-columnists and choral colleagues from across the country share a variety of repertoire and programming considerations from various learning communities and environments. The article explores what is considered when programming for different ensembles, how implementation unfolds throughout the rehearsal process, and how these choices reflect the evolving choral community.*

*Résumé : Dans cet article, les chroniqueurs et leurs collègues chefs de chœur œuvrant dans différents milieux d'apprentissage au pays partagent leurs considérations sur le répertoire et la programmation. L'article traite des aspects à prendre en compte dans le choix du programme pour différents ensembles, de la façon dont ce choix se concrétise tout au long des répétitions et de la manière dont il reflète l'évolution de la communauté chorale.*

As choral educators, the repertoire we use in our classes and rehearsals is the foundation of everything we do. We strive to reach learning goals by helping students apply and build skills directly connected to the music. We foster a sense of community within and beyond the ensemble, exploring various languages, styles, geographic areas, and cultures. And, we use the music as a springboard for inspiration and growth, leading us all to new connections, new music, and new learnings about ourselves and others.

We all have titles in our library that are tried and true. We know they consistently engage singers, they effectively build skills, and they meet the specific programming needs we have in our own unique singing environments. At the same time, we are constantly striving to discover new music that keeps our work interesting, that helps us and the singers grow, and that is more inclusive of the world around us. Educator and conductor Eric Rubinstein (2020) references this expansion of programming in their article, “On the Front Lines of Choral Education Reform,” stating:

On the whole, conductors are also becoming more sensitive to programming a variety of composers that reflect a range of ages, genders, geographical regions, and cultural identities. Through musical representation, we are creating a more inclusive experience for all our singers. Conversations about culturally responsive pedagogy are ongoing and should continue with the commitment to avoid idiomatic programming. (p. 14)

It is important to note that expanding our repertoire and discovering new music comes with challenges. The

act of searching various resources, databases, and publisher and composer websites is time consuming. Professor Andrew Crane (2018) adds that digital developments are also impacting this search: “[W]ith modern digital technology, conductors now have more resources than ever at their fingertips to find newly composed repertoire for their choral ensembles. The digital age has brought us near instantaneous accessibility” (p. 42). We can all likely relate to the feeling of sitting down to hunt for new repertoire and falling down a rabbit hole of hyperlinks and countless browser windows as hours fly by.

Another perspective to consider is the idea of involving the singers in the repertoire selection. Music educator Robert C. Jordan (2022) discusses this approach at length in their article, “Democratic Approaches for the Choral Ensemble: Repertoire Choice and Rehearsal Design.” They outline the many benefits of the approach and share, “When students and I engaged critically with repertoire choice, we learned more about each other, relationships were strengthened, and student engagement flourished” (p. 12). We have been experimenting with this approach with one of the choral ensembles within our university program. The conductor of the ensemble builds the complete folder of music for the year, considering suggestions from previous and current students. As the year unfolds, discussions in rehearsal determine which titles should be added to the rehearsal mix and as concerts approach, students are tasked with considering all of the music prepared and which pieces they would like to share in the concert. This approach has led to meaningful discussions related to why certain repertoire should be connected with other repertoire stylistically or thematically, and which pieces should be reprogrammed in another concert in the year.

Repertoire selection is a challenging and time-consuming task, but as you already know, it is invaluable to the meaningful work we do. Our hope in presenting this article is that you find inspiration from colleagues working with ensembles across the country and beyond. Many thanks to colleagues Dr. Melissa Morgan, Shanda Lee, and Robert Filion who have shared their perspectives and ideas with us.

No one person can be equally comfortable with all styles of choral music. But, we can adopt a growth mindset and be willing to ask for help. Rather than going back to a mainstay of your past repertoire, look for music by underrepresented composers to achieve your vocal and musical learning outcomes. Talk to friends and colleagues about what music they are programming. Be equally willing to veer off the path, programming a composer who lives in your

neighborhood, or a person who is lesser known in the choral community. (Daley, 2022, p. 58)

In the choral program here at Western University's Don Wright Faculty of Music (DWFoM), we have been working to build community connections each year that link repertoire with learning partners in the broader community. Last year we were fortunate to host two highly respected Indigenous composers and educators, Sherryl Sewepagaham and Andrew Balfour, in collaboration with the Canadian Chamber Choir and *musica intima*. Over several days, both the undergraduate and graduate choral students had the opportunity to rehearse and perform each composer's music, engaging directly with the composers, and learning more about the languages used and the cultures represented.

This year, we are excited to be collaborating with one of London, Ontario's newest community choral groups, the London Gospel Collective. Founder and Artistic Director Matthew Atkins collaborated with our choral conductors to select repertoire for the combined concert and has been visiting rehearsals to workshop the music with the DWFoM choirs and to share information related to the style and history of the Gospel genre. Between the dress rehearsal and performance on concert day, our student-led Choir Council is hosting a dinner for all of the choirs involved (over 120 singers!) to help foster community connections beyond our campus.

The choirs also have the opportunity to premiere four new commissioned compositions by Asian-Canadian composers (Cui Wei, GiUng Lee, Kitbielle Pasagui, Mishaal Surti). As part of the learning process, we connected with these composers during rehearsals and enlisted their help with the translation and diction of non-English texts. In our concert programming, we also feature works by current student composers as well as celebrate our alums in the choral composition world (Nancy Telfer, Sarah Quartel). Through our conversations, we have found common ground (finding identity through music) and the feedback from composers has strengthened our artistic interpretation of new works.

Celebrated composer and educator, Nancy Telfer believes that choosing appropriate music inspires choristers to perform at their best because high-quality music enlightens singers as they rehearse and perform (Wong, 2018). She also encourages conductor-educators to attend events where they can find information about new publications. Telfer urges conductor-educators to concentrate on selecting repertoire that has the proper voicing and ranges for their choirs: "The repertoire must be of a good quality. If not, it works against the singers, making it difficult for them to learn choral skills at a higher level" (Wong, 2018, p. 90). She stresses that it is important not to confuse difficulty level with the quality level: "Easy pieces can have a high-quality level, and all difficult music is not necessarily good music. It is the conductor's job to determine which pieces are worthwhile" (Wong, 2018, p. 90). Telfer also believes that singers in a choir will improve quickly when they are given the opportunity to work on several pieces at different difficulty levels. In essence, Telfer believes that good repertoire selection is part of good pedagogy, because "students can learn as much directly from the music itself as they do directly from the teacher. This facilitates and accelerates the educational process" (Wong, 2018, p. 93).

Following are thoughts from our choral colleagues, Dr. Melissa Morgan, Shanda Lee, and Robert Fillion.

### Dr. Melissa Morgan

Dr. Melissa Morgan is a choral conductor, educator, speaker, vocalist, and pianist from Regina, Saskatchewan. She serves as the Department Head of Music and Director of Choral Activities in the department of Media, Arts, and Performance at the University of Regina. Her responsibilities include conducting the auditioned Chamber Singers, and the non-auditioned Concert Choir, in addition to teaching courses in choral conducting, and serving on several university committees.

#### *What Do You Consider When Programming for Your Ensemble(s)?*

Generally, there are three steps that I follow:

1. I like to create themes when programming for my choirs. Some years these themes are very broad such as a concert about love. Other years, my themes may be more specific such as a program of all Canadian Prairie music from 1920–2021. When beginning the planning process for my university choirs, I also consider any events, holidays, or special occasions where the choirs are often asked to sing.

2. Once I have a theme selected, then I think about who is in my ensemble and I begin to ask myself questions. Some of the questions I ask myself fall along the lines of: What are the choral experiences of my choristers? What is the demographic of my choir? What is the voicing of the ensemble? What are the interests or hobbies of the members of the ensemble? I ask questions like these to help me understand and empathize with the people who I will work with on a weekly basis.

- 3 Using the information from steps one and two, I am more prepared to begin selecting music that represents a variety of genres, styles, eras, and cultures and that fits within my desired theme.

#### *How Does the Repertoire Change, Impact, and/or Influence the Rehearsal Process?*

Musical elements such as tempo, harmony, and text, within a choral work can change behaviour within a rehearsal as well as the overall mood or flow of the rehearsal process. Part of the reason choral repertoire is so powerful is because the act of singing is creating and when a singer engages in music making, that singer embodies the repertoire and, one could say, the singer metaphorically becomes the repertoire. One of the challenges a choral director may face is trying to convey to their ensemble the amazing capabilities of their voice and how choral repertoire has a direct impact on the mental, spiritual, and physical aspects of the body which in turn impact a rehearsal process.

#### *How Has Your Programming Process Changed Over the Years?*

My programming process has changed considerably over the years. As an early conductor, I programmed music that was familiar to me. I do not remember taking as much time to understand the people in my ensemble before selecting the music—I simply chose the music that I enjoyed. Now, I concentrate on getting to know who is in the choir and also who might be in the audience. I program music that I think will be thought-provoking, uplifting, challenging, educational, memorable, and inspiring for both the choir and the audience member. I do my best to keep my personal bias out of the picture so that I can be more empathetic to the people who will engage in the music-making and music-listening experience.



## Shanda Lee

Shanda Lee is a faculty member at Kingsway College School located in Etobicoke, Ontario. In addition to fulfilling the role as Arts Coordinator, she delivers the classroom music program for students in grades 3-6 and is the conductor of the extra-curricular choirs. Shanda is part of the coordinating team for the Conference of Independent Schools Music Festival.

### *What Do You Consider When Programming for Your Ensemble(s)?*

Above all else, and regardless of the age group of the ensemble, I am looking to program repertoire that is of high quality and well written. I look for repertoire that is going to encourage beautiful singing, open warm tone, phrasing, and expression. The tempo and styles will vary but high-quality repertoire will engage singers in a way that helps draw out beautiful singing. It matters to me that I love the songs that I choose for my ensembles. I cannot teach the students a piece of music that doesn't engage and inspire something in me.

Music that is relatable and will be engaging for the age group of the singers is also important to consider. My choirs definitely have different personalities from year to year, and I love when I can find a piece of music that matches the personality of the group. As an example, this year my grade 4-5 school choir is very bubbly and high energy. They performed "Sparklejollytwinklyjingly" from *Elf: The Musical* for our Winter Concert and it was a highlight. Music that is well matched to the ensemble has a tendency to elevate their overall singing and performance skills.

