PART II

What's in a name?

Protein is well and good, but until we establish a common understanding of "core" in the educational sense, we'll simply be spinning our wheels. In a cursory browse of the web, I have discovered that the term "core" is avoided actively by most governmental educational organizations (state and federal). Intriguingly, they don't employ any synonyms either. Thus, to discover what is held to be central or essential one must find what is assessed. That is to say, you have to figure out how the measure success in the schools. According to the U.S. Department of Education, *No Child Left Behind* "requires assessments only in the areas of reading/language arts, math and science." However, "[s]tudents may still undergo state assessments in other subject areas (i.e., history, geography and writing skills), if and when the state requires it." The Nebraska Department of Education posts standards in four subjects: social studies/history, mathematics, reading/writing, and science. To earn a GED in Nebraska, a student must pass tests in five areas: language arts-writing, language arts-reading, social studies, science, and mathematics.

Thus, it seems logical to conclude that the contemporary "core" of public education includes reading, writing, social studies, math, and science. But none of the sites mentioned above indicate why these five subjects have been chosen as bellwethers for the curriculum. Oddly, even the U.S. Department of Education fails to make a statement about the purpose of public education. We're left to assume that these five subjects will do the trick, whatever that may be.

The National Education Association comes closest to revealing the secret behind public education when it enumerates its core values. Among them are:

> Equal Opportunity. We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.
>
> A Just Society. We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.
>
> Democracy. We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

Whether the NEA feels the five core subjects handed down from the U.S. Department of Education are sufficient to insure these values remains a bit of a mystery. Judging by the angst surrounding *No Child Left Behind*, one is lead to believe not. This leads to the question of what the core should contain.

I am partial to the definition of "core" used by the Utah State Office of Education, Curriculum, and Instruction: "the ideas, concepts, and skills that provide a foundation on which subsequent learning may be built." The key is then to distinguish between a core subject and a graduation requirement. Merely because something is mandatory doesn't mean it is essential. This semantic stream is related to the earlier discussion of "basic." Reading is a core subject not because the School Board says so, but because through mastery of the skill the student gains access to a diverse spectrum of subjects including anything that can be expressed in writing. Without it, huge swaths of knowledge are unapproachable.

Conversely, health may be a graduation requirement but it is not a core subject. It is a curricular cul-de-sac off of the main road of science. Is it important to have a basic understanding of human reproduction, hygiene, and nutrition? Certainly. But not knowing the specifics of the food pyramid won't prevent you from learning anything else. You might eventually die of scurvy, but your intellectual capacities will be unencumbered.

Arts educators tend to resort to a quality of life argument when defining the core, as I'm sure health advocates do. Not succumbing to scurvy would improve anyone's standard of living. But arts advocates reach fantastic rhetorical heights in their efforts to place music in the core. You may recall the *Child's Bill of Rights in Music* cited on page twelve (Part I). It included this remarkable sentence:

> As their right, all children must have the opportunity to grow in music knowledge, skills, and appreciation so as to bring joy and satisfaction to their lives, challenge their minds, stimulate their imaginations, and exalt their spirits.

A lofty goal, but entirely unattainable through public educational channels until MENC patents an Exalt-O-Meter. Also, it fails to satisfy Utah's definition of "core" because it is self-contained. The *CBRM* tells us we should have opportunities in music because music is swell, not because it is essential to support future learning. It puts music in the category with health – legitimate, but supplementary.

In point of fact, although instruction in music is required in many school systems it doesn't function as part of the core. In spite of herculean advocacy efforts, music remains an enrichment activity largely because music educators treat it as such. Yes, you read that right – music educators perpetuate the belief that the study of music is supplementary rather than essential. How's that for irony? Allow me to support this assertion with a hypothetical scenario.

What if…

In arguments related to music as a core subject, most advocates insist that music is core but can't create a viable model to support their belief. The problem lies in the sub-structure of public education and the nature of music as a performing art. It's the problem Hickey and Rees unearthed (see Part I, page 21). So before we decide whether music should be part of the core, we have to take a look at what happens if it were to be added.

Consider the following hypothetical set of initiatives that could be followed to place music among the core subjects in public education (K-9), with optional advanced placement study

(grades 10-12). It is possible, but it's hardly the utopian vision of the "music is for everyone" crowd. When music really is required of everyone, this is what happens.

First, we would have to achieve specific national initiatives. For the record, I am a firm believer in states' rights. However, if certain national standards could be achieved in curricular structure and teacher licensing, we could take a big step toward addressing the teacher shortage. A teacher trained in one state should be able to step into a job in another state without completely re-tooling. In that light:

1. Achieve consistency across the board with common curricular segments for music instruction. For example: K-5, 6-9, and 10-12. This creates clear elementary (basic), intermediate (exploratory), and advanced (specialized) chunks.

2. Adjust teacher licensing to reflect three distinct specializations: elementary music, intermediate/advanced vocal, and intermediate/advanced instrumental. As a Nebraskan, I am well aware of the problems of small school districts. K-12 all in one building is not unheard of out here, and in such circumstances there is only one music teacher. I am sure there was a time when most of the schools in Nebraska matched this profile. However, as the frontier has receded the state's view of teacher licensing hasn't kept pace. We continue to license our music teachers K-12 everything. There is not another core subject that believes a single teacher can effectively master every developmental stage from age six through age eighteen. Add the challenge of mastering three sub-specialties (general, vocal, and instrumental) and we move from merely ridiculous to completely insane. A change to three distinct licensing options would mean that there are more music teachers in certain schools. A K-12 set up would require a minimum of three. In the larger school districts, it is common to have three music teachers in a single high school so the idea of three music teachers covering the entire spectrum shouldn't hypothetically be an issue if music started behaving like a core subject.

3. Require music as part of the curriculum for every student, every year K-9. There's your rationale for at least three teachers to cover the spectrum. Core is core.

4. Adjust college music education degree programs to prepare the next generation of teachers for this set-up.

- Make the Bachelor of Music degree (4 years) the prerequisite for all aspiring music educators, placing all education content in a Master of Music Education degree (2 years) that follows immediately.

- In the MME program, require students to commit to a single area of specialization determined by the licensing parameters discussed above.

Teachers would enter the field better prepared, with greater focus and expertise, at a higher pay level with only one additional year of study since most BME programs are five years already. This should go a long way to solving the teacher retention problem. The adjustment at the graduate level also enables a more mature decision as to whether to pursue teaching as a profession, and it provides faster access to a teaching license for non-traditional students (i.e.

people who went into the work force in a field other than teaching who now wish to become teachers).

To support our hypothetical music-as-core scenario, certain curricular initiatives would be required.

1. Elementary music (K-5) should focus on musical fundamentals, progress sequentially, and have clear objectives for all students.

    • The basic progression hear – sing – read applies. Therefore, literacy follows the ability to hear (sound first, sight after).

    • Performance is essential, with a strong emphasis on healthy vocalization for pitch-based material, and coordinated movement for pulse based material (voice and body first, instruments second).

    • Improvisation should be present from the beginning and included as an element of performance and assessment at every stage of development. Improvisational abilities should progress as skills increase. Improvisation should be linked to all elements as they are introduced – including (eventually) the non-pitch and pulse based elements of timbre, style, articulation, and tempo, and the advanced concepts of texture, form, etc.

    • Assessment must be based on measurable aspects, e.g. the ability to match and maintain pitch, the ability to match and maintain pulse, the ability to recognize duple v. triple or major v. minor, the ability to improvise tonal and rhythmic cells within given parameters, etc.

