

Listening Back, Looking Forward: Music Education at America's 250th

Abstract: The 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026 presents an opportunity to pause and reflect on contemporary music education. I approach the anniversary from the perspective of democracy in music education at the 150th anniversary in 1926. In what ways were the “unalienable Rights” of “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” visible in the philosophy and practice of music education at the time? The article begins with a description of trends in the middle years of the 1920s that likely influenced the direction of music education. From there, I describe how the sesquicentennial anniversary was formally celebrated. On a theme of “sing democracy,” I illustrate how music educators responded to prevailing trends and in the worldview of the time, sought to enact democratic ideals in school music: advocate “music for every child,” expand the music curriculum, establish curriculum standards to improve the quality of music instruction, assimilate and cultivate citizens, and collaborate with professional communities. In conclusion, I return to those five markers of democratic thinking and action in light of the rights of “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” Listening back to narratives of music, education, and music education in and around the sesquicentennial anniversary can deepen understanding of the evolution of school music and help discern future directions for music in school and community.

Keywords: history of music education, philosophy of music education, advocacy, sesquicentennial, democracy

The 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence presents an opportunity to pause and reflect on music education. Such reflection can assume many forms. The National Association for Music Education marks the anniversary by participating in the Sing Democracy 250-50 States program that culminates in performances of new choral compositions on the theme of American democracy.¹ In this article, I approach the semiquicentennial (250th anniversary) by reflecting on music education at the sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) in 1926. As I discerned which anniversary to highlight in the history of school music education—1876, 1926, or 1976—I chose 1926 based on evi-

dence that revealed it to be a pivotal time for music education and likely to elicit perspectives relevant to music education today. What trends influenced the outlook of teachers, the scope of the music curriculum, and, more broadly, the aspirations and priorities of the music education profession in and around the sesquicentennial in 1926? In what ways can the “unalienable Rights” espoused by the Founders of the Republic, among them, “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness,” be interpreted in the philosophy and practice of music education at the time of the sesquicentennial? By reconstructing a portrait of music education, the intention is to stimulate reflection, prompt questions, and instill hope.²

I begin this article with a description of trends in the middle years of the 1920s that likely influenced music education. From there, I describe how the sesquicentennial was formally celebrated in 1926. On the theme of “sing democracy,” I then illustrate how music educators responded to prevailing trends and in the worldview of the time, sought to enact democratic principles in school music. In conclusion, I listen back for inspiration from music education at the time of the sesquicentennial and look forward with hope as the profession marks the occasion of America at its 250th anniversary.

Music Teaching at the Time of the Sesquicentennial (1926)

The decade of the 1920s is known as a time of economic prosperity, expansion of industry, rapid change, and innovations in technology and communication media. It was also a time when artistic expression flourished, captured in the metaphor of the Roaring Twenties and exemplified in the culture of the Harlem Renaissance. Changes in lifestyle were profound, due in part to increased leisure time and a range of new media and material goods to consume.³ At the same time, a chorus of voices resounded in the name of civil rights—for example, women’s rights and racial equality.⁴ The middle years of the 1920s were distant from wartime and not yet plunged into the economic crash of 1929 that triggered the Great Depression. A sense of peace and prosperity generated optimism and courage to advance one’s cause. The climate for advocating school music was positive, strengthened by new perspectives on the benefits of music to the individual and to society at large.⁵

What contributed to the sense of prosperity that likely impacted the lives of music teachers and the direction of music education? Ownership of an automobile came within reach of the rising middle class. Henry Ford introduced the forty-hour workweek in May 1926, which he believed would motivate people to work better and allow individuals

and families time for recreation activities. Organizations such as the National Bureau for the Advancement of Music (NBAM) and the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC) promoted music as a worthwhile leisure activity and regarded music education as core to their mission. They collaborated with the Music Supervisors National Conference (MSNC)⁶ and the Music Teachers National Association and contributed in important ways to the flourishing of music in school and society. Although industries supporting music education were already embedded in the culture of nineteenth-century school music—for example, the production of textbooks and a range of tools to enhance music learning—their involvement and influence increased dramatically in the 1920s.⁷

The manufacture and sale of phonographs, piano players, and radios transformed the way people interacted with music at home and in school. As school bands, orchestras, and other instrumental classes and ensembles, such as harmonica and piano, increased, so also did the demand for musical instruments.⁸ The availability of phonographs and music listening instructional materials along with radio broadcasts of music led to the development of music appreciation as a core activity in the elementary classroom and secondary general courses.⁹ With intense marketing and advertising, these products were presented to teachers in clever and compelling ways in the pages of music teachers’ journals, such as the *Music Supervisors’ Journal* (Figures 1–3).¹⁰ Imagine the attraction

FIGURE 1

Advertisement of the Victor Talking Machine Company in *Music Supervisors’ Journal* 12, no. 2 (1925): 23¹¹

MUSIC SUPERVISORS' JOURNAL 23

The EAR GATE
is the open way
to the child mind,
where early impressions
are received and
indelibly recorded

ROAD TO LIFELONG HAPPINESS AND ENRICHMENT

CAN you forget the songs you learned in childhood? Try it!

Neither will the child of today ever forget the beautiful music the Victrola brings!

MUSIC cuts deepest into the plastic recording substance—begins sooner—lasts longer than any other art or science—reaches the spiritual, mental and moral nature of the child.

The music of the world is the rightful inheritance of childhood.

The music of the long ago and all the beautiful music for children of more recent years is now available for the home and school through the enduring productions on Victor Records.

The Victrola is indispensable in every modern schoolroom!

HIS MASTER'S VOICE

Educational Department
Victor Talking Machine Company
Camden, New Jersey

DIXIE
SCOTLAND'S BURNING
HAPPY LAND
AMERICA
ROCK-A-BYE BABY
MULBERRY BUSH
LITTLE JACK HORNER
GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME
JINGLE BELLS
OH SUSANNA
POP GOES THE WHEEL
I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO SHOUT

FIGURE 2

Advertisement for the Miessner Institute's Melody Way of Class Piano Instruction in *Music Supervisors' Journal* 12, no. 4 (1926): 47



East, West, North and South City After City Falls in Line

The "Melody Way" of Class Piano Instruction is successful in public schools all over the country. Children make far greater progress with it than they do with private lessons at ten times the cost. Teachers are enthusiastic over it. Below is a partial list of school systems that have adopted "Melody Way."

