

Rethinking Excellence in Music Education

By

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Abstract

In this article, I question an educational ideology of musical excellence, particularly as it tends to appeal to large ensembles in secondary school music. Excellence appears to be a widespread idea that often conjures up notions of distinction, success, and superiority, which may foster feelings of competition that run counter to the inclusivity intended by many music educators. I discuss traditions of music education as they relate to large ensembles, and specifically discuss four facets of competitive music education: becoming the best, visibility, preoccupation with the outcome, and resistance to change. I then appeal to responsibility in music teaching, including broad conceptions of musicianship and diverse musical successes toward lifelong musical engagement, as well as an openness to redefine the term excellence and its use.

Keywords: excellence, competition, ensembles, lifelong learning, musicianship

“This is the best ensemble in the school; we have to demonstrate what the students can do. Most of them take private lessons and so we are able to tackle some difficult repertoire. The school board will be at the concert, and we've only got a week and a half, so all of our focus right now is on the students getting it right," a student-teacher declared to me years ago.

“Ok, what are you trying to teach the students? Did you set goals for this rehearsal?” I asked.

The response was quick: “Right now we’re working on the rep—you know, it’s a high-achieving ensemble!”

“Why is it important that students perform this particular repertoire if it should dominate so much learning time?” I asked her.

“This is what you do,” she assured me.

I probed, “What are students learning, and what do you hope they will do with what they learn?” She looked perplexed, but I pressed, “How will you assess them?”

“Oh, we’ll get to that after the concert,” she responded.

“Does the whole ensemble need to dedicate learning time to this repertoire, could it be a volunteer ensemble?” I asked.

She scoffed and said, “We need the best kids playing their best. There’s no other way.”¹

Although this conversation took place years ago, I cannot forget it. In my view, the student had accepted a dominant line of valuing in secondary ensemble teaching: play the hardest music, get the best students (they should take private lessons), and demonstrate a polished performance to particular people. Accomplish this at all costs. Why strive for this specific kind of excellence in school music? In this paper, I explore the notion of excellence as it implicates competition, standardization, and a perpetually narrow definition of achievement and success in

music education. I then suggest alternative ways of considering goals and outcomes for music teaching and learning in and out of schools. I appeal to responsibility rather than excellence in music teaching, and I encourage openness to redefine the term and its use.

In the story I recount, it is important to bear in mind that this student-teacher was not in a position to overhaul the ensemble structure, performance schedule, or philosophy of their mentor teacher. However, I had hoped that I might prompt them to reconsider some assumptions about what *has to be* in secondary ensembles. Among other issues represented by their comments, namely pedagogical practices, learning objectives, and canonized repertoire, their appeal to excellence in music teaching and learning struck me. While there is much to be celebrated in striving to improve, attempting to seek deeper understandings, or desiring to do one's best, these goals do not always align with ideology and practices of educational excellence.

Excellence appears to be a widespread idea that often emerges in conversations such as this one. It is a term that conjures up notions of distinction, success, and superior advantage²—competition, that is—the achievement of becoming the best. According to Saunders, one of the problems involving excellence in education is that it is so widely accepted.³ They stated, “Because excellence appears neutral, natural, universal, and a legitimate educational goal, it obfuscates the embedded assumptions that undergird the material practices associated with performances of excellence.”⁴ These practices normalize quantification, standardization, efficiency, and competition in education, furthering a neoliberal ideology.⁵

While often promoted with assumed goodness, teachers may use ideals of excellence to enforce particular values. Dai described excellence as a form of giftedness, involving rare and superior qualities that satisfy particular performance standards in domains considered culturally valuable.⁶ He noted that while excellence in educational contexts could comprise social

leadership or creative achievements, it is more often used to describe skilled performance based on curricular standards. Dai questioned the ways excellence might promote social inequalities by failing to account for advantages like social and cultural capital. Enforcement of excellence also promotes productivity, pushing an investment-to-outcome focus that leads to a spotlight on efficiency.⁷

