



Title: A Case History of One Foundation's Philanthropy

Author(s): Robert J. Werner

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It is with pleasure that we inaugurate the reprint of the entire seven volumes of The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning. The journal began in 1990 as The Quarterly. In 1992, with volume 3, the name changed to The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning and continued until 1997. The journal contained articles on issues that were timely when they appeared and are now important for their historical relevance. For many authors, it was their first major publication. Visions of Research in Music Education will publish facsimiles of each issue as it originally appeared. Each article will be a separate pdf file. Jason D. Vodicka has accepted my invitation to serve as guest editor for the reprint project and will compose a new editorial to introduce each volume. Chad Keilman is the production manager. I express deepest thanks to Richard Colwell for granting VRME permission to re-publish The Quarterly in online format. He has graciously prepared an introduction to the reprint series.

A Case History of One Foundation's Philanthropy

By Robert J. Werner

University of Cincinnati

In these days of limited financial resources available to our schools and universities, with government agencies cutting back rather than expanding their programs of support, and foundations providing only a small percentage of what many have allocated in the past for arts education, one looks back with some nostalgia to the golden days of the 1960s. My purpose here is to trace the history of one philanthropy that funded a single project for an unprecedented 14 years and to show how this project was nurtured from an original idea into an influential program which affected the teaching of music at all levels. The legacy of the Contemporary Music Project (CMP) is apparent today in textbooks, syllabi, and the careers of many who were influenced by it.

“The initial reaction to the project was one of considerable interest and enthusiasm, both on the part of the young composers and of the students and teachers in the selected schools.”

In the late 1950s, the Ford Foundation had just established a new division under MacNeal Lowry to support philanthropic programs in the arts. He hired as an associate Dr. Edward F. D'Arms, a man with extensive background in arts programs at the Rockefeller Foundation. They then began to look for significant projects to begin their support of the arts.

At this same time, in 1957, the American composer Norman Dello Joio appeared on the Public Broadcasting System station in New York City discussing music and music education in contemporary society.

Impressed with his realistic approach to these concerns, Lowry invited Dello Joio to come to the Ford Foundation to talk about his ideas regarding programs to support contemporary music.

During these discussions, Dello Joio suggested that young composers, under the age of 35, could benefit from having specific school performing groups to write for, and students in these schools would benefit from sharing in the creation of new compositions by being observers and participants in the creative process. Such a program would also support the development of a new contemporary repertoire for school music while providing a link between the young composer and his or her future audience. He suggested that the foundation support a program that would offer composers one-year residencies in public schools where they would write for specific performing groups. Students in these schools would not only be provided an opportunity to gain insight into the creative process, but those with an interest in composition could be tutored by these young composers. He also expected that such a program would provide support and incentive for the composers at a critical time in their development: shortly after leaving formal training in the universities. It was hoped that these composers would also enrich the musical life of the entire community.

“The Young Composers Project”

The Ford Foundation accepted this proposal, and D'Arms was given primary responsibility for working with Dello Joio to establish what became known as “The Young Composers Project.” It began in 1959 under the administration of the National Music Council. A committee headed

by Dello Joio and consisting of a panel of composers and one of music educators selected the composers and the school systems for the project.

This committee structure provided an innovative opportunity for cooperation between these two areas of the music profession. From all reports, the two panels met each other with some trepidation, but eventually learned to trust and support each other. This was not the least of the accomplishments of the project. The selection committee continued to expand its membership along with the concepts and purposes of the project and later became the Project Policy Committee.

The initial grant of \$200,000 supported a program open to composers not over 35 years of age, most not more than three years beyond their graduate education. During its first three-year period, 31 composers were placed in American public schools.

The initial reaction to the project was one of considerable interest and enthusiasm, both on the part of the young composers and of the students and teachers in the selected schools. It did, however, point up a serious difference in the perception of contemporary music that resulted from differences in the training of composers and music teachers. It was evident that additional training was needed to broaden the understanding of teachers in regard to contemporary music, particularly if they were to be more confident in using this literature in the public school curriculum and performances.

This realization concerned the selection panel and provided the basis for the submission of a proposal by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) to the Ford Foundation in 1962. The proposal suggested a continuation of the composer's program as well as an expansion to include seminars and workshops in contemporary music for music teachers. The proposal also requested the establishment of pilot projects in the use of contemporary music in selected elementary and secondary schools. The resulting grant of \$1,380,000 established an expanded program from 1963 to 1968 under the administrative responsibility of MENC. The program, now called the "Contemporary

Music Project for Creativity in Music Education," included the continuation of the composer's program under the title "Composers in Public Schools." The selection committee, now known as the Project Policy Committee, was also expanded to include representatives of several areas of the music profession.