    • The concept of artistry must be present from the beginning. [See page 39 for a complete statement on artistry in the music curriculum].

The most basic fundamentals in music are pitch and pulse, progressing to mode and meter (large-scale organization schemes for pitch and pulse), progressing to melody, harmony, and rhythm (more specific constructs of pitch and pulse). Melodic contour, harmonic rhythm, and syncopation are examples of advanced concepts that grow from pulse and pitch. Phrasing and form are the largest structures created by linking the building blocks of melody, harmony, and rhythm. The elements of timbre, articulation, style, and tempo would follow once the progression from pulse and pitch through form is well established. An understanding of texture would begin with call and response, moving through monophony to homophony and polyphony.

The savvy reader will note the absence of content standards #8 (understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts), and #9 (understanding music in relation to history and culture). The reason is twofold. First, these standards have the least to do with developing the musical intelligence. They are *about* music, rather than music itself. Second, a person needs to know what music is before he can transplant that knowledge to different intellectual and cultural settings. Although inappropriate for the elementary stage, such exploratory work is ideally suited for the intermediate stage (6-9). Content standards #8 and 9 have historically been the refuge of insufficiently trained teachers, particularly those who are not musicians but are needed to cover music in lieu of a specialist. This leads to elementary music

degenerating into kids shouting the lyrics to poor quality music while dressed as Eskimos, or Maori tribesman, or any other fascinating but irrelevant (to basic musicianship) ethnic or cultural category while their parents test out their new mini-DVD camera. The odd quasi-Sprechstimme approach adopted by most elementary school music classes would have to be retired. Even Rex Harrison couldn't pull it off when he was eight years old, and cuteness just isn't a valid educational goal.

2. Intermediate music (6-9) should provide opportunities for students to put the fundamentals learned in elementary music into various common musical situations and see what happens. In each situation there must be a sequential approach and clear objectives related to the musical setting. The established progression hear – sing – read still applies; improvisation and artistry remain essential elements in every setting. As in elementary music, assessment must be based on musical knowledge and skills, rather than participation/attendance and attitude.

• All students should participate in choir at some point, preferably earlier rather than later. Emphasis should be placed on correct vocal technique and high quality literature. Performance assessment should focus on pitch, pulse, rhythm, tone, and diction at a minimum. In a broad sense, the choir is an ideal vehicle to begin to explore content standards #8 and 9 because its literature encompasses centuries of history and vocal music is authentic to many diverse cultures. Furthermore, the element of text/lyrics is a convenient link or point of entry to other disciplines with one caveat: lyrics are not music. Emphasis must remain on the abstract sonic aspects of the art rather than the linguistic/poetic sidecar.

• All students should learn to play an instrument at some point, preferably after learning to sing. Emphasis should be placed on correct physical technique and high quality method books. Performance assessment should focus on pitch, pulse, rhythm, tone, and articulation at a minimum. Instrument "fitting" should encourage a long-term relationship. In the current system, when a student begins an instrument in 5th grade he might be too small to deal with a tuba or bassoon, so he begins on a smaller surrogate such as euphonium or clarinet. In many cases, inventory limitations preclude even the possibility of bassoon, or horn, or oboe (etc.) until the later grades. In our hypothetical system, students are beginning instrumental study when their bodies are more likely to accommodate the equipment so the concept of switching should be discouraged. Instrument choice should be carefully controlled by the faculty to ensure a healthy diversity, and quotas are appropriate. Forty-seven saxophones, eighteen flutes, sixty snare drums, and one viola isn't acceptable, nor is it musical. Fitting should be based entirely on musical criteria rather than social or emotional trends. This means that Johnny may not get to play saxophone, just as Johnny doesn't get to sing soprano if he's a tenor. A student might choose a large category (woodwinds, brass, strings, percussion), but the faculty has the ultimate say. Each school system would need to maintain an inventory of instruments to meet the needs of the student population. For example, instrument "fitting" in 7th grade should be determined by what will be needed to ensure complete 9th grade large ensembles (this would also determine the instrument inventory).

• By 8th grade, all students should play the instrument they have begun to master in a small ensemble (quintet, quartet/combo – no conductor, just a coach). As stated above, switching instruments should be discouraged. Mastery can only be achieved through consistent effort over time. Assessment in 8th grade should continue as in earlier grades, with the addition of ensemble skills such as balance, blend, leadership, and influence. Each school system would need to maintain a library of literature to meet the needs of the various ensembles. Small ensemble repertoire should be designed for flexible instrumentation and might be facilitated through technology (e.g. a database of materials in Finale format, similar to the *Choral Public Domain Library).*

• All students should play or sing in a large ensemble in 9th grade (concert band, string orchestra, SATB choir). Students wishing to eschew instrumental performance in favor of singing should be allowed to return to the vocal medium. The likelihood of a student being able to continue both instrumental and vocal study will be slim at this stage. That is not a tragedy, it's merely a reality given the restrictions of scheduling. Assessment should follow the flow established in 8th grade, with a commitment to hear each individual student at least once a week. Thus, fluent call and response techniques would be essential for all large ensemble directors. Since such techniques will have been present in the music classroom since kindergarten, it should not be a hardship for the teacher nor disconcerting for the students. Ensemble literature must be top notch, not the latest and greatest pushed by the publisher. There is no need to try to keep up with contemporary music here – stick with the established classics. Repertoire should reflect a "great works" approach. A faculty committee would be charged to determine the top 25 or 30 works for each grade (I-VI), with new works added by petition as the budget allows. Every selection in the library must easily stand up to independent review based on nationally accepted criteria such as those enumerated by Jay Gilbert in his thesis[1].

Finally, in our hypothetical scenario intermediate music would not include marching band, pep band, jazz band, show choir, or pit orchestra. Although valid, these media represent specialized techniques and repertoire that is ancillary to basic, common practice musicianship. The purpose of elementary music is to build the foundation upon which the intermediate house will be built. Outbuildings like marching band aren't a part of the basic blueprint.

When the students complete the hypothetical music sequence (end of 9th grade), they should have achieved at least proficiency in each of the nine standards as described by MENC[2]. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, but there is great need to illustrate how the wheel might be installed. That is where MENC failed after the standards were unveiled in 1994. They assumed they would be absorbed into the current system. They were wrong.

3. Advanced music (10-12) should provide a spectrum of opportunities for students who wish to pursue the option of music study beyond the common core. As with advanced

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[1] http://www2.doane.edu/Dept_Pages/Gilbert/welcome.htm

[2] http://www.menc.org/resources/view/the-school-music-program-a-new-vision

placement classes in history, English, etc. advanced music is not intended to serve every student. Auditions may be an appropriate screening process at this stage. Although optional, advanced music must share the sequential approach and clear objectives demonstrated through the elementary and intermediate courses. The established progression hear – sing – read still applies; improvisation and artistry remain essential elements in every setting, and students should have an opportunity to explore improvisation idiomatically as well (esp. jazz, perhaps rock or gospel). Given their background, students would be prepared to continue in large and small ensembles, and college prep courses such as music theory, keyboard skills, composition, and music technology might be offered as resources warrant. However, even without such courses a student who is the product of this progression would be better prepared than the majority of freshmen music majors in the current system. Assessment must continue to be based on musical knowledge and skills, rather than participation/attendance and attitude.

