

Toward an Extension of Regelski's Praxial Philosophy of Music Education into Music History Pedagogy

JAMES VINCENT MAIELLO

For Connie Kessel and Bob Hess

A similar scene plays out in darkened lecture halls in college and university classrooms at colleges and universities across North America and beyond. A professor stands at the front of the room and lectures (viz., 'talks at' the students), perhaps peppering the presentation with brief questions and some discussion. The basic lecture model is a medieval one, from a time when 'masters' professed their ideas by reading them aloud to assembled students, though it has been altered and adjusted over the centuries: Active interaction between the instructor and the student and among students through dialogue, questions, or some kind of activity, are common in the twenty-first century classroom. Technology has also enlivened teaching in innumerable ways. For example, PowerPoint software has made multimedia presentations much easier, though it also facilitates 'canned' or 'pre-packaged' lectures. So-called 'smart' classrooms offer myriad opportunities for students to interact with information, among them always-on internet access and SMART Board technology. The paradigm has remained fundamentally the same, however, and a time travelling law student from thirteenth-century Bologna would no doubt recognize a music history lecture in present-day Poughkeepsie as a familiar learning experience.

In this essay, I argue for a paradigm shift in the teaching of music history for college music majors, one that parallels relatively recent alternatives in the philosophy of music education more broadly through the following arguments and recommendations: (1) The traditional model for teaching music history no longer the most effective one; it is outdated and has significant philosophical weaknesses. (2) The field of music education philosophy offers a critical foundation upon which to frame a discourse about teaching music history and several philosophical models on which to draw, of which I

I am grateful to Cynthia Cyrus, Colette Simonot, Thomas A. Regelski, and Joanna Helms for their careful attention to and criticism of earlier drafts of this essay.

Journal of Music History Pedagogy, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 71–108. ISSN 2155-1099X (online)

© 2013, *Journal of Music History Pedagogy*, licensed under CC BY 3.0

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

advocate a hybrid drawn from several of the praxial philosophies of music education; in particular Thomas Regelski's highly pragmatic approach. (3) Musicological praxes should be counted among the many "diverse musical practices" that praxialists believe are the fundamental nature of music. (4) I advocate a "musicology as praxis" model for teaching music history, driven by the dual emphases of student self-growth and of lasting pragmatic benefits to the student. (5) Curriculum should be student-centered and students should play a role in the process, albeit with the instructor's guidance. (6) Instruction should focus on action, on doing, and replicate as closely as possible true musicological praxis, and as such should strive to create "optimal experiences" for self-growth and to reflect the "real life" situations that musicians typically face. (7) Assessment should be as realistic as possible, modeling authentic musicological praxis. (8) Instructors and administrators should engage in reflective teaching that involves rigorous self-critique of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and they should adjust accordingly.

Before continuing, let me state explicitly that this paper is primarily theoretical and that most of the examples I offer regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment are not unique or new. Many instructors already do these things in various combinations and to varying degrees in their classrooms and programs. I believe firmly, however, that a coherent and considered philosophy must guide method in all aspects of education. My contributions in this essay are to argue that musicologists need to rethink the fundamental paradigm of music history pedagogy and to suggest the theoretical model of music education philosopher Thomas Regelski as a point of departure for developing a systematic philosophy of teaching music history. Then, both existing and new approaches, methods, and strategies may be applied *systematically and consistently* within a coherent framework, one that is inherently pragmatic and student-centered.

Let me also offer this clarification: Throughout this essay, I refer to "music history pedagogy" to describe primarily undergraduate education in "music history" and "musicology." While music history pedagogy might focus traditionally on introductory and survey courses, using secondary sources like textbooks and modern editions, there is no reason not to integrate "musicology pedagogy"—methodological and historiographical training and reliance on primary sources typically reserved for specialist graduate students—into the undergraduate curriculum to the extent possible and productive in a particular situation. Indeed, as traditional approaches lose their efficacy, there is considerable ambiguity about what ought to constitute a curriculum in music history and musicology at the undergraduate level. I see the traditional content of "music history" curricula as fundamental predicates to musicology, which I hold is one of music's diverse practices, just as teaching in these areas is a musical (and a professional) praxis. To put it in Aristotelian terms,

undergraduate curricula should address the *theoria* and *techne* of music history and the *praxis* of musicology.

As a sub-discipline (of musicology), music history pedagogy has not yet engaged in the long critical process that has dominated sister disciplines such as history (in general), music education, or music theory; many recent developments indicate that these debates are now beginning. For example, James Briscoe has pointed out that, in addition to the College Music Society's (CMS) emphasis on post-secondary teaching in music (including music history), the American Musicological Society (AMS) has sponsored a Pedagogy Study Group since 2006 that, in turn, has sponsored teaching-focused sessions at the AMS's annual meeting and annual symposium Teaching Music History Day.¹ In 2002, Mary Natvig edited the first collection of essays dedicated to the topic, *Teaching Music History*, and *Vitalizing Music History*, a similar compendium under Briscoe's editorship, followed in 2010.² *The Music History Classroom*, edited by James A. Davis and focused on the "nuts and bolts" of teaching music history, is the most recent volume on the subject.³ In addition, the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* appeared in 2010, signaling an even greater awareness of teaching music history as a vital part of musicology.

Although these efforts and a significant number of articles have begun a productive, necessary dialogue, they tend to focus more narrowly on specific content, issues, and methods, not on fundamental philosophy that might guide curriculum and instruction in music history.⁴ I must acknowledge that Douglass Seaton has already approached this issue by suggesting, *inter alia*, that "music history ought to investigate musical experience" and that music history students must engage actively in the practice of the discipline.⁵ Indeed, I find Seaton's perspective close to the one I advocate in the present assessment, though it is still grounded in the traditional approach. Melanie Lowe has also challenged the efficacy of the music history survey and questioned its

1. James Briscoe, ed., *Vitalizing Music History* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2010), xvix.

2. See Mary Natvig, ed., *Teaching Music History* (Aldershot, Hants and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002) and Briscoe, *Vitalizing Music History*.

3. James A. Davis, ed. *The Music History Classroom* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

4. For a bibliography of literature on the topic of music history pedagogy, see C. Matthew Balensuela, "A Select Bibliography of Music History Pedagogy Since 2000," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 1, no. 1 (2010): 61–66, <http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/13/15>. See also Mary Natvig, *Teaching Music History* and James Briscoe, *Revitalizing Music History*.

5. Douglass Seaton, "Teaching Music History: Principles, Problems, and Proposals," in *Vitalizing Music History*, ed. James Briscoe (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2010), 60.

relevance to contemporary music students.⁶ Nonetheless, music history pedagogy can benefit from the same kind of philosophical evolution that music education has been undergoing and, thus, what follows is an attempt to address teaching music history under the encompassing umbrella of music education.

The Music Education Model of Thomas A. Regelski.⁷

The field of music education has seen fierce debates on the philosophy of teaching music; these have been led most recently by such scholars as Bennett Reimer, David Elliott, Thomas Regelski, and Wayne Bowman. Such discussions can offer useful insights and exemplars for music historians as we begin to address many of the same educational and pedagogical issues in music history. In “‘Music Appreciation’ as Praxis,” music education philosopher Thomas A. Regelski offers a pedagogical model upon which music history teachers can draw, one of the many (though closely related) praxial philosophies of music education.⁸ He argues that traditional aesthetics privileges disinterested contemplation and music’s autonomy as an aesthetic object, and thus that ‘background’ knowledge and cognitive understanding become the only path to true ‘appreciation.’ Regelski suggests that this ‘fine art’ approach, in divorcing music from everyday life, has created both a musical hierarchy (with ‘pure’ instrumental music at the top, descending to whatever the theorist places lowest on the totem pole) and a notable gap between the public and connoisseurs. While the public continues to view music as an integral part of everyday life, aesthetes have sacralized so-called ‘classical’ music, and the widening gulf has impacted art music far more negatively than it has vernacular musics.⁹ In schools and universities, an aesthetics-based paradigm of “music appreciation as connoisseurship” has emerged, one that focuses on elevating taste and converting students to the sacralized view of music, in part by transmitting the “‘background information’ [supposedly] necessary for understanding and thus appreciating ‘good’ music.”¹⁰ Regelski argues that

6. See Melanie Lowe, “Teaching Music History Today: Making Tangible Connections to Here and Now,” *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 1, no. 1 (2010): 45–59, <http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/17/24>.

7. The intended audience of this essay is one comprised of musicologists, and I do not assume any familiarity with the scholarship of music education. As such, this section presents not a new interpretation, but rather a substantive summary of the philosophical debate that occurred in that field between approximately 1970 and the present. Its purpose is to offer a condensed account of the issues I use later to assess music history pedagogy.

8. Thomas A. Regelski, “‘Music Appreciation’ as Praxis,” *Music Education Research* 8, no. 2 (2006): 281–310.

9. *Ibid.*, 282.

10. *Ibid.*, 291.

this approach has been largely unsuccessful and that classical (or serious art) music has distanced itself from society, as is evidenced by dwindling audiences, struggling opera companies, and so on. Moreover, this has created a need for music education to defend its place in the curriculum in the absence of pragmatic results.¹¹

As an alternative, Regelski offers “music appreciation as praxis,” a model that integrates academic music and practice and emphasizes “mindful use” over cognitive “understanding.”¹² He writes, “a praxial approach to classroom music puts an emphasis on . . . the ‘doing’ of music as an active pursuit where meaning is made, not taught as though it can be found, discovered, or received ready-made.”¹³ Even listening—one of the most physically passive elements of the traditional music appreciation paradigm—“is treated as its own, unique musical praxis.”¹⁴ Thus, as regards school music, “the most important guiding ideal is to facilitate ongoing *amateur praxis*” as a listener and a performer.¹⁵ Accordingly, instructors must focus on fostering functional, *independent musicianship* and should consider carefully the kinds of literature and musical experiences in which each student will most likely engage actively.¹⁶ Regelski also addresses music teaching as professional praxis, suggesting that educators “should be engaged in *making a pragmatic difference* in students’ musical lives, presently and for the future.”¹⁷

Although it is beyond the scope of this article to chronicle in detail the history of music education philosophy in the twentieth century, it is useful to contextualize Regelski’s article within his broader philosophy of music education and its place in that field’s scholarly discourse. The dominant philosophy in music education in North America since World War II has been one that treats music as a source of aesthetic experience and, thus, music education as a species of “aesthetic education.” In the early 1950s, Charles Leonard, Robert House, and others began rethinking the nature and function of music education;¹⁸ they based their philosophy on the aesthetic theories of philosophers like Kant and Hanslick, as well as more modern figures like Susanne Langer and Leonard Meyer.¹⁹ It was not until 1970, however, that Bennett Reimer

11. Regelski, “‘Music Appreciation’ as Praxis,” 291.

12. *Ibid.*, 282.

13. *Ibid.*, 295.

14. *Ibid.*, 295.

15. *Ibid.*, 295. Italics in original.

16. *Ibid.*, 295–6.

17. *Ibid.*, 297. Italics in original.

