

Music Education in Canada:

Depth-of-Field and Subjective Perspectives

Kari Veblen and Carol Beynon

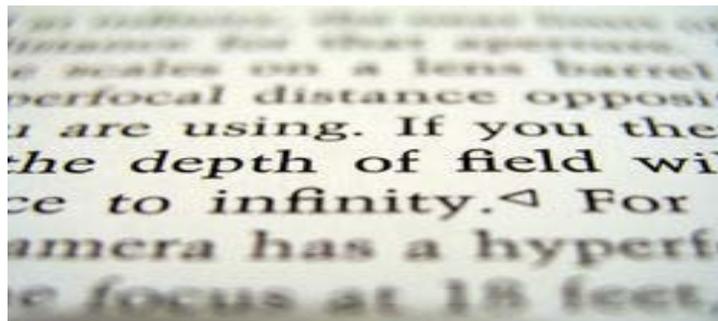
The University of Western Ontario

Depth of field

In optics, particularly film and photography, the depth of field (DOF) is the distance in front of and behind the subject which appears to be in focus. For any given lens setting, there is only one distance at which a subject is precisely in focus, but focus falls off gradually on either side of that distance, so there is a region in which the blurring is tolerable. This region is greater behind the point of focus than it is in front because the angle of the light rays change more rapidly; they approach being parallel with increasing distance.

(This definition, and the following image, is available at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Depth_of_field)



When a photographer composes a picture, focus is a prime consideration.

However, the human eye is subject to an optical phenomenon such that it perceives a

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finite number of things in focus. Therefore, a photographer focuses on objects in a zone called depth of field that will appear sharp to the eye, but will actually bring in objects just before and just behind the centre or heart of the picture. As the camera's aperture becomes smaller, there is an increase in the depth of field and the area that appears to be in focus.

Bearing this metaphor in mind, this E-book reveals the expanse and depth of music education in Canada through a number of increasingly focused snapshots, ranging across this nation from British Columbia to Newfoundland. Each author reflects on the state of Canadian music education in terms of his or her geographical region, or music-teaching (e.g. choral music education), or a critical issue (e.g., gender studies). These multiple views, or records of a particular point in time, are fleeting and part of a continuing process subject to change. But taken as a whole, they become a comprehensive handbook of critical and current aspects in Canadian music education.

The *Pan-Canadian Symposium on Music Education Canada* that gave birth to this E-book, and its sister, printed text, aimed to achieve the following:

- Bring together Canadian music education researchers, policy makers, and practitioners to examine the state of music education across the country, including areas with limited accessibility;
- Create a greater awareness of the importance of Canadian arts/music education;
- Create cross-country networks of researchers and practitioners;
- Use research findings to define and promote Canadian public policy for music education;

- Involve composers and performers in the dialogue about Canadian music education;
- Encourage music making through varied genres, including traditional and contemporary forms;
- Incorporate the rich pluralistic mosaic of Canadian citizenry in music education practices;
- Contribute to creativity in learning;
- Support Canadian research in music education toward the rebirth, development, and valuing of contemporary Canadian music;
- Support and encourage respect and understanding among Canadian cultures and peoples;
- Make recommendations to Canadian policy makers and monitor their actions on behalf of music/arts education.

In the past, the International Society for Music Education, and national organizations, helped Canada build national and international connections and create networks. Despite the efforts of these organizations, a number of political, geographical, and economic forces have limited collective action. Thus, this project is about the past, the present, and the future. It is about seizing a point in time to systematically look back at our combined histories and to consider the realities of music education in Canada today. This affords us the rare opportunity to reflect upon a wide range of highs and lows, of mistakes and accomplishments, in order to move proactively into the future.

Organized in four sections, *From Sea to Sea: Perspectives on Music Education in Canada*, systematically moves through geographic areas, types of music education programs, issues, expansions, and then reflections. Perspectives range across the musical/artistic, to sociological, narrative, historical, anecdotal, and statistical viewpoints.

After preliminary remarks, our focus moves to a “cross-country checkup.” Here scholars report on studies they have conducted on each jurisdiction in Canada, including two of Canada’s northern territories.

The Second Section, “Old Meet New: Traditions, Developments, Issues,” examines various genres of music education from past to present. After a look at our roots, authors’ older traditions are paired with new developments in areas such as strings education, non-traditional forms of music, choral programs, and popular music in the curriculum. New forms of delivery and repertoire are discussed, as are gender issues and critical thinking in undergraduate experiences. Other matters include policy development, the wider context of Community Music, and globalization. Much of the material in this section has been published in the companion printed text *Critical Perspectives in Canadian Music Education* (Wilfred Laurier University Press). Abstracts of these chapters are provided in this E-book.

Section Three, “Rising To The Challenge,” offers a critical analysis of current sociological issues and challenges for music educators. This segment explores underpinnings, events and networks, policy development, political forces, and philosophy in Canadian music education.

In the final parts of the E-book, we look ahead and consider a future through the eyes of our new and senior leaders. Canada’s eminent music education scholars reflect on

this process of review. The book ends by looking toward the horizon and contemplating futures for music education.