Scholars offer different perspectives on the goals and purposes of school music. These perspectives do not always align with superiority and efficiency but often lean toward inclusiveness and growth. For example, Cutietta noted that in a democratic society, schools should educate as many people as possible to become musically informed and engaged, and to prepare students to contribute to society through their own meaningful lives.⁸ Similarly, Johansen stated that meaningful music education should allow people to make positive differences in their lives and foster positive social change.⁹

Nevertheless, school music focuses on skills and concepts that may lack transferability or sustainability in many students' lives.¹⁰ For what does a school music education prepare students? According to Thibeault, music in the United States tends to exist as a "specialist-oriented presentational field."¹¹ Perhaps an elite student can later study music in higher education or strive for a professional music career. Among even those few, however, skills are needed beyond artistry and technical mastery of an instrument that may include, for instance, finance, education, fundraising, and management.¹²

Excellence, or a drive to excel in the schooling system, can be considered in relation to high achievement. School music achievement is sometimes defined by quantified assessments that align with contemporary policies of standardization and competition used for comparability.¹³ Learning assessments may focus on skills and concepts related to national and

state standards; we may assess learning in particular ways.¹⁴ However, within a school culture of standardization, long-term musical engagement may be taken for granted or undervalued. School music cultures tend to enact teacher-centric efficiency and measurable productivity, particularly in large ensembles with larger populations than typical school classes.¹⁵

Competition to excel above others is likely one reason the pool of students and teachers involved in school music remains narrow. Cutietta described school music traditions (including higher education) as a “closed feedback loop” that begins with participation in school music and moves to music teacher preparation programs, professional development, and perpetuation of traditions as music teachers in K–12 systems.¹⁶ We may reward teachers for ascribing to traditions that may include being selective among students, participating in festivals, winning competitions, and perhaps leading some students to music careers. In an attempt to shed light on this loop, Schmidt questioned who the leaders are in music education, whose ideas we listen to, and who should be allowed to participate.¹⁷

Despite standardization, we can regard high achievement in different ways. For example, students love music, continue to be musical in their adult lives, gain a depth of understanding about music, and become versatile musical people. D. A. Williams, drawing from the works of Bennett Reimer and David Elliott, noted shared goals of music teaching and learning that encourage a reconsideration of excellence. Some of these goals include acknowledging local culture; value for human thinking and feeling; and integration of listening skills (affect, interpretation, structural components, expressivity, representation, social context, and personal meanings); and creativity, self-growth, and self-knowledge.¹⁸

Although I propose the notion of excellence as problematic, I do not mean to say that music classes should lack rigor or that students should not strive to attain refined skills or

understandings. Music classes that operate apart from the traditions of competition and excellence can certainly lead students to achieve sophisticated musical skills and understandings. Students are motivated by positive expectations and goal-setting, which we can implement without competitive and standardized traditions.¹⁹

I propose that learning is too often in tension with the ways ideas of excellence we seem to uphold. As Deresiewicz asked of privileged education in general, are teachers forcing a choice between learning and success?²⁰ I ask, do music teachers prioritize students' ongoing musicianship beyond their school years? Such an openness might lead to divergent and ongoing definitions of music that teachers might not get to know and see fully. There may not be much public recognition for this focus. Yet do music teachers really value the kinds of broadening and inclusion that might oblige us to ask ourselves such difficult, vulnerable questions? As Williams noted, the music education profession must be open to critical consideration and alternatives.²¹

For music students, some of whom will become music educators, an unquestioned endeavor to achieve excellence often begins early. This endeavor can include private study, lessons with the best teachers, efforts to undertake increasingly difficult repertoire in the Western classical canon, participation in competitions, auditions to regional ensembles, acceptance to prestigious schools of music, and so on, painting an elite pathway. While some of these activities may occur outside schools, school music classes often support a similar ideology that, as Webster noted, often marginalizes music instruction outside of traditional performance ensembles.²²

Some students will audition into honors ensembles, compete for the first chair at festivals, and play concerts of challenging repertoire in efforts to realize a narrow standard of excellence and achieve recognition for it. While these activities can certainly be motivating and

satisfying for some students, they contribute to a shrinking group that adheres to traditional music education experiences. As Cutietta noted, we must extend the reach of music programs to raise diverse musical citizens.²³ Traditional music education experiences seem in tension with music as a school subject presumably for all.