As a school music teacher my programming is by default influenced by specific concert expectations (Remembrance Day, Winter Holiday Concert, Spring Concert, School Closing). I try to be as creative as possible here while still finding repertoire that is appropriate for the occasion of the performance. With regard to my school choirs, the amount of rehearsal time that I will have greatly influences my repertoire choices. I only see each of my groups for a 30-minute rehearsal once a week, so I have to keep in mind what is going to be achievable within the limited amount of rehearsal time!

Finally, I am also part of a team that coordinates choral repertoire for our Independent School Music Festival in Ontario. For this we are looking for high quality repertoire that will engage and inspire the singers and that may provide an elevated level of challenge. Taking care to make sure to program for diversity and inclusivity in terms of culture and gender representation is also important.

### *How Does the Repertoire Change, Impact, and/or Influence the Rehearsal Process?*

Because I always have very limited time with the kids, I often find that my lack of rehearsal time (sometimes) impacts the repertoire that I am able to choose. That aside, I will do a lot of modeling of sound for the kids or have them stand in circles in their sections to help them develop part singing. If it is a piece more unfamiliar to them, I will play them a recording or we will watch a performance so that they have a concept of what the piece sounds like. I never teach a piece straight through from beginning to end but rather begin with sections that may repeat.

### *How Has Your Programming Process Changed Over the Years?*

The biggest change to my programming over the recent years has been the impact of the pandemic on my singers. I teach in a K-8 elementary school, and because our physical

space is small, during the pandemic we were unable to have choir or band rehearsals for almost three years. Last year was the first year we were able to return to extra-curricular choir and it definitely began a rebuilding period. We are working to rebuild numbers, re-establish good singing skills, producing a beautiful sound, listening, and doing more grounding in unison singing. Just in the last few months I have been able to reintroduce part singing to my grade 6-8 choir which has been exciting!

## Robert Filion

Robert Filion is an Ottawa-based choral director and educator. His choirs are celebrated across Canada, earning top awards at the local, provincial, and national levels. He currently conducts the University of Ottawa Choir and the Chorale du Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau. In 2011 Robert Filion was appointed Artistic Director of Unisong, the annual Canada Day festival of Canadian choirs at the National Arts Centre. He works with the National Arts Centre Orchestra on concerts involving youth choirs. He focuses on new works and music from around the world and has collaborated on productions of original Canadian works by a variety of celebrated composers. Since 2019, Filion is the Conseiller pédagogique en Arts et culture and continues his work to lead the next generation of choral conductors across Canada. In 2013 Mr. Filion received the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence.

### *What Do You Consider When Programming for Your Ensemble(s)?*

I'll go in order of importance here (for me):

1. What performances do we have? Could some of the music be useful for other events (corporate events, tours, festivals, etc.)
2. Are there themes to performances: Christmas, mass (which time of the year), anniversary, etc.

Once I have that settled, then I start looking:

1. Who are my singers? What level can they read? How many parts can they sing in?
2. Restrictions: This can be many things—few tenors, altos in my Children's choir don't have a lot of sound below A, etc.
3. Variety: This is very important. I like to sing and learn at the same time: Styles, languages, compositional techniques, culture, etc.
4. The times we live in. What are the subjects that are relevant to my singers in the times we live in? For example, next year I have a theme based on "For the Beauty of the Earth" (Rutter) where all the program will be about mother earth (light, environment, water, etc.)

Also, the music has to be beautiful (text, music, rhythm...something, if not all has to be beautiful!). In general, the most important thing for me (is that) we are entertaining on two grounds—the choristers and the audience. Therefore, my programming is always done in order to please both. It's not easy especially when you think of the person who bought a ticket to come see their friend sing. We must entertain *everyone* who comes to the concert...hopefully they will come again.

### *How Does the Repertoire Change, Impact, and/or Influence the Rehearsal Process?*

When planning my rehearsal schedule for the preparation of a concert or for one rehearsal, I plan to do things that will have (somewhat) instant success so that singers can leave each rehearsal feeling good and musically satisfied. I also want to learn something new at each rehearsal: notes, diction, musicality,

background, etc. This is most hard to achieve in the first rehearsals of preparation, but when I choose the music, I always want to have some easy music so that it gives us time to work more on musicality (nuances, style, etc.). I believe that if we learn these things well in easy pieces they will transfer in others and the singers will develop a love of making musical and technically better interpretations and want to do it in all the music.

My warm-ups are also influenced by the repertoire. If the sopranos need to sing B-C (pitches) then I will make sure to sing there and beyond in the warmup. I also incorporate diction and interval/harmony exercises that will help when we get to specific passages of the repertoire.

### **How Has Your Programming Process Changed Over the Years?**

A lot! When I started (some 30 years ago) the internet was not there to help me out. I had to choose from what was right there in front of my eyes. Choral Canada's PODIUM Conferences, American Choral Directors Association National Conferences, concerts, friends—they all helped me get some ideas. Over the years I've collected a huge personal library and heard many more choirs at festivals, conferences and, of course, the internet. Publishers and composers give us better access to their music also. In a nutshell, it's easier today but harder too as there is so much out there. It's easy to get lost listening to choirs on the internet.

I was lucky to have choirs at different levels to work with throughout the years. This always gave me different groups to tackle different music with. I've been lucky in that way and still am. I've also learned to be more patient when it comes to performing a piece I really like. Sometimes it might take a few years before it fits in a particular program and I'm ok with waiting a while.

The most important thing—Canadian talent! I love and always try to include some local music, either in French, from Canadian composers, and also try to commission new works. It's always a win-win when we perform Canadian music: for the choristers and the audience. Nothing like being there at a world première!

### **Conclusions**

The common criteria from our choral-educator colleagues seem to align with those by celebrated choral directors Hilary Apfelstadt, Lynne Gackle, Eugene Rogers, and Jo-Michael Scheibe who presented a session on “Responding to Changing Times and Demands for Music that Engages Diverse Musicians and Audiences While Promoting Excellent Quality” at the 2019 American Choral Directors Association National Conference. When it comes to repertoire selection, some suggestions include considering the multiple purposes a piece of music would serve, looking for quality (expressiveness and craft), content (musical matter that is worth our time), and context (is it appropriate to the musicians and audience?). For programming considerations, they encourage conductor-educators to explore balance and flow in programming.

There are existing resources online that would help us sidestep the rabbit hole of the internet. The State University of New York at Fredonia's Institute of Composer Diversity Database (<https://www.composerdiversity.com/>) “works to encourage the discovery, study, and performance of music written by composers from historically excluded groups.” The website also features a page suggesting best practices and benchmarks for creating diverse concert programs. Dr. Derrick Fox's website

(<https://www.drerrickfox.com/diversity-resources>) contains a page that lists a variety of resources for music educators on Diversity, Equity, Access, Inclusion and Belonging within their music-making spaces. For professional development, Choral Canada's PODIUM Choral Conference and Festival 2024 in Montréal (May 16-19, 2024) has a list of interest sessions dedicated to repertoire (<https://www.podium2024.ca/>).

We thank our choral colleagues for sharing their experiences and ideas in this article. As we step into the second half of the school year, we wish you a fulfilling and successful term of music-making!

### **Reach Out and Share**

Collaboration is at the heart of our choral practice, and we are thrilled to be dedicating this space to learning together. To contribute an idea or to point us to a possible connection in your community, please contact us at [mramsay9@uwo.ca](mailto:mramsay9@uwo.ca) and [twong427@uwo.ca](mailto:twong427@uwo.ca). We look forward to hearing from you!

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## Conversations: Defining Dominance and Privilege in a Globalized World from an Indigenous Perspective

### Discussions : définir la domination et le privilège en contexte de mondialisation selon une perspective autochtone

J. Alex. Young

*Abstract: In conversation, cultural dominance is often equated with White privilege. This is due to a misunderstanding of these two concepts. Although dominance and White privilege are related, they are separate in the way they are rationalized, and therefore, the way they are characterized should be examined. By defining what cultural dominance is, one can see that White privileges are merely a by-product of Euro-Western dominance in education, media, politics, religion, arts, and music. This oversaturation of the dominant culture is noticeably present in the music classroom and has contributed to profoundly negative effects, creating a destabilized sense of self, culture, and spirituality in the Indigenous people of North America. Through these definitions, White privileges become luxuries where there is no need to search endlessly for cultural representation, only to face the choice to either assimilate or starve.*

*Résumé : Dans les discussions, la domination culturelle est souvent assimilée au privilège des Blancs, ce qui témoigne d'une mauvaise compréhension de ces deux concepts. Bien qu'étant liés, ceux-ci n'ont pas les mêmes fondements, c'est pourquoi il est important de bien les définir. En précisant ce qu'est la domination culturelle, on constate que les privilèges des Blancs ne sont en fait que le résultat de la domination euro-occidentale dans les domaines de l'éducation, des médias, de la politique, de la religion, des arts et de la musique. Cette sursaturation de la culture dominante est nettement présente dans les cours de musique et a des conséquences extrêmement négatives, notamment la l'altération de l'image de soi, de la culture et de la spiritualité des Autochtones d'Amérique du Nord. Les définitions montrent que les privilèges des Blancs offrent le luxe de ne plus devoir chercher sans cesse des représentations culturelles, mais imposent de devoir choisir entre s'assimiler ou vivre avec un sentiment de manque.*

#### White Privilege

Often, conversations around dominance settle on the issue of White privilege. Whenever I have found myself

in conversation with someone who opposes the concept of White privilege, the implication always arises that it does not exist as the present-day financial status of White and non-White people are generally equal. As a person of Indigenous-Settler heritage with a Cree grandmother who attended Residential School, my perspective will not allow me to agree with this implication. However, I have noticed within these opposing arguments a misunderstanding of the terms “White privilege” and “dominance,” which therefore require definition and examination.