18. Michael L. Mark, “Public Policy and the Genesis of Aesthetic Education,” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 6, no. 2 (1998): 110 and Charles Leonard, “Music Education—Aesthetic Education,” *Education* 74, no. 9 (1953): 26.

19. Philip Alperson, “What Should One Expect from a Philosophy of Music Education,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 25, no. 3 (1991): 221. See also Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and*

articulated “music education as aesthetic education” (MEAE) as a philosophy: Reimer’s MEAE relied heavily on the disinterested contemplation that accompanies the aesthetic formalist view of art as a collection of ‘works’, but it also focused on music education as the education of feeling and drew on his own interpretation of Dewey’s conception of the aesthetic experience, an interpretation that praxialists have argued is misconstrued.²⁰ For example, Pentti Määttänen demonstrates that Reimer’s characterization of the aesthetic experience as something done for its own sake is essentially at odds with Deweyian pragmatism, which held that thought could not be separated from practice.²¹ Reimer asserted that music education should develop the student’s aesthetic sensitivity to the elements of music and through them gain cognitive insight into human feeling.²² Although he did not advocate strict aesthetic formalism, Reimer nonetheless put music and its so-called intrinsic qualities at the core of music education by identifying rhythm, tone color, texture, and form as the basic ‘concepts’ to be taught; he also proposed that “music of high quality be the main material of study.”²³ That students cannot perform such literature—at least not in its original form or with the artistry necessary to achieve his claimed aesthetic goals—is a problem Reimer has ignored, and one that undermines his approach. School music is rarely a source of such high quality music.

For Reimer, instruction began with a canon of acceptable, appropriate—that is, ‘high quality’—music, which served as the content for study (mainly performance and listening). Students developed technical and cognitive skills in order to understand better what Reimer considered the intrinsic qualities of this music. Then, they might in turn respond to works of art by engaging in performance, criticism, and evaluation, their increased knowledge resulting in a greater appreciation and, thus, more profound ‘aesthetic sensitivity.’ In Reimer’s brand of aesthetic education, the canon, the instructor, and other experts regard truth, knowledge, and value as inhering in ‘works’ of music as aesthetic ‘objects’ that are autonomous and thus free of ‘extra-musical’ variables. These autonomous qualities are also, for the most part, held to be

Form, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1953); Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957); and Leonard Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

20. Alperson, “What Should One Expect from a Philosophy of Music Education?” 227 and Paul Guyer, “History of Modern Aesthetics,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 28.

21. Pentti Määttänen, “Aesthetic experience: A Problem in Praxialism—On the Notion of Aesthetic Experience,” in *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 1, no. 1 (2002): 7.

22. Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 40.

23. Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 40, 133.

objective and universal; that is, timeless, faceless, and placeless.²⁴ In this regard, I see obvious parallels with traditional curriculum and instruction in music history at the post-secondary level.

Reimer's approach was routinely accepted initially, in part because *A Philosophy of Music Education* (1970) was the only published monograph on the subject at the time. Several scholars, however, began to challenge it more systematically in the 1990s, among them philosopher of art Philip Alperson and music education philosopher David Elliott. In his seminal 1991 article "What Should One Expect from a Philosophy of Music Education," Alperson characterized MEAE as an "aesthetic cognitivist" approach that employed an "enhanced version of aesthetic formalism," in which "musical properties and features provide *extramusical* knowledge."²⁵ After challenging these approaches on various philosophical grounds, Alperson, who was at the time the editor of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, suggested a praxial approach as an alternative to strict aesthetic formalism and MEAE. He rejected the idea that music is best understood on the basis of universal features or values, asserting, "the basic aim of a praxial philosophy of music is to understand, from a philosophical point of view, just what music has meant to people," an approach he characterized as "contextual but not relativistic."²⁶

Alperson was certainly not the only scholar dissatisfied with the aesthetic education model. David Elliott challenged Reimer's fundamental definition of art and music, arguing that Reimer had limited the meaning of 'art' to include only 'fine art;' he suggested a broader, more inclusive view of music.²⁷ Elliott also took issue with Reimer's constricted notion that all "music is *a priori* a collection of autonomous aesthetic objects."²⁸ In particular, he disputed Susanne Langer's beliefs that works of fine art are a special kind of presentational symbol through which one can gain cognitive knowledge about the life of feeling and that art education is essentially the education of feeling, tenets central to MEAE.²⁹ In doing so, Elliott attacked not just MEAE, but obliquely the practice of teaching music according to anachronistic, traditional philosophies of education, in particular those grounded Platonic idealism, Aristotelian realism, and Neo-Thomist scholasticism.

24. Although peripheral to the present discussion, Lydia Goehr has provided an illuminating inquiry into how and why the concept of a musical work developed and the impact of that concept. See Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

25. Alperson, "What Should One Expect from a Philosophy of Music Education," 227.

26. *Ibid.*, 233–34.

27. David J. Elliott, "Music Education as Aesthetic Education: A Critical Inquiry," *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* 2 (1991): 49.

28. *Ibid.*, 51.

29. *Ibid.*, 58–9.

Alperson, Elliott, Regelski, and Wayne Bowman have emerged as the most prominent figures advocating praxial approaches to music education, though I am concerned primarily with the praxial philosophies of Elliott and Regelski in the present essay. It would be remiss not to acknowledge, however, Bowman's significant and extensive contributions to the discourse of music education philosophy, particularly regarding issues of ethics and advocacy for music education, praxial music education, and his highly accessible introduction to music philosophy, *Philosophical Perspectives on Music*.³⁰ David Elliott articulated his praxial approach most completely in a 1995 book, *Music Matters*.³¹ Fundamental to Elliott's philosophy of music education was a rethinking of the nature of music itself. Borrowing Alperson's use of the Aristotelian term *praxis*, he too rejected the aesthetic concept of music, defining music not as an aesthetic object but rather as a human endeavor with all the attendant cultural and practice-specific complexities.³² As such, Elliott's philosophy drew ideas from philosophers like John Dewey, Francis Sparshott, and Philip Alperson.³³ He also turned to the work of cognitive scientist Daniel Dennett and psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, suggesting that music's value is tied closely to human consciousness and self-growth. Elliott adopted Csikszentmihalyi's term "optimal experiences," for experiences congruent with one's self-goals, and "flow," for the positive feeling that accompanies "optimal experiences."³⁴ In my reading of Elliott's praxial approach, "music," in all its diverse practices, is fundamentally an autotelic action for self-actualization. Musical praxis, then is a way of effecting flow and, subsequently, self-growth.³⁵ Elliott asserted that music educators must prepare students for

30. Wayne D. Bowman, *Philosophical Perspectives on Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); See also "An Essay Review of Bennett Reimer's *A Philosophy of Music Education*," *The Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1991): 76–87; "Philosophy, Criticism, and Music Education: Some Tentative Steps Down a Less-Travelled Road," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 114 (1992): 1–19; "Universals, Relativism, and Music Education," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 135 (1998): 1–20; "What Should the Music Education Profession Expect of Philosophy?" *Arts and Learning Research* 16, no. 1 (1999): 54–75; "Music Education in Nihilistic Times," *Educational Philosophy and Theory (Journal of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia)*, Special Issue: *The Philosophy of Music Education: Contemporary Perspectives* 37 (2005): 29–46; and "The Limits and Grounds of Musical Praxialism," in *Praxial Music Education: Reflections and Dialogues*, ed. David J. Elliott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 52–78.

31. David J. Elliott, *Music Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 29.

32. *Ibid.*, 91.

33. *Ibid.*, 43.

34. *Ibid.*, 114.

35. J. Scott Goble, "Perspectives on Practice: A Pragmatic Comparison of the Praxial Philosophies of David Elliott and Thomas Regelski," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 11, no. 1 (2003): 27. In this article, Goble provides a lucid and eminently readable assessment of both scholars' philosophies.

musical praxis by inducting them into a variety of authentic musical practices, devoting the later chapters of *Music Matters* to *how* to do so.³⁶ These musical praxes are not limited to performing, but include a full range of 'musicing,' from listening to composing. I propose musicological research of all kinds is rightfully and beneficially included under this umbrella of diverse musical practices. Throughout the text, he affirmed and reaffirmed the centrality of action, authentic experience, and situational context to his praxial philosophy as well as to the belief that the development of knowledge and skills are essentially a means to effective musical praxis, not a matter of music 'for its own sake'. Finally, Elliott recommended that music education programs (of all kinds) serve as "reflective musical practicums" in which students are inducted into the needs of a variety of musical practices.³⁷ I understand Elliott to mean that music education should create systematic, graduated, diverse "optimal experiences" for students to engage in one or more musical praxis.

As J. Scott Goble notes, Regelski had begun to drift away from the traditional, aesthetic education model as early as 1981, when he presented his "action learning" approach to music education in *Teaching General Music*.³⁸ Although I will discuss Regelski's action learning model in more detail later, it is appropriate now to point out that it prioritizes relevance to the student's life and recommends explicitly learning experiences that closely resemble (given a school context) "reasonably realistic real life" musical experiences, thus revealing the pragmatism that is a hallmark of his philosophy.³⁹ Like the other variants of praxialism that have emerged, Regelski's philosophy is rooted in Aristotle's three types of knowledge, *theoria*, *techne*, and *praxis*. He has, however, offered a more systematic consideration of the Aristotelian bases for praxis than did Alpers or Elliott:⁴⁰ To paraphrase Regelski's take on Aristotelian praxis, *theoria* encompasses knowledge created to be contemplated for its own sake (the 'pure' idea), and *techne* refers to the technical "know-how" used to make things (the skill)—including music. Both *theoria* and *techne* are grounded in the question of what one knows or is able to do. But *praxis* is something altogether more complex since praxial knowledge involves people, not mere 'things'. *Praxis* this requires a practitioner to use knowledge and skills appropriately and effectively in a variety of contexts that involve or serve the needs of people—in our case, students and the people (society) they serve. Because praxis engages with people, *phronesis*, a process

36. Elliott, *Music Matters*, 135.

37. Goble, "A Pragmatic Comparison," 29.

38. *Ibid.*, 30.

39. Thomas A. Regelski, *Teaching General Music: Action Learning for Middle and Secondary Schools* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1981), 18.