Varying degrees of competition is present in school music. Whether formally structured, like a band competition, or less formally, perhaps auditioned seating arrangements, competitive musicianship shapes a culture that affects even those who do not participate in it. For instance, a concert focusing solely on what an ensemble can do rather than a visible acknowledgment of what learning processes the ensemble underwent, who contributed to that process, and in what ways they contributed, including how they realized a final performance, will fail to make learning visible and may even fail to value learning in favor of accomplishment. Such a performance communicates strong school music values to the community. Performing can certainly represent learning, provide purpose for learning, and shape the nature of learning, yet it is not necessarily synonymous with learning.²⁴ Learning and performance are related, yet it is also possible that one can dominate the other when focused on efficiency and success.²⁵

The students who do not feel successful in school music may not recognize their own human musicianship. Resulting self-conceptions that one is unmusical are unfortunately common, societally reinforced, and often long-lasting.²⁶ School music models professional training and performance; we regard those who do not achieve in this system as consumers and appreciators of musicians' work.²⁷ However, these ideas are not new. Scholars have written and spoken at length about such concerns as a focus on process over product,²⁸ ensemble competitions,²⁹ and ensemble structures.³⁰

Encouragingly, researchers continue to explore new ideas for those students who may not otherwise find a place in school music.³¹ In some cases, however, even these classes adhere to pervasive notions of musical excellence. Some practitioners will agree that teaching and learning in large ensembles can occur in musical, student-centered ways that provide ownership and autonomy. Teachers can facilitate such pedagogies even though it may be difficult to disband ideals like excellence that so often frame them. However, to do so, necessitates an active rethinking of ensemble norms and values in addition to likely expectations among the audience and community.

A philosophy of excellence elicits increasingly thoughtful and enlightened responses from music professionals who have expressed concerns about competition in general education and music education.³² Some have emphasized the need for a broad representation of students, teachers, repertoire, styles, practices, and pedagogies in school music.³³ Despite scholars' appeals to seek various kinds of inclusion in music education, music programs—particularly within large ensembles—still widely employ a philosophy that adheres to traditional notions of excellence stemming from longstanding conservatory/apprenticeship .hip models.³⁴ These traditions tend to be exclusionary in terms of who is prioritized and upheld as valuable relative to others.

Traditions

In music education, changes such as the inclusion of technology,³⁵ integration of varied musical cultures and practices,³⁶ and considerations for all learners³⁷ contribute to broadened curricular aims. Secondary general music, in particular, has also become a pivotal topic, sparking contemplation about musicianship, musical preferences, and pedagogies.³⁸ While change tends to

come slowly, music educators and scholars have considered new approaches with interest and often diligence toward inclusivity and improved pedagogies.

Apple pointed out that when societies encounter insecurity and fragmentation, a concurrent interest in stability and tradition will likewise take shape to counter the change.³⁹ Despite broadening views and practices, a strong belief in traditions of the large ensemble, and a focus on excellence persist. This can be noted in studies that focus on continually improving musical quality, for instance, in topics of ensemble leadership,⁴⁰ conductor expressivity,⁴¹ conductor and ensemble expressivity and festival ratings,⁴² and relationships between ensemble and conducting quality.⁴³ Additional studies highlight topics of rehearsal achievements,⁴⁴ problem-solving in rehearsals,⁴⁵ benefits of participation,⁴⁶ group cohesion and motivation related to conductor support,⁴⁷ and rapport between teachers and students in ensembles.⁴⁸ Also, other studies explicitly focus on elite ensembles or festivals, including reflections on benefits and motivations for honor ensemble participation,⁴⁹ and influences on solo and small ensemble festival ratings.⁵⁰

Some ensemble directors enact a pedagogy that is inclusive and student-centered, as Miksza noted.⁵¹ They may introduce informal learning opportunities, peer- and self-assessments,⁵² use of technologies,⁵³ and other tools and pedagogies that are embedded to varying degrees in the teaching approach and curricular focus. Still, others may prioritize an agenda of heritage, tradition, and familiarity that have long defined the field.