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Washington, D. C. | *Berkeley, Calif. | Louisville, Ky. |
| Wheeling, W. Va. | Long Beach, Calif. | *Duluth, Minn. |
| *Portsmouth, Ohio | Ogden, Utah | Green Bay, Wis. |
| Bedford, Ohio | Denver, Colo. | *Whitefish Bay, Wis. |
| *Cleveland, Ohio | *Casper, Wyo. | Milwaukee, Wis. |
| Flint, Mich. | *Highland Park, Ill. | *Watwatosa, Wis. |
| Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. | Aurora, Ill. | *Racine, Wis. |
| South Bend, Ind. | *Canton, Ill. | Kenosha, Wis. |
| Crawfordsville, Ind. | Marshall, Mo. | Council Bluffs, Ia. |
| LaPorte, Ind. | *Guthrie, Okla. | Burlington, Ia. |
| Gary, Ind. | *Oklahoma City, Okla. | Dallas, Texas. |

* Cities added during January.

Learn why The "Melody Way" was approved by the school authorities of these progressive cities, how you can obtain the same results in your own schools. Mail the coupon for complete information.

MIESSNER INSTITUTE

and novelty of these media for music teaching and learning coupled with the culture of consumerism that was pervasive in everyday life, although within the reach of only some social classes.

Arising out of the music appreciation movement, the popular music memory contests became a huge success across the nation by the mid-1920s.¹² Organized by groups such as the MSNC, NFMC, and NBAM, advertised by news and broadcast media, and with test preparation carried out in schools, the contests further united music education in the home, school, and community.¹³ Charles Tremaine reported in 1926 that contests "have been held in over 1400 cities."¹⁴ A majority were held in eastern

and midwestern states, and they were also held in southern and western states.

The sesquicentennial was a time to celebrate material progress because it was a time to revisit the "unalienable Rights" of individuals that the Founders identified—"Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."¹⁵ In keeping with the sociocultural and economic milieu and supported by professional organizations, music education experienced unprecedented growth and innovation in the 1920s. The MSNC adopted the motto "music for every child, every child for music" in 1923, access to music education as part of the public school experience was becoming more widespread, instrumental music education

found a secure foothold in education, and music appreciation, associated with a middle-class lifestyle, expanded the range of curricular activity at all levels.¹⁶

However, depending on individuals' history and heritage, social class, and geographical location, there was tremendous diversity in how these aspirations and rights could be experienced and expressed. Remembering 1776 could elicit pride and patriotism or remind individuals of their ongoing struggle toward freedom—equality of educational opportunity, socioeconomic mobility, and respect and appreciation for the cultural expressions of all individuals.¹⁷ At the time, society and schooling continued to be segregated by race and ability, supported and mandated by applicable laws and policies.

The founding of organizations—the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools (1903), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1909), the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (1915), and the National Association of Negro Musicians (1919) earlier in the century—helped unite Black people in their call for equality and inclusion. The renowned activist Carter D. Woodson created Negro History Week in the year of the sesquicentennial in 1926, which became Black History Month in the year of the bicentennial in 1976.¹⁸ Sounds of the Jazz Age were heard in northern cities as the Great Migration of Black people from southern states continued into the 1920s. For example, Black artists of the Harlem Renaissance who flourished in the 1920s, including Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Ma Rainey, and Bessie Smith, introduced new musical styles into the urban landscape. For Native American people, an act of Congress in 1924 admitted them to US citizenship for the first time. A large majority of their school-age children were educated in boarding schools in the mid-1920s.¹⁹ The education of students with disabilities took place in separate schools or in separate classrooms in the growing number of public schools that added special education programs.²⁰ Acknowledging these sociopolitical facts is vitally

FIGURE 3

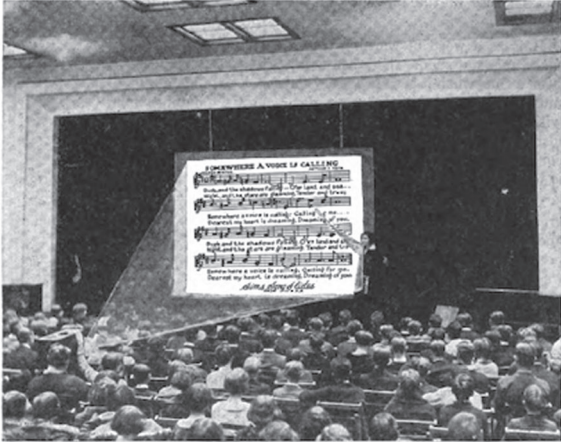
Advertisement for Sims Song Slides in *Music Supervisors' Journal* 12, no. 2 (1925): 15

MUSIC SUPERVISORS' JOURNAL 15

SIMS SONG SLIDES

"The World is Singing Its Way to Brotherhood"

Old Favorites in Standard Four Part Arrangements.
New Copyright songs not otherwise available for Assembly Singing.



Students of the Junior High School Kirksville, Mo., singing from Sims Song Slides. Mrs. Ermine Thompson White, who last year directed the assembly singing here, says: "It is astounding how this method improves the sight reading ability of students."

CAN BE USED IN DAYLIGHT
(NOTE PICTURE)

"I am delighted with the Assembly Singing with your Song Slides. Through them I feel Kansas City may be made a singing city."
Mabelle Glenn, Director of School Music, Kansas City, Mo.

SIMS SONG SLIDE CORPORATION
KIRKSVILLE, MISSOURI

important when considering democratic principles in music education at the time of the sesquicentennial.

With regard to events that took place during 1926 (in chronological order), music teachers might have noticed or participated in the first Negro History Week launched on February 7; the nineteenth annual meeting of the MSNC held in Detroit, April 9 through 16, that included a performance of the first National High School Orchestra; National Music Week, May 2 through 8; the first official National School Band Contest in Fostoria, Ohio, June 4 through 5; or the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia, May 31 through November 30.

