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## Toward a Useful Synthesis of Deweyan Pragmatism and Music Education

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this work is to explore the possibility of incorporating pragmatism into music education. The paper discusses John Dewey's pragmatism and analyzes the interpretations and influences of Deweyan pragmatism in music education with the help of interview responses of scholars worldwide. Finally, it seeks specific answers as to how Deweyan pragmatism can help the transformation of music education, particularly of music teacher education. The historical information was obtained through a close analysis and reviewing of Dewey's writings, as well as other educational scholars' writings on Dewey's pragmatism. After gaining a personal insight and understanding how much Dewey's pragmatism and specific notions (such as experience and democracy) have influenced the field of education and music education, several well-known music professors and philosophical scholars in the field of music education and philosophy from the United States, Canada, and Finland were asked to respond to interview questions. As the review of literature and interview analysis showed, current music educators, writers, and thinkers have not exhausted the study of pragmatism. Dewey's ideas offer great potential to expand the abilities and possibilities of music education for social change. They can also be used as a guide to understand the complexity of postmodern society and its institutions. A more comprehensive construction of a Deweyan music education might be proposed to further philosophical studies.*

### Introduction

Cultural and historical experiences affect and change educational institutions in a society, and they also shape the fundamental philosophies that underlie them. Scientific inventions, wars, and ideological, social, and cultural struggles interact to give new meanings (as well as new

conflicts and questions) to every aspect of life. Shaping and sharpening certain philosophies (to give a “real” meaning or to offer solutions to a profession, institution, or practice) might appear to be conscious and visible intellectual acts during human history, but sometimes these acts are inevitable interventions that redefine and revisit already existing philosophies. Pragmatism is one of the philosophies in modern history that has not been directly and deeply analyzed in music education. It offers additional territory for music educators to investigate and apply in practice.

In the last forty years, music scholars have emphasized the importance of having a solid philosophical foundation in music education. What does it mean to have a philosophy of music education? According to most scholars, having a solid philosophical base will give a real meaning to the profession and music educators so that music will be understood as a necessary human activity to be used and developed in schools. When scholars engage in academic discourse to build a solid philosophical foundation for music education, they try to advocate certain philosophical approaches through answering the following questions differently: What is music education? Why is music important in one’s life? What is the benefit of interacting with music? What constitutes music teaching and learning? What is the best way to teach music? Which music should be taught in the classroom and why? How can musical learning occur? What is the best way to train music teachers? Although music educators might never reach a consensus on the answers, the discursive process of building philosophical understanding and cultivating critical thinking skills to question “why music education should be part of a human’s life” is crucial.

Lauri Väkevä (2002) draws distinctions between the three major philosophical arguments used in defending the pedagogical significance of the arts. [Even though he discusses these

philosophies in the context of arts in education, in this essay these argumentative strategies will be discussed in the field of music education]. Väkevä (2002) states,

Metaphysical (or essentialist) arguments put weight on the substance of the arts as the principal determinant of their value; cognitive arguments connect the significance of the arts to their contribution to human thinking and problem solving; pragmatic arguments situate the value of the arts in their contribution to the signifying practice(s) of human life. (p. 5)

The present study will focus on pragmatic arguments that take place in the field of music education. First, it will discuss the current arguments in the area of the philosophy of music education, so that a deeper context can be set for this work. Next, it will summarize John Dewey's pragmatism. Third, it will analyze the interpretations and influences of Deweyan pragmatism in the field of music education (both in the theoretical and practical domains) with the help of interview responses of a diverse group of scholars, including Jere Humphreys, Paul Woodford, Pentti Määttänen, Heidi Westerlund, and Lauri Väkevä. Last, it will seek answers to some fundamental questions about Dewey's pragmatism with the help of the participants' responses.

