



Title: Musical Intelligence in the World: Negotiating the Social World of Music

Author(s): Paul Woodford

Source: Woodford, P. (1996-1997). Musical intelligence in the world: Negotiating the social world of music. *The Quarterly*, 7(2-4), pp. 49-63. (Reprinted with permission in *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 16(7), Autumn, 2010). Retrieved from <http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/>

Visions of Research in Music Education is a fully refereed critical journal appearing exclusively on the Internet. Its publication is offered as a public service to the profession by the New Jersey Music Educators Association, the state affiliate of MENC: The National Association for Music Education. The publication of VRME is made possible through the facilities of Westminster Choir College of Rider University Princeton, New Jersey. Frank Abrahams is the senior editor. Jason D. Vodicka is editor of the *Quarterly* historical reprint series. Chad Keilman is the production coordinator. The *Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* is reprinted with permission of Richard Colwell, who was senior consulting editor of the original series.

Musical Intelligence In The World: Negotiating The Social World Of Music

By Paul Woodford

*Faculty of Music
University of Western Ontario*

The concept of musical intelligence is usually equated with the development, application, and measurement of musical skills and abilities or cognitive processes needed to represent and manipulate musical sounds internally (e.g., Sloboda, 1985; Dowling & Harwood, 1986) or, in more general terms, to solve musical problems (e.g., Bamberger, 1991).¹ Research into the sociologies of musical belief and knowledge, however, suggests that such conceptions of musical intelligence are inadequate for the reason that they ignore the social contexts in which musical thought and action take place (and are judged). Accordingly, they fail to take into account and to explain the myriad social forces that work (some would even say conspire) to ground and shape our musical thinking. Most damning of all, they depict the musically intelligent person as one who can perform isolated feats of musical pyrotechnics or who can solve abstract musical problems rather than as someone who can successfully negotiate the social world of music.

As it is conceived in this paper, musical intelligence — at least the kind that really matters — is less about musical skills and

abilities or cognitive processes *per se* as it is about exercising freedom of musical choice and association and, thereby, constructing the musical self (i.e., one's musical individuality). Musical intelligence is thus eminently practical, not just in the narrow sense of the expertise or skill required to manipulate musical imagery internally or to perform music well (Elliott, 1995), but in the much more important sense of exerting some degree of conscious and purposeful control over one's own musical thinking and learning — of thinking musically for oneself! From this Deweyan perspective musical thinking is social in nature. It is also implicitly political in so much as it is framed within the context of a multilogical exchange among competing musical groups, all of which espouse and proselytize their own musical beliefs, ideas, practices and political agendas. In large part, musical intelligence is the means whereby one negotiates those musical groups and their beliefs and practices with a view to deciding where one stands in relation to them.

Exercising one's musical intelligence, however, is easier said than done. This is because musical groups tend to be normative in nature. They exert social pressure upon their membership (but also upon other people with whom they come into contact) to conform to collective norms of musical thought and action. As is explained in this paper, if children are to exercise their musical intelligence and, thereby, participate as full-fledged and productive members of a demo-

Paul Woodford is an Assistant Professor of Music Education at the Faculty of Music, the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada. He is guest editor of a forthcoming volume of Studies in Music from the University of Western Ontario on the nature of musical critical thinking.

Fundamental to the sociological conception of musical intelligence being developed here is the understanding that what distinguishes individuals and groups of people from one another musically is not so much their ascriptive characteristics... or degrees of knowledge and expertise but, rather, their beliefs.

cratic musical society, they will have to learn to resist social pressure from friends and associates to conform to their musical beliefs, practices and ways of thinking.² They will also need to begin taking more responsibility for inventing, developing, and defending publicly their own musical ideas. What this really means is that they will need to begin challenging conventional musical thought and wisdom and, concomitantly, the established socio-musical order. Put yet another way, they will need to begin thinking more like musical leaders, or what I call "expert musical thinkers." In the following pages, I attempt to define what is meant by expert musical thinking before considering some important implications for music education. Before delving into the qualities and characteristics of expert musical thinkers (i.e., musically intelligent thinkers), however, it will help to consider something of the social foundations of musical thought and action.

A Sociology of Musical Belief

Fundamental to the sociological conception of musical intelligence being developed here is the understanding that what distinguishes individuals and groups of people from one another musically is not so much their ascriptive characteristics (e.g., age, sex, race) or degrees of knowledge and expertise but, rather, their beliefs.³ Musical beliefs, because they determine what counts as musical knowledge (i.e., what is important or valuable musically) to the individual, group, and society, function as guides to musical thought and action.⁴ They do this by prioritizing features of a given musical composition, event, or situation for subsequent attention, by determining how musical knowledge acquired through the senses or in the imagination is categorized for storage in memory,⁵ and by

providing a social frame of reference and set(s) of standards for making judgments as to musical taste, preference, and individuality (i.e., originality). In effect, a musical belief system establishes the rules of engagement within a musical group and culture (i.e., what is expected or considered to be within the bounds of normal musical thought and behavior). In order to participate intelligently in a musical community and culture, one must have access to its beliefs.⁶

The trouble is, groups of people tend to be sociocentric, orthodox, and self-righteous in their musical beliefs.⁷ One reason why people tend to be sociocentric in their musical thinking is that many of their beliefs, because they have been acquired through frequent observation of cultural practices, are so ingrained in their lifestyles and thinking as to be automatic or habitual. Not only are people often unaware, or unconscious, of many of the beliefs they hold, but they tend to put them into practice without actually thinking about them and their implications. In other words, much of what people believe, think, and do is habitual. The problem with this unthinking and habitual commitment to cultural beliefs and ways of thinking is that it makes it more difficult to approach, understand, and empathize with beliefs and practices other than our own. Unaware that at least some of our beliefs are actually prejudices, we blithely apply them to practice without due regard for cultural, gender, and other differences and inequities.⁸ In consequence, we either misinterpret the musical intentions of others (e.g., "they have the same musical beliefs and values as we do but just aren't as good at putting them into practice") or, as is more often the case, avoid their music altogether. Either way, all sorts of opportunities for personal and musical growth are missed.⁹