Music and the Sesquicentennial Exposition

World's fairs (or universal expositions) in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America attracted considerable attention and revealed musical and educational values and beliefs of the time.²¹ The principal official event sponsored by the US government in 1926 was the International Sesqui-Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia (Figure 4).²² It sought "to reconsecrate American patriotism by reminding the nation of its beginnings."²³ US President Calvin Coolidge delivered a speech at the Exposition on July 5 in which he reminded the nation of those beginnings.²⁴ Certain details of

FIGURE 4

"America Welcomes the World," The Sesquicentennial International Exposition," broadside poster by artist Elliott Brewer, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1926



the Exposition program reflected musical and educational values of the day. The Philadelphia Orchestra was the official Exposition orchestra. A notable music education leader, Frances Elliott Clark, served on the Exposition music committee. Given her stature and role as director of the Education Department at the Victor Talking Machine Company in nearby Camden, New Jersey, and the recent launch of the Orthophonic Victrola, which was featured at the Exposition, her presence is not surprising. George Lindsay, director of music for the Philadelphia Public Schools, served as chair of the public schools subcommittee. The bands subcommittee was chaired by Albert Hoxie, the renowned leader of the Philadelphia Harmonica Band that performed several times during the Exposition, including at the Ohio House Dedication (Figure 5). John Philip Sousa and his band performed a march Sousa composed for

FIGURE 5

Harmonica Players with Ohio Governor at the Ohio House Dedication, Sesquicentennial International Exposition, Philadelphia, July 20, 1926



Source: <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/sesquicentennial-international-exposition/>.

the occasion, *Sesquicentennial Exposition March*.²⁵

Two pageants, *Freedom* and *Loyalty's Gift*, were composed for the occasion. The patriotic pageant *Freedom*, staged by Robert H. Burnside, focused on American history and emphasized “with all the art of the stage and music and spectacle the great human struggle for freedom through the ages.”²⁶ *Loyalty's Gift*, created by African American Dora Cole Norman, was “a highly dramatic picture” of Black history and culture that included performances by Marion Anderson, the Hampton Quartet, the Fisk Quintet, and “a chorus of 500 voices in music that included the famous Negro spirituals.”²⁷ Although the Exposition and the sesquicentennial received minimal coverage in music and education journals, a patriotic cantata written for the anniversary, *The Spirit of '76*, was advertised widely (Figure 6) in the *Eastern School Music Herald*, the *Music*

Supervisors' Journal, and *The Supervisors Service Bulletin*. The cantata followed “the various stages of the country’s development through to the causes of the War for Independence,” ending with “a song of victory and of the flag with the strains of the ‘Star Spangled Banner’ at the close.”²⁸ In general, the Exposition included music performances connected to the lives of Americans at the time and exhibited the latest technologies that had become a feature of music instruction in many schools nationwide.

Toward a Song of Democracy: Music Education in and around the Sesquicentennial

In many ways, the stars were aligned in 1926 for music to flourish in public schools in a year that celebrated American independence and democratic principles. Each generation of music

educators aspires to democratic practices,²⁹ at all times shaped by prevailing societal beliefs and values. What markers of democratic thinking and action were evident in school music in and around 1926?³⁰ For the purpose of this article, I focus on markers that demonstrate music educators’ efforts to (a) advocate “music for every child,” (b) expand the music curriculum, (c) create curriculum standards to improve the quality of music instruction, (d) cultivate and assimilate citizens, and (e) collaborate with professional communities.

Advocate “Music for Every Child”

Of all the mottos invoked to advocate music education, “music for every child, every child *for* music” has been drawn on consistently since it was first used by then-President of MSNC, Karl Gehrrens, in 1923.³¹ The message of “music for every child” appeared on the front cover of every issue of the *Music Supervisors' Journal* in 1926 (Figure 7). The motto aligned well with MSNC’s goal of expanding the presence of music in public schools. It also aligned with the beliefs of educational leaders who spoke frequently to music’s value in public schools in reports and conference addresses during 1926.³² A focus on music was motivated in part by greater understanding of its value in human life and central role in the lives of children and youth.³³ With scant evidence of music in segregated public schools and teacher education programs³⁴ and in schools for students with disabilities³⁵ in the 1920s, it is not clear to what degree the motto of “music for every child” was drawn on to promote music education in those school settings. President Coolidge, commenting on music in the magazine *Music and Youth* in November 1926, emphasized that music “is not merely for the few, but rather for the many. Its appeal reaches to all, its response comes from all. . . . [It] should increasingly be established and recognized, as an important national asset.”³⁶ The aspiration of music “for the many”

FIGURE 6

Advertisement for *The Spirit of '76 Cantata* in *Music Supervisors' Journal* 12, no. (1926): 57

1776 - 1926
150 YEARS
On the 4th of July
since the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia.

This Important Celebration
calls for special attention in the schools all over the country. We offer a new two-part cantata as an aid in this celebration:

“THE SPIRIT OF '76”
Poem by Dorothy Lehman Sumerau
Music by Ira B. Wilson

A copy will be sent on 10 days' approval just as soon as off the press if you request and mention “The Supervisor's Journal.”

Lorenz Publishing Co.
New York (70E. 45th St.) Chicago (218 S. Wabash)
Dayton, Ohio (216 W 5th St.)

FIGURE 7

“Music for Every Child” Motto on the Front Cover of the *Music Supervisors' Journal* 12, no. 3 (February 1926)

MUSIC FOR EVERY CHILD — EVERY CHILD FOR MUSIC

MUSIC SUPERVISORS JOURNAL

FEBRUARY, 1926

The Official Organ of The Music Supervisors National Conference

Detroit, Michigan, April 12-16, 1926

The novelty of new recording technologies sparked the imagination of music teachers as they envisioned a common musical experience for students through music listening and appreciation lessons. As former music teacher and MSNC founder, author of music appreciation textbooks and media for schools, and now director of music education at the Victor Talking Machine Company, Frances E. Clark bridged the gap between industry and the music classroom.⁴¹ Along with music appreciation, by 1926, instrumental ensembles had also become an institution in many high schools.⁴² This unprecedented development over a decade or more was made possible in part by the availability of professional musicians turned educators to direct bands and orchestras and the support of key partners—school administrators, the NBAM led by Charles M. Tremaine,⁴³ and the music industry. Curricular expansion advanced around strong and tight networks of support. In the absence of a historical account

is considered in the context of a segregated society.

