

# Music Selection

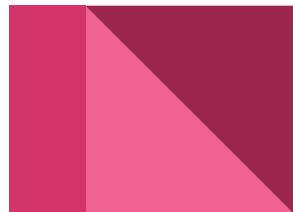
“What Makes it Great?”

CMP Workshop 2016 - Jeremy Little & Melissa Schoonover

# 0 How Lovely...

- ❖ What was your favorite part?
- ❖ What makes it lovely (musically)?
- ❖ Why do you think it has this withstood the test of time?





# Think - Pair - Share

- ❖ Shaping Sound Musicians, pp. 102-104
  
- ❖ CMP At-a-Glance - Music Selection
  - Choose a category (or two!) and discuss how it applies to “O How Lovely...”



# Separating the Practical from the Philosophical

- ❖ CMP Music Selection asks us to begin to develop our skills in aesthetically critiquing the works we choose.
  - How many of us did this in college?
  - How would you rate your skills in this area?
  - How have you purposefully improved your skills in this area?
- ❖ Elevate your skills over time...like any other discipline...this takes practice
  - Admittedly, the very idea of determining “greatness” may tough for some to stomach and it can be hard to articulate your thoughts at first....this doesn't mean it's not worth the effort.
- ❖ Will the music you choose be around in 50 years? 250? (transcendence)




# Separating the Practical from the Philosophical

- ❖ “This piece is great” vs. “This piece is great for my kids”
  - “A good teacher can turn any piece into a ‘teaching piece.’ But that doesn’t make it great art.” - R. Swiggum
  - “I do understand the pedagogic purpose behind this stuff. Beethoven didn't have to come up with music scored for middle school bands made up of 57 alto saxophones, 40 trumpets, 15 percussionists and one oboe. Fair enough.” - S. Budiansky
- ❖ Recognizing the “school market” & the music business
  - “Just good enough” vs. truly great art = can be difficult to discern



# Music Selection - Questions to Ponder

- ❖ How comfortable are you with analyzing a piece to determine its aesthetic merit? Where would you fall on the “music selection” continuum?
  - ❖ What is the ‘nutritional’ value of the music that we’re consuming?
    - Is this music worthy of your students’ time & focused attention?
  - ❖ What would your music selections look like if you were the **only** arts contact that child ever had?
  - ❖ What would you perform if there were no concerts?
- 


# Music Selection - A Philosophy of Music Ed.

“Every time a choice is made, a belief is applied.” - Bennett Reimer

## Art

- ❖ Expects you to “chew.”
- ❖ Provokes and challenges.
- ❖ Changes us.
- ❖ Operates on multiple layers.
- ❖ Open to many interpretations.
- ❖ Is nuanced and subtle.
- ❖ Nourishes.
- ❖ Puts value on inner depth.
- ❖ Created for meaning.

## Entertainment

- ❖ “Goes down easy.”
  - ❖ Stays in the comfort zone.
  - ❖ Amuses us.
  - ❖ Makes a simple point.
  - ❖ Is more one-dimensional
  - ❖ Is obvious.
  - ❖ Satisfies the “sweet tooth.”
  - ❖ Puts value on external.
  - ❖ Created to sell.
- 



# Pop Music - “Everybody’s favorite argument!”

- ❖ To ‘pop’ or not to ‘pop’? - false dichotomy
- ❖ What’s the “nutritional value” of what you’re studying/performing?
  - A little dessert is great...in context & proportion
- ❖ Interview with Ken Myers
  - Popular Culture = not rooted in a specific community or people, not distinctive because it’s popular, distinctive because it’s disseminated by mass media
  - Produced not in order to sustain convictions or pass along values from one generation to another
  - To make \$ and to entertain
  - Decide whether or not something is good not based on its popularity one way or another
  - How to decide what is good/quality?

# Let's have some fun, shall we?

How do we begin to spot clichés or formulas or trite music & ask ourselves if it's worthy?

cliché (n): A phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought."

Band: ABA form,  
programmatic, ostinato, wind  
chimes, as many  
percussionists as possible,  
titles that include Eagles,  
Mountains, Creeks, Winds, &  
Castles

Orchestra: optional drumset,  
special effects (knocking,  
playing on wrong side of  
bridge, stomping, col legno,  
glissandi), "incorporating a  
theme by..."



