

MUS 775

Discussion 2 - Choksy, Chapter 1 & 2

Jim Novak

1.21.21

Discuss the contributions of Horace Mann, Lowell Mason, Johann Pestalozzi and how they fit into their own time in history and what place they have (or should not have) in today's music education.

The organization of the schools of the United States in the early 1800's, due largely to the tax law, created a situation where citizens were arguing about how to fund the schools. Tuition costs, as well as the marginalization of poor families through "pauper oaths" contributed to many children not attending school at all. These problems worsened through the 1830's, by which point most states were calling for school reform.

At the time of this call for reform, Horace Mann was a lawyer in Massachusetts. He was elected to the House of Representatives, then to the Senate, and was elected President of the Senate in 1836 and 1837. Among other things, he was a big proponent of public education, and in 1837 he signed a bill providing a state board of education in Massachusetts. The board was tasked with sharing the most effective teaching methods around the state.

Mann served as first secretary of this very first Board of Education in Massachusetts, focusing heavily on reforming schools, improving attendance, quality of education, teacher training, and school conditions. He created, published, and largely funded *The Common School Journal*, a publication pushing the need for improving schools in America. He was required to submit annual reports to the legislature and school administrators. These reports focused on the conditions of the schools across Massachusetts, and gave Mann another vehicle to push for school improvement. His seventh annual report is considered to be his most important, having been completed shortly after a trip to Europe. In this report, Mann made the case for music education in the public schools. He insisted that music education is essential in every school curriculum, and that singing be a vital part of every student's music education.

On August 28, 1838, the Boston school board made music a part of the regular curriculum. This came with a number of scheduling and budgetary constraints, but it was a monumental step in making music education mandatory in public schools.

Lowell Mason grew up with music in his family. He was a composer, performer, conductor, and educator, having written *Juvenile Lyre*, the first school song book published in America. Mason

was a proponent of the educational philosophy of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. Pestalozzi was a proponent of Swiss education reform, favoring observation, experimentation, and reasoning over memorization and recitation, which were common practice at the time. He believed that it was the teacher's responsibility to engage the student and guide them to self-activity. Pestalozzi believed that education should be sequenced so that students learn based on previous knowledge, and that a policy of kindness in management should replace the older, strict disciplinary methods.

Mason went on to establish the Boston Academy of Music, a private music school which sought to teach music to children and adults, train music teachers, organize performers and directors of sacred music, provide a performance venue for the children and adult students, bring vocal music into the public schools, and publish musical instruction books. Mason wrote the teaching manual for the academy, which was influenced by Pestalozzi's philosophy of education.

Philosophically, Mason believed that students learn by doing. They make conclusions through the experiences of observing, comparing, and making decisions. Finally, students must have faith that some things "just are," and that they must trust their teachers to impart some knowledge. The musical philosophy of the Boston Academy was one that vocal music was central to all music education, while recognizing the limitations of the child's voice. The academy valued experience over abstract learning, and emphasized sequence in notation instruction. Melodic reading was taught via *solfa*, and rhythm reading was taught via patterns, beating time, and body movement.

Mason (and Pestalozzi) established many instructional and philosophical approaches that are still used today. They were pivotal in the reformation of music education in America.

Discuss the contributions of the Yale Seminar and the Tanglewood Symposium and how they affect what you teach in your classroom.

The Yale Seminar took place in June 1963, consisting of thirty one music performers and educators. They came together to identify some of the current problems in music education, and to determine some possible solutions to those problems. They focused on two key areas: music materials and music performance.

The problems with music materials were numerous. School materials at the time were of poor quality, narrow in scope, containing no jazz, popular or folk music. It was disengaging and uninteresting for the students, which I imagine led to a dissuasion of music for many children.

Weak, erroneous arrangements were often implemented, destroying the authenticity of the music studied, and further driving students away from it. Songs were also selected based on the accompaniment deficiency of the music teacher.

The participants found that music performance was generally high in American music education, but they determined that teachers were focusing on drills, and not on musical understanding and growth. To this point, they proposed ten recommendations to improve music education:

1. Develop musicality through performance, movement, composition, and listening.
2. Expand the music library to include music of the entire world.
3. Sequence music instruction through K-12.
4. Develop varied and authentic literature for ensembles.
5. Make advanced theory courses available for students who are interested.
6. Bring musicians, composers and scholars into the schools.
7. Take advantage of community music resources.
8. Bring urban music opportunities to all students. Develop a network of the arts in schools across the country.
9. Use multimedia in the classroom.
10. Provide training for music teachers.

I have seen the benefits of the Yale Seminar firsthand in the quality of literature over the past 50 years. Quality, variety and consistency have improved dramatically in the realm of band ensemble music, to the point that transcription errors are almost non-existent. The current variety of ensemble music at our disposal is larger than it has ever been, and it continues to widen every day.

Similarly to the Yale Seminar, The Tanglewood Symposium looked at the role of music in education, but also its role in American life, creating eight statements on the improvement of music education:

1. The integrity of the musical work is vital.
2. A wide variety of music should be used, including all historical periods and genres, current music, folk music, and music of other cultures.
3. Provide enough time in the schedule for music education.
4. Emphasize arts at the high school level.
5. Implement multimedia and technology in music education.
6. Individualize instruction, so that every student is successful.
7. Expand music education more into inner city schools and areas where cultural diversity is deficient.

8. Expand teacher education, equipping teachers to better serve all students.

My philosophy on literature selection reflects the second statement of The Tanglewood Symposium. Students are better served when they are exposed to the widest variety of music, as it helps them determine and expand their musical tastes. I use multimedia and technology as much as I can, as it just helps to engage students, and offers some variety of instruction. I think we have to individualize our instruction to engage every student if we want them to be successful and continue in our programs.

Discuss the Ann Arbor Symposium in its approach via psychology to music education

The Ann Arbor Symposium took place in 1967, serving as a follow-up of the Tanglewood Symposium. Over the course of three sessions, prominent music educators and psychologists presented papers and responded to each other's findings. While there was disagreement between the two professional groups, the results of the symposium were:

1. Music education must focus on the individual student and what makes each student unique.
2. Music education must be multi-faceted. Students should learn music theory aurally, verbally, and visually, and relate that learning to their own experiences.
3. Musical skills and concepts must be structured and sequenced in learning.