- In the hypothetical model, once the advanced stage has been reached, marching band, pep band, show choir, and pit orchestra should only be offered as extra-curricular, club or team activities exactly analogous to sports teams or drama club. In high schools that include grades 9-12, freshmen would not be eligible to participate. Furthermore, just as a student cannot compete on two sports teams with overlapping seasons, students should be required to choose between overlapping activities (e.g. football and marching band, basketball and pep band).

- The advanced music curriculum should define an appropriate period of time for the preparation of any given performance material. Six months on any one piece is educational malpractice. Furthermore, performances in any given semester should demonstrate a progression of concepts and skills. For the experience to be educationally and artistically valid, participation in all performances must be required, hence scheduling must be carefully considered and fully supported by administration.

- The approach to literature selection established for the 9th grade ensembles (the "great works" concept) should extend through grades 10-12. That will enable the district to maintain a common library, saving money in the long run. The library doesn't have to be large, but it does have to include the best quality literature representative of a broad spectrum of compositional eras and styles.

When students complete the advanced portion of the hypothetical music sequence (end of 12th grade), they should function at the advanced achievement level of each of the national standards as defined by MENC. To this expectation I would add the ability to function deliberately as an artist for at least brief stretches of time. [See page 39 re: artistry].

To complete the picture of our hypothetical program, certain administrative initiatives would need to be set in motion. Various steps should be taken at the school district level to facilitate the shift to the new system. In all cases, there would need to be a confident and knowledgeable spokesperson designated to address the concerns of students, parents, and other members of the community. MENC should take the lead on the national level, and should provide materials to assist at the state and local levels (press kits, information hot-lines, website, etc.).

1. Suspend all contest and festival participation to alleviate the pressure of "having to get a 1" while changing gears. In the current system, many administrators take advantage of the district contest as a convenient way to assess the music program. In the hypothetical new system, they would need to find a new, and far more valid, method. Similarly, many music teachers use district contest to motivate students and build parental support. Teachers would need to learn new, more artistically driven methods of energizing their program.

2. Go cold turkey and discontinue all marching band, pep band, show choir, pit orchestra, and jazz activities for a period of at least three years. In many cases, these organizations are the tail wagging the dog that is the music program. Indeed, the average community member views these activities *as* the music program and the sole purpose of music education. Large scale deprogramming would need to take place to ensure the hypothetical new system has a secure footing. No doubt parents and students would be dismayed because Johnny won't have all those great experiences his parents/siblings/older classmates have had. Music teachers and band/show choir boosters' organizations would be dismayed because a large source of flexible revenue would be eliminated. Some of the more musically savvy would be dismayed because America's Great Cultural Heritage (aka jazz) is getting short shrift. Marching band and show choir enthusiasts would be dismayed because the trophy pipeline will dry up. Music publishers would be dismayed as a large source of revenue disappears. Nevertheless, it would have to be done, and as with removing a band-aid it should be done quickly.

3. Devote three years of Midwest Clinic and ACDA conference agendas to supporting the change. This is essential. Veteran teachers would need strategies to help them evolve in the hypothetical new system, and new teachers would need support and reassurance.

The huge problem with any change, hypothetical or otherwise, is to convince folks to let go of cherished habits and institutions (hence the three year trial periods in several areas). It would take the enlistment of some seriously talented professional marketers and publicists, and probably a high profile spokesperson or two (the modern equivalent of Leonard Bernstein, or Beverly Sills). It would also rely on the rapid success of a core cadre of "believers." To build such a team would require the support of a major university with a reputation for forward thinking and training quality teachers.

Dollars and cents

As the hypothetical scenario illustrates, it is possible for music to function as a full-fledged member of the core. Probability is another matter entirely, particularly in light of the fiscal impact of such a shift. Using La Crosse, Wisconsin as a model Chris Werner made the following projection:

> If 7th grade music becomes group lessons of twenty-five students each, the numbers for a single middle school would be approximately twelve sections of 7th grade music, plus twelve sections of 6th grade music and twelve sections of 8th grade music. The existing music wing has two large rooms. To cycle thirty-six sections of music through the music wing on a daily basis (core classes meet daily), the school would need a minimum of six or seven classrooms. Teachers are under contract to teach five classes each day (there are

> seven periods, but two are required for prep). To instruct the thirty-six sections of music would require a minimum of seven music teachers. The school currently employs four. Added staff increases the demands on administrators, particularly in the area of assessment, so add at least one to the administration roster.
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> In La Crosse, there are fourteen elementary schools. Elementary music instruction is covered by a team of seven teachers who travel among the schools. The hypothetical system would require fourteen teachers, or at least one for each building. There are three middle schools on the model described above; each would need to increase its staff from four to seven. There are two high schools, each with four music teachers. In the hypothetical system, the high schools (10-12) could remain essentially as is.

Chris' bottom line: to move music from its current ambiguous status to core would demand an increase of sixteen positions. Following current Wisconsin staffing guidelines, each teacher costs the system approximately $70,000 (includes salary and benefits at the MM+0 level). Staffing alone would represent a more than $1.1 million annual increase to the school system budget. Add the necessary building costs for rooms and instrument storage, and the number balloons dramatically at the front end.

Additional obstacles include fitting music classes into already over-stretched student schedules, perhaps requiring an extended school day, and the inevitable bullying of non-core subjects to make all the pieces of the puzzle fit. It is hypothetically possible to bring music into the core, but is it worth it? Another way to phrase the question to the music education establishment is: if this is what "core" means, are you willing to do what it takes to make it happen? I'll go out on a limb (a short one), and predict the answer would be no. It's a short limb, because music education has a long track record of compromise simply to exist as part of public school instruction – even an elective part. If your resources are taxed when contesting a parking ticket, you're in no position to fight World War III.

Through the Looking-Glass

If music is not supportable within the core, then let's visit the opposite hypothetical extreme: no music in the schools. All the resources and space currently allocated to music would be divided up among the traditional academic core subjects, which would enable those subjects to have a better shot at meeting the needs of students nationwide. Not a bad idea actually, but before we call in the demolition crew we need to imagine what our society would look like without any music instruction in the public schools.

If we return to the initial injection of music into the school day, back to Lowell Mason, we find the two most senior arguments in favor of music in the curriculum: improved performance of music in church services, and greater appreciation of European art music. The church music angle dried up early in the 20th century and its counterpart – the idea that music's role was to elevate, exalt, and enrich the lives of students throughout their lives – expanded to fill the void. Mason's appreciation angle was souped-up to cover a much more democratic selection of musical styles and traditions. The result was a popular new twist to the concept of appreciation. Mason's goal was to assert the moral and artistic superiority of European art music; appreciation meant the acquisition of refined and cultured tastes as they were defined by the upper class. The broadening of the spectrum of music worthy of appreciation changed the goal of music educators

to training students to be more intelligent and discerning patrons/consumers of music – all music. The bias toward art music remains steadfast (Mozart is still an undisputed genius), but ethnic and popular traditions have earned and held a place at the table for more than half a century.

If the objective of making more intelligent patrons/consumers of music through public school instruction holds true, then removing music from the school day would result in the evaporation of the more complex, abstract, and artistic forms of music. As in *Lord of the Flies,* the musical marketplace would be ruled by the simplest, most visceral and popular forms. I can picture an episode of *Celebrity Deathmatch* in which Miley Cyrus eviscerates Igor Stravinsky in three rounds. Without musical instruction, American consumers would be defenseless in the face of unscrupulous marketing firms as they wield the unfathomable influence of music to sell products nobody needs. And Lowell Mason's worst nightmare would be realized as hard-line conservative religious sects finally succeed in eliminating every shred of music from churches, temples, and synagogues from coast to coast. Oh, the humanity!