### **Methods of the Study**

The historical information was obtained through a close analysis and review of Dewey's writings, as well as other educational scholars' writings on Dewey's pragmatism. After gaining some personal insight, and understanding how much Dewey's pragmatism and specific pragmatic notions (such as instrumentalism, experience, and democracy) have influenced the field of education and music education, several well-known music professors and philosophical scholars in the field of music education and philosophy from the United States, Canada, and Finland were asked to respond to the interview questions. These particular scholars have been chosen because they all have contributed to the scholarly discourse on Dewey. Kvale (1996)

states, “The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meanings of peoples’ experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (p.1). With this study, I tried to build knowledge through an interchange of views among the participants and myself. I obtained the data through e-mail correspondence. For this particular study, e-mail correspondence provided the ideal interview format. It allowed the participants time to reflect upon and respond to the questions in writing, at their own pace.

The literature review process was helpful in creating and strengthening my argument that the field of music education—the available philosophies of music education—can benefit more from the ideas of Dewey. The e-mail correspondence was equally helpful. The following questions were posed to prominent music educators across the world via e-mail. I had two main points of emphasis while constructing the questions. First, I hoped to develop the idea that Dewey’s work has much more to offer to music educators. Second, because the participants have much more extensive experience with Deweyan thought, I hoped to “compare notes” with them, to discover what I had been missing.

- Has music education been closed to pragmatism, and other modern philosophies? Even though the progressive ideas of John Dewey made a great impact in the field of education, in my review of literature I have found that there has not been direct and deep analysis and application of his pragmatism into music education. Why might this be the case?
- During this very critical time in history should music educators revisit Dewey’s pragmatic notions so that we might benefit from them in terms of nurturing individuals who can properly function in a democratic society? Should we also rethink the place and function of music education to be able to achieve a social change?
- Are current teacher education curricula capable of producing Dewey’s ideal teacher? How? If not, why and what is missing, and what are major steps that music teacher education programs should take?

- What would be the suggestions as to how these theoretical and philosophical writings available in journals and books can begin to impact the learning experiences of undergraduates?

I analyzed the participants' responses by seeking common themes and by listing their unique and individual perspectives on the topic. I also used direct quotes from their interview statements.

### **Philosophical Perspectives in Music Education**

Before the 1990s, the dominant philosophy in music education was “music education as aesthetic education.” Abraham Shwadron and Bennett Reimer were the well-known proponents of this approach. They sought to establish a sound philosophy to emphasize and advocate music education in the school curriculum. According to Reimer (1989), “the most important concept in the history of music education [is] the concept of aesthetic education” (p. 24). Reimer’s (1989) philosophy of music education is based on the premise that “the essential nature and value of music education are determined by the nature and value of the art” (p. 1). His philosophy of music education is built on “absolute expressionism,” which insists that the artistic meaning and value of an artwork are internal. If one is to have an artistic experience, she must search for meaning and value in the artwork. According to absolute expressionists, even though “nonartistic references [such as lyrics and historical and political influences] in a work of art” have importance, they are [and should be] “transformed and transcended by the internal artistic form” (Reimer, 1989, p. 27). According to Reimer (1989), the role and major function of music education should be to educate human feeling “through the development of responsiveness to the intrinsically expressive qualities of sound” (p. 53). Reimer (1989) argues that such an intrinsic artistic quality can be observed in “timeless monuments of art” (p. 27) and that musical materials used in the classroom “should be good music which means genuinely expressive music” (p. 53). On the other hand, in what may be considered a nod toward multiculturalism, Reimer (1989)

states that some musical materials (for example, jazz, rock, and folk), which reflect the music of various ethnic and cultural groups in American society, can be considered as “proper sources for finding expressive music” (p. 54).

McCarthy and Goble (2002) write that music education as aesthetic education “focuses on preparing students to perceive and respond appropriately to musical works as forms of art—especially great works or ‘master pieces’—in order to ‘educate their feelings’ and to evoke in them ‘aesthetic experience’” (p. 21). To the contrary, for some scholars such as Thomas Regelski and David J. Elliott, music education as aesthetic education “cannot be beneficial in organizing and rethinking the realities of contemporary music education” (as cited in Westerlund, 2003, p. 45). They believe that approaching music teaching and learning aesthetically may fail to capture the multiplicity of musical practices worldwide and may neglect various sociological, political, and cultural dimensions of music (McCarthy & Goble, 2005). In various musical traditions, the musical experience cannot be understood as an aesthetic experience the way it is in Western societies (Westerlund, 2003). As she argues, “Aesthetic refers to a directly contemplative, abstract, and intellectual experience. Since this contemplative ideal for artistic experience can be traced to a particular historical period [the Romantic period] in Western thinking...there are enough reasons to suspect that a pluralistic music education cannot simultaneously be aesthetic” (p. 45). The primary reason for this argument involves the fact that Romantic artistic philosophy was essentially the articulation of white, male elites.