Jordan Peterson defines White privilege as tied solely to forms of financial benefit, noting that incrimination of a race with a collective crime is the most racist act anyone can commit. Peterson uses the success and resulting persecution of the Kulaks of Russia to reinforce his argument (PragerU, 2020). I feel this example devalues Peterson’s argument as the modern-day achievement of financial status is not as directly defined by race. However, Western European populations face fewer internal and mental roadblocks than other groups due to their history of oppressive colonialism. This affords them a level of comfort in a world that is largely designed around their cultural perspectives. For example, one form of White privilege is that searching for cultural representation is nonessential due to its superabundance in modern music, arts, entertainment, and education. In this same video (PragerU, 2020), Brandon Tatum reinforces Peterson’s definition of the misconception of White privilege.

Tatum implies that non-White privilege exists as educational institutions and companies seek to hire non-white professionals to diversify their employee body (PragerU, 2020). I have found evidence of this and agree that this approach has negative effects, such as tokenism. To avoid these negative effects, it is important to consider why non-White cultures ask for this form of diversification from these educational institutions and companies. In addition to the historical marginalization of non-White groups, there is still, to this day, a focus on White representation in education, arts, and music. Therefore, the lack of diverse presence extends to music education and can be seen as a reflection of these forms of Western European Imperialism.

Imperialism refers to the domination of Western

thought and culture in non-Western society by creating binary oppositions between colonizer/colonized, marginalizer/marginalized, White and non-White, etc. (Chilisa, 2012, pp. 8-9). For me, it represents a globalized culture dominated by practices that originated in White, Western European countries. Those who do not fit within or conform to these practices are viewed as others or outsiders. In this single culture system, what is not immediately understood is often avoided, as fear of the unknown is attached to the fear of change. From this fragility of cultural representations, we have begun to see distorted interpretations of population numbers to determine cultural significance.

### White Minority and Control

Justin Gest (2022) notes how the majority of U.S. population growth in 2021 came from immigration and that by 2044, non-Hispanic White people will become one of the multiple minorities. Gest suggests that many conflicts in the United States regarding school curricula, affirmative action, and Confederate monuments are the result of attempts to reconcile earlier understandings of the nation's identity that have been built on the idea of a nation implicitly or explicitly united by a common ethnicity, race, or religion.

This conceptualization of minority is uncommon amongst White North Americans because their historical dominance means that they are currently the majority through the process of colonization and their associated historical genocide of Indigenous people and slavery. With this being the historical reality for White North Americans, their perception of being considered a minority may be inconceivable and thus terrifying. Gest (2022) states, "Currently, we know little about how societies respond when the majority status of a native group feels threatened" (Gest, 2022, para. 3). Just as I have acknowledged my bias as an Indigenous-Settler person, I understand that Gest's viewpoint is also one of perception. Therefore, it is clouded by his inability to consider the feelings of the Indigenous people on the receiving end of every historical act of colonization that Western Europeans have taken.

In Justin Gest's (2022) view, individuals' self-realized enlightenment is unnecessary for successful coexistence as it discounts the constructed nature of national identity and hinders the state's power to manage the demographic change process through institutions and rhetoric. Gest feels the six examples he explored cannot predict the future of the United States but only offer a glimpse of the country's future. I feel a similar lack of confidence in his research results from his perception of these processes of population shift from a member of the dominant culture and his lack of research in current demographics on a global scale.

Britt Hawthorne (2023) states that 85% of the global population can be considered People of the Global Majority (PGM). This refers to all groups currently classified, by North American definitions, as visible minorities, including biracial and multiracial descent combinations that do not have access to White privileges (Statistics Canada, 2021). Nationalists (n.d.) statistics resemble this number,

placing the global White and/or European population at around 12%. Both numbers provide a means of viewing the White population in a new light by placing it within a small minority of the global population. When a minority controls, on a near-global scale, the enculturation, religion, education, and artistic expressions of those outside their own culture, they are, by definition, a dominant culture.

In many sources, the term "dominant culture" has been defined as any culture with power over another group's religion, language, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. The privilege of this dominance results in a strong presence in institutions of education, governance, business, law, and communication (Chilisa, 2012, pp. 9-10; The Decision Lab, n.d.). For example, in North America, movies, books, films, history, pop culture, magazines, toys, and so on, centralize the experiences and lives of White people. Combining this oversaturation with the use of terms like "ethnic minorities" distorts the reality of how many non-White ethnicities there are in the world and creates a White Supremacy Culture that portrays the values, norms, and standards that whiteness holds more value (Hawthorne, 2023).

Language similarly portrays this dominance where terms like "people of colour," "Black, Indigenous, People of Color," and "non-White" place these people in relation to whiteness, which centralizes the racial underpinning of our language that the word "people" defaults to "White people" based on their dominance and acceptance as the "norm" (Hawthorne, 2023). The Decision Lab (n.d.) asks, "If all societies are made of people with different backgrounds and ideologies, how does a dominant culture form?" They answer this by noting that dominance is centred around race and colonialism, where one group aims to take political control over another group of people or their geographical area. This often involves the dominant culture forcing their values and language upon the colonized group. North American colonialism began in the fifteenth-century Age of Discovery when European nations set out to explore and obtain other regions (The Decision Lab, n.d.).

The 1493 Doctrine of Discovery was applied to the Americas, which was essentially a legal doctrine that promoted European settler colonialism and sought to replace Indigenous populations with European settlers (The Decision Lab, n.d.). The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was only developed once British administrators realized that the success of European colonies in North America depended on First Nations. It established a Western boundary for the colonies and "Indian Territories" where no settlements or trades could occur without the Indian Department's permission. However, as settlers demanded more, First Nations people were seen as an impediment and the lands were surrendered for settlement (The Decision Lab, n.d.).

Through the 1820s in the colonies, British culture was perceived as superior, and Indigenous peoples were thought to lack civility. Settlers forced First Nations peoples to abandon traditional lifestyles and align with British and Christian society (The Decision Lab, n.d.). The

Royal Proclamation can be viewed as an attempt at hegemony with the Indigenous population. However, cultural dominance overturned any possibility of achieving this hegemony. The result was that the European settler and their cultural domination disregarded Indigenous culture and the people.

### Cultural Domination

Margaret Kovach (2021) states, “There has been a crisis in Indigenous education, child welfare, and criminal justice policy (among other sites) in this country. Why? Because the research that influences policy and shapes practices impacting Indigenous communities most often emerges from knowledges not of Indigenous culture and context” (p. 12). This quote reflects the Marxist belief that the sole goal of leadership is dictatorship. However, there is another form of leadership, and it is “hegemony.” The concept of hegemony is simple as it means political leadership based on the consent to be led, which is secured by the diffusion and popularization of the worldview of the ruling class (Bates, 1975, p. 352; The Decision Lab, n.d.). However, even attempts at hegemony were the downfall of the colonization of North American Indigenous people as it was ignited by the ignorant belief that we consented to be led when we did not.

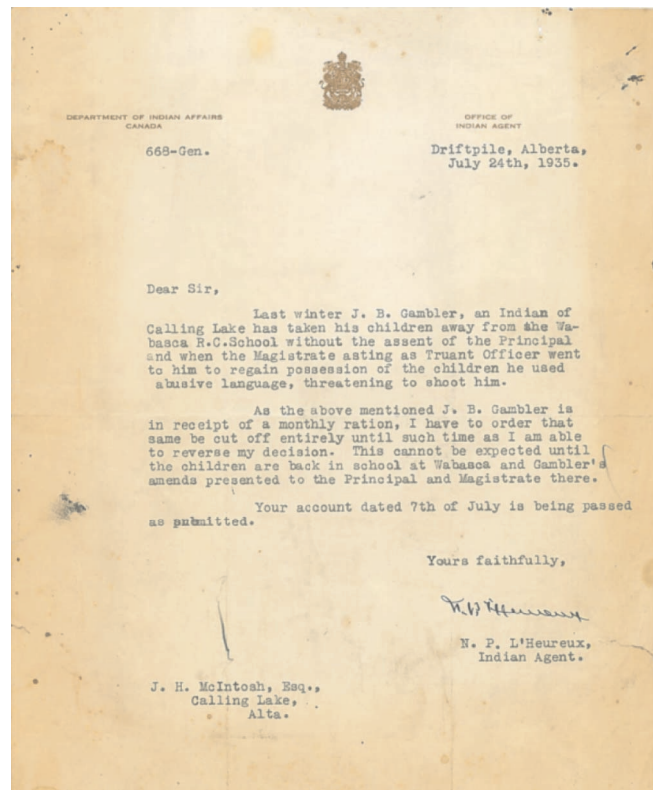
European settlers continue to regard Indigenous educational, spiritual, artistic, and musical practices as replaceable despite the negative effects that developed in Indigenous communities when traditional lifestyles were dismantled. Forced assimilation occurred when Indigenous people attempted to maintain these traditions, and the systems used in Europe proved to be contrary to Indigenous worldviews, particularly when they were forced upon us against our will. The force exerted on Indigenous cultures used hegemony as a tool to dismantle rather than build. For example, Bates (1975) references Gramsci’s breakdown of hegemony and the role of intellectuals in society existing on two “floors,” described as “civil society” and “political society.” On the one hand, civil society comprises private institutions—schools, churches, clubs, journals, and parties—which contribute to forming social and political consciousness; on the other hand, political society is composed of public institutions—the government, courts, police, and military—that exercise “direct dominion” (Bates, 1975, p. 353).

Attempts at achieving hegemony became a dictatorship based on the racial privilege of White settlers versus others that exists to this day. With the overwhelming number of White settlers that came to North America, the control over the Indigenous people has not subsided. It exists presently and is pushing outward to a global scale. This is allowed to happen based on the differences between Western and Indigenous educational systems. In this sense, hegemony is tied to what Bagele Chilisa (2012) refers to as “The Captive Mind,” where it is believed that all methods that originated from Western European thought are universal to the rest of the world. Education and academic discourse are captive in this mindset that their methods and research should only be from Euro-

Western philosophies and culture and are universally beneficial to all cultures (Chilisa, 2012, pp. 7-8). Therefore, Western European culture imposing its beliefs and educational systems on Indigenous people is a form of assimilative hegemony in the way that it disregarded the worldviews, beliefs, and education systems of Indigenous people that existed here for thousands of years before their arrival. This disregard for Indigenous Knowledge Systems and worldviews was based on the arrogance of their captive mindset and quickly turned to forced assimilation enforced by both the political and civil groups of the hegemony within Settler society.