Expand the Music Curriculum

Reading primary sources about curriculum developments that were afoot in music education in and around 1926 is humbling.³⁷ One senses the intense energy and deep passion that music teachers and other advocates invested in making music central to the mission of education. The time was favorable for expanding the music curriculum, especially at the secondary level, as both a curriculum subject and an extracurricular activity.³⁸ The inclusion of more and different ensembles, piano instruction,

and music appreciation classes and “a forward movement” in the curriculum of the high school was, as Birge put it, “bewildering from the rapidity with which it has taken place” and “without precedent.”³⁹ Furthermore, the landscape (and soundscape) of music in many elementary classrooms underwent change, moving from a predominance of singing and sight-reading to the inclusion of music listening, use of classroom instruments (rhythmic “toy orchestras”), and the beginnings of creative music-making. With such rapid developments, new curricula were created to respond to progressive ideals in elementary schools or to reach more students in junior high and high schools.⁴⁰

of music in schools in the 1920s that included schools segregated by race and ability, it is not possible to generalize; schools endowed with the social capital, racial heritage, and economic resources were more likely to benefit from such support.

Beyond the two dominant paradigms of music education—performance and appreciation—the values underpinning child-centered education were applied to practice by some music educators, especially at the elementary level. Motivated by the principles of progressive education espoused by John Dewey,⁴⁴ the individual child was at the center of their own learning. The principles also acknowledged the heterogeneity of learners' backgrounds, the centrality of home life in school life, and the child's need for creative self-expression. Not only did the child have a right to a musical education but also to one that nurtured their unique identities through music. Such work was explored in laboratory schools that experimented with innovative curriculum focused on the child as learner. In the context of music, we look to Satis Coleman's innovative work at the Lincoln Laboratory School at Teachers College, Columbia University, and the numerous books that she published in the name of advancing creative music education.⁴⁵ Beyond the environment of lab schools, music was integrated into pedagogical approaches that had a creative focus.⁴⁶ A description of curriculum in segregated schools for Black students in Charlotte City Schools in North Carolina in the late 1920s illustrated how creative music-making was featured in the "activity curriculum" through "composing of words, writing of music, and folk dance."⁴⁷

At the high school level, attention to musical creativity was not evident. The goal was to grow ensembles and standardize learning outcomes and to establish music as a scientific subject worthy of inclusion in the core curriculum. A tension seems to have existed in beliefs about the nature of musical experience in school. An increasing focus on aesthetics by many MSNC leaders⁴⁸ was reflected in appreciation of the beautiful and the

harmonious, language that was familiar to general educators, school administrators, and professional musicians. Karl Gehrkins wrote that if "an aesthetic reaction does not result in the case of a large proportion of lessons it is doubtful if music is worth all it costs in time, money, and energy."⁴⁹ Other leaders put the social and socializing values of music in K–12 education in the foreground. In his President's Address at the MSNC biennial conference in Detroit in April 1926, Edgar Gordon described a move from "art for art's sake" to "a democratic concept of musical enjoyment" that placed music "in the very fabric of life itself."⁵⁰ Both leaders, though, were focused on the humanistic aspects of music education; as Gordon put it, the profession's task was "to supply the saving spiritual and subjective qualities of human life."⁵¹ Similar to the changing sociopolitical landscapes of music in society at large, the meanings of musical experience in the curriculum were also in a state of flux.

Establish Curriculum Standards

The subject of curriculum standards, which is integrated into educational discourse today, was central to reform efforts in music education in the 1920s. A unified approach to primary-grade education began formally with the founding of the National Council of Primary Education in 1915. One of the first tasks of the new Educational Council of MSNC, established in 1918,⁵² was to produce a standard course in music for elementary grades.⁵³ A similar effort was undertaken in secondary education⁵⁴ and reflected in subsequent bulletins of the Council on high school and junior high school curriculum.⁵⁵ Other trends were dominant too in music education in the mid-1920s.

A focus on educational outcomes accompanied that of curriculum reform and standards. It was interpreted in music education by the production of tests to evaluate students' musical ability, a focus on competition in music performance, and the proliferation of music memory contests.⁵⁶ Competing for a place at the national level was

the pinnacle of the competitive space, exemplified in the first National High School Orchestra at the MSNC conference in Detroit in April 1926 and the first National School Band Contest in Fostoria, Ohio, in June 1926.⁵⁷ Contests had their downside in terms of democratic practices. In the early years, a single band won in the different classes of competition in each contest, and "school officials and bandmasters alike grew increasingly dissatisfied" with the system.⁵⁸ On the one hand, aspiring to high standards was a noble goal, and motivating students through competition was effective; on the other, contests had consequences that highlighted the conundrum of music as vocational or avocational education, music for the few or the many, professional training or preparation of amateurs for lifelong participation in music.

By the mid-1920s, the roots of many current forms of music curriculum organization and assessment were sown—a belief in unified curriculum standards by which school music could be advanced as a school subject and in the function of music contests to motivate, to raise standards, and to attract good public attention. Similar to other historical eras, tensions or seeming contradictions can exist among the multiple trends that permeate the discourse and rhetoric of public schools. The principles of progressive education and student-centered curriculum models influenced by them, more in evidence at the elementary level, were rooted in a space different to that of standards, psychometrics, and educational testing and different again from the climate of capitalism that was evident in the proliferation of educational materials and musical instruments and media. Other societal expectations were competing for a place in the democratic mission of school music, among them, the goal of cultivating American patriotism.

Assimilate and Cultivate Citizens

The education of American citizens of good moral character prepared for

civic engagement was an expectation of schools in the mid-1920s.⁵⁹ With increasing numbers of students participating in school music, the popularity of patriotic songs and marches, and a greater availability of music by American composers, students performed American music more frequently as part of the curriculum.⁶⁰ Although “The Star-Spangled Banner” was not declared the official US national anthem until 1931, it was already performed widely in schools by the mid-1920s, along with “America.”