40. See Thomas A. Regelski, "The Aristotelian Bases of Praxis for Music and Music Education," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 6, no. 1 (1998): 22–59.

of ethical decision-making and action, separates it from the other two types of Aristotelian knowledge.⁴¹ This ethic is central, and is concerned with achieving “right results” for given situation of human need. Moreover, true praxis is also inherently social and undertaken to benefit others, a point on which Aristotle is very clear: “Practical wisdom [phronesis], then, must be a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human goods. But further, while there is such a thing as excellence in art, there is no such thing as excellence in practical wisdom. Plainly, then, practical wisdom is a virtue and not an art.”⁴² One evaluates the ethical and practical results of praxis a by the effects of the action; one finds the “goodness” of medical praxis, for example, in its effect on the patient. Indeed, one finds praxis in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* as a deciding part of his virtue ethics.⁴³

Regelski has laid out his philosophy in a number of scholarly articles, the most comprehensive of which is “A Prolegomenon to a Praxial Philosophy of Music and Music Education.”⁴⁴ For Regelski, music is defined not as an aesthetic object but by its myriad functions in all societies. He argues that a praxial philosophy of music focuses “on the role of music ‘in action’ for ordinary people as a key means by which life is well-lived and ‘made special,’” a concept borrowed from Ellen Dissanayake.⁴⁵ Music’s value is not uniform and transcendental, but rather “it is rooted in the situated and highly specific conditions of the here and now.”⁴⁶ Regelski’s praxialism, not surprisingly, focuses centrally on the question “what is music good for?” His answer goes well beyond that it is ‘for’ contemplation alone. Educationally, music education should produce independent, critically-thinking student-musicians who have the knowledge, skills, and desire to engage in a full range of musical praxes, at least as actively ‘serious’ amateurs. Teachers and students are practitioners who, like doctors and lawyers, seek not an absolute solution, but rather the best solution in a given context. This is not conducive to the instructor-centered lecture model, which emphasizes—often out of necessity—a passive, corporate experience over active, individualized experience, and that presupposes the inherent value of instruction, not its *utility* to the each student.

41. Thomas A. Regelski, “A Prolegomenon to a Praxial Theory of Music and Music Education,” *Canadian Music Educator* 38 (1997): 44. See also Regelski, “The Aristotelian Bases of Praxis.” As prolegomenon, it laid out a research plan that was followed up by a series that focused on details mentioned only generally in it.

42. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, trans. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 1027.

43. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI, *passim*.

44. Regelski, “A Prolegomenon to a Praxial Philosophy,” 43–51.

45. *Ibid.*, 44. See also Ellen Dissanayake, *What is Art For?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988) and Ellen Dissanayake, *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

46. Regelski, “A Prolegomenon to a Praxial Philosophy,” 44.

While Goble suggests that Elliott and Regelski seem to agree that music is a universal human trait and both clearly reject the aesthetic philosophy advocated by Reimer and others, he also identified fundamental differences in their praxial approaches.⁴⁷ For example, where Regelski has emphasized music's pragmatic value as part of "a life well lived,"⁴⁸ Elliott has privileged the concept of self-growth. Regelski himself also provided a critique of Elliott's philosophy that detailed several points of divergence in their respective approaches.⁴⁹ In general, Regelski urged Elliott to broaden the scope of his philosophy beyond musical performance and self-growth and to align the curriculum even more closely with facilitating lifelong musical praxis.⁵⁰

Most recently, Regelski has articulated his philosophy further in challenging that Alperson's "robust praxialism"—i.e., that aesthetic 'properties' account for the effectiveness of any musical practice—is predicated on the erroneous notion that "music's praxial appeal depends on its aesthetic essence."⁵¹ He also reaffirmed that praxialism is not a species of aesthetic education but is based on fundamentally different premises, one that "offers a distinct and highly pragmatic alternative."⁵² Regelski argued that Alperson fails to define clearly the aesthetic properties, qualities, or experiences essential to robust praxialism, attacking Alperson's constantly shifting meaning of "aesthetic" for exhibiting the *fallacy of equivocation*.⁵³ To Alperson's accusation that Regelski, Elliott, and Bowman had taken an "anti-aesthetic turn," Regelski responded, "praxial theories simply dispense with aesthetic theorizing as a necessary or useful basis for valuing music and musical experience and as a rationale for music education."⁵⁴ He also revisited the benefits praxial theories hold for music and music education, chief among them its direct practical application to both music and to teaching.⁵⁵ Finally, Regelski concluded that "praxial theories of music and music education not only do not need aesthetic speculations to be robust, they are vastly more robust without them"⁵⁶ because music and teaching it are more 'down to earth' than the speculative rationalism of aesthetic metaphysics. While music education has

47. Goble, "A Pragmatic Comparison," 34.

48. Regelski, "A Prolegomenon to a Praxial Philosophy," 44.

49. Regelski, "Accounting for All Praxis: An Essay Critique of David Elliott's *Music Matters*," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 144 (2000): 61–88.

50. *Ibid.*, 83.

51. See Thomas A. Regelski, Response to Philip Alperson, 'Robust Praxialism and the Anti-Aesthetic Turn,' *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 18, no. 2 (2010): 196–203.

52. Thomas A. Regelski, "Praxialism and 'Aesthetic This, Aesthetic That, Aesthetic Whatever,'" *Action Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 10, no. 2 (2011): 63.

53. Regelski, "Praxialism and 'Aesthetic This, Aesthetic That,'" 63. Italics in original.

54. *Ibid.*, 63–4.

55. *Ibid.*, 81.

56. *Ibid.*, 82.

moved beyond the simple dichotomy of “aesthetic” and “praxial” approaches and it is no longer appropriate to frame the discussion of music education as such, significant and irreconcilable differences remain nonetheless.

Like Elliott, Regelski was concerned with the professional praxis of teaching music in addition to issues of curriculum and instruction. Shortly after *Music Matters* appeared, Regelski proposed an approach to curriculum evaluation grounded in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, in particular Jürgen Habermas, one that may be applied as a corollary to Elliot’s prescription for self-critique in *Music Matters*.⁵⁷ Among other attributes of critical theory, he advocated using *immanent critique* as⁵⁸ a process for evaluating music teaching and argued that critical theory will expose *legitimation crises* in the field.⁵⁹ Most importantly, Regelski adopted critical theory’s view of rationality as freedom and its treatment of taken-for-granted practices and paradigms as warning flags in need of rigorous critique.⁶⁰ As examples of “warning flags” in music education, he identified strict methodologies in music education like Orff, Kodaly, and Suzuki programs, as well as MEAE. One might find parallels in music history pedagogy not only in the use of canonical works but also in textbooks, curricular organization, and so on. Combining Elliott’s mandate for self-actualization through musicianship skills suited to particular practices with Regelski’s critical methodology results in a reflective process that demands of instructors a rigorous critique of their own teaching and curriculum, assessing the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction in a way that encourages thoughtful adaptability and guards against complacency. This willingness to assess and change constantly appears common among praxial philosophies, but it is particularly emphasized in Regelski’s approach. Indeed, Regelski cautions strongly and explicitly against an overdependence on prescriptive, recipe-like methods (what he calls “methodolatry”) that provide an excuse for poor teaching, and that allow

57. See Elliott, *Music Matters*, 290; Thomas A. Regelski, “Critical Theory as a Foundation for Critical Thinking in Music Education,” *Studies in Music from the University of Western Ontario* 17 (1998): 1–21.

58. Immanent critique uses the claims made by an ideology, institution, or practice as the criteria by which its success and pragmatic relevance are judged.

59. Regelski, “Critical Theory as a Foundation for Critical Thinking,” 7–8. Italicized terms are those Regelski appropriated from the Frankfurt School’s social critiques. A legitimation crisis arises when the claims made by an institution or ideology are clearly unfulfilled, thus requiring ‘legitimation’—in effect, advocacy or advertising of its virtues in the absence of unequivocal evidence of pragmatic benefits. One might suggest via immanent critique that the claims of the benefits of music history teaching often remain unfulfilled because they are often not formulated or evaluated in pragmatic terms.

60. *Ibid.*, 11.

teachers to focus blame on the student who has not learned 'the material'.⁶¹ Overall, this process aims to provide consistently effective and meaningful instruction, as well as adaptable and highly self-reflective instructors.

Musicology as Musical Praxis

Regelski's ideas about musical praxis are consistent with both musicology's increasing emphasis on cultural context (the application of diverse methodological models and broadening concepts of music's nature) and also emerging developments in the philosophy of music history pedagogy (what we should teach of music history, how we should teach it, and to whom). Moreover, we must reflect critically on the uses of music history as praxis: *Why* do we teach music history? In Regelski's praxial sense, what is it good for? To what degree, if at all, have its claimed 'goods' been attained in pragmatic, praxial terms; i.e., able to be used to inform students future musical practices? Addressing the ethical dimension more specifically, whom does teaching music history benefit and how? Musicology and the study of music history (and its pedagogy) are fundamentally musical praxes because they fall under praxial theory's inclusive umbrella of "diverse musical practices." As such, I suggest that the paradigm shift over the last decades in music education philosophy provides an effective and appropriate framework with which to examine the teaching of music history, one that might encourage a separate, more systematic literature investigating the philosophies of music history pedagogy. Although related pedagogically to models from general history and other humanities, music history curricula are linked fundamentally and uniquely to the primary content area, music, with all its concomitant philosophical baggage. For example, the essay collection *The New World History: A Teacher's Companion* does address issues such as the philosophy of history and philosophical approaches to teaching history at the college level, but integrating music substantively and centrally into the discussion is—understandably—beyond its scope.⁶² *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods* deals primarily, as its title makes explicit, with instructional methods and assessment mechanisms, many of which music history instructors may find useful.⁶³ It does not, however, address music as the primary content area.

61. "Methodolatry" is a term coined by Tom Regelski to label (derisively) the practice of teachers becoming dependent on specific methods and equating good teaching with adherence to a given method. See Thomas A. Regelski, "On 'Methodolatry' and Music Teaching as Critical and Reflective Praxis," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 10, no. 2 (2002): 102–23.

62. Ross E. Dunn, ed., *The New World History: A Teacher's Companion* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000).

63. See *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods* (Emporia, KS: Emporia State University, 1976–).

I suggest also that “methodolatry” based on aesthetic formalist assumptions has long permeated music history pedagogy at the post-secondary level. Music history as such thus lends itself all too well to the paradigm of the lecture. Similarly, paper and pencil assessment (not assessment of relevance to praxis) is relatively straightforward, making it an easy process to apply in the college classroom. Moreover, the traditional philosophies of education on which the university lecture model is based are grounded in Platonic idealism (i.e., that “ideas” are real and of the greatest educational value), Aristotelian realism (i.e. the ‘form’ of ‘things, and orderly ‘facts’ about ‘things’ constitute proper knowledge), and the neo-scholasticism (i.e. that knowledge comes not from empirical experience but from reason) of philosophers like Aquinas. Although distinct philosophies, they all hold that truth, knowledge, beauty, and value are *a priori* concepts, ‘out there’ for students to discover or teachers to convey to the students’ minds as vessels to be filled. I argue, then, that although history and culture have long been incorporated into curriculum and instruction, aesthetic formalism and other traditional philosophies have formed the basis for the college music history paradigm, emphasizing form, structure, biography, the so-called ‘great works’ of music, ‘great’ composers, and so on. One has only to look at chapter titles of standard music history textbooks to see this kind of emphasis, be it a focus on aesthetic formalism (“Musical Taste and Style in the Enlightenment” and “Romanticism in Classic Forms: Orchestral, Chamber, and Choral Music”)⁶⁴ or great masters (“Class of 1685 [I]: The Instrumental Music of Bach and Handel” and simply “Beethoven”).⁶⁵ This focus on canonical works and composers also reflects an affinity with the educational perennialism of Robert M. Hutchins, Mortimer J. Adler, and others.⁶⁶ For perennialists, truth is permanent and constant, and education should pass on this knowledge—which has stood the test of time—to the next generation. This position, like other traditionalist approaches, does not account for changing performance practices, audience praxis, and the constantly evolving spectrum of musical experiences.

