

Response to Paul Lehman's "How Can the Skills and Knowledge Called for in the National Standards Best Be Taught?"

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It is a great privilege to read all the papers that have been written for this symposium, but it is a particular privilege to respond to Paul Lehman's paper. In his paper Dr. Lehman lays out a very clear explanation for the history and the content of the National Standards as well as a vigorous defense for the implementation of both national standards and state and local standards. He also talks about the considerable attention that we need to give to training teachers and preparing them for the classrooms of 2020. All of us are aware of the value of original sources, so when we think about the beginning of the standards movement, it is very special to have with us the person who chaired the effort for the music educators. For the graduate students here, that is hard to beat!

When we talk about the nature of societal changes, there are many things that are reflected in this paper that we have seen in actual practice. One topic Lehman discusses is the idea of general music classes in secondary school. Since that was also a major thrust of the Housewright Symposium keynote speech by Libby Larsen, I wonder about the implications this has not only in the training of secondary school music teachers, but also in the spirit of what they believe about music. I come from a state where there was legislation passed in 1992 that requires a fine arts credit in high school for students on the college preparatory path. It has been in law now long enough for us to see the results of the requirement on enrollments in classes. The enrollments have increased noticeably in the visual arts, but the increase in music classes has been far less dramatic. If you ask the children why, they will tell you that they do not have to audition for visual art class. There seems to be a mind-set, at least with a great many young people, that in order to participate in music in high school, you have to be a special, "talented" youngster. You have to be the one who can perform, which students define in the formal sense. The present emphasis on performing groups in high school, which borders on obsession, gives us considerable food for thought if we are serious about music education for all children.

Another critical point in Lehman's paper is the number of choices in music classes that we will have in the next twenty to twenty-five years. One of the problems for schools in providing these choices is the increasing emphasis on smaller schools with more personal attention for students. Large high schools with several thousand students are

often viewed as impersonal and unable to meet the needs of students in the next century. If parents and communities continue to support the trend to smaller and more intimate school settings, it will be more and more difficult to offer the wide variety of music class choices Lehman envisions. Another trend that has mushroomed in the last ten years is the concept of home schooling. During my years as state Commissioner of Education in Tennessee, I saw personally the enrollment increase in home schools. One of the things that I found interesting was the role of community organizations in providing social experiences for home schooled youngsters, particularly in music. In many areas where there is a relatively large percentage of home schoolers, there will be a church or community organization that establishes a program for these youngsters to participate together in music. They will form a choir, a band, or some other sort of performing group. Many times they are not the traditional groups that we have in many of our secondary schools. For example, I have not seen a single marching band of home schoolers. Maybe they miss having a football team to run through their halftime show; I am not sure! At any rate, they do perform; they set up small instrumental ensembles, small choir groups, anything in which they can get a reasonably cohesive group of youngsters to work together. Such groups give these children the socialization their parents are often looking for, as well as musical training and experience. Quite often church musicians include working with these groups as part of their job responsibilities. This movement is having a real impact on what we do in schools, particularly in regard to certification of teachers. Many of these church musicians and private teachers do not have the traditional certification required of school music educators, yet many of them have excellent credentials in music as well as experience and training in working with students.

There are other issues in education that are providing challenges for traditional music education programs. Charter schools, for example, are providing parents with another choice for the education of their children. Technology, with classes available on the Internet, provides still another choice. While attending school on the Internet is not as widely accepted as either home schooling or charter schools, it is a choice that is just beginning to come into its own. The Virtual High School in Florida is a concept that will become increasingly popular everywhere. The enrollment in all of these alternatives to traditional schooling is growing exponentially, and the more choices parents and students have, the more different strategies we are going to have to develop to provide music education for youngsters. Only one thing is sure; none of these issues is going away. We have reared a generation that expects instant gratification. It is unreasonable to think that in a society in which you have become accustomed to a wide variety of choices, even in relatively insignificant things like selecting a pair of jeans with the "correct" brand name to sit on your fanny, you will be willing to give up choosing where your child goes to school. Choice is a big issue with all of us.

Another major issue discussed in Lehman's paper is that of teacher preparation and training. This issue has an impact on higher education institutions in two specific ways. The first is time. Everyone has a suggestion for improving teacher training, and almost every suggestion begins the same way: "Why don't we add . . . ?" The result is a "laundry list" of courses that could easily require five or more years to complete. When we view

this pragmatically, we know that undergraduates are not going to spend six to seven years in training to take a job that pays a beginning salary of \$30,000 a year, especially when the salary schedule tops out at \$50,000 per year. Some young people are willing to begin a career at a relatively low salary if there is the potential for a much higher income as they gain additional training and experience. This is not the history of K-12 salary schedules.