# Considerations

- ❖ Shaping Sound Musicians, pp. 208-210
  - List of “Everyday Needs to be Considered”
  - Balancing the Curriculum
- ❖ Rehearsal Time
- ❖ Audience & Community
- ❖ Tips:
  - Perform less music at each concert?
  - Intentionally sight-read/study pieces you may not perform (gasp)
- ❖ We Acknowledge:
  - This is RISKY to do
  - You may feel VULNERABLE
  - Growth mindset...the idea of “..yet”

# Museums in a Quandary: Where Are the Ideals?

By Michael Kimmelman, New York Times, August 26, 2001

... Attendance is considered a measure of public service by funders, government funders especially, who, without thinking the issue through, simply figure that the more people who visit museums, the more public-minded the museums must be, never mind that attendance has nothing necessarily to do with enlightenment. Museums, having therefore been instructed that success is to be measured by attendance, then organize Monet and van Gogh shows, which guarantee big box-office returns, so they can declare themselves successful...

The question should not be how many people visit museums but how valuable are their visits. Attendance at a museum is different from attendance at a ballpark or a movie. Partly the difference is that baseball and Hollywood are for-profit businesses while museums are educational institutions, although the more people the merrier at museums; to borrow a useful turn of phrase, museums are equal-opportunity elitists.



...So what defines a museum now? Museums are at a crossroads and need to decide which way they are going. They don't know whether they are more like universities or Disneyland, and lurch from one to the other.

Their priorities need restating. They are neither universities nor Disneyland. Are museums places to show things people didn't know they wanted or may not think they want to see? Yes, but they are also entertainment palaces. This is fine. Culture is entertainment, partly, and museums betray the public and their purpose if they aren't seriously amusing...


But beyond leisure and entertainment, our perception of a museum, and its moral value, still has to do with our desire for sacred space, even if we are reluctant to put it that way. Museums exist to offer us something that we can't find anywhere else: an encounter, whether with an object or idea (or even with something on the Internet if we consider virtual museums) -- an encounter we deem true and authentic in a place respectful of this private transaction. Otherwise, museums are just fancy storage facilities and gift shops.



This sounds obvious but evidently isn't. It entails less equivocation, less democracy, less blurring of the line between commerce and content, and a reassertion of authority on the part of museums, which must restate their convictions about esoteric beauty, the ethical import of aesthetics and the special, if intangible, power of the things they possess. The goal is not for every museum to become another Frick. It is to use the excellent new tools available -- technological, didactic -- to become more effective and more affecting places.

Between the university and Disneyland is not a morass of compromise but a realm of rational entertainment, a concept harking back to the Enlightenment. Rational entertainment requires a standard of quality on the part of museums. Quality has become a dirty word, an anti-democratic concept, according to museum critics, but quality, and the ability to explain it eloquently, are still what separate museums from shopping malls.

Museums need to reclaim the idea of quality because it is what people want when they go to museums: to be told what they should value, so that they can then decide for themselves whether or not to agree -- which is how a free democracy really works. Standards change, values evolve, but without them at any given moment, we are lost.



# The Repertoire is the Curriculum: Getting Back to Basics in Music Education.

By: Stephen Budiansky, "Speech to the WASBE Conference, 2009, p. 20 & 25.

"Great art is made by individuals who have placed a commitment to their art above everything else. It's made by people who understand that it's going to be extraordinarily hard, that they almost certainly will fail, that they will be mercilessly attacked, but who have chosen to run that gauntlet nonetheless.

"...So if a critic expresses a view you disagree with, the grown-up and energetic and useful response is to marshal your own critical arguments as to why his analysis is wrong. The not very grown - up response is to protest that he should not have expressed his views because it is being "rude" or "unsupportive" to do so. My other point is this: of course criticism is often ill wrought just as the works of art they criticize are. Critical judgments often change over time. They are often hotly disputed by other critics then and later. Yet criticism is part of the essential conversation by which art is made. It is part of the process by which we begin to develop sophistication and judgment and appreciation of art at all. [underline ours] It is part of the refining fire that art goes through. The very discussion and debate is part of what makes art art. When you isolate yourself from criticism, you are not producing art.

You are producing . . . a product."



# No one is alone...

- ❖ Throughout these next hours and days, commit yourself to growing in your ability to determine if this music is truly a great work of art.
- ❖ Use the people around you. Ask them questions. Bounce your thoughts off them.