When Indigenous people failed to commit to this assimilative hegemony, they were disciplined (Bates, 1975, p. 353). For example, see Figure 1, which is a letter to the owner of the Calling Lake local food store regarding a local Indigenous man named J.B. Gambler, who refused to send his children back to Residential School.

Figure 1  
Letter from Calling Lake, Alberta “Indian Agent” J.H. McIntosh



*Note.* This letter has been shared online from many sources as it is an example of how Indian Agents enforced these disciplines with an inhuman coldness and disregard for Indigenous autonomy (Calling Lake Community Society, n.d.; Lamirande, 2014)

The current view of education and artistic practice remains largely in the Western European method, rooted in the byproduct of this dictatorship disguised as hegemony. Indigenous people faced coercion and assimilation from both the civil and political forces of the Western European settlers through Residential School education enforced by the services of the Royal Canadian Mounted

Police. Both societal systems worked against Indigenous people, resulting in abuse of power from all levels of Settler society. The result of the force exercised by the dominant culture was a fragmentation, or all-out erasure, of Indigenous culture that has had continued effects on our identity, views, and well-being. For example, the Cree language is a significant aspect of our identity, and we strive to maintain it because only English and French are taught in community schools. Cree see this linguistic reclamation as a response to Residential Schools where our language was never taught, and people were often punished for speaking Cree. Ferrara (2004) refers to a story told to her by a Cree woman describing a day she was caught speaking Cree in a Residential School, and the teacher cut a piece of her tongue, which scarred her both physically and emotionally (p. 20). These heinous acts committed in Residential Schools resulted in a complete deconstruction of Indigenous forms of cultural education and, thus, our spiritual and artistic practices.

Ferrara (2004) describes how Indigenous people face ideas imposed on them by others, which creates a form of internalized oppression called “colonial mentality.” Colonial mentality has become part of the Native construction of self and devalues the viability of Native beliefs resulting in a negative and conflicted self-image. When this cultural oppression is internalized, it is manifested through suicide and death resulting from alcoholism and violence (Ferrara, 2004, p. 39). Cree people attribute this to the negative effects of acculturation developed from the “Whiteman invasion”; the preferential response is an encouraged return to traditional practices and spirituality (Ferrara, 2004, p. 20).

Therefore, Western European settlers did not attempt an informed sense of hegemony, as evidenced by the many assimilative acts that occurred through Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop, and tuberculosis hospital segregation (Bates, 1975, p. 353; Pelley, n.d.). Forcing Indigenous people into educational systems that aim to replace Indigenous ways of knowing, learning, and being with Western European knowledge creates vast cultural rifts among Indigenous people. Legislation, such as the potlatch ban, led to a detrimental downfall in transmission and traditional learning and knowing.

Indigenous people are viewed as a “living book” whose history and stories are carried through their lives, and the halting of gatherings stopped the sharing of this knowledge. The result was the same as the assimilative force of Residential Schools, leaving Indigenous people feeling foreign and separated from their home community (The Decision Lab, n.d.; Robinson, 2020, p. 56). Many Indigenous people thus strive to maintain their customs and control their traditional ways because they are integral to our existence as autonomous people (Ferrara, 2004, p. 18).

In Indigenous worldviews, knowledge is not enforced upon people as the experiential interpretation of events attaches a subjective meaning to reality. For example, many Cree believe that this experiential basis of knowledge is ecological and spiritual, and knowledge is adapted to perception and imagination. In contrast, Western scientific

knowledge is removed from them, and science seems to provide the absolute authority for all knowledge (Ferrara, 2004, pp. 62-63). Cree education occurs within the family, focusing on first-hand lived experiences. Ferrara notes that many Cree people said children are allowed and encouraged to explore the world on their terms. Such an approach is believed to foster the development of independence, equality, perseverance, and respect, which Cree society values (Ferrara, 2004, p. 60). Therefore, at its core, the concept of hegemony is counterintuitive to Cree and, therefore, Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

### Consequences and Actions

The consequences of misinterpreting the definition of White privileges and domination are often dire. Rather than viewing cultures in terms of population numbers in certain regions of the world, it is more apt to think of cultural dominance in terms of controlling the standard for normalcy over People of the Global Majority through presentation of religious, educational, political, and artistic practices. Therefore, the non-dominant is represented as all that must conform to dominant culture standards in some form despite differing personal histories of enculturation.

By this definition, the dominant culture constructs a societal narrative that sidelines minority voices and casts their experiences through a lens that reinforces the dominant culture’s norms and values. It is common for those of the dominant culture to overlook these consequences of ideological domination (The Decision Lab, n.d.). For example, individuals who belong to a minority culture internalize the values and norms of the dominant culture in hopes of gaining access to dominant culture privileges. Minority identity development may involve assimilation attempts by changing one’s cultural practices, appearance, or name to fit in with the dominant culture. Members of the dominant culture have the privilege of not needing to acknowledge their social positioning or face any form of forced assimilation that removes their power and autonomy (The Decision Lab, n.d.). This privilege manifests in music education through representation, as dominant students can see themselves reflected in both the faculty and the curriculum. Students surrounded by staff who resemble them and share similar values feel they can receive the support necessary to succeed. Students who do not feel supported feel that success is out of reach. This reminds me of my post-secondary education as a student of Indigenous-Settler descent. I often felt that only my outward self was welcome on campus, while my thoughts and beliefs were not.

Ferrara states,

Cree, Indigenous, or “traditional” definitions of being human are no longer fully functional. The school system bombards the Cree with images of self and of collectivity that are Euro-Canadian rather than Cree. Formal schooling opens up new options, yet many of these options are hard to operationalize because many Crees feel that the system forces them to polarize their lives. (Ferrara, 2004, p. 37)

Other minority students similarly feel the need to as-

similate after making hierarchical comparisons between their minority group and the dominant culture, which was judged superior based on mainstream definitions of success (The Decision Lab, n.d.; Ferrara, 2004, pp. 35-36). As a composer of music, I often felt that my creative voice was hindered by this expectation to assimilate. There was a noticeable lack of Indigenous presence and support while I was pursuing my education. Therefore, I felt that the European rooted music I was learning only represented a small fragment of my whole persona. Furthermore, I felt that my Indigenous beliefs were wholly unwelcome as they were often counterintuitive to this Western-Eurocentric cultural dominance in music education. Western education systems that reject or otherwise exclude Indigenous Knowledge Systems perpetuate these identity issues and foster more of the negative effects of historical traumas.

To address the prominence of dominant culture in education institutions, there is a need for diversified staffing, courses built around multicultural perspectives, and training on teaching practices sensitive to cultural and ethnic issues (The Decision Lab, n.d.). At the forefront of these needs is diversified staffing, which indicates relinquishing the dominant culture's power. This addresses the misconstructions the dominant culture presents of non-dominant culture's practices and beliefs. When a member of the dominant culture presents a non-dominant culture, it is filtered through the biases and views of the dominant lens, through which all the misconceived concepts of superiority can dilute true cultural meanings and significance. For present-day Indigenous cultures, this can be highly damaging to our process of reclamation due to the way forced assimilation systems and historical genocides have fragmented our traditional knowledge. It can have far greater consequences for people striving for reidentification with their Indigenous cultural identity.

Cree adults often feel destabilized as the values taught in the school system do not address Cree values, traditions, and ways of knowing and being. The elements of their composite self are missing in the curriculum. For Cree people, the high rates of suicide among Cree youth are strongly related to this destabilized sense of self (Ferrara, 2004, p. 38). When someone from the dominant culture presents their version of our music, it creates a version of our culture that does not exist. For example, see Erinn Banting's (2007) book *The Cree*, which is riddled with oversimplifications and past tense verbs, resulting in the view that Cree is a culture that no longer exists and lacks complexity. These considerations translate to relinquishing dominant power to non-dominant cultures, allowing them to teach on their terms. For Indigenous people this demonstrates that not only is our culture respected but we also hold sovereignty over said culture.

Despite sovereignty being the objective in the arts, this is not present in music education. There have been descriptions of sovereign practices in music, dance, film, theatre, and visual arts. However, objectivity should be accompanied, not replaced, by acts of sovereignty in the Indigenous practice of culture. Sovereign listening may be to hear the significance of our chosen instruments on

what land we perform, and why we use music to communicate (Robinson, 2020, pp. 63-66). For me, the importance is why our voices need to be heard now more than ever and what that means for our cultural reclamation and representation.

Dylan Robinson (2020) solidifies this argument by describing that Marc Lescarbot's 1606 copy of a Mi'kmaq song was set in Western choral music by Gabriel Sagard-Theodat in 1636. The original song was twice filtered through Western biases, obscuring any original context and significance (p. 118). In terms of music education, it can be determined as an impossibility to remove Indigenous music from Indigenous spirituality and, therefore, from Indigenous culture. This determines that true Indigenous sovereignty is music, which can represent both culture and personal expression, and the only way to have these transmitted positively is through Indigenous people. Any form of Indigenous music presented by a non-Indigenous musician thus becomes a form of misconstrued extractivism that promotes assimilation and oppressive Western dominance and White supremacy.

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and spirit must be maintained. His compositions are combinatory sonic and narrative explorations of his personal connection to home, family, story and spirituality.



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**STYLE:** Essays are accepted in either English or French. Essays must be typed, double-spaced. APA 7<sup>th</sup> guidelines for formatting, citations, and reference list must be applied.

Essays will be reviewed based upon the following criteria:

- 4000-word limit, including abstract and references
- 50–100-word abstract summarizing content
- Introduction to the topic and thesis position
- Literature and content
- Context related to music education
- Understanding of the issues and/or practices
- Originality
- Summary and Conclusion(s)
- Writing clarity
- APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition formatting, citations, and referencing

Note: Students, with guidance from their university supervisor, are expected to adhere to their respective university's policies on academic integrity as it relates to the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT in the preparation of their essay submission. Students must apply current APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition guidelines to properly cite and reference all AI-tools and sources used. For example, see *APA Style Blog – How to Cite ChatGPT* (<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>)

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**SUBMISSIONS:** For the 2024 competition, submissions must be received electronically on or before **MAY 1, 2024**. No late submissions will be accepted. To facilitate the blind review process, applicants are required to include **three** electronic attachments saved as Word files – cover page, abstract and essay, letter from faculty member.