In addition to being sociocentric, musical groups are often orthodox — even dogmatic — in their musical thinking. Because musical belief systems are complex social constructions representing some form and degree of consensus among large numbers of people, they have an inertial quality about them. They are slow to change and evolve for the reason that it takes time for individual members to communicate with one another and to share and consider alternative viewpoints. They also exert a kind of gravitational pull or social pressure (e.g., peer pressure) on individual members of groups to conform to collective norms of thought and action. In consequence, much of what we believe, think, and do musically is governed by the people with whom we associate. Put yet another way, much of what we believe, think, and do musically is governed by conventional musical wisdom. No doubt the aforementioned reliance on tacit and habitual musical beliefs and practices has something to do with this as does the fact that belief systems play an important role in establishing the categories of musical thought. As will become clear later on, these observations have profound implications for the teaching of musical creativity and, by extension, the development of musical individuality.

The need to maintain and validate personal and social beliefs also helps explain this social pressure. If a belief system is to be sustained over time, the people holding those beliefs will need to periodically validate them.¹⁰ One of the best ways to maintain and validate one's beliefs (at least in one's own mind) and to strengthen one's commitment to them is to participate in the socialization of new members or in the continued induction of members into the social structure of the group. The act of proselytizing one's beliefs in hopes of "winning" converts works as a kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more one successfully convinces others of the validity of certain beliefs and practices, the more deeply one commits to them.¹¹ Given this understanding, it is no wonder that people are inclined to be self-righteous and to impose their views on others. The act of proselytizing their beliefs and practices works to remove any doubts they have in their own minds.

While beliefs, musical and otherwise, are often arrived at by means of social consensus, it is important to understand that group leaders play an important, if not crucial, role in shaping the beliefs of the group. Indeed, research suggests that groups of people may owe their musical beliefs more to the qualities of their musical leaders than to any collectively and democratically formed wish on the part of the membership.¹² That is, in many cases it is the leaders of musical groups who do most of the socially and musically significant (i.e., creative and political) thinking and, thereby, play a major role in shaping the musical beliefs, thoughts, and actions of the collective. One reason why groups rely on their leaders to interpret problems and to make decisions for them is that individual members are seldom knowledgeable of the entire scope of the belief systems to which they subscribe. Most people have neither the inclination nor the time to immerse themselves in the intricacies of a belief system. Rather, they tend to adopt several or more substantive beliefs as guides to thought and action and infer the rest: hence the need for experts and group leaders — people who are intimately familiar with the complexities and subtleties of the belief systems in question, who can explain and interpret core beliefs to the membership at large, and who can put them into practice, thereby also setting the standards for thought and action within the community.¹³ Of course, because they have more knowledge and social power within the group, leaders also have proportionately greater responsibility for preserving and propagating the beliefs of the group.

But while group leaders play an important and even necessary role in shaping the beliefs of their followers, there is always the danger of indoctrination. As is explained shortly, unless individuals learn to think for themselves and to challenge their leaders (as well as their followers), they will not be in a position to exert control over their own musical thinking and learning. Indoctrination most often occurs when leaders are strong-willed and charismatic individuals who view themselves as self-styled prophets. However, leaders are not always completely to blame when indoctrination takes place. For reasons

...musical leadership ability is not something that people are born with or that is handed ready-made to them but, rather, something that they must cultivate on their own.

unknown, people tend to imbue their leaders, particularly strong ones, with almost religious qualities. It may be that indoctrination is an occupational hazard of espousing and proselytizing strong views. If members of groups are to learn to think musically for themselves they will have to stop putting their leaders on pedestals. They will also have to begin taking greater responsibility for developing and defending publicly their own musical beliefs and ideas. In other words, they will need to begin thinking more like leaders! As is explained next, the social process of becoming a leader sets one apart to some extent from the groups to which one already belongs while simultaneously providing access to other leaders holding similar beliefs about the nature of knowledge. Leaders, it seems, constitute a group (or groups) of their own.

Defining Expert Musical Thinking

As conceived herein, musical leadership ability is not something that people are born with or that is handed ready-made to them but, rather, something that they must cultivate on their own. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that what distinguishes musical leaders from others is not so much increased access to knowledge and social status within the group or expertise (though it is that, too) as it is the disposition to stand out from the crowd in musical thought and action. Musical leaders — at least the ones with which we are concerned here — are determined to be innovative and creative in thought and deed and, thereby, to develop their individuality as musicians. It is this disposition to be responsible for their own thoughts and actions, to be creative and individualistic, but also to stand up for what they believe that makes it possible for would-be leaders in music to acquire increased knowledge and social status within the group.