Elliott (2005a) further explains that aesthetic theory cannot be easily divorced from Romantic ideology, nor its social phenomena such as “the decline of the European aristocracy and the rise of the middle class” (p. 23). According to Elliott (1995), the new Romantic ideology imposed “the autonomy of the individual and, therefore, the irrelevance of an individual’s

background” and acknowledged the individual and “inner worth” (p. 23). The main goal of this aesthetic ideology was to create a new aesthetic realm in which audiences of the century would distance themselves from the social and practical contexts of musical sounds for the purpose of entering the “quasi-religious” world of aesthetic experience (p. 25). Elliott (1995) criticizes music education philosophers who embrace this aesthetic concept of music (and music education) as uncritical and unaware of the contextual and historical realities of this aesthetic theory, especially its tendency to divorce itself from the lived experiences of human beings.

An opponent of Reimer’s philosophy of aesthetic music education, Elliott (2005) advances the notion of praxial music education, building his philosophy on the idea that “music is not simply a collection of products or objects”; music is something people *do* (p. 39). In this context, music is a form of intentional human activity that involves four dimensions: “a doer, some kind of doing, something done, and the complete context in which doers do what they do” (Elliott, et al. p. 40). Bowman (2005) states that even though praxial orientations are new in philosophical debates in music education, the word “praxis” can be traced back to Aristotle. In Aristotle’s philosophical paradigm, “movement and change are always directed to a goal” (Määttänen, 2000, p. 6) and “praxis designate[s] ‘right action,’ human activity that is goal directed and carried out with close attention to norms and standards” (Bowman, 2005, p. 52). Aristotle’s “right action” in Elliott’s praxialism refers to “active engagement in productive music making” (Elliott, 1995, p. 175). In his exploration of Aristotelian praxis, Regelski concludes that music is “good time” (Määttänen, 2000, p. 11). Regelski (2005) explains that his theory of praxis

accounts for all kinds and uses of music and finds musical value not in disembodied, metaphysical hypotheses concerning aesthetic meaning, but in the constitutive sociality of music and the functional importance of music for the human processes that govern social and thus individual consciousness. (p. 234)

The premises of Elliott's philosophy of music education are (1) "the nature of music education depends on the nature of music," and (2) "the significance of music education depends on the significance of music in human life" (Elliott, 1995, p. 12). Elliott (2005a) believes that his philosophy of music education offered in *Music Matters* is a praxial one because it requires "a full understanding of the nature and significance of music [that] involves more than an understanding of pieces or works of music" (p. 14).

Praxialists consider "not only the cognitive operations of musical agents, but also the ways their musicing is informed by specific social and cultural conditions" (Szego, 2005, p. 214).

Pedagogically, praxial music education "focus[es] on involving students in the musical practices of different cultural groups and helping them to understand the intensions of those who undertake them, as well as the social, historical, and cultural conditions in which they organize, exist and have meaning" (McCarthy & Goble, 2002, p. 21).

In his discussion of praxial multiculturalism in music education, Elliott (2005a) maintains that music is about more than sonic events. Elliott (1995) uses the term MUSIC to designate music as "diverse human practice consisting in many different musical practices or Musics" (p. 44), thus "MUSIC is inherently multicultural [and] music education ought to be multicultural in essence" (1995, p. 207). He states,

Musical practices, and the products and events they produce, are saturated with personal and collective values and meanings. Multicultural music education allows us to develop students' understandings of these values and meanings; 'teaching music' with a multicultural mindset allows us to deepen students' knowledge and 'feel' for the ways in which 'music' is deeply social, cultural, ideological, political, and personal ... limiting students to one musical practice counts as an extraordinary form of cultural and creative censorship. (Praxial Music Education, para. 3)

Elliott (2005a) argues that giving students opportunities to experience other musics will enable them to be more creative and critical in music making and listening. Music teachers will

also benefit from linking the “primary values of music education to the broader goals of humanistic education” through teaching music multiculturally (Elliott et al. 2005, para. 6). Elliott (2005a) calls multicultural music teaching and learning “musical risk-taking,” which will cause disorientation but will activate “self-examination and personal reconstruction of one’s relationships, assumptions and preferences” (Elliott et. al., 2005, para. 6).