**File #1** is a **cover page** including:

- a. the name of the author
- b. name and year of the competition to which you are applying (e.g., Kenneth Bray Undergraduate Competition 2024, Dr. Franklin Churchley Graduate Competition 2024)
- c. institutional affiliation
- d. permanent home address
- e. permanent email address

File name format: (Last name) Cover Page

**File #2** is an **abstract** followed by the **essay**:

Page 1: 50–100-word abstract summarizing the essay content

Page 2: begin the essay

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**File #3** is a **letter from a faculty member**:

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Please note:

No identifying content within the body of the text is allowed with respect to either author or institution.

Essays must be the student’s own work but may be vetted through faculty at the request of the author.

Winning essays may be published by the CMEA/ACME in the *Canadian Music Educator*. Winners in each competition will receive a cash award.

#### **EMAIL ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS TO:**

Dr. Andrea Rose

Professor Emerita and Honorary Research Professor

Memorial University (Music Education)

Director of Higher Learning, Canadian Music Educators’ Association

<https://cmea.ca>

Chair, CMEA/ACME National Student Essay Competitions

Email: [arose@mun.ca](mailto:arose@mun.ca)

Phone: by appointment via email

## APPEL DE TEXTES POUR LES CONCOURS D'ESSAIS ÉTUDIANTS 2024

L'Association canadienne des musiciens éducateurs/  
Canadian Music Educators' Association



**Concours d'essais Kenneth Bray (premier cycle)**

**ET**

**Concours d'essais Dr. Franklin Churchley (cycles supérieurs)**

**DATE LIMITE DE SOUMISSION DES ESSAIS : 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2024**

**ADMISSIBILITÉ :** Le concours s'adresse aux étudiants canadiens de **premier cycle** ou de **cycle supérieur** qui font leurs études au Canada ou à l'étranger, et aux étudiants internationaux qui étudient dans une université canadienne. Chaque candidat peut soumettre **un** seul essai.

**SUJET :** Le sujet est libre, mais doit se rapporter aux pratiques ou aux enjeux actuels ou émergents dans le domaine de l'éducation musicale.

**STYLE :** Les essais peuvent être rédigés en **anglais** ou en **français**. Ils doivent être dactylographiés à double interligne. La présentation, les citations et la liste des références doivent respecter les normes de l'APA (7<sup>e</sup> édition).

Les essais seront évalués en fonction des critères suivants :

- Limite de 4000 mots, y compris le résumé et les références
- Résumé de 50 à 100 mots
- Présentation du sujet et de l'objet d'étude
- Documentation et contenu
- Contexte lié à l'éducation musicale
- Compréhension des enjeux ou des pratiques
- Originalité
- Résumé et conclusion(s)
- Clarté du texte
- Présentation, citations et références selon les normes l'APA (7<sup>e</sup> édition)

Note : Il est attendu que les étudiants, guidés par un professeur, respectent les politiques d'intégrité intellectuelle de leur université en ce qui concerne l'utilisation d'outils d'intelligence artificielle générative (IA) tels que ChatGPT pour la préparation de leur essai. Les étudiants doivent respecter les normes de la 7<sup>e</sup> édition de l'APA pour citer et référencer correctement toutes les sources et les outils d'IA utilisés. Par exemple, voir la page de la bibliothèque de l'UQAM sur la façon de citer ChatGPT : [https://uqam-ca.libguides.com/ChatGPT\\_et\\_IA/Integrite\\_et\\_citer](https://uqam-ca.libguides.com/ChatGPT_et_IA/Integrite_et_citer)

**PROCESSUS D'ÉVALUATION :** Les essais feront l'objet d'un examen à l'aveugle par des universitaires de renommée nationale dans le domaine de l'éducation musicale. Pour éviter les risques de conflits d'intérêts, les membres du jury seront sélectionnés après la soumission des essais, et leurs noms seront annoncés en même temps que celui des gagnants.

**SOUSSION :** Les essais doivent être transmis au plus tard le **1<sup>er</sup> mai 2024**. Aucun essai reçu après cette date ne sera accepté. Afin de faciliter le processus d'évaluation à l'aveugle, il est obligatoire de transmettre **trois** pièces jointes en format Word : une page titre, le résumé suivi de l'essai et une attestation d'un membre du corps professoral.

**Fichier 1 (page titre) :**

- a. Votre nom
- b. Nom et année du concours auquel vous participez, p. ex. concours d'essais Kenneth Bray 2024 (premier cycle), concours d'essais Dr. Franklin Churchley 2024 (cycles supérieurs)
- c. Nom de l'université
- d. Adresse postale permanente
- e. Adresse courriel permanente

Nom du fichier : (Nom de famille) Page titre

**Fichier 2 (résumé et essai) :**

Page 1 : résumé du contenu de l'essai de 50 à 100 mots

Page 2 : début de l'essai

Nom du fichier : (Nom de famille) Essai 2024 premier cycle (ou cycle supérieur)

**Fichier 3 (lettre d'un membre du corps professoral) :**

Lettre officielle attestant le statut actuel de l'étudiant et son affiliation à l'université

Nom du fichier : (Nom de famille) Lettre

**Notes importantes :**

Aucun contenu permettant d'identifier l'auteur ou l'institution n'est autorisé dans le corps du texte. Les essais doivent être le fruit du travail personnel de l'étudiante ou de l'étudiant, mais peuvent toutefois avoir été soumis à l'approbation du corps enseignant.

Les essais gagnants pourront être publiés dans la revue *Musicien éducateur au Canada/The Canadian Music Educator* de l'ACME/CMEA, et les lauréats du premier prix de chaque concours recevront une bourse.

**TRANSMISSION DES DOCUMENTS PAR COURRIEL À :**

Dr. Andrea Rose

Professeure émérite et professeure-chercheuse honoraire

Université Memorial (Éducation musicale)

Directrice de l'enseignement supérieur, Association canadienne des musiciens éducateurs

<https://cmea.ca>

Présidente, concours nationaux d'essais étudiants de l'ACME/CMEA

Adresse courriel : [arose@mun.ca](mailto:arose@mun.ca)

Téléphone : sur rendez-vous par courriel



## **Joint Consortium of Research (JCoR) Call for Proposals 2024** **FOCUS: Improving Music Teaching and Learning through Scholarly Inquiry**

The Joint Consortium of Research (representing the CMEA/ACME and Coalition for Music Education in Canada) invites applications for funding projects aiming to improve music teaching and learning at any level (K-PSE) through systematic scholarly inquiry. Up to \$5,000 will be targeted (budget permitting) to fund this program.

### **GUIDELINES**

*Study Requirements.* These grants are intended to support small-scale projects that involve exploring music teaching and learning in your own professional context, such as a school music program, a community-based music studio or program, or a university music classroom. Such music studies include reflecting on your own practice, seeking out instructional resources and/or approaches to enhance music teaching and student learning, implementing these enhancements, assessing the outcomes, and disseminating what has been learned with others.

Projects are required to align with applicants' institutional policies and must be implemented by **February 28, 2025**. Prior to starting a funded project, music educators working in schools or community-based settings must secure permission from their relevant administrators. University professors and/or graduate students must secure approvals from the research ethics boards that apply to them.

Applications involving partnerships between music educators/scholars working in universities, schools, community sites, professional organizations, and/or cultural institutions will be considered, as will be applications from music education graduate students completing research studies that align with the focus of this funding program.

*Mentorship.* CMEA's Director of Research and Publications (DRP) will provide support and guidance to funded applicants (individual or small group) throughout the process if desired in up to three scheduled meetings. Meeting times will adhere to teachers' collective agreements and take place outside of teacher preparation time. Mentorship support includes finding a focus, identifying research questions, reviewing current research and professional literature, designing enhancement strategies, developing plans for assessing outcomes, analysing, and interpreting data collected, preparing a timeline, and planning for sharing results.

*Funding Parameters.* Funds may be used to cover the direct costs of conducting the research, including research assistant salaries, honoraria for Elders or consultations, instructional resources

or supplies, costs of release time (substitute teachers), mileage to team meeting sites and meals/refreshments, and/or professional learning resources (to a maximum of 20% of total funding). Funds may *not* be used for conference travel, electronic devices, musical equipment, instruments, or communicating final study results.

*Application Process:* Interested applicants should email a brief research proposal (approximately 1000-1500 words) along with a budget as a Microsoft Word document to: Dr Francine Morin at [research@cmea.ca](mailto:research@cmea.ca) by **June 14, 2024**. For those new to the research process, a proposal template can be provided.

*Selection Process.* Successful applicants will be chosen by **June 28, 2024**, by a jury with representation from the CMEA/ACME and CMEC. Assessment criteria include relevance of project to Canadian music education; soundness of research plan; potential for improving music teaching practice and enhancing music learning; clarity of budget in demonstrating how the funds will be used, and that the use of funds is appropriate. JCoR will provide written notification and procedures for the dissemination of funds.

*Reporting Requirements.* A final research report (approximately 12-15 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font) should be submitted to Dr Francine Morin at [research@cmea.ca](mailto:research@cmea.ca) by **March 28, 2025**. Projects must include plans for sharing results with music education colleagues through presentations at conferences or professional meetings, and/or articles for publication in CMEA/ACME's journal or newsletter. A final report template can be provided upon request if needed.

#### **TIMELINES**

June 14, 2024	Application Deadline
June 28, 2024	Notification of Grant Awards
July 4/5, 2024	Mentorship Meeting #1: Orientation
November 29, 2024	50% Funding Advanced & Mentorship Meetings Scheduled (if desired)
March 28, 2025	Final Report Due (including financials, expenses, receipts)
April 15, 2025	Remaining 50% Funding Advanced

Names of recipients and research descriptions will be published in the *Canadian Music Educator* journal and will be posted on the CMEC and CMEA/ACME websites.