Certainly, many music appreciation and other generalist music courses at the college level confuse (or equate) understanding with appreciation (viz., the styles, forms, structures, and other objective elements that one must know to

64. J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), viii, ix.

65. Richard Taruskin and Christopher H. Gibbs, *The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), ix, xi.

66. See Robert M. Hutchins, *The Learning Society* (New York: New American Library, 1968); Mortimer J. Adler, “The Crisis in Contemporary Education,” in *The Social Frontier* 5, no. 42 (1939): 140–45; and Mortimer J. Adler, “In Defense of the Philosophy of Education,” in *The Forty-first Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Forty-first Yearbook, Part I: Philosophies of Education*, ed. Nelson B. Henry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942): 197–249.

'appreciate' music 'properly') by focusing exclusively on the 'pure' value of music and the contemplative experience so dear to aesthetic formalism and its relatives.⁶⁷ For their part, traditional music history courses usually center on canonical works and composers, and the formal and stylistic elements of music and their historical 'development' often occupy a prominent place in daily lectures. Given the importance of music's socio-historical context in the music history curriculum, strict aesthetic formalism is out of the question because musicology as a discipline privileges such contexts, minimizing the autonomous nature of the musical work as aesthetic object. The "enhanced" aesthetic formalism of MEAE that focuses on expression and the like has certainly been a useable philosophy, though, at least in part. Even in canonizing a work as 'historically important,' one often details its importance in terms of its inherent qualities; i.e., the formal or stylistic boundaries a work or a composer inherits and stretches. For example, one notes the importance of the "Tristan chord" or serialism not for what they reveal about the cultural milieu of their time but for intrinsic qualities rooted in aesthetic formalism: The "Tristan chord" stretches the limits of functional harmony; serialism imposes new structural principles on the organization of pitch, rhythm, and other intrinsic elements of music. Despite the inclusion of historical and cultural context, then, the current standard of music history pedagogy is nonetheless grounded, like Reimer's MEAE, in perennialist philosophies of education, from its focus on the canon and 'masterworks' to its encouragement of disinterested, intellectual, contemplative engagement. Furthermore, given MEAE's prevalence in North American music education, today's university music students and their instructors are generally products of elementary and secondary school music programs grounded in this philosophy.⁶⁸

Musicology and Music History Pedagogy as Musical Praxis

Traditional perspectives and issues of basic history, musical style, and so on will always play a role in music history curricula, but I will admit openly that I see these as means to different ends, serving a different range of 'good fors'. As such, I favor a praxial approach to teaching music history, one that draws heavily on Regelski's praxialism. As Regelski, Bowman, Elliott, and others have shown, music educators, despite their best efforts, have not reconciled many of the differences between aesthetic and praxial approaches. Music history pedagogy has not yet been considered from this perspective; a dedicated, systematic philosophy for teaching music history remains unarticulated.

67. See Regelski, "'Music Appreciation' as Praxis," 281.

68. Thomas A. Regelski, "Curriculum: Implications of Aesthetic versus Praxial Philosophies," in *Praxial Music Education: Reflections and Dialogues*, ed. David J. Elliott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 221.

Again, although the emerging literature on the subject, referenced above, has certainly contributed significantly to the discourse on teaching music history, it has most often addressed more focused or individual issues than overall philosophy of pedagogy.

The traditional paradigm of music history pedagogy suffers from systemic flaws, chief among them a predication on “objective” truth and meaning, despite the diversity of methodologies found in musicology. Kevin Korsyn, for example, addressed this issue in a pointed critique of musical research, identifying a “crisis of discourse” dominated by the discipline’s paradoxical statuses as a “Tower of Babel” and a “Ministry of Truth.”⁶⁹ Essentially, Korsyn argued, in part, that the various subdisciplines and methodologies of music research have become so specialized that they cannot communicate effectively with each other. At the same time, though, each one pushes its adherents toward “increasing uniformity,” which I suggest belies a predisposition for universals.⁷⁰ Indeed, to privilege canonical works, methodologies, and concepts is to acknowledge the existence of objectively ‘good’ music and universal meaning. Musicology itself has maintained deep roots in aesthetic formalism and philosophies with absolute and objective conceptions of metaphysics and epistemology, respectively; this fundamental underpinning has become the taken-for-granted foundation for teaching music history. In *Contemplating Music’s* call to a “musicology oriented towards criticism,” Joseph Kerman exposes even new musicology’s entrenched belief in objective truth and music’s intrinsic value as an aesthetic object, defining criticism as “the study of the meaning and value of art works.”⁷¹ Kerman argues further for theory and analysis as a mode of “formalistic criticism;” he cautions against losing touch with “the aesthetic core of music, which is the subject matter of criticism.”⁷² Kerman supports analysis largely because it focuses on the individual work itself as art to be contemplated for its own sake. He even suggests that musicologists gravitate toward analysis “because of a commitment to music as aesthetic experience, and when tasks of a merely mechanical or detective nature begin to dissatisfy them,” reasoning that “it is natural for them to look across the street, as it were, to a discipline which promises closer engagement with the music.”⁷³ Offering Lewis Lockwood’s approach to studying Beethoven as an example of musicology oriented towards criticism, he characterizes Lockwood’s methodology as such because it focuses on “the musicologist’s

69. Kevin Korsyn, *Decentering Music: A Critique of Contemporary Music Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 25; *passim*.

70. *Ibid.*, 6, 25.

71. Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 16.

72. *Ibid.*, 18–19.

73. *Ibid.*, 115.

concept of and response to the work of art as art, and towards the composer's own self-criticism."⁷⁴ Kerman's concepts of music and musicology were highly influential in the discipline and are strikingly similar to MEAE's basic views on music and music education, even using the same catchwords of "aesthetic experience," "response to the work of art," and "criticism."

If one accepts the now-dogmatic view that *Contemplating Music* was, as Philip Brett called it, a "defining moment in the field" of musicology, one must also acknowledge that it had a similar impact on the teaching of music history, one of the musicologist's primary responsibilities.⁷⁵ Certainly music history instructors strive to represent the discipline and its praxes as accurately as possible in the classroom, rather than simply to repeat the findings of other musicologists; major changes in musicology have influenced music history pedagogy significantly. Musicology has changed drastically, though, since Manfred Bukofzer asserted "the description of the origin and development of styles, their interrelation, their transfer from one medium to another, is the central task of musicology,"⁷⁶ but music history pedagogy, with its focus on the period and style survey, remains stuck—at least partially—in this past. Traditional models of teaching music history, then, determine the value of music education and music history education in terms of the assumed, inherent "nature and value" of music" as essentially and "purely" aesthetic.⁷⁷ Again, this presupposes objective truths and values grounded in aesthetic formalism and in traditional—idealist, realist, neo-scholastic, and perennialist—philosophies of art and of education. From the Platonic ideal to the 'great works' of perennialism, traditional educational philosophies all rely to varying degrees and in varying ways on the existence of universal, pre-existent knowledge. Moreover, music history's value to an institution's broader curriculum is taken for granted, but is not substantiated by reflection on its actual pragmatic value for students. Value is somehow implicit and it is expected that the student will simply accept this view. These beliefs drive not only curriculum, but also all subsequent educational operations, namely instruction and assessment. Although traditional philosophies underpin the traditional and prevalent curricular and instructional models of music history, the emergence of pragmatism and existentialism and the application of contemporary philosophy

74. Kerman, *Contemplating Music*, 141.

75. Philip Brett, "Kerman, Joseph," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/14914> (accessed May 14, 2012).

76. Manfred Bukofzer, *The Place of Musicology in American Institutions of Higher Learning* (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1957), 31.

77. Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education: Advancing the Vision*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), xi. I cite the third and most recent edition of Reimer's text here to show that this belief has remained consistent throughout three decades of Reimer's revisions.

and sociology (e.g. Pierre Bourdieu) to educational theory undermines them and renders them ineffectual. By examining curriculum, instruction, and assessment in turn, I argue that a philosophy of music history pedagogy based on praxial approaches to music education is not only sound philosophically and effective pedagogically, but also more relevant, and thus has more value to twenty-first century students than one based in traditional practices.

So, why do we teach music history as part of a core curriculum for college music majors in a variety of specializations? What is music history ‘good for,’ as the praxialist will ask? One finds the musicology community’s explanation in most of the textbooks used in music history surveys at the university level, most often answering the question from the student’s perspective of “why should I, as a college music student, study music history?” In the most recent edition of *A History of Western Music*, for example, J. Peter Burkholder declares “we study music history because it gives greater understanding to all music, past and present” and affirms that much of the book “explores changing musical styles, the primary composers, genres, and works, and the tension between innovation and tradition, always trying to make clear what is important, where it fits, why it matters, and who cares.”⁷⁸ Barbara Hanning echoes this sentiment in her condensed version of Grout/Palisca/Burkholder’s book, writing, “we study music history because in music, as in all other realms of human endeavor, the past influences and informs the present.”⁷⁹ She goes on to tell us that by studying music history, we will become better listeners and that our “deepened understanding will also increase the pleasure we derive from hearing and performing the music that we do.”⁸⁰ Both authors address music’s role in society throughout, but it is telling that this appears not as a primary reason but rather after acknowledging, however implicitly, the value of “understanding” more deeply “music” as an autonomous, aesthetic object. Moreover, these represent the latest editions of both texts, published in 2009. While Douglass Seaton’s preface to the third and most recent edition (also 2009) of *Ideas and Styles in the Western Musical Tradition* presents a more nuanced view of music history’s nature and purposes, it remains rooted in an aesthetic conception of music. For example, pledging to “[let] the musical styles speak for themselves” and the assertion that “music embodies and reflects the *epistemological* underpinnings of the culture in which composers created it” recalls both Bukofzer’s emphasis on musical style and the Langerian view that music is a special kind of presentational symbol

78. Burkholder et al., *A History of Western Music*, xxiii–xxiv.

79. Barbara Russano Hanning, *A Concise History of Western Music*, 4th ed. (New York: Norton, 2009), xxvi.

80. *Ibid.*, xxvii.

of states of feeling.⁸¹ Among the benefits Seaton articulates for studying music history is the idea that “listeners will hear more sensitively and alertly when they enrich their understanding with the knowledge of the social contexts and philosophical ideas from which the music arose.”⁸² It is worth noting here that Seaton goes to considerable lengths to avoid a traditional style survey, putting context and culture on an equal footing with the aesthetic object “music.” Nonetheless, he, Burkholder, and Hanning, all of whose views I argue represent the prevailing justification and advocacy for teaching music history at the university level, have grounded their reasons firmly in the principles of music as aesthetic in its essential nature and thus as oriented to aesthetic education. In doing so, the traditional paradigm of music history pedagogy privileges contemplative, informed understanding as a means to appreciate properly autonomous works of music whose value is taken for granted and universal.⁸³ Correspondingly, it ignores the actual ‘use’ value of all forms of music—classical and otherwise—and, thus, the ‘use’ value of musical history knowledge to the various practices of different musical professions.