Supported by strong philosophical backgrounds, the scholars of philosophy of music education have argued and formulated philosophical principles for culturally diverse music classrooms in America. Some concerned with the aesthetic experience and educating students’ feelings. Some insisted the integration of multiculturalism into music education theory and practice. Schools do not exist in a vacuum; they are like living organisms. They reflect our communities, beliefs, and habits, as well as the inequalities and problems of the larger society. For instance, a music classroom is not free from what musically, artistically, and politically happens at home, church, on the street, or in the media. Music teachers—and their students—bring their subjectivities, experiences, and cultures to the classroom. Children are involved in music in a number of environments outside of the classroom, including home and church. Classrooms can be places where children with different backgrounds and identities can express themselves freely and democratically. As Dewey (1916) wrote, “A democracy is more than a form of government: it is primarily a mode of associated living, a conjoint communicated experience” (p. 87). Music classrooms, especially, can offer a democratic environment where children and teachers can discuss and experience each others’ perceptions of music. They can pose critiques and understand how music is experienced and learned in unique cultural environments and social spaces.

During the last century, educational scholars and researchers offered creative, humanistic, and constructive formulations for more democratic education. John Dewey, especially, set up philosophical and educational principles that involved questioning the notion of democracy, experience, and praxis-based education.

### **Dewey's Pragmatism and Education**

Dewey (1954a) explains his epistemological principles this way: knowledge does not come from mere physical observation, but rather is about the consequence or use of an object or idea. In other words, there is a connection and interaction between an idea or object and observer (or one who experiences). In this sense, there is no fixed and universal knowledge because the consequences, functions, and purposes of knowledge of an idea or an object might be different for each individual. Dewey states that the knowledge of an object or idea is not only situational and changing, but that it is also an instrument for solving problems. After gaining knowledge through the empirical method, Dewey's pragmatic method requires that the question "What is it for?" be answered. The function of knowledge is important according to our personal needs and experiences. If it is not working for me, it is useless. Therefore, the school should arrange teaching-learning settings according to the needs and experiences of the individuals. In this way, students can learn to think, analyze, and synthesize what they learn (or experience) and what they need to learn now and in the future. Dewey, however, feared an education that was overly individualistic; for this reason there is a need to understand his critique of traditional education and notion of democracy.

His emphasis was on democratic conversation, in particular that experience is a social process, not a passive one (Dewey, 1954b, p.631). In *Democracy and Education* (1944), he argues that education should be based on a democratic conversation. For Dewey, humans are

parts of nature and society. He uses living organisms to characterize society and stresses each individual's participation and function in this living organism. Because the self is socially built, he believes that democracy is the best way to live and that the school should be based on democracy so that individuals can become more effective members of democratic society. Therefore, the primary purpose of the school is to cultivate and nurture democratic individuals who are active participants and critical thinkers.

Dewey argues that traditional education lacks an understanding of individual differences, needs, and the diverse experiences of students. For him, an individual, as part of a social whole, can only function properly if she grows in an educational environment that is democratic (an environment concerned with participation as a shared activity with a common social purpose) and organized according to that individual's needs and differences. The curriculum of traditional education is extremely focused on content (which is fixed, universal, and abstract), rather than process, which is ideally created by the free contribution of individuals.

Dewey, the modern father of experimental and pragmatic education, not only has been celebrated but also misunderstood and misapplied in schools throughout the twentieth century. His thoughts on progressive education were commonly misunderstood. Because progressive education supported the unlimited freedom of individuals, Dewey was criticized for promoting an educational philosophy that lacked structure and discipline. Without using freedom in an appropriate way (that is, without constructing a theory that places freedom in the educational process accurately), freedom alone would not be a solution. He explained that learning should be based on a clear theory of experience. Humans start to experience when they are born, and the school should not neglect the past experiences of individuals and their developmental differences; rather, they should build the new experiences on older experiences appropriately.