File Name: JCoR Funding Call for Proposals 2024 (Improving Music Teaching and Learning Research Grants, January 11, 2024)



**Appel de propositions 2024 du Consortium pancanadien de recherche (JCoR)  
Axe : Amélioration de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage musical par la  
recherche universitaire**

Le Consortium pancanadien de recherche (qui représente l'ACME/CMEA et la Coalition pour l'éducation musicale au Canada) lance un appel de propositions pour des projets visant à améliorer la qualité de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage musical à tous les niveaux scolaires (de la maternelle au postsecondaire) par une recherche universitaire systématique. Un montant allant jusqu'à 5000 \$ pourra être octroyé (selon le budget disponible) pour financer les projets.

**DIRECTIVES**

*Projets admissibles.* Les bourses sont destinées à soutenir des projets à petite échelle impliquant l'étude de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage de la musique dans votre propre contexte professionnel, que ce soit le programme musical scolaire d'une école, d'un studio privé, d'une école de musique communautaire, ou encore celui d'un cours de musique universitaire. Le but de l'étude peut être de réfléchir à votre propre pratique, de chercher des ressources ou des approches pédagogiques pour améliorer l'enseignement musical et l'apprentissage des élèves, d'appliquer ces améliorations et d'en évaluer les résultats ou de diffuser les connaissances acquises.

Les projets doivent respecter les politiques des institutions auxquelles les candidats sont rattachés et devront être mis en œuvre d'ici le **28 février 2025**. Avant de démarrer un projet financé, les musiciens éducateurs travaillant dans une école ou un établissement communautaire doivent obtenir l'autorisation de leur direction. Les professeurs d'université et les étudiants des cycles supérieurs doivent obtenir l'approbation du comité d'éthique de leur établissement.

Les demandes de musiciens et de chercheurs dont le projet est réalisé en partenariat avec une université, une école, un organisme communautaire, une organisation professionnelle ou une institution culturelle sont également admissibles, de même que les demandes d'étudiants en éducation musicale dont les travaux de recherche concordent avec les objectifs de ce programme de financement.

*Mentorat.* La directrice de la recherche et des publications (DRP) de l'ACME fournira un soutien et des conseils (individuellement ou en petits groupes) pendant le processus aux boursiers qui le souhaitent, dans le cadre d'un maximum de trois rencontres sur rendez-vous. Les rencontres se dérouleront dans le respect des conventions collectives des enseignants et en dehors de leurs heures de planification. Le soutien peut porter sur le choix du sujet ou des questions de recherche, le recensement des recherches en cours et de la littérature professionnelle, la recherche de stratégies d'amélioration, l'élaboration de plans d'évaluation des résultats, l'analyse et



l'interprétation des données collectées, la préparation d'un échéancier et la planification de la diffusion des résultats.

*Paramètres de financement.* Les fonds peuvent être utilisés pour couvrir les coûts directs de la recherche, y compris les salaires des assistants de recherche, les honoraires pour des Aînés ou des consultations, les ressources et les fournitures pédagogiques, les coûts des congés (enseignants suppléants), les frais de kilométrage et de repas/brevages pour assister à des rencontres d'équipe, ainsi que les ressources d'apprentissage professionnel (jusqu'à un maximum de 20 % du financement total). Les fonds ne peuvent pas être utilisés pour les voyages de congrès, les appareils électroniques, l'équipement musical, les instruments ou la communication des résultats finaux de l'étude.

*Transmission de la demande.* Les candidats intéressés doivent soumettre par courriel une brève proposition de recherche (environ 1000 à 1500 mots) accompagnée d'un budget au format Microsoft Word à Dr Francine Morin avant le **14 juin 2024** à [research@cmea.ca](mailto:research@cmea.ca). Un modèle de proposition peut être fourni à ceux qui ne sont pas familiers avec le processus de recherche.

*Processus de sélection.* Les propositions seront choisies d'ici le **28 juin 2024** par un jury composé de représentants de l'ACME/CMEA et de la Coalition pour l'éducation musicale au Canada (CEMC). Les critères d'évaluation sont la pertinence du projet pour l'éducation musicale au Canada, la validité du plan de recherche, le potentiel à améliorer la pratique de l'enseignement musical et à renforcer l'apprentissage musical, la clarté du budget à démontrer la manière dont les fonds seront utilisés et en quoi les dépenses sont appropriées. Le JCoR transmettra un avis écrit ainsi qu'une description des modalités de distribution des fonds.

*Rapport final.* Un rapport de recherche final (environ 12 à 15 pages, double interligne, police de 12 points) doit être soumis à Dr Francine Morin avant le **28 mars 2025** à [research@cmea.ca](mailto:research@cmea.ca). Le rapport doit inclure un plan pour la communication des résultats aux collègues de l'éducation musicale soit par des présentations dans le cadre de congrès ou de rencontres professionnelles ou par la publication d'articles dans le journal ou l'infolettre de l'ACME/CMEA. Un modèle de rapport peut être fourni sur demande.

#### **DATES IMPORTANTES**

14 juin 2024	Date limite pour la soumission des propositions
28 juin 2024	Annonce de l'attribution des subventions
4-5 juillet 2024	1 <sup>re</sup> rencontre de mentorat : orientation
29 novembre 2024	Versement de 50 % de la subvention et prise de rendez-vous pour les rencontres de mentorat (si désiré)
28 mars 2025	Remise du rapport final (incluant les données financières, les dépenses et les reçus)
15 avril 2025	Versement de la portion restante du financement (50 %)

Les noms des lauréats et la description de leurs recherches seront publiés dans la revue *Musicien éducateur au Canada* et seront affichés sur les sites Web de la CEMC et de l'ACME/CMEA.

Nom du fichier : Appel de propositions 2024 du JCoR (Subventions pour l'amélioration de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage musical, 11 janvier 2024)

## Simplifying Songs for Your Popular Music Ensemble

### Simplifier des chansons pour un ensemble de musique populaire

Steve Giddings

*Abstract: In this article, the author gives some quick ideas and tips for simplifying songs while helping to keep the authenticity and the integrity of those songs intact. He gives specific tips for guitarists, drummers, keyboard players, bass players, and even horn players. Some ways to help the band fit into the range of the singers through transposing are briefly discussed.*

*Résumé : Dans cet article, l'auteur propose quelques trucs et idées rapides pour simplifier des chansons tout en préservant leur intégrité et leur authenticité, puis donne des conseils spécifiques pour les guitaristes, les batteurs, les clavéristes, les bassistes et même les cornistes. Enfin, il traite brièvement de la transposition, un outil qui permet aux musiciens de s'adapter à la tessiture des chanteurs.*

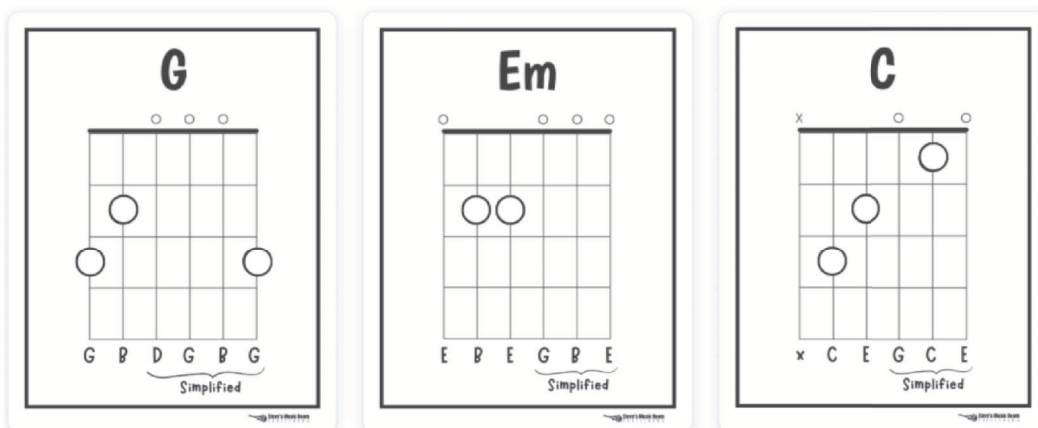
Making your songs sound authentic with young learners can be a bit of a challenge, but it doesn't have to be. Here are some ways to simplify tunes for your kids while still keeping the integrity of the song and the sound intact:

#### For Guitarists

- Use simple versions of the main open chords for guitar. Don't use all six strings if you don't have to. Use the three smallest (highest pitched) strings and one finger or sometimes no fingers to make the same chords. Here are three common chords with their simplified versions highlighted by a bracket. Notice that Em doesn't need any fingers down, while C and G only require one finger (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

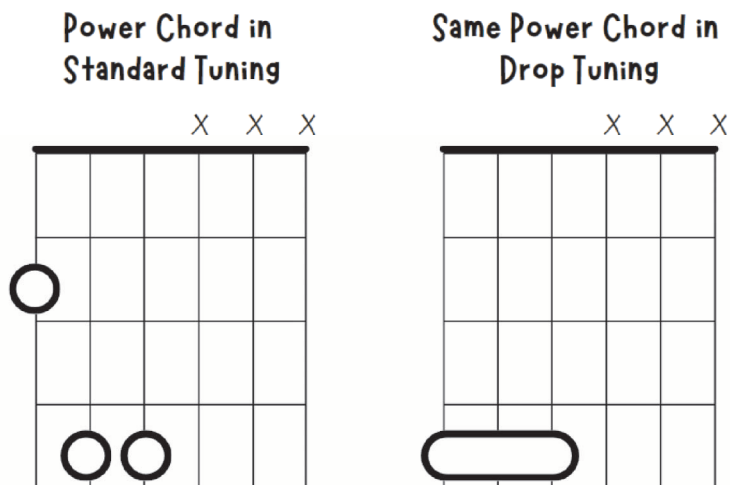
*Simplified Guitar Chords*



- Simplify power chords by playing them with one finger. Power chords are moveable chords that consist of a root and a fifth. A 1 - alternatively, tune guitars to Drop-D tuning to facilitate one-finger power chords (Figure 2).