The second problem is technology. Although technology has tremendous potential for allowing preservice and inservice teachers to obtain training from some of the leading experts in the country, and although they will be able to do so at a time they choose, that old devil time again rears its head. I was at a technology conference in Miami recently where they were discussing the wonderful possibilities for taking courses online. You could almost see the teachers' eyes glass over, thinking, "Oh great, now I can do inservice at 11:00 p.m. They have now made it possible for me to work twenty-four hours a day. I can hardly wait." We shall have to think very differently in the years to come about the way we structure teacher training in higher education. Some things are going to have to go away, and some of those things are "sacred cows." Many of our higher education institutions are not ready for their sacred cows to go away. Colleges and universities do not alter their form and organization easily, because their customs and modes of preparation are deeply ingrained. Worthy traditions, such as tenure and academic freedom, while having unquestionable value for institutions of higher learning, also can lead to the tradition of making a nest that time cannot penetrate.

One of the threads that runs throughout Lehman's paper is that of a multicultural approach to music education, which affects teacher training and curriculum, both in K-12 schools and higher education. As musicians, many of us think (as most people in the world do) that a good education is what we had. A good education therefore, reflects the kind of music we know and were taught, and which we expect to teach to our students. We will, therefore, continue to teach western European music to children who have never seen western Europe, who have no family that was ever in western Europe, and who believe they can live a full, rich life and never see western Europe. No one denies the contribution made to music by the western European tradition. Scarcely anyone would recommend eliminating the study of western European music from a comprehensive music curriculum. I think, however, we kid ourselves when we assume that a commitment to teaching quality music of other cultures in a meaningful way is supported by most schools and communities. One of the values that the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) subscribes to is that of multicultural education. I have had the experience of dealing with a barrage of letters asking if our state required NCATE membership of our higher education institutions. The reason for the letters was that the authors objected to the multicultural requirement. If you believe that multiculturalism is a war that has been won, I submit you are naive. It may have been won in a few communities, but we have a great many communities where the majority of the citizens do not even consider it an issue.

I was at the Tennessee Arts Academy not long ago, sitting in the back, and they were talking about different performances of "The Star Spangled Banner." They played a tape

of Whitney Houston singing it, and it was an impressive performance. I was dismayed to hear a teacher say, "Well you know, I am sorry, but that is not my 'Star Spangled Banner.'" That statement came from a teacher—a teacher who cared enough to come to an arts academy and spend a week. It was a music teacher. So if you think the multicultural war is over, and that it has been won, it has not even started. We give nods to it. We do the politically correct thing, but in our heart of hearts we often do not embrace the concept. This is an issue that we are going to have to make truly conscious efforts to deal with because everyone's music is important. Everyone's music contributes to who we are as a people. These are the kind of things that are going to be such challenges as we enter the next millennium. If we can solve some of these problems, it will make such a difference to our children.

Another issue in Lehman's paper is that of assessment. Today assessment often is decided in state legislatures. Legislatures love to pass what they can measure, and what does not cost too much! Many times when we talk to legislators about assessment, they think that we are talking about being able to prove who is doing a good job, instead of proving whether or not children are learning and in what ways they are learning, and how we can improve the areas in which they are not learning. The same thing is true when we talk about school reform. Often legislators and community officials are concerned about school districts as "jobs programs" for adults instead of education programs for children. Too often jobs in the education arena, particularly in K-12, are held hostage as political patronage. We still have school districts that put employment opportunities for relatives of elected officials ahead of the best interest of the children of the district. It happens regularly, not just in one state, but in communities in every state.

So these are the kinds of hard issues that we face when we talk about making things different in the new millennium, not only in music education, but also in all education. If we can learn to deal with choice, if we can learn to deal with each other as equals, accepting and understanding the joy of everyone's music, if we can learn to work with political organizations to put the child's welfare and education first, and if we can work with our professional organizations to make continuous improvement a reality, we are getting closer to the goals we are setting for 2020. We need to ask ourselves the hard questions about equity, excellence, and effectiveness.

These are the kinds of thoughtful questions that I think will take a prescription like Paul Lehman has written and make it possible for us to truly see a difference in music education. I hope so, because there is one thing we all know about music. There are times when you do something in music that you cannot explain and you can't tell why, but you know you have made a joyful noise. That is very special. It is our job to be sure that all children in 2020 have the kinds of instruction in music that allows them to experience that joy.