According to him, “education is a process of living, and not a preparation for future living” (Dewey, 1954b, p. 135). Dewey opposes an education that only prepares students for the future because there is no fixed and identical future for every individual. The experiences of every individual are unique and situational. Dewey (1954b) states, “[...] to prepare him for the future life means to give him command of himself; it means so to train that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities [...]” (p. 135). For this reason, the school should present a small sample of society in which teaching-learning settings are arranged in careful, natural, and interactive ways so that each individual can construct his or her own learning, and can learn to think, analyze, judge, and transfer that learning to the new conditions in terms of the consequences of his actions. This process is based on inquiry and an increasing ability to think and judge at the level of the individual. According to Dewey, the teacher is not an authoritarian figure of external control. She is a social worker who guides investigation and cultivates the student’s ability to think and solve problems. The teacher organizes the classroom environment and activities in terms of each individual’s past experiences (principle of interaction of experience), needs, curiosities, and motivation. In *Experience and Education* (1938), Dewey discusses the difficult duty of teachers:

A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth. Above all, they should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worthwhile. (p. 40)

According to Dewey, the arts as experience constitute part of daily human life; they are not distant and do not belong to the “privileged.” They occur in the realm of action and are very closely bound to the social context. In other words, art is a product of the social world. Elliott (1995) implies that “cultural and ideological values are embodied in the musical patterns” (p.

191). For instance, rap music involves a set of practices and history that is different from traditional European concert practices. As it originated in the mid-1970s in New York city, rap “emerged from the streets of inner-city neighborhoods as genuine reflections of hopes, concerns and aspirations of urban Black Youth” (Powell, 191, p. 245). The most distinctive feature of this music is its explicit lyrical content and rhythmic power. Powell (1991) states that rap lyrics represents an expression of contemporary African American experiences, including social, political, and racial awareness and critique: “For Black youth in particular rap provides a powerful force for identity, solidarity, and emotional reinforcement” (Powell, p. 245). It should be noted that most black children in America perceive rap as music. While this point seems obvious, not everyone considers rap to be music.

### **Why Pragmatism Now?**

Starting from the last half of the eighteenth century, the expanding value of the nation-state notion has appeared as the most visible reaction against imperialistic traditions. The common and oppressed people wanted to be heard, acknowledged, and freed through sharing common democratic power. Having the *same* history, beliefs, ideals, and dreams let them fight against oppressors and create their democratic nations, but hegemony continued to exist in different ways. Even though individualist notions continued to simmer, less powerful groups remained oppressed, and the more powerful attained hegemony over the less powerful, especially in education. During the last quarter of the twentieth and early twenty-first century, the nations of the world have become more pluralistic and multicultural, have begun questioning the *status quo*, and have begun to honor individual differences shaped by culture, class, gender, and race. This new multicultural awareness, however, creates new challenges within societies and their institutions. Thus, it is no coincidence that philosophers such as Peter McLaren and Henry

Giroux have developed critical pedagogies that share similarities with Dewey's pragmatism. (Westerlund, p. 24, 2002). Critical pedagogy's main concern is the issue of power in the educational process. It questions the *status quo* in an effort to empower and give full voice to those historically marginalized. Westerlund (2002) believes that,

[In critical pedagogy general], students are seen as active agents who can change their own experience and social environment. In this process, music is not only information, but it also becomes a field of possibilities and change. (p. 24-25)

Critical pedagogy and Deweyan pragmatism share the notion of the great community. They both believe that education should be based on democratic conversation, and the primary purpose of the school should be to cultivate and nurture democratic individuals who can become active participants and critical thinkers.