**Figure 2**

*One Finger Power Chords*

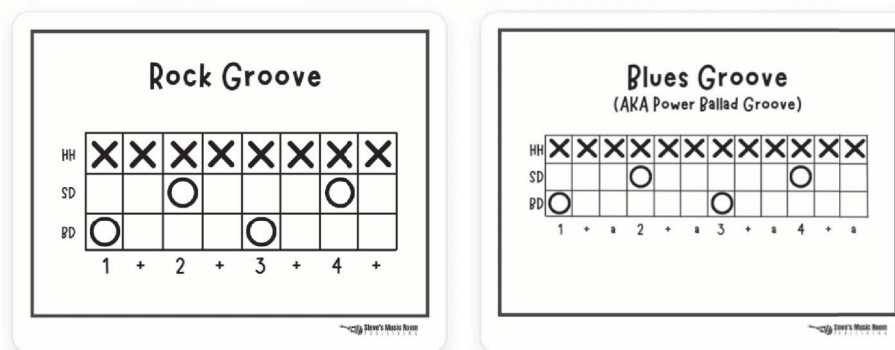


- Can't play barre chords? It's okay, just use power chords instead. If a song has a barre chord or two in its progression, using a power chord instead is a good substitute. This works well for key changes in the middle of your song that requires the use of almost all barre chords. When there is a bit of distortion in the guitar part, having a third in the chord can muddy the sound anyway!

**For Drummers**

**Figure 3**

*Drum Grooves*



- Unless it's a really iconic drum part, a basic rock, or triplet-based groove will suffice (Figure 3)
- Break down the pattern. Have drummers play hats and snare only, or bass drum and snare only.
- Use TUBS charts for drummers (pictured in Figure 3)
- If you have more than one drummer, have one play the hats and snare and one play the bass and snare.

**For Keyboard Players**

- Use dyads on the piano/keyboard parts if your players have small hands or are having trouble with triads. Dyads are the stepping stones to being able to play triads or tetrachords.
- Transpose to an easier key. Singers occasionally need a song transposed up especially if your singers are young. Capos for guitars can easily transpose your tunes up by a step or more. Transpose buttons on most keyboards/electronic pianos are helpful in this regard. Depending on the key and the piano part, you might be able to change the key without the keyboard player needing to learn anything new except where they place their hands.

**For Bass Players**

- Unless it's an iconic bass line like in the opening of "Sweet Child of Mine" playing the root notes will suffice. Or, have the keyboard player do it on a bass setting in their left hand.

**For Horns**

- Bring lines down the octave where needed.
- Consider not using notation for horn players as many popular tunes are in keys they would not have read in yet and having notation will be a hindrance. Also consider that many popular music styles do not use staff notation or any notation at all. Not having notation would be more authentic to the genre, in many cases.

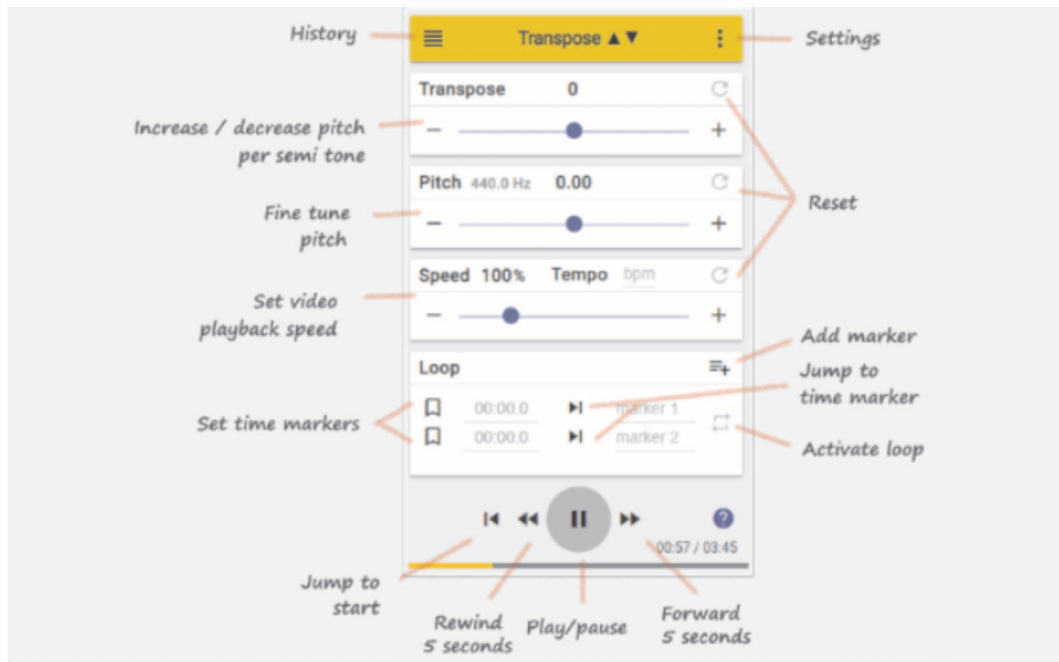
- If your group doesn't have horn players, have keyboard players do the lines on a brass effect.

### Transpose or Down Tuned?

- Song you are learning has the guitars down-tuned? Transpose the video in real time using the Transpose Chrome Extension (Figure 4) to avoid down tuning your guitars.
- A note on drop and down tuning. Drop tuning (as described in this article) is when the 6th string of a guitar is “dropped” down one whole step. Down tuning is when all strings are tuned down equally.

**Figure 4**

*Transpose Chrome Extension*



In many popular music songs, the verses are at a comfortable lower register and the choruses are often in a higher register. This is often called a “lift.” Because of this, singers will often need songs transposed. They might find the verses comfortable, and the choruses much too high or vice versa. If transposing makes things more difficult for the instrumentalists (like transposing down), consider changing the octaves the parts are sung in instead of transposing.

There are many other ways to simplify a song to get an authentic sound while also keeping the integrity of the song intact. Try some of these strategies in your beginning and less experienced groups. Wherever you are in your popular music ensemble coaching journey, I hope you find some help in this article. Until next time, Happy Musicking.



Aside from teaching public school on Prince Edward Island where he also coaches rock ensembles, and singing groups, Steve is also author of three books for music teachers (as well as many other resources) with his most recent being published by Oxford University Press in April of 2022 called, “Technology for Unleashing Creativity.” All three of his books are available on Amazon in print and Kindle formats. He is active as a workshop facilitator as well as owner/operator of [StevesMusicRoom.com](http://StevesMusicRoom.com), a comprehensive resource for music educators across the world. Any questions, comments, or requests can be forwarded to [steve@stevesmusicroom.com](mailto:steve@stevesmusicroom.com). Follow him on social media @StevesMusicRoom.



## PRESS RELEASE

February 12, 2024



The Canadian Music Educators' Association/L'Association canadienne des musiciens éducateurs is pleased to announce the winners of the 2023 National Undergraduate and Graduate Student Essay Competitions. There were ten submissions (7 graduate and 3 undergraduate).

The winners of the 2023 competition are:

### DR. FRANKLIN CHURCHLEY GRADUATE ESSAY COMPETITION:

**FIRST PLACE: DIANE MURRAY-CHARRETT** – UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Essay Title: *Dragonfly on My Shoulder: Transformation in Music Education*

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Lori-Ann Dolloff

### KENNETH BRAY UNDERGRADUATE ESSAY COMPETITION:

**FIRST PLACE: HAYDEN R. SPENCE** – MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Essay Title: *Modernizing Music Assessment: A Three-part Evaluative Structure*

Faculty Advisor: Professor Beth Tuinstra

All submissions were blind reviewed by two jurors. Jurors are experienced music education scholars with strong credentials. They devoted substantial time reading and scoring the submissions, as well as providing constructive feedback to participants.

2023 Graduate Essay Jurors:

- Dr. Lee Willingham, Wilfrid Laurier University
- Dr. Jody Stark, University of Manitoba
- Dr. Charlene Ryan, Toronto Metropolitan University
- Dr. Betty Anne Younker, Western University (Professor Emerita)
- Dr. Andrée Dagenais, Brandon University
- Dr. Hélène Boucher, The Université du Québec à Montréal

2023 Undergraduate Jurors:

- Dr. Adam Adler, Nipissing University
- Dr. Kiera Galway, Mount Allison University

A special thank-you is offered to all those who participated in the competition, including students, faculty advisors, and reviewers. Together, we all make a difference in celebrating, growing, and promoting Canadian music education.

Dr. Andrea M. Rose

Chair, CMEA/ACME National Student Essay Competitions

Director of Higher Learning, Canadian Music Educators' Association/  
*L'Association canadienne des musiciens éducateurs (CMEA/ACME)*

*L'Association canadienne des musiciens éducateurs (CMEA/ACME)*

Professor Emerita and Honorary Research Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland



## COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE

Le 12 février 2024



L'Association canadienne des musiciens éducateurs/Canadian Music Educators' Association a le plaisir d'annoncer les gagnants des concours nationaux 2023 d'essais pour les étudiants de premier cycle et des cycles supérieurs. Les jurés ont examiné un total de 10 essais (7 essais des cycles supérieurs et 3 essais de premier cycle).

Voici les gagnants des concours 2023 :

### CONCOURS D'ESSAIS DR. FRANKLIN CHURCHLEY (CYCLES SUPÉRIEURS) :

**1<sup>re</sup> PLACE : DIANE MURRAY-CHARRETT** – UNIVERSITÉ DE TORONTO

Titre de l'essai : *Dragonfly on My Shoulder: Transformation in Music Supervision* : Dr. Lori-Ann Dolloff

### CONCOURS D'ESSAIS KENNETH BRAY (PREMIER CYCLE) :

**1<sup>re</sup> PLACE : HAYDEN R. SPENCE** – UNIVERSITÉ MÉMORIAL

Titre de l'essai : *Modernizing Music Assessment: A Three-part Evaluative Structure*  
Supervision : professeure Beth Tuinstra

Tous les essais ont été examinés à l'aveugle par deux jurés, qui sont tous des chercheurs expérimentés ayant une expertise en éducation musicale. Les jurés ont passé beaucoup de temps à la lecture et l'évaluation des essais, ainsi qu'à la rédaction de commentaires constructifs à l'attention des participants.

