

A Response To “An Overview of the History and Development of String Teaching and Orchestral Training in Canada” (Ninette Babineau)

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This extremely well written and comprehensive chapter discusses past and present string music instruction in Canada. Clearly organized and concise, it presents a great deal of information, for which the author is to be congratulated.

While it is enormously interesting to read about each individual situation, I found that in some ways the litany became almost redundant (with the exception of the SATS program in the High Arctic which was highly dramatic). I realize the purpose of the paper is to present in as much detail as possible each programme, which provides a snapshot, a frozen moment in time, of those programmes. By the time this book is published, however, some of the programmes will have changed yet again. Rather than the statistical information, I found that I was much more interested in the “human” side of the issues, which were briefly discussed in the final section. Obviously, this reflects my own personal preferences and biases. My suggestion would be to find a way to summarize the purely descriptive information (perhaps with more details placed in an appendix) and greatly expand the Challenges and Considerations section. This, of course, changes the purpose of the paper, and may be entirely inappropriate; but for me, this change would make the paper truly compelling (as it seems to describe—with notable exceptions—

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increasingly deteriorating situation generally), and provide a context in which to make sense of the demographic data without “preaching to the choir” so to speak. Regardless, this is a very strong piece that accomplishes what it sets out to do.