

Title: Voodoo and the Applied Music Studio

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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.

Voodoo And The Applied Music Studio

By Manny Brand

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Although shrunken skulls or chicken blood are certainly not a part of applied music instruction, there is a mystery that often surrounds the applied studio. This issue peeks behind this veil of mystery as we fulfill our continuing goal of meeting the broad interests of all those involved in music teaching and learning.

After all, whether one conducts bands or choirs, teaches music theory or trombone, or administers large or small music programs, we all have experienced, first hand, music teaching and learning in the applied studio. In fact, applied studio instruction may be the single music teaching/learning experience that binds us all together. Society expects results from applied instruction. Students (or more accurately, their parents) directly support the cost of private lessons, sometimes with financial sacrifice. We tend to believe the applied studio is the cradle of musicianship; it is responsible for inspiring, instructing, and preparing the world's musicians. Yet precisely because we expect the applied studio to produce our finest performers, applied instruction is often shrouded in mystery:

- What happens in the applied studio?
- What makes an applied music teacher effective?
- How do applied music teachers gauge their success?
- How are applied music teachers and their students evaluated?

In spite of all that we know about music teaching and learning, the applied studio's instructional processes are often ignored by research, which generally emphasizes group music instruction.

Some applied teachers and students may even enjoy mystifying their studio, but TQ readers have an urge to inquire. Sure we marvel at an outstanding performer, but we want to know about the process—the instruction—that produces extraordinary performers. This issue provides diverse perspectives on music teaching and learning in the applied studio. Some articles are theoretical, others data-based, and still others offer insights based on the author's rich teaching experiences.

In the first article, Richard Kennell asserts that applied music instruction lacks a theoretical foundation. He offers a useful theoretical model, based on the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, and discusses the complexities involved in making wise pedagogical choices in the applied music lesson. In the next article, authors Hal Abeles, Jeanne Goffi, and Susan Levasseur report on the development, reliability, and use of instruments for evaluating applied music faculty.


Another aspect of applied teaching and learning involves the role of technology. Victoria McArthur's study examines the use and effectiveness of computers in the applied setting. Charles P. Schmidt studies the applied studio through a variety of lenses, including instrumentation to measure teacher and student behavior, evaluation of instruction, instructional methods, and curricular issues.

Carla S. Wasson surveys chairs of search committees involved in hiring college applied faculty and reports on factors influencing committee decisions in hiring candidates. Her study raises a number of important is-

sues concerning the quality and effectiveness of teaching music in higher education, the academic reward system, and the preparation of graduates for applied music teaching.

The role of preparatory programs in preparing prospective applied studio teachers is discussed by Carolyn Livingston and Jane Murray. Carla LeFevre-Milholin contrasts instrumental versus vocal teaching/learning. She asserts that the successful voice teacher (and student) must overcome obstacles that do not occur in applied instrumental studios. Finally, Barbara Doscher demystifies the most mystical of all applied instruction—studio voice. She notes that understanding of the physiology of breathing, how the vocal folds

function, and the part played by fixed vowel formants allow one to devise instructional techniques to replace the mysteries of the voice studio.

Research in music teaching and learning has not focused attention on the most common form of music study—the private music lesson. As Charles Schmidt points out, applied instruction tends to be “idiosyncratic and based more on intuition than on a systematic examination of assumptions.” Myths or unfounded teaching practices have no place in the professional practice of applied music teaching. This issue of TQ helps to lift the veil of mystery that for too long has surrounded applied music instruction. 

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