Howard Gardner helps explain this con-

nection between creativity, individuality, and leadership. In his book *Creating Minds: An Anatomy of Creativity* (1993) the truly creative person is characterized as one who not only wishes to be different from others but actively seeks out some degree of asynchronicity with them in thought and action. Creative people experience some kind of peak or flow experience from challenging conventional wisdom and the established order.¹⁴ As Gardner explains,

By definition, most individuals are not marginal within their community; hence, to the extent that there is a larger proportion of marginal individuals within the ranks of the creative, one has evidence that asynchronies may actually be associated with creative output in a statistically verifiable way. But it seems equally true that creative individuals, once they have felt the pain and pleasure of asynchrony, often continue to seek asynchrony, even as other individuals 'escape from freedom' and rush to the comfort of majority status.¹⁵

The development of creativity (and hence also individuality) depends as much on some sort of conscious decision to "live life on the edge," to "push the envelope," or to challenge conventional thought and wisdom as it does on the possession of expertise in a particular domain. What is more, Gardner observes that truly creative people — those who make the most remarkable breakthroughs in their fields — are seldom prodigies.

Based on this knowledge, it seems reasonable to propose that the development of creativity (and as will be shown leadership) depends as much on the possession of a disposition to stand out from the crowd as it does on any kind of genetic inheritance or an abundance of skill. If this is true, then by implication music teachers ought to discuss with, and demonstrate to, students what it means to be an individual in musical thought and deed.¹⁶ Unless teachers inculcate in students a disposition to be thoughtful and to

distinguish themselves from their peers by developing, justifying, and sharing with others their own musical beliefs, ideas, and practices, it is doubtful that they will be creative to any significant extent!¹⁷

While the connection has already been made between individuality and creativity, what remains to be shown is how they relate to leadership. Once again, Howard Gardner comes to our assistance. In his most recent book, *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership* (1995), Gardner observes that, among other things, what sets would-be leaders apart from other members of groups is a willingness to confront and challenge incumbent leaders and authority figures.¹⁸ There are two parallel social processes involved in the development of future leaders. Would-be leaders define themselves in relation to their peers while simultaneously modelling themselves and their thinking and behavior after the leaders they have known or studied, sometimes from afar. Given a sufficiently strong sense of self, novice leaders begin to think and act more like authority figures. Not only do they begin to take responsibility for coming up with their own ideas, stories, or messages, but they begin to assert themselves by contributing to some sort of public, and possibly highly politicized, forum. Very often, this requires that they challenge established practices and, concomitantly, the established social order. Of course, there is much more to becoming a leader in music or in any other domain than simply standing up for what one believes.

David Elliott's philosophy of performance-based music education provides insight into the nature of musical leadership. As Elliott conceives it, music education through performance is a social process whereby students are inducted into the ways of thinking (i.e., decision-making processes) and behaving of expert musical practitioners. In effect, they are inducted into communities, or groups, of expert music performers. Superior, or expert, musicians are distinguished by knowledge of musical standards and practices coupled with certain critical abilities.¹⁹ These qualities make it possible for them to generate and develop their own musical ideas (i.e., musical interpretations) in light of past and present musical practice.

Consistent with the work of other philosophers and theorists already reviewed herein, Elliott views music performance as a constructive activity whereby the individual pursues self-knowledge (i.e., constructs the musical self). Where I think Elliott errs, however, is in overemphasizing music performance at the expense of other forms of musical thought and action involved in listening, composing, and philosophizing. According to him, in order to think musically one must know how to perform it. Intelligent music listening, too, "depends on learning how to make music well."²⁰ However, Elliott does not convincingly explain (at least to me) why performance is necessarily more constructive and intelligent than listening and other forms of musical involvement. While I agree that students require first-hand knowledge of expert musical practice if they are to develop the capacity to think musically, less clear is why they need to perform in order to do this.²¹

My own work for the past several years has been dedicated to developing a conception of the "expert musical thinker." As the reader will have already guessed, expert musical thinkers (e.g., performers, composers, listeners, critics, or musicologists, etc.) are disposed to think for themselves, or to be creative in musical thought and deed, to think more like musical leaders, and, thereby, to develop their musical individuality (although this should not be interpreted to mean that they always place their own musical and other interests before those of the group). Perhaps the most important things that distinguish expert musical thinkers from others are the dispositions to expand their acquaintance with, but also their understanding and appreciation of, the musical world; to think rationally (or to make explicit, critically examine, and reconcile their musical beliefs with experience); and, to the extent that it is possible, exert some degree of personal and conscious control over their own musical thinking and learning so that they can resist social pressure from friends and associates to slavishly conform to their ways of thinking musically.

Aware of the social forces that shape their own musical thinking and behavior, yet curious to know more about music, expert musi-

Expert musical thinkers...feel morally and intellectually empowered to think for themselves or to decide their own musical beliefs and values and, when necessary, to challenge conventional thought and wisdom.

cal thinkers explore the world of musical beliefs and practices and associated groups for the immediate purpose of deciding which ones to adopt as their own. To the extent that it is possible, they wish to decide their own musical tastes, preferences, and enthusiasms and, concomitantly, the musical groups with which they wish to associate (e.g., jazz, rock, folk, concert artists, or aficionados associated with them).

Implicit in expert musical thinking, then, is some sort of conscious weighing of musical groups and their beliefs, practices, and standards with respect to their value to the self but also the dispositions to continue learning about those musical belief systems, practices, and groups that exist; to be more inclusive or to attempt to draw people of diverse musical backgrounds, interests, and beliefs into one's sphere of influence; to effect changes in their thinking (i.e., to contribute to the growth of the society and culture); and, generally, to achieve some social and musical unity of experience. However, expert musical thinkers (at least as defined herein) do not merely impose their views on other people. Rather, they engage with them in musical and other forms of discourse (e.g., verbal) in hopes of arriving at some level of mutual understanding and respect. Recognizing that there is value inherent in all musical belief systems and groups, and wishing to learn more about them, they try to remain openminded and flexible in their musical thinking. Implied here is an attitude of reciprocity. While contributing to communal understandings of music, they remain receptive to what others have to say and do musically. Ultimately, their aim is to explore, understand, and reconcile the diversity of musical beliefs, practices, and groups that exists. In so doing, they hope to expand their conception of what is music.