The goal of assimilating immigrants into American society through public education was maintained. Although immigration acts of 1921 and 1924 restricted immigrants based on national quotas, school communities remained ethnically diverse. Clark argued that “We, the melting-pot nation, can amalgamate all these diverse peoples more quickly through music than in any other way.”⁶¹ Fostering a sense of belonging to the nation, *E Pluribus Unum* (see Figure 4), was implemented in the teaching of both folk songs and dances of many lands as well as performing American patriotic music.⁶²

In segregated Black schools and communities, social circumstances were different. The quest to be recognized and to have their history and heritage acknowledged in the school curriculum was at the forefront of collective efforts. The performance of the Black hymn “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (1900) was central to such efforts. Both this hymn and the poignant words of Langston Hughes in his poem “Epilogue” (or “I, Too”) published in *The Weary Blues* in 1926 serve as a reminder a century later of the power of music and other arts to amplify people’s existence and voice their rights. Hughes wrote, “I, too, sing America. . . . I, too, am America.”⁶³

Published literature in the mid-1920s highlighted the potential of music education to build patriotic values and assimilate to the mainstream of American society. Meanwhile, voices from “within the Veil”⁶⁴ advocated for their rights as American citizens, also drawing on music to develop in their youth a sense of pride. It may be said that music

educators and others responsible for music instruction across the segregated landscape of public schools were conscious of cultivating a sense of belonging and citizenship. Their motivation to do so, however, was rooted in a range of histories and life experiences that formed their outlook and shaped their experience of being an American citizen.

Collaborate with Professional Communities

Professional teacher groups are, in a sense, communities of citizens working in the name of advancing the education of children and youth. What was the professional culture of music education at the time of the sesquicentennial? Which groups served as the profession’s allies? Who was included in their community? These are questions for music teachers of any era. As a professional body, school music teachers started out as a Department of Music Education in the National Education Association in 1884. Thus, they were embedded professionally in education. The extent to which music as a school subject was supported publicly by influential leaders in general education around 1926 is noteworthy. So too was the frequency of exchange between general education and music education professional communities. Music educators presented at education conferences and were published in education journals and proceedings.⁶⁵ After their performance at the 1926 MSNC conference, the National High School Orchestra was featured at the 1927 conference of school administrators in Dallas.⁶⁶ Education scholars and administrators were invited to give keynote addresses at MSNC conferences.⁶⁷

MSNC also had close ties with music organizations such as NBAM and NFMC. This was evident in the support they received for instrumental music, music contests, and music memory tests. The professional identity and practice of the school music teacher continued to extend beyond the school into the community, evident in Ruth Hyde Perkins West’s description of her work as music supervisor in a southwestern region,

published in the December 1925 issue of the *Music Supervisors’ Journal*:

I have a very large and very interesting field of Rural work in music here in the most Southwest corner of our U. S. A. I drive 15,000 miles a year in a Ford coupe and my car is welcome in every neighborhood as is the community sing and the free piano lesson and the evenings with the victrola.⁶⁸

With the increasing autonomy of music as a subject in the school curriculum, the education of more specialist teachers due to an increase in teacher education programs and the first bachelor degrees in music education,⁶⁹ and the growing maturity of MSNC, the professional community sought to confirm its national identity. Two new Sectional Conferences of MSNC—North Central and South West—were announced in 1926, as was a change from a national annual to a biennial conference. In the same year, the *Music Supervisors’ Journal* became the sole magazine for all regions. These actions reflected a more inclusive approach in the national organization, aiming to serve music educators in every corner of the nation. They also coincided with a move toward more independence and autonomy as a professional group.

Listening Back for Inspiration, Looking Forward with Hope

In marking the 250th anniversary, I focused on music education at the sesquicentennial anniversary in 1926. The first of two questions set forth in the article—what trends influenced the outlook of music teachers, the curriculum, and the priorities of the profession at that time—brings us to the heart of the Roaring Twenties and its contradictions: prosperity and opportunity, leisure and consumerism defining the experiences of some; racial tension and segregated schooling, inequality and injustice defining the experiences of others. These contradictions were borne out in the narratives of school music passed on through the generations. The state of music education in and around 1926, as

evidenced in the professional writings presented here, reflected abundance and growth and transformation. In these same sources, there was a rhetoric of silence, a dearth of narrative around the music education of children and youth who were in segregated schools. In critiquing the actions of music educators a century ago, it is important to keep in mind that they were circumscribed by the prevailing worldview that determined how teachers viewed their responsibilities to school and society.

The second question I set out with related to the rights of “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”⁷⁰ in the context of music education at the sesquicentennial anniversary in 1926.

The years in and around 1926 exuded hope and promise toward a happy and fulfilled life. Music was promoted as a medium toward that state of being. In an era of progressive education centered on the child learner, it is not surprising that the goal of “music for every child” was chosen. It was advanced along many pathways—that students had access to music in school, experienced the enjoyment of performing together, internalized the values of “good” music through performance and appreciation, and through musical engagement, students would be enriched for life and become citizens of good character. MSNC leaders showed vision, imagination, and deep commitment in their efforts to realize the goal of “music for every child” in schools where they had influence. The impact of class, heritage, and location on realization of this goal is yet to be studied—for example, in rural schools, in boarding schools for Native American children and youth, or in segregated schools for Black students, especially in the South.

To fulfill their responsibility to every student, the profession saw the need to articulate the values of school music. Although decades before the publication of any formal philosophy of music education, authors described a variety of reasons to respect and augment the place of music in schools—civic (with a focus on building American patriotism, assimilation of diverse persons into society, and developing moral character),

social (with a focus on schools providing music for school and community functions), and aesthetic (with a focus on developing an individual’s capacity to appreciate “good” music as a pathway to experiencing beauty). A combination of these values is found in the foreground or background of professional philosophy across the decades, often in tension with one another.⁷¹

With this broad set of functions in mind, leaders set forth to advocate the subject and to create curriculum guidelines and standards for all music teachers, implemented by an increasingly specialized teaching force. Developments in instrumental music and music appreciation particularly drew positive attention and promoted good public relations in and outside the school. Music educators had strong support from those who wanted to advance music in American culture, including representatives of music industry. As a school subject, music aligned well with trends of standard setting and measurable learning outcomes in high schools. Its presence was seen to engender pride and happiness in schools and communities. The professional community led by MSNC flourished, too. The spirit of the Declaration of Independence was present in its self-determination, increasing recognition as a professional community, and the support it earned from a strong network of advocates in related fields, especially in education and community music.

In the process of listening back to sources published in and around 1926, I observed trends and changes that likely directed the course of music in education in subsequent decades. First was the tangible impact of recording and broadcasting media on the transformation of curriculum and the direction of classroom music activity at both elementary and secondary levels. New technology continues to enter the field and requires teachers to evaluate its use and value in the classroom. Second was the expanding breadth of values associated with music and a deeper understanding of the effects of music on children and youth. The range of

voices who addressed those values was noteworthy—not only music education leaders but also those in general education and in music organizations outside the music teaching professions. Yet the values they described did not address sociological issues such as justice, poverty, and equity. Which set of values are highlighted in today’s conversations, and which receive little attention? And whose voices are included in discussions of music’s value in education?