Curriculum

The curricula instructors and departments design for each course is the most direct way to express the conception of music history as praxis. Essentially, curriculum is a set of agreements about what should be taught, what is worth knowing, what is worth teaching.⁸⁴ It reflects substantively the—often taken for granted—metaphysical, epistemological and other beliefs of its creators, and in the teaching of music history, it seems, truth, reality and knowledge are primarily treated as predetermined concepts and ideas to be “conveyed” to students most efficiently and effectively. Traditional undergraduate music history curricula are built, more or less, around various survey-style lecture courses, the content spanning one or more historical periods and often organized chronologically. Indeed, even an informal glance at institutional websites and catalogs reveals that the chronological survey is alive and well in major universities, small colleges, and conservatories.⁸⁵ As I have outlined

81. Douglass Seaton, *Ideas and Styles in the Western Musical Tradition*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xvii. Italics in original

82. *Ibid.*, xviii.

83. See Regelski, “‘Music Appreciation’ as Praxis,” 281.

84. For a recent discussion of the general education curriculum in American universities, for instance, see Louis Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University* (New York: Norton, 2010).

85. For example, *inter alia*, Bowling Green State University, Brandon University, Heidelberg College, Harvard University, Indiana University, Ithaca College, The Juilliard School, Lawrence University, Ohio State University, Pomona College, State University of New York campuses at Fredonia and Potsdam, University of California, Santa Barbara, University of

above, the curricular approach to music history is similar to traditional music appreciation courses, except in greater scope and detail. Its content usually includes varying parts biography, history, and stylistic analysis of important techniques, 'major' compositions, and so on. Curricular authority rests primarily with the instructor, who chooses what topics, knowledge, and skills are important to 'impart' to students. Additionally, the instructor is responsible for choosing the course texts, which become authoritative Bibles of sorts, contributing to what Lawrence Levine has called the "sacralization" of music and what I like to call the 'canonization of the canon.'⁸⁶ This model assumes certain unreasonable universals: First, it presupposes that the instructor knows without consulting the student what is 'right,' 'good,' or useful for the student to know. Second, it assumes that the same content is equally valuable for all students in a given course, however diverse their interests and eventual musical and professional needs. For example, the premise that all students benefit equally from a survey of medieval and Renaissance music or from identifying the structural expansions of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5* is akin to the argument that masterworks are intrinsically valuable to everyone because of their internal structural qualities and because they have stood the test of time, having long been a part of the repertoire (or music history curriculum). Because students enter the classroom with different needs and backgrounds, however, how can one predetermine what is good for all students, especially before even having met them? Surely the answer is not some standardized, average version of what it takes to be labeled a "musician." Furthermore, given the diversity among students' experiences and goals, how can an instructor purport reasonably to assume that a student studying violin performance has the same academic and musical needs (or interests) as a saxophonist studying music education? It is implicit that the instructor's knowledge, training, and experience justify that authority and the need for student submission to it, at least in accepting the course content as 'true' and 'good.' Instructors and their choices, then, determine the value of the curriculum. Yet again, this exposes the traditional curricular model's reliance on philosophically (and educationally) outmoded ideas of absolute value.

Michigan, University of Texas, and Washington College all employ some form of chronological survey of Western music as an integral part (if not all) of their music history core curricula. Again, this information was obtained through the websites and official catalogs of the institutions named (15 May 2012).

86. Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), passim. In particular, see "Chapter 2: The Sacralization of Culture." See also Vesa Kurkela and Lauri Vakeva, eds., *De-Canonizing Music History* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009); Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman, eds. *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

What if one rejects the traditional reasons for studying music history and the idea that there is a 'correct' and 'fixed' curriculum that professors should dictate unequivocally to their students concerning what knowledge and skills are valuable? Well, for one thing, the traditional paradigm, with its 'one-size-fits-all' approach to curriculum, is no longer efficacious because it does not allow for highly individualized curricula based on a student's particular needs. Similarly, the lecture is no longer the most effective mode of instruction, though it is sometimes the most adopted given practical constraints. Truth, reality, knowledge, and value are not universal but rather are, for today's "constructivism," developed by learners through their individual experience.⁸⁷ In order to learn a concept, then, the learner must experience it in action because knowledge is *constructed* through active experience in the given environment. The traditional approach, however, is predicated on the outdated concept that instructor's task is to transmit pre-existent knowledge of pre-determined, universal value to the student, who is an empty vessel or bank vault waiting to be filled with it. These ideas and their implications for curriculum, instruction, and assessment are certainly not new in general education. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* appeared well over three decades ago. In it, he criticized what he called the "banking model" of education, an approach that considers knowledge "a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing."⁸⁸ Around the same time as Regelski and others were challenging MEAE, Robert Barr and John Tagg challenged the "instruction paradigm" of undergraduate education, calling for an end to the "privileged position" of the lecture, which they acknowledged as the primary learning environment for undergraduate students.⁸⁹ They argued instead for a "learning paradigm," one in which colleges strive "to create environments that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves."⁹⁰ Again, while these fundamental concepts are not new, it is worth considering them specifically in the context of music history pedagogy in a more intensive way than has yet been done, and Regelski's music education philosophy provides an effective way to begin.

87. In social psychology, the basic premise of "constructivism" is that knowledge is not transmitted, but rather that it is constructed through the learner's actions with the materials to be learned, using the skills to be developed. See, for example, John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York and London: Continuum, 2000).

88. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 72.

89. Robert B. Barr and John Tagg, "From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education," *Change* 27, no. 6 (1995): 13.

90. *Ibid.*, 15.

We must ask the question again, then: Why teach music history? Approaching it from Regelski's perspective, "what is music history good for?" Building on Elliott and Regelski's rethinking of "music," I argue that the music history we teach is not the content (facts, style features, etc.), though we may regard them as *theoria* and *techne* learned through musicological *praxis*. Rather, musicology encompasses many of the "diverse musical practices" that Elliott, Regelski, Alperson, and others have argued constitutes "music." For music history pedagogy, one may view Elliott's focus on self-growth and Regelski's emphasis on pragmatic, 'real world' benefits as equally important drivers of curriculum and instruction. Studying music history, then, should be good for "self-growth." Using Csikszentmihalyi's terminology, it offers the student "optimal experiences" that are challenging and that effect "flow." One might even argue that, because self-actualization represents the highest of human needs, self-growth is justification enough for music history's place in any curriculum. Studying music history should also be pragmatic, though: As a result, the student should be able to engage more effectively in musical *praxis* outside the classroom than was possible before studying music history. Put simply, we teach music history so students can self-actualize and so they can engage more effectively in musical *praxis*, and instructors have an ethical obligation to make educational decisions with those ends in mind. Effective concepts are learned and retained as concepts-in-action, not simply in short-term verbal memory.

A praxial music history curriculum, then, is based not on what students should *know*, but rather on what they *can do* (differently, better, more often, or with more satisfaction) as a result of studying music history. I suggest not a curriculum of music history as content (verbal) knowledge, but rather something fundamentally different: a curriculum of musicology as musical *praxis*. In doing so, one may offer an alternative to the traditional view of curriculum in seeking to engage the student as practitioner. While students may not be 'exposed' to as much of the 'content' present in the traditional music history survey, they will instead have the skills to seek out that content and apply it appropriately when they need or want to do so.

While traditional approaches to teaching music history focus—as most traditional educational philosophies do—on the subject matter, a praxial philosophy of music history pedagogy puts students and their musical and professional (and personal) needs and interests at the center of the curriculum. Knowledge and value are not absolute or guaranteed; each student must create or construct them. Such an approach privileges student interests and freedom of choice at the expense of focusing on more restrictive models organized by subject matter. Consider the following example: Using "Baroque music" as a bounded content area, one might organize the curriculum around any number of hypothetical problems or emergent issues in musicology

instead of a chronological or topical schedule. After beginning with an analytic critique of the idea of "Baroqueness" itself (how the concept originated and how it has been applied to composers, musical styles, and other art forms) one might use the problem of characterizing the size and composition of Bach's chorus and orchestra as a point of entry to address issues ranging from Baroque style to information literacy and research skills. The knowledge and skills a student gains through the experience may not match that of another student in the same class, and both students may assign different value to the enterprise than would the instructor, but this is immaterial. Students construct knowledge, and subsequently value, through active experience; they determine the nature of that knowledge and its value by their own praxis.

Admittedly, such an approach may be an uncomfortable curricular model for teachers. We are used to playing the dominant role in choosing most, if not all, of the content that is important to a given curriculum. Indeed, that is the system in which we trained and the one in which we currently teach. Bearing in mind Regelski's pragmatic, individualized focus, the newly proposed praxial approach requires much more than simply letting students choose their own course content. Rather, for this approach to succeed the instructor must serve actively as advisor, facilitator, and guide. Curriculum is student centered, not a free-for-all; it is not the curricular equivalent of the 'choose-your-own-adventure' books that were so popular during my childhood. Nonetheless, students must play an active role in deciding what is worth learning *to them*, albeit with the instructor's structuring of the learning opportunities. Within standards and parameters set by the university, accrediting agencies, departments, and instructors, both professors and students work together in determining appropriate outcomes and beneficial courses of action. For this model to be effective, students must acknowledge the instructor's expertise and experience as one might another practitioner, as in law or medicine. Like a lawyer or medical doctor, the instructor has an ethical obligation to provide appropriate structure and pedagogical support in setting and achieving 'right results.' It is important to distinguish here between "authoritative"—where students meet their needs and goals via the instructor's authority with the knowledge and—"authoritarian," where students have no choice, no needs, no goals of their own. Moreover, the instructor should be able to explain the reasons for prescribing certain courses of action and requirements. For example, my advanced pre-college music history class spends two classes each fall on a unit titled "If you play Bach backwards" Using excerpts selected by both myself and the students (often works they have prepared in studio instruction), we trace historical influences on Bach's music, among them dance forms, the Lutheran chorale, Renaissance polyphony, the North German organ school, Italian concerto principles, and so on. The unit finishes with a discussion about (and sometimes a performance

illustrating) how the students might apply their newfound knowledge and perspectives, making independent decisions about performance practice and interpretation. Again, the students rely on the instructor's experience but they are, in any case, also entitled to a carefully considered rationale from the instructor regarding *why* this is included in the curriculum and *how* it can be relevant to them.

Instructors will certainly need to experiment with the practicalities of collaborative curriculum design, from initial surveys to individual consultations. Introductory courses might begin with a relatively uniform curriculum that offers students limited input. Instructors may design a variety of assignments that meet the same general objectives, each which are geared toward various specializations within the undergraduate curriculum. Students, with the instructor's guidance, choose the assignment that best fits their instructional and future professional needs, or interests. The instructor can be confident that relatively uniform curricular goals are being addressed, and the students know that that the assignment is in some sense relevant. Moreover, by engaging the student in the process, the locus of control—and the responsibility for success or failure—has been transferred to the student.