Importantly, because expert musical thinkers are skeptics and disposed to subject self-consciously their musical beliefs to intellectual scrutiny, they are able to identify and thereby exert some level of control over those of their beliefs, practices, and ways of thinking that may be prejudicial to other people and cultures and that may prevent them from approaching and making sense of their music.²¹ These same qualities, coupled with a disposition to distinguish themselves from others, make it possible for expert musical thinkers to distance themselves to some extent from the beliefs and practices of the people with whom they associate. Consistent with Howard Gardner's findings with respect to creative individuals, expert musical thinkers seek out some degree of asynchrony in musical belief, thought and action with the groups of musicians, interested amateurs, or musical enthusiasts with which they choose to associate.

Herein, it is suggested, lies a key to musical creativity, individuality, and leadership. Expert musical thinkers, unlike many other people, feel morally and intellectually empowered to think for themselves or to decide their own musical beliefs and values and, when necessary, to challenge conventional thought and wisdom. Of course, the act of challenging conventional musical thought and wisdom is tantamount to challenging the established social and musical order. Somewhat skeptical of what their friends and associates (including teachers) tell them, they feel personally responsible for developing, warranting, and defending publicly their own musical beliefs, practices, and ideas. In other words, they think and act as musical leaders!

In keeping with Gardner's observations with respect to the development of would-be leaders, there may be two (and possibly more) parallel social processes involved in becoming an expert musical thinker. Would-

be expert musical thinkers align themselves with certain of their peers while simultaneously modelling themselves after established musical and other leaders. That is, having gained access to a musical group and its beliefs, they aspire to a leadership role and begin to modify their beliefs and behavior accordingly. Inevitably, as these acolytes gain experience, knowledge, and confidence, they begin to challenge those in authority in a bid to affirm their own ascendancy.

As the reader may have already guessed, expert musical thinkers are simultaneously members of a number of different groups. In the first place, they are members of groups of musicians or interested amateurs associated with the multitude of musical styles, genres, and cultures available. At the same time, because they seek out and associate with other expert musical thinkers, they are also members of the community of musical leaders. However, expert musical thinkers also share a lot in common with leaders in other domains. In fact, all of the characteristics of expert musical thinkers identified in this article can be applied equally well to leaders and thinkers in virtually any domain of experience (witness Howard Gardner's study of leaders in the domains of politics, anthropology, physics, the business world, religion, the military, and education). Thus, expert musical thinkers are also a part of a wider community of people that is committed to some form or other of intellectual endeavor.

Previously, it was stated that what distinguishes groups of people from one another is not so much their ascriptive characteristics or collective thoughts and actions but their beliefs. Indeed, as should be evident by now, there are qualitative differences not only in how group members and their leaders think but also in what they believe. Ordinary members of groups, because they are less knowledgeable of the subtleties and complexities of the belief systems to which they subscribe, are usually less sophisticated in their beliefs yet, paradoxically enough, more unequivocally certain of them. They also tend to be less flexible in their thinking. Expert thinkers, on the other hand, are not only more sophisticated, knowledgeable, and consistent in their beliefs but, when chal-

lenged, are more likely to be flexible in their thinking and to wish to consider and reconcile opposing points of view. If, as was previously stated, the musical world is politically charged, then expert musical thinkers are also experts at musical diplomacy.²³

As case in point, Frank Zappa is known to many people as an idiosyncratic and eccentric rock musician. Less well known is the fact that he was able to successfully negotiate with musicians of diverse interests and backgrounds in order to accomplish his own compositional agenda. Influenced by the likes of Edgard Varese, Igor Stravinsky, Anton Webern, and Spike Jones, not to mention numerous rock musicians and composers, Zappa composed highly creative and innovative works of rock, contemporary symphonic, chamber, and electronic music. Zappa was an expert musical thinker in so much as he was committed to stretching himself musically (and probably in many other ways, too), to reconciling musically disparate belief systems and groups (e.g., rock, classical, and avant garde musicians), and, thereby, to challenging the established musical order. He was also capable of standing up for what he believed. For example, in 1985 Zappa spoke eloquently on behalf of rock musicians at a series of hearings on pornography in rock music held by the United States Senate Commerce Committee. Responding to demands by Christian fundamentalist and other lobby groups that some rock music be censored because of obscene lyrics or socially inappropriate behavior by rock musicians, Zappa convincingly argued that what was at stake was nothing less than freedom of speech.²⁴

But there is still more to being an expert thinker — musical or otherwise — than having expertise in some domain or being more knowledgeable and consistent, yet flexible, in one's beliefs and in challenging the established order. Expert thinkers, and regardless of the subject area or domain of experience, seem to possess an *ethos* (or a set of guiding beliefs) of their own. That is, in addition to demonstrating knowledge (including, possibly, expertise) in a given subject area or domain of experience, they share a set of very general beliefs about the way context-specific

If ...individuals acquire their beliefs through observation of practice within a group or community and through association with people who epitomize those beliefs and practices, then music students will need to associate with expert musical and other thinkers.

beliefs and forms of knowledge should be acquired, organized, warranted, and applied to experience. For example, expert thinkers believe in the value of personal growth, of learning for its own sake, and in the need for expertise and creativity in some domain(s). They also share the convictions that for something to count as knowledge it should be subjected to intellectual scrutiny and that it is important to stand up for what one believes (provided of course that one's own beliefs have been carefully scrutinized and warranted).