But wait…what we know today as art music developed gradually over centuries in which there was no public education and even the nobility was largely illiterate. In fact, today's art music is yesterday's popular music with a patina of respectability gained by sitting on the shelf long enough so the majority has forgotten its existence. The same happens with furniture and household items: keep them for twenty years and – presto! – they're antiques worthy of collection. Is Bakelite truly a cultural treasure? Maybe if you're a chemist, but to the rest of us it's just old plastic. The same can be said of Beethoven. Furthermore, the musical marketplace has always been ruled by the simplest, most visceral (for the age) and popular forms – Mozart was the Miley Cyrus of his day – and even the ancient Greeks knew that music hath charms to loosen the tightest purse strings. And alas, I think it's fair to say that after enduring millennia of crossfire from competing philosophies music is permanently ensconced in the majority of religious traditions, even without the help of public education.

Music – even dusty old art music – isn't going anywhere, school instruction or no. Society's understanding and use of music will continue to evolve. Consider this: virtually every 20th century non-art-music trend is the result of activity wholly outside of school music curricula (jazz, rock, rap, punk, disco, grunge, gospel, alternative, etc.). Consider too the recent rejuvenation of classical album sales with the spectacular emergence of mp3 technology and iTunes. Left to himself, and given buffet-style access, the average Joe is likely to choose a balanced diet of musical fare. This has little to do with music education; it has everything to do with the nature of music itself. Music = protein. Our bodies know it even if our conscious mind forgets. It's hardwired. Archeologists have found musical instruments that are approximately 80,000 years old. Public education has existed for much less than one percent of that span of time. Music is here to stay, and it doesn't need the schools in order to flourish. Rather, the schools need music in order to reach their full potential.

Music isn't the core; it's the seeds within the core. Without the fundamental material of artistry, nothing new can grow. The core academic subjects are the result of artistic thinking and creative problem solving. Descartes, Euclid, Newton, Einstein, Copernicus, Galileo, Herodotus, Aristotle, Edison, Gutenberg…every original thinker since the dawn of man has relied on his artistic faculties to transform and expand the boundaries of human understanding and achievement.

Artistry

Artistry is an ideal that is often misunderstood, but it occupies the very heart of why education in the arts is essential. It has taken me a long time to find a word that accurately described my goal as a conductor, for myself and the ensembles with which I work. The key to my understanding of artistry is that it has nothing to do with perfection. In fact, much of artistry is antithetical to the concept of perfection. Imagine: a pianist sets out to create a perfect rendition of a Beethoven sonata. But the "perfect" version of that sonata only existed in Beethoven's mind. Even the score, set down in the composer's own hand, is imperfect due to the limitations of notation. Even if the pianist could reach directly into Beethoven's brain, he would not acting as an artist; he would be acting as a copyist, and any scientist that works with cloning will tell you the copy is never as good as the original. Artistry demands individuality. Not originality for its own sake (the horrible misconstruing of the concept of interpretation), but originality that is inevitable because each of us is unique.

The only way you could achieve a perfect rendition of a Beethoven sonata is to *be* Beethoven. Even Liszt couldn't do it, nor would he have wanted to. Liszt's artistry depended upon his being Liszt. Forget perfection. The best we can do (and it's darn good) is Beethoven through Liszt. Okay, he's dead, but the point is the artist is inevitably a filter. The responsibility of the artist is, therefore, to be as loose a filter as possible – to allow as much of Beethoven, and as little of himself, to come through. In this case, Liszt is probably a bad example because I suspect he deliberately Lisztified whatever repertoire came his way. Skillful? Certainly. Talented? No doubt. Smart? All the way to the bank. Artistic? Debatable.

Another way of looking at it: perfection is universal, artistry is individual. Perfection is objective and immutable; artistry is subjective (to some degree) and ephemeral. Even if perfection were possible to achieve, it is certainly impossible to recreate. As the great thinkers strive to illuminate the perfection of the universe/nature/God's creation/human potential (your choice), the only tool available to them is artistry because they are working ahead of the curve. They are surveying uncharted territory and have to improvise until the rest of us catch up.

Artistry isn't merely skill, nor is it simply creativity. It is the deliberate exercise of all your faculties (intellect, emotion, technique, intuition) in a concerted effort to bring into being something that wasn't there before[3]. For a musician, it is an honest, unpretentious effort to make music in a given moment. For young musicians, that moment might be a single note, by accident. For pros it is likely to stretch over a sustained period of time, on purpose. For me, the importance is the realization that artistry is possible at every level – from beginner to expert. The proportion of artistry to routine work will change over time. However, even the greatest artists still have their share of mundane effort just as the most rudimentary practitioners have the potential for a flash of artistry. Another difference that develops is the ability to be deliberately artistic, versus stumbling upon it through dumb luck.

Take a typical kindergarten class, give each kid a box of elbow macaroni, a bottle of non-toxic glue, and a sheet of construction paper. Give them some time, and when they're done set their pictures side by side. Odds are there will be at least one that stands apart from the others, if only

[3] For a spectacular demonstration of artistry through stone masonry, check out http://www.lewfrenchstone.com/

a little bit. Perhaps the arrangement of the noodles is more asymmetrical, or it incorporates an unusual grasp of the media (e.g. solo glue blobs interspersed with the noodles), or there is a different sense of dimension (e.g. stacked noodles, rather than a single layer). Is it great art? No, it's pasta stuck to paper. Is it a demonstration of artistry? Absolutely. Was it intentional? Probably not. Does it matter? At this stage of the game, no. But if the teacher is smart, he'll teach the class what is artistic about Johnny's picture to help them see new possibilities.

In the U.S., seeing new possibilities as the result of artistry has brought to life Microsoft, NASA, Coca-Cola, hybrid cars, the Peace Corps, polio vaccines, electricity, refrigeration, microwave popcorn, in-line roller skates, contact lenses, and jet planes. American artistry has also conjured up *Rhapsody in Blue,* Mickey Mouse, Taliesin, *Appalachian Spring, American Gothic, Moby Dick,* the twist, and the collected works of Robert Frost. Intriguingly, many of the artists responsible for these works were either poor students or dropped out of school altogether. Perhaps there is something inherent in our school system that discourages artistry. If we've accomplished all of the above in spite of discouragement, imagine the possibilities if we remove the impediment (that exercise in itself requires artistic thinking, by the way).

Let's visit a typical middle school band rehearsal – a curricular locale that should be devoted to artistic development. The ensemble is practicing "Air for Band." Ask each student to play a given phrase. Odds are there will be at least one performance that stands out from the others. But here's the catch: the teacher isn't listening for artistry (phrase shape, intent, personality, etc.), he is listening for technical accuracy. The kindergarten equivalent would be: did the student use the glue to stick the macaroni to the paper – yes or no? In band: did the student play the correct notes and rhythms – yes or no? Artistry isn't on the teacher's radar screen because music educators are taught to believe that artistry is "advanced."

If Johnny happens to play a nice phrase, he's got "talent." According to most, you can't teach that, let alone measure it. But in the interests of advocacy, most band directors will take credit for it when everybody says what a wonderful music teacher Johnny must have because he sounds so good. But if Johnny's band director is constantly on the alert for flashes of artistry in every student – not merely those with talent – he'll have plenty of fodder to help the entire ensemble hear new possibilities.