While it may be easy to accept some changes, like broadening repertoire,⁵⁴ it may be more difficult to ask deeper questions of school music programs such as could the very structure of the large, traditional ensemble create division and tension between participation and specialization?⁵⁵ Or, could pedagogical approaches and affiliations, often held as markers of

professional identity,⁵⁶ exclude students in the name of efficiency and excellence? Following, I discuss four facets of excellence particularly prevalent in secondary instrumental ensembles: becoming the best, visibility, preoccupation with the outcome, and resistance to change.

Becoming the Best

Excellence, often considered naturally desirable, tends to communicate *the best*. In other words, anyone who is not the best is less than the best, a lower status. This approach serves to divide people into winners and losers. These ideals are incongruent with the inclusion and opportunity of public schooling that should account for all students and their growth and the consideration of basic human needs, such as survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun.⁵⁷ The competition and quantification used to identify *best* may fail to acknowledge the labor and learning of individuals' growth from where they began. This decontextualizes learning in the name of status rather than usefulness to students.⁵⁸ Competition for excellence can intensify over time. Students or ensembles may compete for distinction among others they deem similarly skillful. In turn, the bar of excellence heightens, and the harder it can become to achieve so-called successes.

What about those who do not reach this level of distinction, cannot place into the honors ensemble, or in the absence of an actual competition feel that they fall musically short among peers? They may view themselves as unmusical and discontinue participation in ensembles, in schools, or perhaps regard themselves as unmusical for life and steer themselves away from opportunities to enact their own human musicianship in the future.⁵⁹

When students are divided out or remove themselves, society loses. Students should regard themselves as legitimately musical and live their adult lives feeling and doing musical things as they wish. Without societal participation, a musical culture will reflect only some, who

found their own niche and ways of sustaining it. If school music teachers embraced the challenge of facilitating all students' musical participation apart from trappings of excellence, the artistic landscape could become increasingly interesting as a reflection of a musically diverse society.⁶⁰

Visibility

Excellence is exciting—it can be seen, heard, and compared. It can impress and provide status. When music teachers uphold notions of excellence, they model a value system that presupposes that the director, performance, repertoire, and presentation are important, whether or not they are educational. They are responsible for deciding what is important, how to explain and model that importance, and perhaps why it is so.⁶¹ In an interview with Strand, composer Libby Larsen acknowledged the beginnings of the large ensemble performance as an important way to synchronize many people under one director—as they described, a useful model for the industrial age of its emergence.⁶² However, Larsen went on to describe a collaborative project that lessened performance focus in favor of group composing and aligned with “a culture built upon independence fluidity, and collaborative skills in small groups” that are representative among modern workers.⁶³

Visibility can be one method used as an important advocacy tool in order to educate the community about students' musical growth or accomplishments. Beyond the accomplishment of organizing an ensemble to play particular literature and the assumed benefit of learning, performance may display the success of the teacher in organizing the students' learning, perhaps factoring as an informal evaluative tool of their teaching. This sort of visibility adds pressure to teachers who feel they must fulfill community expectations through ensemble performances.

Scholars have also encouraged other advocacy efforts that involve visibility—and involvement—beyond ensemble performance. These include, for example, making strong policy

arguments and involving parents and community in music-making.⁶⁴ We may also create visibility through a broad range of students' musical involvements with their community. Gee noted that traditional and well-meaning advocacy efforts can contribute to a growing public disassociation with arts education inadvertently.⁶⁵

Other, socially-minded goals in music learning have been encouraged in attempts to create meaningful music learning opportunities such as connecting school music to local music-making, embracing students' curiosities, and peer mentoring.⁶⁶ These goals, however, are rarely aligned with conceptions of excellence⁶⁷ and do not tend to provide comparable visibility through a public display. They could, however, provide valuable opportunities for public participation.⁶⁸ Socially-minded goals tend to be broad, specific to the community, the group, and individuals in it and would be more difficult to quantify and compare.