If, as research into the sociologies of belief and knowledge suggests, individuals acquire their beliefs through observation of practice within a group or community and through association with people who epitomize those beliefs and practices, then music students will need to associate with expert musical and other thinkers. David Elliott is saying something very similar when he advocates that music education be reconceived as a social process whereby students are gradually inducted into the specific beliefs, practices, standards, and ways of thinking of expert musicians (read performers).²⁵ However, as has already been pointed out, Elliott's conception of music education has been criticized for its over-emphasis on music performance at the expense of other forms of musical thinking involved in listening, conducting, criticizing, composing, philosophizing and so on.²⁶

Needed, it seems to me, is a much broader view of musical thinking (and of musical intelligence), one that gives due recognition to the manifold ways in which music may be experienced and *practiced* and that, moreover, acknowledges that expert musicians are part of a wider intellectual community. Given the information presented in this paper, students will clearly need to associate with music teachers, performers, composers,

critics, and philosophers etc. who possess musical and other forms of expertise but who are also disposed to be creative and to be leaders to some extent in their respective fields or sub-disciplines. Moreover, if expert music thinkers are also members of a wider intellectual community that has its own general beliefs, practices, and ways of thinking, and if students are to begin integrating and reconciling their musical beliefs with those from other subject areas, they should probably also associate with expert thinkers and leaders from other domains of experience (e.g., the visual and literary arts). Bennett Reimer might be on the right track, then, when he argues that music educators ought to work with educators from other artistic domains.²⁷ Indeed, I would argue that if music education is ever to secure its place in the schools, music educators must convince parents, administrators, and students alike that they are part of the wider artistic and intellectual communities.

It is important to note that there may be developmental stages to this relativistic and metapsychological understanding of the musical world. Psychologist William G. Perry has proposed one model of intellectual and ethical development in undergraduate students, the highest stage of which is remarkably consistent with the conception of expert thinking proposed in this paper. According to Perry, undergraduate students progress through at least four broad and qualitatively different stages in the ways they perceive the world and make value judgements.²⁸ The first stage, entitled dualism, is characterized by a tendency to make categorical judgements. While acknowledging that different belief systems, perspectives, and groups exist, students are prone to categorize them as being either "right-good-we" or "wrong-bad-

them."²⁹ Not surprisingly, uncertainty is viewed as an error.

At the next stage of development, multiplicity, students believe that one opinion is as good as another — that all opinions and beliefs are equally valid. They may even argue different sides of an issue with equal conviction. Towards the end of this stage, however, they begin to form an appreciation of the complexity of human behavior and to realize that some arguments, opinions, or beliefs are better supported or more logical than others. Once they have realized that "what is 'true,' 'good,' or 'effective' depends on the context in which it is being considered,"³⁰ students have entered the third stage, known as relativism. At this stage, they are more mature in their thinking in so much as they begin to think more critically and to take more responsibility for finding and pursuing their own interests. Of the few undergraduate students who reach this stage of development, however, most are in their senior year.

The last stage of intellectual and ethical development, commitment with relativism, is seldom attained by undergraduate students. At this stage, students knowingly commit to some belief system, group, lifestyle, or career as means of defining the self or making sense of the world and of their place in it. Recognizing that the world is a confusing and often chaotic place, they begin to organize and prioritize their beliefs, values, thoughts and behaviors as means of simplifying and clarifying experience. However, while placing a premium on consistency of thought and behavior, they remain open to new ideas and challenges. While consciously and deliberately committing to some musical world view, or perspective, the individual remains open to learning and understanding what other musical and educational belief systems, groups, and individuals have to say.³¹

Implications for Music Teaching and Learning

Throughout this manuscript many implications for music teaching at both school and university levels have been raised. For example, the observation was made that if students are to think for themselves they will need to think more like musical and educa-

tional leaders. More specifically, and in addition to the obvious needs for breadth and depth of experience, students will require encouragement from music teachers and instructors to invent, develop, warrant, defend and, when necessary, reconstruct their own beliefs, values, practices, and ideas, preferably in some sort of public forum (e.g., concerts, classroom discussion, educational conferences and the like). If students are to do this, they will need to know what it means to think independently. Accordingly, it was suggested that teachers should discuss with them what it means to be creative and to be individuals in musical thought and action.

However, while discussion of the nature of creativity and individuality is probably helpful, particularly if students are to learn to think self-consciously about their own rates of progress towards more mature modes of thinking, they will also need to associate with music teachers and other individuals who are themselves expert musicians and thinkers (note that the two are not always synonymous)³² and who can serve as appropriate role models. Moreover, and especially when the goal is to integrate learning in different subject areas, they should also associate with expert thinkers in other domains.

An important consideration for teachers at all educational levels is that some students may not be developmentally ready to assume greater responsibility for their own thinking and learning. Indeed, if Perry is right that the last stage of intellectual and ethical development is seldom attained by undergraduate students, then one might be tempted to conclude that the development of individuality is a lost cause for the majority of people (or at least that it requires many more years of accumulated experience and wisdom than can be provided for in the educational system). Such a conclusion, however, would probably be erroneous for the reason that students are seldom required in the school and university to engage in those kinds of activities and thinking that contribute significantly to the self-conscious construction of their individuality.³³ Too often, teachers, because they are preoccupied with lower level kinds of activities such as rote learning, the retention and regurgitation of subject-specific knowledge

for its own sake (as opposed to teaching students how to use that knowledge for their own ends), and the development of musical and other skills and abilities, forget to challenge students to think for themselves. Indeed, it seems safe to say that independent thinking, when it happens at all in the school, is an *epiphenomenon*. Although possibly attributable to some extent to ordinary classroom or rehearsal room activities, it is seldom explicitly taught for as a direct and highly desirable outcome of music instruction. Given this understanding, it is no wonder that students fail to demonstrate evidence of independent thinking. Perhaps if teachers at all levels of schooling made the development of individuality (Gardner refers to this as the intelligence of the self) an educational priority and if they invested more time and energy finding ways to challenge and encourage students to think more independently this goal might be reached much earlier.

