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The Road Goes Ever On: Estelle Jorgensen's
Legacy in Music Education

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Ch. 02 - Becoming and Being, Being and Becoming: A Necessary Balance in the Journey of Musician Educators

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Section I - The Past is Our Future / The Past is Not Our Future

Chapter 2

Becoming and Being, Being and Becoming: A Necessary Balance in the Journey of Musician Educators

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Abstract

In the field of music education philosophy, several contributors have significantly impacted how we think about and do music education. One such person is Estelle Jorgensen. Integral to her writing was the use of metaphor, which served as a means to present complicated concepts and ask complex questions. Her intent was less to provide answers but to instill an inquiry of pondering and imaging; it was more about the journey of seeking possibilities, and less about converging on ‘truths’ and arriving. The focus then was more on *becoming* and less on *being*. This continuous process of pondering and imaging could feel like an endless conjuring for a space to experience –to live longer in the being. These notions will be examined through the use of metaphor while unpacking *The Art of Teaching Music*¹ with a specific focus on the becoming and being musician educator, what that entails and what it might mean as the field continues to emerge and unfold.

Introduction

When spending time reflecting on the contributions of Professor Estelle Jorgensen to the profession and to many us as a role model and mentor, I thought of the use of metaphors. Thinking of

metaphors is most appropriate since Professor Jorgensen skillfully utilized metaphors throughout her writing as she explained complex concepts that underlie philosophical thinking in music education. In honor of her metaphorical writing, I will focus on Professor Jorgensen’s *The Art of*

*Teaching Music*² with a specific focus on the emerging musician educator through the lenses of metaphors. With this focus, I will examine and reflect on themes as found in her 2008 book with an eye to the continuing 21st century in which we live as the metamorphosis continues.

Sculpting Musical Lives: The Emerging Music Educator

As I think about the evolution of an emerging music educator I reflect on the sculpting of a musical life through the lens of a writer, composer, and potter. The writer and composer begin with an empty page, one that becomes “interactive” as ideas are shaped, reviewed, put into context, assessed, and revised or eliminated. The visual of the page changes with each gesture. As with life, we try things out, assess, erase, try again, learn from what was written, accept, try it out, edit, rearrange, re-erase, and re-assess. The process is organic and fluid and includes intentional making and receiving.³ It requires an openness and flexibility that is laced with curiosity and imagination. It seeks structures while assessing the relevancy of the rules through examining the intent and the creator of each. After the examination we move forward knowing that in seeking structures, the rules can be rethought and rewritten. The rules are but mere guides as we build structures in response to new ideas and pathways.

A potter begins with material - a lump of clay - that is shaped through

reciprocity. With each gesture, the evolving shape is examined and evaluated, which informs next steps and further direction. As we examine such processes of a writer, composer, or potter, we can think of our journeys as music educators in which the shaping is reciprocal - we shape and are shaped, we offer and respond to what we see, hear, and feel. This is done in isolation, and with others and artifacts in our spaces. We create and re-create self and spaces that are inclusive and respectful while being open to opportunities. We create our sense of being as we pursue happiness and utilize our human potentials of imagining, while understanding and accepting the messiness and fluidity of life.⁴

“The fluidity is experienced as we move across a continuum that is ever changing - between learning and teaching, between being a musician and an audience member and feeling a blend of the two. During this process we can forge relationships within our contexts while reaching out to new communities and expanding our circles thus widening and deepening what we know and are able to do. This fluidity in education, while not always grasped, is a constant.⁵ Our recognition of the fluidity questions what is regarded as truth, the methods, “the right way,” scripts, and rules that are constructed by all things not grounded in human development but rather on theoretical understandings, objects, and the structures of schedules constrained by hours, days, and months - that which is not based on human understanding at the collective and individual levels but on imposed constrictions and restrictions that receive attention to the detriment of the

human condition. So how do/did these 'things' influence, impede or motivate us to question during our journey as we entered Schools of Music?

The Beginnings: The Emerging Musician Educator

We come to schools of music because someone encouraged us to enter - someone provided us and others opportunities for education in music and we were successful thus encouraged and motivated. Our identities aligned with what we knew and experienced during our pre-college experiences. Typically, the experiences were in part constructed by a music educator who taught us in elementary, middle, and high school; a private teacher; or an artist. Depending on who led us as growing and aspiring musicians, we may have experienced spaces to reflect on our practice and critique our growth, and thus began to prune our musicianship and reflective practice. We may have begun to cultivate habits of mind to think about learning and teaching, about how we learn music, and how we are being taught. This notion of space for such growth and the related responsibility for our growth - our own contributions - is part of the larger fabric of emerging as a musician educator.⁶ The responsibility of the educator and the "educate" is interwoven with reciprocity as each experiences involve our 'sliding' around on the continuum of teaching and learning.