Evolution of the Concept: Comprehensive Musicianship

With this new charge and expanded responsibilities, CMP (Contemporary Music Project) organized seminars and workshops in various colleges that provided opportunities for teachers to have direct experiences with contemporary music through analysis, performance, and creative activities. The project also established six pilot programs in public schools to explore new methods of presenting contemporary music concepts to children, primarily through improvisation and composition. At the same time, CMP continued to place twelve composers a year in residencies in selected public schools.

This next step in the evolution of Dello Joio's initial concept continued to provide contemporary music for schools and an insight into the creative process for students, while at the same time exploring the possibility of new methods of teaching contemporary music by teachers who would be more comprehensively prepared. By 1965, the policy committee felt that a serious look needed to be taken at the total preparation of music teachers, and thus a seminar which included major figures in the various fields of music was held in April 1965 at Northwestern University. The purpose of this seminar was to consider ways of re-evaluating the professional education of music teachers. As a result, a procedure for such an education was suggested which later became known as "comprehensive musicianship." The ideal preparation that was described came from the realization that it was necessary to provide a more comprehensive preparation for teachers by experiences with all aspects of musicianship if they were to confidently deal with the techniques represented by the compositions of both contemporary composers and the more traditional repertoire.

Thus, the concept of introducing contemporary music to public school students had moved to the next stage of evolution, which now suggested a more in-depth view of the presentation of music of all periods as the basis for understanding the contemporary literature. It was decided that the concept of comprehensive musicianship should be tested by a diverse group of schools and colleges. The policy committee approved the next step in the project's development by establishing, between 1966 and 1968, six regional Institutes for Music in Contemporary Education in which this concept would be tested in 32 colleges and universities and four pre-collegiate settings. Late in 1966, a proposal for additional funding to strengthen the program was submitted, and supplementary funding was provided by the Ford Foundation in the amount of \$250,000. This was used to support, publish, and distribute reports of the regional institutes and convene meetings of participants for evaluating and refining procedures in teaching this more comprehensive musicianship.

As a result of the work of these 36 experimental centers, a review of their results, conference presentations, and the continuing work of composers in the public schools, the concept of comprehensive musicianship was refined to provide the basis for the development of new professional training programs in many colleges and universities. It also became the basis for the development of teaching approaches in K-12 programs.

A New Phase of Sponsorship

From 1959–1968, the Ford Foundation had remained supportive and interested in programs that brought together professionals, teachers, and students to develop this more comprehensive approach to teaching, performance, composition, and appreciation. Thus, in 1968, under the leadership of Vanette Lawler, the Executive Director of the Music Educators National Conference, and with support of the CMP Project Policy Committee under the chairmanship of Norman Dello Joio, a new phase of sponsorship was proposed. This would provide a five-year continuation grant in the amount of \$1,340,000

from the Ford Foundation and an additional contribution of \$50,000 for each of the five years from MENC.

This final five-year grant was approved and had three major areas. The first involved the placement of musicians-in-residence to communities. The concept of placing composers-in-residence was expanded beyond public schools to include entire communities or states. During this five-year period, twelve composers and one performer were placed in communities throughout the United States, from Alaska to Tampa, and from Boston to Hawaii. Their charge was to serve as cultural catalysts by encouraging cooperation and innovation among the various educational, civic, and artistic constituencies.

The composers' success was measured by the extensive scope of their influence and their creative work. They worked with state arts councils, the mayor's office, and public schools and universities. In one case, the composer was so successful that at the end of the three-year residency period—as funding was gradually handed over to the community—the state's art council took over the composer's support for an additional two years to enable the composer to serve throughout the state. In all cases, these resident young professionals served as composers, teachers, and truly comprehensive musicians.

The second program was devoted to defining and refining the principles involved in the teaching of comprehensive musicianship. Grants were given to 21 teachers to develop various approaches to teaching this concept. Experience with a great variety of music was fundamental to this approach, as was the personal involvement of students in analysis, composition, performance, and the complementary activities of research and teaching. The educational strategies that were developed were based on the integration of skills and information about a wide variety of music by involving students in a project-oriented approach that gave them the independence of making critical judgments about many kinds of musical expression.

The third program, complementary activities, included workshops, publications,

and conference presentations. These brought hundreds of teachers into more direct contact with these concepts and teaching methods.