A third observation, and perhaps the most significant and powerful of all, was the growth of instrumental music in public schools, accompanied by a culture of contests and a network of supporters to hold it in place. Its time had come, welcomed by many stakeholders—from school administration to cultural organizations to music industry. Fourth was the opportunity afforded by progressive education to increase creative music-making in the curriculum at the elementary level. Music instruction was in the hands of classroom teachers in most school districts, and leadership in MSNC to promote creative music-making was not forthcoming. There was a long road ahead before national attention was devoted to creative music-making in the curriculum, beginning in the 1960s and becoming enshrined in the National Standards for Arts Education in 1994.

A fifth and final observation speaks to the substantial but limited views provided by the primary sources available to write a historical narrative of music education in the mid-1920s. A century later, the question of whose stories are being documented and archived today is important to consider. Efforts to create and archive for future generations a diversity of sources that represents music education comprehensively is a collective responsibility of P–12 music teachers, researchers, organizations, and curators of music archives.

There is much to learn from and celebrate in the stories of music education in and around 1926, the year of the sesquicentennial. The profession honors a generation of music educators who advanced music in the school curriculum

and strengthened music's presence in education. Let the profession be inspired and encouraged to recommit to "sing democracy" in this complicated moment of the 250th anniversary of American Independence and to continue to move forward the rights of "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" in music classrooms across the nation. Listening back to narratives of music, education, and music education in and around the sesquicentennial anniversary can deepen understanding of the evolution of school music and help discern future directions for music in school and community.

ORCID iD

Marie McCarthy  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6030-0422>

NOTES

1. Tina Sayers, "Sing Democracy 250-50 States Program," *NAfME Blog*, April 12, 2025, National Association for Music Education, <https://nafme.org/blog/sing-democracy-250-50-states-program/>.
2. Although the focus of the article is the year 1926, the literature drawn on is not limited to that year. Evidence from the years around 1926 is included to inform events, trends, and patterns of thinking highlighted in that year.
3. Michael D. Hattem, *The Memory of '76: The Revolution in American History* (Yale University Press, 2024); Michael Shally-Jensen, ed., *Defining Documents in American History: The 1920s* (Salem Press, 2014); Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties* (Harper and Brothers, 1931).
4. Shally-Jensen, *Defining Documents*; Langston Hughes, *The Weary Blues* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1926); Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (Albert and Charles Boni, 1925).
5. Edgar B. Gordon, "President's Address, Some Significant Tendencies in Music Education," *Music Supervisors' Journal* 12, no. 5 (1926): 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22; Willem Van De Wall, *The Psychotherapeutic Value of Music*, address delivered at the Eleventh Recreation Congress, Atlantic City, NJ, October 19, 1925 (National Bureau for the Advancement of Music, 1925).
6. The Music Supervisors National Conference was founded in 1907, renamed the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) in 1934, MENC: The National Association for Music Education in 1998, and the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) in 2011. The term "music supervisor" indicated a trained music teacher who provided music instruction in public schools, was a supervising instructor for classroom teachers, or had some form of supervising responsibilities in a school district.
7. J. Scott Goble, *What's So Important About Music Education?* (Routledge, 2010), 198–208; Jere T. Humphreys, "Instrumental Music in American Education: In Service of Many Masters," in *The Ithaca Conference on American Music Education: Centennial Profiles*, ed. Mark Fonder (Ithaca College, 1992), 25–51.
8. See Jere T. Humphreys, "An Overview of American Public School Bands and Orchestras Before World War II," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 101 (1989): 50–60; Humphreys, "Instrumental Music in American Education," 30–31.
9. Goble, *What's So Important*, 198–206; Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 3rd ed. (Rowman and Littlefield Education, 2007), 292–95, 315–17.
10. The *Music Supervisors' Bulletin* first appeared in 1914, with a name change to the *Music Supervisors' Journal* in 1915. Its name was changed in 1934 to the *Music Educators Journal*.
11. Reflecting accepted practices of the era, the advertisement of the Victor Talking Machine Company in Figure 1 includes songs that originated in or were performed in minstrel shows.
12. Mark and Gary, *History of American Music Education*, 319–10.
13. Charles Tremaine, "Music Memory Contests," *Journal of the National Education Association* 15, no. 2 (1926): 43–44; Anon., "National Music Week: Plan for Great Music Memory Contest," *Music Supervisors' Journal* 12, no. 4 (1926): 74–76; Karl W. Gehrkins, "A Page or Two of Opinion," *School Music* 27, no. 132 (1926): 1–2. Tremaine wrote that "the best organized contests are those which enlist the cooperation of the school authorities and of local forces outside the schools interested in the cultural advancement of the community" (43).
14. Tremaine, "Music Memory Contests," 43.
15. For a deep analysis of how the Revolution was memorialized at each anniversary, see Hattem, *Memory of '76*.
16. Mark and Gary, *History of American Music Education*, 288–323; Ruth I. Gustafson, *Race and Curriculum: Music in Childhood Education* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 81–99.
17. Primary sources on related topics include Carter G. Woodson, *The Negro in Our History* (The Associated Publishers, 1922), with three further editions published in the 1920s; secondary sources include Jacob W. Hardesty, *The Jazz Problem: Education and the Battle for Morality During the Jazz Age* (SUNY Press, 2023), especially chapters two and three.
18. Jarvis R. Givens, *Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching* (Harvard University Press, 2021), 60.
19. David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928*, 2nd ed. (University Press of Kansas, 2020), 31.
20. By the 1920s, "hundreds of school districts in more than half of the states had established public school special education programs, almost all of them housed in separate classrooms or buildings." Michael L. Wehmeyer, "From Segregation to Strengths," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 103, no. 6 (2022): 10. See also Philip M. Ferguson, "Creating the Continuum: J. E. Wallace Wallin and the Role of Clinical Psychology in the Emergence of Public School Special Education in America," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 18, no. 1 (2014): 86–100.
21. Marie McCarthy, "American Music Education as Reflected in the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, 1892–93," *The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 15, no. 2 (1994): 111–42.
22. This image, among others, was chosen to advertise the sesquicentennial.
23. Erastus Long Austin and Odell Hauser, *The Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition: 150 Years of American Independence. A Record Based on Official Data and Departmental Reports* (Current Publications, Inc., 1929), 11. For a variety of reasons, among them, inclement weather, waning public interest in and national need for