Preoccupation with a Desired Outcome

When one strives for excellence, one is likely preoccupied with an outcome, which can stifle creativity and limit thinking. It can also drain the intrinsic drive. In fact, rewards can negatively affect one's creativity and motivation.⁶⁹ Such preoccupation often emphasizes notions of pre-existing talent rather than continuous, focused efforts and learning strategies. Focus on the product can even create anxiety around learning and necessary risk-taking. In order to achieve an impressive outcome, authoritarian direction seems justifiable in the name of efficiency but forsakes ownership and creativity. Rather than intending a predefined excellent outcome, students should be invested in their work, be personally motivated, and find ways to make it meaningful and sustainable.

Resistance to Change

When a norm such as the large ensemble is firmly in place, it can be difficult to question or adapt it. People grow and change, or should feel that they could. Artistry itself can be an avenue for growth and change. Artists emerge into different periods of creative output at different times in their lives, and their resulting creative periods are often noteworthy. Students will necessarily grow and change, too, as they emerge toward adulthood and similarly embark on new personal growth chapters. So too should their musicianship. But how might one facilitate artistic learning experiences that embrace such divergent personal growth?

As stated, ensemble programs can be inflexible in the name of efficiency. Authors have noted that pedagogies can operate similarly—in efficient but perhaps inflexible ways that may not achieve long-term learning or take into account evolving people.⁷⁰ Rather than a static tradition like longstanding large ensemble cultures, we might view culture as dynamic. In this way, culture can act as a reflection of students here and now as well as in their varied states of becoming. That is, the culture of music in any school can and should look unique as it reflects the people who are there in time and place. When teachers and students instead conform to static cultural traditions, they conform to fit the structure rather than actively shape their own.

Some students succeed in traditional systems; most ensembles have star players who excel in the program. Ensembles are a legitimate avenue for music-making that can challenge and inspire; they are cultures of their own that are sought by some learners. Some students *want* high-achieving ensemble experiences that are defined in traditional ways. High achievement can be considered differently, however, from that which occurs competitively within and between ensembles. Learning itself can be motivating. Students can even define achievement.

However, the reward of excellence can demand continuous and increasing extrinsic motivators to coerce behavior toward an intended goal.⁷¹ For instance, some ensembles regularly take trips to festivals. Students typically value these social experiences and may be motivated to participate in music as a result. While social experiences among adolescents are indeed important and can play a crucial role in learning, motivation through travel and festivals may not motivate them to learn music. The learning may also fail to transfer beyond the repertoire and ensemble of that time and place. Although students can undoubtedly have important social experiences *while* learning music, it is also possible that performance and scoring will sideline educational goals. If we define student success through intrinsic motivation and a love for learning rather than a judge's score, it might become transferable and sustainable.

Exploring Intentions

Many music educators express their hope that their work might foster a lifelong engagement with music for their students.⁷² Among students who take part in school music, questions remain about what they will gain long-term. Where do they go from principal flute senior year? Where do they go from acceptance into the top ensemble at the state festival? Do the biomedical engineering band alums still play their instruments? What about those who do not attend college or who cannot locate an ensemble to join? Does their high school music education play a role in future enactments of musicianship?

Among those students who thrive in a college culture of large ensembles, which can mirror elements of competition, and excellence, what long-term musical gains have they then made? Is it possible that some students' musical growth may actually be restrained through such tradition? How many high-achieving college musicians sadly admit in an informal setting, "Improvise? Sing? Sorry, that has not been part of my musical preparation." For some, structures

of past or current ensemble experiences confine musicianship to a large ensemble culture, possibly stifling continued participation outside these norms.