More advanced courses, which often feature lower enrollment numbers, offer more flexibility for innovation. The instructor might construct a general, basic framework of goals and common assignments and devote the first class meeting to engaging the students in formulating their own learning plan for meeting those goals. I suggest first being completely forthright and open about accreditation requirements, internal guidelines, and the instructor's own standards. The ensuing activities might include discussions involving the entire class, small "focus groups" that address a different issues or plan a topical units, etc. Students can be assigned to research appropriate readings, design worthwhile activities, and so on, presenting them at the next class meeting, at which the class will establish a specific plan for the course. Again, the instructors would serve as facilitators and advisors, suggesting readings and activities based on their experience, expertise, and the parameters outlined for the course. Indeed, it is easy enough to prepare a relatively extensive list of suggested readings from which the students may craft a more focused selection that is relevant for them and which meets the instructor's requirements. While there are innumerable ways of individualizing curriculum, from class-centered projects to individualized educational plans, engaging students as agents of their own education fosters intrinsic motivation, empowers them, and renders the curriculum relevant, individually and collectively. Making curriculum—not simply instruction—student centered requires a fundamental paradigm shift, an essential one if musicology as *praxis* is to be effective as a pedagogical model.

Instruction

Considering musicological praxis as a foundation for the music history classroom can also transform the methodologies of instruction. Turning to instructional models for music history, traditional ones are overwhelmingly passive and abstract, the quintessential 'ivory tower' experience (and I mean that negatively). Predicated on 'received' knowledge and meaning, instruction focuses on the transmission of this otherwise inert knowledge from the mind of the instructor (or text author) to the student. The primary modes of instruction are verbal-linguistic and auditory, taking the form of lecture, reading, listening, and so on. There is perhaps no educational experience more passive than the traditional lecture, a mode in which the student is responsible for almost nothing more than attendance and attention (or the appearance thereof). It is the instructor's responsibility to choose and transmit the stipulated course content, removing the student's agency and reinforcing the instructor as the gatekeeper and arbiter of knowledge. This stands in opposition to the more transformative approaches offered by critical theory, pragmatism, and existentialism, which aim to "use the past, in the present, to transform the future."⁹¹ I do not mean to suggest that a lecture cannot be completely engaging and promote active learning; we have all heard (and hopefully given) such lectures. I have in mind, though, some of the music history lectures to which I was subjected as an undergraduate, in which the sole purpose seemed to be the transfer of inert data. Although certainly not as common as it once was, I would argue that this approach is still used, and perhaps more often than we care to admit. While reading assignments are somewhat more active for students, the premise often remains the same as a lecture: to fill the student's mind with carefully selected, 'given' knowledge. The traditional approach's epistemological and axiological weaknesses (like MEAE's) appear most clearly, however, in the disembodied listening experience associated with "music history and literature," which centers on the identification of formal and stylistic features of "masterworks" whose significance to the intellectual community (and by proxy to the student) has been preordained. Again, the instructor has assessed both the knowledge to be transmitted and has assumed its value, both of which are regarded as absolute and universal, at least insofar as concerns the educational experience. Differences between instructors, texts, and the like are either ignored or written off under the aegis of 'academic freedom.'

Even traditional writing assignments are problematic. In addressing student writing (e.g., research papers) as instruction—that is, as formative assessments and learning experiences—one must confront their neo-scholastic

91. Personal communication with Thomas Regelski, January 4, 2013.

underpinning. The instructor assumes what is best for the student, and indeed for all students in the class; namely, that they should develop the ability to construct rational arguments by assembling available evidence, to summarize a given position, and so on. While we may acknowledge that these exercises are valuable to the student's intellectual growth the actual value to students interests and personal and professional needs too often make these assignments irrelevant for both the short- and long-term. So, in examining traditional instructional models in the music history classroom, similar problems exist to those in traditional music history curricula, among them the assumption of fund of accumulated knowledge and universal value, and the irrelevance of student agency. Traditional modes of instruction are perhaps even more problematic because they are passive precisely when the student should be most active, when *learning* should occur.

Recalling Regelski's emphasis on pragmatic, 'real world' benefits, instruction should replicate authentic musicological praxis, allowing students to transfer knowledge from the classroom into the 'real world' of their professional and personal musical needs in the future. The study of music history should aim to produce students who have not only the skills and knowledge to use their learning independently of teachers (e.g., 'on the job'), but also the desire to do so. The value of the subject and its instruction rests with individual students; instruction is deemed meaningful and productive to the degree it is relevant to them outside the classroom, whether for its utilitarian benefits or its role in self-growth. While growth as a comprehensively prepared musician may be a primary goal for instruction, I suggest here that it is important to acknowledge that the music history (or any) classroom is a place for an infinite variety of self-growth experiences, many of which are unrelated to the primary content area (i.e. general critical thinking skills, effective time management, and self-confidence, just to name a few). In stark contrast to the traditional lecture-based course, the bulk of instruction should engage students in activities that resemble 'real life' needs for music history and that are useful in key ways outside the classroom. In doing so, we may remove many of the axiological problems present in traditional instructional models, rejecting the idea of objective, universal, 'pure' value and replacing it with pragmatic value construed by the student as a result of experience and need. Because knowledge is constructed, not 'given' as predetermined (by the instructor, the text, the discipline), active experience is central to instruction on both epistemological and axiological grounds; for students to be motivated intrinsically, they must find value in instructional activities.

Unlike the passivity of the lecture, the praxial classroom focuses on action. In this context, action (as opposed to mere activity) is characterized by *intentionality*—the 'aboutness' of an action, the goal it seeks to bring about for the individual—and the reflective process of evaluating to what degree the action

has served such intentionality.⁹² For example, while an instructor may present the nature and benefits of critical, 'scholarly' editions of music via a lecture, a more praxial approach would have students create a critical edition from primary sources, compare it to other published editions, and evaluate the historical strengths and weaknesses of the editions (including their own). Surely this is closer to the challenging, "optimal experiences" through which students may experience self-growth or "flow." In addition to discovering through experience the tangible benefits to a performer of using scholarly editions, the student has, in the process, developed the ability to make his or her own performing editions, a practical professional skill and one that has "real world" value to a student-performer and to prospective teachers. The classroom, then, becomes not a repository for *transmitting* knowledge, but a place for musicological praxis that *transforms* the learner. That students will not perform these praxes at the level of a professional musicologist is not the issue, in part because the process and the learning experience are far more important than the product. Praxis grows along with future use and according to future needs. It resides in the actions of all practitioners, not in the mind of a professor or text author.

Having taught courses with over four hundred students, I am certainly not oblivious to the practical challenges presented by scheduling needs and other institutional and departmental restrictions that make the lecture model an economical, efficient, and thus attractive mode of instruction. I did, however, arrive at a way to reconcile my hypothetical, "praxially-perfect" classroom with institutional reality: Recognizing all the constraints above, I can surely move towards a praxial model for instruction *to the degree it is possible* in my institution and in my classroom. This is something instructors do all the time, but perhaps not systematically or with the conscious intention of adhering to a particular philosophical approach. My philosophy places a premium on pragmatic benefits to the student, so I will incorporate methods to achieve that results as effectively as possible my given situation. For example, when constrained by a large lecture model, I might focus during part of a lecture on an issue in performance practice and highlight ways musicological research might be used to address that issue. To emphasize transferable skills and practical application, I can follow up with an assignment that requires students to identify and recreate a similar situation in their own performance medium. Similarly, I might conclude a lecture on the underpinnings of Romanticism by having students break into small groups (in or outside of class) and brainstorm ways their understanding of the concepts presented affects their approach to performing, conducting, teaching, or studying the

92. For a systematic consideration of the concept of intentionality, see John Searle, *Intentionality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

relevant literature with which they have had experience. The most important thing is for me to move continually toward a more systematic application of that philosophy, thinking critically and adjusting constantly. This is actually not at odds with a praxial philosophy, which is inherently pragmatic, seeking the best results for a *given*—not an ideal—situation. Moreover, we can choose to broaden the classroom beyond the lecture hall and into the ‘real world,’ turning what appeared a few sentences ago might have appeared to be a compromise into a golden opportunity to engage students in musicological praxis as educative experience. This does, however, require instructors to transfer a certain measure of control, agency, and responsibility to the students. In so doing, we expect much more of our students than in traditional modes of instruction, and we show our respect for them as agents of their own education.

Assessment

Finally, we must address how Regelski’s ideas might affect assessment. For most humanities courses at the university level, music history included, the traditional methods of evaluating student performance have been the written examination and the research paper. These assessment tools reveal an emphasis on both Platonic idealism and neo-scholastic reason, but decidedly not on the ‘real world,’ although musicological praxis is most often verbal. At its best, a written examination is only a reflection of what knowledge a student can recall at a given moment in a setting divorced from the environment in which that knowledge can presumably be used. Multiple choice and short answer questions gauge the recall of information, not synthesis or even comprehension, let alone usability. Even a well-crafted essay response exists in the vacuum of the exam context, reflecting not only the traditional focus on the idea in itself, but also the neo-scholastic predilection for well-reasoned responses as intellectual exercise.

I discussed the research paper earlier as a mode of instruction, but it is most often used as a summative assessment, as the culmination of a given course. The instructor evaluates not only the content of the assignment, but also the systematic, disciplined process of organization and rational argument. Again, the instructor assumes that such an intellectual process is valuable in itself. The same is true of less argumentative forms of assessment. I have been inclined to assign students the task—largely deplored—of writing a *précis* of the introduction to Theodor Adorno’s *A Philosophy of New Music*. I have thought it valuable for the students to engage with Adorno’s ideas, his prose, and to develop the ability to assess the main points of an intellectual argument such as one finds in Adorno’s introduction. I also have believed that Adorno’s position is central to understanding twentieth century music. Examining the

practice critically, I have been guilty of several philosophical and pedagogical missteps. First and foremost, I have made unilateral decisions that Adorno's position is more worth understanding than others, and that my own understanding of it is the correct interpretation. The students must submit to my authority as the transmitter of unconditional knowledge and value, though they may find no practical use for the assignment at all (and apparently rarely do, despite my best motivational efforts). Using the précis as assessment is also problematic in that it belies my focus on the idealized—as opposed to practical—exercise as a way to evaluate the rational process of distilling an argument to its main points. And it assumes that the process leads to a valuable intellectual skill, a judgment I cannot make for another person. In short, traditional forms of assessment are ineffective for evaluating *real* learning because they are divorced from real musical needs and because they assume, like traditional curriculum and instruction, fixed and final answers regarding knowledge and its value, absolutes defined not by the student but by the instructor.