Belz (2006) argues that music teacher training institutions in America lack multicultural perspectives and that students are "being [taught] in a vacuum, resulting in music educators seemingly not interested in or unaware of the varied traditions of music making in our world" (p. 42). Most music schools train music teachers to teach these "canons" without understanding that an artwork, musical work, or pedagogical approach is embedded in culture, society, history, and politics. The majority of music graduates are unaware of the various social groups that affect children's musical learning; such groups include gender, family, peer networks, social class, and ethnicity (Welch & Adams, 2001). In the 1940s, Charles Seeger, a well-known American musicologist, drew attention to the assumptions that American music educators reflected in their teaching practices (McCarthy, 1995). According to McCarthy (1995),

Seeger discussed the assumption that music progressed from lower to higher stages, from folk to art music. 'Traced by the 'advanced' culture, a fixed, one-directional evolutionary pattern led somewhat naively to itself as representing the highest stage.' Second, he warned teachers to "be careful to avoid the fallacy that music is a 'universal' language.' He explained it by pointing out that 'what music

we know, we know only in the frame of our own culture, in which a certain place and function is allowed to it by custom.' He urged teachers to learn more about various idioms of American music culture, while acknowledging the difficulty of moving beyond their own. (p. 275)

Even though the progressive ideas of Dewey made a great impact in the field of education, in my review of literature I have found that there has not been direct application of his pragmatism into music education. I believe that we, as music educators, should revisit Dewey's pragmatic notions so that we might benefit from them with respect to nurturing individuals who can properly participate in a democratic society. We should rethink the place and function of music education so that it can help achieve a social change with the help of Dewey's ideas. Thinking and reflecting on the notions of Dewey's pragmatism might help music educators construct new meanings and alternatives for the field and prepare them for diverse classrooms.

### **Analysis of Responses and Findings**

The participants generally believe that music education could be more conscious of the general developmental lines in education. They explain their reasons why music education has been and continues to be immune to a good many innovations in education theory. Paul Woodford believes that music teachers are not particularly interested in intellectual ideals. Even though Dewey has always been influential among university music educators, he doesn't think that Dewey's ideas have influenced actual practice very much. His further analysis as to why this is the case is very interesting. Woodford writes that

the lack of depth is probably attributable to the nature of professional "training." The profession is so focused on training teachers that it forgets that music education is supposed to be an intellectual pursuit. I often think that what goes on in music teacher training is vocational training—and I do not think many music majors want to be intellectually challenged. (personal communication, November 15, 2004)

Jere Humphreys's response reveals more historical facts. When Dewey was conducting his philosophical and pedagogical studies, undergraduate music education programs were just beginning to arrive in universities and become standardized at four years. He believes that "music education changed radically as a result of progressivism but it did not adopt progressivist philosophies" (personal communication, November 22, 2004). Pentti Määttänen, a professor of philosophy, displays a somewhat different perspective. He believes that, even though some music educators have been responsive to current theories and philosophies, problems stem from an insufficient understanding of these theories. He provides an example:

A reason is the hard criticism of the new generation of philosophers, namely logical empiricists and other analytical philosophers who misunderstood Dewey, and could not fit his views and his way of writing in their brand new paradigm of philosophizing. [...] In music education one reason is Bennett Reimer, whose views have been influential but deeply misunderstood Dewey. (personal communication, November 24, 2004)

All of the interviewed participants believe that music education should be a part of social change through cultivating and nurturing democratic individuals who are active participants and critical thinkers. Määttänen quotes from Dewey: "ethical values cannot be detached from active participation into the social life; the good (the possibility for good life) must be constructed in the course of participating, and changing the conditions of life, and music education has role in this [...] This in itself is a kind of ethical and political act" (personal communication, November 24, 2004). Humphreys's insight is also important: "I think that many people in the so-called advanced world today take democracy for granted" (personal communication, November 22, 2004). Woodford articulates the need for sources in the field that "explicitly locate music education practice within larger political contexts while grappling with issues that should matter to us all." In his recent book, *Democracy and Music Education: Liberalism, Ethics, and Politics*

of *Practice*, Woodford states that he uses Dewey's and other philosopher's ideas to discuss a philosophy of music education for our time, and he believes that

[M]usic programs should work to effect social amelioration and contribute to the common or public good. [...] The purpose of music education ought to be the development of democratic musical citizenship. Graduates of music programs should know about the complexity and moral uncertainty of the musical and wider world. (personal communication, November 15, 2004)

