

PREFACE

The study of music has been an important component of the curriculum since the inception of the concept of formal instruction as a primary form of education. From the advent of singing schools in the early public schools more than a hundred years ago, to today's development of music curriculum that reflects simultaneously the continuous innovations in information technology and rapidly changing societal norms, music educators have sought to develop and implement quality music education programs that contribute to the education of learners in a meaningful way.

As music education programs in schools developed, so too did teacher education programs in universities in order to supply the schools with qualified teachers. And, as universities in Canada developed from instructional units into research-based institutions, so too did the analytic study and evaluation of music education by increasingly qualified researchers. The music education community is far broader however, than that which is taught in the school system. In this book, music education involves not only school teachers and students, but community teachers and learners, music education researchers, professional artists, composers, listener/responders, policy makers and numerous private sector support companies.

By their very nature musicians are travelers: musicians have to travel to perform; performing groups travel to different venues to perform as much as to learn from others; music education researchers study different phenomenon and travel to present their research and learn about new developments from colleagues around the world. It is this last group that is mainly responsible for the content of this publication. Canada, while large geographically, is small in population and spread out. It is more common for

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Canadian music education researchers to interact with colleagues from other parts of the world at various meetings, than amongst themselves. Although there is a vibrant and utilitarian Canadian Music Education Association (CMEA) that holds annual conventions for teachers, the opportunity to share research in this venue is limited – partly because the conventions emphasize professional development for practicing music educators, but also because Canadian university gives more merit to professors to present papers at international venues than local. The International Society for Music Education (ISME) represents music educators and researchers globally and mainly because of financial limitations, more Canadian academics have access to ISME events than school-based music teachers or community musicians. Every two years, ISME hosts a music education meeting somewhere in the world, and in this one location, time is always set aside for representatives from each country to meet as a group. During each of the past two conventions (Norway 2002 & Canary Islands 2004)—and likely at earlier ones as well—the Canadian delegates talked the necessity to hold a meeting in Canada for music education researchers to share their work with each other. We sense that this urgency to meet was propelled by the worry about the decline in music education programs in schools all across Canada. Long-standing were being lost due to declining enrolment and/or erosion of budgets, and it seemed that the curriculum being offered was more representative of the 1970s and 80s than of the 21st century.

Kari Veblen, from the University of Western Ontario and ISME Board member, returned from the meeting in the Canary Islands to tell research colleague, Carol Beynon, that this time the delegates were serious about setting up a meeting somewhere in Canada in the near future. As we bandied this notion about, the solution suddenly seemed

obvious. In 2005, the Canadian Federation for the Social Sciences and Humanities would hold its national meeting at the University of Western Ontario. Beynon was involved with helping organize the Canadian Society for Studies in Education meetings while Veblen was involved with the Canadian University Music Society meeting, both sub-groups of the Congress. We reasoned that if we invited and offered to host them, perhaps the music education researchers across Canada would meet at Western prior to the society meetings. We had no funds to support travel or even supply refreshments so each person coming had to support his/her own travel and subsistence. Our respective Deans promised space for meetings and some support for technological assistance.

Before extending the invitation, we needed a reason to meet and we guessed that if colleagues were to receive funding from their home universities, they would need to present a paper. The topic seemed obvious – what should we be doing about music education in Canada? How could/should music education respond to the dramatic changes in technology, genres of music, shrinking programs and resources, emphases on meeting international standards in literacy and numeracy, and postmodernism? We decided that in order to look at what direction music education should take, we should review where music education has been, where we are now, and how we got here. Only the most foolish of researchers would begin to say what path we should follow in the future if we didn't know what the present state of music education was. As a result, the theme of the meeting was born: *Music Education in Canada: What is the State of the Art?* and we invited our colleagues to come and involve themselves in a collegial think-tank style meeting.

To make a long story short—we invited as many colleagues as we could find from across the country to come to Western for three days prior to the SSHRC Congress. Each person was given a topic to research that would help to answer the main question – in most cases, the topic was not part of their primary research agenda. Each was asked to present his/her findings in the form of a paper for open discussion. And they came—50 of Canada’s leading researchers, many with doctoral students in tow, as well as music educators and performers, and leaders of CMEA, ISME and the Canadian Coalition for Music Education. The discussions were lively and it was decided that:

- a) the papers were worthy of further development and publication, and
- b) the topics of discussion were highly relevant and we should schedule another meeting in two years to keep the discussion and interaction alive.

This publication represents not only the culmination of the first Canadian music education think-tank, but other papers that were invited to respond to this important question.

There are a significant number of research publications that investigate various aspects of music education, ranging from philosophies of music education to analyses of the tiniest components of music education. While this may seem to be just another ‘research in music education’ publication, it is significantly different in a number of ways. First and foremost, it is the first and only collection of papers that address the phenomenon of music education in Canada in as inclusive a means as possible. Secondly, the authors represented in this publication are recognized as Canada’s leading researchers

in music education and they represent music educators from the eastern-most point of Canada in Newfoundland to the western points of Vancouver Island, south to the Great Lakes and US border, and north to the Yukon and Nunavut. In each of the papers, the authors address one topic from either a provincial perspective or through a more sociological lens. While the publication was meant to be inclusive, there are glaring omissions. While an overview of each province's accomplishments is included, only two of Canada's three territories are represented. We could find no one from the Northwest Territories able to contribute a chapter; nor were any representatives from the territories able to attend the think-tank meetings due to lack of financial support. We tried hard to include representatives in music education from First Nations communities in the meetings but were unable to find someone able or willing to attend or write a paper. There are obvious topics included in this book just as there are topics that should have been included, that are missing. While the book is meant to be as inclusive as possible, it must be acknowledged that once something goes into a fixed form, it automatically becomes restrictive and exclusive.

Besides our Canadian authors in this publication, readers will find reflections by other music education researchers from all around the world. We sent all of the papers out for review and asked the reviewers to reflect on the content of the papers using their own lenses of experience from their context. Their words are both perceptive and relevant and certainly add richness and depth to the book. Readers will also find personal narratives interspersed among the chapters—narratives from retired music educators who are looking back; narratives from undergraduate students considering a career in music education; narratives from newly graduate music teachers who share their excitement and

their anxieties. Education is about lifelong learning and this E-book is intended to help us to learn from each other.

Because information technology is so prevalent in our current lives and we find ourselves wondering what technology will come next, we have published both an open access E-book and a collection of papers in traditional book printed form. Authors contributed so generously and in so many formats that we needed to employ several sites. The printed edition contains 13 chapters in full. The E-book holds, another 34 chapters, maps, contributed reflections, images, documents, contributor bios and abstracts for chapters in the printed text. Both editions are peer-reviewed. We want the books to be accessible to as many people across Canada as possible, and indeed around the world if they see anything of value in it. This is a first endeavour for us and we hope that the paired formats with their limitations and strengths are useful in ensuring the authors who appear here are heard and seen.

It is our intention that this publication be perceived as it was intended—a snapshot view at one point in time of music education in Canada that may be helpful in moving music education forward—whatever that means. We fully acknowledge that it is bound by its limited number of authors, its topics and format, and therefore is automatically finite and exclusive. It may provide some insights into music education that are helpful; on the other hand, parts of it may gather dust swirling around in cyberspace.

We express our sincere appreciation to you for reading this publication and we welcome your comments and insights. We can be reached by email at beynon@uwo.ca and kveblen@uwo.ca.