A caveat is in order here. While it is essential that students discuss and debate important issues and conflicting musical beliefs and values amongst themselves and with their teachers and other authority figures (either in person or through reading, discussing, and writing about their ideas), the goal is to encourage the free exchange and examination of ideas. If this is to be accomplished, everyone concerned will have to make a sincere effort to understand and respect each others' musical beliefs (although this does not mean that they need always accept them). Students need to challenge the established order, but they should be made to realize from the beginning that respect and tolerance are two-way streets. Instructors are thus more than just guides or facilitators of students' growth. They are also mediators of conflicting beliefs and values and the people concerned.

Conclusion

In this manuscript, an attempt was made to explain that if children are to eventually learn to think musically for themselves, or to think intelligently in music, they will need to think more like expert thinkers or leaders in their respective domains. The reader will recall that implicit in expert musical thinking is a

disposition to take responsibility for one's own beliefs, thoughts, and actions. In the final analysis, it is up to students, themselves, to determine the extent to which they wish to develop their individuality and, concomitantly, the degree to which they feel comfortable thinking and acting like leaders. Perhaps all that teachers can do, aside from challenging students to continue learning and growing and by raising their consciousness with respect to personal and societal impediments to independent kinds of thinking, is to continually remind them that it is possible to exert some measure of control over their own thinking and learning, provided they so desire it and have the intellectual and moral fortitude to stand up for themselves.

Howard Gardner, in his book *Leading Minds*, remarks that while his conception of leaders as presenting messages is not unique, what is unusual and possibly unprecedented is his depiction of leadership as "a cognitive enterprise occurring and recurring within — and between — the minds of leaders and followers."³⁴ This cognitive enterprise takes the form of a political exchange among individuals and groups with different, and often competing, stories, assertions, beliefs, and ideas needing to be told. The depiction of musical leaders presented in this paper is consistent in many respects with Gardner's cognitive vision. What I find especially intriguing about his conception of leadership is that it suggests (albeit not explicitly) that our concept of musical mind needs to be expanded to take into account the broader sociological and cultural contexts. I would even go so far as to suggest that researchers would profit from taking a more systemic (i.e., social) approach to music cognition in which individual thinkers are conceived in terms of their function in, and contribution to, musical society as a whole. This idea is hardly new. The young John Dewey conceived of society as functioning like an organism in which each individual simultaneously contributes to, and is influenced by, society as a whole.³⁵ More recently, cognitive scientists have begun to return to this conception of human thought, or one similar to it, in which thinking takes the form of a dynamic, if often

subtle, and reciprocal interaction between the culturally endowed mind and the world.³⁶

As a final note, I feel obliged to remark that, like Gardner, I do not concern myself in this paper with contemporary critiques of leadership (e.g., deconstructionist, postmodern, or feminist critiques that question the legitimacy of the concept of leadership). There are several reasons for this omission. To begin, there is the obvious problem of lack of space in a paper that is already over long. More to the point, the conception of the expert musical thinker presented herein bespeaks a similar concern for matters of cultural gender, and other forms of equity and diversity as well as personal and musical emancipation and empowerment. Recognizing that thinking is political in the sense that it is colored by the groups with which we associate, all of which proselytize their own implicit or explicit agendas, stories, beliefs or ideas, I developed the concept of the expert musical thinker as one possible antidote to the problems of social conformity and indoctrination. Problems of political rhetoric notwithstanding, it seems to me that many feminist and other critical theorists in music are saying much the same kind of thing.³⁷ What interests them, and me, is how musical democracy can be fostered and encouraged. As should already be evident, expert musical thinkers are not just any leaders but, rather, ones who are prosocial and dedicated to fostering a sense of community (albeit not at the expense of losing themselves in the group). They wish to become integrated into the various musical and other groups with which they associate while simultaneously differentiating themselves from them in thought and action. The point, then, is not so much to attempt to create musical and educational leaders as it is to empower students to think musically for themselves, to exert some level of control over their own lives, and, thereby, to become active participants in a democratic musical society.

Notes

1. See John A. Sloboda, *The Music Mind: The Cognitive Psychology of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); W. Jay Dowling and Dane L. Harwood, *Music Cognition* (Orlando: Academic Press, 1986); and Jeanne

Bamberger, *The Mind Behind the Musical Ear: How Children Develop Musical Intelligence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

2. Howard Gardner says much the same thing in his recent book *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 1995). As he writes, "The end product of . . . [the] processes of self-definition and identification is as individual as part of a group; as a holder of certain beliefs, attitudes, and values; and as practitioner of certain behaviors. It is the particular burden of the leader to help other individuals determine their personal, social, and moral identities; more often than not, leaders inspire in part because of how they have resolved their own identity issues" (25). As Gardner says, knowledge and understanding of how leaders think and act should help inoculate individuals against mindless acceptance of what political and other leaders tell them (306).

3. As Jeffrey Wright explains in "Belief Systems and Their Influence on Musical Experience" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1991), ascriptive characteristics such as age, ethnicity, sex, and socioeconomic status play a role in determining which beliefs are made available to children. For example, it is generally recognized that adults treat young boys differently from young girls (e.g., "Boys don't cry"). This accounts, at least in part, for differences in belief and behavior. Similarly, socioeconomic status often determines which beliefs about lifestyle and material goods are imparted to children. Presumably, children from a lower socioeconomic bracket will be exposed to a different set of beliefs than children of wealthy parents (210).