- expositions, and alternative opportunities for leisure activities, the Exposition did not enjoy a level of success similar to earlier expositions. Hattem, *Memory of '76*; Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000).
24. President Coolidge said: "If all men are created equal, that is final. If they are endowed with inalienable rights, that is final. If governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that is final. No advance, no progress can be made beyond these propositions." Calvin Coolidge, "The Inspiration of the Declaration," speech given July 5, 1926, Philadelphia, PA, available in the virtual archive of the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation, <https://coolidgefoundation.org/resources/inspiration-of-the-declaration-of-independence>.
 25. Paul E. Bierley, *The Works of John Philip Sousa* (Integrity Press, 1984), 61. Sousa was inspired by Hoxie's harmonica band and subsequently wrote a piece for them titled *Harmonica Wizard*.
 26. Austin and Hauser, *Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition*, 20.
 27. *Ibid.*, 246–47.
 28. "New Publications," *The Supervisors Service Bulletin* 5, no. 4 (1926): 16. I encourage music educators whose school programs go back to 1926 to research their school's history with this anniversary in mind.
 29. Randall Everett Allsup, "Democracy and One Hundred Years of Music Education," *Music Educators Journal* 93, no. 5 (2007): 52–56, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002743210709300517>.
 30. I humbly acknowledge the limitations of creating a national portrait of music education given the immense diversity of cultures, races, social classes, geography, educational opportunities, and economic conditions of the time. Moreover, minimal historical documentation is available that describes music in schools segregated by race and ability in the early twentieth century. An increase in scholarly attention to the history of music education for Black students is noteworthy in the last two decades, as efforts to redress the imbalance in the profession's accounting of the past have increased. For example, see special issue of the *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* (April 2022) and Marie McCarthy, Sean Grier, and Tiffanie Waldron, "Sounding the Silences of African American Music Education History: A Bibliographic Guide to Research Literature from the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1177/15366006251369108>.
 31. Gehrkens later explained the motto as the twin ideas that "every child must have a chance to study music" and that as an outcome of music instruction, "every child will like music—will be for music." Karl W. Gehrkens, "Music for Every Child," *Music Educators Journal* 23, no. 3 (1936): 13. See Lauren Heidingsfelder, "The Slogan of the Century: 'Music for Every Child; Every Child for Music,'" *Music Educators Journal* 100, no. 4 (2014): 47–51.
 32. *Proceedings of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Meeting Held at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 27–July 2, 1926* (National Education Association, 1926); *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year Ended June 30, 1926* (Bureau of Education, 1926); Department of Superintendence, *A Reprint of the Fourth Yearbook - The Nation at Work on the Public School Curriculum* (National Education Association, 1926). Attention to music for students in city and rural public schools is noteworthy in these sources.
 33. For example, see "The Value of Music," excerpt from *Educational Monographs: Pennsylvania in Music* (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction, 1926), 16–18, in *Music Education: Source Readings from Ancient Greece to Today*, ed. Michael L. Mark, 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2008), 118–19.
 34. McCarthy et al., "Sounding the Silences."
 35. Carol L. Shansky, "'We Are Aiming for Quality and Good Music': The Hebrew Orphan Asylum Harmonica Band (NYC) and Music Education, 1924–1930," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 42, no. 1 (2020): 46–70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536600619853885>; Deborah A. Sheldon, "The Illinois School for the Deaf Band: A Historical Perspective," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 45, no. 4 (1997): 580–600, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3345424>.
 36. Calvin Coolidge, "President Coolidge Speaks of Music," *Music and Youth* 2, no. 1 (1926): n.p.
 37. The primary sources underpinning this statement are the 1925, 1926, and 1927 issues of the *Eastern School Music Herald*, *The Journal of the National Education Association*, *Music Supervisors' Journal*, *The Musician*, *School Music*, *The Supervisors Service Bulletin*, and the *Teachers College Record*; National Education Association, MSNC, and Music Teachers National Association proceedings and yearbooks; and Department of Superintendence yearbooks.
 38. George S. Counts, "Music," in *The Senior High School Curriculum* (The University of Chicago, 1926), 108–11; Mark and Gary, *History of American Music Education*, 288–89, 291–92; Edward B. Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States* (Oliver Ditson Company, 1928), 168–69.
 39. Birge, *History of Public School Music*, 169.
 40. See sources under the next topic of establishing curriculum standards.
 41. For a contemporary view of Clark's work at the Victor Company, see Julia J. Chybowski, "Selling Musical Taste in Early Twentieth-Century America: Frances E. Clark and the Business of Music Appreciation," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 38, no. 2 (2017): 104–27, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536600616684969>.
 42. The development of music in the senior high curriculum coincided with the restructuring of secondary education into junior and senior high schools. The Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education was founded in 1911, and it issued a report on the "Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education" in 1918. This radical change in educational structure and philosophy impacted the course of music education.
 43. It was Tremaine who advocated for an Instrumental Affairs Committee in the MSNC, organized the first national school band contest in Chicago in 1923, and wrote and spoke convincingly in several music and education journals on the power and value of contests to advance music education.
 44. John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," *The Journal of Education* 104, no. 21 (1926): 542.