The End of Funding, But Not of Influence

In June 1973, the project funding concluded after 14 years, but this did not signal the end of its influence. The almost 80 composers who were placed in-residence in public schools and communities, the countless number of teachers and students that they worked with, and the thousands who participated in workshops and in-service institutes all absorbed some aspects of the original concept that Dello Joio had proposed to the Ford Foundation. The foundation, on the other hand, particularly through the belief of Lowry and the constant support and nurturing of D'Armes, provided the philanthropic support for these ideas, the financial and psychological stability that was crucial to allow for the development of the various components of this concept that became apparent as the project matured. In looking at it from today's perspective, it can be said to have provided the luxury of risk-taking. Not all its efforts were successful, but they touched and changed many.

Summing up the program in 1973, D'Armes, who had just retired from the Foundation and accepted the chairmanship of the CMP Policy Committee for its final year, reflected as follows:

"It is possible to discern several principles which have characterized CMP activities in the course of its existence. One of these characteristics is initiative. The idea of placing young composers in public school systems, originated by Norman Dello Joio, was a landmark in many respects. It helped young composers to learn their craft; it brought young people of school age into direct contact with the creative process; and it broadened the repertory of music performed in elementary and secondary schools. Perhaps most important, this program was the prototype of many of the artists-in-residence programs supported by the National Endowment and other philanthropies in the 1960s and 70s. It took the initiative in reviewing curricula both at the university and the

public school levels and it brought together practicing musicians, music educators, and lay members of the community to evaluate and develop plans for implementation.

The second characteristic was flexibility; it placed composers from metropolitan cities into small rural communities. It moved residencies from public schools to communities and states. It developed programs that proved the flexibility of the concept of comprehensive musicianship and applied it in a wide range of educational settings.

A third characteristic of CMP has been its coalescing function. From its initial bringing together of the panels to place select young composers in school systems through the development of the policy project committee with its broad representation of the profession, it has brought together under its auspices many diverse and significant aspects of the community. Through its efforts, it has worked closely with its original partner, the Music Educators National Conference, and besides has had significant influence with such other organizations such as the National Association of Schools of Music, the College Music Society, the International Society for Music Education and the American Musicological Society. It is also worth noting the role that it played through its composers in residence in bringing together the diverse aspects of community relations from political and professional organizations including schools, arts councils, orchestras, churches, popular music groups, radio and television stations, and a wide variety of educational institutions at all levels within the community.

As more and more of these persons who have been affected by CMP move into positions of influence and as more and more of their students assume an active role in the music profession, it is hoped that the effects of CMP will continue to widen.¹

Now, 17 years after the completion of this project, the specific accomplishments of individuals have melded into practice and become part of the history of music education and of young composers in our country. There is no doubt that CMP had significant personal implications for those who participated; many developed a lifetime interest in professional education and now lead significant careers, particularly in higher education.

Learning from the Past

What can we learn from this case history, in which the Ford Foundation supported CMP for 15 years, committing \$3,500,000; and in which the Music Educators National Conference contributed \$250,000 during the final five years? This commitment grew from Dello Joio's initial idea to provide closer contact between the young composer and his future audience; it grew and was nurtured at each step by the professional commitment of those who directed the programs either as administrators or policy committee members. The generosity and stability of the Ford Foundation commitment allowed the officers of CMP to give the idea and its offshoots a chance to develop.

Today, the arts and humanities do not have the support they enjoyed in those golden years of the 1960s. One wonders, with some nostalgia, whether a similar idea proposed today could be funded; and if funded, would it be allowed to develop into a multidimensional program like the Contemporary Music Project? The support of risk-taking and idea development, particularly at such a level, is rare indeed today, but this strategy remains one of the most important means of encouraging the teacher, the creator, the performer, or the scholar.

One can only hope that a new era of similar support for projects not directly connected with making a living or the development of technology or commerce will come again, so that equal emphasis

can be placed on those aspects of arts education that affect the quality of our lives in a significant way. As with most meaningful change, new concepts must be given the opportunity to be nurtured and evaluated at constantly evolving stages as we deal with the development of new attitudes based on the security of previous experiences. It is as necessary in the arts as it is in the sciences, but seldom does arts education have this kind of commitment for the evolution of a concept.

Programs in the arts, and particularly in arts education, must by nature be long-ranged, often without immediate and demonstrable results. Trust and the willingness to support new opportunities as they are identified is the most important gift philanthropy can make. All who were touched by the Contemporary Music Project are deeply grateful and share the hope that this kind of support for arts education will again be possible before too long. Today's growing commitment to a quality sequential arts curriculum could be enriched by such enlightened philanthropy. □

Note

1. Edward F. D'Armes, "CMP in Perspective," *CMP Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Spring 1973.

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