Schools of Music: The Emerging Musician Educator

As those who work with young music educators in schools of music, we reflect on our own experiences and how they differ, or do not differ, from the experiences of students today. Some questions we may ask focus on how music education became situated in K-12 and university settings, why the inclusion, and what influenced the curriculum. From that we may examine the roles of those engaged with the curriculum and the resulting or continuing identities of us, and those who graduated from our programs. Is there evidence of growth from a diverse perspective, of what genres have been "deemed" appropriate and acceptable? Is there evidence of changing roles of those who teach and learn? Has the involvement of the student changed - from one who receives instruction to one who is engaged in the learning? Have we listened to those who have suggested that the involvement of reflective practice can transform students and inculcate notions of flexibility, adaptability, curiosity, and imagination?⁷

One could argue that our roles and identities have been very slow to change, to be open, to include music beyond the Western European art form, and thus to include those whose musical experiences lie outside of the canon. As students enter middle and high school, they encounter very specific music, experienced in very specific ways, and performed with very specific expectations. How students are engaged in these environments, particularly

in the large ensemble environments, has changed as conductors have recognized the richness of empowered students having agency throughout their learning. The podium transforms from being about the conductor and more about a space to guide and nurture, to construct musical experiences that are meaningful and educative.⁸ But the larger question does remain - has the profession (we) grown and embraced opportunities and others as we have learned about long standing existing musical worlds that are new to us and musical worlds that have evolved and grown around us? And if we have, can we identify changes in music educators' and students' identities and roles while learning and teaching? Have we considered, expanded, and diversified? Do we represent evolving institutions? Have we "allowed" others in?

In thinking about diversity, growth, and access I was intrigued by the visual of a castle recently experienced. On a recent visit to France that involved a group of us meeting in a castle over a three-day period, I was struck by how we crossed over the moat, entered the (given) password, and moved into the courtyard. From there we entered a (given) second password and moved into the ground floor. Passwords are necessary for entrance into academic programs, and moats around castles allow for that *which is* to remain the same and untouched by others. Only those given the password are afforded entrance. I wondered about the isolation of universities, and specifically schools of music, and thought about instances of

branching out, evolving, expanding, and in response to that which has been learned. I thought about how "living" in our "castle" (school of music) represents boundaries from "other" and those who do not have the password to get in. Have we become calcified? What would our experiences of evolving roles and identities be if we thought of multiple accesses that required as much traffic out into musical communities as it did traffic in? What if the passwords were co-constructed? Would our roles and identities in response to changing curriculum and access become structure seeking and less rule abiding?⁹ Would they reflect fluidity, connection, and reciprocity? Would the experiences reflect dialogical as opposed to dialectical constructs?¹⁰ How would we, and our students, be as we all entered and continued to engage in and with the profession at large?

Moving Forward: The Emerging Musician Educator

And so, we begin to unfold as musician educators, and for some we have expanded our identity as researcher and administrator. As a composition by a composer begins to unfold, it is informed by the composer's past life, including music written before and currently, musical interactions, and any possible parameters that are decided by others. This unfolding could be viewed as "a universe of possibility."¹¹ As we re-arrange art (music) it re-arranges us, creating affective openings and cultural and social understandings, and contributes to a collective of those engaged

with the musical experience - which is always ongoing and evolving. These experiences become a fund of experience that provides context for subsequent encounters.¹² The process is reciprocal among and between each person, and through growth we reflect on how we interact with each other.¹³ Like a cleochlic, a prism that changes colors and perceptions as you move it around, we learn that our identity requires different perceptions as we move from one role to another - musician, educator, learner, researcher, administrator—and we learn that our perceptions change from role to role and context to context. The reality of situatedness and sharing our experiences in each context continues to define us in each of our roles. Our self-awareness of the identities and roles continue to be critical for reflection to occur as we continue our journey.¹⁴

Through our journeys, and as we speculate about the evolving 21st century musician educator, it is important to have room for imagination and curiosity as we gain deeper and broader insights about our passions - our values. It is critical that we are not boxed into an either/or style of thinking but rather a growth of thinking through a pluralistic understanding about the overlaps and influence of other.¹⁵ The journey is not about either/or but rather a pluralistic notion of understanding, one that reflects a developmental evolution from a psychological perspective - it is a metamorphosis as we evolve from one to the other and in each of the roles along a continuum.¹⁶