4. Ibid. Actually, as Wright points out, it is a little more complicated than this. Belief and knowledge seem to be two sides of the same coin. Belief determines what counts as knowledge. At the same time, knowledge works to solidify and buildup belief. Moreover, belief and knowledge appear to be aspects of the same sociological process. "To become involved in a social institution is to adopt a belief system. Conversely, adoption of a belief system entails access to social knowledge" (217).

5. James Borhek and Richard Curtis in *A Sociology of Belief* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975) explain that the individual's world perspective (i.e., belief system) or perception of reality is mediated by "learned styles of perception and categories of thought" (122).

6. Robert Walker, *Musical Beliefs: Psychoacoustic, Mythical, and Educational Perspectives* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990).

7. According to critical thinking philosopher and theorist Richard Paul, it is human nature to adopt sociocentric, self-serving, and self-righteous beliefs and to become defensive when they are challenged. These kinds of beliefs constitute one's "primary nature." However, humans also have a "secondary nature," or a disposition towards rationality. Regrettably, this latter disposition is more difficult to develop. It is the development of this disposition towards rationality, both at individual and group levels, with which we are most concerned in the present paper. See Richard W. Paul, "Dialogical Thinking: Critical Thought Essential to the Acquisition of Rational Knowledge and Passions," in *Teaching Thinking Skills: Theory and Practice*, ed. J. B. Baron and R. J. Sternberg (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1987), 127-148.

8. Paul Woodford, "Critical Thinking in Music: What is It?" *Canadian Music Educator* 37 (Fall 1995): 38.

9. Paul Woodford, "Developing Critical Thinkers in Music," *Music Educators Journal* 83 (July 1996): 27-32.

10. Wright, "Belief Systems," 198.

11. One of the best ways to maintain beliefs is to isolate them and the groups holding them from competing viewpoints. It is for this reason that some group leaders encourage their followers to avoid social contact with other groups and their beliefs. Similarly, certain beliefs that are based on everyday experience are deemed self-evident truths. In consequence, people do not always feel the need to validate them. *Ibid.*, 190-193.

12. Borhek and Curtis, *A Sociology of Belief* (122). Christopher Small in *Music, Society, Education* (London: John Calder, 1977) says almost the same thing. Because ours is a consumer society in which experience is me-

diated by experts, the common man lacks creative experience but also confidence in his ability to judge what is of worth, or value, to him. Art and art criticism are practiced by only a "tiny minority of the population" (90-91).

13. As Wright explains in "Belief Systems," this tendency to make assumptions based on incomplete knowledge of the belief system in question is one reason why people are often wrong in their beliefs (134-135).

14. Howard Gardner, *Creating Minds: An Anatomy of Creativity Seen Through the Lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Gandhi* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

15. *Ibid.*, 381-382.

16. This distinction between teaching musical skills and abilities on the one hand and inculcating in students the disposition to develop their musical individuality on the other is really one of means and ends. Musical skills and abilities are means whereby musical individuality is developed. Unfortunately, musical skills and abilities are treated by some music teachers as ends in themselves. For more about this confusion between musical means and ends as it relates to music education, see Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989).

17. David Elliott argues in *Musical Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), that musical expertise is the foundation for musical creativity. General tendencies to challenge traditional assumptions, to recognize good problems in a domain, and to make independent judgments promote creativity, as do certain generic values (e.g., valuing originality). To him, however, these tendencies and values are secondary to expertise. My own position is that these general tendencies and values are central to creativity for the reason that they are an outward expression of belief. Musical creativity is unlikely to happen to any significant extent unless one believes that creativity contributes in important ways to the construction of the self (i.e., it makes the development of individuality possible).

18. Howard Gardner, *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 1995). Gardner actually distinguishes

between several different kinds of leaders. The *ordinary*, and hence most common, leader merely reflects the collective beliefs and values of the group. American President Gerald Ford was an ordinary leader in so much as he did not attempt to stretch the consciousness of his followers. The *innovative* leader (e.g., the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher or American President Ronald Reagan) take pre-existing but neglected stories or platforms and resurrect them, thereby reorienting the thinking of their followers. The last, and most rare, kind of leader is the *visionary* (e.g., Jesus Christ, Gandhi, and Monnet). These individuals create new stories, images, or visions. While visionary leaders are rare in the religious and political fields, they are much more common in specific domains, especially in domains such as the arts and sciences in which there is a sophisticated membership. It is these innovative and visionary leaders with which Gardner, and I, are concerned (10-11).

19. David J. Elliott, "Music as Knowledge," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 25 (Fall 1991), 29.

20. Elliott, *Music Matters*, 174.

21. Elliott believes that music listening is less intelligent and constructive than performing, conducting, composing, arranging and so on for the reason that it is not a form of physical activity. To music psychologist Jeanne Bamberger, however, music listening, or hearing, "is itself a performance, an active process of making meaning." Jeanne Bamberger, *The Mind Behind the Musical Ear*: 3.

22. According to critical thinking theorist John McPeck, critical thinkers engage in reflective scepticism, meaning that they deliberately suspend belief in order to consider plausible alternatives. For more about McPeck's definition of critical thinking, see John E. McPeck, *Teaching Critical Thinking: Dialogue and Dialectic* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

23. David Elliott and Lee Bartel are saying something similar when they refer to Richard Pratte's conception of dynamic multiculturalism, or the belief that education ought to prepare children to learn how to understand unfamiliar cultural practices and artifacts. Preferring the term interculturalism over dynamic multiculturalism, Bartel, who is

writing about cultural equity in music education, suggests that schools should help children gain "the freedom to cross cultural boundaries in a safe and manageable manner." Lee R. Bartel, "Cultural Equity in Music Education," *The Recorder*, The Journal of the Ontario Music Educators Association, 37 (March/April 1995): 54.