The participants are generally not very optimistic that current teacher education curricula are capable of producing Dewey's ideal teacher. They explain what is missing and what needs to be done. Woodford believes that progress in teacher education is possible, and he provides inspiring ideas. He writes about "recruiting visionary teachers with ideas who can reinvigorate the profession." He believes that music education majors should be treated like literature students who are expected to know the differences between capitalism and democracy or Marxism (personal communication, November 15, 2004). Määttänen believes that the curricula should include a fair amount of extramusical elements. Humphreys is also fairly pessimistic. He thinks that teacher education programs cannot be successful because they cannot involve students with real teaching situations and real students. Väkevä writes, "Problem-based projects and action learning seem to be natural ways to teach music [...]. They help music teachers to relate their teachings to what really counts in the pragmatist account of learning, that is, to student's own experience. I hope that the work done today in the philosophy and theory of music education will have influence on the teacher training programs worldwide" (personal communication, February 25, 2005).

The participants imply that music teacher training programs should include a course on the history and philosophy of music education; such a course might enrich students' teaching experiences by grounding them in philosophical discourse, and make them consider current

issues critically and take a strong position. Väkevä writes, “the most pressing philosophical challenge that we face is to fit together global and local values of ‘musicking’ while at the same time contributing to democratic habits of mind and action that comprise good lives in Deweyan sense.” Woodford offers a critique of university professors, arguing that they fail to reach undergraduate students. He also believes that the intellectual warfare among scholars has discouraged conversation. Määttänen and Humphreys emphasize the importance of putting students in real teaching situations so that they can realize the problems and difficulties of the profession, and develop their own teaching philosophies. Westerlund responds, “North American music educators use the term utilitarian to refer to educational practice that emphasizes the non-musical benefits of music and music education. One of these non-musical benefits is the social function of music. However, even pragmatism is utilitarian in a sense that it accepts that art or any learning can, and should, have use-value or that music has certain conditions, for example, a community” (personal communication, February 16, 2005). According to Westerlund, students should be motivated to think and offer their own critiques of the purposes and conditions of music education so that a natural dialogue between students’ own thinking and philosophical and theoretical discourse in the field can be created.

### **Conclusion and Discussions**

It is obvious that the study of pragmatism as it relates to music education has not been exhausted by current music educators, writers, and thinkers. David Elliott and other praxialists, for instance, debate related notions in their work today, such as multiculturalism as articulating the students’ interest according to their social, economic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, and music making as a dominant teaching practice. I believe, however, that Dewey’s pragmatism offers more that can enrich the field of music education. Dewey’s pragmatism might also be

synthesized usefully to ameliorate apparent polarization between aesthetic and praxial philosophies of music education. Arap Lang'at (1988) states, "Pragmatism took the form of mediating philosophy, striving the unify science and religion, theory and practice, speculative thought and analysis [...] and in educational theory it sought to reconcile school and 'life'" (dissertation abstract).

Dewey's pragmatic ideas offer us the opportunity to reexamine the purpose of education, and the function of music education. Close analyses of his pragmatic notions such as experience, culture, and democracy cause us think how music education might share and integrate these notions fully into theoretical and practical domains. If Dewey's ideal was to create a great community through education, then we should ask how music and the arts could share this mission. Väkevä (2003) states:

Dewey sees as 'one of the chief functions of the arts in education' to 'maintain the natural union of the socially important with that which makes strong emotional appeal.' Thus, arts in education should be conceived as *praxes*, where socially fruitful and co-operative inquiry meets its aesthetic consummation. (p. 146)

His ideas also help us to understand the needs of a constantly changing postmodern society. They help to create a bridge between progressivism and pluralism and critical pedagogy, all of which question institutional hegemony in the educational system; all offer hope, justice, and the possibility of social change. As Humphreys pointed out, some notions in the advanced world are taken for granted, such as democracy, and some are denied or ignored. Westerlund (2002) states:

Dewey claimed that our conception of democracy has to be constantly discovered, and re-discovered, re-made and re-organized. It is an ongoing project that involves conflict-resolution that is situation-specific [...] An educator has to invent constantly new forms and ways of cooperation and search for meaning in relation to the experience of the students [...] Besides making space for different student 'voices,' education can produce real changes in the social structure of the classroom. (p. 216-217)

How can we, then, as music educators, increase our consciousness? How can we increase our philosophical and political awareness? Hinchey (1998) states,

critical consciousness is the mental habit of asking ourselves what assumptions are guiding our actions; why we believe what we believe; who gains and who loses from the assumptions we endorse; whether things might be otherwise, and possibly better; and how we might effect change if we think it desirable. (p. 123)

As the survey participants continually emphasized, music education as a profession should start to develop a self-image of intellectual pursuit, to be taught and studied in the universities. The music teacher curricula should include more extramusical elements like sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and critical pedagogy to be able to produce Dewey's ideal teacher. Woodford's insight is very important. He believes that music teacher education programs should "recruit visionary teachers with ideas who can reinvigorate the profession" (personal communication, November 15, 2004). Almost every music teacher training institution's ideal is to prepare excellent musicians and teachers; however, problems and challenges still exist to achieve this goal. One of the challenges that university music programs face is how to prepare culturally effective and responsive music teachers. There are, however, other challenges in curriculum and course content, especially a lack of philosophical approaches in standard music education. Further research should be done on the challenges facing professional music educators when they encounter diverse musical classrooms.

Another insight shared by the participants is that music education majors should be placed in real educational situations so that they can begin examining problems (including teaching, political, or cultural problems) within the social context of music education. Instead of floating on the surface of the latest trends, music educators have to take responsibility for resolving their educational struggles and developing their own ideas. A teacher whose students are of a different culture than her own must be committed to reflect upon her biases and how

those biases influence her teaching. Quoting from Chalmers (1984), Wasson et al. (1990) suggest that a reflective teacher should constantly pose questions: “How does society influence what individuals and groups perceive as art (and music)? How do members of different groups determine their standards for judging art forms (musical forms)?” (p. 4). They state that a culture’s aesthetic production and experience should be seen in context. They believe that artistic perception is a social phenomenon and that art teachers should understand and experience their students’ culture and how art exists and lives in that particular culture. Wasson et al. (1990) posit that teachers should be willing to identify sociocultural groups in the classroom and “their accompanying values and practices which influence aesthetic production” (p. 6). For this to happen, they recommend “anthropologically based methods” that are applicable in a regular classroom (p. 6). First, they believe that most children in American schools “participate in at least three or more sociocultural milieus,” such as “their peer group and its resulting popular culture, their ethnic group or groups, and the dominant Euro-American dominant ideology.” According to them, the most ignored sociocultural milieu is the students’ popular subculture, which is shared among peer groups (p. 5). It is a difficult yet important task for music educators to take their students’ “socio-cultural milieus” into account while they teach and construct their curricula.

British philosopher Charles Taylor (1994) discusses the importance of identity and recognition in contemporary societies. In his estimation, the “crucial feature of human life is its fundamentally dialogical character. We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression” (p. 32). We can connect Taylor’s argument to the issue of musical identity. Acquiring different musical expressions through the construction of multicultural and culturally

responsive music education helps our students articulate their musical identities. Taylor (1994) continues

Discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others. That is why the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity gives a new importance to recognition. My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others. (p. 34)

Cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds define our musical identities and define who we are. As Elliott (2005b) explains, "praxial music education conceptualizes 'identity' in terms of the fluid connections between the student's personal, psychological, social, cultural, and bodily self, all of which develop in the context of the educational community or 'belongingness' that I call the curriculum-as-practicum, which has self-growth and enjoyment as its center" (Music and Identity, para. 10).

The purpose of this work has been to explore the possibilities of incorporating pragmatism in music education. As the participants suggested and reviews of literature showed, Dewey's pragmatism has not been analyzed deeply enough in music education. Dewey's ideas offer us great potential to expand the abilities and possibilities of music education for social change. As I mentioned earlier, his ideas can be used as a guide to understand the complexity of postmodern society and its institutions. A more comprehensive construction of a Deweyan music education might be proposed to further philosophical studies.

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