Jurés des essais des cycles supérieurs 2023 :

- Dr. Lee Willingham, Université Wilfrid Laurier
- Dr. Jody Stark, Université du Manitoba
- Dr. Charlene Ryan, Université métropolitaine de Toronto
- Dr. Betty Anne Younker, Université Western (professeure émérite)
- Dr. Andrée Dagenais, Université Brandon
- Dr. Hélène Boucher, Université du Québec à Montréal



Jurés des essais de premier cycle 2023 :

- Dr. Adam Adler, Université Nipissing
- Dr. Kiera Galway, Université Mount Allison

Nous tenons à remercier toutes les personnes qui ont joué un rôle dans ces concours, soit les étudiants, les superviseurs et les jurés. Ensemble, nous pouvons changer les choses favorisant les échanges sur l'éducation musicale au Canada.

Dr. Andrea M. Rose, présidente

Concours nationaux 2023 d'essais étudiants de l'ACME/CMEA

Directrice de l'enseignement supérieur, Association canadienne des musiciens  
éducateurs/Canadian Music Educators' Association (ACME/CMEA)

Professeure émérite et professeure-chercheuse honoraire, Université Mémorial de Terre-Neuve

*continued from page 3*

de précieux conseils aux enseignants qui veulent simplifier des chansons pour leurs élèves sans en compromettre l'authenticité et l'intégrité. Giddings propose également des stratégies pratiques pour les guitaristes, les batteurs, les claviéristes, les bassistes et les cornistes.

Enfin, ce numéro marque une transition au sein de notre équipe éditoriale. Plusieurs membres terminent leur mandat de trois ans, et nous les remercions pour les services

qu'ils ont rendus à la communauté canadienne de l'éducation musicale. En même temps, nous accueillons de nouveaux membres avec lesquels je me réjouis de travailler jusqu'à la fin de mon mandat de rédacteur en chef. Ensemble, nous poursuivrons nos efforts pour publier des numéros qui reflètent la bienveillance que nous manifestons dans notre profession.

*continued from page 4*

come to school. Celebrate your students' accomplishments, learn with them, and have fun making music.

Please do not forget that the CMEA and your provincial music education associations are here for our members. Reach out at any time with your struggles, victories, or frustrations. I can be contacted at [president@cmea.ca](mailto:president@cmea.ca).

Peu importe où l'on se trouve dans ce beau pays, le printemps est à nos portes. J'espère que vous profitez du temps plus doux et des journées qui s'allongent.

J'ai eu l'idée de vous parler de choses que les professeurs expérimentés savent probablement déjà, mais auxquelles on ne pense pas toujours, et que j'aurais aimé savoir au début de ma carrière. Mon parcours a été en dents de scie, jalonné de triomphes, d'échecs et de quelques frustrations. J'ai beaucoup appris sur moi-même, sur la musique et sur les gens.

L'enseignement de la musique est à la fois étrange et merveilleux. Chacun de nous a sa propre façon d'enseigner, mais nous avons tous en commun d'être extraordinaires. Nous enseignons avant l'école, après l'école, le soir et même à l'heure du dîner. Si vous ne trouvez pas ça extraordinaire, allez voir ce que font les autres enseignants le midi. Certains s'assoient ou parlent entre adultes... Nous? Nous mangeons un sandwich d'une main et dirigeons de l'autre, tout en disant aux percussionnistes d'arrêter d'allumer des feux dans la rangée du fond... C'est vraiment différent.

Nous vivons dans un univers scolaire que seuls les professeurs de musique connaissent. Du primaire à l'université, peu de nos collègues non musiciens comprennent notre réalité. Ceux qui enseignent une autre matière comme les maths, l'anglais ou les sciences ne savent pas toujours ce que c'est que d'enseigner à des élèves qui ont envie d'être là, qui sont passionnés par la musique et qui arrivent à 7 h 30 pour apprendre. Un collègue du nord de la Colombie-Britannique m'a suggéré de proposer au professeur de math d'échanger pendant un an nos séances matinales ou nos répétitions du midi. Cette proposition ne serait-elle pas intéressante?

Nous passons du temps en dehors de l'école pour faire de la musique avec nos élèves. J'ai fait le calcul : quatorze concerts en moyenne par an, qui durent en moyenne 3 heures du début à la fin du nettoyage, soit 126 heures par an! Dans ma carrière, j'ai donc donné 2520 heures de mon temps pour mes élèves en plus de mes heures d'enseignement. Si j'avais travaillé pour une quelconque entreprise privée, ces heures auraient été payées en heures supplémentaires... toutefois ce n'est pas une question d'argent, ni de perte de temps, mais plutôt d'expérience acquise. Nous transmettons des connaissances et influençons positivement des vies. Je continuerai à organiser des

concerts et à faire de la musique avec mes élèves parce qu'ils adorent ça, tout comme moi, leurs parents et toute la communauté. Et quand je vois un élève sourire, je sais que je lui ai appris quelque chose.

Nous faisons plus qu'enseigner la musique : nous transmettons aux élèves le respect de soi et leur apprenons à vivre avec les succès et les échecs, à lire, à compter, à travailler en équipe, et à être une bonne personne. Nous enseignons tout ça dans nos classes de musique. À mes débuts, j'ai fait de la suppléance dans une classe de musique de maternelle un mois de septembre. J'ai appris aux élèves à s'asseoir en cercle tous les jours pendant une semaine. Ça n'avait rien à voir avec la musique, mais cet apprentissage était essentiel pour participer à la vie scolaire et faire partie d'une équipe et du groupe.

Nous apprenons à la prochaine génération comment faire face à l'échec. La musique est l'un des rares domaines de l'éducation où il est facile de faire des erreurs et de se tromper. On peut faire une fausse note, se tromper de paroles ou jouer la mauvaise pièce.

Nos élèves passent beaucoup de temps sur les médias sociaux et les jeux vidéo, et ces plateformes les récompensent continuellement. C'est dans la classe de musique que la réalité les rattrape...

Tu n'as pas appris ta partie? Tu n'as pas pensé à noter la reprise sur ta partition? Tu as oublié tes partitions, ton uniforme pour le concert ou ton instrument? Ce sont toutes des leçons de vie pour nos élèves. Ils doivent faire ces erreurs pour apprendre, et ces leçons leur servent dans leur vie de tous les jours. Dans une classe de musique, c'est évident que nos erreurs sont bien réelles, et on se souvient tous des leçons que nous en avons tirées. Mais quelles sont les conséquences quand on meurt dans un jeu vidéo?

Nous avons accès à ce que les élèves ont de mieux à offrir. J'entends régulièrement mes collègues dire : « oh, ce jeune n'a rien accompli » ou « cette élève est (insérer un commentaire négatif) ». Je leur réponds alors avec plaisir : « il a joué un concerto pour trompette la semaine dernière et c'était magnifique », « vous devriez l'entendre jouer en solo » ou, mieux encore, « elle n'a jamais manqué un seul cours de musique ». Nous tirons le meilleur de nos élèves parce que nous leur permettons de réaliser quelque chose qui leur tient à cœur et d'appartenir à un groupe.

Peu importe l'âge de vos élèves et la région où vous travaillez, sachez que vous jouez un rôle important dans leur vie. Vous leur apportez quelque chose que les autres enseignants ne peuvent leur offrir, et ils ne l'oublieront jamais. Pour certains de nos élèves, la musique est leur seule raison de venir à l'école. Soulignez les réussites de vos élèves, apprenez avec eux et amusez-vous à faire de la musique.

N'oubliez pas que l'ACME et les associations provinciales sont là pour vous. N'hésitez pas à me contacter en tout temps pour me faire part de vos difficultés, de vos réussites ou de vos insatisfactions. Vous pouvez me joindre au [president@cmea.ca](mailto:president@cmea.ca).

# MUSIC EDUCATION AT WESTERN UNIVERSITY



The Music Education Department at Western is dedicated to world-leading research and teaching in music education.

**adam patrick bell** Music and accessibility; disability studies and music education; popular music and music production pedagogy; music software/ instrument design

**Mark Ramsay** Choral conducting and leadership; Canadian choral repertoire; diversifying choral repertoire; choral curriculum and pedagogy; tenor/bass choirs and repertoire

**Colleen Richardson** Wind band/ensemble literature and performance; rehearsal and conducting techniques and pedagogy; international wind orchestra repertoire/ training

**Kevin Watson** Jazz education; music teacher preparation; improvisation; instrumental practice; music cognition

**Tracy Wong** Choral conducting and pedagogy; choral composition and arrangement; vocal pedagogy in a choral context; Malaysian choral music

**Paul Woodford** Democracy and music education; social justice and music; music education theories and policy; music education and politics

**Ruth Wright** Sociology of music education; popular music in music education; empowering marginalized students through music education; informal music learning; music, class, and education

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## UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

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**Bachelor of Arts** Honours Specialization in Music, Specialization in Music Administrative Studies, Major in Music, Major in Popular Music Studies, Major in Creative Arts and Production, Minors in Music Performance Studies, Music, and Dance

### Collaborative Programs:

Music Recording Arts (with Fanshawe College)

Music & Business (with Ivey Business School)

## GRADUATE STUDIES

MMus and PhD Music Education

MMus Literature and Performance

Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA)

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One-Year MA and PhD Music Theory

One-Year MA and PhD Musicology

Additional Qualification: Collaborative

Specialization in Music Cognition



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# HD-300

Workstation for Band Directors



## THE ULTIMATE BAND DIRECTOR COMPANION

The HD-300 makes every music teacher's job easier by combining tools to help students improve rhythm, intonation, and tone production in one intuitive package. One-touch transposition between C, Bb, Eb and F makes it very easy to help students find their note while reading from a transposed score. The simplified user interface, new recording & sound-back features, and the addition of the optional mobile app, build on the success of the HD-100 and HD-200.



**Tuner • Metronome • Audio Recorder • Transposition Tool • Intonation Trainer**



### HD-300 Assistant App (optional)

HD-300 Assistant is the iOS App that controls the HD-300 remotely, and offers several additional easy-to-use features, including a powerful rhythm function, a user friendly intonation training tool, and much more.