24. Zappa was responding to a lobby group known as The Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) started by wives of United States Congressmen. This group was exerting pressure on the music recording industry to voluntarily attach "labels on albums and cassettes warning of explicit lyrics." In responding to complaints by this group and Christian fundamentalists, Zappa argued that "There is no conclusive scientific evidence to support the claim that exposure to any form of music will cause the listener to commit a crime or damn his soul to hell.... Bad facts make bad law, and people who write bad law are, in my opinion, more dangerous than songwriters who celebrate sexuality." Complicating the situation for Zappa and other rock artists was the fact that husbands of five of the PMRC members were sitting on the Senate committee. Quoted in Robin Denselow, *When the Music's Over: The Story of Political Pop* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), 266-267.

25. Elliott, "Music as Knowledge," 37.

26. For one critique of Elliott's praxial philosophy see Bennett Reimer, "Avoiding Extremes of Theory and Practice in Music Teacher Education," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 3 (Fall 1993): 12-22. To be fair, Elliott acknowledges that there may be "higher level," context-free cognitive capacities such as Gardner's intelligence of the self, analogic thinking, and general common sense that operate both within and among different domains of experience. Also acknowledged is the possibility that musical involvement may contribute to the development of the self in general and, therefore, "to one's overall quality of life." Unfortunately, Elliott does not pursue this line of thought further. Elliott, *Music Matters*, 131.

27. Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 226-229.

28. For more about Perry's model, see

William G. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970). See also his chapter "Cognitive and Ethical Growth: The Making of Meaning," in A. W. Chickering, *The Modern American College* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981). In actuality, Perry identifies nine developmental stages of intellectual and ethical growth. Manny Brand has conveniently collapsed them into the four broader stages or world views utilized here. See Manny Brand, "Toward a Better Understanding of Undergraduate Music Education Majors: Perry's Perspective," *Bulletin of the Council of Research in Music Education* 98 (Fall 1988), 22-31.

29. Brand, "Toward a Better Understanding," 23.

30. *Ibid.*, 25.

31. Howard Gardner, too, believes that there may be developmental differences in how individuals think with respect to the groups with which they associate and their beliefs. Whereas less mature thinkers tend to think along the lines of Perry's first three stages of ethical development, the "seasoned adult," he says, is able to distance himself somewhat from the group and its beliefs. He is also able to appreciate that he "might well have belonged to a different set of groups, and thence entertained a quite different philosophy of life. But rather than defending each set of groups as equally viable (as the relativistically oriented counterpart is wont to do), such an adult at least attempts to justify the particular ensemble of group memberships to which he is fated to belong."

Gardner, *Leading Minds*, 54. For a feminist perspective on intellectual and moral development, and a sympathetic critique of Perry's scheme, see Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger and Jill Mattuck Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

32. What I am alluding to here is the fact that musicians might possess an abundance of skill acquired through past experience yet lack the necessary dispositions for continued growth and learning. As Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamaglia explain in *Surpassing*

Ourselves: An Inquiry into the Nature and Implications of Expertise (Chicago: Open Court, 1993), the difference here is between true experts and experienced non-experts. Whereas the former are disposed to continually reinvest in the constitutive problems of their respective fields, the latter, while possessing expertise, lack the requisite dispositions to remain professionally and intellectually vigorous. Based on this understanding, music teachers require more than just musical expertise. They must also be disposed to continue learning and growing musically.

33. As Gavriel Salomon and David Perkins explain, schools seldom require students to transfer learning between different contexts or to engage in those kinds of activities that require the mindful and self-conscious use of knowledge acquired through past experience to solve current problems. Gavriel Salomon and David Perkins, "Transfer of Cognitive Skill from Programming: When and How?" Paper sponsored by the John and Mary Markle Foundation, New York, and the National Institute of Education, Washington, D.C., 1985, ERIC ED 271092. What these and many other authors and researchers are saying is that schooling should be less about the development of skills and abilities or the acquisition of bits of knowledge (although those are still very important) as it should be about inculcating in students an "ongoing disposition of fairmindedness and self-examination that makes intellectual, emotional, behavioral, and indeed, social integrity possible." Carl D. Brell, "Critical Thinking as Transfer: The Reconstructive Integration of Otherwise Discrete Interpretations of Experience," *Educational Theory* 40 (Winter 1990): 65.

34. Gardner, *Leading Minds*, 296.

35. Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 126-127.

36. Jean Lave, *Cognition in Practice: Mind, Mathematics and Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 177.

37. For example, Jennifer Rycenga, in her article "The Uncovering of Ontology in Music: Speculative and Conceptual. Feminist Music." *Repercussions: Critical and Alternative Viewpoints in Music and Scholarship* 3 (Spring

1994), observes that, "Radical feminism is intent on maintaining a tension between the one and the many, between unity and diversity" (28). This is entirely consistent with my own conception of expert musical thinking, as is Mary Daly's insistence on a "connectedness that is rooted in Self-creation" (29). Similarly, and again in keeping with feminist theory, I define power not in terms of domination but, rather, as self-determination. As Gloria Steinem puts it in *Revolution from Within*

(Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co., 1992), "Instead of outstripping others, the goal is completing oneself" (188). Some writers might quibble with my use of the word "expert" on the grounds that it connotes elitist and sexist tendencies. As used by me, however, it refers to the potentiality for learning. The point is that one can always learn more about self and others through mindful engagement in musical experience. 