Praxial assessment calls for “authentic assessment” as its main mode of evaluation, asking essentially the following question: Does the student have the skills, knowledge, and cognitive insight to perform representative ‘real life’ activities using skills and knowledge gained as a result of instruction? While authentic assessment has become a commonplace and sometimes bandwagon term in education, its originator, Grant Wiggins, defined it as “engaging and worthy problems or questions of importance, in which the students must use knowledge to fashion performances effectively and creatively. The tasks are either replicas of or analogous to the kinds of problems faced by adult citizens and consumers or professionals in the field.”⁹³ The students must demonstrate that they have the requisite knowledge and skills needed to assess a given situation, to choose appropriate means, and then produce a result that is appropriate for the situation. Traditional elements, such as recall and rational argumentation, may be well be called upon as needed; but they should be a means toward a practical end within the assessment tool, not included solely for their own sake. Put simply, the student must engage in the *praxis* of musicology in terms of its relevance for musical praxis, not as an end-in-itself. I submit that this, when applied consistently and comprehensively, provides a more realistic strategy for assessing long term, practical learning than traditional methods as discussed above. I also suggest that assessing the student as a practitioner is even more important at the university level than in secondary schools, in part because universities now market

93. Grant Wiggins, *Assessing Student Performance: Exploring the Purpose and Limits of Testing* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993) 229. Wiggins first used the term in Grant Wiggins, “A True Test: Toward More Authentic and Equitable Assessment,” *Phi Delta Kappan* 70, no. 9 (1989): 703–13.

themselves as providing career preparation, and degrees often lead to professional certification or a career. There are a number of authentic musicological activities in which students might engage as assessment (and as instruction, for that matter). While the necessity of program notes for an audience does indeed recall the connoisseurship approach of MEAE, authoring program notes is a relevant, authentic activity for introductory music history courses, because it is a task that a music professional may be expected to do regularly and one that can reveal a student's ability to 'make sense' of a composition in terms intended for other readers. Short, descriptive essays addressing the music, its historical context, and how one could apply this knowledge into his or her own performance can serve as a similar alternative. Advanced classes might tackle more synthetic, complex projects. The critical editions I mentioned earlier, student-curated exhibits, and even peer teaching are all viable alternatives to traditional assessment models. Consider the following example of peer teaching: A student ensemble performs a Haydn string quartet in class. The class (including the performers) coaches the ensemble, analyzes critically appropriate stylistic variables, and decides what historical or stylistic concepts (socio-cultural contexts, performance practice issues, etc.) might be taught through performing the piece and how to do so. The same approach may also be applied to solo or recorded large ensemble literature. By mirroring real, professional praxis, students have the opportunity and tools for self-growth and to construe for themselves the value of not just assessment, but also of curriculum and instruction. Instructors, for their part, gain the ability to evaluate accurately what the students truly 'know' and what they can actually do in the field as a result of instruction.

Self-critique and Regelski's Action Learning model

Praxial approaches like those of Elliott and Regelski also insist on a reflective practice that is typically absent from traditional educational praxis, one whose application to teaching music history is needed desperately. If we are to engage in teaching music history as professional praxis, musicologists must turn a critical lens on our teaching praxis, and I suggest using Regelski's approach to do so. For Regelski, "a profession depends in part upon a reasoned and reasonable pragmatic consensus among a critical community of practitioners concerning the nature of the ideal benefits towards which it is devoted and by which it is evaluated."⁹⁴ Central to professional praxis, then, is *phronesis*, the ethical commitment to be care-full [sic] and prudent in getting the 'right results'; tangibly beneficial results.⁹⁵ These results, in turn, become

94. Regelski, "On Methodolatry," 117.

95. Thomas A. Regelski, "Music and Music Education—Theory and Praxis for 'Making a Difference,'" *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 37, no. 1 (2005): 16.

the 'value added' criteria by which the field may be assessed.⁹⁶ As a framework for guiding the discourse in which professionals must engage to reach this consensus, Regelski turned (as I noted earlier) to the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, in particular the ideas of Jürgen Habermas. He applied critical theory's rejection of positivism to music education, arguing that a positivist-technicist ideology allows teachers to develop a "false consciousness" and to expect (and accept) technicist 'quick fixes' found in the latest method, curriculum, software package (etc.) in lieu of pragmatic progress. Unfortunately, music education is particularly susceptible to the kind of 'what works' claims perpetuated by such false consciousness, of which Habermas (and Adorno) was centrally critical.⁹⁷

After exposing some of the fundamental weaknesses in music education as professional praxis, Regelski offered an antidote. He suggested that a critical theory of education must be equally critical of "positivist research that makes a technology of teaching" and subjective teacher knowledge that relies on solely on one-size-fits-all techne, ignoring the phronesis central to praxis.⁹⁸ According to Regelski, "professionalizing music teaching requires *ideology critique* that identifies, along with methodolatry, paradigms, ideologies, and other alienating conditions or impediments to bringing about 'right results' for students"⁹⁹ judged in terms of meeting the pragmatic needs at stake. Music teachers must identify ideological forces that prevent them from empowering students musically. Again, they can begin to do this by engaging in *autobiographical critique*, a self-critical evaluation of their own beliefs and the forces (ideologies, institutions, paradigms, etc.) that have conditioned them, as well as through *immanent critique*, evaluating the value claims made by the field as the criteria for the effectiveness of praxis. Teachers must also determine the valued ends or "right results" through reasoned professional discourse characterized by *communicative competence*.¹⁰⁰ Central to this discourse is what Habermas called "communicative reason," (or "communicative rationality") free and open discussion in which final decisions depend on the strength of the better argument. Discussion based on communicative reason focuses not on finding a perfect solution for everyone, but rather coming to an agreement that is satisfactory to all parties.¹⁰¹ Finally, Regelski highlighted the need for "*social action plans* of change agency, by which such

96. Regelski, "Music and Music Education," 16.

97. Regelski, "On Methodolatry," 108.

98. *Ibid.*, 108.

99. *Ibid.*, 112. Again, italicized terms here are those Regelski appropriated from the Frankfurt School's social critiques.

100. *Ibid.*, 112.

101. See Andrew Edgar, *Habermas: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2006), 23–25.

knowledge can be translated into professional praxis.”¹⁰² Although Regelski conceived this model with primary and secondary school music education in mind, it is flexible and may be applied to college-level music history pedagogy easily and effectively.

Ultimately, however, such rigorous critique depends on action-based curriculum and action research, for which Regelski offers Action Learning as a model.¹⁰³ Action research is research undertaken by a practitioner to improve practice in that practitioner’s given situation and for similar situations in the future.¹⁰⁴ Action research, then, is focused and it is applied vertically over time to similar situations.¹⁰⁵ For example, I might engage in action research to improve teaching undergraduate music history and the results may inform my teaching of undergraduate music history over several years at Vanderbilt University, a relatively specific situation. While they may serve as a model for other situations, it is not necessarily possible to generalize the results for broad application.¹⁰⁶ In the early 1980s, Regelski began advocating a systematic model for curriculum and instruction based on Action Learning that has its conceptual roots in the American pragmatism of James, Dewey, and Peirce. Action Learning itself was not new, but its application to music education, specifically the general music classroom, was. While encouraging student activity, Regelski cautioned (and still does) against confusing Action Learning with the “activities approach,” which often obscures goals and devolves into purposeless activity for its own sake, leaving the student unguided.¹⁰⁷ In essence, while the “activities approach” supposedly teaches concepts and skills “actively,” it lacks cohesive, pragmatic, musical goals as the intentionality for guiding a student’s actions. Action Learning, on the other hand, focuses on the goals and intentions of the student; the value and effectiveness of curriculum and instruction are determined by the degree to which they effect tangible, pragmatic benefits for the student.¹⁰⁸ While Regelski is absolutely correct in advocating for more tangible musical goals at the middle and secondary levels, I suggest that instructors also include more student involvement at the

102. Regelski, “On Methodolatry,” 113.

103. *Ibid.*, 114.

104. Thomas A. Regelski, “Action Research and Critical Theory: Empowering Music Teachers to Professionalize Praxis,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 123 (1994–5): 69. The term “action research” was coined by psychologist Kurt Lewin in “Action Research and Minority Problems,” *Journal of Social Issues* 2, no. 4 (1946): 34–46.

105. This vertical application in situational contexts is precisely why it is difficult or impossible to generalize action research to situations that are often considerably different.

106. Regelski, “Empowering Music Teachers to Professionalize Praxis,” 69.

107. Regelski, *Teaching General Music*, 11. See also Thomas A. Regelski, “Action Learning,” *Music Educators Journal* 69, no. 6 (1983): 46–50; Thomas A. Regelski, “Action Learning versus the Pied Piper Approach,” *Music Educators Journal* 69, no. 8 (1983): 55–57, 64.

108. Regelski, “Action Learning versus the Pied Piper Approach,” 55–56.

university level—involvement that amounts to ‘action’ not mere ‘activity’—in designing curriculum (goals and objectives) and instructional activities, fueling student intentionality and thus fostering intrinsic motivation.

For Action Learning to be effective, one must evoke from students a range of realistic and pragmatic goals to ensure that instruction is fully mindful on their part. Regelski's Action Learning model specifies three distinct levels of “action goals”—*program ideals*, *intermediate goals*, and *learning objectives*. Program ideals are overall goals; they are somewhat flexible, and do not result in any single state of completion. Rather, they are always present as worthwhile directions in which to strive (e.g., good health, good friend, good parent). Intermediate goals are more specific set of goals that guide daily instruction; what a given class attempts to achieve. These goals articulate *how* instruction and assessment should be structured, and reflect praxial theory's focus on student-centered learning, modeling ‘real life’ experiences and authentic assessment. Finally, learning objectives are detailed goals that support the program ideals and are designed by the instructor according to the guidelines of the intermediate goals, achieved through daily activities and lessons.¹⁰⁹ Although this is a compressed overview of Regelski's application of Action Learning, one may correlate it easily with praxial approaches in both its objectives and the process by which those objectives are met. This model also creates a kind of feedback loop, allowing instructors to assess continually all aspects of curriculum and instruction. For example, if students are not typically meeting a learning objective, the instructor adjusts activities and lessons to address the relevant problems.¹¹⁰ Likewise, if the class consistently has difficulty achieving an intermediate goal, the instructor must assess whether that goal is appropriate or whether the intermediate goals to that end are effective. Depending on the answer, the instructor might tailor learning objectives (and subsequently, daily activities) to facilitate successful achievement of that goal.