Can Johnny recreate his successful phrase? Probably not, because he's now self-conscious so his "filter" is too tight. But he – and everybody else – knows it's possible. They now have a clear target to aim at. Sadly, in normal band rehearsals, artistry isn't the target – technical accuracy is. You've got clear correct v. incorrect to build a grading rubric upon. Also (and this is the most tragic element of all): most music educators can't recognize flashes of artistry, they can only spot it in its most obvious, extended (i.e. professional) form. Sadly, as artistic flashes go unnoticed while technical accuracy is rewarded the ensemble sets their priorities accordingly.

By the time these students arrive in college, they are stiff as a board and deprogramming is both tedious and painful. It's like physical therapy after being in full-body cast for 8 years. "But I played all the correct notes; what do you mean I've only earned a B for this lesson?" "My range is much bigger than hers; why wasn't I assigned the principal part?" "But I was the best in my high school; I should be in the wind ensemble." Every now and again I'll get a kid who managed to remain flexible. They might not set the world on fire technically, but they're a joy to work

with. Happily, technique tends to catch up with artistic instinct rapidly, whereas artistry doesn't necessarily follow technique willingly.

Planting

Embedding the seeds of artistic thought in the curricula of the public schools is a much less onerous and expensive proposition than a full-blown attempt to make music a core subject. It's the same with landscaping: if you buy a fully grown tree for instant shade, it's going to cost an arm and a leg and will take an industrial digging machine to plant it – but call before you dig, or you'll be chatting with John Barnes Chance before you know what hit you. But if you buy a sapling and a spade and have the patience to wait a few years you can achieve the same result eventually. (Nebraskans should understand this concept better than anybody as Nebraska is the home of Arbor Day, the oldest Federal Tree Nursery, and the largest hand-planted forest in the U.S. Before the Cornhuskers, Nebraska was "The tree planter's state").

This brings us back to teacher training. In short, teachers must be trained to recognize the faintest flashes of artistry in any setting. To recognize artistry, one has to have had an actual artistic experience; to teach artistry one has to be able to be deliberately artistic. In a fit of enthusiasm I would suggest that all teachers, regardless of subject area, should be equipped with this essential skill. In the subsequent hangover called pragmatism I will simply assert that this skill is essential for teachers in the arts (although I still think it would be a fantastic bonus for everybody else too).

The great obstacle to achieving this vision is the fact that artistry can't be measured. In today's testing-based educational culture, there is no such thing as an unassessable necessity. But we're taught that the best things in life are free, and MasterCard keeps reminding us that the essentials of life are "priceless." In other words, the true goal of life can't be measured. I'm beginning to envision an ad campaign for artistry in the schools:

> "Macaroni, $4. Construction paper and glue, $2. The ability to sit in your garage and invent a device to change the world…priceless."

It took artistic thinking for a bunch of guys to dress as Native Americans and pitch tea into Boston Harbor. The non-artistic response to the Tea Act of 1773 would have been to simply stop buying tea. $4/gallon gas? Maybe it's time to don ethnic costumes and start throwing things again. Or maybe American artistry will come through yet again with a viable alternative energy source (costumes would be more fun though).

With all thoughts of spiffy outfits aside, meaningful assessment is a vital aspect of education that is essentially absent in arts education. We have to have some way to tell if teachers are teaching and students are learning. Science, math, and history are fact based, and problems are solved through a right/wrong, yes/no process. The Battle of Hastings was fought in 1066 – correct! The atomic number of xenon is 56 – wrong! (It's 54). The humanities deal with meaning in a similar fashion. Bibliothèque means library in French – correct! *Hamlet* is a dramatic tragedy that revolves around death as its central theme – bingo! In physical education you have a score, or a time, or a weight to measure yourself against. But in the arts there is no right/wrong, there is only better/worse.

To add to the confusion, since the 1960s it has become virtual social policy in the U.S. that qualitative judgments are insensitive and elitist, and therefore frowned upon. When we pulled down the rigid class structures of the early 20th century (a laudable achievement, to be sure) we threw out some valuable building materials that might have been recycled. The skill of argument, central to the Socratic and Judaic traditions, was tossed on the rubble pile like so much bent copper pipe. The popularly held concept of debate in the U.S. has degenerated to mean nothing more than vociferous posturing based on emotion rather than logic. Meaningful debate and productive argument requires the skillful, logical application of better/worse thinking – but we've removed better/worse from the toolbox.

As a result, we have become a "good enough" society that feels the need to apologize for striving to be stronger, smarter, and (yes) better than our global neighbors. Artists solve problems through a better/worse process rather than a right/wrong process. By enlivening our nation's artistic capacities we will once again recognize that better is not wrong. I have digressed, but I can tie this quickly back into the flow with a single question.

In vino veritas

When does "good enough" become intolerable? Frank Battisti told an anecdote at the Midwest Clinic that is particularly apt here. If all you've tasted are $6 bottles of wine, you'll be perfectly content until somebody gives you a $200 bottle. After that, those $6 bottles won't taste the same. What was once refreshing becomes vaguely disappointing. Obviously, a problem arises if your budget is limited but nobody will dispute quality.

Transferring the analogy to music education, I would assert that the majority of teachers have never been involved personally in the musical equivalent of a $200 bottle. They have probably heard a top-notch professional performance (at least a recording), just as our $6 wine enthusiast has no doubt seen $200 bottles on the shelf at the liquor store. But until you've actually tasted/performed at the higher level you can easily write it off as a luxury. But if you're an oenophile, or a musician, those peak experiences are the whole point – they are a necessity, even if they are encountered infrequently.

According to common lore among music educators, when you're "in the trenches" teaching middle school you're dealing with the musical equivalent of Ripple and your taste buds (ear buds?) burn off. Evidently this excuses – or causes, as so many have told me – the hacking away on the podium that is called either conducting or teaching depending on who you ask. In essence, the argument is this: there is no reason to break out the Riedel stemware when a mason jar will do, and since they're just kids you'd be foolish to waste the good stuff on them. Heck, forget Ripple and go with Mountain Dew straight from the plastic bottle. They'll prefer the taste and will drink more, and drinking (the activity) is the point – right?

Wrong. The point is to educate the palette to be able to discern the elements of even the most complex flavor. You can't teach someone to prefer one flavor over another (there truly is no accounting for taste), but you can teach them to use their taste buds to their fullest capacity. To do so, you have to explore the full range of possibilities in a logical progression. This means that the teacher needs to know what the full range is – you can't teach what you don't know. And that's why so many music educators are so limited in their abilities and aspirations.

I just read another article in the *Yale Alumni Magazine*, this one by Stanley Fish ("Education: The Deflationary View," July/August 2008), that summarizes the issue aptly:

> College and university teachers can (legitimately) do two things: (1) introduce students to bodies of knowledge and traditions of inquiry that had not previously been part of their experience; and (2) equip those same students with the analytical skills – of argument, statistical modeling, laboratory procedure – that will enable them to move confidently within those traditions and to engage in independent research after a course is over.

To bring this into the realm of music education, most BME programs rely heavily on students' ability to retain and reenact their high school band/choir experience. It is the tradition of self-perpetuation mentioned earlier. To enable students to reach beyond previous experience one must first loosen their grip on the cherished attitudes and practices that caused most to pursue music as a career. When a student enters a degree program in, say, engineering he is essentially a blank slate. He doesn't go to class expecting to have the same experience he had in high school. He expects to be challenged with new material. Not so with musicians. Many music majors are resentful of having to acquire new skills ("These are just hoops to jump through to get the degree"), distrustful of new techniques ("I won't need to know this – my band director didn't"), and disparaging of new literature ("We didn't play this in high school"). Tragically, these attitudes often calcify into the foundation of their professional goals and aspirations – the very educational philosophy that will drive all decision making throughout their career.