We have spaces to determine the breadth, depth, and strength of the evolution. Zander and Zander¹⁷ remind us about a process that we can work through during multiple times in our lives with questions to ask oneself: “What assumptions am I making, that I’m not aware I’m making, that gives me what I see?” Once answered one then asks, “What might I now invent, that I haven’t yet invented, that would give me other choices?”¹⁸ It is in the process of uncovering that one can seek other questions that provide opportunities to evolve, transform, and re-define. Opportunities emerge and possibilities are sensed. Obstacles are identified and solutions are generated. During the process the notion of “open to” is necessary as is the growing ability to construct a longer vision; this allows the various choices to become meaningful within the larger whole.

My thinking as reflected in the above writing has been a metamorphosis largely in response to engaging with colleagues (including former students) and current students. One who has made a significant impact on my thinking and the field is Professor Jorgensen. The influence of her thinking and writing, and her generosity of being humane is evident throughout this reflection. Estelle has modeled for us as a human *being* as opposed to a human *doing*—one who embraces and exudes happiness as a state of being, which in turn enriches life and ours.

Notes

- 1 Estelle R. Jorgensen, *The Art of Teaching Music* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2008).
- 2 Estelle R. Jorgensen, *The Art of Teaching Music* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2008).
- 3 Estelle R. Jorgensen, *In Search of Music Education* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997). [Chapter 3]
- 4 Estelle Jorgensen, *The Art of Teaching Music*. [Chapter 1]
- 5 See Elliot Eisner, *The Kinds Of Schools We Need* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, (1998); Estelle Jorgensen, *The Art of Teaching Music*; Ken Robinson, *Out of Our Minds: Learning To Be Creative*, 2nd ed. (West Sussex, United Kingdom: Capstone Publishing Limited (a Wiley Company), 2011).
- 6 Estelle Jorgensen, *The Art of Teaching Music*. [Chapter 3]
- 7 See, for example, John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1938); Elliott Eisner, *The Kinds Of Schools We Need*; John D., Bransford, Ann L. Brown, and Rodney R. Cocking, eds., *How People Learn: Brain Mind, Experience, and School* (Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning and Committee on Learning Research and Educational Practice, National Research Council, Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000); Estelle Jorgensen, *Transforming Music Education*; John I. Goodlad, *Romances with Schools* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004).
- 8 John Dewey, *Experience and Education*. [Chapter 3]
- 9 Elliot Eisner, *The Kinds Of Schools We Need*. [Chapter 2]
- 10 Estelle Jorgensen, *The Art of Teaching Music*. [Chapter 4]
- 11 Ben Zander and Rosamund Stone Zander, *The Art of Possibilities* (Harvard Business School Press: Boston, MA, 2000). [Chapter 2]
- 12 John Dewey, *Experience and Education*. [Chapter 3]
- 13 Estelle Jorgensen, *The Art of Teaching Music*. [Chapter 3]
- 14 Ibid. [Chapter 3]
- 15 Ibid. [Chapter 13]
- 16 Ibid. (Chapter 4)
- 17 Ben Zander and Rosamund Zander, *The Art of Possibilities* [p. 15]
- 18 Ibid., 15.

About the Author

Betty Anne Younker, Ph.D. (Northwestern University) is Dean and Professor of Music Education of the Don Wright Faculty at the University of Western Ontario. Prior to completing the PhD, Betty Anne taught students through music in school and in private studios. Her research includes examining creative and critical thinking philosophically, psychologically, and pedagogically. She continues to engage with students in classrooms, and the profession in multiple roles including as a past president of *The College Music Society*. Her research has been disseminated in national and international journals and books, and has been presented at provincial, state, national, and international conferences.

Project Links

This chapter comes from a book titled *The Road Goes Ever On: Estelle Jorgensen's Legacy in Music Education*. The philosophical essays contained within focus on themes that have intrigued Estelle Jorgensen whose forty years of scholarship have strongly influenced music education research and practice: the transformation of music education in public schools; feminist and LGBTQ voices; mentoring; the unfinished search for new ways of seeing, hearing, and doing; multiple and intersecting musical identities; the tension between tradition and change; and activist practice in music education.

The complete book can be found at the following link: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/jorgensen/>