What to Do?

I suggest that rather than an appeal to excellence, music educators instead might appeal to responsibility in teaching music, focusing on music in social life as well as within the school.⁷³ Where excellence divides and separates those on the top as special or better, responsible music teaching focuses on the long-term sustainability of a uniquely realized, personal musicianship among all students. To hope for long-term outcomes, it is first one's responsibility to demonstrate respect for all students as musical people. As I have stated elsewhere, a regard for the distinct musicianship represented throughout the student body exhibits value for diverse musicianship throughout society.⁷⁴ Music educators can welcome multidimensional musicianship and an expanded presence of, and participation in, music among secondary students, alumni, and the local community.

I use large ensembles as an example of competition-minded excellence that is prevalent in the field. Although my critique might seemingly apply exclusively to ensembles, it can also describe other kinds of music learning that embody similar philosophical and pedagogical structures. For instance, learning standard notation, learning about Bach, playing in a rock band, or songwriting, while potentially suggesting particular methods, can also fall into a framework of excellence, which Saunders described as a focus on efficiency, production, quantification, and measurability.⁷⁵ Narrowly-defined traditions, which often implicate competition and a preoccupation with perceptions of success, can exist in many forms. This will depend on many factors, including the music culture of the school and community, the students, the teacher's

pedagogical approach, long-term educational intentions, the curriculum, and the musical lives that might develop from what they learn and experience.

Music teachers must value students' musical futures rather than focus solely on in-the-moment, in-school successes defined by traditions. In other words, what are students intended to gain, and why might they become invested? Is there a visible pathway toward applicability, context, and meaning-making? No standard curriculum or pedagogy can appropriately lead to a broadly-applied approach, however. Rather than having *a way*, music educators can make changes that alter expectations so that they do not become cemented as tradition, pedagogy, or value-system.

To circumvent a taken-for-granted naturalness of excellence and underlying neoliberal ideology, music teachers must be confident in collaboratively determining new definitions of success, achievement, and excellence. With a focus on the learning processes of individual and class growth and the value placed on students' trajectories that include motivations, curiosities, skills, and understandings, we might celebrate students' achievements might b alongside and among one another, rather than within an artificial hierarchy of quantified achievements. Through not only differentiated learning, but also evaluative criteria and learning goals, students can take increasing ownership of their learning, and comparisons can become increasingly meaningless.

Music educators do not have to have all the answers. In fact, attempts to have *the answer* remain precisely the issue. Rather, we should share pedagogical and curricular challenges with students in a spirit of collective musicianship, curiosity, and community. On the topic of motivation, Kohn promoted collaborative decision-making, regarded as shared intellectual and practical challenges.⁷⁶ How might one dissolve the societal emphasis put on traditions of

professional distinction?⁷⁷ Rather than emulate the excellence of professional orchestral musicians, we might initiate collaborative opportunities to foster values and practices toward diverse musicianship. This can certainly occur with professional musicians, but it can also occur with nonensemble students, in- and out-of-school music teachers, and community musicians of all sorts.⁷⁸ All can contribute in unique ways, all might feel vulnerable, and all can benefit as learners. Importantly, teachers must continually express, model, and make visible their sincere valuing of varied kinds of musical expertise.

A critical take on excellence may trouble some readers, as it draws into question a deep-seated educational and societal relationship with competition and status. A redefinition of *excellence* is needed—but not exclusively by experts who have succeeded in the system as it stands and not by outside forces that have imposed their own, niched pedagogies for learning music; instead, redefinition should be accomplished in collaboration with the students themselves for their musical benefit. Criteria determining excellence should be open to students in order to help ground relevant learning pathways.

