

## **Voices From the Symposium: Considering A Future For Music Education In Canada**

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At the end of the “Music Education in Canada: What Is the State of the Art?” Symposium, I asked those assembled to consider what we had accomplished in our short time together. The answers included:

- being refreshed and inspired,
- having a better sense of the diversity of Canada,
- needing to establish more connections at all levels of music education,
- getting a national perspective,
- dialoguing with colleagues (networking),
- connecting faces to names,
- feeling a part of something bigger,
- getting information, and
- engaging in fellowship.

In spite of the many challenges facing music education, participants exuded a genuine optimism that was heartening.

I agree that the Conference was a significant event in Canadian music education for the reasons mentioned above, but there are additional reasons I think the Conference was propitious. It was the first time that Canadian music educators (including teacher

representatives from the Territories and provinces, music teacher educators, and researchers) gathered to share the state of music education across the country and to discuss significant issues and trends. That senior colleagues took the time to attend added credibility and depth to the event. While the presentations were brief and the time for discussion limited, the event was a first step — a “getting to know you” session — and, hopefully, it will inspire other meetings where action could be the focus. Thank you Carol Beynon, Kari Veblen for having a dream and making it happen. Second, many diverse voices were respectfully attended to during the conference. There was an openness to and interest in diverse ideas from across our country. The conversation must continue. Third, graduate students witnessed and occasionally participated in the dialogue. The presence of doctoral students reminded me of the importance of having solid doctoral programs in music education in Canada to develop tomorrow’s teachers, researchers, and leaders.

Throughout the presentations and discussions, we heard good news—music education in the schools will continue, thanks to committed teachers, students, and parents—and a call for change in the face of many contemporary challenges, including the use of world music and popular music, globalization, and social consciousness. I left the conference having identified matters that I think need our immediate attention if we are to “move forward”:

- We need to work together, uniting our voices (while respecting diversity). The CMEA is working towards this vision.

- We need to support the development of arts education policy at all levels. The Coalition for Arts Education (of which the CMEA is a founding member) has developed “Policy Guidelines for Arts Education in Canadian School,” available at [www.artsed.ca](http://www.artsed.ca)).
- We need to engage in critical discourse without personal enmity.
- We need to engage in political and ethical discourse and action.
- We need research about Canadian music education done by Canadian music education researchers who **know** research methodology.
- We need to support quality Canadian initiatives and publications in music education to balance the smaller Canadian market.
- We need to mentor young music teachers and student teachers not only in their teaching but also to assume leadership roles.
- We need to articulate better the need for music teacher education.
- We need to communicate better the meaning of music education (not just band, or choral, or strings) to students, administrators, parents, government, advocacy groups, and industry.
- We need to explore and monitor the meaningful use of technology in music education.
- We need to establish better communication between French and English music educators and researchers.
- We need a Canadian music education research journal.

I look forward to our next conference and to addressing at least some of the identified issues.