These faulty philosophies must be challenged. However, protocol in the arts facilitates avoidance ("It's art, it's how I feel – you can't tell me I'm wrong"). Also, the time worn argument "because I said so" isn't sufficient beyond fourth grade. Believe me, I've tried. This brings us to Dr. Fish's second item: equipping for independence. In short, there is both a qualitative and quantitative difference between "Hey Ya" and a Beethoven sonata (between a $6 and a $200 bottle of wine) and it is the faculty's obligation to illuminate it. Nobody has to like the sonata when all is said and done. I still can't stand most string quartets, but I can tell you why one is of a higher quality than another and that ability – the deliberate exercise of artistic thinking – makes me stronger in all areas. It's mental cross-training.

Who gets to judge?

Scene: I am an M.D. and I am observing another doctor whose job it is to set broken bones (indeed, a doctor who has the reputation of being the best in town). My colleague finishes setting the patient's arm and proudly introduces him to me. I shake hands with the patient and notice that his arm bends unnaturally, like a wet noodle. This scene is repeated several times over several years, always with the same result. I conclude that my colleague is not good at setting broken arms, in spite of his reputation.

Would any sane person have a problem with my conclusion? The purpose of setting a broken bone is to keep it immobile. The patient's bone was mobile, every time. End of story. Now, if we change the scene and I walk into a maternity ward with the intent of observing a colleague setting broken bones, I would be an idiot to claim that the obstetrician delivering a baby was doing a poor job of setting a broken arm. I'll grant that.

Scene: I am a D.M. and I am observing another musician whose job it is to teach music to high school students in an ensemble setting (indeed, a musician who has the reputation of being the best high school band director in his region). I witness the following:

- the first ten minutes of a forty-eight-minute class period are devoted to a discussion of fund raising.

- during the subsequent warm up interval, many students are talking and wandering around. Those who are playing an instrument are ripping through the "fun" passages of their ensemble music, or seeing if they can play higher and/or louder than their neighbor, or (in the case of the percussion) whacking objects randomly while telling jokes.

- finally, the director leads the ensemble through a short excerpt, followed by the director's lengthy verbal description of what they should have done. They play the excerpt again, with a slight adjustment from a few players, followed by more directorly banter. After the initial description and adjustment, the ensemble doesn't budge at all and the descriptions become more verbose. They reach the end of the piece, and the sound of the ensemble is virtually unchanged.

I am then invited to the podium to lead the remainder of the rehearsal – the D.M.'s equivalent of the M.D. shaking hands with the patient. We play a short excerpt, followed by a brief request to adjust a specific element (shorter, louder, etc.). We play the excerpt again and the ensemble complies, with the exception of the percussion who are doing homework from another class. We then play another excerpt and as we play I move to adjust certain elements (aka conducting). The more savvy students comply while the majority remains essentially oblivious. This cycle continues and gradually the ensemble's sound changes perceptibly. This scene is repeated several times over several years, always with the same result. My conclusions are manifold:

- Given the allocation of time within the class period, I conclude that the my colleague's priorities are out of whack based on the stated purpose of the class.

- Given the behavior of the students in the warm up interval, I conclude that the ensemble doesn't know or doesn't value the standard elements of physical, musical, and mental pre-performance routines.

- Given the quality of the interaction of the ensemble and the conductor when involved with the excerpt, I conclude that either the ensemble is dense, lethargic, and/or recalcitrant (entirely possible for normal teenagers), or the director's instructions and actions are ineffective in terms of adjusting the sound of the ensemble.

- Given my own direct interaction with the ensemble, I conclude that they are a typical high school band: some students are very talented and flexible, some are hopeless and rigid, and most are in the agreeable, malleable middle. I conclude further that if the ensemble's sound can be adjusted positively in a short period of time, it should be able to change dramatically over an extended period of time (e.g. a semester, or school year).

- Finally, combining all of the above, I conclude that the director is not a skillful conductor and is not an effective teacher. When it came time to shake hands, the evidence proved the metaphorical bone wasn't set.

I return to the school several times over a period of several years and observe an exact reenactment of the scene described above. The ensemble sounds and behaves identically in each instance. It becomes clear that the achievement of this sound and behavior is the goal, or at least the default setting of the resident director. Furthermore, consistent with my colleague's reputation, this ensemble has received the highest rating at contest every year for many consecutive years, reinforcing the merit of the director's goals/habits and professional status. There's the rub.

As an individual who was invited to observe, and someone who is regularly paid to judge ensembles, someone who has earned three degrees in music and who has been a musician for thirty years, I bear the professional responsibility to view all activity in my field with a discerning eye. But a significant portion of my judgment is based on a template of my own design. Thus, my judgment can be categorized as opinion. In the case of the doctor setting the broken arm, even a non-M.D.'s judgment would be considered fact. Everybody knows a bone shouldn't be wiggly, but very few people know how to perceive subtle differences in the sound of an ensemble. Even fewer know that the sound of an ensemble is supposed to be adjustable. Indeed, to most music educators the goal is an ensemble whose sound is not adjustable, but consistent and clean, solidly fixed and "correct."

However, the portion of my judgment that is based on fact – in a music classroom, a music teacher is supposed to teach music – cannot be written off as opinion. Fund raising is not music. Furthermore, students in a classroom are supposed to be "on task." Percussionists doing math homework during rehearsal are not on task. Hence, my judgment that this teacher is not effective as a teacher is objectively accurate. But my judgment that this band director is sub-par as a conductor is debatable because there is not agreement even among professionals as to what conducting is, let alone what constitutes more or less effective conducting.

My judgment on that front can be dismissed as opinion, or even delusion, and it often is (dismissed, not deluded). The weirdest thing is to work with an ensemble that hears itself changing even as their director can't. I have had this experience with bands as young as 6th grade. If the director hears something, it is chalked up to the Guest Conductor Effect. I'll be the first to admit that a new voice has an edge over the resident teacher. The point is that the ensemble can change, and once they realize it the sky's the limit. But the director has to be willing and able to change with them. There's rub #2.

There are many objective elements about teaching that can and should be judged but aren't. Case in point: I know a teacher who is now in a mysterious 4th year of probation before earning tenure as a high school band director. He's a great guy and a talented musician, but a lousy band director and an inept teacher. He should have been booted long ago, but the administration is unwilling to judge even the objective aspects of his work. Why? Because nobody really knows what's supposed to be happening in the band room. Kids are having fun, and the band is playing peppy tunes – isn't that what music is about? We're back to Mountain Dew in plastic bottles.

Bottom line: music educators have created a very effective smoke screen behind which they are able to hide some egregiously bad teaching. The other core subjects resent this, because their subjects are transparent: either you can add, or you can't. If Johnny can't read and write, it's obvious. But who's to say if Johnny is a good musician? Meredith Wilson hit the nail on the head with Prof. Harold Hill and the Think System. Each music educator reserves the right to

judge according to his own unique template. Since Lowell Mason started the ball rolling, each educator has been allowed – indeed encouraged – to create his own. There are no checks and balances, so a music teacher has a good chance of talking his way out of being fired as long as he hasn't broken any laws. It's a free-for-all.