45. See Terese M. Volk, "Satis Coleman's 'Creative Music,'" *Music Educators Journal* 82, no. 6 (1996): 31–33, 47, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3398949>. The role of music education in lab schools associated with Black colleges remains hidden. In her book (based on her PhD dissertation), Sharon G. Pierson provides an insightful study of Lab High at Alabama State College that includes reference to music in the curriculum. Sharon Gay Pierson, *Laboratory of Learning: HBCU Laboratory Schools and Alabama State College Lab High in the Era of Jim Crow* (Peter Lang, 2014).
46. A number of pedagogical approaches at the elementary and junior high levels—the activity curriculum, project methods advocated by curriculum theorists such as William H. Kilpatrick, and the curriculum in platoon schools—included music as a medium for creative self-expression. See Will Earhart, *Music in Platoon Schools* (US Bureau of Education, 1927), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112088205452>.
47. Mrs. H. A. Whiting, "The School Activities of Charlotte, N. C.," *The Bulletin: Official Organ of the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools* 10, no. 6 (1930): 8; see also pages 5–9, 12–17. See detailed description of the "first-grade orchestra" in Thelma D. Perry, *History of the American Teachers Association* (National Education Association, 1975), 128. The activity curriculum attracted national and international interest. Perry wrote that "the project was influential in stimulating quite a large number of Negro elementary teachers in other cities and states to use the plan" (127).
48. For example, see Will Earhart, John. W. Beattie, Ella Ruth Boyce, et al., "Reports of National Subject Committees – Music," in *Department of Superintendence Fourth Yearbook, The Nation at Work on the Public School Curriculum* (National Education Association, 1926), 298–318.
49. Gehrkens, "Page or Two of Opinion," 2.
50. Gordon, "President's Address," 14.
51. *Ibid.*, 22.
52. The Council was renamed over the years: National Council for Research on Music Education in 1923 and Music Education Research Council (MERC) in 1932, with MERC the governing body of the current Society for Research in Music Education, which was founded in 1960.
53. *Bulletin No. 1, Standard Course in Music for the Elementary Grades and Four-Year Course for Training Music Supervisors* (Music Supervisors' National Conference, 1921). This movement to unify and standardize music instruction, according to Mark and Gary, inspired the thinking behind "music for every child." Mark and Gary, *History of American Music Education*, 266.
54. The Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education issued the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education in 1918.
55. Music Supervisors National Conference, Report of the National Research Council of Music Education, *High School Credits for Applied Music Study*, Bulletin No. 2 (University of North Carolina, 1922); Music Supervisors National Conference, Report of the National Research Council of Music Education, *Music in the Junior High Schools*, Bulletin No. 4 (University of North Carolina, 1925). Sixteen bulletins were issued by the end of 1926. See Mark and Gary, *History of American Music Education*, 264–65.
56. Peter W. Dykema wrote a column on behalf of the MSNC Tests and Measurements Department for the *Music Supervisors' Journal* from 1924 to 1930, indicating the relevance of the topic to the profession in the 1920s. It is important to note that the eugenics movement and scientific racism motivated the emphasis on testing in this decade. See Julia E. Koza, "*Destined to Fail*": *Carl Seashore's World of Eugenics, Psychology, Education, and Music* (University of Michigan Press, 2021). The topic was addressed in research studies completed in the 1920s (and continuing beyond that decade). See McCarthy et al., "Sounding the Silences."
57. Band tournaments existed for several years. The first national school band contest conducted under the auspices of the Committee on Instrumental Affairs of the Music Supervisors National Conference and the National Bureau for the Advancement of Music began in 1926 in Fostoria, Ohio. See James Edwin Moore, "The National School Band Contests from 1926 to 1931" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1968), 1.
58. Moore, "National School Band Contests," 1.
59. The *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* (1918) included worthy home membership, citizenship, worthy use of leisure, and ethical character.
60. *The Supervisors Service Bulletin*, sponsored by the Educational Music Bureau, published lists of music appropriate for school and community use during the mid-1920s. There was a consistent focus on patriotic songs, marches, cantatas, and operettas. Among pieces that appeared frequently were "Hail to America" (Huffer), "Land of Our Hearts" (Chadwick), and "God Bless America" (DeKoven). Writing in the January–February issue of the *Bulletin* in 1926 (vol. 5, no. 3), the editor asserted that "America is the greatest country on the globe" and "let us impress the schools with that fact and teach them to tell it in song. Every child should sing 'America the Beautiful,' and 'Our Flag' (Johnston)" (12).
61. Frances Elliott Clark, "A World Brotherhood through Music," *Journal of the National Education Association* 15, no. 5 (1926): 151.
62. See chapter 3, in Terese M. Volk, *Music, Education, and Multiculturalism: Foundations and Principles* (Oxford University Press, 1998).
63. Hughes, *Weary Blues*, "Epilogue," 109.
64. W. E. B. Du Bois used the metaphor of "the Veil" in his writings. See W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Dover Publications, 1994; original, 1903) and W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* (Dover Publications, 1999; original 1920).
65. For example, see *NEA Proceedings of the 1926 congress* for papers on music education (529–36) and references to music in numerous papers; Hollis Dann's article on "Music as an Avocation," *Journal of the NEA* 15, no. 9 (1926): 277–79; or Part II of the 1926 *NSSE Yearbook*. Peter Dykema led symposia on "Music from the Point of View of the General Educator" at Teachers College, and the papers were published in the *Teacher College Record* in January 1926 and March 1927.
66. "President Condon Announces Notable Dallas Feature, National High School Orchestra Will Play for Department of Superintendence," *Journal of the NEA* 15, no. 5 (1926): 255, with accompanying photo of the National High School Orchestra. Condon spoke to the educational value of music and "its

place in the development of character and citizenship.”

67. For example, Thomas Briggs, Teachers College, Columbia University, addressed the 1926 MSNC annual conference. Topics about music were featured at National Education Association and NSSE (National Association for the Study of Education) conferences and in education journals.
68. Ruth Hyde Perkins West, Supervisor of Music, S. D. County, “Letter to Editor,” *Music Supervisors’ Journal* 12, no. 3 (1925): 57.
69. See Mark and Gary, *History of American Music Education*, 320–23. Although several forms of music teacher qualifications were granted in earlier decades, Oberlin Conservatory

and Kansas State Normal School were among the first to offer a music education degree by the 1920s.

Documentation of early music education degrees in Historically Black Colleges and Universities indicates that Hampton Institute approved a music education degree in 1942. Lori R. Shipley, “A History of the Music Department at Hampton University” (DMA dissertation, Boston University, 2009).

70. For an elaborate exploration of these rights in the context of music education, see Estelle R. Jorgensen, “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness: Values for Music Education,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in*

Music Education 226 (2020): 66–79, <https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.226.0066>.

71. See Vicki L. Eaklor, “Roots of an Ambivalent Culture: Music, Education, and Music Education in Antebellum America,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 33, no. 2 (1985): 87–99, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3344729>. Eaklor presents a compelling argument to show “a persistent conflict between the emphasis on music’s function as a moral and social tool and its cultivation as an art” (88). She concludes that “[e]ven as music was promoted as a means to broadly conceived social aims, methods were employed that caused music to resemble an end in itself” (97).