Just as Regelski adapted Action Learning for use in general music classrooms, musicologists might adapt it effectively to the music history classroom. For example, one might establish as a program ideal that students should be able to author a functional grant proposal outlining a feasible musicological project, an eminently pragmatic goal with transferrable applications in many fields. The knowledge and skills necessary to reach this goal form the intermediate goals: Among other things, students must assess critically the current scholarship on a given topic, survey methodological approaches, and synthesize information to develop an original proposal. The ability to access

109. Regelski, “Action Learning,” 48.

110. The instructor must also consider seriously the possibility that the objective is ill-conceived or inappropriate for the circumstances and must be adjusted.

and evaluate information from a variety of sources requires advanced research/information literacy and critical thinking skills, which also become intermediate goals. In articulating the tangible results of their proposal (articles, monographs, critical editions, etc.), students identify the various forms of musicological praxis; individual students may need to develop topic-specific skills (reading Renaissance notation, for example). Again, program ideals cohere intermediate goals, and learning objectives for individual activities correlate specifically to intermediate goals. Students might “assess the current scholarship” on plainchant transmission via in-class debates, position papers, or other evaluative activities. They might develop information literacy skills through guided experiments in database searching or the ever-popular library “scavenger hunt,” virtual or real. Compiling an annotated bibliography for the grant proposal addresses two intermediate goals, developing information literacy and evaluating the current scholarship on a selected topic. Students can review books—another form of musicological praxis—that address the same topic from different scholarly perspectives to survey different approaches. The J.S. Bach biographies by Karl Geiringer and Christoph Wolff, for example, provide excellent methodological counterpoint, as does Peter Jeffery’s ethnomusicological study of Gregorian chant and Willi Apel’s standard overview of the subject.¹¹¹ An instructional objective might be “the student will compare and contrast the methodological approaches of Jeffery and Apel in their respective studies of plainchant.” These tasks are all, however, linked directly to the program ideal of authoring a functional grant proposal. The resulting pyramid of goals and objectives support each other, ultimately realizing to some degree the program ideals. The interdependence among goal levels and the unifying program nature of ideals ensure that the goals are always kept in sight, making instruction focused and purposeful.

Again, although instructors already routinely employ many of the strategies and assignments I have offered throughout this paper, this does not mean that we are all already praxialists, though much of what already occurs in the classroom may be incorporated into a praxial approach. Indeed, without a systematically governing philosophy, we risk the purposelessness of the “activities approach”—student activity as though for its own sake. One must design curriculum, instruction, and assessment to be systematically and consistently praxial, from the program ideals through learning objectives and assessments, conceived as elements of a unified whole. In short, I have advocated a rethinking of the holistic picture.

111. See Karl Geiringer, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Culmination of an Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: Norton, 2000); Peter Jeffery, *Re-Envisioning Past Musical Cultures: Ethnomusicology and the Study of Gregorian Chant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); and Willi Apel, *Gregorian Chant* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1958).

Epilogue

Musicology has changed considerably over the last fifty years. The positivist research that dominated the field in the early and mid-twentieth century has come to include a plurality of methodologies and approaches, incorporating feminist theory and semiotics, postmodernism, literary theory and cultural anthropology, just to name a few. The music history survey courses of the last century are simply not reflective of the present state of the discipline and even less reflective of the students who come to study music at the university. With so many rich approaches with which to explore music as a cultural and human phenomenon, a more praxial approach to teaching music history can capitalize on this fecundity. Students have more ways than ever before—for example, the increasing opportunities offered by computers and other technology—to engage in musicological praxis and to find meaning and value in it for themselves. It would serve both the discipline and its students to step out of the pedagogical shadows of a venerable yet outdated past, and to begin to adapt elements of praxial philosophies of music education to the teaching of music history. Surely the idea of student-driven curriculum and instruction can be exciting for us as teachers, as is the prospect of ensuring that our students derive real value from their education. If nothing else, I hope this essay serves to frame a discourse along the lines of the ideology critique Regelski has advocated and that it may contribute to new philosophical and pedagogical dialogue for the teaching of music history and musicology.

Appendix: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography on Music Education Philosophy

The philosophical debate between music education as aesthetic education (MEAE) and various praxial philosophies of music education has been a significant current in the scholarly discourse of that discipline for the last two decades or so. Given the high stakes—the fundamental concepts of music's nature, its value, and as such the nature and value of music education—it is hardly surprising that the discussion has been polemical. As the rift between the two positions widened, many scholars sought to reconcile the two using a variety of methodologies and justifications. There remains, however, wide disagreement among music educators not only about the core philosophical issues, but also about whether or not aesthetic and praxial philosophies have been (or can be) reconciled and to what degree, if at all.¹¹²

112. Regelski, "Praxialism and 'Aesthetic This,'" 61–100. See in particular p. 82.

I include the bibliography below as a tool for those interested in tracing the scholarship surrounding the aesthetic/praxial dialogue in music education. It is by no means comprehensive, and I have selected the scholarship that, in my view, elucidates the essential issues and highlights representative positions taken over the years. I have organized the sources chronologically so the interested reader may follow the debate as it unfolded, beginning with Bennett Reimer's original articulation of MEAE and concluding with Regelski's most recent defense of various praxial philosophies. Although this reading list is an introductory and focused one, I hope it provides a point of entry into the debate and stimulates discourse.

Reimer, Bennett. *A Philosophy of Music Education*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970.

Reimer's text represents the first systematic articulation of music education as aesthetic education (MEAE), which has become the dominant current in music education since its publication. Reimer's conception of music as an aesthetic object, and Langer's philosophy of music as a special kind of symbol were central to Reimer's approach, as was his interpretation of the Deweyan aesthetic experience.

Reimer, Bennett. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1989.

The second edition of Reimer's text aimed to articulate more clearly the arguments of the seminal first edition.

Alpers, Philip. "What Should One Expect From A Philosophy Of Music Education?" *Journal Of Aesthetic Education*, 25, no. 3 (1991): 215–42.

Alpers outlined three philosophical positions for addressing music and music education. The first two, a "formalist aesthetic" view and "enhanced aesthetic formalism," were traditional philosophies based on Kant, Hanslick, and others. Alpers then mapped out a new, praxial approach that was essentially pragmatic.

Bowman, Wayne. "An Essay Review of Bennett Reimer's *A Philosophy of Music Education*," *The Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1991): 76–87.

Bowman argued that despite its clearer articulation, Reimer's position was fundamentally the same as it had been in 1970. Perhaps most significantly, he took issue with the universalism of Reimer's approach and the notion of a universal set of criteria for evaluating art, especially its vaguely defined.

Elliott, David J. "Music Education as Aesthetic Education: A Critical Inquiry," *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* 2, no. 3 (1991): 48–66.

Elliott challenged the foundations of Reimer's philosophy, in particular his conception of music as aesthetic object and Reimer's reliance Langer's theory of art, which Elliott considered illogical.

Elliott, David. *Music Matters*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

In *Music Matters*, Elliott articulated most fully his praxial philosophy and its application in curriculum and instruction. He advocated a concept of music as an

autotelic human endeavor (not as an aesthetic object) and a "curriculum as practicum" approach.

Regelski, Thomas A. "A Prolegomenon to a Praxial Theory of Music and Music Education" *Canadian Music Educator* 38, no. 3 (1997): 43–51.

Regelski presented a relatively comprehensive exposition of his praxial philosophy, which also rejected the aesthetic concept of music as object. Regelski's praxialism was more pragmatic than was Elliott's, focusing on the importance of amateur musicmaking and the question "what is music good for?"

Spychiger, Maria. "Aesthetic and Praxial Philosophies of Music Education Compared: A Semiotic Consideration," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 5, no. 1 (1997): 33–41.

Spychiger compared the aesthetic and praxial philosophies using Alfred Lang's semiotic theory and concluded that, although Elliott and Reimer disagree about the philosophical nature of music, both philosophies represent complete semiotic circles and are not significantly different. As such, she argued that Elliott's praxial approach "does not qualify as a new philosophy."

Koopman, Constantijn. "Music Education: Aesthetic or Praxial?" *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 32, no. 3 (1998): 1–17.

Koopman asserted that aesthetic and praxial philosophies were, in fact, compatible. He recommended ending the polarization between them, offering the summary assessment that "musico-aesthetic experience constitutes the core of musical practices and musical practices are the social realities in which musico-aesthetic experience can come to life." Koopman suggested that music education should be inspired by the best ideas that originate from both philosophies.

Regelski, Thomas A. "Accounting for All Praxis: An Essay Critique of David Elliott's *Music Matters*," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 144 (2000): 61–88.

Regelski offered a critique of Elliott's philosophy, acknowledging it as the first significant alternative to MEAE but challenging certain aspect of it. In particular, Regelski took issue with Elliott's focus on performance and encouraged him to address all forms of musical praxis, as well as to consider amateur musicmaking as a more significant part of a praxial philosophy.

Westerlund, Heidi "Reconsidering Aesthetic Experience in Praxial Music Education," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 11, no. 1 (2003): 45–62.

According to Heidi Westerlund, praxialists like Elliott, Regelski, and Bowman had initially misinterpreted Dewey's concept of the aesthetic experience, that Dewey's notion of "aesthetic" was different than traditional aesthetics; it was closer to praxial theory. Thus, praxialists could embrace the concept and still reject the constricting idea of art as object. It was, in fact, Reimer who had misinterpreted Dewey.

Reimer, Bennett. *A Philosophy of Education: Advancing the Vision*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.

In the third edition of his text, Reimer considered carefully the criticisms and ideas of Elliott, Regelski, Bowman, and others, alternately broadening his scope and defending coherently some of his positions, namely the validity of music's nature as

an aesthetic object. Ultimately, Reimer advocated a “synergistic” approach that incorporated or attempted to otherwise address much of the debate that had arisen in response to MEAE’s former expositions.

Stubley, Eleanor. “A Tale Thrice Told: Reflections on Bennett Reimer’s Vision Across the Decades,” in *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 2, no. 1(2003): 1-11, http://actmaydaygroup.org/articles/Stubley2_1.pdf.

Stubley traced the three editions of Reimer’s text and concluded that it was essentially an expanded, updated, clearer presentation of Reimer’s original fundamental position. In particular, she highlighted his intractable, Langerian concept of music as an unconsummated, presentational symbol expressive of the patterns and forms of human feeling.

Alperson, Philip. “Robust Praxialism and the Anti-Aesthetic Turn,” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 18, no. 2 (2010): 171–93.

Alperson assessed the past three decades of debate and advocated a “robust praxialism” that acknowledges and embraces *all* musical practices, of which aesthetic ones are equally legitimate to those proposed by Elliott, Regelski, and other praxialists. He argued that “music is itself best understood as an amalgam of overlapping forms of musical activities.... that are exceedingly various, complicated, and, indeed, even at times internally fractious.

See also: Thomas A. Regelski, “Response to Philip Alperson, ‘Robust Praxialism and the Anti-Aesthetic Turn,’” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 18, no. 2 (2010): 196–203. Regelski challenged that Alperson’s “robust praxialism” is predicated on the erroneous notion that “music’s praxial appeal depends on its aesthetic essence. Citing Bowman, he rejected the idea that aesthetics (and aesthetic terminology) are necessary at all in addressing music’s value and urged music education to move beyond aesthetics.

Regelski, Thomas A. “Praxialism and ‘Aesthetic This, Aesthetic That, Aesthetic Whatever.’” *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 10, no. 2 (2011): 61–100.

Essentially a more complete “response” to Alperson’s “robust praxialism,” Regelski reaffirms praxial theory’s fundamental differences from aesthetic approaches and argues against the need to use aesthetics in valuing music and music education. He asserts that the language of aesthetics is vague and inconsistent, concluding ultimately that praxial theories are eminently stronger having been unburdened from aesthetics.