So, who has the right to judge? Everybody, and nobody. I'm working on the principle that it's survival of the one with the most proof – I agree with the premise of Dr. Fish ("Education: The Deflationary View"). I can back up my judgments twenty ways to Sunday; that's why fewer and fewer people hang out with me at Midwest, and I don't think I'll be invited to judge certain district band contests again. They retreat behind the smoke and are tragically allowed to do so by the Powers That Be. If they see someone holding a fan, the go into lock-down behind the standard excuses: block scheduling, budget insufficiency, helicopter parents, too many conflicting extracurricular activities, disinterested administrators, and lack of innate musical talent in the student body.

Where's Toto when you need him?

In *The Wizard of Oz*, it was Toto who pulled the curtain back to reveal the wizard's fakery. The dog was an inspired choice for this act. He couldn't be accused of malice, or jealousy, or any other human motive. In the face of a dog simply being a dog, the wizard had no choice but to confess. But the wizard's ruse was obvious: he wasn't who/what he claimed to be. In music education it's not that clear cut. Who is the musical/educational equivalent of Toto? I'm not sure there is one. Everybody has a stake, and nobody can realistically claim to be disinterested or objective.

What are the odds that the Wizard will give himself up? It hasn't happened so far, but there is an odd situation in Oz. Everybody knows the Wizard is a charlatan. I have yet to meet a music educator who believed there weren't serious problems in the national system of public education generally, and music education specifically. Teachers are a notoriously critical lot. There is a silver lining to this cloud, however. Teachers' naturally critical faculties can, through artistry, be put to good use. The key is to return to the ancient foundation of argument and debate.

Assessment in the arts cannot be objective, but it can be logical. According to our old friend *Wikipedia,* in a comparatively well supported and thoroughly cross-referenced article, logic is the study of the principles of valid inference and demonstration. The word derives from Greek λογική (logike), fem. of λογικός (logikos), "possessed of reason, intellectual, dialectical, argumentative", from λόγος logos, "word, thought, idea, argument, account, reason, or principle". The article continues,

> As a formal science, logic investigates and classifies the structure of statements and arguments, both through the study of formal systems of inference and through the study of arguments in natural language. The field of logic ranges from core topics such as the study of validity, fallacies and paradoxes, to specialized analysis of reasoning using probability and to arguments involving causality. Logic is also commonly used today in argumentation theory.

Logic has been used for thousands of years as a tool to get a grip on that slipperiest of nouns: truth. Art and truth have a similarly long-lived association that occasionally involved Grecian

urns. The English playwright Harold Pinter began his 2005 Nobel Prize in Literature acceptance speech with a vivid description of the frustration, urgency, and necessity of grappling with truth.

> In 1958 I wrote the following:
>
> 'There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false.'
>
> I believe that these assertions still make sense and do still apply to the exploration of reality through art. So as a writer I stand by them but as a citizen I cannot. As a citizen I must ask: What is true? What is false?
>
> Truth in drama is forever elusive. You never quite find it but the search for it is compulsive. The search is clearly what drives the endeavour. The search is your task. More often than not you stumble upon the truth in the dark, colliding with it or just glimpsing an image or a shape which seems to correspond to the truth, often without realizing that you have done so. But the real truth is that there never is any such thing as one truth to be found in dramatic art. There are many. These truths challenge each other, recoil from each other, reflect each other, ignore each other, tease each other, are blind to each other. Sometimes you feel you have the truth of a moment in your hand, then it slips through your fingers and is lost.

Once upon a time, truth was central to university study. Consider the motto of Yale University: Light and Truth. Or Northwestern: Whatsoever things are true. Or Harvard: Truth. Or Johns Hopkins: The truth shall make you free. Or the University of Michigan: Art, Science, Truth. You get the picture. In the second half of the 20th century, the accumulation of facts has usurped the quest for truth as the modus operandi of college students. Even liberal arts colleges have adopted job training as their central mission in lieu of education in the broader sense. This shift is causing the essential skills of reasoning and argumentation to atrophy in the American citizenry.

Consider the irony of the business degree. In many universities the business school is the fastest growing, if not the largest division of the institution. Students are majoring, double-majoring, and minoring in business with the hopes of landing a job in the "real world." Parents encourage their progeny to enter the business program believing it to be a practical and efficient path to a good salary, healthcare, and retirement plan. Here's the best part: in the "real world" the business degree has come to be viewed as the most useless – a distinction formerly held by degrees in the arts. Successful businesses actively avoid hiring business majors because they have been taught everything about balancing the books, marketing, and team building, and nothing about thinking, prioritizing, and problem solving. Businesses want liberal arts majors – rather, what liberal arts majors used to be.

Be careful what you wish for

Twenty-five years ago the U.S. was number one in college graduation rates when the report *A Nation at Risk* was published. It began,

> Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world.

Many of the indicators of risk cited in the April, 1983 document remain unchecked in 2008. The report stated,

> Business and military leaders complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs in such basic skills as reading, writing, spelling, and computation. The Department of the Navy, for example, reported to the Commission that one-quarter of its recent recruits cannot read at the ninth grade level, the minimum needed simply to understand written safety instructions. Without remedial work they cannot even begin, much less complete, the sophisticated training essential in much of the modern military.
>
> These deficiencies come at a time when the demand for highly skilled workers in new fields is accelerating rapidly.

Perhaps the most fateful statements in the report are these:

> Educational researcher Paul Hurd concluded at the end of a thorough national survey of student achievement that within the context of the modern scientific revolution, "We are raising a new generation of Americans that is scientifically and technologically illiterate." In a similar vein, John Slaughter, a former Director of the National Science Foundation, warned of "a growing chasm between a small scientific and technological elite and a citizenry ill-informed, indeed uninformed, on issues with a science component."

Society wished for a more scientific, fact-based, job-oriented curriculum in the misguided belief that it would improve the U.S.'s position in the world economy. They demanded more precise methods of assessment and a bolstering of the academic core (aka the "New Basics:" English, science, math, social studies, and computer science). Foreign language study received special mention in addition to the basics. Everything else fell into Implementing Recommendation #7:

> The high school curriculum should also provide students with programs requiring rigorous effort in subjects that advance students' personal, educational, and occupational goals, such as the fine and performing arts and vocational education. These areas complement the New Basics, and they should demand the same level of performance as the Basics.

Lucky #7 didn't stand a chance against the legions of recommendations tied to the New Basics, and among the Basic siblings it was patently obvious that math and science were the favorites. Furthermore, #7 is spectacularly vague compared to, say, #2:

> The teaching of *mathematics* in high school should equip graduates to: (a) understand geometric and algebraic concepts; (b) understand elementary probability and statistics; (c) apply mathematics in everyday situations; and (d) estimate, approximate, measure, and test the accuracy of their calculations. In addition to the traditional sequence of studies available for college-bound students, new, equally demanding mathematics

> curricula need to be developed for those who do not plan to continue their formal education immediately.

Inspiring stuff. Society made a wish in "A Nation at Risk" and we've gotten exactly what we asked for: more emphasis on the New Basics, more stringent assessment, clearer standards. We've also gotten rampant grade and degree inflation, increasing instances of in-school violence, and a resurgence of teacher retention problems. So now it's a quarter of a century after the report and we've dropped twenty ranks in college graduation rates. Well done. Mathematics (the favorite son), has evidently decided to spend the time "finding itself" while backpacking through the Alps because the U.S. now ranks twenty-fifth among thirty industrialized countries in that subject. But we can't blame math, we have to blame the parents that put a futon on the floor of the basement next to the water heater for "the fine and performing arts and vocational education" in order to give each of the New Basics its own room (each equipped with cable TV, wireless internet, and a mini-fridge for snacks). Now if the parents had just told the New Basics they had to share a room with the futon group, the whole family would be better off.

