

Introduction

As I traveled across my home state of Florida and our nation giving workshops, and as I prepared to become MENC president, I observed many imaginative practices and youngsters involved in making music in many different ways. Of course, some of our best practices have remained essentially the same over the years; yet many situations I observed were very different, some were extremely different—and it was always a little disquieting. The constantly changing demography, the advanced information concerning how students learn, and the explosion of technological advances combined with the burgeoning choices within our society seemed to be having profound influences on music education. The changes necessitated by a rapidly expanding information base and a society where students do so many different things and learn in so many different ways were overwhelming. At times it left me breathless. So much of music instruction had changed dramatically since I was teaching classroom music. I was sure that things would continue to change, and to change in ways far beyond our current understanding.

The theme of needing to address these changes kept recurring. It was clear that someone needed to look into our future—to look at what these changes would necessitate and what we as music professionals might do to insure that future generations would continue to experience the deep joy that we know as practicing musicians. The more I thought about this, the more I became convinced that it was time, perhaps even past time, for something to be done.

I recalled another time in my life when changes seemed rapid and overwhelming. Then I remembered the Tanglewood Symposium and the guidance for music educators that it provided through those difficult times. I suddenly realized what must be done and also who had to do it. There had to be another symposium, an important symposium, and it must be good.

As these ideas began to take shape, many aspects concerning this symposium seemed certain: It must be a symposium that charts the course of music education across the next several decades. It must involve a large cross section of those who have a vital interest in music and people; it must be well planned; it must involve the best of our profession; and it must take into account all of the changes that we now know or are able to imagine. Most important, it must give us direction as we enter the next millennium. Fortunately the leadership of the MENC National Executive Board and the national headquarters office agreed.

As the planning began, it became clear that, as with Tanglewood, Vision 2020, as we decided to call it, would be our opportunity to be idealists, knowing that the future realities of education will always hone and reshape our vision.

Vision 2020 was created, developed, and presented as follows:

- In talking with past MENC presidents and colleagues in music education during my time as president-elect of MENC, Vision 2000, as it was originally conceived, seemed to me to be an idea whose time had come.
- Partnering with universities on similar projects has worked well for MENC in the past. Given the leadership of Wiley Housewright during the implementation and defense of many of the findings of the Tanglewood Symposium when he was president of MENC and The Florida State University (FSU) dean of the School of Music, working with members of The Florida State University School of Music staff seemed a wonderful way to honor his legacy as a leader in music education. Jon Piersol, dean of the School of Music, and Cliff Madsen, coordinator of music education at FSU, agreed and offered their support.
- In the spring of 1998, the MENC National Executive Board under Carolyn Lindeman's presidency gave final approval to the concept.
- In the summer and fall of 1998, a series of planning meetings were held to lay out the specifics of the project, refine the questions to be asked, and identify authors and commission members.
- In October 1998, MENC sponsored the third Music Education Summit, inviting the presidents and executive directors of all major music-related organizations to attend. The first drafts of the questions for Vision 2020 were discussed at the summit.
- Vision 2020 authors attended the summit so that they could hear the input of these leaders. The authors subsequently refined the questions and began writing draft responses to them.
- From April 7 to 11, 1999, the Housewright Commission on Music Education met in Tallahassee to respond to the drafts that the authors had developed. A small group of commission members focused on each topic. Commission members were chosen to represent broad intellectual, demographic, and geographic interests in music making and music education.
- From September 23 to 26, 1999, the Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education was held in Tallahassee to seek field response to the papers. Commission members representing varied interests related to music education presented formal responses to each paper. More than 150 people attended, with forty states represented. An equal number of K-12 and higher education teachers participated, along with representatives from industry and the community.
- On March 8, 2000, Vision 2020, including the Housewright Declaration, which consists of a summation of the agreements made at the Housewright Symposium, was presented at the MENC National Conference in Washington, D.C.

Will our dreams for music education all come true? Perhaps they will not. The conditions of change are so rapid that by 2020 things we have yet to imagine will be commonplace. Yet if we are to keep within music education programs those things that are dear to us and that should be unchanged, it is vital we take responsibility for envisioning a future that is what we want it to be and begin the work of making that future a reality.

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