As professionals invested in teaching and learning, teachers must redefine or perhaps relinquish the term excellence and the broad connotations that linger with current use. Some practices do not broadly serve students and fail to reflect society. Some pedagogies fail to invite, include, and be flexible in the name of efficiency and comparability. The goal of finding and molding the best students concentrates one's efforts on a narrowed few who may not even benefit in the long-term. Tradition should not unquestioningly determine educational values and practices. Rather, a critical consideration of what activities occur in music classes, the intentions that underlie them, and varied ways one might facilitate a democratic space for student learning

(now and toward students' futures) is necessary. These ideals should emphasize all students' growing musicianship to avoid an ongoing preoccupation with determining who made the cut.

¹ A student in conversation with the author, 2017. Note applies to the preceding conversation.

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³ Daniel B. Saunders, "Resisting Excellence: Challenging Neoliberal Ideology in Postsecondary Education," *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* 13, no. 2 (October 2015): 391–413, <http://www.jceps.com/archives/2653>.

⁴ Saunders, "Resisting Excellence," 393–94.

⁵ Saunders, 394.

⁶ Dai, "Excellence at the Cost of Social Justice," 94.

⁷ Dai, 94.

⁸ Robert A. Cutietta, "K–16 Music Education in a Democratic Society," in *Policy and the Political Life of Music Education*, ed. Patrick Schmidt and Richard Colwell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 253–66.

⁹ Geir Johansen, "Sociology, Music Education, and Social Change: The Prospect of Addressing Their Relations by Attending to Some Central, Expanded Concepts," in "Sociology of Music Education," ed. Petter Dyndahl, Sidsel Karlsen, and Ruth Wright, special issue, *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education* 13, no. 1 (March 2014): 71, http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Johansen13_1.pdf.

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¹¹ Matthew D. Thibeault, “Music Education for All through Participatory Ensembles,” *Music Educators Journal* 102, no. 2 (December 2015): 54, <https://doi.org/10.1177.0027432115610170>.

¹² Alan Fletcher, “Can Music Education Policy Save American Orchestras?” in *Policy and the Political Life of Music Education*, ed. Patrick Schmidt and Richard Colwell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 231–40.

¹³ Jess Mullen, “Music Education for Some: Music Standards at the Nexus of Neoliberal Reforms and Neoconservative Values,” *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 18, no. 1 (March 2019): 44–67, <https://doi.org/10.22176/act18.1.44>; and Ruth Wright, “Gender and Achievement in Music Education: The View from the Classroom,” *British Journal of Music Education* 18, no. 3 (November 2001): 275–91, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051701000365>.

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¹⁵ Brian N. Weidner, “Achieving Greater Musical Independence in Ensembles through Cognitive Apprenticeship,” *Music Educators Journal* 104, no. 3 (March 2018), 26–31, <https://doi.org/10.1177.0027432117746217>.

¹⁶ Cutietta, “K–16 Music Education,” 258.

¹⁷ Patrick Schmidt, “Why Policy Matters: Developing a Policy Vocabulary within Music Education,” in *Policy and the Political Life of Music Education*, ed. Patrick Schmidt and Richard Colwell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 11–36.

¹⁸ David A. Williams, *A Different Paradigm in Music Education: Re-Examining the Profession* (New York: Routledge, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429199806>.

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²¹ D. A. Williams, *Different Paradigm in Music Education*, 3.

²² Peter R. Webster, foreword to *Policy and the Political Life of Music Education*, ed. Patrick Schmidt and Richard Colwell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), ix–xvi.

²³ Cutietta, “K–16 Music Education,” 260.

²⁴ Abramo, “Competition in School Ensembles,” 155.

²⁵ June Countryman and Leslie Stewart Rose, “Wellbeing in the Secondary Music Classroom: Ideas from Hero’s Journeys and Online Gaming,” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 128–49, <https://doi.org/10.2979/philmusieducrevi.25.2.03>.

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²⁷ Dabback, “Exploring Connections,” 232.

²⁸ Lucy Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way ahead for Music Education* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2001); and Erynn M. Millard, “The Role of Ensemble Competitions in Choral Music Education” (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2014), http://purl.flvc.org/fsu/fd/FSU_migr_etd-9051.

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