In this analogy it's easy to see the government in the role of the parents. However, that's not accurate. The government is more like the in-laws/grandparents who think they know better than the parents because they walked to school in the snow, up hill (both ways). The parents are educators – the folks who actually live with the children in question and are responsible for their well being. Educators are in an awkward position. Grandma is threatening to write them out of the will if little Johnny doesn't win the global Soap Box Derby. But on Derby day, Johnny inevitably gets left in the dust.

"No Child Left Behind" is the offspring of "A Nation at Risk," and the family resemblance is uncanny. Each takes issue with teacher training and assessment but neither recognizes the fatal flaw: we're measuring what we wish teachers would teach even as we train and equip them to teach something else. Grandma wants a Derby trophy, but she's insisting that Johnny take tennis lessons. It's a curricular shell game and we've all lost track of the pea.

To return to an earlier metaphor, we're training teachers to plant the core without the seeds and we're wondering why the trees we think we're planting aren't growing. That's right – we've spent the last twenty-five years burying sterile cores in the ground. Wait…that sounds like a landfill. It is! The very same landfill discussed in Part I. Logic would dictate that after twenty-five years of trying without a positive result one should try something else. But the curriculum teaches neither logic nor creative problem solving, so we're going with "No Child Left Behind." After all, it's exactly what we wished for.

Oh, *that's* what that is

Centuries ago, music and logic sat side by side as two of the original seven liberal arts. In Medieval universities, the seven were divided into the Trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric), and the Quadrivium (geometry, arithmetic, music, and astronomy). The Trivium was the foundation, or baccalaureate program. The Quadrivium comprised the master of arts, whereas philosophy and theology were reserved for the terminal degree (Ph.D.). Many improvements and additions have been made to this basic structure as the world has become more complex. In the hubbub, we accidentally tossed out one small but essential item of common sense: before you

teach someone what to think you have to teach him how to think. Before you furnish a mind with facts, figures, and abstractions you have to build the room to hold the furniture.

In music education programs, we're ending up with a pile of chandeliers, bean-bag chairs, butter churns, and armoires in the middle of the lawn. We continue to neglect to build the house even as we fail to wonder why we're still holding on to a butter churn. What's missing? Logic. In her book *The Trivium: The Liberal Arts of Logic, Grammar, and Rhetoric* (2002), Sister Miriam Joseph illustrates the house quite neatly:

> Logic is the art of thinking; grammar, the art of inventing symbols and combining them to express thought; and rhetoric, the art of communicating thought from one mind to another.

It's a simple blueprint, and it's no wonder we threw it out mistaking it for a placemat from Long John Silvers. We have committed a logical misstep in assuming that because we are no longer trying to create philosophers and theologians (for the most part), we don't need the structure that supported those programs. We're never going to use the attic, so forget about building the basement. Genius.

Am I suggesting that we recreate the curriculum from the University of Oxford, c. 1200? Certainly not. But music is located in the Tornado Alley of academia and we need that basement. Big winds are constantly trying to blow it out of the neighborhood and without the refuge that logic provides, we're headed for Oz.

I'll have what she's having

The scene from "When Harry Met Sally" has become the stuff of film legend. In the interest of keeping this essay Rated G, we'll just say that Meg Ryan's character is experiencing a vividly positive emotional response to her lunch and another customer would like to enjoy the same meal. It's funny, and a very accurate illustration of human nature (the grass *is* always greener). However, it is not logical – it's emotional. Meg Ryan could be eating a peanut butter sandwich, and the lady may have a severe legume allergy. She wouldn't enjoy the sandwich at all, and might well end up in the emergency room.

Since the advent of romanticism, emotion has risen to dominate all other aspects of art. In the 20th century, the new mix proved to be a powerful fertilizer that encouraged the germination of more artistic styles and philosophies than at any other point in history. In essence, it liberated artistry from the bounds of technique. It raised the humble peanut butter sandwich to rival Escoffier's masterpieces. Picasso and Tillie[4] (the Jack Russell terrier that specializes in abstract expressionist "paintings") can now share gallery space. Enjoyment shoved edification out the window, and the pursuit of happiness supplanted the pursuit of truth and beauty.

In a supremely weird twist, the phrase "I don't know if it's art, but I know what I like" came to mean "What I like has more value than what I don't understand." There was a time not so long ago when the man on the street assumed that something he didn't understand had more value

[4] http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/215796/painting_pooch_gets_2200_per_masterpiece.html

than his everyday favorites. The effort to grasp more subtlety and complexity was factored in to overall value. Now you have to offer a discount if thought is involved.

Setting aside the challenge of defining art (FYI: *Britannica Online* defines it as "the use of skill and imagination in the creation of aesthetic objects, environments, or experiences that can be shared with others"), let's consider the relationship of art to happiness. For the sake of this investigation we'll use the concept of enjoyment as an expression of happiness. It is common in today's cultural climate to say "Because I enjoy X, X is good; therefore X is art." Enjoyable = good = art, or the short version: enjoyable = art as in, "Wow, the guy who made this burrito is an artist!" He may well be, but the fact that you like his burrito has nothing to do with it.

In 1896, in his essay *What is Art?,* Leo Tolstoy described, "the prevalent view of today which regards any art as good if only it affords pleasure." It would seem that 21st century sensibilities are not as evolved as we might like to believe. He went on to write, "Art, in our society, has been so perverted that not only has bad art come to be considered good, but even the very perception of what art really is has been lost." More than a century has passed and we still haven't found it. In the abstract, this really isn't a problem. It keeps philosophers from wandering the streets without purpose, and most people don't care anyway. But in the specific context of education – particularly music education – the quest to define art is essential because in the definition resides the clues to the function of the arts in the larger curriculum. Here's a hint: it has to do neither with enjoyment nor appreciation.

Tolstoy had a great deal to say, and his definition of art included the following:

> Every work of art causes the receiver to enter into a certain kind of relationship both with him who produced, or is producing, the art, and with all those who, simultaneously, previously, or subsequently, receive the same artistic impression.
>
> The feelings with which the artist infects others may be most various - very strong or very weak, very important or very insignificant, very bad or very good.
>
> The chief peculiarity of this feeling is that the receiver of a true artistic impression is so united to the artist that he feels as if the work were his own and not someone else's - as if what it expresses were just what he had long been wishing to express. A real work of art destroys, in the consciousness of the receiver, the separation between himself and the artist - not that alone, but also between himself and all whose minds receive this work of art. In this freeing of our personality from its separation and isolation, in this uniting of it with others, lies the chief characteristic and the great attractive force of art.
>
> *The stronger the infection, the better is the art as art*, speaking now apart from its subject matter, i.e., not considering the quality of the feelings it transmits.
>
> The degree of the infectiousness of art depends on three conditions:
>
> 1. The greater or lesser individuality of the feeling transmitted;
> 2. The greater or lesser clearness with which the feeling is transmitted;
> 3. The sincerity of the artist, i.e., on the greater or lesser force with which the artist himself feels the emotion he transmits.

> Thus is art divided from that which is not art, and thus is the quality of art as art decided, independently of its subject matter, i.e., apart from whether the feelings it transmits are good or bad.

Note that last bit: the quality of art is decided independently… The critical component of the statement is the realization that the quality of art *can* be decided, and it has nothing to do with enjoyment. An earlier segment of this essay touched upon the problem of who gets to judge. When it comes to art, philosophers have gone a long way to answering that question. Put on your reading glasses, pop some NoDoz, and consider the following.